Rhythm and Modernity: The Concept of Dynamic Unity in Literature of the Early 20th Century Metropolis

By

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Declaration

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Summary

In the early 20th century, a number of writers and artists began using the concept of rhythm as a framework for understanding modernity and for devising possible responses to it. What made this concept uniquely suited to the modernist project was its inherent flexibility: it offered a way of integrating phenomena that unfold on widely divergent spatial and temporal scales into a system whose principle of unity is itself dynamic. For these writers, rhythm was not merely an isolated feature of individual works of literature, relegated to the domain of prosody, but provided instead a way of apprehending and structuring all aspects of human experience based on the interplay between similarity and difference, repetition and variation. Understood in this way, rhythm enabled moderns to develop a principle of coherence in an ever-changing and seemingly fragmented world and, with it, a means of accounting for the multifaceted relationship between observer and phenomenon observed, self and other, and part and whole of an all-encompassing scheme.

Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's practice of rhythmanalysis (*Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* [1992]), my dissertation shows how modernist writers such as Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf, and the group of artists commonly known as 'the Rhythmists' used literature in order to intervene in the rhythms of everyday life and to respond to perceived changes in modern consciousness. My analysis draws on a variety of fictional and non-fictional works published between 1900 and the mid-1930s that attest, collectively, to the importance of rhythm as a principle of unity in both textual and social practice. By guiding readers to discover this principle of coherence in literary works, modernist writers attempted to provide contemporaries with a means of positioning themselves in relation to the physical and social spaces of the metropolis, of which London serves as the paradigmatic example.

My dissertation begins by outlining some of the main challenges that modernity presented to early 20th century Londoners through Ford Madox Ford's 1905 *Soul of London*. This text lays the foundation for thinking about modernity as a rhythmic phenomenon determined by the processes of literary production. My analysis of the magazine *Rhythm* (1911-13) develops the relationship between art and life further by exploring this rhythmic theme within the context of a cosmopolitan community whose varied contributions are featured in the publication. It also shows how these writers use rhythm to understand the interplay of past, present, and future. The second half of my dissertation engages these different strands in relation to the work of Virginia Woolf. I begin with a number of essays Woolf published between 1905 and 1932, focusing especially on 'Street Music' (1905), 'Street Haunting' (1927), and 'Oxford Street Tide' (1932), which outline the imbrications of literature, the city, community, and individual identity from a rhythmic perspective. The final section of my analysis reflects on each of these aspects of rhythm through the prism of *The Years* (1937), a novel in which Woolf illustrates the changing rhythms of London between 1880 and 1936. My dissertation as a whole shows that understanding modernity through a rhythmic framework enabled early 20th century writers to find coherence in their historical moment and to devise, through the medium of literature, strategies for navigating the future.

Abbreviations

BA — *Between the Acts*

D — *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*

E — *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*

ER — *The English Review*

L — *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*

Mrs D — *Mrs Dalloway*

RA — *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*

SL — *Soul of London*

TL — *To the Lighthouse*

W — *The Waves*

Y — *The Years*

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Introduction

> 'If life is not always poetical, it is at least metrical. Periodicity rules over the mental experience of man, according to the path of the orbit of his thoughts. Distances are not gauged, ellipses not measured, velocities not ascertained, times not known. Nevertheless, the recurrence is sure. What the mind suffered last week, or last year, it does not suffer now; but it will suffer again next week or next year.' –Alice Meynell, 'The Rhythm of Life' (1893)

Rhythm is, in its broadest sense, the form and structure of all experience; it is the experience of space and, equally importantly, of time. To be conscious—that is, to perceive the passage of time, even if it seems to exist in severed instances of 'now,' is to map it onto space, just as to move through space entails traversing it in ever increasing units of time. This superimposition of time and space, which is necessary for understanding both movement and change, is rhythm. To be conscious of the passage of time or of the expanse of space is, therefore, to become attuned to the idea of rhythm, which encapsulates within itself the ideas of sameness and difference, of repetition and progression, and of cyclicality and linearity. Understood in this way, rhythm provides a response to the dichotomy between the concepts of being and becoming inherited from Pre-Socratic philosophy, which have shaped the Western tradition of thought[1]; it also offers a system for referencing change that is itself dynamic but that still maintains a connection, however loosely conceived, to previous iterations of that reference frame.

In the early 20th century, a number of writers and artists began gravitating towards the concept of rhythm as a framework for understanding modernity as well as participating in shaping its historical moment. What made this concept uniquely suited to the modernist project was its inherent flexibility: it offered a way of integrating phenomena that unfold on

[1] For a more detailed analysis of the biases underpinning Western metaphysics, see Charles Kahn's *Essays on Being*, a 2009 collection of his earlier work on the importance of the Greek verb 'to be' in relation the metaphysical tradition. David Harvey provides a number of similar insights in *The Condition of Postmodernity*; however, his analysis does not extend to the ancient world (see especially pages 204-5).

widely divergent spatial and temporal scales into a system whose principle of unity is itself dynamic.[2] In other words, when abstracted from the particularities of musical composition, rhythm denotes an interplay between similarity and difference whose structure is not pre-set or pre-defined but evolves with the unfolding of all events. For these writers, rhythm was not merely an isolated feature of individual works of literature, relegated to the domain of prosody, but provided instead a way of apprehending and structuring all aspects of human experience. Because this rhythmic framework arises from the synthesis—indeed, the dialectic—of space and time, it enables the creation of principles of coherence in all events that unfold in a spatio-temporal plane. The concept of rhythm captivated the modernist imagination because it helped these writers conceive of modernity as a complex and dynamic system existing in a symbiotic relationship both to lived experience and to art.

This thesis aims to show the prominence of the concept of rhythm in the works of a number of key modernist figures, including Ford Madox Ford, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, and Virginia Woolf, published between the first decade of the 1900s and mid-1930s. By surveying a wide range of works that circulated both independently and in the periodical press throughout this period, my dissertation outlines the many ways in which moderns employed this concept in order to understand their own historical moment and to participate in shaping it. I begin my analysis with a preliminary outline of this rhythmic framework, based primarily on Henri Lefebvre's important and influential work on the topic, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life* (1992), which will help delineate the theoretical scope of rhythm while also underscoring its relevance to the study of modernism

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[2] In a recent essay entitled 'Rhythm and the Measures of the Modern,' Laura Marcus also emphasizes the unity and flexibility entailed by this concept. She explains, for instance, that rhythm functioned as 'a connective tissue between . . . the arts and the sciences' that emerged in response to the problem of 'increasing specialization' during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (213). Marcus' article also provides a good survey of some of the scientific ideas about rhythm during this period.

and modernity. Each of the chapters that follows expands and reinforces key aspects of this rhythmic framework by engaging with specific modernist texts. As I show throughout my dissertation, modernist studies, which has traditionally focused on time and space independently, has only recently become attuned to the importance of rhythm in relation to the intellectual and artistic currents of the early 20th century. By engaging with this concept directly, my thesis argues that moderns themselves understood their historical moment as an essentially rhythmic epoch and that this way of relating to modernity enabled them to conceive of contemporary art as entering into dialogue with and shaping modern consciousness.

The conceptual schema of rhythm has its roots in Immanuel Kant's philosophy and, more specifically, in the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds he posits in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). The noumenal world—the world of 'things in themselves'—is completely unknowable for Kant (A250-3); the version of the world that reveals itself to us—the phenomenal world—appears to us in space and time.[3] However, Kant conceives of space and time not as properties inherent in the world but as pre-conditions for perceiving it; they are the filters through which we view the world:

> [S]ince all representations, whether they have for their objects outer things or not, belong, in themselves, as determinations of the mind, to our inner state; and since this inner state stands under the formal condition of inner intuition, and so belongs to time, time is an *a priori* condition of all appearance whatsoever. It is the immediate condition of inner appearances . . . and thereby the mediate condition of outer appearances. Just as I can say *a priori* that all outer appearances are in space, and are determined *a priori* in conformity with the relations of space, I can also say, from the principle of inner sense, that all appearances whatsoever, that is, all objects of the senses, are in time, and necessarily stand in time-relations. (A24/B51)

[3] See also sections A39/B56, A254/B309-A257/B312.

Because all perception in Kant's schema takes place through the prism of time and space, both the principle of continuity and that of change emerge from the patterns of convergence formed by the superimposition of the two. As he explains in *The Critique*, both space and time are, in themselves, immutable; all alteration happens *within* each domain (A41/B58). This qualification implies the idea of an experience—of continuous engagement and, with it, the idea of traversing, in the first instance, time, in the second, space: 'The movable [in other words, that which changes] is found in space only through experience,' just as succession in time also requires 'the perception of some existence' in space (A41/B58).[4] Changes in space, therefore, can be measured in relation to time and *vice versa*.

Henri Lefebvre, who is perhaps the most important and insightful 20th century theorist of rhythm (as it applies to social structures and lived experience), opens his *Rhythmanalysis* (1992) by outlining the relationship among space, time, and mutability in terms that echo Kant's.[5] What Lefebvre adds to Kant's framework is something he refers to as the 'science' or 'new field of knowledge' of rhythmanalysis, which he understands as having 'practical consequences' in the way the world is organized (3).[6] Rhythm, for Lefebvre, is everywhere—it permeates all aspects of our world, ranging from the rhythms dictated by planetary

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[4] Although Kant does not specify that this perception must happen in space, this qualification is implied by the quotation above, where he outlines that all perception requires the transcendental aesthetic of space.

[5] There are a number of contemporary British philosophers, of which the most relevant is perhaps John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, who were also working on related concepts of time and consciousness and who, through their works, sought to find ways of understanding inter-personal dynamics (see, for example, Avrom Fleishman's discussion some analogues between Woolf and McTaggart). The writers I explore below, however, focus explicitly on the idea of rhythm and on the way in which rhythm becomes an organizing principle for everything that unfolds—or appears to unfold—in space and time. Unlike contemporary analytical philosophers, these writers seem to be interested primarily in providing an account of (inter-)subjective and often deeply contradictory experiences rather than establishing the nature of reality based on logical inferences. The very idea of rhythm, as I explain below, is a way of preserving the tension in contradictory modes of being, not of eliminating it; it is also an acceptance that the noumenal world is not knowable from a human perspective and that space and time are the basis of the phenomenal world. It is for this reason that I draw on Kant and Lefebvre for my analysis.

[6] Lefebvre notes that the term is not his but that it originated in the works of the Portuguese philosopher Lúcio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos and was taken up by Gaston Bachelard (see *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* and *The Dialectic of Duration*).

movements to those of vital systems in our bodies (8). From the point of view of rhythmanalysis, the essence of all rhythm is periodicity—that is, repetition with variation. As he explains in the opening chapter of the work,

> [n]o rhythm [can exist] without repetition in time and space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without **measure**. But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. . . . [T]here is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference. (Lefebvre's emphasis, 6)

Lefebvre makes the point that this difference persists even in the cases where each repeated element is identical (such as in the case of a repeated number or symbol). This is so on account of the principle of iteration: one iteration of something is by definition different from any other iteration because all repetition must take place in time and/or in space, which denotes precisely the complex notion of return that he highlights in this passage (6-8). Rhythm, for Lefebvre, is a dialectical relation of 'unity in opposition' (ibid.). He places such emphasis on the idea of measure because the notion of unity in opposition depends on what I have labeled above as the convergence of reference frames:

> Time and space, the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions . . . [and] everywhere where there is rhythm, there is *measure*. (Lefebvre's emphasis, 8)

The notion of a 'measuring-measure' underscores the nested quality of space and time as well as the dynamism of the system of referencing that space-time allows.

Lefebvre attributes the difference between cyclical and linear rhythms to what he posits as their respective origins: cyclical rhythms originate in nature and those that are linear emerge 'from social practice' or human activity (8). While this distinction between the cyclical and the linear may seem intuitive and well-founded, Lefebvre himself suggests that it is difficult to maintain because these different kinds of rhythms 'interfere with one another constantly' (8). And although the categories of 'the social' and 'the natural' maintain their

practical application of delineating separate domains of human experience that have traditionally been defined against one another, they lose their definitional force over the course of *Rhythmanalysis* (*RA*). In other words, these concepts are useful only to the extent to which they refer to the tradition of thought embedded in the binary pair. Moreover, as Lefebvre explains in the Dressage chapter of *RA*, the very idea of the natural 'falsifies situations': 'Something passes as *natural* precisely when it conforms perfectly and without apparent effort to accepted models, to the habits valorised by a tradition' (Lefebvre's emphasis, 38-9). Such distinctions are nevertheless useful because rhythms can be understood only by comparison—or 'in relation to'—other rhythms (10). The 'base' or 'reference' rhythm is, by default, generated by the subject's experience of the self (ibid.).[7]

This relational quality of rhythms focuses the entire practice of rhythmanalysis on the human subject, whom Kant also foregrounded, although in more abstract terms, in his Transcendental Aesthetic. As Lefebvre explains in his second chapter, The Rhythmanalyst: A Previsionary Portrait, engaging with rhythms requires embodiment—it requires the experience of rhythm. The rhythmanalyst listens

> first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order to consequently appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome. (19)

This dynamic between subject and object, observer and the phenomenon observed that Lefebvre outlines is one of the defining features of rhythmanalysis. It is also the most appealing feature and, at the same time, the strongest source of contention of the kind of 'science' Lefebvre espouses. The rhythmanalyst studies entities around him as bodies or, more accurately, as analogous rhythmic systems existing on varying scales: he listens 'to

[7] At the end of the chapter entitled Critique of the Thing, Lefebvre offers another way of grouping rhythms based on the idea of private versus public (17-18). Although useful in understanding different types of rhythms, this schema applies only narrowly to my analysis of Mansfield's and Woolf's works (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), so I will not discuss it at length here.

them *as a whole*' and unifies them 'by taking his own rhythms as a reference' and 'by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa' (20).[8] The idea of listening is strictly metaphorical in this account, for the rhythmanalyst draws on all his senses, thinking of his body 'not in the abstract, but in lived temporality' of the everyday (21). Just as the human body 'consists of a bundle of rhythms, different but [often] in tune,' so does the world in all its complexity. The rhythmanalyst's work, then, is to compare various perceived rhythms to each other through the framework of the self, situating this self 'simultaneously inside and outside' of the phenomenon observed (27). 'Arrhythmia' or the lack of harmony amongst rhythms is understood by Lefebvre as a form of illness in the body (20). He does not explore the idea of this disturbance on a social level, but, by extension, arrhythmia in society is akin to a series of symptoms that the rhythmanalyst can both diagnose and, in the very act of assessing, modify.

By engaging in the process of analysing rhythms, the rhythmanalyst necessarily 'changes that which he observes' (25), thus eroding the boundaries between subject and object (36). The result of this interaction shows the true dynamism of this rhythmic framework whose reference points are forever subject to change as different rhythms interact with one another. The only laws that apply in such a system are, broadly speaking, the laws of harmonics.[9] The role of the rhythmanalyst cannot, therefore, resume itself to observation but must have a creative dimension. And although the portrait of the rhythmanalyst Lefebvre sketches bears some traces of a scientist or an 'empiricist,' he is most akin to 'the poet,' for his work entails performing 'a verbal action,' which itself has 'an *aesthetic* import' (23-5).

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[8] Throughout these passages I follow Lefebvre's use of the singular masculine pronoun in order to avoid confusion.

[9] These are denoted in Lefebvre's system by the concepts of eurthythmia, polyrhythmia, and arrhythmia (16-17). I will not discuss these concepts further because they are not directly related to the analysis I undertake here.

This verbal action is precisely the 'practical consequence' (noted above) of engaging with this field of knowledge. For Lefebvre, the rhythmanalyst's task is to change the rhythms he perceives and to do so specifically by revitalising the concept of art in response to the problem of reification that many Marxists, including Lefebvre himself, have pointed out:[10]

> Since the so-called *modern* era, the concept of the **work of art** has become obscure without disappearing; on the contrary; it extends and differentiates itself into substitutes: the **product** and the **thing**. The rhythmanalyst will bring about many works himself by renewing the very concept of the work. (Lefebvre's emphasis, 26)

What makes Lefebvre's work pertinent to the study of modernism is that, as I show throughout my dissertation, he is responding to intellectual and social trends originating in the early 20th century. *RA* is primarily concerned with schematising the set of conditions that define modernity and outlining the scope of rhythmic interactions present within it, thus providing a theoretical foundation for what many modernist writers sought to accomplish through their own works.

Although the modernist works featured in this dissertation are less systematic in their approach to rhythm, the subject-centric focus that this kind of engagement entails is precisely what gave rise to early 20th century writers' fascination with a rhythmic model of the world. As I argue in what follows, and especially in my discussion of Ford Madox Ford and Virginia Woolf, thinking about modernity in these terms allowed writers to shift the focus from mechanised, large-scale systems of production of goods to human subjectivity. For these as well as for many other writers, thinking about the individual's place within networks of production and exchange that are themselves rhythmic in nature and that dominate modernity constitutes a way of resisting both the debilitating experience of fragmentation that is so

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[10] See, for example, Georg Lukács' essay 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in *History and Class Consciousness* or Louis Althusser's *For Marx* (230n17) and *Reading Capital*, written with Étienne Balibar (191, 217, and the glossary entry for 'reification').

characteristic of modernity and the seemingly unstoppable push towards fetishization of goods that market forces create.[11] In short, what both Ford and Woolf see as the problems of modernity can be encapsulated in Lefebvre's concept of 'dressage,' which denotes the repetitive process through which humans are 'broken in' and are taught to conform (see above) to the requirements of their social context (39).[12] Approaching the human subject relationally allows modernist writers to model new ways of resisting forces of alienation and fragmentation by creating and engaging with communities through art. This response to modernity applies not only to Woolf and to Ford but also to a group of artists and writers who are often referred to as 'the Rhythmists' and who seek to outline, through their works, the principles of unity and continuity in a world that seems both isolated and fragmented.

Before turning to discuss the concepts of space, time, and rhythm in relation modernist studies, I pause briefly to show how the two writers I mention above, Ford Madox Ford and Virginia Woolf, connect the individual's experience of the metropolis to the large-scale rhythms of global exchange. For the purpose of this illustration, I draw on a few short passages from *Soul of London* (*SL*) and *The Years* (*Y*). In the Roads into London chapter of *SL*, Ford explains that 'one may grow bewildered to the point of losing hold of one's identity amid the crash and charge of goods trucks' on London streets (41). For Ford, one is able to get beyond this bewilderment by understanding the harmonising force of the 'Modern Spirit' (29-30), which I discuss in more detail below. The same experience is echoed repeatedly not

[11] For a more detailed account of how this process works, see my discussion of the pencil and the bowl from Manuta at the end of Chapter 3.

[12] Although the notion of making individuals conform to external systems—often labeled as simply 'ideology'—is a staple of Marxist thinking (see especially Althusser's 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'), Lefebvre's work is particularly illuminating in this respect because, like Ford, he provides a clear account of how individuals are shaped by performing everyday activities—by, in effect, living in a particular context. Bryony Randall makes a similar point in *Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life* (18), and while she also draws on Lefebvre, her study of dailiness ignores *Rhythmanalysis* altogether, focusing instead on *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *Critique of Everyday Life*, as well as on Ben Highmore's *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, which also has its foundation in these works.

only in Woolf's 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide' (featured in Chapter 3 of this dissertation), but also in *Y*. The novel's '1891' chapter, for example, provides two instances of this sense of bewilderment and of its resolution through the character of Eleanor. As these passages demonstrate, the feeling of being disoriented and being frustrated in one's purpose resolves itself as soon as Eleanor manages to harmonise with her surroundings. In the first instance, we see Eleanor trying to catch a bus upon realising that she 'was late' for an appointment:

> She ran; she dodged. Shopping women got in her way. She dashed into the road waving her hand among the carts and horses. The conductor saw her, curved his arm round her and hauled her up. She had caught her bus. (89-90)

A few pages later, Eleanor once again walks out into the street to find that

> [c]abs, vans and omnibuses streamed past; they seemed to rush the air into her face; they splashed the mud onto the pavement. People jostled and hustled and she quickened her pace in time with theirs. (100)

In the first passage, Eleanor is literally swept into the right tempo by the conductor who pulls her up, thus averting a breakdown in rhythm; in the second, she seems to make a conscious effort to get in time with those around her by quickening her pace. Both episodes illustrate, however, that although the city may seem to move chaotically, there is an underlying rhythm and that one can get past the feeling of bewilderment by learning to move 'in time' with it. As I show in later chapters, a number of the other characters in the novel harmonise with their immediate surroundings in a similar way.

What causes this seeming chaos in the city is, however, the rhythm of industry and trade, which is linked to the movement of goods. Given the scale on which this other rhythm operates, its effects on sections of the city can, at times, appear chaotic. Ford, for instance, describes the 'great open spaces all over London where the transfers [of goods] are made from line to line' for the purposes of redistribution:

> At night they are most active. Electric lights glare and seem to drop sparks from very high in the air . . .; rails glimmer here and there underfoot like marsh pools of water; hooded trucks seem to wander alone and to charge each other in all the black distances. One might be on some primaeval plain, watching, in the glare of lightning, to the unceasing crash of thunder, primordial beasts grazing, wandering, or in violent combat. (41)

The image of the primaeval plain reverberates in many ways with the works of the Rhythmists I explore below, and the effect it has is certainly bewildering and petrifying. For Ford, one can begin to understand it and find ways of working within it only when one becomes aware that the rhythm of this movement is set by the ticking of the industrial clock. For Woolf, however, the emphasis is slightly different, though the origin of the rhythm is almost the same: the driving force of this rhythm is, for her, the desire of the Oxford Street clientele for more and 'newer' products, which accelerates the movement of goods and changes the rhythm of the entire system to which the metropolis belongs. As I show in Chapters 3 and 4, Woolf's analysis of the relationship between the individual and the rhythm of the modernist metropolis culminates in the 1930s in two essays I mention above as well as in her description of North's reintegration into London society in the final chapter of *The Years*.

Time, Space, and Rhythm in Modernist Studies

Despite the central place that the concept of rhythm occupied in the works of early 20th century writers, modernist reception studies have only recently become attuned to its full importance outside of the domain of prosody. Up until the early 1990s, the study of modernism was dominated by the category of time. This tendency can be attributed in great measure to the influence of Henri Bergson's thought on early 20th century art. In *Inventing Bergson*, Mark Antliff notes that Bergson's works were widely read, translated, and disseminated within the first decade and a half of the 20th century, and that Bergson himself

reached great acclaim as a public speaker, giving lectures not only in France, but also in England, Italy, and even across the Atlantic between 1911 and 1913 (6). The link among time, interiority, and style, prompted by Bergson's idea of the *durée*, and, indeed, also in part by William James' idea of the stream of consciousness, formed a strong current in modernist reception studies.[13] As Bryony Randall notes in *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*, 'the theories of Bergson are often spoken of together [in critical discourse] as lying behind the development of the "stream of consciousness" novel' (32).[14]

The primacy of time over space was also reasserted in historicist critical works focusing on modernism and modernity. Fredric Jameson's injunction to 'always historicize,' which opens *The Political Unconscious*, has often been cited as the motto for this critical position (ix). The basic premise of the approach is, as Jameson himself explains, the idea that important moments or aspects of the past can recover their general significance and 'urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; . . . only if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single vast unfinished plot' (3-4). This formulation of history has been echoed by many critics since then, including James Longenbach in *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot, and the Sense of the Past* and Peter Osborne in *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avant-Garde*. Longenbach's work seeks to outline the 'different attitudes towards history that are bound up with modernism' (8), while Osborne's argues, in very lucid terms, that 'categories of historical consciousness' such as

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[13] In a late 1970s interview, subsequently published under the title 'Questions on Geography,' Michel Foucault comments on the fraught history of the debate between space and time. Although speaking about this in order to reassert the importance of the concept of power, which includes dimension of both, Foucault acknowledges that there has been a 'devaluation of space that has prevailed for generations': 'Did it start with Bergson, or Before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic. . . . If one started to talk in terms of space that meant one was hostile to time. It meant, as fools say, that one "denied history," that one was a "technocrat"' (70).

[14] Although there are many examples of critical works that follow this trend, Shiv K. Kumar's *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (1962), Sanford Schwartz *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and 20th-Century Thought* (1985), and Paul Douglas' *Bergson, Eliot and American Literature* (1986) are among the most critically acclaimed studies of modernist literature to do so.

'modernity' and 'postmodernity,' 'modernism' and 'postmodernism,' are 'constructed at the level of the apprehension of history as a whole' (viii-ix).[15] What is more, modernity, for Osborne, can itself be defined as 'a culture of time' or a 'distinctive way of temporalizing "history"' (ix).[16] The important suggestion that we get in Osborne's study, however, is that if each of these 'categories of historical consciousness' are constructed retrospectively, in relation to 'the apprehension of history as a whole,' then they are also interdependent. And indeed this crucial point also informed the 'spatial turn' that was taking place in the background of Osborne's work.

Although strands of the historicist approach to modernism have persisted well into the 21st century,[17] often providing important insight into critical debates about the idea of modernity, the early 1990s saw a shift in modernist reception studies towards the categories of space. The critic often credited with making the pendulum of modernist literary studies swing to the opposite extreme is, of course, Fredric Jameson himself. As both Susan Standford Friedman and Andrew Thacker remark, the slogan, 'Always historicize!' quickly changed to 'Always spatialize!'[18] This shift is marked by Jameson's influential essay, 'Modernism and Imperialism,' published in 1990, as well as by *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, which was published the following year and which features the idea of 'cognitive mapping,' borrowed from the urban theorist Kevin Lynch.

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[15] It is interesting to note that many of the critics who think of modernism in historicist terms tend to focus exclusively on the works of W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound (see, for instance, Leon Surette's *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult* or Michael North's *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound*). In this regard, see Michael Kaufmann's 'A Modernism of One's Own: Virginia Woolf's *TLS* Reviews and Eliotic Modernism,' which I quote at the beginning of my third chapter.
[16] Osborne's position resonates in many ways that of the Rhythmists I discuss in Chapter 2 of my dissertation. However, as I point out in my analysis, the Rhythmists' 'distinctive way of temporalizing "history"' is rhythmically.
[17] See, for instance, Ronald Schleifer's *Modernism and Time: The Logic of Abundance in Literature, Science, and Culture, 1880-1930* and Sandford Kwinter's *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of Event in Modernist Culture*, or Randall Stevenson's *Reading the Times: Temporality and History in Twentieth-Century Fiction*.
[18] These references can be found in 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies' (426) and *Moving Through Modernity* (1), respectively.

Taken together, these works signal a number of important and interrelated trends in modernist studies, the first of which Jameson himself cites in 'Modernism and Imperialism.' The main premise of this essay is that imperialism, which is primarily concerned with delineating and managing space, is intrinsic to understanding modernism (154-5, 167). Moreover, Jameson notes that the discussion of interiority—of 'increased subjectification and introspective psychologization'—must be set aside because it fails to provide insight into the social context of the period (153). *Postmodernism* completes the conceptual shift by making the link between space and ideology, embodied in the works of Lynch and Louis Althusser, more explicit: '[T]he alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves' (51). This problem, Jameson explains, can also be expressed in terms of '"the subject's *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence"' (ibid.).[19] Cognitive mapping is, therefore, deeply intertwined with 'real' mapping and the concept of space becomes the key to understanding time.[20]

Jameson's *Postmodernism* shows two important aspects of this spatial turn: the first, as suggested above, is that discussions of modernism since the early 1990s have been increasingly shaped by definitions of 'postmodernism'; the second, that this shift in literary studies drew inspiration from the work of geographers, urban planners, and social theorists of the late 20th century. Works such as David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* or Edward W. Soja's *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* became commonplace references in modernist literary studies,[21] as did the tendency

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[19] A more elaborate explanation of this link can be found on pages 50-54 of *Postmodernism*. The quotation embedded in the text is from Althusser's well-known essay entitled 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.'
[20] Thacker and Peter Brooker reiterate this point in their introduction to *Geographies of Modernism* (2-3).
[21] Soja is particularly relevant in this sense because his work shows that the spatial turn in literary studies is based on an earlier spatial turn that had taken place in geography and in cultural studies in the 1960s. The

to define modernism as a postmodern retrospective. Andrew Thacker's *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* is a perfect example of such interdisciplinary practices, for it draws not only on Harvey and Soja in order to construct its own approach, but also on Henry Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, which had become prominent in critical discourse with the spatial turn.[22] I will return to Thacker's work shortly because, in addition to tracing a comprehensive theoretical genealogy,[23] his work is both nuanced and insightful in its approach. He also illuminates particularly well the relationship among space, empire, and modernist studies:

> If imperialism and colonialism were projects intrinsically concerned with the politics of space, then it appears inevitable that we should discuss how writers produce texts that map empire, and how resistant narratives attempt the rewriting of imposed cartographies. (1) [24]

Franco Moretti attempted to do precisely this kind of mapping, in a very literal sense, in his landmark study *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*. The opening passages of this work provide a very clear and succinct explanation of the importance of this kind of interdisciplinary, geographically-inflected study:

> [G]eography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens,' but an active force, that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth. Making the connection between geography and literature explicit, then—mapping it[—is important] because a map is precisely . . . a connection made visible . . . [that] will allow us to see some significant relationships that have so far escaped us. (3)

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chapter entitled 'History: Geography: Modernity' is illuminating as a whole because it provides a comprehensive outline of the theoretical landscape of spatial studies in relation to historicism and to the study of modernism more broadly, but see especially pages 11, 15-17, 24-5, and 31.

[22] I should note that Thacker does resist the practice of defining modernism retrospectively (see *Moving Through Modernity* 2). One of the strengths of his argument is his observation that space was a subject of contention and debate in modernity (2, but see especially his comment about the phrase '"we live in spacious times"' that has its origin in Ford Madox Ford's *Soul of London*).

[23] See especially the first chapter of *Moving Through Modernity*, entitled 'Theorising Space and Place in Modernism.'

[24] The topic of imperialism itself, although linked to my area of research, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. An extensive discussion of the relationship between modernist and imperialism already exists within the critical domain in numerous forms. Three collections of essays that are particularly important in defining this critical scope are Howard J. Booth's and Nigel Rigby's *Modernism and Empire*, Anna Snaith's *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London, 1890-1945*, and Richard Begam's and Michael Moses' *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939*.

The idea of unearthing relationships that had previously been covered over or hidden is precisely what has driven the study of the politics of literary space over the past three decades. However, just as privileging time serves to cover over important relationships, so does privileging space, and it is for this reason that my own work attempts to capture a way of thinking that combines both space and time in equal measure.

In addition to being a category that the moderns used in thinking about themselves and their context, rhythm entails a form of conceptual flexibility that can accommodate a much broader range of ideas and information than the categories of space or time. What is more, as a number of the studies outlined above show, the tendency of certain scholars to cluster either around the study of time or around that of space involves an artificial—and, indeed, unsustainable—conceptual division. Many of the works I mention above are valuable and insightful to the extent to which they are diverted from their stated purpose—in other words, to the extent that they use one category in order to discover and explore the other.[25] My own analysis of rhythm in early 20th century works draws inspiration precisely from these studies and seeks to bring to the fore connections that may not be visible through a narrower lens. In so doing, it also mounts a defence against a critique that has often been levelled at proponents of rhythm throughout the 20th century and continuing into the beginning of the 21st—that is, the charge that rhythm is far too vague and encompassing a concept to preserve any explanatory force. As I show not only in the remainder of this introduction but also throughout the rest of my dissertation, the flexibility that rhythm entails ought not to be mistaken for lack of depth or precision.

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[25] A work like Ricardo J. Quinones' *Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development* seems to be a case in point, for despite the overtly historicist approach, the mixed metaphor embedded in its title shows the need to think in spatio-temporal terms.

In preparation for analysing the ways in which rhythm figures in works of modernist literature, I would like, however, to provide a brief overview of a few critical works that have helped inform my approach. One of the earliest and most comprehensive studies linked to the type of analysis I pursue in this work is Stephen's Kern's *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, which offers an overview of the major changes taking place at the turn of the century, from scientific, technological, social, political, and artistic perspectives, in relation to the idea of space and time.[26] Of special note here is the account of the many ways in which both space and time become more standardized and yet simultaneously come under increased scrutiny from the point of view of individual experience of the world. Kern is able to capture a fundamental aspect of early 20th century life by taking into account the perspective of the modern subject while also providing a compendium of information about the changes that take place in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The chapter he dedicates to the idea of speed, for example, documents many of the issues that inform Ford's *The Soul of London*, as well as Woolf's and the Rhythmists' varied writings; it also outlines what David Harvey will later call the 'space-time compression' characteristic of modernity (260-1), which is integral to the idea of movement that Andrew Thacker explores.

Thacker's *Moving Through Modernity* is one of the most important antecedents of my work, for the concept of movement implies the process of traversing both space and time (which remains somewhat underprivileged in his study) that is central to my approach. Thacker's argument for the importance of space in literature has its foundation in the category of 'social space,' defined as space produced by social practices, that Lefebvre outlines in *The Production of Space*.[27] This concept is important for *Moving Through*

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[26] More recently Randall Stevenson has taken up this kind of analysis in *Reading the Times* (see especially Chapters 3 and 4).

[27] For more information, see the first two chapters of *The Production of Space*. Also see pages 16-22 of *Moving Through Modernity* for a more detailed account of Thacker's engagement with Lefebvre.

Modernity because it encapsulates the notion that 'forms of spatial organisation . . . play a dominant role in shaping societies, determining the realms of mental and physical space' (17). Thacker's work begins, therefore, with the premise that modernist texts create 'metaphorical spaces that try to make sense of the material spaces of modernity' and that 'modernist writing can be located only within the movements between and across multiple sorts of space' (3, 8). In much of his analysis, however, movement between different types of space appears to be unidirectional, from the 'real' to the 'metaphorical.' In other words, although *Moving Through Modernity* provides a very good illustration of how social spaces 'help fashion the literary *form* of the modernist text' (4), it often leaves out the second element of this reciprocal, or, indeed, 'dialogical,' relationship between metaphorical and material spaces;[28] throughout the work, there is little account of the process of resisting and rewriting that Thacker mentions on the opening page of his study (see quotation above).

My own work, by contrast, attempts not only to provide a wider conceptual framework that accounts for both space and time but also, more importantly, to show how modernist writers seek to intervene in their historical moment and to use art in order to impact the forces that shape modern consciousness. This inter-dependent system of relationships is the primary focus of the chapters that follow. As I have noted above, the idea of rhythm draws its force from its ability to show complex interactions within a dynamic system. The writers I discuss in my dissertation use the concept of rhythm not only to understand how past rhythms affect those of the present—in other words, to understand how modernity is being shaped by something akin to a historical and material inertia expressed in large-scale rhythms—but also to illustrate how individual subjects can engage with the present, especially through the medium of art, in order to change these rhythms and to shape

[28] A case in point is the concluding section of the Imagist Travels chapter, and especially pages 104-6.

the future. This concern applies equally to all the authors I discuss: it is central to Ford's project of mitigating the effects of the periodical press, whose ever-increasing tempo forces a form of triviality upon people that, in his view, diminishes the capacity of the mind; to the Rhythmists who seek to ensure the continuity of a certain *élan vital* by, on the one hand, demonstrating how rhythms operate across large expanses of time and space, and, on the other, infusing their own rhythms with what seems to them to be a primitive essence; and to Woolf, whose work with and across genres seeks to uphold both the notion of the individual and that of a non-constrictive community amidst economic, social, and political currents that are continually eroding both.

Finally, I would like to mention two, additional studies, Bryony Randall's *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* and Adam Barrows' *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn*, that approximate, in different ways, the methodology I employ in this study. Although neither of these authors mentions *Moving Through Modernity* explicitly, they both seem to draw on the very ideas that inform Thacker's work. For this reason, Randall and Barrows are best viewed in relation to the theoretical background I outline at the beginning of this section. My own work seeks to highlight these resonances and continuities in relation to modernist reception studies because, as my discussion of the spatial turn suggests, critical practice is itself a rhythmic phenomenon: it seeks to 'make new'—to provide new ways of seeing and understanding modernism—through a structure of repetition with variation. It is for this reason that I have opted to structure my discussion of both literary and critical texts throughout my dissertation in chronological order.

The account of modernism that Bryony Randall provides in *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* resembles Thacker's not merely in the insight it provides into an essential feature of modernism but also in the way it delimits its focus. Drawing on Lefebvre's

Everyday Life in the Modern World and *The Critique of Everyday Life*, Randall explains that the concept of 'dailiness,' which defines her approach, 'describes something [that is] forming, by defining, every human individual' (18). It is also bound up with a 'general temporality of sameness-and-difference' (22). What Randall describes through these passages is precisely the notion of dressage that I outlined above. I have chosen to use *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre's last work,[29] as a central theoretical text for my study because it encapsulates many of the important concepts he developed in his earlier, better known writings, such as *The Production of Space* and *The Critique of Everyday Life*, and does so using the concept of rhythm, which moderns themselves explored at length. The idea of 'sameness-and-difference' that Randall uses in her analysis suggests precisely the rhythmic dynamic that I outline but does so only in the narrow sense of daily lived experience amidst the forces that define modernity. This reliance on the concept of everydayness, however, limits the scope of Randall's analysis in significant ways. As I note above, rhythm was an important idea for many modernist writers because it enabled them to think not only about the everyday but also to reach far beyond it. Rhythm, therefore, allowed moderns to link daily subjective experience with historical trends, thus providing a way of connecting different spatio-temporal scales, such as those of the individual, of society, and of various aspects of the history.

Adam Barrows' *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn* comes closest to sketching this correlation among different reference frames; however, while Barrows' approach is also founded in Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* and is, therefore, engaged with the question of how rhythm operates on a number of different scales, the focus of his analysis differs from mine significantly. Following the trend set by both Jameson and

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[29] The work was published posthumously in 1992 (see page vii of the introduction to *RA*).

Thacker, Barrows argues that ‘the spatial turn reinvigorates the ways in which we understand time in literature’ (2). Barrows’ formulation of his position echoes *Moving Through Modernity* on a number of different levels: his work argues not only that

> literature is ideally suited to spatially conceptualize temporal experience, but that in so doing, narrative fiction can intervene meaningfully in the problems of mediating between locality and globality. (2)

And as Barrows notes both in his introduction and in his subsequent analysis, he is particularly interested in issues of globalization and imperialism (3-8, 44-47, 60-65); the issue of literary form is, therefore, tangential to his work. (For instance, the third chapter of his monograph, entitled Modernist Panarchies: Woolf, Joyce, and Rhythm, explores modernist texts written by these three authors, but does so in a somewhat cursory manner.) Much of his study is directed at showing the general relevance and applicability of Lefebvre’s rhythmic framework to the study of 20th century literature as a whole, seeking to find continuities between works published across the century. But while Barrows tends to apply Lefebvre’s framework to literary texts,[30] my own work uses Lefebvre as a way of focusing and guiding the search for a theoretical framework that 20th century texts themselves create.

In addition to the above, there is also a significant theoretical difference between Barrows’ use of the idea of rhythm and mine. In *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn* Barrows treats rhythm as, on the one hand, divisible into its components parts, often preferring to focus his discussion on either time or space, with only occasional references to rhythm as the synthesis of the two, and, on the other, adjectivally, as a quality that time and space can exhibit. Barrows’ discussion of ‘time as a mediator between macro- and micro- space’ (59-60) and his use of phrases such as ‘rhythmic time’ (61) or, its opposite,

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[30] See especially p 151 of his book, but also the way in which he applies Lefebvre’s framework both to Woolf and to Joyce in Chapter 3.

'rhythmic spaces' (6,87) illustrate both of these tendencies. It is in passages such as these that Barrows seems to speak in the idiom of the critics who chose either space or time as a focal point for their analysis, thus moving away from what I take to be the essence of rhythmanalysis. As I show in my discussion of Lefebvre's theoretical framework (above)[31]—and, indeed, also in my discussion of the modernist texts throughout the remainder of my dissertation—dividing rhythm into its component parts can be misleading because it shifts the discussion back into a binary model of thinking. In other words, it is not, as Barrows suggests, that time mediates between macro- and micro- spaces or that space mediates between macro- and micro- temporal frames; rhythm itself mediates between macro- and micro- scales that exist only at the intersections of time and space. Rhythms, Lefebvre insists, can be measured and compared only in relation to other rhythms, not in relation to individual component parts that make up any particular rhythm. Rhythm is something beyond space and time—it is the relationality of the two that creates a principle of dynamic unity, of being *and* becoming, of similarity and difference simultaneously. The referential labels we assign to various rhythms, which often parade as units of either space ('London,' 'the city') or time ('modernity,' '20th century'), are in effect units of rhythm that become artificially simplified and stabilized in order to be conceptually apprehended. It is precisely for this reason that Lefebvre's rhythmanalyst listens through the body (*RA* 19-20) and that Woolf's puzzle of modernity 'never fits' (*E*5 284).

In what remains of the introduction I would like to speak of two such referential labels, the city and community, that are essential to the concept of modernism and that constitute the two poles of my analysis. My discussion of these will help delineate the scope of the idea of rhythm as I have been discussing it thus far. As Raymond Williams explains in

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[31] See *RA* 10 but also Lefebvre's sketch of the rhythmanalyst, who must use internal rhythms 'as a metronome' (19).

'The Metropolis and Modernism,' one of the defining features of what 'can be properly called Modernism' is 'the new and specific location of the artists and intellectuals of this movement within the changing cultural milieu of the metropolis' (20).[32] The common strand among the writers I discuss in my dissertation is not just that they are London-based and that London itself, as a paradigmatic example of the modernist metropolis, becomes a topic of concern for them, but that they all consider urban dynamics from a rhythmic perspective. The issues of isolation and fragmentation that arise in the experience of urban life give rise to new ways of thinking about community, and each of the writers discussed below sees art as a means through which different kinds of community can be created. Although the communities they envision may differ significantly from one another, they all share the same principle of organization—rhythm. In other words, both the city itself and the diverse communities it encompasses function as inter-dependent, dynamic systems, illustrating the interplay between unity and fragmentation, similarity and difference, repetition and variation which forms the basis of rhythmic interactions.

Rhythm and the Metropolis

In his introduction to *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature*, the collection in which Williams' essay (cited above) appeared, Edward Timms notes that in 'around 1900 the city became the focal point for an intense debate about the

[32] My intention is not to suggest that modernity is experienced only within the space of the city, but rather, as I explain in Chapter 3, that the city is what propels the changes experienced in rural—or perhaps even colonial—settings. The growing demands of the city drive the movement of goods, of information, and of people around the world, which, as Ford outlines in *Soul of London*, create the experience of isolation and fragmentation. Moreover, as Melba Cuddy-Keane argues, especially in relation to Woolf's works, the city is a space that can include within itself pockets of seemingly non-urban rhythms in its parks and gardens (see *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* 49). In other words, the city itself is not a specific, homogenous rhythm, rather a multiplicity of inter-related and mutually-defining rhythms that create a form of harmonic relationship. Different cities around the world, being made up of different series of inter-related and mutually-defining rhythms create different harmonic patterns, different composite rhythms.

dynamics of technological civilisation and its effects on the quality of human life' throughout Europe (1). The problem was, of course, 'not merely the overwhelming size of the metropolis, but also the dynamic acceleration of urban and technological development' (3), which is the subject of Ford Madox Ford's *Soul of London* as well as many of Woolf's essays and fictional works, and especially of *The Years*, which will be the focus of my final chapter. The city acquires such importance in the modernist imagination because, as Timms notes, it 'ultimately becomes a metaphor—[a] dynamic configuration of the conflicting hopes and fears of the twentieth century' (4). To translate this idea into the idiom I have been using thus far, the city becomes the rhythmic unit of choice for the early twentieth century imagination on account of the variety of rhythms it embodies and their effect on the human subject. Language and, more specifically, literature is crucial to understanding these rhythmic interactions because, as William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock have pointed out, the subject's experience and perception of the urban landscape is 'inseparable from the words . . . [used] to describe them and from the activities of reading, naming, and metaphorizing that make all . . . [such] formulations possible' (1). In other words, the issues of fragmentation and isolation are fundamentally problems of making meaning; they stem from the difficulty of relating the part of a dynamic system to the whole, the individual to a community or to the city itself.

Kevin Lynch's definition of 'legibility' in relation to the city has been quoted frequently precisely because it articulates in succinct terms a feature of urban life that many moderns had to contend with. Legibility, for Lynch, is the measure of how easily individual parts of the city 'can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern' (*The Image of the City* 2-3). Moreover, as Lynch explains, legibility in relation to the city is indistinguishable from the act of finding coherence in a text on a printed page that can be 'grasped [visually] as a related pattern of recognizable symbols' (3). The problem of

modernity, as each of the writers I discuss shows, is that reading the modernist city becomes an increasingly difficult task on account of the way early 20th century life is structured. And since the challenge of modernity is ultimately the challenge of finding legibility, the writers I analyse seek, through the medium of both essays and fictional works, to offer their readers strategies for making sense of a seemingly fragmented world by illustrating how the very same principle of coherence operates in relation to literary texts. This principle of coherence is, in both domains of experience, what I have labeled above as 'rhythm.'

I begin my dissertation with Ford Madox Ford's often overlooked *Soul of London* (1905) because this work offers a number of key insights into modernity. Most importantly, its detailed exposition of early 20th century modes of transportation and communication demonstrates that modernity itself can be understood as a change in the rhythm of the city, driven equally by market forces and technological innovation. Although written and published at the very beginning of the 20th century, *Soul of London* (*SL*) identifies a trend that holds true for a number of decades following its publication. In this work, Ford identifies the essence of modernism by showing the connection between increased integration in the urban centre and the modern subject's heightened sense of fragmentation and isolation. The seemingly paradoxical correlation between integration and the perception of fragmentation poses a problem of legibility not just for Ford but also for many other 20th century writers as well. As I show throughout my dissertation, the modernist project can be defined as an attempt to find coherence—that is, to make explicit the link between the rhythm of this ever-changing and ever-expanding metropolis and its interaction with individual rhythms.

The sheer size and expanse of a modernist metropolis poses a significant challenge to legibility because the scale of the city becomes incommensurate with that of human experience. If, as Lefebvre suggests, the human subject is the instrument for measuring

ambient rhythms—or, to put it differently, if the unit by which we measure rhythms is calibrated to the embodied experience of the individual—then the scale of the metropolis becomes incompatible with the scale of individual experience. The issue of scale also illustrates the difference, in Lefebvre's thought, between natural rhythms and those based in human activity. Natural cycles, despite existing on a much larger scale, are pervasive. For instance, days, seasons, or years are experienced equally and ubiquitously by all. Although these cycles exist on a cosmic scale, they manifest themselves fully on the scale of individual experience as well, and are therefore perceptible regardless of the individual's placement in time and in space. As I argue below, however, the rhythms of the city can be disorienting because they are not equally nor fully perceptible from all vantage points despite emerging on a much smaller scale.

Ford's *SL* shows that the alarming rate at which London expands during the first decade of the 20th century makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to develop a conception of the city as a whole and, therefore, to understand their relationship to it (27-9). Each Londoner, Ford explains, knows, first hand, only a few, distinct sections of the city. The neighbourhood in which Londoners live, itself often a function of the types of labour they engage in combined with the modes of transportation available at their disposal, defines their individual perspectives on the city (*SL* 7-14, 27-9).[33] Therefore, for the inhabitants of this metropolis, there is not one London but a multiplicity of 'Londons,' each of which matches the class and profession of individual Londoners (48-9, 74). The beat of the industrial clock that haunts Ford's text rules not only the time one spends engaged in work but also defines the structures of one's activities outside of work, including hobbies and amusements (59,

[33] With regard to this idea, also see Raymond William's *The Country and the City* 165.

81).[34] Moreover, it delimits the way in which one navigates the city. Although each individual's labour is connected with the city as a whole—with the process of sustaining and expanding it—the tendency towards specialization and towards routine activities makes individual Londoners incapable of envisioning the organizational principle of the whole, thus creating the feeling of being in a fragmented and chaotic world (58-9).

Coherence, for Ford, lies in understanding the operation of 'the Modern Spirit,' which denotes the large-scale organization of forces in the city (58-9). The purpose of *SL* is precisely to show the correlation among the different forces that shape the modernist metropolis, and to present them as a unified whole expressed in musical terms. Each of the essays in this work sheds light on how the activities carried out in one area of London are deeply connected to those that unfold in a completely different area. What connects these different sections of an ever-expanding metropolis are, of course, the modes of transportation and communication available. However, as Ford explains, being able to travel at ever-increasing speeds across London or having access to a wide range of information disseminated by the press does not, by itself, enable city dwellers to find coherence either in the city or in their own lives. *SL* shows that as all activities become more synchronised, the modern subject becomes increasingly isolated by the particularities of his or her life and incrementally less capable of apprehending the ways in which the Modern Spirit operates. In Ford's account, legibility is not based in the city itself but in the subject's ability to abstract from his or her individual perspective in order to form a general conception of the city as a unified whole; it is a function of a certain frame of mind, which Ford labels as 'the critical attitude.' This mental attitude helps one envision the forces operating in a city as a harmonic

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[34] The image of the clock appears in all essays, but most evocatively in the London at Leisure section, pages 80-1.

unit, thus enabling moderns to conceive of their own movements and activities as part of a larger dynamic system.

As I note in Chapter 1 of my dissertation, Ford's project from 1908 onwards focuses primarily on finding ways to instil such an attitude in fellow Londoners by presenting them with literary works conducive to this purpose. As he explains in *The English Review*, the aim of the literary pieces he presents to his readers encourage them to step out of their individual reference frames in order to relate to an 'other' (represented by the text itself), and to consider the relationship between the work as a whole and its constituent parts. Although Ford makes the link between engaging with literature and engaging with the city explicit, he does so in a cursory manner, without exploring the implications of the rhythmic dynamic of the modernist metropolis fully. This work was taken up, however, in the early 1910s by a group of artists and writers that have become known as 'the Rhythmists' and in the 1920s and 1930s by Woolf, who develops this musical metaphor into a coherent interpretive framework.

Rhythm, the publication launched in 1911 by John Middleton Murry with the help of Michael T. H. Sadler and John Duncan Fergusson, became the most concentrated attempt to define and explore the concept of rhythm as a framework for understanding modernity. Although the magazine's run ended just two years later, in March 1913, the work of its contributors is particularly important for understanding the relationship between part and whole and, therefore, for understanding the dynamic of a community (to which I shall turn my attention in the next section). It is also particularly important in understanding modernity against a historical background. Contributors such as Frederick Goodyear, C. J. Holmes, Gilbert Cannan, and even Murry himself grapple with the same issues of technological innovation and of increasing mechanisation driven by market forces as Ford does, but they

are also concerned with the relationship between modernity and previous ages and with the dynamic between art and life. Most importantly, *Rhythm* attempts to demonstrate how rhythm itself, which is defined within the publication as a structure of echoing, creates a form of cohesion through time and space. This notion of the echo, outlined in the first issue in an essay entitled 'Aims and Ideals,' is precisely the structure of repetition with variation that I outlined above in my discussion of Lefebvre and that can give rise to a dynamic type of unity. It is also what enables individuals to translate their experiences from one domain into another: literature, for the Rhythmists, is crucial to understanding the principle of unity that is part of lived experience because it is itself an echo of life.

The structure of the echo also allows for literature and, more broadly, art to reverberate through life. To put it differently, understanding the resonances between the present and the past enables the contributors of *Rhythm* to conceive of a way of shaping the future. Murry, for example, envisions the artist as the demiurge who looks to the past through the prism of an artistic tradition in order to create the future; however, just as the present exists in a harmonic relationship to the past, so too must the future. Therefore, for the Rhythmists, modernism is a form of creating the past anew. The clearest example of this form of recreation can be found in the Rhythmists' numerous attempts to combine different perspectives on primitivism with the magazine's general claim to cosmopolitanism, both of which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. One distinctive feature of this project undertaken by this group of artists is the attempt to (re)define the category of the subject such that it can preserve its individuality while also maintaining an ability to relate, dynamically, to an ever-changing world. The perfect embodiment of this dynamic between individual and community, part and whole, self and other, similarity and difference is

embodied in *Rhythm* itself, which brings together very different works that resonate with one another.

This notion of the echo and its superimposition on the complex interaction between part and whole is also essential to Virginia Woolf's understanding of modernity, especially as it manifests itself in the relationship between the individual and the city. The element that connects individual identity with the city and with literature is, in Woolf's work, rhythm. Because rhythm occupies such a central place in both her fictional and non-fictional writings, the works Woolf published during the first three decades of the 1900s provide, collectively, a more extensive account of this concept than any of the other authors I discuss in my dissertation. Three, interconnected strands of her work stand out in particular because they help provide a more detailed and more nuanced perspective not only on Ford's writings but also on the Rhythmists' varied attempts to define their historical moment: the link between reading/writing and navigating the city, the relationship between part and whole both on a global and a local scale, and the formation of individual identity.

From the perspective of rhythm, 'Street Haunting' (1927), 'The Docks of London' (1931), and 'Oxford Street Tide' (1932) are central texts in Woolf's corpus, as is *The Years* (1937), to which I dedicate my last chapter, because they weave together all three of these strands of modernity mentioned above. Collectively, these three essays explore fragmentation not only of the self into different personalities (which are often defined by habitual activities and patterns of behaviour, be they entrenched by work, by leisure, or by family life), but also, more generally, the seeming discrepancy between different parts of the city, which itself splits up into different centres of activity. As I show throughout my analysis, Woolf's response to the problem of fragmentation is similar to Ford's in its attempt to define unity and coherence through a rhythmic framework. However, unlike Ford, she is not concerned

merely with the early 20th century but with the emergence of modernity out of the 19th century.

'Street Haunting' is perhaps the most important and most complex of the three essays I refer to above, but it connects with 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide' (which open *The London Scene* series) in order to show that the movement and flux of the city through its neighbourhoods exists in a symbiotic relationship with the global tide of trade.[35] Woolf uses these essays to explore both the global influences upon and the ramifications of the 20th century metropolis. Most importantly, she also shows that the metropolis interacts with the global system to which it belongs in a manner that resembles the interactions between an individual and the city to which he or she belongs. Woolf's exposition of this issue culminates in *The Years*, the last novel to be published during her lifetime, and particularly in the character of North, who represents the flux of global trade while also simultaneously exemplifying the isolation and fragmentation that is characteristic of the modernist mind navigating the early 20th century metropolis. Through this character as well as through a number of the essays I discuss, Woolf demonstrates that the principle of unity is harmonic both on a macro and on a micro scale—that cohesion and coherence depend on this structure of repetition (or echoing) and on the interplay between similarity and difference in every iteration of a pattern.

The encounter between self and other, be that other an individual or an altogether different kind of entity existing on a different scale, can be understood using the rhythmic framework because, as Woolf suggests, 'the other' is, by definition, as much a rhythmic entity as 'the self'; indeed, 'the other' is precisely any entity whose rhythms are distinguishable from the rhythms of the self. Engaging with literature is analogous to

[35] For a related reading of 'The Docks of London,' see Anna Snaith's and Michael Whitworth's introduction to *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Place and Space* (24-7).

navigating the city because, as Woolf demonstrates in 'Street Haunting' and in *The Years*, literature affords readers a rhythmic experience. In this regard, genre becomes quite important for Woolf and she dedicates much of her career to considering the relationship of reader, theme, and form. The essay and the novel are especially important genres for her—indeed, the majority of her own writing falls into these two categories—and they are so because of the ways in which they capture and convey the rhythms of early 20th century lived experience.[36] The third and fourth chapters of my dissertation provide a detailed account not only of Woolf's analysis of rhythm in relation to genre but also of the ways in which her own writings instantiate these ideas and attempt to structure her readers' encounter both with the city and with literary texts. Much like Ford and like the contributors of *Rhythm*, Woolf's priority is to enable readers to find coherence amidst the seeming fragmentation of modern life. She does so by, on the one hand, making these rhythmic systems intelligible and, on the other, demonstrating how any individual can—and does—participate in shaping the rhythm of the system to which he or she belongs. Through this process, Woolf illustrates that the experience of unity or cohesion within the city need not come at the expense of individuality.

Rhythm and Dynamic Communities

Being an active participant in shaping the rhythms of a system to which one belongs is an exercise in becoming a part of a community while also preserving one's identity—an exercise in sustaining something of one's own distinctive rhythm while also being in harmony with the rhythms of 'the other,' regardless of what that other might be. Thus far I

[36] It is important to note here that, for Woolf, the process of reading and writing seem to be complementary. As she explains in some of her letters and diary entries (cited in Chapter 3), the act of producing narrative is as rhythmically-inflected as the act of reading it. This is yet another feature of Woolf's work that links her approach with Ford's and the Rhythmists', for they all see literary production as a way of producing rhythm and, therefore, having an impact upon previously existing rhythms.

have spoken of the relationship between part and whole as the relationship between the individual and the city; however, what makes up the city is, of course, various nested groupings of rhythms or (as I refer to them below) 'communities.' The relationship of the individual to a community is, therefore, also a relationship of part to whole. In what follows, I provide a brief outline of the different types of communities that emerge in the works I analyse throughout my dissertation. I would like to stress, however, that the principle of coherence one develops in relation to reading and to navigating the city is the same as the principle of coherence that defines communities for these writers. Communities are, in essence, expressions of different aspects of the metropolis and can, therefore, mediate the relationship between the individual and the city as a whole.

Beginning with my own area of research, the writers I discuss below can themselves be considered to form a community—specifically, a community defined by literary production and by the interest in understanding modernity through a rhythmic framework. This particular community can help illustrate a number of important features about the other types of groupings I discuss below. As Raymond Williams explains, one of the defining features of modernism is the 'new and specific location of artists and intellectuals' in relation to the metropolis ('The Metropolis and Modernism' 20). London itself provides 'the ground bass' (Ford *SL* 11) for all the communities that are linked, both physically and imaginatively, to the city.[37] Here I use the term 'physically' in a restricted, Lefebvrian sense, for it denotes exposure to rhythms associated with a certain positionality. The writers I discuss in my dissertation create a particularly well-defined community because their works are influenced by and respond directly to a very similar set of rhythms which can be subsumed under the broad category of early 20th century London. Importantly, they also respond to one another

[37] This statement holds true even in cases where an author seems to refer to a nation but is in effect imagining an urban community (see, for example, my discussion of Ford's Englishman in Chapter 1).

and, at times, seem to shape each other's works. In other words, although the communities they envision differ in important ways (as do their individual works), they all have a similar approach to a set of conditions that are commonly referred to as 'modernity.' This similarity, then, provides the basis of a kind of imaginative unity. And indeed, the stress falls on 'imaginative' because, as Benedict Anderson notes in *Imagined Communities*, 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' (6).[38] The distinguishing feature of different types of communities is, therefore, not the content of the communities but 'the style in which they are imagined' (ibid.). This observation is particularly important for my work because the 'style' of creating communities is precisely what my dissertation aims to show through the works of these different authors.

I stress, however, that the communities these writers aim to create through their works are not merely imagined but also interpretive. Of the writers discussed here, Ford is perhaps most explicit in outlining the type of interpretive community he tries to create in response to the modern condition. If the problem of modernity is, for him, increasing specialisation and a general narrowing of one's intellectual abilities (*SL* 59-62), then the role he takes upon himself as the editor of *The English Review* is to instil in his readers the 'critical attitude' I describe in the previous section.[39] In other words, Ford aims to create an interpretive community that is able to counteract what he takes to be the more debilitating forces of modernity. For him, these forces are embodied in the periodical press and in the way it

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[38] While Anderson's ideas have come under heavy criticism (see, for example, Berman's *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community* [9] or the collection of essays edited by Pheng Cheah and Jonathan Culler, *Grounds of Comparison: Around the Work of Benedict Anderson*), this specific observation about communities is particularly astute.

[39] Patrick Collier explains that this was a feature of much debate around newspapers (see *Modernism on Fleet Street* 1-6). He also notes that because 'the issue of mass journalism offered . . . writers an arena, an existing field of discussion with ready terms and arguments, in which they could work out their questions and anxieties about the public, democracy, and the arts,' the process of 'talking about newspapers was a readily available way of talking about the social function, if any, of literature in modem society' (6), which denotes precisely the types of debates that the writers covered in my dissertation engage in.

overloads modern minds with unrelatable facts (ibid.). He attempts to counteract these forces, paradoxically, through the means of a periodical publication that he himself edits, *The English Review*.

The difference between this and other literary magazines lies, Ford suggests, in the type of works contained in the magazine (for it featured primarily what Ford refers to in 1908 as 'imaginative' or, in the early 1910s, as 'impressionistic' literature) as well as in their length. The works Ford selects for his magazine are designed to pluck readers out of the quick, staccato rhythms of their lives and to teach them to engage with ideas in a more leisurely and comprehensive manner. And indeed, in Ford's idiom, the term 'leisure' denotes precisely the creation of a rhythm that exists between the beats of the industrial clock. Through its more dilatory nature, this other tempo allows individuals to relate to entities that embody a wide range of rhythms (be they other people, neighbourhoods, or, indeed, entire cities) and to find coherence in them. Literature, therefore, provides a training ground in Ford's view by encouraging readers to engage with rhythms that are not their own and to find coherences in imaginary universes that differ from those with which they are familiar. The kind of community that *The English Review* aims to create is, therefore, a community of readers who are proficient in the art of discovering coherence in different contexts, much as he himself does in the essays that make up *SL*. In short, Ford's interpretive community is a community that understands rhythmic interactions on a variety of scales and that is able to subvert the debilitating rhythms of 'the market' in order to develop individual melodies that exist in harmony with the 'ground bass' of London.

The desire to create a community of readers that mirrors the approach of a particular magazine or periodical publication is not unique to Ford's *The English Review*; we can see a similar approach in *Rhythm* as well. Although the contributors of *Rhythm* do not make any

explicit references to the type of community they wish to create, the publication's tendency to emphasise and reflect on the community it embodies suggests that its primary purpose is to strengthen the number of converts to this new way of understanding both modernity and art. Unlike Ford's editorial essays, none of the pieces featured in this magazine is overtly didactic. As a whole, the magazine states its goal by envisioning a possible future through the 'ideal of a new art' (1.36)—a strategy that is very much in line with what John Middleton Murry, the magazine's founder, defines as the role of the artist (see above). The journal's opening piece in 1911, 'The New Thelema,' written by Frederick Goodyear, imagines, as its title suggests, a new 'polity of Thelema,' a future community (1-3). Although vague in its description of what this new Thelema might entail, Goodyear's article stresses, in general terms, the ideas of liberty and neo-barbarism (ibid.). As I show in my analysis of *Rhythm*, however, these ideas are two, defining features of the community made up by the magazine's contributors. The first of these is the desire to preserve individual identity (and, with it, the liberty to be and to express) while also maintaining a harmonic relationship with a group. This complex dynamic between group and individual is something I discuss at length in Chapter 2, especially in relation to Michael Sadler's contributions to the magazine, which illustrate this concept in relation to the Fauvist movement, but also with regard to a number of Murry's editorial pieces published over the course of the magazine's run. The second defining feature is the tendency towards primitivism, which merits a few additional words here.

The idea of primitivism reveals something fundamental about the magazine, its contributors, and its intended readership; it is also deeply linked to the notion of cosmopolitanism, which illustrates the breadth of the community of readers and contributors Murry envisioned. As Carey Snyder has pointed out, primitivism itself was a cosmopolitan

movement and the very act of displaying primitive art links *Rhythm* with art galleries that were doing so in urban centres across Europe.[40] The idea of a cosmopolitan community was central to Murry, and we see its importance not only in the journal's attempts to include artists based in other cities across the world (whom I list in the opening section of Chapter 2), but also in Murry's insistence on publishing a list of the magazine's 'foreign agents' and of major cities around the world where one might find the magazine. By suggesting that *Rhythm* is informed by and disseminated in places such as Paris, New York, Munich, Berlin, Warsaw, Krakow, and Helsingfors, Murry attempts to both describe and project a vibrant community of artists, all of whom are engaged in the process of defining a new art through the synthesis of past and present. This version of cosmopolitanism, therefore, illustrates the notion of a rhythmic community whose principle of cohesion does not entail the destruction of individuality. Mansfield explores the complexity of this dynamic between individual and community in relation to the idea of primitivism in 'Sunday Lunch,' her satirical portrayal of the London artistic community, which I discuss at the end of Chapter 2.

Woolf is also interested in unity rooted in rhythmic interactions, particularly from the point of view of relating to communities that exist in the urban space. Because the essays I discuss were published in different periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic, their intended readership, as I note in Chapter 3, is far less concentrated than Ford's or the Rhythmists'. Nevertheless, Woolf is also engaged in creating a certain kind of interpretive community, though one that differs in style from previous communities. Throughout these essays (and even throughout her novel *The Years*), Woolf is primarily concerned with a subset of readers who are also street haunters or who, at the very least, struggle with navigating the urban

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[40] See my discussion of Carey and of the relevant quotations in Chapter 2.

space.[41] Woolf acknowledges the power of rhythm as a force for cohesion as early as 1905, where she playfully suggests that the best way to manage the chaos of the modernist metropolis is by placing a band to beat the time at every intersection (*E*1 32). Just over twenty years later she returns to the same topic in 'Street Haunting,' which illustrates the complexity of rhythms on city streets. What sets Woolf apart from the writers I discuss above is, however, that she regards individual identity as equally malleable and subject to change as the rhythm of the city itself. Moreover, the aspect of one's identity that surfaces at any one point in time depends, for Woolf, precisely on the rhythm of one's immediate environment.

Of the writers discussed above, Woolf's account of communal interactions offers the most comprehensive description of the way in which this rhythmic system operates, for it outlines both the malleability of individual identity and the way in which the modern subject can affect the rhythm of his or her environment. In 'Street Haunting,' for example, Woolf explores many different selves that emerge depending on how one moves through the city—that is, depending on which streets and places one frequents (*E*4 486). For Woolf, the rhythm of known interactions is, for the most part, pre-set, as is our identity over the course of those interactions; but walking among strangers along a city street allows this identity to open up because the rhythms we encounter amongst those we do not know enables us to imagine versions of ourselves that cannot emerge in more constrictive environments such as a home or a place of work. The potentiality of the self is realized in the encounter with 'the other' (understood in very broad terms); becoming a part of the 'vast republican army of anonymous trampers' (*E*4 481) enables one to actualize at least some aspects of one's own

[41] In other words, my focus here is not the readership of any particular magazine nor is it the idea of the 'common reader,' which many scholars have analysed in depth. Some of the most noteworthy studies on the subject include Melba Cuddy-Keane's *Virginia Woolf, The Intellectual and the Public Sphere* (see especially Chapter 3), Katerina Koutsantoni's *Virginia Woolf's Common Reader*, and *Virginia Woolf and the Literary Market Place* edited by Jeanne Dubino.

identity that may have been suppressed. Being in a city—being a part of an urban community—is, therefore, not necessarily a limiting or debilitating experience for Woolf nor does it strip one of agency. Through the episode of the dwarf, which tracks the manner in which this character's distinctive rhythm affects the rhythm of the entire street, Woolf demonstrates that the relationship between the individual and city-based communities is symbiotic: individuals affect and are affected by the rhythms of the street in equal measure, especially in the context of such an *ad hoc* community.[42]

The analogue for this kind of interaction is, of course, the act of reading texts. 'Street Haunting' makes this link through the use of pronouns that stage the encounter between reader and text, inviting those who approach the text to join in the act of street haunting imaginatively. Both here and in the opening essay of *The Pargiters* (a work that is in many ways an extension of 'Street Haunting' and one that I discuss at length in Chapter 4), Woolf echoes precisely Ford's stance: reading and walking through the urban landscape are both activities that bring us into contact with rhythms that are not our own. Engaging with narratives and experiencing the multiplicity of rhythms they offer can help readers develop strategies for interacting with and interpreting the rhythms of the modernist metropolis. In turn, these experiences can enable them to understand the shifts in their own identities.

As Jessica Berman notes in *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*, one of the important features of modernist texts is 'the way in which the gathering of identity always remains partial and fleeting' (20), just as communities themselves, which are constantly in flux, are incomplete and relational (10, 19). This statement holds true for all of the writers I mention above, but especially so for Woolf, who

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[42] Another way to describe this would be to say that such communities are 'relational,' a point that Melba Cuddy-Keane makes about Woolf's thinking in general (*Virginia Woolf, The Intellectual and the Public Sphere* 31-4).

explores the issue of community at length throughout her career. It is important to note, however, that communities in modernist literature tend to be ephemeral because modernity itself is in flux. All of the works I explore in my study show that modernity is, in essence, a perpetually changing rhythm, though one that is constantly being shaped by echoes of the past. Woolf's *The Years* brings all of these aspects of modernity together with the issue of community, for it attempts to trace, over a period of half a century, how the rhythms of a past London become the rhythms of the present (and, implicitly, the rhythms of the future). In so doing, it provides insight into the dynamics of interpersonal interactions, showing these nested rhythmic groupings of various communities in London against the background of the changes that modernity brings. It also demonstrates, through various characters, the process by which individuals can integrate into different kinds of communities without necessarily being confined by them.

Chapter Outline

Before proceeding to a more extended analysis of the works I mention above, I wish to make a few remarks about the organizing principle of the dissertation as a whole. As noted earlier, I have structured my study in accordance with a chronological sequence because this organizing principle is most conducive to showing the rhythmic nature of the ideas and approaches developed (that is, that they are characterised by repetition with variation), while also allowing for non-sequential connections to form in the material presented across chapters. Although none of the authors I discuss makes explicit references to any of the other writers included in my dissertation, the resonances among their ideas are, as my analysis demonstrates, undeniable. The rhythmic framework I explore throughout my thesis develops

out of what I take to be the combined project of ‘modernism,’ to which I refer throughout and whose defining feature this study seeks to outline.

Chapter 1 is primarily focused on defining modernity and articulating the set of problems that are central not only to Ford Madox Ford’s work during the first decade and a half of the 20th century but also to the works of the writers who follow him. Ford offers us a symphonic metaphor for modernity that identifies the city as the ‘ground bass’ and ‘background’ in reference to which individual lives unfold (*SL* 8, 22). Importantly, for him, it is also the background against which periodical publications operate and shape the minds of Londoners. The metaphor Ford uses provides a good starting point for thinking about rhythm in relation to early 20th century experience because it encapsulates the essence of what later writers such as Woolf and the Rhythmists discuss. However, because Ford provides a condensed account of this rhythmic framework and of the way in which it can be used to shape modern consciousness, the full force and relevance of his ideas becomes visible only when viewed in the context of the works I discuss in subsequent chapters.

The magazine *Rhythm* (1911-1913) is the focus of Chapter 2 because the publication is dedicated, in its entirety, to exploring the relationship between life and art through the framework of rhythm. For the contributors of the magazine, art becomes the vehicle through which moderns can understand their historical moment, find a sense of cohesion in the present (which expresses itself in the guise of a community), and develop strategies that enable them to shape the future. *Rhythm* in effect shows the relevance of its namesake to understanding and connecting phenomena that unfold on a variety of scales ranging from the cosmic to the micro. This kind of approach helps illustrate the relevance of Lefebvre’s ideas to different artistic currents of this period; it also illustrates, through the wide range of contributors it brings together and through their respective works, that it is possible to create

harmonic—and, indeed, rhythmic—communities out of distinct voices without sacrificing individuality. The impressive and wide-reaching community that emerges through the pages of the magazine becomes the paradigm for the artistic and communal engagement that the magazine's contributors attempt to instil in its readership.

Chapter 3 continues the temporal progression into the 1920s and 1930s with Virginia Woolf's essays, but does so by returning briefly to 1905, with an essay entitled 'Street Music' that provides a counterpoint to Ford's *SL*. The essays Woolf published in a variety of magazines and journals during the first three decades of the 20th century are important to understanding modernity because they develop and weave together many of the ideas that emerge in the first two chapters. Several of the essays I discuss here, including 'Modern Fiction' (1919), 'Montaigne' (1924), 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (1927), 'Letter to a Young Poet' (1932), are dedicated to tracing the relationship between art and life, and her sustained engagement with these issues helps define a number of key elements of the rhythmic framework I describe. These elements include the relationship between modernity and form (understood not only as genre but also as style and mode of approach within each genre), the complex dynamic among the city, narrative, and the modern mind, and the formation of dynamic communities within the city space. This last aspect of Woolf's work, which she explores at length in 'Street Haunting' (1927), is especially important because, as I note above, it expands the very definition of 'community,' demonstrating the flexibility of communal bonds as well as the dynamism with which they form and re-form.

Chapter 4 focuses on Woolf again, but this time on one of her late fictional works, *The Years*, which offers a comprehensive illustration of the different kinds of rhythm identified throughout the previous chapters. The novel's historical frame, beginning in the 1880s and ending in the 1930s, enables Woolf to depict not only the rhythmic shift that

London undergoes at the turn of the century, which illustrates much of what Ford describes in *SL*, but also tries to capture some important features of the modern mindset through a number of the characters in the novel. The formal considerations that went into structuring *The Years*, which can be gleaned from its composition history, extend and clarify Woolf's earlier discussion of form and rhythm in response to the conditions of modernity. Similarly, the rhythmic approach she takes on the topic of history in this novel mirrors to a great extent the Rhythmists' approach to understanding historical development and variations on a large scale, as does her rendition of different group formations (which I outline in the previous section). My analysis of the novel itself and also of the importance of rhythm to understanding modernism culminates in the discussion of North's reintegration into 1930s London society. This episode provides the clearest and, in some ways, the most comprehensive account of how an individual who experiences fragmentation and who feels isolated from society can engage with rhythm in order to integrate into a community that subsequently modulates his experience of life in the modernist metropolis.

My reading of these varied texts shows that rhythm helped moderns connect individual experiences of the early 20th century metropolis with the idea of community through the medium of art. Lefebvre's theory of rhythmanalysis, which forms the background for each of the chapters below, provides a number of the conceptual tools necessary for outlining this theoretical framework; it also provides insight into the status of the work of art and the role of the artist with respect to both understanding and generating the rhythms of a society. In closing, therefore, I return to John Middleton Murry's image of the artist as the demiurge who uses his or her conception of the past and sense of the present in order to give form and shape to the future that is always unfolding. This way of representing the creative process is not particular to Murry but applies to a number of key modernist

authors as well; indeed, as my dissertation shows, this conception of the writer’s role in relation to the events that unfold on a large spatio-temporal scale is so pervasive during the period that it becomes a way of defining and articulating the modernist project as a whole.

Chapter 1:

Ford Madox Ford: The Editor as Mediator of the Urban Experience

In her 2008 introduction to the Modernist Journals Project's *The English Review*, Nora Tomlinson explains that 'the major achievement' of the magazine under Ford's editorship was that it 'construed notions of contemporary cultural crisis and tried to respond to them' ('*The English Review*: An Introduction'). Although Tomlinson acknowledges that the journal was not alone in doing so, she notes that 'Ford articulated this crisis more forcefully and responded more vigorously than any other editor.' This statement echoes much of the praise Ford's contemporaries bestowed upon his work as editor. Consider, for instance, Ezra Pound's pronouncement in 1930 that *The English Review* was the 'most brilliant piece of editing' he had known and that it 'might be taken as a paradigm' for literary journals ('Small Magazines' 693):

> In its [the journal's] first year and a half it printed not only the work of Hardy, Swinburne, Henry James, Anatole France, various other monuments, various other writers of extensive reputation (Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett, etc.), but it also printed the work of, I think, all the first-rate and second-rate (as distinct from third-, fourth-, and fifth-rate) writers then in London: Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence (his earliest printed work), myself, Cannan, Walpole, etc. (ibid.)

In a somewhat similar vein, although perhaps with an eye to how the contents of *The English Review* (*ER*) might maintain their relevance well beyond the journal's historical moment, Douglas Goldring's 1943 *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle* speaks of the first twelve issues of the journal (that is, the issues that were edited by Ford) as remaining current many decades after it was published:

> As a rule, nothing could be duller than a run of back numbers of a thirty-year-old periodical. It is proof of Ford's genius as an editor—no other word than genius is adequate, for there has been nothing like it before or since, in England or, so far as I am aware, in any country—that they are as excitingly alive today as they were when they appeared. (54)

But while Tomlinson is quite correct in her assessment of the importance and the function of *ER* in relation to the intellectual currents of its own historical moment, her account places too much emphasis on the journal as an isolated effort in Ford's *oeuvre*. The project of defining and explaining contemporary cultural crises was a major concern for Ford for much of his career. One of his earlier attempts at doing so stems from his engagement with modern, urban centres in his 1905 *The Soul of London*. Although this collection of essays has often been overlooked in recent critical studies on Ford, it did receive some acclaim at the time of its publication and it marked a shift in Ford's career, both intellectually and professionally.[1]

This chapter traces Ford's assessment of modern life (which is, for him, inextricable from the urbanization that he identifies with the early 1900s) over the course of the decade between the mid-1900s and the mid-1910s. Through an analysis of Ford's work during this period, I will show the basis for understanding modernity as a rhythmic system and the ways in which doing so informs Ford's own account of the relationship between the individual and the city, self and other, part and whole, and, equally importantly, reader and text. This chapter begins with a discussion of modernity as presented in *The Soul of London* in order to identify the problems Ford associates with this mode of life and to show how these map onto larger concerns about city dwellers' conceptions of the spatial and temporal dimensions of their experience. I argue in this section that Ford sees the culmination of the problems presented by modernity in the workings of the periodical press, which comes under heavy critique in the later chapters of *The Soul of London*. Ford's ideas about the role of art in society, however, prompt him to create his own journal, *The English Review*, in order to counteract what he understands to be the pernicious effects of modernity. Drawing on the

[1] Alan Judd notes not only that *The Soul of London* was 'well received' but also that, after its publication, 'life began to pick up' for Ford and that his literary output increased as well (138). Also see Frank MacShane's description of this period in Ford's life, which traces a similar arc (65ff).

editorials that Ford wrote for the journal and subsequently republished as a monograph entitled *The Critical Attitude*, I sketch Ford's initial ideas about how developing a 'critical attitude' can help change an individual's relationship to modernity and to the city. The spatio-temporal dimensions of this new mode of relating to modernity are explained in more detail in the penultimate section of my chapter, which explores not only Ford's reformulation of the 'critical attitude' into a theory of Impressionism, but also the ability that art has to interject into the experience of every day life, bending both space and time and, therefore, changing its rhythm. The final section of this chapter returns to *The Soul of London* and applies the theories Ford developed in the late 1900s and early 1910s to the problems of modernity. In so doing, it recasts both the problem and its solution in musical terms, providing analogues between the experience of art and that of the city. The musical and, more specifically, rhythmic vocabulary Ford uses forms a part of a common vocabulary for a number of other modernist writers throughout the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. This similarity is the basis of a connection between Ford's work and a multitude of subsequent responses to modernity.

The Modernist Metropolis and Its *Modus Operandi*

The Soul of London (*SL*) is a multifaceted work that develops a new mode of expression and, with it, a new mode of relating to the urban environment. This new way of interacting with one's environment is based on an understanding of the metropolis as a dynamic and, more importantly, rhythmic system. *SL*'s stated purpose is to capture the 'atmosphere' of contemporary London and, by doing so, to 'preserve an entirely individual representation' of it that might inspire the 'imagination of posterity' (14). However, in its attempt to define the essence of the urban space, it also shows how various aspects of modern

life are intertwined to create both the problems that have come to be associated with the early 20th century and the opportunities that such a life provides. To put the matter in terms delineated, quite usefully, by Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman in *Modernism in the Magazines* (2010), Ford's *SL* is an attempt both to define the challenges of 'modernity'—a 'social condition'—and to imagine a modernism—some kind of 'response to that condition'—that addresses those challenges (26). As I will show throughout this discussion, Ford's *SL* defines modernity as the product of speed, fragmentation, and specialization, all of which are inter-related; he envisions possible modernisms, however, as emerging from the application of a method of writing that he later comes to label as 'literary impressionism.'

One of the crucial insights of *SL* is the understanding that modern life has become integrated in unprecedented ways. What emerges from this work is, therefore, not so much a complete picture of London *circa* 1905, but an analysis of how the urban space, the division of labour within it, the modes of transport available to workers, travellers, and residents alike, and the prevalent means of disseminating information in this context are interconnected. *SL* provides an analysis of how all of these aspects of early 20th century London life contribute to the formation of 'the singular and inevitable product that is the Londoner' and that is also 'the modern' (12-13).[2] Although Ford sees traces of an older town of London ('an assembly of tents beside a river') in the city's current form, and although some of the qualities of that town persist (13-14), what seems to separate contemporary London from these earlier Londons is, in part, its ability to assimilate widely disparate types of people, be they foreigners or English, and, by 'slowly digest[ing]' them, to convert them into Londoners (12-13). Since London's status as a '*world* town' [my emphasis]—a city, a metropolis—is based partly on its ability to absorb diversity and synthesize it, it is also based indirectly on its sheer

[2] Sara Haslam also notes some of these connections in her introduction to *Ford Madox Ford and the City* (see especially page 12), but she does so only in passing and does not pursue their relevance further.

size and on its propensity to continue growing. This continual extension beyond set boundaries exists in a symbiotic relationship to the commercial activity that takes place within its confines and which depends in part on the availability of modes of transportation.

Ford's observation about the inter-connectedness of modern life is by no means unique nor is it entirely original. Most famously Georg Simmel made a similar argument just two years before the publication of *SL* in 'The Metropolis and Mental Life.'[3] This lecture, which was subsequently published in essay form, describes the many social problems that can arise out of the condition of modernity. The modernist metropolis, for example, is driven 'by production for the market' (411)—more precisely, an anonymous market—which implies that metropolitan life is inconceivable 'without the most punctual integration of all activities and mutual relations into a stable and impersonal schedule' (413). This way of organizing life is directly related to the increasing 'functional specialization of man and his work' (409). Surprisingly, however, Simmel reaches the conclusion that specialization makes individuals not substitutable, as Ford does, but 'incomparable' to one another, which in effect denotes that they appear both 'indispensable' to each other and 'directly dependent upon the supplementary activities' of the others (409). Moreover, specialization also gives rise to a 'structure of highest impersonality' while simultaneously promoting 'a highly personal subjectivity' (413). But because the market that dominates the metropolitan environment favours some at the expense of others, these two opposing forces result in the devaluation of the self: they create feelings of worthlessness and dissociation from society at large, and they reduce the individual to a 'negligible quantity' (415-6, 422). These feelings are exacerbated by the range of stimuli present in the metropolis. What Simmel refers to as the 'closely

[3] Max Saunders touches very briefly on some of the similarities between Ford and Simmel in 'Ford, the City, Impressionism and Modernism,' as does Giovanni Cianci in 'Three Memories of a Night: Ford's Impressionism in the Great London Vortex'; however, both of these articles have a slightly different focus from the argument I make below.

compressed contrasting stimulations of the nerves' present in metropolitan life give rise to a *blasé* attitude that, in effect, makes one experience both the meaning and the 'differing values of [all] things' as 'insubstantial' (414). The experience of disjunction, disunity, and isolation, coupled with an inability to discriminate between the relative worth of things leads Simmel to conclude that modern life results in the atrophying of spirituality and idealism (422). Simmel sees the market economy and the 'dominance of the intellect' as 'intrinsically connected' precisely because of the disappearance of this spiritual dimension (411). While such a phenomenon can be found in all metropolises, London is, in Simmel's view, the paradigmatic example of hyper-intellectualized, calculated, and fully integrated life (412).

The similarities between Simmel's and Ford's accounts are striking and they suggest not only that both writers are responding to a similar set of phenomena—that is, to modernity—manifested throughout Europe, but that this form of reflexivity is an integral part of the early 20th century intellectual life and is, in itself, a modernism.[4] But whereas Simmel's tendency is, as Richard Sennett explains, to seek a quasi-spiritual existence that encourages the individual to develop a new dimension of being and to become something separate from his or her activity in the market economy ('The Classic Schools of Urban Study' 10), Ford's has a slightly different approach: the focus, for him, is not on handling the challenges of modernity by finding an alternate spiritual domain for the self, but by engaging with this mode of life in all its complexity. The 'critical attitude' that Ford attempts to explain to, as well as to instill in, his readers over the course of a decade is precisely a mode of engaging with modernity. As we shall see over the course of this chapter, the distinctions that emerge between Simmel and Ford, particularly those that speak to the issue of relating parts of the metropolis to the whole, serve to underscore the extent to which Ford envisions

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[4] Consider, for example, the assertion that London, 'if it make men eminently materialist in their working hours . . ., [it also] makes them by reaction astonishingly idealist in their interior souls' (*SL* 57-8).

the metropolis as an exciting place that is full of opportunities for the Londoner who can approach it in a self-affirming manner.[5]

Ford begins his discussion of London with the idea that the city shows itself in different guises to different people, and that it appears to change depending on how one approaches it, in both a literal and figurative sense (15-17). A native Londoner, for example, will experience the city differently from a 'provincial,' or even from a foreigner, who moves to London at a later stage in life (8-10). For some, London is a means of getting somewhere—'a central highway' or 'a thing figured on a map' (10); for others, it is a neighbourhood or a manageable sub-section partitioned from the whole (14), which in turn becomes a standard or a unit of measurement by which the Londoner can measure the entirety of a seemingly unrelatable whole (7); for others yet it is—or can become—something akin to a 'Personality' with which they interact (3). Not all ways of relating to a metropolis are equally fruitful. For example, when considered in its entirety from a quasi objective perspective, both as a present structure and as a historical palimpsest, it seems abstract, impersonal, and cold (8, 14-15): London never 'misses' or 'needs' anyone; the 'innumerable trade-centres' and 'innumerable class districts' make it 'a place upon which there is no beginning'; it is, so to speak, the often quoted 'ragout of tit-bits' that can seem both appealing and also overwhelming to the individual (10, 12).

The advantage of such a place is, however, that it must, as a whole, be quite diverse and it must, therefore, tolerate a wide range of different people and modes of life. However,

[5] Giovanni Cianci speaks of the relationship between Ford's ideas in the 1910s and Futurism, and suggests that there is some affinity between *SL* and this movement (49). See my discussion of Ford's own account of the difference between Impressionism and Futurism at the end of this chapter.

Ford is careful to point out that if a metropolis is able to absorb such disparate mind-sets and modes of life, it does so by minimizing the scale of the differences among them:

> If in its tolerance it [London] finds a place for all eccentricities of physiognomy, of costume, of cult, it does so because it crushes out and floods over the significance of those eccentricities. (12)[6]

Although London itself may be tolerant, individual Londoners are, on the whole, ‘anything rather than tolerant’ of other city dwellers who are unlike themselves (17). But despite these animosities, London ‘provid[es] a background’ for all forms of individual experience that takes place in the city (22). And in providing this background, it becomes ‘one of the most intimate factors of . . . [a Londoner’s] daily life’ (8), thus acquiring a ‘Personality’ (3), which is, for Ford, the defining aspect of both modernity and of modernism. How a Londoner conceives of this personality is directly dependent on his or her ability to assume a critical attitude that is itself in many ways modelled on the dynamics of the city. The highest praise that Ford bestows upon London is that in its ability to provide a place—indeed, seemingly the right place—both ‘for the great of the earth’ and ‘for all the earth’s vermin’ such that they may coexist in close proximity, it behaves like the mind of the critic synthesizing all it encounters (12). And ‘as a critic, London is wonderfully open-minded’ (12); it is the ideal critic. In *SL*, this tolerance seems to imply not only that London *can* absorb the foreign and the new, but that it *does* so on a regular basis, expanding the range of ideas and modes of life that it can encompass: ‘Its spirit, extraordinary and unfathomable,’ ‘spreads like sepia in water,’ making it ‘illimitable’ (13).

London expands not only figuratively but also literally. This spatial and temporal expansion is symbiotically related to the expansion of its extraordinary and unfathomable spirit: the sheer variety that defines London is maintained through the absorption of diverse

[6] See also Ford’s discussion about the ‘freedom’ that London allows on pages 74-75.

individuals, whose lives and activities take up an ever-increasing amount of space. The impetus to expand sustains London as a metropolis through time.[7] One aspect of modernity that enables such an expansion is the availability of new modes of transportation that are reshaping the city and, through it, modern consciousness. It is no surprise, then, that transportation seems to be for Ford synonymous with communication:

> [T]he 'question' of London, seen from one point of view, resolves itself into that one of highways; and the very origin of London, the first cause of its existence, is that waterway. Nowadays we have discovered, as if in the night, a new secret of rapid communication: what, as with every previous modification of the kind, the face of London bids fair to change unrecognisably. Whilst the pen is actually on my paper London is spreading itself from Kew towards Hounslow, towards Richmond, and towards Kingston, and on its other bounds towards how many other outlying places? The electric tram is doing all this. (27-28)

This new form of communication is a conglomerate of new modes of traversing large expanses of space in ever-diminishing units of time (an idea that denotes precisely the change in rhythm that is characteristic of modernity). What is important about these new modes of transport—and also what contributes, at least in part, to their status as modes of communication—is that they affect conceptions of the city as a whole; more specifically, they skew it in accordance with the principles that govern each form of movement.[8] This alarming rate of change is, of course, signalled by the reference to the changes that happen as Ford writes *SL*, which was completed in a surprisingly short amount of time.[9] The sheer size

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[7] This is an idea that Ford returns to in a later essay entitled 'Future in London' (1909): 'For a city to have a future, it must grow; in cities, and in Love, there is no standing still, you go either forward or backwards. And, if the Future of London is to be one of growth, sanity, and health, some such revolution in the Londoner's consciousness of his city must take place' (1104).

[8] This point has been made before in relation to railway transport by Nicholas Daly, and as he explains in 'Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and Modernization of the Senses,' each new way of organizing and apportioning space in relation to time has an effect on the psyche: '[T]he railway must be understood as more than a simple mode of transport: for the Victorians it stood as both agent and icon of the acceleration of the pace of everyday life; it annihilated an older experience of time and space, and made new demands on the sensorium of the traveller. With the modern city and the factory floor, then, the railway required a new subjective disposition' (463). Daly also makes this point in a subsequent book entitled *Literature, Technology, Modernity, 1860-2000* (see page 37).

[9] Alan Judd notes in his biography of Ford that he 'wrote *The Soul of London* in about three months' (122). See also Nicholas Freeman's discussion of how Ford approached this project in 'Not "Accuracy" but

of London and its sustained expansion means that one cannot possibly encompass all of it, nor even see as much of it at a time 'as one may see . . . of any country town' (23). However, new modes of transportation allow one to form composite images of sections of London (a small scale version of the 'ragout of tit-bits' noted above) depending on how one moves through the city and which paths one carves out.

New modes of transportation have, of course, both benefits and drawbacks. The motor car, for instance, allows extremely quick travel with unprecedented flexibility, but its use renders invisible the reference points and sign-posts of a previous age. Travelling into the city by means of such a vehicle is to miss the changing landscape—'to fly too fast for any easy recognition of the gradual changes from country to town' (28). Missing the gradations of space also implies, given the speed of the journey, that there is almost no time in which to absorb differences as they emerge across spaces even if one should notice them. This sense of missing out on an experience of travel also resurfaces in the context of foreign travel: to travel from afar to 'London in a Pullman car' is to have taken the 'whole journey in an hotel' that resembles 'one of . . . [the traveller's] own hotels' and that, in turn, is not unlike this traveller's own home (32). When this traveller arrives at his destination, 'he has gone through none of the *process* of travel, none of his edges have been rubbed off' (my emphasis, 32). Therefore, although these modes of transportation make places more reachable, they also make them less intelligible. This inability to relate to one's environment is one of the problems of modernity for Ford and it is exacerbated by the comfortable familiarity that new modes of transport allow. The less visible or noticeable the outside world becomes, the more the journey solidifies the individual's biases. A car's speed, for example, coupled with the

"Suggestiveness": Impressionism in *The Soul of London*' (29-31), especially as it contrasts to Henry James' failed attempt to write 'London Town.'

relative position of the driver to his or her surroundings, blurs the landmarks it passes, thus rendering the gradations of space less intelligible (28). In short, one's

> attitude, backed up by that sense of being at home, . . . kills . . . tolerance for the habits of others. It is the reason why the days of most rapid travelling are the days of most frequent misunderstanding between the races of mankind. (32)

As one's individual biases solidify, so too does the boundary between self and other. The critical attitude Ford envisions a few years after *SL* is, as I explain below, a way of mediating between self and other, between an individual and a world that seems to be recreating itself anew.[10]

Despite the problems that Ford identifies in regards to these new means of transportation, he does not see all as equally problematic because not all 'produce the same psychological effects' (29). Unsurprisingly for him, he seems a bit more hopeful about the experience afforded by the means of transportation available to a larger cross-section of the population.[11] The electric tram for instance is, from the point of view of 'getting [people] into town,' an analogue to the car. It distinguishes itself from a car, however, by travelling at a slower speed, which provides the traveller (who is *not* the driver) with an opportunity to experience the journey without anxiety and to enjoy a much longer 'range of sight' than one might have otherwise (29). While driving a car may seem a bit like running an obstacle course, riding a tram—and even a train, for that matter—allows one to take in—or, in Ford's words, to 'pick out'—various snippets of life that are unfolding on the side of the tracks.

The phrase 'pick out' is, as no doubt Ford would have known, a literal translation of the Greek verb *lego* (*λέγω*), which denotes the practice of reading; it is a way of making

[10] Consider the way in which Ford envisions this age of technology as lighting on a 'primaeval plain' (41), which I discuss in my introduction, and the confusion and bewilderment it might bring to someone watching this spectacle.
[11] See, for example, Nora Tomlinson's comment about Ford's populist tendencies (Introduction).

meaning.[12] This kind of meaning-making resembles Ford's own practice of evaluating and selecting submissions to *The English Review*.[13] It also suggests a way of approaching the world that Michel de Certeau has theorized more recently as a 'tactic' in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). De Certeau himself seems to have been equally aware of Greek cultural and linguistic resonances for he calls those who discover their 'own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality' of their surroundings 'poets' or makers 'of their own acts' (xviii). When one is forced to travel in a vehicle whose movements through the city are formalized and whose path is always pre-determined, the creative act of meaning making cannot be based on an attempt to control the spatial relations that have been pre-defined (which would constitute a 'strategy' in Certeauvian terminology), but must resort to 'tactics,' which are based on 'a clever utilization of time' (38-39). In other words, a tactic involves identifying the right time—the time when an 'opportunity' presents itself that 'must be seized "on the wing"' (xix). Because 'the space of a tactic is the space of the other'—that is, the space delineated and 'organized by the law of a foreign power'—the tactic itself is a way picking out and arranging elements of what has been given in order to create (i.e., '*poiein*'/ποιεῖν) an interpretation that may differ significantly from the dominant message uttered or from the command issued within a certain (power) structure.

This process of picking out in the distance is important for Ford because it reveals 'the Modern Spirit' (30). Here I shall quote a passage at length to illustrate not only that the Modern Spirit becomes manifest in the experiences of a kind of movement through the city that allows one a different perspective—specifically, a perspective that is well beyond the

[12] See my also my note on craftsmanship, below, for another place where Ford seems to be sensitive to Greek resonances.

[13] In *The Life and Work of Ford Madox Ford*, Frank MacShane describes Ford's practice of choosing works for the *English Review* by reading passages at random, picking out bits and pieces of the text in key locations to decide whether a submission was worth printing in the journal or not (78). Ford himself has justified this practice in *Mightier than the Sword* (101-102) and in its American initial edition entitled *Portraits from Life*.

human scale, which makes the individual's movement commensurate with those of the city—but also that this spirit expresses itself as a force operating through the city:

> The other day I saw from the top of an electric tram, very far away, above the converging lines in the perspective of a broad highway of new shops, a steam crane at work high in the air on an upper storey. The thin arm stretched out above the street, spidery and black against a mistiness that was half sky, half haze; at the end of a long chain there hung diagonally some baulks of wood, turning slowly in mid-air. They were rising imperceptibly, we approaching imperceptibly. A puff of smoke shot out, writhed very white, melted and vanished between the housefronts. We glided up to and past it. Looking back I could see down the reverse of the long perspective the baulks of timber turning a little closer to the side of the building, the thin extended arm of the crane a little more foreshortened against the haze. Then the outlines grew tremulous, it all vanished with a touch of that pathos like a hunger that attaches to all things of which we see the beginnings or the middle courses without knowing the ends. It was impressive enough — the *modern spirit expressing itself in terms not of men but of forces*, we gliding by, the timbers swinging up, without any visible human action in either motion. No doubt men were at work in the engine-belly of the crane, just as others were very far away among the dynamos that kept us moving. But they were sweating invisible. That, too, is the Modern Spirit: *great organisations run by men as impersonal as the atoms of our own frames, noiseless, and to all appearances infallible*. (my emphasis, 29-30)[14]

The relationship between the subject's perspective from the train and the city is signalled by the parallelism in the cranes 'rising imperceptibly' and the train 'approaching imperceptibly.' The choice of the word 'imperceptibly' denotes, of course, that the crane and the train are not perceptible to each other. Their respective movements are not responding to one another but originate, instead, in the Modern Spirit itself—that greater force that operates through both and that happens to be perceptible only to a mind that can understand the cause as well as the purpose of their movements. And if the modern spirit reveals itself in this large-scale organization of city life (recall Simmel's 'punctual integration of all activities'), events

[14] In *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, Vol. 1, Max Saunders notes that Ford's choice of the term 'soul,' which denotes 'psyche,' suggests 'a disconcertingly psychological approach to its subject' (169). This approach is disconcerting in Saunders' view because of Ford's own mental state at the time, which is re-created in *SL* itself.

unfolding on a individual and human scale may well seem somewhat chaotic and unsynchronized when one is operating on a smaller scale.[15]

The clearest example of such a contrast emerges from an analogous passage in *SL* that has received some critical attention in the context of literary impressionism. In this second passage Ford recalls 'picking out' experiences while travelling on a train. The experience is not entirely one of alienation, however. On the contrary, Ford notes that he feels 'almost invariably a sense of some pathos' (as he does above) 'and of some poetry' on his train journey into London (42). One aspect of these feelings is prompted by the understanding that so many lives have been encompassed by the buildings he sees; another, however, seems to be based on seeing 'so many bits of uncompleted life' unfold before him (42). At one point during a train journey Ford catches a glimpse of a woman who 'ran suddenly out of a door,' wearing a white apron, with 'her sleeves . . . tucked up. A man followed her hastily, he had red hair, and in his hand a long stick' (42). The train moves on and in response to the suspended action Ford laments that he had 'not the least idea whether' the man 'were going to trash her [the woman], or whether together they were going to beat a carpet' (42-3). This 'constant succession of much smaller happenings' that one sees in snippets as one moves through the city causes both pathos and dissatisfaction on account of 'the sentiment ingrained in humanity of liking a story to have an end' (43). The difference here seems to be that one cannot observe enough of a space or observe it for long enough in order to be able to imagine a totality, a unified action and purpose of whatever is unfolding.[16]

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[15] There seems to be another aspect of London's development that contributes to this incongruity: that is, the historical development of different areas of London on a small scale. Ford sketches this development out on pages 32-38; however, for the purposes of my argument, the fragmentation of day-to-day life is more important than the type of spatial and historical fragmentation he describes in those passages.

[16] Ford is not suggesting that it would necessarily be desirable to gain access to such totalities. Some 'happenings' are quite clearly more important than others and fragmentation seems to be the necessary precondition of progress or of some kind of forward movement: 'One would, quite literally, never get any for'arder if one stayed to inquire to the end of every tragi-comedy of which, on one's road, one caught a

This unified purpose becomes clearer, though perhaps not always comfortable or welcome, in the movement of the city as a whole. On such a large and impersonal scale, the movement of the Modern Spirit through the city reveals the operation of market forces. As Ford's description of the crane suggests, work itself is a manifestation of the Modern Spirit in the metropolis, and it is so in a number of ways. I began my discussion of *SL* with an explanation of how different Londoners might experience and understand their city. One way of accounting for this discrepancy is by tracking how the division of labour in the city is related both to the division of physical space and to the available modes of navigating space within a city. Ford sketches this division in broad but stark terms. For him, there are two main forms of labour—'labour of . . . [one's] body' or the labour of one's 'attention' (47)—which can, in turn, be divided into the seemingly infinite professions we see in the city. Not only do the members of these two camps see London differently and inhabit different subsections of it (for instance, 'the man who expresses himself with a pen on paper sees his London from the west' while the other sees his London from the opposite direction), but the notion that 'there may be another enormous London' beyond the one they experience on a daily basis 'never really enters . . . [their] everyday thoughts' (48). This way of understanding the city is directly linked to the way in which labour had become compartmentalized, and both of these experiences contribute to the formation of a certain mindset: '[T]he tendency to specialise in small articles, in small parts of a whole'—that is, the assembly line method of work regardless of the context in which it is applied or type of work to which it is applied—ensures that almost 'all work in modern London is . . . routine work' (58). In other words, 'work itself becomes an endless monotony' that has a direct impact on the minds of the workers:

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glimpse. And it is unpractical to wish that every bricklayer and mortar carrier who added his wall to the infinite number already existing should be able to sign his work as an artist signs his picture' (43).

> [T]here is no call at all made upon the special craftsman's intellect that is in all the human race.[17] It is a ceaseless strain upon the nerves and upon the muscles. It crushes out the individuality, and thus leisure time ceases to be a season of rest, of simple lying still and doing nothing. One needs, on the contrary to asert [*sic*] one's individuality, and to still the cry of one's nerves. This leads to . . . hobbies which, psychologically considered, are a form of new work making some appeal to our special temperaments. (59)

It is impossible not hear echoes in this passage of the kinds of problems Simmel identifies in relation to modernity and to urban living. The value of Ford's account of this phenomenon, however, rests partly in the way he connects this condition and the role of the periodical press.

SL is unforgiving in its critique of the periodical press, and although it may seem strange to see such strong criticism voiced by someone who goes on to found a literary magazine just three years after making these pronouncements, the force of Ford's 1905 critique may help shed light on what, exactly, he may be aiming to achieve through *The English Review*. The problems Ford identifies in relation to newspapers, which seem to capture all that is wrong with periodical publications in general, are that they solidify a mind-frame created by increasingly specialized forms of labour. The type of worker who is consumed by labour—and this tends to be the case particularly with poorer labourers—belongs to a class that

> is absolutely incapable of creating Movements.[18] . . . [The] whole nerve force of such workers, and nearly all their thoughts, are given to their work. They cannot combine, they have not any thoughts left for it; they could not strike because they have no means of communication; they are inarticulate. (62)

[17] Here the Greek roots of some of these concepts are interesting to note again. Although craftsmanship is signified by the term *τέχνη* and a craftsman would be a *τέκτων*, Ford's insistence on intellectual craftsmanship takes us back into the realm of 'the maker'—*ποιητής*.

[18] Through his choice of words in this instance Ford makes explicit the relationship between physical movement and the ability to create or re-create one's relationship to one's surroundings, which is precisely the creative act that de Certeau points to when he speaks of those who become 'poets of their own acts' (see above).

In short, specialization, which is the product of the modern age, leads to the erasure of individuality, which makes workers replaceable. Those workers who do not develop a mental life outside of work become inarticulate, which prevents them from communicating, from constructing communities, and from expressing any form of agency in society.[19] '[I]f he is to rise out of the ruck,' this worker 'must impose his private personality upon a greater, or upon a lesser, public' (63). In Ford's view, however, the problem is that the feature of modern life that might have had the ability to nurture agency among people seems to be most responsible for propagating the kind of work that impedes the expression of anything belonging to an individual. His own magazine attempts to undo these effects.

The tendency of modern life to smother the expression of the individual will is most visible in the way that the periodical press, 'that most enormous and most modern of industries,' works: not only is it structured according to the industrial model but the patterns of dissemination and consumption associated with the periodical press suggest that it also plays an active role in structuring other forms of industry (63). The employers within this domain—that is, those who have a stake in the profitability of their businesses[20]—select for their 'favours men who inspire . . . [them] with confidence' and 'who have not any nonsense about them' or any 'impracticable ideas of one kind or another' (ibid.). This mode of selection translates into the practice of instating editors who are concerned with publishing what 'will appeal to . . . [their] particular "crowd"' of readers (64). In other words, instead of encouraging creativity, such publications tend to cater to the tastes that have already been

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[19] See Patrick Collier's description of the commonly held belief that 'newspapers were impoverishing public discourse' and that the public debate about newspapers was 'a readily available way of talking about the social function . . . of literature in modern society' (*Modernism on Fleet Street* 1,6). Also see n38 in the introduction.
[20] Ford has much to say on the organization of the business world (see, for example, pages 64-66 or his comment about corporations on 95-6); however, in the interest of brevity, I shall speak here only about what is directly related to periodical publications.

shaped by the demands of modern life (ibid.). In the struggle between encouraging the artistic impulse and giving in to the tendency towards mechanization, the periodical press is upsetting the balance in favour of the latter, and doing so seemingly on account of concerns related to profitability.[21]

By giving their readers desired information (so to speak) these periodicals provide, on the one hand, the wrong kind of information—that is, they overwhelm their readers with what Ford rather scornfully calls 'facts'—and, on the other, they interpret these 'facts' for their readers, thus performing a crucial act that each member of society should undertake individually. In so doing, they reshape people's mind-sets. As I mentioned above, Ford seems particularly attuned to the ways in which city life molds minds.[22] Not only does London breed, for him, 'a certain cast of mind by applying men's thoughts to a similar class of occurrences' at all times, but the periodical press further exacerbates this particular side-effect of city life: for Ford, 'the "facts" of the daily and weekly press take the place of any broad generalisations upon life' (85). 'The Londoner has lost all power of connected conversation, and nearly all power of connected thought' because newspapers are, in Ford's view, devoid of all such qualities (88).[23] Indeed, the very language people use to describe their lives is disseminated through the press by the never-ending marquee of disconnected headlines and slogans that 'flicker through the dazed and quiescent minds' of Londoners

[21] See also pages 67-8. In *Modernism on Fleet Street*, Patrick Collier analyses a similar passage that Ford wrote in *The English Review* describing the effect of a '"spray of facts"' upon the modern mind (Collier 14-5).
[22] Max Saunders' observation that 'the problem of *reading* London is . . . related to the problem of reading *in* London' is very much on point ('Ford, the City, Impressionism and Modernism' 73).
[23] The phenomenon that Ford responds to has been described in more detail by Mary Hammond in *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914*. Hammond explains that '[s]ome of the most popular newspapers signalled an extremely close affiliation with the travelling public. . . . [These newspapers] adopted a fragmentary form,' offering extracts of information 'seldom more than a page in length,' which was 'ideally suited to fragmentary attention span of the urban dweller and especially the train traveller' (78).

(86).[24] What is more, books, especially literary and imaginative works, which encourage the kind of intellectual activities Ford thinks have disappeared, have been deposed from their 'intimate position in the hearts of men' (86), leaving a rather noticeable gap in formative material.

Newspapers are so effective in eroding intellects because the consumption of facts becomes a ritual of sorts—one that is performed with much reverence and great frequency. Aside from the steady encounter with various daily papers, Ford claims that the Sunday paper had become a staple of 'most Sabbatarian breakfast tables' by 1905 (89).[25] And what distinguishes the Sunday paper from the daily papers is its propensity to preach, so that even if the Londoner 'no longer go to church or chapel . . . on Sunday mornings, before his Sunday dinner,' he still 'gets as a rule his dose of general reflections' (90). This derisive comment has multiple reverberations. The Londoner, who has become in Ford's esteem barely capable of connected thought, is, in absence of a critical mind-set that weighs and judges claims according to its own temperament, well-primed for absorbing moralizing statements regardless of their worth.[26] And since literature—that is, literature of the kind that does not moralize—seems to have been deposed by the periodical press, there seems to be very little chance of salvaging that 'critical attitude' which is indispensable for Ford in

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[24] The continuation of this sentence claims that such flickers leave no 'trace' in the minds of newspaper readers. However, based on the comments Ford makes about how newspapers re-name aspects of daily life (85-86), I take this second part of the sentence to mean that although the particulars of any event or issue presented in a newspaper may vanish—indeed, the very concept of a *news*paper suggests that it works by replacing old 'facts' with new, improved, and up-to-date ones—at least some information remains in the reader's mind. That information stores itself as re-fashioned categories of thought—as new words which are markers of modified concepts.

[25] Raymond Williams reaches roughly the same conclusion regarding the role of the Sunday paper in the late 19th century. In 'The Press and Popular Culture: An Historical Perspective,' he argues that 'the real history of the nineteenth century popular press has to be centred around the Sunday paper,' which, very much as Ford himself explains, replaced the sermon and was widely read even by the working classes regularly (41, 48-9). In this context Kelly J. Mays' 'The Disease of Reading and Victorian Periodicals' is relevant as it outlines a number of the important concerns with reading periodicals that were raised in public debates during the late 19th century. Of these, the most useful for my purposes are the issues of the speed and automatization of the reading process (170-2), which are also central for Ford.

[26] See page 63 for a more extensive account.

mounting an adequate response to the modern condition. Ford encapsulates the pernicious effects of this vicious cycle in his reading of the idiom ‘to speak like a book’: on the one hand this phrase shows the general and growing contempt for books and for the complexity of thought that is associated with them, and, on the other, it marks a significant shift in both language and consciousness. As he explains in that chapter, although the phrase might have been ‘used invidiously’ initially, its use ‘marked the . . . distinction between our spoken and our written tongue’ for which ‘the periodical press must be held responsible’ (87). Although Ford claims that this distinction emerged as early as the 18th century, he sees the shift from invidiousness to contempt as having taken place during the modern period.

I will continue the discussion of the potential that Ford sees in certain kinds of periodical publications, particularly as they relate to articulating responses to modernity, below; however, I wish to pause here to highlight the notion of periodicity, which is central to my argument both in this chapter and in the remainder of the dissertation. ‘Periodicity’ refers to the continual appearance of each of these publications, which not only amplifies the effects of the information they convey, but also affects the structure of lived experience. Ford’s repetition of the phrase ‘daily and weekly press’ emphasizes the ritualistic nature of the act of consuming news, as does the idea that reading the weekly paper has replaced the Sunday sermon; it also suggests precisely how pervasive this mode of disseminating information has become. Although *SL* itself registers a number of ways in which these rituals affect lived experience, I wish here to draw on Henri Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*, which sheds light on the manner in which urban rhythms—created, in part, by recurring practices—affect city dwellers’ conception of their environment and their relationship to time. Lefebvre’s important insight about rites or rituals is that they ‘have

a double relation with rhythms': they not only create their 'own time and particular rhythm,' but they also intervene 'in everyday time, *punctuating* it' (Lefebvre's emphasis, 94). As he says elsewhere in the same work, 'the media enter into the everyday' and 'they contribute to producing it' (48). In other words, although the marquee of headlines that 'flicker through the dazed and quiescent minds' of Londoners may seem benign (*SL* 86), it is everything but that: it serves to mark and punctuate time in a certain way. What Ford reveals when he speaks of the periodical press as the most modern of industries is precisely that it structures industrial time. Londoners in *SL* get their daily dose of news at the start of the day as they are commuting to work, suggesting that the time spent with the newspaper somehow imparts the right mind-set to them for their daily drudgery.[27]

Londoners' engagement with the Sunday paper is something slightly apart from their engagement with the daily newspapers, but it is equally ritualistic in nature: reading the Sunday paper re-creates readers' experience of the rhythm of lived experience even from within the boundaries of leisure time. Although, as we shall see, leisure time is not necessarily unstructured time, the Sunday paper limits the ways in which individuals are able to organize their time outside of work. Ford's lament about this paper '*invad[ing]* . . . Sabbatarian breakfast tables' (my emphasis) is precisely on account of the idea that the Sunday paper had restructured the order of the day's events for those who observe this ritual. For instance, he recalls a different ritual during his youth, one in which the procurement of the paper on Sunday mornings seemed to be an excuse to take an extended morning walk (89). In other words, the reading of the paper was ruled by other activities—activities that it

[27] Lefebvre also speaks of an endless cycle of the media whose outputs make time appear 'occupied' (46-47). Although the cycle of news in the early 1900s was quite different from that of the 1980s when Lefebvre was working through his ideas of rhythm (if for no other reason than on account of available communications technology), the problem of distinguishing the information that 'has value from that which has none' and separating it from an ideological injunction (*RA* 46) certainly echoes many of the concerns Ford raises.

has now come to dominate. Moreover, for Ford, it also drowns out individual, critical viewpoints that can form through engaging with these ideas actively. Although the communities of readers that form around individual papers may be hostile to one another (*SL* 96), thus falsely suggesting participation in public discourse with a variety of points of view, readers are equally beholden to this kind of publication and to the form of consciousness it creates. Not only does the Sunday paper organize time for those who observe this ritual but it imposes the structures of specialized labour time onto leisure time, thereby solidifying the kind of mind-set that perpetuates those aspects of modernity that are most constrictive for Ford.[28]

The English Review: Defining a Critical Attitude

By 1908, Ford seemed to have decided that the best way of responding to this issue of modernity would be to employ the same structure of engagement with readers and to create his own magazine. The implication in this act is that *The English Review* uses the ritualistic nature of periodical publications while subverting its most pernicious side-effects by encouraging readers to develop a 'critical attitude.' The are many accounts of the founding of the magazine, ranging from Ford's wish to publish Thomas Hardy's 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy,' which had been rejected by other magazines, to a need to create a platform for the

[28] Max Saunders notes that *SL* was written at a time when Ford was struggling with agoraphobia, a condition which prompted him to think extensively about German term '*Platz*' (as in the phrase '*Platz Angst*') and its analogue, '*agora*' ('Ford, the City, Impressionism and Modernism' 68). Saunders explains that, for Ford, both '*Platz*' and '*agora*' denoted 'a fear of the city, or of what the city has done to space,' especially in relation to the experience of high density or of crowding (68-9). I support Saunders' interpretation only in part, for it seems to me that during this period Ford is equally concerned with the notion of time and with its relation to space. In other words, while there is a component of space in Ford's experience of the city, this element appears to be inextricable from time in *SL*. The framework that Ford uses to understand the city is based in rhythm, not space, and his primary focus appears to be the idea of movement.

works of Henry James, H. G. Wells, and Joseph Conrad.[29] But regardless of which concern may have tipped the scale in favour of launching *The English Review*, it would be reasonable to assume that the magazine came into being on account of a confluence of factors. Moreover, it is quite evident, both from its structure and its editorials, that *The English Review* was designed as a response to the contemporary crises noted above. In the journal's first issue Ford explains that the 'main section of the Review is devoted strictly to *Belle-lettres*' (157n), but he also points out that 'the letters' and the arts are inextricable from a general engagement with 'ideas' of a particular time (158). Vague though this category may be, it signals Ford's attempt to find precisely the way in which literary production and, in general, artistic production can serve to define a culture. The 'great body of imaginative effort' that the journal promises must, in Ford's view, 'be regarded as an event at least as important in the history of a civilisation' as political events:

> the record of events assimilated by the human mind to-day moulds the event of to-morrow, and the nearer the record comes to registering the truth, and to so rendering it as to make it assimilable by the human apprehension, the more near it comes to being a historic expression, the more near it comes to being a historic event itself. (159)

The English Review is born, therefore, out of an understanding that there is a continuum of types of events in society and that the very act of recording these events defines the present and shapes the future. This is an idea to which Ford returns the following year in his essay 'Future in London,' published in W. W. Hutchings' *London Town: Past and Present*, where he acknowledges not only that 'the problems of a city's life depend on means of communication' (1098), but also that the 'tyranny of the Past . . . is one of the main

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[29] Many—indeed, far too many to list—have speculated about the inception of *The English Review*; however, see Max Saunders biography of Ford (242-3), Frank MacShane (75-78), and Nora Tomlinson's Introduction for a fairly comprehensive list of options.

obscurers of our view of the future,' aided in its tendency to eclipse potentiality by a general intellectual laziness and 'want of imagination' (1100-1101).

The English Review, then, is an attempt to make 'the Englishman think'—or to imagine—and to 'enjoin upon . . . [him] a critical attitude' that can re-fashion his relationship to his surroundings (*The Critical Attitude* 4).[30] Although Ford often speaks of a 'national character'[31] and although *SL* is itself part of a trilogy entitled *England and the English*, Ford himself often alternates between the national and the civic. This switch, however, is not accidental on his part: as he notes in *SL*, 'London is England'—it represents England synecdochically (33). This synecdoche is based partly on London's position on the Thames, which meant that it served as the gateway to the rest of the country and that its proximity to Westminster made it, in effect, the administrative centre. In other words, both commercial and political activity had been focalized in London for many centuries. What is more, whenever Ford speaks of the Englishman he is merely using the term as a foil for the Londoner. In *SL*, for example, those Englishmen who do not belong to London are merely labelled as 'provincials' and in *The English Review* he seldom refers to them at all. Indeed, Englishness as an identity seems to be exported from London to the provinces and London itself stretches well beyond its physical boundaries: the 'extraordinary and miasmic [London] dialect,' for example, 'is tinging all the local speeches of England,' and one can find 'red brick houses trying to look like London villas' even in the New Forest National Park (13).

In this urban context, therefore, the purpose of *The English Review* (*ER*) is ostensibly to find a school of thought that bears a 'trace of a sober, sincere, conscientious, and scientific body of artists, crystallising, as it were, modern life in its several aspects,' and, if it should

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[30] Ford goes on to mention London is spreading well beyond the British Isles, but that is a theme that extends beyond the current study. However, I do wish to note that this is one of the many aspects of Ford's work that finds resonances in Virginia Woolf's writings (see Chapters 3 and 4).
[31] See also *Critical Attitude* 30.

exist, to promote it (*The Critical Attitude* 30). What Ford finds, of course, is not a school of thought but instances of this kind of writing among his peers and, by collecting them in *ER*, effectively creates that 'school.'[32] The introduction to *SL* (to which I shall return at the end of this chapter) is the first draft of its manifesto[33]; 'On Impressionism' is its polished form. *ER* represents a transitional stage, and serves as an educational tool for modern life.[34] Unlike the type of periodical Ford dislikes, however, the education it offers is not content-based but methodological. It tries to meet Ford's Englishman half way by providing him with the kinds of materials to which he is already accustomed, such as 'informal notes on subjects of the day' (current events) or 'studied articles upon political or diplomatic topics' (generalizations akin in structure to those that a Sunday paper might provide) (*ER* 1.1 157n). But the emphasis falls on the journal's efforts to supplement social analysis with a large dose of precisely the kind of imaginative work that seems, in Ford's esteem, to be in short supply (*ER* 1.1 157n).[35] If, as Ford complains in *SL*, periodical publications have deposed books, especially those containing imaginative literature, then *ER* attempts to reverse this trend in a way that may be more palatable to his Englishman: it makes such works 'manageable' by serializing them. These snippets of larger works become, in a sense, structural analogues to the snippets of London that he presents to his readers in *SL*. The reader's task, much like the city dweller's, is to learn how to piece these snippets together and, through them, to envision possibilities for the future.

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[32] In Clifford Wulfman's terms, Ford seems to be trying both to 'identify' and 'invent . . . a readership familiar with both serious literary reviews and popular magazines' (231).

[33] See Alan G. Hill's introduction to *SL* (xxii), which makes a similar case.

[34] For more information about how Ford positions himself in relation to small magazines, see Clifford Wulfman's 'Ford Madox Ford and *The English Review*' pages 230-231 and Mark Morrisson's *The Public Face of Modernism* page 39.

[35] Clifford Wulfman points out that when Austin Harrison stepped into the editorial role the focus of the magazine shifted towards politics ('Ford Madox Ford and *The English Review*' 237).

The notion of a critical attitude is an initial formulation of a mode of thinking that becomes subsumed under the category of literary impressionism in Ford's 1914 essay on this topic. The first incarnation of the concept places an emphasis on reading and interpretation while the later one places it on artistic creation. This practice of re-articulating the same idea in different forms, though not unique to Ford, is particularly noticeable in his work; it is a process of distilling ideas over time, of re-positioning them in relation to a dynamic world and of re-articulating their importance. One might note, for example, that over the course of the decade from the mid-1900s to the mid-1910s, the observations of *SL* constitute the basis of the *ER* editorials, whose contents are re-cast in *The Critical Attitude*, which then mutates and crystallizes in 'On Impressionism.' The last of these works is, in some sense, a fuller version of Ford's contribution to the formation of possible modernisms, but it is also a short-hand one: its importance becomes intelligible only in the context of the other works, which articulate various aspects of modernity as well as possibilities for responding to them.

The series of editorial essays Ford planned for the *ER* provided him with a structure in which to work out the purpose of art and the way it interacts with modernity, especially in its urban form. They also served to contextualize the literary works that are featured in the journal, while simultaneously fulfilling an educational purpose both through their content and stylistically. It is quite appropriate, then, that Ford should begin his editorials in the *ER* with a multi-part essay entitled 'The Function of the Arts in the Republic' ('Function') and that he should end the series with one that attempts to address objections to the critical attitude while also re-stating its object.[36] In 1911, this last essay becomes the introduction to *The Critical*

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[36] The editorials that are re-published in *CA* are modified only slightly. Generally speaking, Ford tends to re-arrange some of the materials in those editorials, seldom making any changes. However, when he does make these slight changes it is often to clarify an idea and to rephrase it in terms of concepts he has already treated elsewhere. Because Ford's essays in *ER* and *CA* are so closely related, I draw upon both formulations of the same ideas in order to present a more complete picture of his thinking about the critical attitude *circa* 1910.

Attitude (*CA*). The function of the arts as it emerges across the entire series is two-fold: it is to register and render 'the truth' about the present (*ER* 1.1 159) and to serve an 'educational' function (*CA* 27). Needless to say, these two functions are related, for the kind of education that Ford has in mind is quite specific. As he notes in 'Function,' the role of art is to 'point out where we stand,' to provide 'a picture of the life we live,' and to do so in such a way that the *status quo* becomes 'assimilable by the human apprehension' (*ER* 1.1 159). Ford is quite insistent, however, that this description ought not to moralize or pontificate; what is needed, according to him, is an assessment of the 'characteristics of modern life' and not of an Utopian world (*ER* 1.1 160, 1.2 319). For example, he praises Henry James (among others) precisely because 'he never moralises' and is able to keep 'his private views' out of his novels (1.1 159). *ER* distinguishes itself from other magazines, then, in its endeavour to provide its readers with various pictures of modernity. This mode of representing modernity is not really an attempt to sketch an objective reality or to arrive at prescriptive statements that generally follow closely upon such ontological claims; it is, on the contrary, an attempt to present reality as it is filtered through the minds of a certain set of artists.

This kind of writing is valuable in Ford's esteem because it presents readers with competing versions of reality and encourages them to 'pick out' their own—to, quite literally, construct it. In short, it encourages the reader to mirror the actions of the writer by, in a sense, becoming a maker—a 'poet' (*poieiteis*/ποιητής)—of words, of ideas, and, therefore, of life. As we shall see, this approach to modernity is based on the understanding that it is not possible for any one mind to see life 'whole' (*CA* 28). Although Ford rejects, to some extent, the notion that life can be captured in its entirety, the kind of creative synthesis he is seeking offers, in one instance (that is, in *SL*), a means of capturing as much of modernity as possible and, in another (in 'On Impressionism'), a means of capturing an essential feature of lived

experience. This process of synthesizing information is a way of making sense of the relationship of part to whole within a dynamic system of mutual interdependencies; it also serves as a model for negotiating the relationship between the subject and the object, the self and the other.

Ford is, of course, well aware that such an ambitious project is doomed to fail. Indeed, he seems to have had a good sense of the fate of his journal even as early as the fourth issue, for he identifies the challenges it faces in very stark terms. These challenges are two-fold but they both stem from the idea that this mode of writing and thinking is an expression of a certain type of character. The first is that it would be very difficult to create the 'school of thought' he wants—the collegial forum for expressions of modern life—because only a 'madman' would believe that forming 'a combination of strong individuals' can be entirely peaceful (*ER* 1.4 797). The second stems from the recognition that such individuals are hard to come by and that the average Englishman may, in truth, lack not only character but the ability to acquire it. As he explains in the final editorial essay of the *ER*, 'no sane man would set out to make the ass play upon a musical instrument' (531).[37] However, by continuing to do precisely that—that is, continuing to work on projects he acknowledges will fail—he suggests that success or failure are not as easy to define and that the goal both of defining modernity and articulating modernisms is worth pursuing despite the odds set against it. The very act of republishing the editorial essays of the *ER* in a book form suggests a conviction that these ideas can, at least in part, shape the future, as does the admission in *CA* that the Englishman, despite his many failings, seems to be something of a 'poieitic

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[37] Ford is fond of labelling himself as a madman, but this practice is merely one form of exaggeration he makes use of; it is a form of posturing whose workings he discusses in 'On Impressionism.' In this essay he explains that 'the impressionist must always exaggerate' (169) because doing so is one way of keeping the audience engaged (327-8) while also expressing an aspect of character. These passages show precisely why a synthesis of various aspects of modernity cannot, in any way, be objective, though it may well constitute an honest engagement with reality as it is perceived by the consciousness that creates a work of art.

being' (5).[38] These contradictory assessments of the journal's ability to fulfill its goals, expressed in vivid, humorous, and often very broad characterizations (in *SL*, in the guise of various Londoners and in *ER* and *CA* in different incarnations of the reading public) amount precisely to the kind of imaginative work that Ford describes. Throughout *EA* and *CA* Ford is both explaining and demonstrating his theory of art by attempting to puzzle and fascinate his audience in equal measure using the various personas he constructs.

'On Impressionism': The Expression of Character

This process of constructing personas, which Ford describes in some of his earlier essays, serves as a tool for modelling the encounter between self and other. While *ER* attempts to tackle the function of art by discussing how it can record modernity, 'On Impressionism' focuses directly on the role of the artist in both mediating and creating a picture of reality for those who encounter the work of art. The difference between Ford's position in *ER* and in 'On Impressionism' is, primarily, that he places far more emphasis on character as expressed through the work of art. This notion of character appears to be based in large part on what he had written about individuality and personality in *SL*. The most pernicious effect of modernity and, more specifically, of the structure and specialization characteristic of modern labour is, as we have seen, that it 'crushes out . . . individuality' (59), which leads to an inability to think on a large scale—to generalize and contextualize—

[38] One of the places where we see the 'poietic' nature of the Englishman surface is, not surprisingly, in Ford's discussion of music, which has an important relationship both to expressing a 'national character' and to shaping it (ER 1.03 565-6, 568). In this respect, music is a direct analogue of literature in his mind (ibid.). 'The trouble,' as Ford sees it, is professionalization in music—it is in the creation of the professional musician, who is merely an analogue to the specialist of *SL* (567). Ford notes that in the past (or in a somewhat romanticized version of it) there were so many amateur musicians that it was possible, without much difficulty, to find 'a quartette party in any provincial town' in England (568). The 'professional concert,' however, creates an audience that no longer needs to be competent in music (see the laziness and 'want of imagination' Ford mentions in 'Future in London' [above] and that, in effect, becomes passive). This past, with its higher concentration of non-professional musicians, was, in Ford's idiom, a time when more Englishmen were 'poieitic.'

and an inability to 'communicate' and, therefore, to 'combine' one's will with that of others in order to bring about some kind of collective action (62). Ford was quite clear in *SL* that in order 'to rise out of the ruck,' a worker (yet another name for both a Londoner and an Englishman)[39] must assert his (in Ford's formulation) 'individuality' and must impose his 'private personality' on society (59, 63). What distinguishes a regular Londoner and Englishman from an artist is this development of character. We discover in 'On Impressionism' that the artist is precisely that person who is capable of expressing individuality and that the work of art itself becomes 'the expression of' character or of 'an ego' (167).

'On Impressionism' develops the aspect of Ford's earlier work that deals with the notion of constructing a school of thought and, more specifically, with developing a craft of writing.[40] This essay presents a distinction between different types of writing based on their aims to achieve different ends. 'The agricultural correspondent of the *Times*,' for instance, does a very different kind of writing than the 'Impressionist would' (168).[41] The former, Ford claims, may write well or write compellingly, but ultimately seeks only to provide readers with 'factual observations' that belong either to him or to other 'sound authorities'; his aim is to convey some kind of 'real' and even quantifiable 'value' through facts and observations. An Impressionist, on the other hand, offers his readers 'nothing but the pleasure of coming in contact with his temperament,' and impressionist writing in general is merely 'a frank expression of personality' (168-9). The impressionist achieves this effect not by reporting a

[39] It is tempting to think of such a worker as, specifically, a factory worker. However, much of the contempt Ford holds for white collar work, especially as instantiated in relation to the 'industry' of the periodical press, shows that specialization affects all tiers of society equally, though some may have well have to ability to acquire more wealth than others.
[40] See the idea of a community and a craft in 'On Impressionism': 'Young writers to-day have a much better chance, on the aesthetic side at least. Here and there, in nooks and corners, they can find someone to discuss their work, not from the point of view of goodness or badness or of niceness or nastiness, but form the simple point of view of expediency'—i.e., of creating an 'effect' (327).
[41] Here and below I retain the gender of the imaginary writers Ford speaks of.

catalogue of different aspects of an event, but by somehow 'giv[ing] an impression of the whole thing' (175), which is a synthesis of multiple experiences of 'places, persons, emotions, all going on simultaneously in the emotions of a writer' (173). The aim of the impressionist is not to present arguments about a set of 'contradictory facts' or reports about life,[42] but to 'render those queer effects of life that are like so many views seen through bright glass' (174). In other words, the agricultural correspondent of the *Times* aims to become a medium through which the facts of the world transfer themselves onto his readers in as unadulterated a manner as possible, while the impressionist writer, in synthesizing the experience of the world through his individual perspective, aims to give readers a sense of an encounter with his temperament and his personality by providing them with his particular 'generalizations,' which are themselves 'strong indicators of character' (172).

The distinction Ford draws between different kinds of writing aligns itself with different ways of relating to readers. These distinctions enable Ford to classify, though admittedly in somewhat vague terms, different types of periodicals. In his last *ER* editorial, Ford mocks the 'respectable journal that preaches respectability' and that is incapable of 'take[ing] broad views' (4.15 531), suggesting, of course, that *ER* does *not* belong to that category of publication. This final *ER* editorial serves as a last attempt to define a slightly different type of publication on the basis of how it aims to affect its readership. 'On Impressionism' continues in this vein but provides a little more insight into how such a publication might function. Here he explains that some journals try to identify themselves with and to voice opinions that belong to 'as large a number of readers of the journal' as possible while others do not (169). This first type of journal is focused on building a

[42] In this passage Ford seems to be responding to a question that he brought up as early as *SL* in the discussion of what constitutes modernity. It seems that, at least in this article, he suggests that it is impossible (partly on account of these seeming contradictions) to know what something *is*, so we must therefore focus on what it *means* for us—that is, on how it is *relevant* to us.

relationship with its readers that appears to be based on a quantitative mode of thinking about interactions, not on a qualitative one. The wish to represent the readership seems to lead, for Ford, to a strictly descriptive mode of address; a focus on the artist's ability to synthesize information, however, creates a space for a somewhat different form of interaction not just between reader and text but between journal and text. This second type of journal attempts to do something more complex that seems to be far more difficult to articulate.[43] It must not (according to the opposition that Ford sets up between the two) cater to the whims of the majority of its readers but attempt to present them with a unique mode of viewing the world. If the exemplary writer for the first type of journal 'must sacrifice his personality' and also 'the greater part of his readability,' then the writer for the other does precisely the opposite: this writer must be able 'to handle words' such 'that from the first three phrases any intelligent person . . . will know at once the sort of chap that he is dealing with' (169). The act of reading, then, becomes an act of encountering another person—the person of the artist, the impressionist, whose personality is expressed in the work of art.[44]

I should note here that Ford is adamant about conceiving of literature as an encounter with 'a character' because it prevents this kind of imaginative writing from seeming to belong to a specialized discourse. It would be far-fetched to suggest that Ford might be anticipating the rather specialized and at times impenetrable mode of writing often associated with modernist art of the 1920s and onwards; but, as he shows in *SL*, he understands the

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[43] Indeed, Ford himself seems to refrain from articulating what it does in very precise terms. However, he does suggest how it may operate, and my account of how this other kind of journal operates is an attempt to piece together these different suggestions.

[44] For a good overview of both the development of the theory of impressionism starting with Pater and ending with Ford, Conrad, and James, as well as of the critical discussions around this style of writing, see Adam Parkes' *A Sense of Shock*. Other studies of note on this topic are, of course, Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, Jesse Matz's *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics*, Michael Levenson's *A Genealogy of Modernism*. Because my goal in this chapter is not to understand impressionism itself but to try to piece together how Ford in particular makes the link between an individual's encounter with literature and that same individual's encounter with the city, I focus on his particular flavour of impressionism only to the extent to which it helps explain the earlier formulation of his ideas.

extent to which specialization—and industrialization—can impact all areas of life. In the final section of 'On Impressionism' he makes an interesting switch from describing impressionist art to contextualizing Impressionism as a whole in relation to other movements. The category of an ideal reader comes into play through this shift. On a number of occasions throughout this essay Ford leads us to consider that there is some kind of affinity between literary impressionism and futurist painting, which attempts to bring together different aspects of modernity in a vivid, stark manner (175).[45] However, at the end of the essay, he suggests that one of the differences between Futurism and Impressionism is the expectation these respective modes of address have of their audience. Ford seems to see Futurism (represented by the character of the 'futurist friend' in the essay) as aiming to reach a community of 'intellectuals' and not the 'cabmen round the corner' to whom he wishes to address himself (329). The problem with intellectuals in Ford's view is that they have 'conventional mind[s]' that they have acquired 'simultaneously with the A B C of any art' (329). In other words, the study of conventions tends to entrap the mind within them. What he seeks is an open-minded, though not necessarily well-read, reader who has the willingness to consider that the same thing may look different at different times and to different people (much as the London does in *SL*). He labels this kind of intelligence a 'peasant intelligence' partly because it seems to be based on a willingness to observe phenomena without pre-conceived notions but also because, as he explains in *SL*, 'the classes [of Londoners] that are recruited from the country' have 'slower mind[s]' that are 'more given to generalisations' and that are 'more idealising' (85).[46] The person in possession of such a peasant intelligence

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[45] As noted above, there is some similarity Ford's artistic tendencies and those of Futurism, particularly in his propensity to focus on speed as it affects the 'London' mind-set. For a more comprehensive account of the complex relationship between Ford's impressionism and Futurism, see Giovanni Cianci's 'Three Memories of Night: Ford's Impressionism in the Great London Vortex.'

[46] This type of mind is, of course, set in contradistinction to the mind of the Londoner 'for whom the "facts" of the daily and weekly press take the place of any broad generalizations upon life' (85).

would 'know that this is such a queer world that anything may be possible' and might, upon an encounter with a strange sensation or even a work of art, merely 'say that it is a queer thing and will store it away in his mind along with his other experiences' ('On Impressionism' 332). It seems that this initial willingness to consider what the world *is* (as opposed to what it ought to be) constitutes a different mode of being—specifically, a mode of being alongside others that is also the precondition of bringing about any kind of change, be it on an individual or societal level.[47]

Impressionism is not just a mode of writing; it is also a way of conceiving of the relationship between subject and object within a dynamic system by recasting it in the terms of self and other. The encounter with literature is a special case of this relationship on account of its educational force. In *A Sense of Shock* (2011), Adam Parkes explains that this theory becomes particularly important for Ford in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s (the Great Depression era) when he is thinking primarily in political and economic terms: Impressionism

> benefit[s] the republic because, by educating readers to adopt a more sensitive and skeptical attitude toward literature, it would enable them to become more attentive, more inquiring interpreters of society as well. (Parkes 181)

One finds traces of this thinking in *SL* as well, of course, where Ford touches on the problem of agency in society.[48] However, the full implications of Ford's theory to social agency is beyond the scope of my argument. For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on the importance of impressionism only to the extent that it allows one to inhabit, to make sense of, and to interact with the urban environment. In 'English Literature of To-day' (*ER* 3.11), Ford claims that 'Art is the supreme bringer into contact of person and person'—that the very province of art is 'the bringing of humanity into contact with humanity' (486)—which is

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[47] For more information about this, consult Parkes' *A Sense of Shock*, especially 178-187.
[48] See *SL* 62, but also my analysis above.

something that ‘grows daily more difficult in the complexities of modern life’ (488). But from a structural perspective, the city fulfils the same purpose as art. ‘The tendency of humanity is to crowd into the large cities,’ where they lead ‘semi-migratory lives,’ precisely because the city is the locus of contact that permits the exchange of goods and information with a certain lifestyle (488). We find ourselves returning not only at Georg Simmel’s explanation of the integrated functions of the city, but also to Ford’s discussion of leisure in the context of London life.

In the penultimate chapter of *SL*, Ford speaks of a ‘third state between work and amusement’ that is a form of ‘bathing in the visible world’ (81). This state is leisure and it is, above all, a contemplative state, though not necessarily an active one. By its very nature it stills the passage of time while also marking it, thus opening up the possibility of envisioning and instantiating different types of rhythms. It also provides a space for something akin to the generalisations that Ford seeks:

> [I]t is in the breaks, in the marking time, that the course of life becomes visible and sensible. You realise it only in leisures within that laborious leisure; you realise it, in fact, best when, with your hands deep in your trousers pockets, or listless on your watch-chain, you stand, unthinking, speculating on nothing, looking down on the unceasing, hushed, and constantly changing defile of traffic below your club window. The vaguest thoughts flit through your brain. . . . You live only with your eyes, and they lull you. So Time becomes manifest like a slow pulse, the world stands still; a four-wheeler takes as it were two years to crawl from one lamp post to another, and the rustle of newspapers behind your back in the dark recesses of the room might be a tide chafing upon the pebbles. That is your deep and blessed leisure: the pause in the beat of the clock that comes now and then to make life seem worth going on with. Without that there would be an end of us. (80-1)

Max Saunders notes that the ‘temporal paradox’ represented in this passage ‘is central to Impressionist art, which freezes time in order to suggest its processes’ (‘Ford, the City, Impressionism and Modernism’ 74). And if, as Ford explains, London holds people captive

'by her leisure,' then the city holds one transfixed in the same way that a work of art would.[49] Indeed, this scene is precisely an instance of those 'queer effects of life that are like so many views seen through bright glass' that Ford speaks of almost ten years later in 'On Impressionism' (174).[50] As I noted above, however, if the periodical press—the newspapers rustling in the background—has become a hobby or a form of leisure for Londoners (*SL* 85), then this precious time becomes filled with the sea of 'facts,' preventing the mind from synthesizing information. Moreover, without these 'pauses' life seems to flow differently: it becomes 'shorter, swifter, more regretful, less filled' (81) and it unfolds with an automatism reminiscent of the ticking of the industrial clock.

If one way to forestall this process of being swept away by the seeming acceleration of time is to look at the city, at least occasionally, as a work of art, another, related way to achieve the same effect is to see it is a personality. Ultimately, however, these two modes of approaching the city become interchangeable for Ford because, as I have noted above, art itself is nothing other than the expression of character. *SL* is no exception. It is designed as a series of encounters—or, more specifically, a series of anecdotes about encounters—with various aspects of the city. Most of them are encounters with people, but some (and here we might think of the majority of anecdotes presented in 'Roads into London') are with sections of the city itself. Both types of anecdotes, however, attempt to reveal something about the relationship between part and whole—something that is encapsulated in the title itself, which

[49] The 'character' whose words Ford reports in his introduction to this section is, of course, a provincial turned Londoner who admits that he would not return to the country because he would not want to let go of '"the Saturday afternoons and Sundays"' and the '"dinner hour with . . . mates and the snacks of talk between whiles loading barrows"' (72). This character's provinciality, for Ford, makes him particularly prone to benefiting from this leisure time.

[50] I pause here to note another parallel between Ford and Lefebvre. If 'the present' for Lefebvre is 'a fact and an effect of *commerce*' [Lefebvre's emphasis], then 'presence situates itself in the poetic'—that is, in 'value, creation, situation in the world and not only in the relations of exchange' (47). This moment of being transfixed is a creative moment, and it can create both space within time and time within space.

signals a synecdoche that we find in the text as a whole.[51] A book that claims to be about the totality of London—about its 'atmosphere' and its 'Personality'—suggests that a component part of it, the soul, is representative of the whole. This issue of the relationship between part and whole surfaces in all the works I have discussed so far. In *SL*, it is at the very root of the dynamic between individual and city; in *ER*, it represents the tension between a segment of a work and its entirety, as well as that between a section of an issue and the whole; and in 'On Impressionism,' it is implicit in the dynamic between a character *of* a work of literature in its entirety—that is, the character of the writer that it expresses—and individual characters *in* it. In all three instances, the issue is the very same. Although the solution to this complex problem is not particularly easy to parse or even to pin down, the make-up of *SL* does offer some suggestions.

SL presents itself under the guise of a non-fiction book about London, and yet it is quite clearly a first-person narrative that is not entirely concerned with factual accuracy. It is made up of a series of smaller narratives (that is, the encounters noted above) presented by a narrator-protagonist whom we are encouraged to identify with Ford himself. The series of anecdotes 'Ford' offers us about the various people he meets and places he visits give us a sense of a character of 'Ford' that is, surprisingly for this period, not entirely a *flâneur*. If anything, he is very inquisitive and spends most of his time not only finding new ways to navigate the city, hopping from one mode of transportation onto an-other, but also striking up conversations with just about anyone he sees. The range of social classes he interacts with is astounding: as we see in the passage on leisure quoted above, 'Ford' appears to be in a gentleman's club; however, just a few pages before that, he was speaking to a manual labourer who is winning his bread by filling up wheelbarrows with various materials and

[51] See n14 (above) on the idea of 'soul,' which also suggests a kind of character.

transporting them. 'Ford,' then, seems to have equal access to this wide range of city dwellers. But each of these city dwellers is, despite being portrayed quite vividly, a type. It is impossible to list them all here, but amongst the most notable are what he calls the various Napoleons of industry (i.e., different types of entrepreneurs), the provincials (which are subdivided according to how capable they are of generalizations), the native Londoners (who are, in some sense, the least interesting for 'Ford' because they are paradoxically enough also the most out of tune with their city), and the foreigners (who become 'Londonized' to various degrees). 'Ford' himself, being in contact with them all, having understood and somehow synthesized all this diversity, becomes *the* Londoner—the one who is, in fact, an embodiment of 'the Modern.' The creative act of synthesis leads, for Ford, both to synecdoche and personification. *SL*, in expressing the synthesis that this character of the Londoner makes, is, therefore, an expression both of the city (a space) and of modernity (a period of time). What it contains within it is a record of encounters that may help, as Ford hoped *The English Review* would, individual Londoners relate to their city in ways that they may not have considered before. This strategy of writing creates not only, as Adam Parkes explains, a dialectic of 'vagueness and concreteness' (19-20),[52] but also a dialectic among part and whole, among inter-dependent subjects, and even a dialectic of space and time. The mind of the artist then—and of the ideal Londoner—is the mind that can absorb this diversity by synthesizing it anew at every point in time.

[52] Parkes is very well aware that various dialectic poles align, as are most of the critics with whose work he engages. While the majority of critics seem, like Parkes himself, to be chiefly interested in the dialectic between aesthetic and politics, I focus here on a different aspect of experience.

Rhythm: A Dialectic of Space and Time

Thus far I have spoken of interactions in the city in primarily literary terms. I would now like to turn to a parallel way of formulating this relationship between part and whole, which is important for Ford's understanding of how people experience the city. This second mode is not only ubiquitous in *SL*, but it also enables us to position both the text and the germ of impressionism that it contains in relation to contemporaneous attempts to understand modernity and to envision possible modernisms. I refer here to a way of conceiving of the city in musical terms. As we have seen already, Ford is well aware of the city as having a rhythm that is different from that of other types of places. What makes this rhythm unique is the 'industrial time' mentioned above, which is punctuated in part by the publication of the periodical press: newspapers mark units of industrial time, be they daily or weekly, and the information they present structures the Londoner's mind such that it can better apply itself to specialized work.[53] But there are other rhythms in the city, too. The rhythm of city leisure, for example, is significantly different from the rhythm of the working day. The Londoner who stares, transfixed, outside a window manages to stretch time in such a way that the rhythm of his thoughts and of his particular experience alters in relation to other rhythms. More specifically, it creates 'room' for a different kind of experience within the maddening pace of city life.

As I have noted above, one of the defining features of the metropolis is, for Ford, not only its intrinsic diversity but its continuing ability to assimilate widely divergent modes of

[53] In relation to this topic, see Lefebvre's *RA*: 'Producers of the commodity *information* know empirically how to utilise rhythms. They have cut up time; they have broken it up into *hourly slices*. The output (rhythm) changes according to intention and the hour. Lively, light-hearted, in order to inform you and entertain you when you are preparing yourself for work: the morning. Soft and tender for the return from work, times of relaxation, the evening and Sunday' (Lefebvre's emphasis, 48).

being and thinking. Ford envisions this relationship as a harmonious but a polyphonic and polyrhythmic one. The whole of London

> is so essentially a background, a matter so much more of masses than of individuals, so much more, as it were, a very immense symphony-orchestra than a quartette party with any leader not negligible, that its essential harmony is not to be caught by any human ear. It can only be treated as a ground bass, a drone, on top of which one pipes one's own small individual melody. (11)

The extent to which these individual melodies or melodic lines within a symphony are inter-dependent is signalled by the absence of a clear, dominant force; however, there is a sense in which, by virtue of coexistence, all of these individual melodies have to be somehow harmonious. When London 'assimilates and slowly digests' new-comers it is modifying their individual melodies such that they become attuned to the rest of London. It is for this reason that, 'as an incomparable background' for the individual's experience, London 'is always in the right note, it is never out of tone' (22). In other words, the experience of the city becomes intimate precisely because each individual perceives a kind of resonance or harmony with the enormity of the city; it does not matter that the city itself creates the harmony that is perceived (8).

If we now return to the passage in which Ford describes seeing the Modern Spirit at work while travelling on an electric tram (*SL* 29-30), we notice that the entire scene becomes more intelligible in musical terms. The 'great' and 'impersonal' organizations through which the Modern Spirit becomes manifest are beating time—industrial time, to be more exact—that is itself counted out through the labour of innumerable people. Individuals must pipe their own melodies in relation to this rhythm that they are creating collectively. Therefore, while the activity on a busy London street may seem chaotic, the movement of those very same people expressed on a larger scale may create patterns that are rhythmic. By 'rhythmic,' here, I mean specifically that there exists, in the instantiation of the majority of acts in the

city, an ordered relationship among the spatial and temporal dimensions of each act. What is more, the ordered relationship between these dimensions of individual movements both determines and is determined by other movements within the city space. An added layer of complexity is, for Ford, that the relationship between the city space of the past and that of the present is also understood in similar terms. In his introduction to *SL* he speaks of his own endeavour to 'make the past, the sense of all the dead Londons that have gone to producing this child of all the ages, like a constant ground-bass beneath the higher notes of the Present' (4). This figuration of past and present in symphonic terms provides us not only with another model for relating space and time—one that will become relevant to my discussion of *The Years* in Chapter 4—but also shows us that art, especially impressionist art in this case, can bend space to encompass its organization at different points through time. Therefore, for Ford, literary or imaginative works mediate not only between individual modes of relating space to time, but also among cumulative modes of doing so (be they sequential or synchronous) through this musical metaphor by constructing overlapping layers of space-time that can encompass events on a number of different scales.

In all of these relationships some rhythmic deviancy is, of course, present by necessity at various stages of the process of assimilation. But if the majority of acts performed in the city are not in harmony with one another, that which unifies the city—the principle according to which time and space are negotiated within the city in order to allow a multiplicity of exchanges to occur—disintegrates. The force of this harmony ought not to be overestimated. 'Polyrhythmia,' which signifies precisely that state in which a city can and does function is not, as Lefebvre explains, a simple harmony: it 'always results from a contradiction, but also from resistance to this contradiction' (99). In short, 'polyrhythmia'

denotes all stages of the process of assimilation Ford describes.[54] As my discussion of *SL* shows, what characterizes the metropolis is that it is a dynamic system whose internal structure perpetually changes as it grows and whose component parts influence one another while also often competing directly with each other. The symphonic metaphor that Ford develops in this text suggests, however, that this tension, this competition to create a dominant melodic line, is itself part of the harmony. The relationship between similarity and difference is visible only if one becomes attuned to the mode of thinking that Ford explores in later essays, especially those published in *ER*. The interpretive act that one performs in picking out a harmonic relationship is, for Ford and for many of the writers I discuss below, the mechanism for linking self to other, part to whole. As we will see in future chapters, some acts, be they creative or simply mundane, exist in uneasy relationships to 'the ground bass' of the city, while others seem to 'fit in' with that rhythm effortlessly. It is important to note, however, that both types can be understood within this rhythmic framework. The encounter with art (and, more specifically, with literature) is, much as Ford himself suggests in his discussion of impressionism, crucial in mediating this relationships between the rhythms of the individual, the rhythms of a community, and, more broadly, the rhythms of a city itself.

[54] Although Ford does not consider what a diametrically opposed state may be, Lefebvre's work accounts for it, for he labels this other state 'arrhythmia.' Lefebvre speaks of arrhythmia and polyrhythmia not just in relation to a city (or a city-state), but also in relation to a body, thus aligning himself, perhaps inadvertently, with the Hobbesian model of the state as a body politic in which polyrhythmia is figured as a healthy state of being and arrhythmia as disease or pathology (16-20).

Chapter 2

Rhythm/*Rhythm*: The Structure of the Echo in Life and Art

Ford Madox Ford's idea of rhythm—and, more specifically, of the beat of industrial time that I explore in my previous chapter—demonstrates that modernity expresses itself rhythmically within the city space and outlines the ways in which literary production can shape these rhythms. The link Ford draws between art and the city is based primarily on the function they serve: they both bring 'humanity in contact with humanity' and they both encourage us to think about the relationship between part and whole as it applies to lived experience (*ER* 3.11 486). However, Ford's tendency to reach for musical metaphors appears almost instinctive: the interpretive structures he outlines happen to converge in music; musical metaphors are not the foundation of his hermeneutic but they follow from it. John Middleton Murry's attempts to grapple with modernism and modernity, on the other hand, begin precisely with the idea that rhythm is a common feature of all that is. Although Murry is not alone in focusing on this concept, *Rhythm*, the magazine he launches in the summer 1911, constitutes one of the most explicit and at the same time least dogmatic attempts of the early 1910s to link modernism and rhythm. As he notes in his autobiography, *Between Two Worlds* (1935), the magazine's title was a recognition that rhythm is 'the distinctive element in all the arts and that the real purpose of "this modern movement,"' which Murry saw as intertwined with the works featured in the magazine, was to 'reassert the pre-eminence of rhythm' as an organizing principle (156).

Rhythm's short run ended in March 1913 due to mounting financial troubles. The magazine was conceived as a quarterly publication but switched to a monthly model in June

1912, when Charles Granville, Katherine Mansfield's publisher, undertook its publication.[1] From its very inception, *Rhythm* was deeply rooted in the idea of an artistic community and was the result of collaborative work. Although Murry served as the nucleus of the journal during its two-year run, he began the magazine as a co-editing project with Michael T. H. Sadler and John Duncan Fergusson. Mansfield joined the team, displacing Sadler, just before the beginning of the second series. Despite its short run, *Rhythm* brought together an impressive range of contributors whose works span multiple genres and artistic modes. Indeed, one of its distinguishing features was its ability to bring together a diverse community of writers and artist across international boundaries. The first few issues of the magazine developed a link between London and Paris that was later expanded to other corners of the world. For instance, sketches by members of the Parisian Académie (such as André Dunoyer de Seonzac, Jessica Dismorr, and Marguerite Thompson) were published alongside works of (Paris-based) international artists such as the Spanish Pablo Picasso, the Russian Natalia Gontcharova, the American Anne Estelle Rice, and, of course, the Scottish J.D. Fergusson and S. J. Peploe. Similarly, Francis Carco's French articles were included in the magazine's first issue and later became formalized as a series entitled '*Lettre de Paris*.' To this were added French poems by Tristan Derème and Jean Pelerin. In the magazine's second series, French works were supplemented, initially, by translations of Russian works (including poems that Mansfield herself wrote under the pseudonym Boris Petrovsky but that she claimed to have translated, and a short story by Leonide Andreieff). [2] Later issues also featured contributions from the Japanese writer Yone Noguchi and the Polish Floryan

[1] For a more detailed account of the publication of *Rhythm*, see Carol Snyder's Introduction to the Modernist Journal Project (MJP) digital archive of the magazine. I wish to note here, however, that, unlike Snyder, I do not see *The Blue Review*, the magazine Murry ran between May and July 1913, as a continuation of *Rhythm*. Because the principles informing each of the magazines differs significantly, I will not be referring to the later publication in this chapter.

[2] See Angela Smith's *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, pages 47-8, for a list of Mansfield's pseudonyms.

Sobieniowski. Although many other magazines of the time had international ambitions, *Rhythm*, as Sharon Greer Cassavant notes, 'displayed a cosmopolitanism that no other British journal possessed in those years' (14). What allowed this kind of cosmopolitan community to form was precisely the flexibility that the concept of rhythm entails, which is based, as I explain below, in the interplay between similarity and difference. This interplay informs Murry's notion of the echo, which becomes a structuring principle both for the magazine itself and for the community that gathered around it.

The communal dimension of *Rhythm* was so important that, in his later years, Murry felt the need to attribute both its title and its inception to a series of conversations he had with the Scottish painter J.D. Fergusson, who, according to Murry, 'appointed [him] to be the man who should carry the new doctrine of rhythm' into the domain of literature (156).[3] In this apostolic role, Murry augmented Fergusson's ideas with an observation of his own: extrapolating from Fergusson's life, Murry explains that rhythm came to mean for him an 'essential living positive thing' (156) and that it was deeply connected with the life of an artist.[4] 'Art,' he observes, is 'a quality of being' and an artist's life 'must have' rhythm—that is, it must somehow unfold in accordance with the principles of rhythm (154). However, for reasons that will become clear in my discussion of the dynamic among the magazine's contributors, each artist's rhythm 'must be his own' (ibid.). In her 2010 study *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde*, Faith Binckes notes that the concept of rhythm was at the forefront of late 19th and early 20th century artistic and literary movements. She also explains that the strand of this concept based on Henri Bergson's ideas—that is, the strand to which Murry attached himself—was merely one of many (62). Although I take Binckes'

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[3] As I show in the next section (cf. n21), Fergusson's account of this episode is somewhat different, which suggests that both he and Murry are posturing, but doing so in different ways and for different reasons.
[4] Carey Snyder also makes note of this addition in her introduction to *Rhythm* for the Modernist Journals Project.

point that this engagement with rhythm is not specific to Murry or his circle, it would be reductive to say that 'rhythm' became the title of an avant-garde magazine solely because it denoted modernity and, with it, the vague notion of an avant-garde (61)[5]; rather, I suggest, 'rhythm' came to denote modernity precisely because various writers and artists engaged with it consistently in their works. The magazine *Rhythm*, then, is not the culmination of a single artistic trend but, as my dissertation shows, part of a series of philosophical and artistic currents that carry well into the 1930s.

This chapter focuses on the concept of rhythm as it emerges through the works of different 'Rhythmists,' but also as it becomes synthesized with the idea of modernism in the magazine's editorials. Murry's 'modernism,' for example, is not only a spatial and temporal marker, as it was for Ford, but comes to signify a mode of engaging with modernity and with artistic practice grounded in the concept of echoing. I begin my analysis by exploring how core writers of the magazine negotiate its relationship to already existing conceptions of modernism, which provides a framework for understanding how rhythm relates to cosmopolitan communities. The next section extends the analysis of modernity, urbanization, and mechanization begun in Chapter 1 through an examination of different ideas of rhythm foregrounded in several of the magazine's short stories. Through these works I also tackle the issue of artistic production, especially within the context of an increasingly mechanized age, from the point of view of some of the magazine's core contributors. Although my analysis does not limit itself solely to Katherine Mansfield, one of the magazine's most prominent contributors, a number of her works are central to my argument because they serve as paradigmatic examples of the ideas underpinning the publication as a whole. In particular, they help shed light on the structure of the publication and on the importance of primitivism

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[5] Binckes draws on Frances Spalding's *Roger Fry: Art and Life* here and shares her perspective on the use of the term (see Spalding 148-150).

in relating creative communities to their urban context. The final section of this chapter considers how *Rhythm* attempted to build and sustain a cosmopolitan community in light of the modernism-urbanism dynamic already examined. Since the core contributors of the magazine understand rhythm to be that which links all the arts, they make an effort to present *Rhythm* itself as the common element among different cosmopolitan communities seeking to understand and redefine modernism.

'In Its Vagueness Lay Its Very Strength'[6]: Synthesis and Re-creation in *Rhythm*

It has been pointed out by a number of critics that the concept of rhythm remains conspicuously undefined and under-explained in this magazine, despite the boldness with which it is foregrounded both in the title of the publication and in some of the magazine's opening pieces. This theoretical shortcoming has cast some doubt on *Rhythm*'s role in defining an acceptable strand of modernism even for Arnold Bennett, one of the magazine's early critics, who saw it as a publication that took an ineffective revolutionary stance.[7] Bennett's assessment of *Rhythm*, which appeared in the August 3rd, 1911 issue of *The New Age*, contains a number of scathing remarks;[8] indeed, *Rhythm* becomes, for him, an example of what a modernist magazine ought not to be. Although Bennett's article takes notice of some 'interesting post-impressionist illustrations' featured in *Rhythm*, he finds the

[6] The quoted phrase is an explanation Murry himself offers for his project in 'What We Have Tried to Do' (1.03 36).

[7] Arnold Bennett, a critical authority affiliated with *The New Age* is perhaps the most important critic of the period to comment on *Rhythm*. Bennett's assessment was not only influential during his time, but his critique was later taken up in various forms by Malcolm Bradbury in the mid-20th century, and, more recently, by Sharon Greer Cassavant, Mary Ann Gillies, and Faith Binckes.

[8] It is important to acknowledge here that there was also much rivalry between *The New Age* and *Rhythm*, and that the animosity became more pointed as Katherine Mansfield migrated towards the newer magazine. In *Coming to London*, Murry notes: '*The New Age* was venomous about us. Every number of *Rhythm*, which was by now improving, was systematically torn to pieces in a column or two of *The New Age*' (105-6). For a list of *The New Age*'s attacks, see Carey Snyder's section on this in her introduction on *Rhythm*, especially n12. However, despite—or perhaps because of—this rivalry, as Malcolm Bradbury points out *in 'The Little Magazine – I: "Rhythm" and "The Blue Review,"' Rhythm's* owes much of its 'attitude' to *The New Age* (423).

magazine’s literary works to be ‘conventional’ (327). More importantly, the expository pieces of this first issue of the magazine seem too imprecise by Bennett’s standards: Murry ‘flaps in the vague’ in ‘Aims and Ideals’ and even Michael Sadler’s essay on post-impressionism, an important piece that tries both to define the magazine’s scope and to position it in relation to other artistic movements, is, for him, ‘not remarkable’ (327).[9] Bennett also takes issue with the magazine’s size: instead of the ‘scrappy’ and seemingly inadequate forty-to-fifty pages that *Rhythm* produced per issue, he demands a heftier, more methodical engagement. He would prefer a magazine that features ‘a critical study finding fault with some work of established reputation produced according to our old principle,’ ‘a short story of at least five thousand words embodying some new principle,’ and a number of long and short poems ‘by the same hand’ that would solidify this new principle and its distinction from the old one (327-8). In other words, Bennett would like such a magazine both to ‘destroy’ and to ‘create,’ but to do so in a clear, explicit, orderly manner (328).

Rhythm was not nearly as systematic or as narrowly revolutionary in its endeavour as Bennett would have liked. But although there is something to be said for the vagueness of the position pieces it features, these seeming shortcomings can be explained, in part, with reference to the magazine’s aims. *Rhythm* seeks to bring about something substantially different from Bennett’s revolution in print: many of the pieces he criticizes, for example, attempt to manoeuvre around the perpetual struggle between the older and contemporaneous approaches towards a way of ‘mak[ing] things new’ (to use Ezra Pound’s phrase) that does not depend on opposition to the past, especially as it becomes instantiated in successive

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[9] Malcolm Bradbury’s pronouncement on the magazine is less forceful, but it echoes the essence of Bennett’s critique: ‘the position expressed’ by the magazine ‘looks less dramatic’ (which presumably also means less revolutionary) ‘and less coherent than do other tendencies in modernism’ (424).

artistic fads. The magazine's contributors try instead to re-work what is available from the past, be it near or remote, into something that resonates with contemporary needs.

This relationship between old and new is signalled in the magazine's opening piece, Frederick Goodyear's 'The New Thelema,' and it remains a concern for *Rhythm*'s contributors even through to the last issues of the magazine. The vagueness that becomes associated with this group of artists and critics allows room, in Murry's view, for a synthesis between artistic currents that exist at different points in time. That is not to say, however, that art must lose all its revolutionary dimensions. On the contrary, as Murry notes in 'Art and Philosophy,' the notion of revolution is inextricable from art because the way in which art synthesizes the past and the present enables one to become unfettered from constrictive elements in both (1.01 11). In other words, the past and present are two dialectical poles that become synthesized in the work of art. It is important to note here, however, that the reference to artistic currents belonging to different historical periods is not devoid of a spatial component. As my analysis of the cosmopolitan dimension of primitivism (outlined below) shows, movements that are labeled with temporal markers—and, indeed, even historical periods—have a dimension of space folded into them. The most relevant example of this phenomenon is, of course, modernism itself, which has the metropolis folded into its temporal marker. Therefore, the tension inherent in this dialectic of past and present is the tension of rhythm itself: it is an interplay between similarity and difference that allows the artist to create something new that resonates with a historical and artistic past; it is the process of finding 'new chords to create new harmonies' (1.01 12). Over the course of this chapter I will highlight both the similarities and the differences in various contributors' approach to rhythm.

The works featured in the magazine can be divided into five main categories: philosophical statements (which tend to function as manifestos or position pieces for the magazine), critical studies (which aim to define and instruct the readership while also enforcing the dicta of the works in the first category), literary works (which include short stories, poetry, dramatic sketches, prose tableaux, and a number of hybrid genres), drawings and sketches (which are often interspersed with the literary works), and, especially in the last few issues, theatre, book, and art reviews.[10] I will touch on examples of most of these categories in different sections of this chapter, but I begin with the first group in order to provide a framework for the creative pieces that I will discuss in subsequent sections.

The first issue of *Rhythm* constitutes an intervention into the cultural and artistic London scene.[11] This intervention is staged partly through the critical and philosophical essays it features; however, the content of these pieces differs markedly from what critics like Arnold Bennett might have expected. As I have already noted, the issue opens with Frederick Goodyear's essay 'The *New* Thelema' (my emphasis), which ostensibly points out a new direction for art—a new approach to modernism—but does so in very broad terms.[12] Murry's first essay, 'Art and Philosophy,' appears ten pages into the issue, preceded by an eclectic collection of works, including a poem, a few sketches, and, surprisingly, even a blank page. The essay itself offers a very broad treatment of the topic it purports to discuss and, in so

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[10] For a more detailed description of the magazine itself, see Peter Brooker's 'Harmony, Discord, and Difference: *Rhythm* (1911–13), *The Blue Review* (1913), and *The Signature* (1915),' page 325 and onwards.

[11] The editors of the *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* (*OCCHMM*), Volume 1, have included an analysis of this magazine under the heading 'Interventions' precisely because they see it as an attempt to give a certain 'character to the idea of English modernism prior to its consolidation in the next decade' (263). While I have some reservations about the notion that modernism is 'consolidated' in the 1920s, I agree with the *OCCHMM* editors' assessment of the kind of intervention Murry and Fergusson are trying to make through *Rhythm*.

[12] The title of this piece is a clear reference to François Rébelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, but it might also refer to Aleister Crowley's project to set up an altogether different Abbey of Thelema in pursuit of freedom and the expression of the will through the occult (see Tobias Churton's *Aleister Crowley: The Biography*, pages 246-260, and Martin Booth's *A Magick Life*, pages 187, 361-4).

doing, calls upon the reader to undertake the arduous interpretive task of linking this piece with both the art and the philosophy of the magazine as a whole. The only explicit statement about the magazine's aims—'Aims and Ideals,' whose idiom and tone are reminiscent of other manifestos of the period—appears on the very last page of the issue. *Rhythm's* manifesto, however, appears to be almost devoid of content: it simply states that 'RHYTHM is a magazine with a purpose' and that 'its title is the ideal of a new art, to which it will endeavour to give expression' (36). This rather feverish proclamation offers very little explicit guidance; instead, it invites readers to return to the magazine they had just finished reading and to search for the principle that serves to unify these seemingly disparate works into a cohesive whole. In other words, this issue of *Rhythm* provides an opportunity for readers to encounter a wide range of works of art with minimal guidance. And while the magazine offers readers some general concepts that might help them engage with these works, it does so only sporadically.[13]

Because the magazine makes rather heavy demands on its readers, it is no surprise that Bennett and others reacted so strongly to the publication. A more detailed analysis of some of these expository pieces, however, can shed light on the relationship between rhythm and modernism, which is grounded in the interplay between past, present, and, implicitly, future that *Rhythm*'s early contributors discuss. Goodyear's article begins by noting that 'there is nothing new' in this artistic group's determination 'to build the abbey of Thelema' (which is 'the soul's ideal home') or in the desire to create 'an ideal community' (1). The one significant difference between his contemporaries and previous generations is, however, the way in which they choose to pursue this goal. The Rhythmists seek to build this Thelema not in a particular place but (primarily) in time: it will lie in that 'ordinary human future that is

[13] See, for instance, the strategies that Heller employs in order to attract attention around Anna Vaddock's works in the story entitled 'Anna Vaddock's Fame' (1.02 4-6).

perpetually transmuting itself into the past' (1).[14] Thelema, therefore, is not a specific physical abode but a response to the need for constructing a community and of doing so within a number of spatio-temporal frames that are constantly interacting with one another. Moreover, as Goodyear explains, the desires of the past flow forwards in time; whatever becomes actualized, be it either in the present or the future, returns to and reshapes the past, especially the remote past, in the guise of a 'golden age' that then continues to haunt the present (1).[15] Although the second half of this brief piece flounders in the rather complex and murky territory of liberty, the importance of the expression of the will, and the necessity for balancing freedom with order in 'the polity,' Goodyear uses these ideas in order to connect the artistic modes *Rhythm* represents with ideas of primitivism (2-3). This link constitutes a way of relating to the past that is different from Bennett's revolutionary model. 'The New Thelema' ends, therefore, by identifying a community that Goodyear calls the 'neo-barbarians,' a group of 'men and women who to the timid and unimaginative seem merely perverse and atavistic' and who are capable of returning to their 'outcast selves' in order to bring about the conditions for founding the abbey of Thelema.

John Middleton Murry picks up a number of strands of Goodyear's essay and recasts them, initially, in a discussion of the relationship between art, philosophy, and life, and, at the end of the first issue, in a statement about *Rhythm* itself. Art, for Murry, becomes a synthesis of the past expressed in the present. Two aspects of this idea are especially important for understanding the rhythmic interaction between the old and the new: the first, that art is an

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[14] As I note above, however, this kind of temporal marker also implies a space, though perhaps one that is not yet identifiable, especially not in the same way that the space of the past and present are, but that is signalled here by the very concept of Thelema.

[15] Goodyear also explains that this Thelema cannot possibly reside in religious ideals: false hopes and desires are, for him, encapsulated in concepts such as heaven or the Elysian Fields, which are 'equally outside of space and time,' thus requiring those who hope for such ideals to become completely severed from what he calls 'Being' and, in effect, to give up the struggle of changing their reality (1).

expression of something new '*because* it holds within itself all the past' (10, my emphasis) and the second, that the present itself 'is the all-in-all of art' (11). The magazine's stance in relation to continuing artistic tradition is signalled by Murry's statement that 'no art breaks with the past' (ibid.). This statement also serves as a possible response to the objection Arnold Bennett levelled at the magazine, which I have outlined in more detail above. In brief, what Bennett expects of small magazines such as *Rhythm* is that they define themselves *in contradistinction to* extant artistic trends (be they past or present) and also that they do so clearly and consistently. Murry, however, operates with a very different model in mind and one that explicitly avoids being 'reactionary' (12).[16] For instance, although he responds against aestheticism, both in this piece and in 'Aims and Ideals' (11, 36), his theory of creating something new is rooted in the notion of synthesis.[17] 'The flesh and bones of the new creation,' Murry explains, 'may come from the past, but the form is new' (11).[18] In order to produce art, the artist 'must identify himself with the continuity that has worked in the generations before him' (10). The figure of the artist becomes a demiurge who 'looks to the past only to create in the present' (12) and who, in 'Aims and Ideals,' leaves 'protest for progress' (36). Therefore, 'Art and Life travel in a great cycle' of influence and, as in Goodyear's article, art is that which 'forces a path into the future' (11).[19]

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[16] Faith Binckes also notes that '*Rhythm* challenged the concept of an avant-garde predicated upon rupture' (55), but does not trace the model that Murry offers in its place. Her discussion of this aspect of both the magazine and the concept of rhythm is linked to what she perceives to be the lack of clarity denoted by the term, which I discuss in more detail below.

[17] Strangely enough Murry does not reference Hegel, but Goodyear mentions him, alongside Darwin, in his article (see page 2), and the ideas of synthetics and evolution permeate not only this entire issue but the publication as a whole.

[18] Angela Smith rightly points out that '*Rhythm* expresses its Bergsonian principles . . in its form' because 'it manifestly challenges the homogenous in favour of heterogeneity' (*Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* 79).

[19] See also O. Raymond Drey's 'Post-Impressionism: The Character of Movement' (2.12), which discusses how new artistic schools form roughly in the same terms as Goodyear, Murry, and Sadler do. This article also echoes the idea of a school of thought that Ford articulates in *The English Review*, which I discussed in my previous chapter.

The form that the dynamic among past, present, and future takes in the magazine is, for Murry, deeply rooted in the concept of rhythm and of harmony, which are expressed through works of art. He sees works of art as musical 'chords caught and remembered from the vast world music' (9), and 'every note of the eternal music [for art itself, which spans past, present, and future, is eternal] blends in one harmony' (12). The goal of the artist, then, is not the mechanical reproduction of reality, to which I shall return presently, but a refashioning of the old into the new. Although, as Murry states in his manifesto, art is 'the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch' (36), the role of the artist is to find 'new chords to create new harmonies' (12). Building on the idea that 'the present is the all-in-all of art' (11), Murry identifies the present very explicitly as 'modernism,' a term that unifies Murry's historical moment with the artistic modes expressed in the magazine. It is also that which 'disengages the rhythms that lie at the heart of things' (12). Although he acknowledges these rhythms may seem strange or unfamiliar, they are, according to him, 'primitive harmonies of the world that is and lives' (12).

Murry does not offer any clear explanations of how the works featured in *Rhythm* embody the concept its title signals, nor does he outline how one may go about creating this kind of art. Much of the critical backlash to the ideas he presents stems precisely from this perceived shortcoming. However, despite the undeniable vagueness and imprecision that plagues these 'position pieces' or manifestos, the essays themselves serve the purpose of opening up artistic space in certain ways. Here I draw on Faith Binckes' *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde* again, but I subscribe to her position only in part. Binckes shows that the term 'rhythm' had already become a buzz word by the turn of the century and that Murry was drawn to it for that reason (62).[20] In this work, she notes that

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[20] Binckes treats Murry's claims about his (and Fergusson's) revelation about rhythm with much suspicion (see her discussion on page 65). Although I am inclined to agree with her to some extent, Fergusson notes in one

frequent application of this term to different types of art had hampered 'its ability to transmit meaning,' which had the fortunate side-effect for the Rhythmists of rendering it 'supremely suitable for conveying value' (63-4). In short, for her, it signifies the avant-garde and little else. Although she demonstrates quite convincingly that 'rhythm' had currency during this period and that it 'implied a non-constrictive tradition of newness' (64-5), it was not entirely as devoid of meaning in Murry's hands as she and as a number of other critics suggest: it signified a certain type of newness based on the relationship among past, present, and future, and on the dynamic between sameness and difference that is intrinsic to concepts of modernism and of rhythm itself.[21]

This complex relationship between signifying a specific artistic mode and opening up potentiality for other, yet undefined approaches to creating art is treated by Michael Sadler in his article 'Fauvism and a Fauve' (1.01) and by C. J Holmes in 'Stray Thoughts on Rhythm in Painting' (1.03). Sadler encapsulates the issue of cohesion in artistic communities through a discussion of naming. In a lengthy mediation on how to refer to schools of thought, Sadler explains that the names we associate with artistic movements ought to serve as organizing principles: 'The new movement [Fauvism] is far too complex in its aims and far too varied in its ideals, to allow of its being summed up in a single word' (14). Although Sadler refers

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letter that he 'didn't think Rhythm was a good title' for the magazine because 'it was (at that time) a word hardly ever used and to most people meant nothing' (quoted in Margaret Morris' *The Art of J.D. Fergusson* 64). However, as I will show throughout this chapter, the continuity in the use of terms like 'rhythm' supports not only my argument about how communities shape interpretive structures but also about the interplay between sameness and difference that the concept of rhythm allows.

[21] I have already noted Bennett's position, but also see Mary Ann Gillies' *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*, which rather dismissively states that Murry was 'incapable of finding and formulating his own aesthetic notions' (60) and Sharon Greer Cassavant's *John Middleton Murry: The Critic as Moralist*, which claims not only that modernism had 'been a rather hazy ideal' for the journal, but also that 'the general philosophy and character of *Rhythm* changed in tune with' Murry's and Mansfield's 'vicissitudes and . . . shifting enthusiasms' (13). Similarly, Angela Smith explains that 'it was initially a strength of the magazine that the title meant something different to each of its contributors, allowing them to offer their own interpretation of 'rhythm,' but ultimately the galvanizing impetus lost its momentum and that later issues have no sense of direction of coherence' ('Katherine Mansfield and *Rhythm*' 105). As I attempt to show in my analysis, the second part of this claim is unfounded; there is remarkable consistency throughout the magazine's run, not only in Murry's own essays but also amongst core contributors.

specifically to 'Fauvism,' what he says applies to the artistic modes *Rhythm* encompasses in general, for, as he notes at the end of the article, the one 'fundamental desire with which all [Fauvists] start' is 'the desire of rhythm' (17). Holmes' piece takes on a slightly different task of analyzing how the musical concept of rhythm can be understood in terms of painting and, in doing so, unearths the principles that inform this kind of artistic creation across media. The notion of rhythm is, for Holmes, based on the idea of repetition and pattern formation: a visual pattern can be called rhythmic (in a narrow sense) 'so long as its elements are repeated at equal intervals, as in a wall paper or tiled floor' (1). However, mere repetition 'suggest[s] a purely mechanical rhythm' (2). Artistic expression 'demands inequality rather than equality' (2); one must avoid all 'methods of work which incline to mechanical repetition' in order to arrive at 'poetical rhythm' (2-3).[22] Holmes' choice of the adjective 'poetical' unites the three forms of art from which he borrows (music, painting, and literature) and shows the extent to which these serve to define each other.

The distinction between the mechanical and the artistic/poetic is a problem that is intrinsic to the concept of rhythm in general and is best understood through Henri Lefebvre's detailed schematic. For Lefebvre, as for *Rhythm*'s contributors, the mechanical and the artistic are aligned with the concepts of similarity and difference. His analysis of the interplay between these two poles of rhythm provides a way of linking what the magazine's contributors say about how it operates in relation to both art and life. Lefebvre begins his discussion of rhythm with the observation that it denotes a measure of sameness—of repetition—but also of difference: if we were not able to distinguish any instance or iteration of something from every other iteration of it, we would not, in effect, understand that

[22] Peter Brooker also notes this feature of Holmes' article in his piece entitled 'Harmony, Discord, and Difference: *Rhythm* (1911-13), *The Blue Review* (1913), and *The Signature* (1915)' but he uses it primarily to distinguish the Rhythmists from the Vorticists (326).

something is being repeated (6-7). With this interplay between sameness and difference we discover the entire spectrum of rhythms which ranges from the 'mechanical' to the 'organic'[23] (6); we also discover the idea of cyclicality and linearity and of their interdependence, for they 'measure themselves against one another' (8). Lefebvre tends to align cyclical patterns with natural rhythms and linear patterns with social practices, but even he himself admits that 'in *reality* [they] interfere with one another constantly' (Lefebvre's emphasis, 8). Moreover, this union is based on the union of time and space: as I have shown in my introduction, time and space 'measure themselves against one another,' which creates a 'dialectical relation' (8).[24] This dialectical relation generates meaning through a structure of 'unity in opposition,' which is, of course, another way of conceiving of sameness and difference (ibid.). I will return to the idea of cyclicality and linearity in my discussion of the literary works foregrounded in the magazine itself. For now, however, I simply note that the unity emerging from this dialectical structure is not only the unity of rhythm itself but also that of the three temporal reference frames (past, present, and future) that I consider above. Murry himself is also insistent upon the idea of unity and suggests, over the course of the magazine's run, additional ways of thinking about it. In 'What We Have Tried to Do,' for instance, the term signals unity within a diverse community (1.03 36); in 'The Meaning of Rhythm' it signifies the unity of a work of art which, as the discussion above shows, is the unity of rhythm (2.05 22). The manifesto Murry published at the end of the magazine's first issue, therefore, encourages readers to look for the principle of rhythm in it because that becomes the unifying element of the varied works of art featured in the magazine.

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[23] Lefebvre seems to use the term 'organic' as that which is different from 'mechanical,' but does not define it fully.
[24] I quote this passage in full in my introduction.

Mechanical vs. Artistic (Re-)Production: A Typology of Rhythm

The issue of mechanical production or repetition in relation to art is central to the problem of modernism.[25] As we saw in the previous chapter, Ford's concerns about mechanization were deeply connected not only with the expression of character or of personality (which, for him, was synonymous with artistic creation), but also with the periodical press. Many of *Rhythm*'s contributors grapple with the same issues both in expository and in fictional genres. The resounding primitivism of the magazine's first issue—that is, the notion that art should capture not only something that is pre-industrial but also something that is so far removed from a mechanistic age that it may yield a way of 're-starting' culture—has much to do with a resistance to mechanical artistic production, as does the feverish insistence on liberty and intuition. It is for this reason that Murry claims the work of art—and, more specifically, the 'freedom' expressed in it—'protests against the incursion of machine-made realism into modern literature' ('The Meaning of Rhythm' 19). In Vincent O'Sullivan's story 'Anna Vaddock's Fame' (1.02), for example, which treats the relationship between avant-garde and popular art, the die-hard art-lover and critic named Heller chides the narrator of the story for allowing the regularity of machine-made realism to control his life and his encounter with art. As he attempts to drag this narrator away from his scheduled lunch and out of his frame of reference, Heller admonishes him for having been 'out of step, out of rhythm' with the world of art (1.02 2). He continues:

> 'Do you eat regular meals? Is your stomach a slave to clocks? All these people'—he waved his arm to comprise the street—'are now going to eat. They don't want to eat really; each one goes because the other goes. Ants! Have you ever watched ants? My chap, you don't want to eat: you are the victim of habit and the town clock and gregariousness. Art would perish so domesticated. As well have a wife and six children. Come and see Anna Vaddock. You will forget the manger.' (2)

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[25] Consider, for instance, Walter Benjamin's discussion of this issue in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.'

The town clock is, of course, that which sets the rhythm of town life.[26] In this town, Heller is the exception that proves the rule: his role as an outsider (for he both seeks and bestows recognition on avant-garde art) shows precisely how well everyone else falls into step. Heller's own miscalculation about the power of this other rhythm, whose force he resists, is, however, what allows Anna Vaddock's art to slip from the avant-garde into the category of popular art at the end of the story. The sneer at 'domesticated' art that we see in this passage also aligns Heller with a primitivist outlook. The rhythm of the town is the rhythm of the manger, where animals' freedom is curtailed and where food and shelter are offered in return for regular labour. The component of office work that appears in a number of short stories in this publication echoes precisely this curtailment of freedom and this trade-off.

I have already touched on C. J. Holmes' explanation of mechanistic repetition in specifically rhythmic terms. I now turn to the most extensive and thorough condemnation of mechanization extant in the magazine, which can be found in Gilbert Cannan's editorial 'Observations and Opinions I – Machines' (2.07), as well as to a short story that he published a few months later entitled 'The Blue Peter.' The former is an analysis of the problems of being trapped in a mechanistic world, especially from the point of view of writing for the periodical press; the latter is a fictional rendition of the same issue. 'Observations and Opinions I' begins with the statement that 'life is dominated by machines' both in England and 'in all other civilized countries' (110). The problem it tackles is very simple: in the Blakean furnace that Cannan imagines the civilized world has become, people can be divided into two categories—'the privileged few are stokers, the rest of us are fuel' (110). Because the system is so very pervasive, future generations are also slated to 'become either stokers or

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[26] Stephen Kern's discussion of the standardization of time both globally and locally in *The Culture of Time and Space*, especially his understanding of the concept of 'public time' and of punctuality (11-15), is relevant here. Also see my discussion of Georg Simmel's ideas about punctuality and the integration of modern life in the previous chapter.

fuel' (110). Cannan's perspective on this issue differs from a simple condemnation of the fact that machines dominate people's lives because he takes a critical perspective on his own ability to act within the confines of the system, which is reminiscent of Ford's concerns about how industrial time operates. In a somewhat humorous passage, Cannan explains that his revolutionary zeal was quickly quashed by the realization that his

> only means of circulating . . . [his] call to arms is by machinery. A magazine is a machine: a publisher's office is a machine: very often editors and publishers are machines, though they wear trousers and dine in the best restaurants. . . . A machine further detests anything like a call to arms which may disturb its smooth running. (111)

In other words, Cannan sees himself trapped in a machine. But all is not lost: the one hopeful note in this piece is, of course, the last sentence of this passage, which offers veiled praise for *Rhythm* itself, the magazine that published his writing, for it implies that those who run the magazine are decidedly not machines on account of encouraging Cannan's call to arms. Much of what he says aims to show that humans are trapped in a system they cannot escape—that, in a proto-post-structuralist manner, there may not be something outside of these mechanisms—but he also suggests that the vitality human beings like, which is antithetical to the mechanism of machines, can enable some to escape this system.[27] Imagination has this ability precisely because it does not subscribe to the logic of the machines:

> The machines are always making theories, and endeavouring to force life to fit in with them. That is why machines never produce anything. Those who accept the theories of the machines are privileged to be stokers and they are rewarded with money and a queer mis-directed thing called success, which means, if it means anything, that all the other stokers talk about you a great deal and wonder how much money the machines have given you and how long you are going to keep it. (111)

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[27] The term 'vitality' seems to be derived from Henri Bergson's concept of *élan vital*, which influenced much of Murry's work. For a comprehensive account of Bergson's ideas and of their relevance to Murry's essays in *Rhythm*, see Mary Ann Gillies (14, 60-6).

This passage captures not only the issues of mechanization/industrialization, but also the problems of a capitalist economy, which are deeply intertwined with this new order and new logic. (Note also the opposition between theorizing and creating, which echoes Murry's and Mansfield's statements that the aim of *Rhythm* is 'creation rather than criticism' [1.03 36].) [28] Cannan's analysis of the problem of mechanization, however, surpasses the solution he offers: he seems to rest his hopes on the 'free men, with brave eyes and health in their souls,' who are, in a Nietzschean manner, 'beyond good and evil, beyond mechanical right and wrong' and who are 'truly living the life of this world' without seeking a 'reward' (112). It is not clear how, exactly, these individuals will overturn both the capitalist and the mechanistic order, but Cannan ends the article on a hopeful note.

'The Blue Peter,' Cannan's fictional foray into the same territory, appeared in the magazine's tenth issue. Although less explicit in its message than the essay I discuss above, it helps to qualify some of the ideas about these 'free men' Cannan mentions because it speaks more directly to his requirements for artistic creation. This story tracks a moment of crisis in the life of a character who is trapped within a capitalist system and whose life unfolds, for the most part, mechanically. I quote the opening paragraph of the story in its entirety because it captures the mechanical regularity of the character's life:

> For forty years he had lived with his mother in the same house. For forty-five years he had worked in the same branch of the same bank, walking to and fro in morning and evening between house and bank, bank and house. For twenty years, at least, he had followed exactly the same route, crossing the streets at the same point, taking the inside of a curve and leaving it always at the same points, hardly deviating by a yard. He walked very fast in the morning and always arrived at the bank at four minutes past nine. He walked faster still in the evening, and, except at balance time, walked home exactly at five. Everything that he did between half-past eight and five was as purely mechanical as sleeping, or eating or dressing. He never saw anything in the streets he passed through four times a day, and he never noticed anything that happened in his house. His mother's habits never clashed with his own, and

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[28] Mark Antliff notes a similar disdain for theorizing in Bergon's ideas in *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (2).

> her presence was never disturbing, for she changed no more than the clock on the landing outside his room. The clock ticked monotonously, but he never heard it. She talked monotonously, but he never heard her. (238)

The repetition of the phrase ‘for . . . years’ and the syntax of the opening sentences create a cadence that solidifies the protagonist’s plight. The variation in the number of years, however, suggests a decline of ‘vitality’ through time. The protagonist—this nameless ‘he,’ this modern everyman—must have had some aspirations in order to purchase a house five years after he began working for the bank; similarly, something must have happened twenty years before the story starts to make him lose interest in finding alternative routes to work. The only suggestion of a rebellion is that he arrives at the bank ‘at four minutes past nine’ every day, though he does it with such regularity that the deviation has been systematized. In other words, even this irregularity serves to deepen the monotony of his life, underscored here by the ticking of the clock.[29] His relationship with his mother has also become wrapped up in this monotony, and communication between them seems to be largely absent and, at most, perfunctory. As we soon discover, this character lives exclusively through his reading, which includes ‘books about ships and the universities and the lives of learned men’ (238). He also reads ‘every novel of the sea that was ever published in the English language,’ though the narrator is careful to point out that he stayed clear of biographies of sailors (238). Using this material, the protagonist exercises his imagination in the evenings and on the weekends by fashioning for himself a universe around the model ships he possesses. Interestingly, however, he does not imagine himself on the ships; rather, he becomes the organizing principle for the universe his characters inhabit and also the owner of the ships,

[29] I have already spoken of the importance of ticking clocks above, but I return to it here because it is a common feature of other stories published in *Rhythm*, such as ‘New Dresses’ (2.09 190). There are also a number of stories that have other expressions of standard/public time, such as the movements of the trains, which are subject to the ticking of the clock, as reference points. See, for instance, ‘The Shirt’ (2.06 40-45).

which would suggest his preference to switch from being fuel to being a 'stoker' (238-9).[30] Although this character does make actual sea voyages on his annual, two-week holiday, he makes sure never to speak to a soul while on those voyages, but to focus, instead, on criticizing the navigation on the steamboats by which he grudgingly travels (238).[31]

The moment of crisis comes when the protagonist realizes that he is one year away from retirement and wishes to make a small change in his life: he wants to use his pension in order to move to '"a quiet place"' like Deal, a town by the sea, so that he might '"watch the ships go by"' and take occasional trips across the channel to visit other ports (240). His mother, however, is adamantly against making such a change because she '"couldn't bear to sit in a strange room"' and '"to look out of the window and see strange people"'; she would '"miss the houses and the street"' in their current dwelling place (240). Unable to put up any resistance to his mother's tears, he destroys all his model ships bar one, his favourite, a schooner, upon which he hoists a blue peter, setting it adrift on the seas of his imagination. Much of this process of setting the ship free takes place over the course of the night and, given the break in this character's routine, the story suggests a possible departure from the monotony of the protagonist's life. We discover, however, that despite this symbolic gesture, the very next morning he eats his breakfast, rushes out the door, heads to the bank by the same route he had taken before, and enters through the door 'at four minutes past nine' (241). In short, the crisis happened in an imaginary realm; it did not upset the rhythms of his other life.[32]

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[30] 'A great many characters passed in and about the bedroom, all having dealings with the owner of those ships. The characters never passed out of the bedroom. Many of them were villainous and mutiny was not unknown on the brig or the schooner when they went on long voyages' (239).
[31] As Marlow's prelude to the story in *Heart of Darkness* suggests, there is something not quite right with being 'fresh-water sailor' on a steam-boat (66); a salt-water sailor who harnesses only the forces of nature is far superior.
[32] See Bergson's account of the interaction between pure duration and 'homogenized,' spatialized, external time in *Time and Free Will* (107-8).

This ending suggests, much as Cannan's essay does, that it is almost impossible to break free from the rhythms of the mechanistic age and of the marketplace; however, the protagonist of this story falls short of the brave and free spirit Cannan envisions in his essay and does so in ways that help clarify what is required of this special class of humans—the artists. Although the protagonist of 'The Blue Peter' exhibits an imaginative force and seems to have the creative impulse of an artist, he uses this energy, as noted above, in order to imagine himself as someone who drives the market economy of his universe; he wants to be 'a stoker.' What is more, his plan to escape the monotony of his working life is based on the computation of his wealth, not on breaking with the order that rules his life: he can afford to live in Deal and visit ports on his pension. While there is a suggestion that these retirement plans may provide him with more material for his imaginative work (as it would a good artist), we know from the way he spends his holidays that he avoids interacting with others even when given the opportunity to do so; he stands apart from 'life' precisely because he seems to prefer keeping his imaginative and his 'real' worlds separate. This character, then, has only one component of the artist—imagination—but is found wanting with respect to the other—life or vitality.

This issue brings us back not only to the problem that Cannan cites in 'Observations and Opinions I,' but also to Henri Lefebvre's understanding of both the importance and the pitfalls of that which is embedded in a structure of pre-determined and pre-defined rhythms. It also recalls Murry's idea that art and life must be intertwined. Lefebvre's theory about the interaction of rhythms is based on the notion of ritualized practices which enable one set of rhythms to intervene in or to 'punctuate' the rhythms of daily life (*Rhythmanalysis* 94). I have already discussed this notion at length in my previous chapter; what I focus on in this chapter, however, is the manner in which some of *Rhythm*'s contributors explore a very

similar idea. Although each contributor may have a slightly different approach to understanding rhythm, there is a remarkable affinity in the way they envision various rhythms interacting.

As noted above, Murry's clearest articulation of how art and life are intertwined is based on rhythmic similarity: in 'Aims and Ideals' he explains that art must be 'the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch' (1.01 36). The term 'echo' suggests a form of repetition, of course, but it is repetition with varying degrees of distortion, just as cultural and artistic evolution through time can be explained as repetition with variation or as a constant interplay between similarity and difference (see above). Often this kind of repetition can point to structural similarity. As Malcolm Bradbury notes in a 1968 article entitled 'The Little Magazine – I: "*Rhythm*" and "*The Blue Review*,"' the concept of 'rhythm was the essential quality of a work of art' (423). In the case of visual art specifically, it was 'the principle behind that compositional organization that becomes apparent when one's artistic intention is not to achieve a photographic resemblance' (423). This concept can, of course, be extended to literary works if we substitute 'verisimilitude' for 'photographic resemblance.' The goal of some of the critical articles published in the first few issues is precisely to bridge this gap. I have already touched on this in relation to the essay 'Fauvism and a Fauve' published in the magazine's first issue, but other notable examples include: Michael Sadler's 'The Letters of Vincent van Gogh,' which argues not only that art is, as it must be, 'in touch with life' in van Gogh's work, but also that the letters themselves embody the same juxtapositions that his paintings do (1.02 17-8); Rollo H. Myres' 'The Art of Claude Debussy,' which demonstrates that Debussy's music is 'in its essence Fauvist' and that part of this is based on how he uses rhythm (1.02 33-4); C. J. Holmes' 'Stray Thoughts on Rhythm in Painting,' which envisions rhythm as relationality in space and time (1.03 1-3);

and, last but not least, Anne Estelle Rice's discussion of how the various components of ballet can work together to produce a harmonious performance (2.07 106-110), which also appears in the magazine illustrated by her own sketches. All of these critical works serve the function of educating the magazine's readers to think about art holistically, both by becoming conversant in different forms of art and by becoming proficient at translating the particularities of one artistic medium into another.

The connection among different forms of art, as well as the connection between life and art, is illustrated in two of the stories Katherine Mansfield published in *Rhythm*, 'Ole Underwood' and 'Tales of a Courtyard.' The first of these outlines how the structure of echoing functions not only within the realm of art but also as a way of bridging lived experience and artistic expression. The second presents a broader engagement with the intersection between natural and social rhythms and also offers an explanation as to why the magazine itself has the distinctive feature of interpolating—and, indeed, interrupting—text with visual art. The ideas explored here are also relevant for the final section of my chapter, which shows that the layout and organization of art works within the magazine itself offers a model for understanding how the community of Rhythmists pursues similar goals through different forms of expression.

'Ole Underwood' combines elements of painting with literature, but it also uses the idea of rhythm as the kernel of the story's content and form. The plot of the story is organized around a man of dubious moral character, formerly a sailor, who, having spent twenty years in prison for murdering his wife, seems to be on the verge of committing yet another murder shortly after his release. The narrative spans a very short period of time and ends before the action it foreshadows is completed. Its complexity, however, stems from the

psychological and emotional dimensions of the story, which raise questions not only about Ole Underwood's behaviour but also about the driving force behind his actions. The story also bridges different forms of art. As Angela Smith has noted, Mansfield's 'use of colour imitates what Fergusson and Rice [to whom the story is dedicated] were attempting in their paintings': Old Underwood himself 'is depicted through vividly contrasting colours'—he has a red and white handkerchief, gold ear-rings, and a black cap and umbrella—as is the world around him (*Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* 94-5). Smith claims that this use of colour is 'rhythmic' and suggests that its rhythmic quality is rooted in the way colour—especially red, which is 'a dominant colour in the Fauvist palette'—is reflected or echoed in Ole Underwood's environment: the prison walls, for instance, and the barmaid's flowers are red (94). She also notes that the language in certain sections of the story has a rhythmic quality. While her general assessment of the story is correct, her account of how Mansfield creates this effect is not entirely convincing. Smith reads the first paragraph of the story as being 'largely monosyllabic and emphatic,' a quality which suggests to her 'Ole Underwood's impatience and angry fear' at his situation (94). This reading, however, does not do justice to the complexity of the passage (a section of which I quote and analyse below). Although the passage does contain a number monosyllabic words, it employs a variety of rhythms—rhythms that Mansfield creates, in part, through a wide range of syntactic structures which modulate the effect of the monosyllabic hammering. The prose of this story in general, however, does have a 'stuttering energy' (94), but I attribute this quality to the constant shift of the complex narrative voice (which has a cadence of its own in that opening paragraph) as it focalizes on Ole Underwood himself and becomes swayed by his rhythms.

We do not know much about Ole Underwood's engagement with rhythm(s) before the ordeal with his wife, but his affliction at the beginning of the story seems to be that something inside his breast is 'beat[ing] like a hammer'—

> One, two—one, two—never stopping, never changing. He couldn't do anything. It wasn't loud. No, it didn't make a noise—only a thud. One, two—one, two—like some one beating on an iron in a prison—someone in a secret place—bang—bang—bang trying to get free. Do what he would, fumble at his coat, throw his arms about, spit, swear, he couldn't stop the noise. Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Ole Underwood began to shuffle and run. (334)

In addition to exemplifying how the narrator's rhythms shift through the description of Ole Underwood's predicament, this passage suggests that the constant hammering (which makes Ole Underwood break into a desperate run) is at least in part the effect of the time he spent in prison. As we see throughout the story, Ole Underwood tends to look towards the prison during times of emotional distress, when the hammering is loudest, thus acknowledging its impact on him (335, 337). While the rhythm of this hammering is in part also the rhythm of his heart-beat—an internal rhythm whose origin is signalled as the seat of his passion, associated here with the murder of his wife for, presumably, having cheated on him—he seems to have become aware of this rhythm only during his confinement: its tempo is linked to the act of beating on prison bars in an attempt to break free. This intersection between internal and external forces coincides with the meeting point of the natural and the social in Ole Underwood's context.

The prison occupies a liminal space in relation to society (here, it is physically located 'on the other side of the hill' [334]) and it is a space that, through isolation and confinement, erases some markers of the passage of time while also seeming to extend duration to infinity.[33] To put it differently, prison is the place in which people are kept so that they may

[33] This experience of time seems to be based on Bergson's notion of pure duration (see *Time and Free Will*, especially pages 100-105).

remain outside of the customary rhythms of social life and, therefore, be unable to upset those rhythms through their crimes.[34] As such, it is also the place where the rhythms of the individual break down. We see this paradoxical relationship not only in how the banging on prison bars becomes a way of marking the passage of time or of maintaining a rhythm, but also in Ole Underwood's feeling that his determination to take action makes him 'young again'; he seems to undo the twenty years of being locked up as soon as he breaks free from the mental hold that the prison has over him (336).[35] Although there are suggestions that Ole Underwood will commit another crime at the end of the story, not all aspects of what will unfold are clear. In his article 'Katherine Mansfield and the Working Classes,' Charles Ferrall suggests that Ole Underwood is about to take revenge on the man who seduced—or perhaps even raped—his wife (4). While this outcome is certainly a possibility, it is equally likely that Ole Underwood may be attempting to murder the man who is currently in charge of his ship. This alternate interpretation would explain not only the familiar picture he finds on the wall of the 'State-room' he barges into, but also the obsession with the ship that seems to make Ole Underwood spring into action: 'His ship! Mine! Mine! Mine!' (337). But regardless of what we suppose the end of the story might be, it is quite clear that Ole Underwood is about to act specifically against the conditioning of his time in prison; he is metaphorically breaking through the bars in order to access other modes and other rhythms of being.

The ending of the story is irrelevant to some extent because the primary concern of the narrative does not seem to be to explore an ethical question; instead, it seeks to offer an

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[34] While it is true that the environment of a prison generally yields its own social order and its rhythms, in this particular story, Ole Underwood appears to have been isolated in the prison; there is no suggestion whatsoever of a community of which he may have been a part.

[35] This difficult relationship with time may also be why Ole Underwood notices 'an old face with a trembling chin and grey hair nodding out of the window' (355) as he is walking into town.

account of a certain kind of lived experience through a rhythmic lens.[36] In this respect, Mansfield skilfully shows how Ole Underwood synthesizes both internal and external rhythms despite his best efforts to resist them. One of the passages quoted above, which explains that the hammering never stops, has an inaccuracy embedded in it: the claim that Ole Underwood's rhythm is 'never changing' proves to be false. Significantly, the narrator's account becomes unreliable precisely at the moment that Ole Underwood's frustration colours the narrative itself. The account corrects itself later on in the story when we see that this maddening rhythm is subject to change and that the hammering does stop. One such instance is when Ole Underwood entertains himself by shooing the yellow hens that were huddled under a veranda. The cruelty of his action causes him no qualms until he notices that a little girl in a near-by yard is so horrified by him that she rushes back 'to the door [of the house], beating it, screaming "Mum-ma—Mum-ma!"' (335). This response, as the narrator reports, 'start[s] the hammer in Ole Underwood's heart' (335), thus implying that it had stopped earlier. What we have here is precisely Ole Underwood echoing and, in some sense, 'distorting' the girl's rhythm. Presumably the girl who is shouting to her mother is saying the words 'Mum-ma—Mum-ma!' in quick succession. When Ole Underwood internalizes them, the tempo changes to the slower beat of the 'one, two—one, two' superimposed on the 'bang—bang—bang' noted above. Similarly, the words he hears the Chinamen utter when he interferes with their card game—'"Ya-Ya! Ya-Ya!"' (336)—and his memory of his wife calling the kitten—'"Kit! Kit! Kit!"'—also become elongated (distorted) into the slower, more deliberate rhythm of the banging characteristic to him.

These episodes show that Ole Underwood's own cruelty does not really bother him; what does affect him is the reaction he sees in others, be it in the child, the barmaid, the

[36] See 'A Plea for Revolt in Attitude,' which also echoes the sentiment that a work of art 'must not preach' (1.03 6).

Chinamen, or, broadly speaking, society at large, which is that unnamed ‘other’ responsible for his imprisonment. Ole Underwood’s issues stem precisely from this clash between his rhythms and those of the society in which he lives. I suggested that Ole Underwood may be attempting to return to the life of the sailor because his ‘lust’ for the sea seems to be stronger than his lust for the wife he misses: in a subsequent episode he decides to, quite literally, fling the cat he had found—the reminder of his wife—away because of a different desire that rises up in him. As he is staring ‘up at the wharves and at the ship with flags flying’ the ‘old, old lust’ (perhaps a lust that is older than that for his wife) suddenly sweeps over him, so he mutters ‘“I will! I will! I will!”’ and he then heads straight for the ship which he wants to reclaim (336-7). In short, Ole Underwood’s own rhythm is distinctly at odds with the confinements that town life places on him; he seems to believe that the rhythms of the sea would not produce the same echo in him as the rhythms of the other town dwellers do.

‘Tales of a Courtyard’ also explores the interaction of different types of rhythm, focusing especially on the interplay between natural and social rhythms and touching on the dynamics between individuals and communities through the structure of echoing. Unlike ‘Ole Underwood,’ however, this story treats echoes as phenomena separate from ideas of causality; it is, instead, more concerned with denoting the ways in which different narrative frames and even different forms of art can be superimposed to create the effect of an echo despite being independent of each other. The story itself is divided into three episodes entitled ‘Early Spring,’ ‘The Following After,’ and ‘By Moonlight.’ The first episode’s title positions the entire story in a natural cycle—that of the seasons—and the action it describes takes place during the morning. The second and third sections mark different times of the day. However, the title of the second section—‘The *Following* After’ (my emphasis)—

denotes that we are not tracking a single cycle of a day, but snippets of different cycles. These snippets serve to underscore the repetition that is intrinsic to cyclicality but also the way in which one iteration of the cycle diverges from the next.[37] I will touch briefly on each of the three episodes and, through this discussion, explore how echoing happens not only within the frame of the story itself but also in the way that visual art is inserted into it.

The first episode stages a milder version of the conflict we see in 'Ole Underwood,' but instead of focusing on one individual, it explores the dynamics of a small group within a larger one. The natural rhythms denoted both by the cycle of the seasons and the days is complemented by the social rhythm of the postman delivering mail, which is the catalyst for the action of the episode. The postman's call serves to unify those who are living in the courtyard and to point out where, in the natural cycle of the seasons and days, the community finds itself. The episode is narrated by a first person plural, communal voice. McDonnell hears this voice as 'the kind of monolithic mass that featured in the [magazine's] essays' (67), but my own interpretation differs significantly: although the narrative voice remains first person plural throughout, the diction suggests a shift from a young voice (see, for example, the description of those who gather around the chestnut tree) to an older one (implied in the suggestions about the Russian students' inappropriate behaviour) throughout the episode.[38] As the postman walks in to deliver the mail he announces that the chestnut tree in the middle of the courtyard (around which people are wont to gather) was '"a mass of buds"' that morning (99). People in different houses open their windows to look at the tree

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[37] Jenny McDonnell sees these three episodes 'play[ing] out in reverse from "Early Spring" to the wintry setting of "The Following After" and finally "By Moonlight," which takes place on a summer night' (*Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace* 67). However, it does not really matter whether we are moving forward or backwards in time; a cycle is something that repeats and every iteration is, to the extent to which it expresses this property of cyclicality, replaceable by every other iteration.

[38] One could argue that the voice is shifting back to a youthful voice at the end of the episode, but that may well be a reflection of the way in which the community is behaving (i.e., pointing, laughing, and jeering at the Russian girl). Here, too, we find a structure of unity in opposition.

only to find that their neighbours have also done the same (99). A conversation about the community itself ensues and we find out that a topic of much intrigue is a group of Russian students—two males and a female—who had been living together in one of the apartments. These three had been hiding away 'all through the winter'; they had been spotted only 'behind the window, pacing up and down and talking with great gestures, or at dusk half running across the court' (100). They are not integrated into the wider community, nor do they engage in the same ritualistic activities of communicating with their neighbours (which their foreignness explains in part). Moreover, there is much suspicion about what might be going on among them on account of their shared lodging. Their absence from the public view during the winter calls forth among the neighbourly chatter even the suggestion that they might be dead. As it turns out, however, the spring that (aided by the postman) brings the courtyard community to their windows also brings the Russian girl out of doors, and puts the community's fears at ease. Despite this opportunity that spring—and the scare about the Russians' death—gives the community to absorb these outliers, it chooses to maintain them as outsiders through the act of mockery: 'We jeered and pointed at the swollen distorted body of the girl [distorted, one might add, in the same way that her daily activities are distorted by the community] moving through the sunlight' in the courtyard (100). In other words, natural rhythms may seek to unite, but social rhythms do not necessarily do so.

The second episode, 'The Following After,' begins with a shout that may well be mistaken for a retaliation from the Russian girl: 'That's enough—That's enough!' (100). We quickly realise, however, that this is a cry of frustration uttered by a man identified as Mark who is quarrelling with his lover. The tension between these two opposing impulses—that is, the impulse to bring together events that are dissimilar by using a phrase appropriate to both and that *reverberates* in both—and the impulse to differentiate between them by, for

instance, denoting the passage of time in the title or by attributing the words to someone of the opposite gender is maintained throughout the episode. One mechanism of preserving this tension is embedded within the structure of the story itself; another, which I will discuss shortly, emerges from the way in which Murry (and, presumably, Mansfield herself) chose to insert sketches by other artists into the text of the story. After the outburst quoted above, Mark storms out of the house. His lover awaits his return until nightfall, but then decides to go into the streets in search for him. The fears which she does not admit consciously become intertwined with and echoed by the ticking of the clock: 'All—gone, all gone, all—gone! ticked the clock. Her heart beat to it, but faster' (101). Although the comment that the world 'died the moment he [Mark] disappeared' and the spectre of Mark which guides the lover through the city suggest, quite plainly, that Mark is dead (100-1), Mark's lover maintains a certain level of hope despite her premonition. When she finally finds him (after 'crossing a little court' that may well be the same courtyard they were in that afternoon), she looks into the room that 'was touched with the pink light of the morning' and thinks that the pillow on which Mark's head is resting was 'so red' because the 'sunrise [was] staining' it so (102). Mark's blood on the pillow can—if only 'for a moment'—be confused with the red light of the rising sun, which delineates the beginning of another day, another cycle (102). The force of this episode lies precisely in this tension between similarity and difference, created by various forms of echoing, in his lover's mind. Much in the same style as 'Ole Underwood,' the episode ends just before this character has become fully aware of what has happened; however, we know that the realization that Mark is dead will be made all the more poignant on account of this play of red sunlight that, for a moment, allowed her to maintain the hope that he may have been sleeping. In this case, however, the echo of the reddish tint is

misleading: his blood on the pillow means precisely that he is no longer a part of the cycles of alternating day and night.

There is also another form of intertextual echoing that takes place in this story and it is a feature of how the narrative itself is printed. Part way through this second episode, just as the lover who has quarrelled with Mark goes out into the street to try to find him, the text is interrupted by a sketch of a fairly young man, who has a rather angry look on his face, drawn by Clarence King.[39] The emotion that this sketch projects matches the emotion Mark's face might have projected as he stormed out the door. It is conceivably also akin to the image of Mark that his lover carries with her during the uncanny moments when she thinks she sees him guiding her through the city or when she feels someone very close to her, laughing 'down her own throat' (101). The appearance of this sketch is both puzzling and elucidating. It is puzzling—and, indeed, jarring—on account of the sudden shift from one medium into another, but it also crystallizes and reinforces an aspect of the story through the similarity we can discern between the emotions represented by the narrative and those suggested by the portrait. In other words, one work of art (re)captures and reflects another work of art.

This practice of interpolating different media is quite common to *Rhythm*. Not only is it a feature of every issue, but it is also formalized in some of the woodcuts that frame the text. Some notable examples of these include Jessica Dismorr's woodcut of a naked figure looking at a sphere levitating off the ground, which appears for the first time at the end of Frederick Goodyear's 'The New Thelema,' or Marguerite Thompson's woodcut of a tiger stalking a monkey, which becomes an iconic image for the magazine as a whole, but which also makes its appearance in the first issue, just at the end of Murry's 'Art and Philosophy.'[40]

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[39] In 'Lines of Engagement: *Rhythm*, Reproduction, and the Textual Dialogues of Early Modernism,' Faith Binckes notes that this intermingling of text and image is 'in the style of a *livre d'artiste*' (27).
[40] See Angela Smith's *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* 79, which notes this repeated, rhythmic appearance of the woodcut.

Both of these echo the primitivism of the articles to which they are initially attached but, in echoing them, also provide an additional level of signification, which often creates critical distance through the use of humour. This dynamic is especially true in relation to the second woodcut, which is not only quite humorous in itself (the tiger, which has a smirk on its face, has managed to grasp the monkey by stepping on its tail), but also in the fact that it reappears in later issues with some regularity, and it even becomes a framing device for Mansfield's satirical portrait of London's artistic communities entitled 'Sunday Lunch' (2.09 223). I will return to this piece in the next section of this chapter; however, for the moment, I limit myself to pointing out that the relationship between the visual and literary art featured in this magazine is complex: there is not always a direct correlation between them. The concept of echoing can function differently in different contexts and may allow for each iteration of a feature to take on a different valence. The repeated printing of Thompson's woodcut along with different pieces, for instance, creates not only a kind of rhythm running through the magazine, but also serves to link the various works to which it is applied while signalling that each instantiation of it may mean something slightly different. In other words, the woodcut echoes different ideas depending upon each of its companion pieces.

In order to illustrate how difficult to parse this relationship between companion pieces can be, we need look no further than the third episode of 'Tales of a Courtyard.' Much like the second episode, the narrative of 'By Moonlight' is interrupted by another portrait (which happens to be sketched by J.D. Fergusson). In this case, however, it is not immediately clear in virtue of what these two works are brought together, but the process of trying to make sense of two works side-by-side can help to identify features common to both.[41] Unlike the

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[41] The question of whether the features identified as common are so in virtue of the works of art themselves or of the interpretive act which casts them as such is a problem that goes beyond the scope of this chapter. If, however, we follow Murry's idea that art and life are intertwined in virtue of their rhythmic properties, it

sketch that appears in the midst of the previous episode, which projects a clear emotion, Fergusson's sketch is more enigmatic; there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the portrait, which shows a middle-aged man with a half-smile on his face, and any of the characters in the story. However, because the presence of this second sketch is an echo of the first, we are encouraged to assess how these two pieces work together. In short, the ambiguity here functions much the same as the lack of clarity and precision does in Murry's manifesto: it points us back to the texts themselves and urges us to continue trying to identify patterns in both.

Feodor, the narrator tells us, 'was passionately fond of poetry' and had tried his hand at it a number of times. He also wanted to lead the idealized life of a Romantic poet: he wishes to '"go off into the country with nothing to do but lie in a field all day, or sail in a little boat on a river and sleep in a haystack as snug as a bee in a hive,"' only to return to the city at some unspecified time in the future with "enough poems to last you a lifetime"' (102). It is not exactly clear why this life-style is associated with writing poetry in Feodor's mind, or why the city, where he had already written some poetry, is not an adequate place for the pursuit of art. Indeed, it may well be the case that the desire to write poetry in this way is, as his insistence on having enough money to support an idyllic lifestyle that ostensibly requires none suggests, merely a wish for a certain kind of leisurely life within the 'capitalist' framework. And here we may well think back on Gilbert Cannan's 'The Blue Peter,' whose protagonist wanted to retire by the sea as opposed to leading a life of adventure as a sailor.

The nucleus of 'By Moonlight' is the interaction between Feodor and an old man. As Feodor is writing a poem on the bench by the chestnut tree, the old man sitting beside him brings out a book containing poems that, to Feodor's ears, sounded 'like bells ringing in

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becomes irrelevant whether the two works were placed together by design or by accident; we may well be able to discern 'echoes' between works of art which in no way 'caused' one another.

some splendid tower—like waves beating on warm sands—like dark rivers falling down forest-clad mountains' (104). These poems echo nature to such an extent that Feodor temporarily forgets 'his poverty and helplessness' and 'his craving to go away from the city' (104); he remembers all of these things only when he stops reading the poems. Upon realizing that 'the book is [monetarily] valuable,' for he hears the old man mutter that people have offered him much money for it,[42] Feodor decides to steal the book, to sell it, and to leave for the country funded by the proceeds (104-5). Presented with these two competing notions of value, Feodor finds himself leaning towards the monetary; his plan seems to be motivated by mercantile concerns *despite* having understood and experienced the transformative but immaterial value of the poems.[43] Although Feodor has some initial qualms about taking the book, and even makes a gesture to return it, he holds onto it over the course of the night only to find out the next morning that the old man, who he thought was sleeping, is dead. The report of the old man's death marks yet another abrupt end in this series of episodes that confuse sleep and death. There are some suggestions throughout this episode that the man has something 'divine' about him (103) and that the book may have been a casing for his soul (105). However, it is not clear whether Feodor killed the man by taking away his book of poetry or whether he was merely a scavenger who found an opportune moment.[44] And indeed, this is the ambiguity expressed in the enigmatic portrait embedded in this narrative, with its half-smile and impenetrable eyes, which echoes not only the character of the story as a whole but also, perhaps, the anticipated confusion of those who are reading this story.

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[42] The old man calls his book his 'all in all,' which perhaps is an echo of Murry's statement that the 'present is the all-in-all of art' (1.01 11).
[43] Jenny McDonnell also notices Feodor's ability to identify different forms of value but, for her, this divergence culminates in a definition of 'the artist' (68-9), which I will discuss shortly.
[44] McDonnell suggests it is the former (69); however, as I show in my discussion of this work, ambiguity appears to be a central concern for the story as a whole.

Jenny McDonnell, one of a handful of critics to have mentioned ‘Tales of a Courtyard’ and perhaps the only one who has analyzed it in any detail, understands the dynamic between Feodor and the old man as an attempt to work out the paradigm of the artist. Building on what she sees as the ‘anti-mob’ rhetoric of ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ and ‘Seriousness in Art,’ which present a simplistically antagonistic relationship between the avant-garde artist and the mass reading public’ (62), McDonnell reads the ambiguity surrounding Feodor’s act of seizing the book as a blurring of the boundaries between commercialism and an avant-garde, aristocratic engagement with art (68-71). McDonnell sees Murry and especially Mansfield as struggling with how to relate to their reading public; she notes that they oscillate between collaborative and isolated models of artistic production. She also agrees with Faith Binckes that both Murry and Mansfield had ‘a complex and not entirely adversarial relationship to the commercial culture they publicly disdained’ (Binckes ‘Lines of Engagement’ 28), but maintains that ‘*Rhythm*’s projected public’ was nevertheless ‘elitist’ (61), showing rather astutely that journalism ‘is associated with commercialism’ in their co-authored essay ‘The Meaning of Rhythm’ (63). Although I have referred to a section of the passage in the discussion above, I quote a slightly longer version of it here not only for its denunciation of journalism but also because it suggests a variation on the reading McDonnell offers:

> Freedom in the work of art . . . protests against the incursion of machine-made realism into modern literature. In its attempt to *reproduce* art democracy has succeeded in producing journalism. The journalist himself is the arch-democrat, for he denies his own individuality. (my emphasis, 19)

McDonnell’s interpretation builds on the commercial tensions that Faith Binckes has pointed out, but it seizes too quickly on the terms ‘aristocratic’ and ‘democratic,’ which are not used systematically throughout the publication and which, when they do appear, function merely to denote a majority and minority dynamic, much as the first episode of ‘Tales of a

Courtyard' does. In this respect, McDonnell's term 'elitism' seems far more appropriate because it focuses more directly on the dynamics between the avant-garde and the popular, which, as I have tried to show throughout this chapter, is a common theme in *Rhythm*. I also hear the denunciation of journalism as an echo of Ford: the mob is made up of those who, in *SL*, have lost 'all power of connected thought' and 'all individuality' on account of being overloaded with the 'facts' of the periodical press (85-88).[45] In other words, the aristocratic impulse here is neither political nor historical; it represents, as Gilbert Cannan explains in 'Observations and Opinions I – Machines,' that subset of society that is alive and that is able to go 'beyond mechanical right and wrong'—in other words, to transcend the binary of the stoker and the fuel. The emphasis of this passage, therefore, falls on the opposing forces of modernity—mechanical reproduction and artistic expression—not on class itself, which is more relevant to the next chapter. As I have noted before, this impulse to resist a mechanizing force that seems all encompassing is often acknowledged as a losing battle—as an endeavour that is bound to fail on account of the larger, systemic pressures characteristic of modernity. However, this losing battle is precisely what many small magazines, including *Rhythm* and *The English Review*, seem to be willing to take on, and they do so because each attempt in itself gives rise to a form of 'modernism.' As we have seen thus far, the core contributors of this magazine construct their modernist aesthetic by envisioning the interaction among the multiple layers of art and life in rhythmic terms.

Cosmopolitan Communities within a Rhythmic Framework

In the last section of this chapter I wish to return to the idea of community and to reflect on how *Rhythm* both embodies and projects communal structures. As I have tried to

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[45] This loss of individuality is something that seems quite important in 'Sunday Lunch,' too (see below).

show thus far, the various works featured in the magazine are markedly in conversation with one other: the content—and even the style—of any one author or artist is echoed, amplified, qualified, and sometimes even distorted in the works of another, often crossing generic and medium boundaries. These patterns of repetition and variation create not only a multiplicity of rhythms over the course of the magazine's run, but also a sustained engagement with the concept denoted by its title. This form of synthesis—this 'unity in opposition' as Lefebvre calls rhythmic patterns (*RA* 8)—provides a model for understanding the interplay between the individual and the collective as well as between the local and the global. If rhythm is the unifying principle in art, then *Rhythm* sees itself as fulfilling the very same function in relation to the community of artists it describes and to the community of readers it attempts to create.

This effort to model community is intertwined with what Carol Snyder calls the magazine's 'persistent, if diverse, primitivism' (146), which is deeply connected not only to the urban aspects of modernism but also to its cosmopolitan dimension. Frederick Goodyear's 'The New Thelema,' (discussed above) opens the first issue of *Rhythm* by proclaiming the formation of a community of 'neo-barbarians' that can reshape the future (1-2). Michael Sadler's 'Fauvism and a Fauve' expands the idea of community by offering a model for how individuals may fit within the collective. Both of these pieces prepare the ground not only for Murry's discussion of unity in 'What We Have Tried to Do' (1.03) but also for Mansfield's satiric portrayal of artistic milieux in 'Sunday Lunch' (2.09). Since I have already spoken at length about Goodyear's article, I will turn here directly to Sadler's, which functions as a map of the contemporary artistic landscape and as a way of delineating the community of Rhythmists (or 'Fauvists' as he calls them) represented in the magazine.

Michael Sadler dedicates the first few pages of his article to describing how Fauvism relates to contemporary artistic movements. He explains, for instance, that Fauvism is a reaction both 'against the lifeless mechanism of Pointillism' and 'against the moribund flickerings of the aesthetic movement,' but that it tries to salvage the vitality that Impressionism lost when it 'sacrificed line to colour and light' (14-6).[46] Fauvism, for Sadler, strives to achieve 'decentralization of design,' allowing painting to fill space, to 'spread over any size of surface' (17). This approach to design also allows for a decentralization of artistic doctrine and, therefore, of communal structures within the 'movement.'[47] The heterogeneity of artistic modes implied by decentralization is precisely what Arnold Bennett reacted against in the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Despite much criticism, however, the Rhythmists remained comfortable with a looser structure amongst their ranks. For instance, Sadler explicitly states that the aims and ideals of the movement are varied in all respects except one—that is, 'the desire for [expression through] rhythm' (14, 17). Similarly, Murry maintains that the strength of this artistic movement lies precisely in its 'vagueness' or in the flexibility that it allows practitioners of this kind of art ('What We Have Tried to Do' 36). The challenge then becomes, as the title of Sadler's piece suggests, relating an individual to the community.[48]

Neither Sadler nor Murry offers an easy solution to this problem, though they both attempt to articulate different approaches to it. Sadler demonstrates how the act of contextualizing works of art and of performing formal analyses of them may help one

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[46] The line, as Sadler explains throughout his article, becomes a unit of rhythmic visual art.
[47] We get some sense of this in 'Autumn Saloon,' which explains the similarities amongst different works painted in Cubist and Impressionist styles, thus showing that artists need not identify themselves as Rhythmists in order to employ similar creative principles. 'Cubists at the Grafton: A Retrospective' (2.13) also does something similar.
[48] As I show in Chapter 1, Ford also recognized that the problem of relating part to whole is at the root of modernity. His attempts to teach readers of *The English Review* how to piece together general concepts from snippets of text are in many ways mirrored in the structure and the layout of *Rhythm*.

understand the principles that inform both the works themselves and the artistic movements of which they are a part. This approach offers the magazine's readers a model of how to engage with individual works while linking that textual encounter with a communal structure. Murry's response differs from Sadler's in its explicit focus on the concept of unity. In 'What We Have Tried to Do,' he maintains that the only pathway to revitalizing art (literally, linking it with life) lies in the 'unity' of an artistic community whose members help one another pursue their varied goals without being caught up in 'petty differences' (36). This idea of unity is also linked to art itself. In 'The Meaning of Rhythm,' an essay Murry wrote with Mansfield, the unity of the work of art becomes a marker for 'the individual' or for the artist who shapes it (20).[49] However, both the individuality of the artist and the unity it creates in the work of art could not exist without this paradoxical interplay that rhythm denotes between similarity and difference (which Lefebvre captures very succinctly with the phrase 'unity in opposition'). Implicit in this explanation is also the idea that, having understood the 'new harmonies' that each artist creates, the audience also become unified in the community that serves to support artists, despite maintaining a certain level of heterogeneity. Sadler's and Murry's essays with their respective emphases on diversity and on unity seek to project modes of engaging with different forms of art for the magazine's readers that negotiate the tension between similarity and difference.

Mansfield's own contribution to this issue—'Sunday Lunch'—takes a slightly different approach to the problem that helps illuminate the cosmopolitan dimension of community building. The very complex and playful satirical sketch she presents of a London artistic community turned cannibalistic offers one of the best insights into the kind of

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[49] It is quite possible that this paradoxical unity is akin to the unity that Bergson attributes to number (see *Time and Free Will*, pages 76, 80, 82).

community that *Rhythm* aimed to create by presenting a perversion and a parody of it.[50] In so doing, it also draws a link between primitivism and cosmopolitanism. Most critics who discuss 'Sunday Lunch' interpret it as an instance of Mansfield's condemnation of—or, at the very least, ambivalence towards—London tastes for the exotic; Mansfield's critique of the cannibalistic tendencies described in 'Sunday Lunch' is, for them, also a critique of the primitivism espoused by the Rhythmists. However, Mansfield's choice to write under the pseudonym The Tiger draws a distinction between the act of devouring prey (which is what a tiger might do and which is playfully illustrated in Thompson's woodcut)[51] and its perversion, cannibalism, which weakens the very specie that the act of feeding should have sustained, leaving it in a perpetual stasis:

> The horrible tragedy of the Sunday lunch is this: However often the Society kills and eats itself, it is never real enough to die, it is never brave enough to consider itself well eaten. (225)

Whereas a tiger grows stronger on its prey, this artistic circle does not; it neither dies nor evolves.[52] Cannibalism, then, is a perversion of the life force—and even of the brutality[53]—that is often associated with primitivism. Indeed, in this piece, cannibalism amounts to a form of backbiting: not only is the 'Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism' the kind of society

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[50] Here I am drawing in part on Linda Hutcheon's article 'Parody Without Ridicule,' which explains that parody does not negate that which is being parodied: an act of parody, for her, is 'an act of incorporation' whose 'function is one of separation, of contrast' (203). She later restates the point in literary terms by explaining that 'parodic art both deviates from a literary norm and includes that norm within itself as background material' (204). Although Hutcheon's better known monograph, *A Theory of Adaptation*, revisits parody and re-casts it as a subset of adaptation, the article cited here provides a more comprehensive account of the mechanisms embedded in the form. I should also note that Hutcheon follows a long line of critics in showing both the differences between parody and satire and the point at which they converge. As my argument suggests, I see 'Sunday Lunch' as one of those works in which both approaches converge. While readings of the piece may choose to emphasize either its satirical or its parodic strand, both structures are very much present.

[51] See Snyder 142-4 and 150-6 for a slightly different interpretation of this framing device and of the sketch as a whole. Of the readings of 'Sunday Lunch' I have encountered, Snyder's seems to be the most comprehensive and her analysis of the colonial dimensions of this piece is illuminating.

[52] In regards to this topic, see the idea of evolution in Goodyear's 'The New Thelema' and in Murry's essays (discussed above).

[53] Here we can hear echoes of a line that Murry quotes from J. M. Synge in 'Aims and Ideals': '"Before art can be human it must learn to be brutal"' (36).

that kicks 'strictly under the table,' it also chooses to sacrifice people *in absentia* (225). Although we are told that the 'slaughter of absentees is only a preliminary to a finer, more keen and difficult doing to death of each other' (225), the ending of the piece (quoted above) reveals that the group in question never quite reaches that second stage of cannibalism; it never truly makes a killing. Even the act of drawing blood, for which these artists use 'ever greater skill and daring,' becomes a sign of cowardice, for these people have no blood but 'stuff like blood' flowing 'in their veins' (225). The author, who exposes this behaviour, is presumably able to rise above this mode of being and the publication of 'Sunday Lunch' in *Rhythm* points the finger, by default, away from the group associated with the magazine.

Although Mansfield critiques cannibalism on the one hand, the parodic mode of writing also inscribes this practice on a spectrum of the exotic and, indeed, the barbaric. As Carol Snyder points out, this sketch, along with the many other essays and literary or visual pieces that explore various facets of primitivism, effectively make the magazine itself a gallery in print: *Rhythm* 'becomes another cosmopolitan space that showcases modern primitivism' (144). Essays such as 'The Autumn Salon' or series such as 'The Galleries,' which curate London exhibits for the magazine's readers, serve a similar purpose.[54] This showcasing connects *Rhythm* with urban or metropolitan modernism because as Snyder explains, urban spaces were the only places where one could access such depictions of the barbaric, the savage, or the primitive (144).[55] The emphasis here, of course, falls on 'depiction,' for, as Snyder remarks, the galleries that displayed Gauguin's work[56] were catering to 'metropolitan desires for quaint exoticism' (140) and gave rise to certain ideals of

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[54] The advertisements for prints and exhibits of works by artists whom the magazine featured (cf. for example the 'Advertisements' section of 1.03-2.05 and 2.07 or the 'Notes' section of 2.06) also serve the same purpose.
[55] And here Snyder is also drawing on Mary Gluck's 'The Primitivist Artist and the Discourse of Exoticism.'
[56] The same kind of galleries that, presumably, would have shown the works alluded to in 'Anna Vaddock's Fame,' which I discuss above.

'cultivated savagery' (144). Primitivism, in short, was an urban phenomenon whose material was supplied by an international community of artists. The critics who read 'Sunday Lunch' as purely satiric, then, tended to equate this notion of cultivated savagery with the artistic pretension of London society that angered Mansfield.[57] Although 'Sunday Lunch' does echo some of that distaste, it also provides us with the means to understand the problem from the perspective of communal structures:

> [T]here is no city in this narrow world which contains so vast a number of artists as London. Why, in London you cannot read the books for the authors, you cannot see the pictures for the studios, you simply cannot hear the music for the musicians' photographs. And they are so careless—so proud of their calling. 'Look at me! Behold me, I am an artist!' Mark their continued generosity of speech—'We artists; artists like ourselves.' (223)

Not only have *these* artists upset the balance between life and art by focusing on individuality to such an extent that they eclipse the art itself, they have also lost their individualities in the process: they have become a type. When members of this community speak, their voices, unlike the voices featured in the magazine itself, are indistinct; their speech needs no attribution (244). By signing herself as The Tiger, Mansfield walks a very fine line between effacing her own identity (seemingly in the interest of foregrounding the art itself), and reclaiming that individuality by using a nickname that was commonly associated with her and thus projecting herself as 'the real' savage not only in name but also as a colonial outsider.[58]

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[57] In *Coming to London*, Murry cites a 'darkie' song that Mansfield was wont to sing about living in London: 'London's no place for me—and I don't like London town. / London societee—has turned me down' (105). Also see Rupert Brooke's rather humorous account of 'Katherine Tiger . . . [being] turned out of an omnibus . . . for calling a woman a whore' (quoted on page 2 of Smith's biography). Although Mansfield is defending the suffragist position, Brooke's playful admonition that 'she really ought to remember she's a lidy,' as Smith notes, betrays Mansfield's 'colonial provenance' (2).

[58] For more information, see Anna Snaith's analysis of Mansfield's own perceived relation to English (and London) society (*Modernist Voyages* 111-113, 122). See also Snyder's comment that '"Sunday Lunch" satirizes the trendiness and superficiality of metropolitan exoticism, a discourse in which Mansfield ambivalently participated' ('Katherine Mansfield, *Rhythm*, and Metropolitan Primitivism' 151). I take Mansfield's propensity for dressing up in exotic attire as a sign of this ambivalence. Donning such attire does not preclude her from having a humorous or critical assessment of what is happening in London society; indeed, it is quite possible to

I end my analysis of *Rhythm* with 'Sunday Lunch' because, as a parody, it not only captures the ideas at the very core of the publication but also shows the degree of flexibility that the concept of rhythm allows both in relation to art and to community formation. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, *Rhythm* markets itself as a cosmopolitan publication and, in this respect, approximates the behaviour of the hostess in 'Sunday Lunch.' The results, however, differ markedly from the outcomes of the luncheon. The hostess of the luncheon gathers artists at her table in order to support her cosmopolitan pretensions: these artists serve not only to attract that which is foreign and exotic (here represented by the figure of the Hungarian) by displaying their talents, they also become surfaces on which the cosmopolitan and the exotic are displayed.[59] The Londoner's French hat, bought '"from the little French shop"' or the French dancer's 'Chinese fan,' which stands out even more prominently against the hostess' 'leopard skin,' are two such examples (244). The members of this social circle are, in effect, both audience and performers. They are also participating in 'the new fashion,' that, as Mica Nava explains, was inspired 'by the brilliantly coloured erotic oriental themes and imagery introduced to London by the avant-garde Russian Ballet in 1911' (84).

Rhythm also supports its cosmopolitan aspirations through a double process of featuring cosmopolitan artists and works (listed at the beginning of this chapter) and marketing them to a cosmopolitan readership. To take just one example of it, Anne Estelle Rice herself had done a number of sketches of these costumes worn by these Russian ballet

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undercut London society's expectation of the exotic precisely by performing it to the extreme. In Snyder's words, Mansfield 'appropriates the tropes of barbarism and bestiality' and, one might add, even exoticism, 'to malign those who exclude her, *othering* the *other-ers*, as it were. She *embraces* the very rhetoric of otherness that the "Blooms berries" . . . sling at her, and slings it back in turn' both in her writings and in the persona she performs in London itself (Snyder's emphasis, 152).

[59] This crude display of the exotic can be seen in the way the luncheon's hostess admonishes one of her guests to 'perform' (presumably to perform an identity): '"Remember I didn't ask you to my lunch to wait until the food was served and then eat it and go. Beat your tom-tom, dear"' (224).

dancers and published them in *Rhythm* (first individually, across a number of issues, and, later on, collectively) along with her article on Russian ballet, just two months before 'Sunday Lunch' appeared. But a more important instance of this practice is found in the advertisements for 'agents abroad' displayed on the back cover page of the journal starting with the fifth issue. These agents are sometimes individuals—that is, foreign correspondents—and sometimes establishments such as bookshops, art galleries, and seemingly even stationery shops.[60] What the presence of these 'agents' suggests is not only that the magazine receives contributions from cities such as Paris, New York, Munich, Berlin, and, later on, Warsaw, Krakow, and Helsingfors, but that it may also be expanding its readership to those places. Although the works featured in the magazine may not be as thematically urban or metropolitan as those featured in *The English Review*, or even in other journals of the period,[61] the magazine quite literally positions the creation and distribution of these works within urban centres. *Rhythm*'s intended readership—that is, the kind of readership that the magazine targets—becomes as cosmopolitan as its contributors. In other words, London readers of the magazine can feel that they are linked to other loci of modernism through the magazine itself; the world appears in London at the same time that London itself acquires a world presence.

This way of simultaneously marking the points of origin and the centres of distribution for the magazine's contents unifies, in Murry's terms, the two communal structures associated with the magazine—its readers and its contributors. According to what Murry and Mansfield suggest in 'What We Have Tried to Do' and 'The Meaning of Rhythm'

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[60] The names listed in the publication include the Librairie Galignani, the Paris-American Art Company, or the Galerie Sagot in Paris, and the Cavalry and Co. in Berlin. See, for example, the back cover of the October 1912 issue, which provides an extensive list of places in other cities as well.
[61] We need look no further, of course, that the first line of *BLAST*'s 1914 Vorticist manifesto: 'Long live the great art vortex sprung up in the centre of this town!' (7)

(see above), this unity can exist only by virtue of the unity projected by the magazine itself. Unlike the incongruous agglomeration of signifiers we encounter in 'Sunday Lunch,' the collection of works featured in *Rhythm* is, as I have shown throughout my analysis, unified by the structuring principle of the echo, which creates rhythm(s) by sustaining the tension between similarity and the difference amongst different works of art.[62] It is precisely this kind of interplay that Murry's first expository piece for the magazine, 'Art and Philosophy,' signalled: each work of art featured in the magazine adds to and changes the notion both of rhythm and of modernism that the magazine presents, but does so in accordance with some principle of integration; each work becomes, in Murry's idiom, a new chord that creates a new harmony. Through this approach, Murry and his circle offered not only a means of unification across time by linking the past, present, and future, but also across space by linking expressions of modernism in different urban centres.

[62] The particular combination of the primitive, the exotic, and the cosmopolitan we see in 'Sunday Lunch' borders on the absurd (consider, for example, the image of the French dancer with the fan reclining on the leopard skin, which seems less than appealing). It also creates confusion, as in the episode where the Londoner is asked to prove Slavic heritage based on the Hungarian's assessment of his work.

Chapter 3

Rhythm and Identity in Virginia Woolf's Essays

Having analyzed the concept of rhythm through an editorial perspective (Chapter 1) and through a cosmopolitan community of writers and artists (Chapter 2), I now turn to consider the ideas of unity and cohesion associated with this concept from the point of view of one author, Virginia Woolf. Woolf published in a variety of periodicals over the course of three decades, from the mid-1900s to the mid-1930s. I have chosen to focus on her work in this chapter not only because she is one of the most prolific practitioners of the essay form, but also because, as Michael Kaufmann notes in his contribution to *Virginia Woolf and the Essay* (1997), she published her critical writings more widely than many of her contemporaries, including T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, whose work in this domain has received extensive critical attention (137-9). In his study, Kaufmann explains that

> while Pound and Eliot promulgated the new poetry of their Modernism to several hundred readers centred in London and New York through such 'organs' as *The Egoist* and the *Little Review*, Virginia Woolf spread her views on literature and Modernism in a forum that included tens of thousands of readers all over England and abroad. (137) [1]

However, Kaufmann also makes the important observation that Woolf's affiliation with mainstream contemporaneous journals leads, ironically, 'to the comparative lack of serious attention to her literary criticism' since her death (139). In their introductory remarks to the same collection, Jeanne Dubino and Beth Carole Rosenberg detail this problematic reception history by outlining four stages of response to Woolf's essays: the first, 1921-1941, which 'consists mostly of reviews, review-essays, and occasionally a chapter in a book on the

[1] In *Reading Virginia Woolf's Essays and Journalism* (1997), Leila Brosnan also makes a related point about Woolf's essays: '[A]lmost all the pieces published as essays in Woolf's lifetime, either as part of a collection or as individuals, enjoyed first publication in periodicals or newspapers. They were paid for and thus constituted a part of the economy of work, not the leisured existence untrammelled by the thought of money which characterised the world of high art' (101).

novel'; the second, 1941-1970, saw a 'backlash against Woolf,' resulting in a critical discourse that focused primarily on 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' and 'Modern Fiction,' which were discussed 'only in the context of her fiction'; the third, 1970-1992, was dominated by feminist criticism that 'tended to focus primarily on *A Room of One's Own*, *Three Guineas*, and scattered essays that address the position of women'; the fourth, from 1992 onward, is signaled by the publication of Volume 1 of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* edited by Andrew McNeillie and published by the Hogarth Press (2).[2]

This volume, which was only the first of six projected volumes spanning the early 1900s to the early 1940s, served not only to make widely available essays that had previously existed only in archives of individual periodical publications, but also, in McNeillie's words, to provide those interested in Woolf with a way of understanding both her development and 'the context in which her professional life was lived' (x). In short, it provided access to materials and to the critical apparatus necessary for scholarly engagement with Woolf's works. McNeillie made the case that the previously extant *Collected Essays*, compiled by Leonard Woolf, was merely an extension of the *Common Reader* series that Woolf herself published. Since these editions provided almost no new material or additional critical apparatus, they could shed little light either on Woolf's development or on her context (ix-x). *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, then, marked a new trend in Woolf studies. McNeillie's opening remarks in the introduction—that is, that Woolf's essays are worthy of attention because she was 'arguably the last of the great English essayists' (ix)—signals the recognition of Woolf's non-fictional writings within the scholarly community.[3] He also

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[2] Deborah Parsons also corroborates this reception history in *Theorists of the Modernist Novel* (12-13).
[3] McNeillie's claim about Woolf's status as an essayist demonstrates that her work was being canonized in modernist studies through the publication of her various writings. The suggestions that essay writing has been on the decline since the first half of the 20th century is, however, somewhat problematic. As I show in the remainder of this chapter, especially in my discussion of 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' Woolf saw the essay as an extremely flexible and adaptable genre that would persist in some form or another. In this context it is

acknowledges that his edition of Woolf's essays became possible because Woolf's complete diaries and correspondence, published over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, allowed him (and Stuart N. Clarke, who served as the editor for the final two volumes) to mine relevant contextual information for each of the essays collected in this edition (x). As subsequent volumes of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* became available, they opened up new avenues for engaging with Woolf's work.

Virginia Woolf and the Essay, edited by Dubino and Rosenberg, is the first published collection of essays to engage with this new material and, as such, it positions itself as following the critical trend expressed in Andrew McNeillie's project. Since this collection's publication in 1997, a number of other critics have joined in the effort to study various aspects of this critical corpus. The most notable include Leila Brosnan, Elena Gualtieri, and, more recently, Randi Saloman. I will discuss their individual contributions throughout this chapter; however, I begin by stressing what these critics have cumulatively tried to show about Virginia Woolf—that is, that Woolf was by no means what may be termed an 'isolated genius' of her historical moment. While the importance of the Hogarth Press as an outlet for Woolf's fiction and non-fiction is undeniable,[4] it is worth remembering that she published essays in forty-nine different magazines, ranging from the clerical publication entitled *The Guardian*[5] to the *Times Literary Supplement*, to *Vogue*. What is more, she published widely on both sides of the Atlantic.

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relevant to consider O. B. Hardison, Jr.'s analysis of the evolution of the 'protean' essay form in 'Binding Proteus: An Essay on the Essay' (1989), which argues that the essay form thrived well beyond the 1930s.

[4] Leila Brosnan explains, for example, that 'by publishing the two *Common Readers* and occasional pieces under the imprint of the "Hogarth Essays," Virginia Woolf announced herself to the reading public as an essayist, a term understood by common readers and literary critics alike to have specific generic implications' (95).

[5] For more information about this publication, see McNeillie's remarks both in the introduction to *E*1 (xi-xiii) and in the appendix dedicated to the journals in which Woolf published (*E*1 390).

Interest in Woolf's critical writings seems to have re-emerged partly on account of a growing understanding of the importance of the essay to innovation in modernist writing in general.[6] Critics within the field of English literature have made a number of attempts to show that the essay is not simply ancillary to various forms of poetry or to the novel and that it is worthy of study in its own right.[7] As Randi Saloman explains in *Virginia Woolf's Essayism* (2012), the essay was not only 'a central genre of the modernist period' but it also 'played a key . . . role in the development of the modern British novel' (2). This exploration of the essay form importantly coincided with a resurgent interest in periodical publications of the modernist period, made accessible in part by the Modernist Journals Project (MJP),[8] started in the mid 1990s, and, more recently, by works such as the seminal *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* (2009) or Robert Scholes' and Clifford Wulfman's *Modernism in the Magazines* (2010).

Virginia Woolf's work is particularly relevant to my dissertation not only because, as the range and volume of her writings attest, she was centrally positioned within her cultural moment, but also because, like many of the other literary figures I have discussed thus far, she is deeply interested in the idea of rhythm, especially as it functions within the domains of artistic and lived experience. As I will show in the remainder of my dissertation, Woolf's engagement with the concept of rhythm in both of these domains of experience contributes to

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[6] This concern is, naturally, bound up with a growing interest in the study of journalism in general. For more information regarding this trend, see Leila Brosnan's *Reading Virginia Woolf's Essays and Journalism* (4), but also Mark Goldman's *The Reader's Art*, N. Takei da Silva's *Modernism and Virginia Woolf*. Of particular relevance here is Brosnan's comment that 'the word "journalism" in conjunction with "essay" . . . is not meant to indicate two entirely separate categories of non-fictional works by Virginia Woolf, but a difference in approach to the one body of non-fiction' (5).

[7] See, for example, Graham Good's Preface to *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (1988), especially pages viii-ix. Good and many of the critics who follow him draw on Georg Lukács' 'On the Nature and Form of the Essay' (1908) and Theodor Adorno's 'The Essay as Form' (1958) in order to explain the range of the modernist essay (Good 14-25). This theoretical engagement with Lukács and Adorno, though part of common critical practice, is beyond the scope of my analysis.

[8] The MJP is a project to digitize modernist journals and make them widely available. It is currently run as a joint project between Brown University and the University of Tulsa.

the redefinition of the genre of the novel. The idea of unity rooted in rhythmic interaction provides Woolf with a way of understanding the interplay among different genres that participate in the creation of the novel and also (as it did for many of *Rhythm*'s contributors discussed in the previous chapter) with a model for the dynamic between an individual and a community within an urban space.

I begin this study with an analysis of what the essay as a genre means for Woolf and what role it played in defining a new direction for modernism. This section of the chapter is based primarily on three important essays Woolf wrote on this topic between 1905 and 1924, 'The Decay of Essay-writing' (1905), 'The Modern Essay' (1922), and 'Montaigne' (1924), but I also make some reference to the complementary 'Modern Fiction' (1919). While the remainder of the chapter investigates the relationship between the experience of art and the experience of modernity in a number of other essays, my analysis culminates in her novel *The Years* (1937), which will be the focus of my final chapter and which Woolf developed out of an essay project entitled *The Pargiters*. In tracing this arc from the essay to modern fiction, I draw on Randi Saloman's work in *Virginia Woolf's Essayism* (2012), which demonstrates that the essayistic mode of writing served as a testing ground for much literary experimentation during the first decades of the 20th century, and that it 'helped to produce the "high modern novel" itself' (2). Unlike Saloman, however, I argue that this generic fusion stems from a concern with rhythm both as a principle of art and as a way of parsing modern urban experience. Woolf articulates this dual aspect of rhythm as early as 1905, in an essay published by the *National Review* entitled 'Street Music.' She returns to it again in the 1920s and early 1930s in a number of other pieces that explore, in different ways, the experience of rhythm. The patterns created by this experience outline the dynamic interplay between unity

and dispersity in various domains.[9] The most important of these essays are 'Letter to a Young Poet' (1932), 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (1927), 'Street Haunting' (1927), 'The Docks of London' (1931), and 'Oxford Street Tide' (1932), which are grouped thematically, not chronologically, throughout the chapter. The first group, comprised of 'Letter to a Young Poet' and 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' tackle the idea of rhythm as it relates to the concept of unity within art; the second group, comprised of 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide,' focus on rhythm as a principle of coherence in the city. 'Street Haunting' serves as a transitional point between these two.

Since my analysis seeks to unify these essays through their engagement with the idea of rhythm, a note is in order about their different publication histories. As noted above, these essays span approximately three decades of Woolf's career. Some of them were published in England, some in the United States, and some in both countries. 'Montaigne' and 'Modern Fiction,' for instance, were published in the prestigious *Times Literary Supplement* in England, for which Woolf wrote extensively and which, over the course of these three decades, served as a training ground for the development of her critical style.[10] 'Letter to a Young Poet' ('Letter') which is in many ways a technical piece, and 'Street Haunting,' which not only provides a sense of London but also returns to the idea of rhythm explored in 'Letter,' were published in the *Yale Review*, a 'highbrow' quarterly American publication (Daugherty 9). 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' which attempts to conceive of the future of literature in broader terms, was published in the similar, though perhaps slightly closer to 'middlebrow,' *New York Herald Tribute* (Daugherty 9). It was later reissued by Leonard

[9] 'Unity' and 'dispersity' are, of course, the resounding refrains of *Between the Acts*, published in 1941 (see especially pages 66-136).

[10] Andrew McNeillie's notes on the periodicals that featured Woolf's essays, upon which I have drawn extensively, can be found in the appendices of each of the volumes of essays he edited. See also Mark Goldman's *The Reader's Art*.

Woolf under the title 'The Narrow Bridge of Art,' in England. Although the circumstances of the publication of these essays differ widely, occasionally it is clear that Woolf wrote some essays for very specific audiences. This kind of engagement is especially clear in 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide,' which were part of a series entitled *The London Scene* that was commissioned by and published in *Good Housekeeping*.[11] *Good Housekeeping* was an altogether different kind of publication from the explicitly literary magazines: its aim was, quite pragmatically, 'to teach middle-class women how to run their homes' (Braithewaite et al. 7). As I point out in my analysis of these two essays, Woolf's target audience had a significant impact on how she approached her subject matter. Moreover, in keeping with Kaufmann's assessment of general tendencies in Woolf reception studies, many critics have tended to dismiss *The London Scene* precisely because it was written for such an undistinguished audience. As I argue at the end of this chapter, however, the difference in Woolf's approach here serves to highlight precisely what I wish to demonstrate about her ideas of rhythm: that is, that despite the divergences among the essays I mention above, Woolf's sustained engagement with the city and with questions of identity allows these discrete works to exist in a quasi-rhythmic relationship to each other. This rhythmic relationship creates a form of unity and cohesion among them.

The Importance of the Essay Form

Virginia Woolf began articulating her ideas about the essay as a form in 1905, roughly at the same time as she began thinking about the importance of rhythm. 'The Decay of Essay-writing' was published in *Academy and Literature* in late February of that year and

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[11] For additional information on the publication, its audience, and Woolf's possible reasons for engaging with it, see Alice Wood's article 'Made to Measure: Virginia Woolf in *Good Housekeeping* Magazine,' especially pages 13-17.

'Street Music,' which serves in many ways as a companion piece, was published the next month in the *National Review*. As Hermione Lee points out in her biography of Woolf (*Virginia Woolf* [1997]), 1905 marked a significant change for Woolf. While she was recovering from the nervous breakdown that followed Leslie Stephen's death, she moved back to London, to the Gordon Square house that Vanessa had rented (Lee 203-4). Here she not only managed to return to writing but also took up 'her life-long hobby of "street haunting,"' which she documents in part in her diary (Lee 206-7). This notion of 'street haunting' informs a number of the essays I discuss below. As I explain throughout this chapter, reading/writing and navigating the urban space are linked in very important ways for Woolf, and she often describes these activities using similar terms. This approach is characteristic not only of her essays but also of her fictional works. Since the latter have received far more critical attention, I focus here primarily on the former, making only occasional references to her fiction. Before showing the ways in which writing and walking converge in Woolf's work, however, I wish to discuss what the essay form means to her and why it is relevant to a number of the key issues she explores throughout her writings.

'The Decay of Essay-writing' is the first published essay in which Woolf links the genre of the essay with what is, for her, a quintessentially 'modern' endeavor—that is, with finding an appropriate form in which to express modernist issues and ideas. Although the discussion of content and form here seems, at first glance, to be quite rudimentary, Woolf's characteristic playfulness in tackling the subject baits us with a simple assertion about the state of modernist literature only to bring us face-to-face with the complexity of the problem at large.[12] She begins by outlining, half-jokingly, what seems to be a tangential problem of

[12] For an analysis of this playful, 'feminine' writing, which is related to a form of feminine street walking characterised by deviation from expected routes, see Rachel Bowlby's 'Walking, Women and Writing,' especially pages 209-219. Pamela L. Caughie's 'Purpose and Play in Woolf's *London Scene* Essays,' which I revisit below, also makes a similar point (see pages 396-406).

modernity: the modern age has been so industrious in its production of written works that every household must now assign a member 'to stand at the hall door with flaming sword and do battle with the invading armies' of 'tracts, pamphlets, advertisements, gratuitous copies of magazines, and the literary productions of friends' (*E*1 24-5).[13] The problem she identifies is that the moderns 'try to be new by being old,' which often entails reviving such archaic forms as mystery plays, and affecting archaic accents (*E*1 25). At one extreme, she explains, they deck themselves 'in the fine raiment of an embroidered style,' at the other, they 'cast off all clothing' (*E*1 25). Woolf's initial, rudimentary schematic of form as an outer layer of content, however, quickly gives way to a far more nuanced sense of the dynamic between the two. Drawing on the multiplicity of available forms, Woolf reasons that

> if there are thus an infinite variety of fashions in the external shapes of our wares, there are a certain number—naturally not so many—of wares that are new in substance and in form which we have either invented or very much developed. (*E*1 25)

These works that are 'new in substance and in form' are most worthy of attention. The personal essay, following in the tradition of Montaigne, is, for Woolf, 'the most significant of these literary inventions'; 'the peculiar form of an essay,' she notes, 'implies a peculiar substance' and writing in this form comes closest to the moderns' 'natural way of speaking' (*E*1 25).[14]

The oft-quoted claim that 'all essays begin with a capital I—"I think", "I feel"' (*E*1 25), is, as Woolf explains both in 'Modern Essays' and in 'Montaigne,' precisely where the strength of the type of essay associated with Montaigne lies. In short, modern writers attempt

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[13] All references to Woolf's essays are to the six-volume edition of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. The first four volumes were edited by Andrew McNeillie himself; Volumes 5 and 6 were edited by Stuart N. Clarke.

[14] In this passage Woolf speaks of moderns already writing essays as if it were their most natural speech pattern; however, it is not clear whether the moderns she has in mind reach as far back as Montaigne ('the first of the moderns' [*E*1 25]), or whether she is referring more specifically to her contemporaries. Given the warning about the 'mechanical act of writing' that she places shortly after her discussion of Montaigne (*E*1 26), the former seems more appropriate, for there is a sense which the art of essay writing has begun to decay—to become an empty form.

to use this form because it is most conducive to speaking about themselves. As has been less often noted, however, therein also lies the kernel for the possible decay of this genre—that is, the imposition of this 'I' upon others. Woolf ends 'The Decay of Essay-writing' with a warning that what she calls 'modern criticism' has been reduced to the expression of 'individual likes and dislikes—the amiable garrulity of the tea-table—cast into the form of the essay' (*E*1 26). The 'amazing and unclothed egoism' that offers precepts and advice based on individual likes and dislikes, is a form of didacticism that marks the decay of the essay form (*E*1 26).[15] For Woolf, the aim of the essay should be to give a certain form of delight, and 'everything in an essay must be subdued to that end' (*E*4 216). Despite this focus on the self, however, Woolf explains that the essay requires much skill in execution because one must contrive to fit this self between the margins of a page. The essayist is always working within the constraints of an allotted space—the page of a magazine—and must be able to use that space with great dexterity,

> beginning as close to the top of the sheet as possible, judging precisely how far to go, when to turn, and how, without sacrificing a hair's-breadth of paper, to wheel about and align accurately upon the last word his editor allows. (*E*4 220)

This difficult work of navigating a page is important because the type of essay Woolf discusses must provide its readers with a 'presence,' which is the essayist's most 'dangerous and delicate tool' in reaching an audience, within very strict confines (*E*4 220). The role of the essay—and of the essayist—is to bring 'personality into literature' (*E*4 220). The task is so very difficult in part because 'it is only by knowing how to write that you can make use in

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[15] See Melba Cuddy-Keane's *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (2-3 and 132-145) for a more detailed discussion of Woolf's resistance to didacticism in favour of a dialogic approach. Similarly, in *Virginia Woolf and the Literary Past*, Jane de Gay makes the point that both in her fictional and non-fictional writing Woolf has the tendency of casting 'the author as a character with whom the reader can engage' (8). Alexander J. Butrym's comment that the popularity of the essay genre is its 'ability to draw us by indirection out our ourselves' and to enable us to 'speak to each other across the boundaries of our narrower lives' is also worthy of consideration in this context (Introduction to *Essays on the Essay* 1).

literature of your self'—more specifically, of 'that self which, while it is essential to literature, is also its most dangerous antagonist' when it becomes too authoritative and inflexible (*E*4 221).

This idea of personality is strikingly similar to what Ford Madox Ford observes about the aim and importance of literature in general, which I outline in Chapter 1 in my discussion of 'On Impressionism.' Moreover, as I explain below, this notion of personality (which Woolf also labels as 'soul,' the 'I,' and, elsewhere, as 'life') is precisely why essays in the style of Montaigne become an important genre in the development of a new kind of novel.[16] For Woolf, Montaigne could be considered as the 'first of the moderns' because 'he refused to preach' (*E*4 72). Instead of ethical precepts, he sought to communicate a version of a *self* through his writings. Woolf admires Montaigne's work in particular because what emerges throughout the volumes of his essays is 'the very pulse and rhythm of the soul, beating day after day, year after year' (*E*4 78). And if reading an essay provides an encounter with this kind of personality,[17] then one is by no means 'finished with' a good essay because one has read it, in the very same way that one cannot say that a 'friendship is over [simply] because it is time to part' (*E*4 221). The guiding principle of essay-writing, then, is not to teach but 'to

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[16] In a series of three essays that are based upon one another, 'Modern Fiction,' 'Character in Fiction,' and its later incarnation 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown,' Woolf develops the idea of literature encompassing 'life' through an exploration and inclusion of character. In these essays (see especially *E*3 377-8, 420-2, and *E*4 158-160), Woolf contrasts what she calls literary 'materialism,' which is the tendency of fiction writers to focus on facts such as 'houses, incomes, and occupations of . . . [their] characters' at the expense of something more 'essential' (*E*4 160), which she calls 'life' and which is directly related to the ability to convey a character, 'soul,' or 'personality' through fictional writing. I explore this idea, and its relation to the genre of the personal essay, in more detail in my reading of *The Waves*.

[17] In this case, this persona is linked directly to the author. In this regard, see also Good's study on pages 40-1 and 113 or Scott Russell Sanders' discussion of the fraught relationship between author and speaker in 'The First Person Singular,' published in *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*. In the same volume, Georgia Johnston's essay 'Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader*' touches briefly on this issue in relation to the volume of essays Woolf herself compiled (148-150, 156-7).

communicate'; reading is done neither 'to acquire knowledge' nor 'to earn a living,' but 'to extend our intercourse beyond our own time and province' (*E*4 76).[18]

This extension through time and space is achieved, for Woolf, by using rhythm, which, as I have pointed out already, is constituted by the tension between unity and difference, as a framework for interpersonal relations.[19] The 'sense of dialogue' that Jane de Gay attributes in *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (2006) to Woolf's fictional and non-fictional writings alike is one example of such a rhythmic interaction (8). De Gay notes, for example, that this dialogic structure casts 'the author as a character with whom the reader can engage' (8), which, as I show above, is a feature she borrowed from Montaigne's essays. Moreover, this dynamic can also be applied to Woolf's relation with the literary past: de Gay's analysis of 'Reading' (1919), for example, shows that, throughout her essays, Woolf understands texts to be 'palimpsest[s] of earlier writings' and also 'a physical space in which past writers are present and active' (10).[20] My own analysis of 'Letter to a Young Poet' and 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (below) offers an expansion of precisely this idea, showing that, for Woolf, her work in the essay form aims to provide readers with the opportunity to encounter some kind of self—an *other* self than the one to which they are accustomed. As I show in the remainder of this chapter, she conceives of this encounter in rhythmic terms, which contain an aspect of harmony or unity that does not efface difference. This type of harmony is an effective way of bringing together different points of view or

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[18] This form of extension across both time and space suggest a communal dynamic akin to that of the Rhythmists I discussed in Chapter 2 and its structure is founded on harmony as much for Woolf as it was for them. Here I refer not only to the dynamics among the community of *Rhythm* contributors but also to the way in which the ideas of primitivism that many of them adopt in an attempt to position their own work in a harmonic relationship with that of the past. See also Melba Cuddy-Keane's 'Virginia Woolf and Cohabiting Communities' (forthcoming 2018).
[19] For more information of this tension between similarity and dissimilarity, see Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (6-7, 77-79). While for Lefebvre this tension is preserved in a (non-Hegelian) dialectical structure that resists fusing its constitutive terms (11-12), for Woolf it seems to exist in a *dialogic* structure.
[20] The idea of a palimpsest also features in Melba Cuddy-Keane's reading of *Between the Acts* (see her introduction to the novel, pages lii-lix).

different personalities because, by its very nature, it eschews the question of the nature or essence of any one entity, focusing instead on how a number of such entities can *relate* to one another irrespective of the context in which they find themselves. What follows, then, is an attempt to trace the link between the pulsating rhythm of 'life' that Woolf describes in 'Montaigne' and the rhythm of the modernist city, which is analogous to the interaction between the form of the essay and that of the novel.[21]

'Street Music': Rhythm as the Fundamental Form of Experience

In the 1905 essay 'Street Music,' published in the *National Review*, Woolf discusses the effects that music and, more specifically, that rhythm have on us. She also positions music itself as the most powerful form of art from which others, including literature, are derived.[22] An intriguing feature of the essay is, however, that she locates the discussion of this type of artistic production and experience within the city space. This way of conceiving of modern art is also a feature of much of her later work. A number of the images of city life that have their inception in 'Street Music' inform the depictions of London we find in some of her later essays (discussed below) as well as in *The Years*, which Woolf wrote almost three decades later. Similarly, the ideas about rhythm sketched in this essay provide the foundation for Woolf's thoughts on the relation of rhythm to various literary forms and to the tide of commerce, which she articulates more fully during the 1920s and 1930s. Rhythm can serve

[21] Graham Good, whose work informs much of the reception of Woolf's non-fiction corpus, notes that the essay, especially in its English form 'cultivates diversity' and that it is based not on learning but on experience; as a genre, it attempts to 'yield flexibility to individual experiences' (6-7). Therefore, even '[t]hought in the essay tends to be presented *as experienced*, not as afterthought' (7-8).

[22] In 'Virginia Woolf and Musical Culture,' Mihály Szegedy-Maszák notes that Woolf seems to have realized, through her various encounters with different genres of music, that the '"sense for rhythm" . . . was a sine qua non of prose writing' for her (68).

as an effective principle of unity in both of these domains precisely because it activates something that is fundamental to human experience.

The pretext for 'Street Music' is the paradoxical relationship that Londoners have with their street musicians: on the one hand street music is dubbed a nuisance, but, on the other, the ever-increasing number of street musicians of varying talent would suggest that playing on the streets is a lucrative profession (*E*1 27). This fraught relationship is based on the fear that musicians, who 'are the most dangerous of the whole tribe of artists,' might incite 'within us something that is wild and inhuman' (*E*1 29) and which goes against 'civilisation.'[23] Civilisation is linked, for Woolf, to formal musical training, which focuses primarily on melody, the 'safest and easiest attribute of music' (*E*1 30). Rhythm, 'which is its soul,' and harmony, 'have been pressed, like dried flowers into . . . neatly divided scales' that tame and domesticate (*E*1 30). 'To be civilised,' Woolf explains, 'is to have taken the measure of our own capabilities and to hold them in a perfect state of discipline'; the Dionysian musician (for Dionysus himself is 'the wildest of all the gods, who has not yet learnt to speak with human voice, or to convey to the mind the likeness of human things') has the 'strange and illimitable power of a natural force' over us (*E*1 28-30). This incredible force is precisely why something as 'crude and emphatic [as the] rhythm' of a barrel organ 'sets all legs of passers by walking in time' (*E*1 31).[24] Rhythm, therefore, becomes an alternate mode of organizing modern urban life. Civilisation, as suggested above, is a set of seemingly artificial precepts that, much like music theory, manage and, if need be, suppress

[23] The notion of civilization seems to have been a concern for other members of Bloomsbury as well. In 1928 Clive Bell published a series of essays under the title *Civilization*. Bell dedicates the work to Woolf and suggests, in its preface, that she played a part both in its inception (during the first decade of the 1900s) and in its development (v-vii).

[24] For possible links between the Dionysian in this essay and Igor Stravinsky's 'revolutionary music,' see pages 264-6 of Evelyn Haller's contribution to *Virginia Woolf and Music* entitled '"Shivering Fragments": Music, Art and Dance in Virginia Woolf's Writing.'

aspects of human nature (for rhythm is 'inborn in us' [*E*1 30]) or of human experience that may pose a threat of any kind to this order.

It is important to note in this context that many of the street musicians mentioned are distinctly 'other' in relation to the more educated and affluent classes who are better accustomed to this order. In most cases the musicians are poor, shabby, or foreign: the organ grinders are Italian, the violinists who use 'their instrument[s] to express something in their own hearts' are dressed in rags, the old man whom the narrator of the essay follows, mesmerized, appears 'disreputable' (*E*1 27-8).[25] Indeed, artists in general seem questionable, not only 'because of the eccentricities of the artistic temperament,' but because the English have reached such a 'perfection of civilisation' that they consider 'expression of any kind . . . [as] almost indecent' and 'certainly irreticent' (*E*1 28). The artist 'is possessed by a spirit which the ordinary person cannot understand, but which is clearly very potent' (*E*1 29) and is, therefore, able to disrupt the order of civilised society.

Woolf suggests in rather playful terms that an alternate mode of ordering society would not only be more effective but also, in some sense, more holistic. The effectiveness of this form of order is symbolized, for Woolf, by the image of 'a room full of civilised people moving in rhythmic motion at the command of a band of musicians' (*E*1 31).[26] This scenario illustrates perfectly how insidious the force of rhythm is: because 'rhythm in the mind is akin to the beat of pulse in the body' (*E*1 30), some aspect of rhythm is always present in some form or another even at the heart of the most civilised gatherings. The tongue-in-cheek suggestion that 'a band in the centre of the wild discord of cabs and carriages [on London

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[25] Similarly, the 'battered old woman' whose song arrests Peter Walsh opposite Regent's Park Tube Station in *Mrs Dalloway* is yet another example of such an 'other' (68-70). Elicia Clements notes that even in this case the music is being performed for an audience (and indeed, the narrator records Rezia hearing the song as well), which gives the experience a communal structure ('Musical Events in *The Years*' 185).

[26] Woolf returns to this image and explores it more fully in *The Years*. For more information, see my discussion of North's re-integration into the London social scene in Chapter 4.

streets] would be more effectual than a policeman' is merely a consequence of the observation that the beat of a strong rhythm would turn all traffic (humans, horses, and the machines to which they are attached) into a harmonious dance. The essay ends with a rather naïve assertion that if the music of composers such as Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart could be heard at every street corner,

> it is probable that all crime and quarrelling would soon be unknown, and that the work of the hand and the thoughts of the mind would flow melodiously in obedience to the laws of music. (*E*1 32)

In this passage Woolf suggests that the experience of music and, more specifically, of 'rhythmic harmony' can momentarily create out of life a seemingly 'united and musical whole' (*E*1 31). The unity that rhythm lends to various kinds of human activity becomes very important for Woolf's suggestion that the experience of literature, which is itself very 'nearly allied to the art of music' (*E*1 31), is related to urban experience.

Rhythm and Literary Form

'Letter to a Young Poet' published in *The Yale Review* in 1932, takes a critical essay and casts it into the form of an epistle. The cross-over effect of these genres is an important aspect of what the piece aims to do: as noted earlier, Woolf softens the didacticism that is often associated with the essay form, especially with its overtly prescriptive incarnation aimed at providing general precepts for writing modern poetry, by the application of the epistolary form, which offers readers an individual—and personal—perspective. The result, then, is a subjective exploration of what contemporary poetry is and an attempt to articulate what it might do. For the purposes of my analysis, 'Letter to a Young Poet' is especially important because it explains the ideas of rhythm and unity that the novel itself must appropriate, as she notes in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' in order to become more

relevant to modernity. It also helps establish a conceptual link between fragmentation in literature, fragmentation of the self, and fragmentation within the modernist city, which she discusses both in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' and in 'Street Haunting.' Since Woolf herself did not develop her ideas about the relationship between rhythm and unity sequentially, preferring instead to explore different aspects of this dynamic at different points in time, my analysis will follow the ideas themselves, not their order of publication. Moreover, as we can see from some of her other writings, including diary entries, letters and novels (which I shall touch on below), the very process of revisiting a certain set of ideas in slightly different ways over an extended period of time is itself linked to the creation of a kind of (Lefebvrean) rhythm, as well as to the way she envisions the artistic process in the modernist age.[27]

In the opening paragraphs of 'Letter to a Young Poet' Woolf signals that she is about to engage in a personal form of literary criticism as opposed to an impersonal and authoritative kind. She does so partly through an emphasis on the ephemeral quality of letters and of much modern writing linked to personal opinion, and partly through her admission that she cannot speak with any authority about poetry because she lacks 'a sound university training' (*E*5 308). This form of undercutting what might be understood as conventional authority is quite common for Woolf.[28] What she offers as replacement for an authoritative voice, however, is a thought experiment through the perspective of different characters that the essay itself constructs: 'Let me try to imagine, with your [the poet's] letter to help me, what it feels like to be a young poet in the autumn of 1931' (*E*5 309). This manner of articulating literary criticism is not only a continuation of the ideas we see in 'Montaigne,'

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[27] For more information, see my earlier discussion of the tension between similarity and difference in relation to rhythmic unity.

[28] See Georgia Johnston's analysis of different models of authority Woolf works with in her essay entitled 'Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader*,' and especially on pages 152-3 and 155-7.

but also a paradigm for how the young poet might conceive of himself in relation to his art and his historical moment. Just as Woolf offers the poet a series of personas (a novelist, a critic, a reader, an observer of modern life) that, over the course of the essay, become unified into one voice, the advice she gives the young poet is to synthesize the various aspects of his knowledge and experience into a poetic whole. On the one hand he must be an embodiment of a poetic tradition, for she tells him that he is 'a poet in whom live all the poets of the past' (*E*5 309); on the other, he must represent his contemporary moment and collect it within himself.[29]

The notion of being able to synthesize a historical moment in a work of art is quite complex and Woolf dedicates most of 'Letter to a Young Poet' exploring both the problems and possible approaches to creating this new kind of poetry. The challenge of being a modern poet is, for her, twofold: the pressures that readers, who are now an unprecedentedly large proportion of the population, exert on authors by demanding certain forms of entertainment, and the mundane and often contradictory aspects of modern age, which never quite 'fit' into the category of poetry (*E*5 308-9). Often, these two challenges overlap. Moreover, Woolf describes the problem that the poet faces in the act of creation as a problem of sustaining a certain rhythm: in this essay, the experience of writer's block emerges as an encounter with a 'hard and hostile object' that halts and shocks 'the rhythm which was opening and shutting' in his mind as he was writing (*E*5 310). This 'foreign object, angular, sharp-edged, gritty,' that refuses 'to join in the dance' of the poet's thoughts happens to be a certain Mrs Gape, who imposes upon the poet by asking that he 'make a poem of her' (*E*5 310). Mrs Gape is quickly followed by a Miss Curtis on the omnibus and then yet a third person, a certain C., all of whom flood the poet's mind and stifle his pen by demanding that he retell their stories in

[29] See Section I of T. S. Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' which may have influenced Woolf's own thinking in this regard.

verse (*E*5 310). Woolf hastens to show, however, that this affliction is not unique to the poet she addresses. A cursory look at contemporary poetry suggests that something is amiss with poetry itself: the shock of modern poetry is partly the result of contemporary poets' attempt to include emotions or topics that are 'not domesticated and acclimatised to poetry' (*E*5 311). It is impossible, Woolf concludes, to write 'about the actual, the colloquial,' about Mrs Gape or Miss Curtis or the omnibus, 'without straining the machine of poetry' (*E*5 314).

Woolf makes a similar point in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future': not only does she say that poetry is unaccustomed to being 'used for the common purpose of life' (and is, therefore, unable to handle Miss Curtis or the omnibus), she also explains that some of the challenges of bringing modern life into poetry have much to do with the structure of the modern world, which is mirrored in the fragmentation of the modern mind (*E*4 434-5). Here, as in 'Street Haunting' (below), Woolf is able to conceptualize these aspects of the modern mindset by drawing on the structure of the city itself. And in order to experience the structure of the city one must walk through it. A walk through the streets of London shows the narrator of this essay that moderns live in brick boxes, locked apart and connected only by overhead wires which 'speak aloud to . . . [each dweller] about battles and murders and strikes and revolutions all over the world' (*E*4 434-5). It is no surprise, then, that the structure of the mind is much like the structure of these habitats, coloured by the information that floods into them: the modern mind is inquisitive and 'extremely alive to everything—to ugliness, sordidity, beauty, amusement'—but there is a 'strange way in which things that have no apparent connection are associated' with one another; even emotions which entered 'the mind whole are now broken up on the threshold' and then 'incongruously coupled' (*E*4 435). Something is amiss in all this incongruity despite the candour and honesty that the modern

mind seems to have gained; the category of poetry has to be stretched to the extreme in order to accommodate the range of information that has become jumbled in such a mind (*E*4 436).

Since neither giving in to the demands of readers who wish to see themselves reflected in literature nor including, piecemeal, the objects of modern life results in what might constitute 'successful' poetry for this essay's novelist-critic (*E*5 311), Woolf offers a third alternative: she suggests that the starting point of poetic composition ought to be the self of the poet. This approach is more promising in Woolf's estimation than the other two because it treats poetry itself, as well as the process of writing in general, from a rhythmic perspective. Woolf says very little about what this poetic self might be except that it cannot be specific to the past, described by other poets in other ages,[30] and that it must be determined 'to tell the truth' about itself even if it should make modern poetry more difficult to understand by stretching in a different way to accommodate this truth (*E*5 313-4). Although this intelligibility also puts a stress on poetry (albeit a different kind than Mrs Gape, Miss Curtis, and the omnibus do), it also offers a way of combating the fragmentation that seems inherent in modernity by synthesizing everything through the poet himself. This poetic self, then, must develop in two stages: it begins as an enclosed and isolated self which sits 'alone in a room with the blinds drawn'; in the act of writing about itself, however, it begins to absorb aspects of the world around it (*E*5 313-5). The poet's rhythmic sense, which is 'the most profound and primitive of instincts' (*E*5 315) and is also, by definition, what makes him a poet (*E*5 309), allows him to synthesize these various aspects of what he perceives or experiences into a unified whole. In order to achieve this synthesis, all the poet need do is to open up to his historical moment—that is, to 'stand at the window' of his room and let his

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[30] She makes a similar point in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' where she notes that modern drama is always trying to recapture drama of the distant past (*E*4 432).

> rhythmic sense open and shut, open, and shut, boldly and freely, until one thing melts in another, until the taxis are dancing with the daffodils, until a whole has been made from all these separate fragments. (*E*5 315)

The poet's task, therefore, is not merely to copy himself onto the page but to find, through this rhythmic engagement, 'the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity' and 'to absorb every experience' into a unified poem—a poem that 'is a whole, not a fragment' (*E*5 315). The metaphor Woolf uses for this form of unification is, as the passage quoted above shows, the dance.[31]

Rhythm as a Unifying Force in the Novel

The problem of unifying fragments of experience into a literary whole arises in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' as well but this time it does so within the context of the novel. However, the framework that Woolf provides for the development of the novel suggests, as does my discussion of 'Street Music' (above), that all literary composition ought to engage with rhythm in a similar way. Different genres seem to her appropriate for different ages based on how well they are able to capture the pulse of contemporaneous life. The novel is, for Woolf, the genre that can respond to modernity best. Although the nature of poetry is suited to the rhythm of modern life, she expresses some hesitation, both here and in 'Letter to a Young Poet,' about the extent to which poetry can encompass all aspects of modern life. Similarly, for her, drama has lost the vitality it had during the Elizabethan Age. Modern dramatists' practice of resurrecting ancient worlds instead of embracing the modern has rendered this literary form sterile (*E*4 432). The novel can respond to the needs of the age

[31] In *Virginia Woolf and London*, Susan Squier draws attention to a 1903 diary entry entitled 'A Dance in Queen's Gate,' which talks about the compelling force of music (37). Although I agree with Squier that dance music, which features in this diary entry, 'embodies a central theme of Woolf's mature work,' my analysis will show that this motif goes well beyond outlining 'the social pressures on women' (39), which is the focus of Squier's argument.

because it is a cannibal of sorts—that is, because 'it has devoured . . . many forms of art,' taking essential elements from each, and because it is capable of continuing to do so in order to develop further (*E*4 435). Although the kind of novel that would respond to the modern age fully would be a prose genre, it would also acquire 'many of the characteristics of poetry,' including a specific kind of rhythm (ibid.). By maintaining some of the 'ordinariness of prose' it will, on the one hand, be able to encompass aspects of modern life that are shocking or jarring in poetry, while, on the other, tracing the 'relation of the mind to general ideas' and giving voice to 'its soliloquy in solitude' (*E*4 435). Instead of focusing narrowly on the kind of materialism Woolf describes in 'Modern Fiction,' which creates an overabundance of facts and details (*E*4 438), this new form of novel will 'express the feelings and ideas of the characters closely and vividly, but from a different angle,' which is itself provided by this modern context (*E*4 435). In short, this cannibal novel will

> give the relations of man to Nature, to fate; his imagination; his dreams. But it will also give the sneer, the contrast, the question, the closeness and complexity of life. It will take the mold of that queer conglomeration of incongruous things—the modern mind. (*E*4 436)

This novel will also provide a certain kind of unity, which, as Woolf suggests in her analysis of *Tristram Shandy* (*E*4 437), is based on the rhythm it embodies. This is precisely the kind of unity that the modern mind has within an urban space. It is also the subject of 'Street Haunting,' which I discuss in my next section. The type of rhythm Woolf describes here, however, is slightly different from, yet related to, that of poetic form: it is a kind of unity that 'stands back from life' and that 'leads us to expect a different perspective' (*E*4 437).

The link between rhythm and perspective can be explained by Woolf's description of how the novel approaches its subject matter. Instead of becoming mired in the minutiae of information—the 'bushels of fact' that the Edwardian novel provided—this new kind of

novel should make an effort 'to generalise rather than to split up' (*E*4 438-9).[32] But since prosaic writing is not capable of 'rising high from the ground . . . in one dart,' as poetry is able to do, it must tackle its subject 'in sweeps and circles' while keeping in touch with the 'idiosyncrasies of human character in daily life' (*E*4 438). These 'sweeps and circles' constitute the dynamic of repetition with variation that I have been discussing in my previous chapters; it is the interplay between sameness and difference within the novel itself. Although there are many instances of this type of structure and this approach to writing throughout Woolf's fiction, *The Waves* is perhaps the clearest example of the type of novel she envisions in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future.' I pause briefly here to outline some of its features.

In an exchange of letters that took place just a year before the publication of 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' Woolf wrote to Vita Sackville-West that style 'is all rhythm' and that rhythm itself 'goes far deeper than words' (*L*3 247). When Woolf feels unable to 'dislodge' her visions and ideas from her mind, she explains that it is 'for lack of the right rhythm' in which to express them (*L*3 247). We can see how deeply she was engaged with these ideas while writing *The Waves* not only in the novel itself but also in a 1930 letter she wrote to Ethel Smyth, in which she explains the difficulties of 'writing to a rhythm' instead of writing to a plot: '[T]hough the rhythmical is more natural to me than the narrative, it is completely opposed to the tradition of fiction and I am casting about all the time for some rope to throw the reader' (*L*4 204). The passages of *The Waves* that precede each chapter and that trace the cycle of a day, starting before sunrise and ending after sunset constitute one such rope. Another rope is the structure of the narrative itself. Not only does the movement through the cycle of life in the narrative mirror the movement of the sun, but the different

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[32] As I have shown in Chapter 1, the ability to generalize is an idea that is of great importance to Ford as well, especially in the context of making sense of the world and developing agency.

voices we hear at the beginning of the novel become unified into one voice—Bernard's—by the end.[33] These ropes, however, are all constructed by the rhythmic structure itself; they are the 'sweeps and circles' Woolf describes above.

As I have noted both in my introduction and in the preceding chapter, rhythm is a form of echoing—a patterning based on repetition and variation. It is also a structure for unification. In the opening pages of the novel, Bernard remarks that when the group of friends sit together they '"melt into each other with phrases"' (10). This way of conceiving of inter-personal relationships defines the principle according to which the novel itself operates: the series of monologues we hear (a structure borrowed, of course, from drama) echo each other in different ways. At times various characters will echo their own thoughts (such as when Neville remembers the meeting with his friends in Hampton Court [88-110, 164]), but at other times they echo each other's thoughts (such as Bernard's echo of Susan's emotions of love and hate [10, 190]). This second form of echoing is far more important because, as Elicia Clements points out in 'Transforming Musical Sounds into Words: Narrative Method in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*,' it creates a form of unity while also preserving 'separateness among the subjectivities that inhabit' the novel (161). In 'Virginia Woolf, Sound Technologies, and the New Aurality,' Melba Cuddy-Keane has shown that the notion of a chorus is central to the novel and to characters' perception of their reality and it also serves as a structuring principle of the work itself (88-90).[34] I would add, however, that the

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[33] In 'Music, Language, and Moments of Being,' Adriana Varga conceives of this unity as a polyphony, the interaction of whose voices forms 'a multilayered expression' (89). She goes on to note that each character in *The Waves* 'is a voice that develops as a result of interacting with other voices and is a part of a whole' (90). However, I still contend that that whole is dominated by Bernard, who frames the entire narrative and through whose words we hear the other voices.

[34] Cuddy-Keane makes a compelling argument about the structure of the chorus and in its function in relation to *Between the Acts* both in this article (90-93) and in an earlier article entitled 'The Politics of Comic Modes in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*.' Much like her argument about the structure of the chorus in Woolf's writing, my analysis of Woolf aims to show that rhythmic harmony is a central concern throughout her career. *Between the Acts* itself is a case in point. There a many references in the novel to music 'join[ing] the broken' (83) or holding the fragmented audience together (92), but what is important in keeping the audience engaged—

kind of harmony we hear in this chorus is rhythmic harmony (a term Woolf herself uses in 'Street Music') as opposed to melodic harmony: the voices in the novel harmonize through time as opposed to doing so synchronically. In other words, the pattern of reverberations formed by repetition and allusion throughout the novel culminates in the final section where they all become unified in Bernard's voice.

This intermingling of voices is deeply intertwined with the issue of identity. Because identity itself is the focus of my next section, I will preface that discussion by touching briefly on some of the ways in which identity is constructed and dissolved in this novel. The kind of intermingling that Bernard attributes to language Neville attributes to encountering another person. When he is awoken from a reverie by Bernard, he responds:

> How useful an office one's friends perform when they recall us. Yet how painful to be recalled, to be mitigated, to have one's self adulterated, mixed up, become part of another. (61)

Bernard takes a more positive view of this blurring of boundaries; when Neville bristles Bernard responds with excitement at the possibility of creating his friend within a narrative (63). He seems to embrace the idea of being 'many-sided' when he is amongst his friends (87); when he approaches them, he 'feel[s] the order of . . . [his own] being changed' (161),[35] and he acknowledges that he needs 'the illumination of other people's eyes' in order to see himself (87). At the end of the novel, however, the relationship among them tightens and becomes more unsettling: '"I am not one person," Bernard says, "I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my

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and what worries Miss La Trobe to no end—is not music itself but the rhythm of the unfolding performance itself. The melodic aspect of music is merely a way of directing the audience's attention; it can—and is—at times substituted by various forces of nature (including the bellowing cows and the rain shower) that carry this rhythm forward when the performance appears to be falling apart.

[35] In this passage he also echoes the creative force he has in their presence: '"In a moment, when I have joined them [i.e., met his friends], another arrangement will form, another pattern"' (161).

life from theirs' (212).[36] Just a few pages further, he returns to this problem again: '"Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct?"' (222) These questions, having been left unanswered, suggest that we need not pick one option or the other option; they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Identities change as they brush past each other and as their circumstances change. As the narrative closes we are left with a sense of each of the six characters—of their particularities—but also of the voice that unites them. Bernard is, of course, not only a character within the novel but also the analogue of the poet whose mind synthesizes these six identities and the world they inhabit. The rhythm of the novel is that aspect of poetic composition that the novel has absorbed into itself.

'Street Haunting': Identity in the City Space

As I have suggested throughout this chapter, Woolf's experimentation with the novel was often related to her experimentation with the essay form. Although one can see these connections as early as 1905, parallels are especially visible in the essays I discuss below. These three essays, much like Ford's *Soul of London*, feature movement through the city from different but related reference frames. I will point to formal features of the essays throughout my discussion, often referencing their relationship to Woolf's fictional writing, in order to underscore the presence of unity on the level of literary composition; however, since Woolf sees modern art as inextricable from the modern mind, I will address the challenge of unity from this point of view first. I begin with her 1927 essay 'Street Haunting,' which links modern art to the city through an individual's experience of walking through London. In 'Street Music' Woolf suggested ways in which city life could be conceived of as a dance;

[36] Earlier in the novel Louis had spoken in similar terms: '"I am not a single and passing being. . . . My destiny has been that I remember and must weave together, must plait into one cable the many threads, the thin, the thick, the broken, the enduring of our long history, of our tumultuous and varied day"' (155).

here she shows that London life *is* a dance and that individuals are able to affect the rhythm of the collective by simply being present in the dance.

For Woolf, the modern mind becomes unified, both individually/internally and collectively/externally, in the experience of (urban) space and in the encounter with others. In this essay she suggests that no single form of unity is truer than the rest: while some ways of unifying ourselves may be less constrictive than others, what seems to matter for her is that we experience the process of recreating our identities over and over again by venturing out into the spaces where we can encounter 'the other.' The pretext of buying a lead pencil with which 'Street Haunting' opens is, as Woolf herself admits (and as most critics who discuss this essay reiterate), 'an excuse for walking half way across London between tea and dinner' (*E*4 480).[37] What critics disagree about, however, is the purpose for making such an excursion on that cold winter's evening. Here I will look at two, representative critical positions in more detail. Susan M. Squier, who analyses both 'Street Haunting' and 'Street Music' extensively, sees this search for a lead pencil as a pretext for exploring gender and class relations (44-53). But despite being a very observant reader of both essays and identifying key features with great precision, Squier often leaves the implications of what she identifies unexplored.[38] For instance, she notes in passing that 'Street Haunting' displays 'the cohesive power of the author's imagination' and that it is concerned with 'habitual patterns of experience' (45), yet she argues that the focal question of the essay is 'the relationship between women and the working class' (51), thus limiting the scope of her interpretation to a

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[37] In *Gifts, Markets and the Economies of Desire*, Kathryn Simpson makes the point that it is 'imperative for the narrator to assume the role of a shopper, even on the flimsy pretext of buying a pencil, in order to walk the streets' without being mistaken for a prostitute' (22). I will refer to Simpson's interpretation of 'Street Haunting' and of 'Oxford Street Tide' throughout this section of the chapter.
[38] In 'Purpose and Play in Woolf's *London Scene* Essays,' Pamela L. Caughie points out many of the same problems with Squier's reading (see especially 389-393).

rigid social agenda.[39] In this respect, Squier belongs to the third period that Jeanne Dubino outlines in the reception of Woolf's essays. And while many of the questions Squier raises about the gendered interaction among different classes through Woolf's essays are worth considering, my own analysis tries to move beyond these categories to speak more broadly about the plasticity of individual and collective identities.

Randi Saloman takes Squier's observations much further, providing a different insight into Woolf's work. Her discussion of genre is, however, somewhat problematic, and it is so especially in relation to the ideas of unity and harmony that are central to Woolf's work. Saloman notes, for instance, that 'the larger project of "Street Haunting" is to comprehend this distinction' between buying the pencil and taking a journey that explores the 'liminal space . . . of various intersecting identities' (31-2). Moreover, she argues that these shifting identities serve as a way of distinguishing between the genre of the essay and that of the novel. Saloman's pursuit of this distinction, however, forces her into a position that seems to me to be untenable: on the one hand she claims, using *Mrs Dalloway* as an example of a well-crafted novel, that a novelist fails 'if the events she [Woolf] describes do not come together of their own accord'; on the other, she explains that while the essayist's job is 'to create harmony from entirely random incidents and events,' these pieces do not necessarily 'form a logical whole' (27). Saloman applies the concept of harmony here without consideration of what it may have meant for Woolf. Moreover, she claims that 'there is no organic unity to the images offered in "Street Haunting"'—that these images 'are bound together by coincidence, and by the necessary arbitrariness of the writer's attentions' (27). It is not entirely clear what kind of unity Saloman has in mind in this passage, but as my discussion of 'Letter to a Young Poet' suggests, a work of art can become unified precisely

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[39] See, for example, the very narrow definition of her project in *Virginia Woolf and London*, especially the emphasis on Woolf's status as a woman writer and on the political analysis of her modern setting (11-12).

when it is synthesized by the author's mind; 'harmony' in the work of art *is* a form of unity. This mechanism of unification is the subject of the two essays I discuss at the end of the chapter, 'London Docks' and 'Oxford Street Tide,' but it is also an integral part of 'Street Haunting,' both with regard to its structure and to a number of the episodes that the narrator describes. Although the term 'narrator' is seldom used in relation to this genre, it seems to me especially appropriate for Woolf's handling of certain essays that combine the invitation to dialogue that Saloman has attributed to her (35), as have a number of other critics, with a first person narrative form, which is continuous with the narrative forms of her novels.[40] The complexity of the voice that addresses us in this essay comes precisely from the way in which the essayistic mode (which, like poetry, addresses us through the category of a speaker) is intertwined with the narrative mode (which helps us navigate a text through the presence of a 'voice').

In 'Street Haunting' we see these two currents operate in the framing devices of the essay and in its episodic encounters respectively. However, because the essay traces a physical journey through the city, there is a narrative component embedded even within the framing device itself. We need go no further than the second paragraph of the essay to see this playful relationship between the two genres: the narrative voice tells us that the setting for this walk '*should be* evening and the season winter' (my emphasis, *E*4 480). We are already in a quasi-fictional realm, but one that draws attention to itself. Woolf links the setting to the reality of the readers by switching pronouns in the very next sentence from 'I' to 'we,' thus absorbing us into the narrative itself. Moreover, we find out that she chose this season and the darkness of the hour because it helps illustrate (and perhaps remind us) that when we emerge from our rooms at such a time 'we are no longer quite ourselves' (*E*4 480-

[40] This invitation to dialogue (which I also address above) is partly based on the encounter with the persona of the author that the essay form stages.

1). Embedded in this tension between the first person plural voice, which invites the reader's participation in the narrative, and a somewhat removed fictional world in which someone is undertaking a journey, we find the question of identity—of being 'no longer quite ourselves.' Once the door of our familiar space 'shuts on us' we shed the 'shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves' (*E*4 481). The purpose of 'Street Haunting' is, then, to uncover this soul, this identity.

Woolf revisits this idea close to the end of the essay when she invites the readers to envision the Thames 'through the eyes of somebody who is leaning over the Embankment on a summer evening' (*E*4 489). As she encourages us to 'put off buying the pencil' and 'go in search of this person,' she tells us that it will soon become apparent that this person is ourselves' (*E*4 489). The two versions of the same self that encounter each other are, of course, an echo—a reverberation—not only of each other, but of two earlier selves that also blend and overlap in the essay: the self that 'stands on the pavement in January' and the self that 'bends over the balcony [at a dance party] in June' (*E*4 486). Here, too, there is a problem identifying 'the true self' for it seems to be neither one nor the other but 'something so varied and wandering that it is only when we give the rein to its wishes and let it take its way unimpeded that we are indeed ourselves' (*E*4 486).

The act of wandering the streets illustrates that the self is in constant flux and that it reshapes itself in response to those it encounters while moving through the urban space.[41] The urban space is important because it is a space that always presents us with 'the other'

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[41] In *The Observing Self*, Graham Good mentions that 'the essay is *essentially* a peripatetic or ambulatory form' (xii). What makes 'walking the perfect analogue of "essaying"' is 'the mixture of self-preoccupation and observation, the role of chance in providing sights and encounters, the ease of changing pace, direction, and goal' (xii). Many of the essays I analyse in this chapter suggest as much, but none does so more than 'Street Haunting.' In addition, see Lauren Elkin's *Flâneuse* for an account of how the diversity Woolf encountered while walking through London informed both her fiction and her non-fiction (80-89) and Rachel Bowlby's essay on the narrator's style of walking in 'Street Haunting' that I mention above.

and, as Woolf suggests both here and in the essays of *The London Scene*, it always bears marks of the life of this other. One example of this kind of an encounter is the episode of the dwarf. This episode is particularly important not only because it explores similar issues of identity (for it begins with the question, '"What, then, is it like to be a dwarf?"' [*E*4 483], which the narrative voice asks on our behalf) but also because it attempts to understand the relationship between part and whole, which has been a central concern for many of the works I have already discussed. The focal point of this narrative is the moment when the dwarf, who had entered the store in search of shoes, displays a foot that might be considered 'shapely' and 'perfectly proportioned . . . [for] a well-grown woman' (*E*4 483). Despite the foot's seeming incongruity in the first instance, the act of acknowledging and exhibiting it changes the dwarf's demeanor and her manner of being (*E*4 483): it recreates the entirety of her being for the time she spends trying on different pairs of shoes. Although this effect may be short lived—by the time she steps out into the street her 'old peevishness' and 'the old apology [for her body] came back' (*E*4 484)—some momentary change had happened. What persists in this episode is the principle of change itself.

Woolf shifts the focus back onto the busy street, but just as the acknowledgment of the foot affects the dwarf, so too the re-emergence of the dwarf onto the street affects the movement of the entire street. I quote this passage at length because it brings together all elements of what I have been discussing thus far. Stepping out of the shop, the dwarf

> called into being an atmosphere which, as we followed her out into the street, seemed actually to create the humped, the twisted, the deformed. Two bearded men, brothers apparently, stone-blind, supporting themselves by resting a hand on the head of a small boy between them, marched down the street. On they came with the unyielding yet tremulous tread of the blind. . . . As they passed, holding straight on, the little convoy seemed to cleave asunder the passers-by with the momentum of its silence, its directness, its disaster. Indeed, the dwarf had started a hobbling grotesque dance to which everybody in the street now conformed: the stout lady tightly swathed in shiny sealskin; the feeble-minded boy sucking the silver knob of his stick; the old man

> squatted on a doorstep as if, suddenly overcome by the absurdity of the human spectacle, had sat down to look at it—all joined in the hobble and tap of the dwarf's dance. (E4 484)

The dwarf's movement, conveyed or perhaps amplified by the two blind men, changes the rhythm of the entire street. While this new rhythmic way of moving is 'hobbling' and 'grotesque,' it is nevertheless a dance: there is some principle of rhythmic unity—of coherence—despite it being started by those who are seeming misfits; 'everybody in the street' begins to conform to the dance, not only the misfits themselves.[42] The spectacle that the old man sees is decidedly a '*human* spectacle' that has 'joined' together in front of him. This old man, however, is in some sense a place-holder for the narrator, who both stands apart and yet is also amidst the spectacle itself. These multiple layers of observers—the old man, the narrator/speaker, and the reader (both implied and actual), all folded into the scene by the insistence that 'we' are following the dwarf out onto the street—suggest that the rhythm of the street is a 'rhythm' partly because someone is there to observe this principle of coherence and to acknowledge that the seemingly isolated individuals on the street are moving in time with one another. Just as the poet's mind is required in order to synthesize fragments of modern life into a poem, so too the mind of the essayist is required in order to 'make sense' of the change in the rhythm of the street; this mind is what imparts a unifying element to us in narrating the story.

If we track the movement of the narrative voice in the same way that it tracks the dwarf's movements out of the shop, we learn that it, too, undergoes a slight change. The next paragraph, for instance, begins with yet another shift in pronoun: 'In what crevices and

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[42] Kathryn Simpson offers a very different interpretation of this episode—and of 'Street Haunting' in general—based on Woolf's treatment of consumer culture. She reads the effect of the dwarf walking into the street as a reflection of 'bitter disappointment' with the act of shopping, which is 'infectious' (23-4). While her reading here is insightful, I take some issue with attributing disappointment to the dwarf. My own reading of this episode offers a broader interpretation of the dynamic within the social space, which includes but is not limited to consumer culture.

crannies, *one* might ask, did they lodge, this maimed company of the halt and the blind?' (my emphasis, *E*4 484) This pronoun shift accompanies the shift of focus from the misfits noted above to a meditation about the kind of 'other' that resembles street musicians in Woolf's 1905 essay—that is, the poor, the wild, and the hungry. Susan Squier, who also notices this shift, points out that the use of the impersonal pronoun 'one' aligns the speaker with a certain 'upper-class linguistic orthodoxy,' thus undercutting 'the speaker's identification with the "vast army of anonymous trampers"' (48) at the beginning of the essay. While she is certainly correct in noting that this pronoun creates a rift between the speaker/narrator and the subset of Londoners being described, Squier is perhaps too quick to identify this voice with Woolf's.[43] If we follow the trajectory of the essay, we find this narrative voice returning to the down-trodden, shifting back and forth between 'one' and 'we'/'us' until the 'tide of trade' that 'deposits its burden . . . upon the shores of Oxford Street' (which, we are led to believe, is where we had been all along) combines and intermingles all (*E*4 485).

This same street and the activity of commerce associated with it become the subject of two of Woolf's *The London Scene* essays, written only a few months apart, in 1931 and 1932 respectively: 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide.' As many critics have noted, Woolf's own assessment of the essays she wrote as part of *The London Scene* appears to have been quite disparaging. In a 1931 letter to Ethel Smyth, Woolf writes, 'I am bored to death by my London articles,' which contain 'pure brilliant description . . . and not a thought for fear of clouding the brilliancy' (*L*4 301). What tends to go unnoticed, however, is that the 'brilliant description' Woolf mentions here is an echo of a passage in 'Street Haunting' that precedes the episode with the dwarf. In this passage, the narrative voice invites us to 'dally a little longer' in surveying the city and to 'be content with surfaces [of things] only' (*E*4 482).

[43] See especially pages 48-51 of Squier's book.

These surfaces include the 'glossy brilliance of the motor omnibuses,' 'the carnal splendour of the butchers' shops' that reflect yellow and purple, and 'the blue red bunches of flowers' in the florists' windows (*E*4 482). Both 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide' are echoes of this aspect of the earlier essay and, as such, are a continuation of the description of the rhythm of London. Collectively they explore two related aspects of the 'tide of trade'—the production and distribution of goods—that are representative, for Woolf, of modern urban life.[44] I will, therefore, discuss them together.

As Woolf herself notes at the beginning of 'Oxford Street Tide,' in the docks of London one 'sees things in their crudity, their bulk, their enormity,' whereas in Oxford Street one sees them 'refined and transformed' (*E*5 283). 'The Docks of London' describes how the tide of trade flows by following it through the city. The essay begins with a description of the way ships move into the 'parking ground' of the London Docks (*E*5 275). This movement of the ship into the harbour then translates into the movement of the speaker out of the port and into the city. The link between the two is quite explicit in the earlier essay for the narrator describes walking towards London as 'streaming up the river' (*E*5 276). Moreover, as in 'Street Haunting,' readers are invited to accompany the narrative voice by being called upon yet again in the first person plural (*E*5 276). The movement that started in the harbour takes us to the Tower of London, which is 'the hub of all . . . [the] ant-like activity' of the docks (*E*5 277), and transforms, yet again, to the movement of goods through the city. The journey begun in 'The Docks of London' is continued partly through the very next essay in the series, which traces this tide of merchandise further into London to Oxford Street, and partly in its own closing image, which shows the circular nature of trade.[45] In the last paragraph of the

[44] For an imperialist analysis of *The London Scene*, see Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth's analysis in *Locating Woolf* (23-28).
[45] Pamela Caughie makes the same point on page 396 of her response to Squier. I also note here that there is much affinity between Caughie's reading of these two essays and mine. The difference in my interpretation,

essay, the narrator notes that while we have been tracking what happens to the merchandise that has been brought to London, another ship has been moving ‘slowly out of the dock’ with is its bows turned ‘to India or Australia once more’ (*E*5 280).[46] Presumably this ship will also eventually make its way back to London, after loading and unloading merchandise in various ports.[47]

These two types of movement denote the different aspects of the cyclical tide of trade—that is, the cycle of production of goods and that of their distribution mentioned above. These two aspects of trade are intertwined. Moreover, by their very cyclical nature, both have a rhythmic quality to them. Earlier in the essay Woolf mentioned that trade can occur only when each raw material is broken up and transformed into goods that are then recirculated. It is important, however, that by-products are also carried by this tide. This entire process seems to entail the division of naturally occurring resources into parts that are then reunited into an altogether different whole. All aspects of unification and dispersal are interlinked. ‘Trade,’ the narrator informs us,

> is ingenious and indefatigable beyond the bounds of imagination. None of all the multitudinous products and waste products of the earth but has been tested and found some possible use for. The bales of wool that are being swung from the hold of an Australian ship are girt, to save space, with iron hoops; but the hoops do not litter the floor; they are sent to Germany and made into safety razors. (*E*5 278)

The movement of these goods—the cyclicality with which all of these items, both raw and processed, are moved around the world—creates the rhythm of trade that is expressed in the

however, lies in the connection to rhythm that I argue is so very central to Woolf’s thinking both about the city and about literature.

[46] See also page 277, where Woolf mentions another great liner ‘bound for India’ its way past the ‘sordidity’ of the harbour.

[47] In ‘Woolf and Geography’ Andrew Thacker also makes the point that ‘metropolitan space is deeply imbricated in the geography of empire,’ but his analysis focuses primarily on static representation, not on the idea of flow within a dynamic system (418).

division and re-assembly of matter.[48] By the time tobacco reaches Oxford Street, for example, it has already 'been rolled into innumerable neat cigarettes laid in silver paper' (*E*5 283). Similarly, 'the grease of sheep's thick wool has become scented cream for delicate skins' (*E*5 283) so that the cleansed wool can then be used for blankets (*E*5 277).

The rhythm set by the activities of making and transporting goods is, of course, also carried through in the activities that take place in the warehouses by the docks all the way to the city itself. The loading and unloading of cargo in the docks happens 'rhythmically, dexterously, with an order that has some aesthetic delight in it' (*E*5 277, 279). Beauty, here, appears to be a side-effect of both 'utility' and of order, structure, and regularity (*E*5 279).[49] There is also a related, though slightly different rhythm in Oxford Street. Because of the role Oxford Street plays in this cycle, the rhythm that is carried through from the docks has already been modified. Here

> the mind becomes a glutinous slab that takes impressions and Oxford Street rolls off upon it a perpetual ribbon of changing sights, sounds and movement. Parcels slap and hit; motor omnibuses graze the kerb; the blare of a whole brass band in full tongue dwindles to a thin reed of sounds. Buses, vans, cars, barrows stream past like the fragments of a picture puzzle; a white arm rises; the puzzle runs thick, coagulates, stops; the white arm sinks, and away it streams again, streaked, twisted, higgledly-piggledy, in perpetual race and disorder. The puzzle never fits together, however long we look. (*E*5 284)

The rhythm of the street, which has been absorbed into the very language of this passage, itself 'thickened' by punctuation in the middle and flowing more easily at the extremes, denotes an overabundance of impressions reminiscent of the picture of modernity Ford Madox Ford outlined in *Soul of London*. The difference is, however, that the very rate of change appears to have accelerated by the 1930s. For Ford, the marquee of disconnected newspaper headlines that 'flicker through the dazed and quiescent minds' of Londoners is a

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[48] This passage has a touch of irony in it, of course. The *naïveté* of this point of view becomes clear in the juxtaposition of this industriousness with the ever-growing heaps of refuse I mention below.
[49] Here Woolf echoes an earlier statement that 'use produces beauty as a bye-product' [sic] (*E*5 277).

symptom of the speed of modernity (*SL* 86). For Woolf, the news of Oxford Street changes so quickly—indeed, 'quicker than in any other part of London'—that it becomes impossible to record them in the periodical press. Change itself is built into the activities carried on in this part of London; the street itself must announce change to passers-by and on-lookers. The narrator reads the street for us as if it were itself an ever-updating newspaper or poster ad:

> The press of people passing seems to lick the ink off the placards and to consume more of them and to demand fresh supplies of later editions faster than elsewhere. (*E*5 284).

These people moving through Oxford Street simultaneously erase and re-inscribe markers on the street. More importantly, the movement of people and the manner in which they 'consume' information appears to quicken the rate at which the façade of street itself is changing in response to them.[50] These passages of 'Oxford Street Tide' explain two very important aspects of modernity: on the one hand they suggest that the cycles of production and trade are ruled by human desires and, on the other, that the character of modern life (the blue-print for the modern mind) is based on change. In the final passages of 'The Docks of London,' the narrative voice explains that 'the only thing . . . that can change the routine of the docks' themselves and, implicitly, of the entire city, 'is a change in ourselves' (*E*5 279). This realization is informed by the refuse of all the industry that the narrator discovers while walking out of the docks toward the city. The dumping ground between these two landmarks is full of

> barges heaped with old buckets, razor blades, fish tails, newspapers and ashes whatever we leave on our plates and throw into our dustbins—are discharging their cargoes upon the most desolate land in the world. . . . The dumps get higher and higher, and thicker and thicker, their sides more precipitous with tin cans, their pinnacles more angular with ashes year by year. (*E*5 277)

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[50] In *Gifts, Markets and Economies of Desire*, Simpson also sees a 'parallel between certain aspects of commodity culture . . . and her [Woolf's] ideas about modernist writing and reading' (21).

It is out of this 'sordidity' that a ship bound for India emerges (*E*5 277). The tastes, fashions, and needs of people are what 'call the ships [to and] from the sea' and what 'make the cranes dip and swing' in the docks (*E*5 279-280). Oxford Street changes at such an accelerated rate because the people who move through it demand that change. What is more, the reason this street moves faster and changes more frequently than any other part of London is because, as a centre of a specific kind of commerce, it is the engine that drives these various cycles.

The importance that Woolf attaches to Oxford Street in driving the cycles of trade helps explain what is, for her, the quintessential character of modernity. At the beginning of 'Oxford Street Tide,' Woolf explains that although Oxford Street itself is 'not one of London's most distinguished thoroughfares,' it is one of the busiest (*E*5 283). The observation that 'there are too many bargains, too many sales' and that the 'buying and selling is too blatant and raucous' here is related, in part, to the proportion of the population that frequents this street (*E*5 283). It is in many ways a place that tries to seem something that it is not. The class of people running it are 'modern aristocrats' who both mimic and adapt the behaviour of past aristocrats: they build palaces and claim to be generous after some fashion toward 'the poor' (*E*5 284-5). Their munificence, unlike that of former generations of aristocrats, however, 'takes the form of excitement, of display, of entertainment, of windows lit up by night, of banners flaunting by day,' which are available to all for bargain prices (*E*5 285). But walking through these edifices, 'one is conscious that one is walking on a strip of wood laid upon steel girders, and that the outer wall, for all its florid stone ornamentation, is only thick enough to withstand the force of the wind' (*E*5 285). This flimsiness is part of the flexibility of modernity and it is, therefore, also the virtue of these modern palaces: 'The charm of modern London is that it is not built to last' but that 'it is built to pass'; its

transitory nature is an expression of the Londoner's transitory desires (*E*5 285-6). The puzzle that Oxford Street represents never quite fits because, if it did, it would be static.

It is important to note, however, that there is some regularity despite this constant flux. As the title of the essay itself suggests, there is a 'tide' that sweeps through Oxford Street, denoting a regularity and perhaps a periodicity within the change itself. The cycle of trade, much like a city itself, is a system of inter-dependent entities. Once these interdependencies are established, the rhythm of the whole is subject to change guided, simultaneously, by each and every member. Rhythm is a useful way of conceptualizing this relationship for Woolf (as it was for the writers I mention in previous chapters) because it allows her to conceive of the relationship between part and whole on a variety of scales. One such scale is, of course, a global scale of commerce; another is an urban scale; yet a third, which I have discussed above, is the scale of a work of art (specifically, of literature). Applying the concept of rhythm in this way enables one to move across a number of scales. In order to illustrate this point, I return to Woolf's discussion of identity. As I noted earlier, 'Street Haunting' is an exploration not of identity itself but of the manner in which one's identity shifts depending upon one's circumstances and one's encounters. The narrator of this essay guides us through the city in order to bring us up against different kinds of 'others.' The premise of 'Street Haunting' is that, just as the puzzle of Oxford Street never fits, we cannot find a stable and fixed identity through various contexts. 'Nature,' we are told, 'let creep [into us] instincts and desires which are utterly at variance' with one another, 'so that we are all streaked, variegated, all of a mixture; the colours have run' (*E*4 486). The modern mind that Woolf describes in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' is precisely this kind of variegated being whose heterogeneity is a dynamic principle. Although perhaps not absolutely all aspects of this being can be unified at all times, every situation and every

encounter lends a kind of unity to being. The multiple selves modeled throughout this essay are all true, though they are true at different times in somewhat different contexts.

As noted above, however, some forms of unity appear to be more constrictive than others and these are often the kind that we take upon ourselves with a certain kind of automatism:

> Circumstances compel unity; for convenice' [sic] sake a man must be a whole. The good citizen when he opens his door in the evening must be banker, golfer, husband, father; not a nomad wandering the desert, a mystic starting at the sky, a debauchee in the slums of San Francisco, a soldier heading a revolution, a pariah howling with scepticism and solitude. When he opens his door, he must run his fingers through his hair and put his umbrella in the stand like the rest. (*E*4 486)

The search for oneself begins in 'Street Haunting' with the idea of closing the door to one's dwelling precisely because such dwelling spaces define us and demand specific forms of being and behaving from us. Our relationships to those with whom we cohabit are in some sense determined; the rhythm of those interactions is set.[51] Walking into a house makes one aspect of an identity coalesce into a specific identity type that then must be performed. Conversely, walking out of such a space can open the possibility of being—or perhaps more precisely of imagining (or even remembering) oneself as being—someone altogether different. The setting for the essay 'should be' a winter's evening (see above) because it is conducive to trying on different identities: 'the champagne brightness of the air' is accompanied by a certain kind of sociability on the streets; the 'darkness and lamplight bestow' on us a kind of irresponsibility that allows us to forget ourselves (*E*4 480-1).

As I have already mentioned, however, the change is temporary. Having wandered the streets for an adequate amount of time and having in the end remembered to buy a pencil, the narrator nudges us back to the familiar spaces and to the comfort of the 'old possessions'

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[51] This point is particularly relevant to *The Years*, whose opening chapters present the interactions among the members of the Pargiter household and which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

and 'old prejudices' that 'fold us round, and shelter and enclose the self which has been blown about at so many street corners' (*E*4 491).[52] Yet something remains of this entire journey. Symbolically, the lead pencil is added to those old possessions as a reminder of the experience and of the possibilities that had opened up, if only for a moment:

> Walking home through the desolation one could tell oneself the story of the dwarf, of the blind men, of the party in the Mayfair mansion, the quarrel in a stationer's shop. Into each of these lives one could penetrate a little way, far enough to give oneself the illusion that one is not tethered to a single mind but can put on briefly for a few minutes the bodies and minds of others. One could become a washerwoman, a publican, a street singer. (*E*4 490)

For as long as one intends to return home—that is, for as long as the pretext of buying a pencil is taken seriously enough that it anchors the walk—the possibility of being someone else remains, of course, an illusion. The true 'spoil we have retrieved from the treasures of the city' (*E*4 491) is not the pencil itself but the stories that it helps us tell ourselves. The act of placing the lead pencil beside the china bowl, which is itself a pointer to a different haunt in Mantua, denotes that the walk through London is part of a cyclical series of adventures. The echoes we hear between the quarrel in the stationery shop and the quarrel at the inn in Mantua is, we are lead to believe, merely one of the many similarities of such experiences (*E*4 481, 489-490). The reverberations of these experiences are precisely what make the china bowl and the pencil 'fit' together on the mantle piece.

The act of street haunting is an imaginative exercise and, as such, it connects urban existence with the domain of literature. The passage quoted above makes this link explicit through the reference to storytelling. In foregrounding the act of story telling on the walk back from the haunt, Woolf assigns a place for the narrative aspect of the essay within the

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[52] One of the many parallels between 'Street Haunting' and *The Waves* is that idea of returning to something familiar. In the last paragraph of the essay the narrator signals our return by saying, 'Here again is the usual door'(*E*4 491); in the last passages of *The Waves*, Bernard remarks, '"Again I see before me the usual street"' (228). Here too we get the sense of a cycle (be it the wave that swells in him again or the possibility of a new dawn [228])—the idea of arriving at the same place but of something having changed.

activity of walking itself. To put it differently, the act of story telling (even if we are our own audience) is not only what makes the walk worthwhile but it is what creates the 'illusion' of different modes of being. Within the frame of the essay itself, the true purpose of the haunt was to encounter others so that one may then be able to 'put on' different bodies and minds through the activity of telling oneself stories about them. Each of these stories provides different opportunities for creating a coherent and unified identity, even if it is an identity that we can take up only momentarily. The implicit argument of 'Street Haunting' is, therefore, that an encounter with a literary text and, specifically, with characters in texts produce the same effect. This change in identity happens, as my analysis of Woolf's writing throughout the chapter suggests, partly because reading, like walking, is an activity that unfolds rhythmically.[53] The difference between the narrator/street haunter and the dwarf is expressed in the different rhythms that they embody. Just as the dwarf can affect the rhythm of an entire street, however, so can a text affect the way in which we perceive rhythm around us. Therefore, even in an essay that seems as devoid of 'characters' as 'Oxford Street Tide,' Woolf offers us an encounter with the rhythm of the street itself through language.

I end this chapter by returning to the idea of a rhythmic relationship among these different essays. I have highlighted the publication history of *The London Scene* essays in my introduction because this series differs significantly from the more explicitly literary essays Woolf published. We can see this in the comments Woolf makes to Ethel Smyth in 1931 about the lack of 'thought' and the overabundance of description in this series, as well as in the attempt to look at the rhythm of modernity through the lens of consumer culture. My

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[53] The link between walking and the rhythm of one's mind is also explicit in *The Waves*. As Neville attempts to deal with Percival's death he feels oppressed by the 'sequence' that his life and movements usually take and tries to resist it: '"I still resent the usual order. I will not let myself be made to accept the sequence of things. I will walk; I will not change the rhythm of my mind by stopping, by looking; I will walk. I will go up these steps into the gallery and submit myself the influence of minds like mine outside the sequence"' (117). Needless to say, he quickly changes his mind about what he wants and walks out into Oxford Street (120).

analysis of the first two essays of *The London Scene* demonstrates that she tackles much the same ideas here as she does in her technical essays, and often does so in a similar manner. However, the distinctions among all the essays mentioned above and their ability to operate as discreet works while also contributing to this over-arching statement about modernity illustrates the interplay between similarity and difference that defines the concept of rhythm, not only for Woolf herself but also for the writers I discuss in Chapter 2, who conceive of community in these very same terms. The dynamic that we have seen on the London street in 'Street Haunting' is based on the notion of a large-scale community—'that vast republican army of anonymous trampers' (*E*4 481). Walking among them allows one identity to dissipate temporarily, making room for others to coalesce by changing each person's habitual rhythm to something defined by the relationship among all individuals making up that particular army. This is also the dynamic that Woolf attributes to successful poetry or to the 'cannibal novel.' Woolf's insistence on the idea of soul in relation to the essay, on the synthesizing power of personality in relation to poetry, and on character in relation to fiction denotes simply that our encounters within the domain of literature mirror our encounters in other areas of our lives. The effect of these encounters must, therefore, be analogous. In other words, it is important that literature present characters or personalities to us because, in doing so, it produces the experience of collecting the fragments of our being into a new kind of whole whose very principle of unification is borrowed, to some extent, from those we encounter. In this regard Woolf echoes many of Ford Madox Ford's ideas about personality in literature that I discuss in Chapter 1. For Woolf, however, literature produces the same effect because it brings the habitual rhythm of our thoughts and associations up against the rhythm of an 'other,' be it in the guise of a character or of a text as a whole.

Chapter 4

The Years: A Rhythmic Palimpsest

> '[W]hat I meant I think was to give a picture of society as a whole; give characters from every side; turn them towards society, not private life; exhibit the effects of ceremonies; Keep one toe on the ground by means of dates, facts: envelop the whole in a changing temporal atmosphere; Compose into one vast many-sided group at the end; and then shift the stress from present to future; and show the old fabric insensibly changing without death or violence into the future—suggesting that there is no break, but a continuous development, possibly a recurrence of some pattern; of which of course we actors are ignorant. And the future was gradually to dawn.' --Virginia Woolf, *L*6 116.

The works I have discussed thus far show, from different perspectives, two interdependent aspects of the idea of rhythm as it figures in the modernist imagination: rhythm provides a framework for negotiating the relationship between self and other and it becomes a way of understanding the dynamic between part and whole, individual and community, on a number of different levels. Virginia Woolf's essays develop this approach further by, on the one hand, locating the discussion within an urban centre—the very locus of modernism—and, on the other, showing that reading and engaging with the urban space are analogous activities in virtue of bringing us into contact with rhythms that are not our own. *The Years* (1937), the last novel Woolf published during her lifetime, is in many ways the culmination of Woolf's long-standing engagement with this concept and, as such, it contains the fullest and most extensive account of the importance of the rhythmic paradigm both in the domain of literature and in that of lived experience. The remaining chapter of my dissertation explores the various rhythmic interactions presented in this novel and provides an account of how Woolf tackles the problem of unity and fragmentation. As I have noted in earlier chapters, the interplay between unity and fragmentation is a distinctly modernist concern and it emerges most clearly when viewed through a rhythmic framework that helps bring to the fore the structural similarities of lived experience, narrative practice, and literary form. I

begin my analysis with a brief outline of the novel's reception history. I then proceed to discuss its inception as a novel-essay, to show the importance of this generic category to its engagement with ideas about rhythm, especially as they relate to issues of modernity, and to contextualize it within Woolf's own fictional corpus.

In the introduction to her 2012 critical edition of *The Years*, Anna Snaith notes that the early reviews of the novel disagreed widely in their assessment of its merits (lxxxviii-ix). Many of these critics read the novel as a family saga and compared it, often unfavourably, with John Galsworthy's fiction and, more specifically, with *The Forsyte Saga* (Snaith lxxxix).[1] *The Years'* refusal to adhere to the structure of a historical novel—in Snaith's words, its lack of 'a systematic or sustained representation of the conventional period markers'—caused much confusion and division of opinion (ibid.). The dominant critical perspective shifted drastically, however, as the 'modernist novel,' synonymous with formal innovation, became canonized: over the past few decades *The Years* has generally been deemed too conventional to merit attention. One example of this critical tendency is Deborah Parson's *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf* (2006), which focuses very explicitly on the role of Woolf's fiction in relation to the evolution of the modernist novel and to ideas of 'new realism,' but which makes absolutely no mention of the novel despite referring to all the other fictional works Woolf wrote, as well as to some of her key essays.[2]

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[1] Tracy Hargreaves notes some of these differences of approach in 'Nostalgic Revival: Sexual Politics, Cultural Aesthetics and Literary Form in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*' (see especially pages 132-3), as does Rudolf Glitz in the second chapter of *Writing the Victorians: The Early Twentieth-Century Family Chronicle*.
[2] Parsons notes that the characteristics of the modernist novel are 'newness' and 'self-reflexivity' (12). Her omission of *The Years* from the broad corpus of Woolf's works that she takes into account would suggest that the novel has neither. This is especially surprising because Parsons sees the modernist novels of the three authors she considers as working to capture the 'underlying rhythm . . . of modern life' (15), but she focuses primarily on *Mrs Dalloway* in order to illustrate this practice in Woolf's corpus. For my own assessment of *Y* in relation to *Mrs Dalloway*, see the final section of this chapter.

The little attention that the novel has received in the second half of the 20th century focused mainly on its socio-political commentary. With the exception of the 1977 issue of *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library* (*BNYPL*), dedicated primarily to *The Years* (*Y*), which called for a more nuanced and varied critical approach to the novel,[3] and Grace Radin's 1981 monograph, *Virginia Woolf's* The Years*: The Evolution of a Novel*, critics have looked at the novel as a work whose value lies chiefly in its engagement with contemporaneous social and political issues[4] or as a spring-board into *Three Guineas*.[5] Unfortunately in this regard, Mitchell Leaska's publication of the manuscript entitled *The Pargiters, A Novel-Essay* (1977), which I discuss below, appears to have inadvertently encouraged this narrow critical approach. Susan Squier's 1981 essay 'The Politics of City Space in *The Years*: Street Love, Pillar Boxes and Bridges' is one example of maintaining this socio-political critical stance.[6] Jane Goldman's 2006 *Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* is yet another, for she labels *Y* as a 'conventional' novel (24)[7] while nevertheless crediting it with a 'radical feminist critique of its time' (78).[8] For Goldman, *Y* appears to be a transitory stage between the 'much more experimental' novel-essay from which it emerged, *The Pargiters*, and *Three Guineas*, which completes the generic evolution into a 'feminist

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[3] Jane Marcus' 'Reappraisal of *The Years*,' published in the Front Matter section of the 1977 *BNYPL*, states, rather too forcefully: 'No one, I venture to say, will call *The Years* a "dead" novel again, for this collective effort has rolled back the stone before its tomb and *The Years* has arisen' (139).
[4] David Bradshaw's '"History in the Raw": Searchlights and the Anglo-German Rivalry in *The Years*' (1998), 'Hyams Place: *The Years*, the Jews and the British Union of Fascists' (1990), and 'The Socio-Political Vision of the Novels' (2008) are some examples of this type of reading.
[5] See Jane Goldman's *Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*, for example, which argues that *Three Guineas* 'emanates' from *Y* (80). Also see Alice Wood's *Virginia Woolf's Late Cultural Criticism: The Genesis of 'The Years,' 'Three Guineas,' and 'Between the Acts*' and the essays by David Bradshaw's noted above.
[6] See especially page 218 of the essay.
[7] In the opening paragraphs of '"Two enormous chunks": Episodes Excluded during the Final Revisions of *The Years*' Grace Radin also speaks of the novel as 'conventional'; however, Radin's analysis moves in a completely different direction for she goes on to show how Woolf 'deleted or obscured much of the its [the novel's] political and social content' through the lengthy revision process (221).
[8] Despite recognizing that the novel constitutes a 'deliberate failure' on Woolf's part to speak of a society at large (79), Goldman still suggests that the novel might be too diffuse in its treatment of character and a little careless in its execution (78-9).

and pacifist tract' (78).[9] Within the last few years, however, there has been increasing recognition that the novel deserves far more attention than it has received thus far, which is both encouraged and supported by the critical edition of *Y* published in 2012 by Cambridge University Press.[10]

My aim in this chapter is to show that, far from being a return to the 'conventional' novel, *Y* represents an evolution of the form that Woolf herself had articulated most clearly in 1927 in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future.' Moreover, I argue that its engagement with the idea of rhythm is linked precisely with the structure of the novel and with its inception as a novel-essay. It is also linked in very important ways to the novel's subject matter and to the issues of representation that Woolf is working out as she experiments with the form of the novel-essay in the manuscript of *The Pargiters*, which I discuss in more detail below. As I point out in my previous chapter, the essay is, for Woolf, the idiom the moderns use in speaking about themselves and about modernity: it is most conducive to the presentation of an 'I'—a character or a personality—and it is closest to the moderns' 'natural way of speaking' (*E*1 25). It is therefore a dialogic form whose primary aim is not to convey knowledge but to provide its readers with an encounter, which is the basis for forming a community. And it is precisely this aspect of the essay that Woolf wishes to bring into the 'cannibal novel' that she discusses in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future': the cannibal novel is a form that includes the essay but expands well beyond it in order to explore the 'closeness and complexity of life' by 'giving the relations of man to Nature, to fate; his imagination; his dreams,' but also by

[9] See also Randi Saloman's *Virginia Woolf's Essayism*, page 140, which echoes this point as well: 'The fictional scenes included in this early version [*The Pargiters*] were later combined by Woolf to form much of the initial 1880 section of *The Years*; some of the essayistic material was transferred more or less intact into *Three Guineas*.'

[10] The parallel to this edition is, of course, Andrew McNeillie's edition of Woolf's essays, which I discuss at length in my previous chapter.

including 'the sneer, the contrast, the question' within itself (*E*4 436). The excerpt from the letter to Stephen Spender that opens this chapter, written almost a decade after this essay, both echoes and expands upon the initial formulation: in addition to focusing on the modern mind and its relationship to its surroundings (*E*4 436), here represented by the idea of showing 'characters from every side,' this new kind of novel must shed light on society as a whole. Woolf's holistic approach suggests that she is seeking to understand how community forms—that is, how people become 'compose[d] into one vast many-sided group' (*L*6 116). What is more, this new kind of novel must also show change through different time frames and provide insight into how the present becomes the future (ibid.). The last segment of the quotation could be interpreted in two ways in relation to *Y*, both of which are supported by my analysis below: the first, that the presence of multiple temporal frames, each marked by the chapter heading, enables us to see how, at every point in time, the present shapes possible future outcomes; the second, that the very last chapter, entitled 'Present Day,' suggests something about the future, perhaps through the unsettling song of the caretaker's children (*Y* 385-6).

In that very same letter to Spender, Woolf also states that her project 'completely failed, partly through illness,' for she says she 'had to leave out one whole section' (the '1921' section, which Woolf says she 'could not revise in time for the press'), and, she continues, 'partly through sheer incompetence,' for '[t]he theme was too ambitious' (*L*6 116).[11] A number of critics, including Anna Snaith, Jane Goldman, and Victoria S. Middleton, have pointed out that Woolf's failure is not just inevitable but also in some sense deliberate. Snaith, for example, explains that the scope of the project and the fact that 'its

[11] For the text of the sections Woolf edited out, including the '1921' chapter that she alludes to in her letter, and for an analysis of the effect produced by their omission, see Grace Radin's article '"Two Enormous Chunks": Episodes Excluded during the Final Revision of *The Years*.'

composition spanned close to a decade' of Woolf's life resulted in something that is by its very nature 'an unfinished project' (lxxxviii). Goldman makes a similar argument by explaining that the failure refers to the impossibility of unifying 'art' and 'propaganda' in the novel,[12] but also points out that this failure must be in some sense deliberate because, in order 'to expose the process of pargeting,' which many critics have seen as an important feature of the novel, 'pargeting itself must fail in its aim of completely smoothing over' (79).[13] Victoria S. Middleton goes even further in her essay '*The Years*: "A Deliberate Failure"' for she suggests not only that *Y* represents an 'anti-novel' (171) but also that Woolf deliberately chose 'to work in a mode contrary to her deepest creative instincts' (162-3). In other words, for Middleton, *Y* is a deeply fragmented novel that aims to illustrate the absence of structure through its fragmentation.

While each of these viewpoints provides insight into the scope and technique of the novel (for it is not possible to speak of society as a whole in all its complexity, and fragmentation itself is, indeed, an important aspect of Woolf's project), I wish to suggest a slightly different reading informed by the theory of representation Woolf herself expounds in *The Pargiters*. According to this view, it is neither necessary nor desirable to include every datum related to a society in order to provide a comprehensive account of it that contains some principle of unity among all its seemingly disparate elements. What Woolf explores in *Y* are issues related to rhythmic interactions—that is, to the dynamic between part and whole of a city or, more broadly, of a society and to the challenge of capturing that dynamic in a fictional account. I will refer to these readings of *Y* in more detail in the analysis of the novel that I provide below. However, I would like to begin by turning my attention to *The*

[12] See also Jean Guiguet's argument in *Virginia Woolf and her Works* (312-315) on the topic of the opposition between fact and vision, as well as on the overall structure of the novel.
[13] For a more extensive discussion of 'pargeting,' see Leaska's *The Pargiters*, xiv-xix, as well as his essay 'Virginia Woolf, the Pargeter: A Reading of *The Years*' in *BYNPL*.

Pargiters, A Novel-Essay because it shows us the early phases of Woolf's experiment with the issue of representation on a large scale, as well as her process of working through the fundamental rhythmic dynamic of the interplay between unity and fragmentation. The diary entries and letters to which I refer throughout this section document much of her frustration with this project and provide us with glimpses into her attempts to navigate the murky territory between fact and fiction. *The Pargiters*, the project Woolf began in October 1932, which culminated in the publication of *Y*, constitutes Woolf's attempt to carve out a new kind of realism that can both address and provide insight into the issues of modernity that had been central to Woolf's writings for well over three decades. Since, as I show in my previous chapter, Woolf was deeply preoccupied with the idea of rhythm as a framework for understanding various aspects of modernity, the new kind of realism she creates is also a culmination of her thinking about rhythmic interactions in literature and in lived experience. The final section of this chapter extends my analysis of *Y* by positioning it within Woolf's fictional corpus, especially in relation to novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931), and *Between the Acts* (1941), all of which grapple, in different ways, with communal interactions on various scales in the context of modernity.

The Pargiters, A Novel-Essay

The Pargiters had its inception in a speech Woolf delivered on January 21st, 1931, but it did not crystallize as an idea for a written work until October 1932, when she began making notes under the title 'The Pargiters: An essay based upon a paper read to the London National Society for Women's Service' (Leaska vii, xvi). At the beginning of November, less than a month after she started writing the manuscript, she went back and revised the title to 'The Pargiters: A Novel-Essay.' Leaska notes that the correction was made to the manuscript

on November 2nd (xvi) and Woolf's own diary entry for that day confirms the shift while also articulating a few key thoughts about both the scope and the approach of this new work:

> I have entirely remodelled my 'Essay.' Its to be an Essay-Novel, called the Pargiters—& its to take in everything, sex, education, life &c; & come, with the most powerful & agile leaps, like a chamois across precipices from 1880 to here & now—Thats the notion anyhow. (*D*4 129)

The phrase 'powerful & agile leaps' echoes the 'sweeps and circles' that Woolf had mentioned in 1927 in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (*E*4 438), as well as her insistence in the same essay on this new kind of novel encompassing the 'complexity of life' (*E*4 436). But she interestingly goes on to consider how she arrived at her new project and to offer a small revision to her earlier position on what makes up the 'modernist novel':

> What has happened of course is that after abstaining from the novel of fact all these years—since 1919—&N[ight]. & D[ay]. indeed, I find myself infinitely delighting in the facts for a change, & possession of quantities beyond counting: though I feel now & then the tug to vision, but resist it. This is the true line, I am sure, after The Waves—The Pargiters—this is what leads naturally on to the next stage—the essay-novel. (*D*4 129)

The term 'fact' hearkens back to her earlier condemnation of the 'bushels of fact' that weigh down Edwardian novels and that are often inserted into works at the expense of character development (*E*4 438). Here, however, we see that facts need to be recuperated. As I argue below, these 'facts,' which are decidedly not historical facts, become a way of anchoring the novel itself in various moments of modernity. Moreover, as Randi Saloman has pointed out in *Virginia Woolf's Essayism*, the dynamic between 'fact' and 'fiction'—or 'vision,' as Woolf refers to it here—is precisely what is at stake for Woolf in the many generic shifts that this work undergoes (141).[14] Saloman goes on to explain that the distribution of fact and fiction is 'not equivalent' in *The Pargiters*, yet she insists on dividing the two categories very starkly: 'the novelistic pieces [of the work] . . . are factual' while 'the essayistic reflections . .

[14] See Rebecca Stephens' 'Virginia Woolf's *The Pargiters* and the Dialogue of Genre' (173-8).

. constitute the imaginative fiction of the work (ibid.). As I show in this section, however, Saloman's reading of *The Pargiters* imposes far too rigid a set of categories on Woolf's writing.[15] The evolution of *The Pargiters*, which I discuss at length below, demonstrates precisely the way in which the two modes—and, indeed, in Saloman's idiom, the 'voices' associated with each genre—become synthesized within a work that, initially, places them side-by-side, in an alternating pattern.

The first few stages of the writing process for *The Pargiters* went very smoothly and Woolf seemed to think that *Pargiters* was writing itself. She appears to have worked feverishly on her new project up until late December. On December 19th she notes that she had already written 60,320 words, asserting, a little too soon perhaps, 'I think this must be far the quickest going of any of my books. . . . I have secured the outline & fixed the shape for the rest' of the work (*D*4 132).[16] By February of 1933, however, she seems to have decided against the hybrid form, for she notes in her diary that she is 'leaving out the interchapters [that is, the essays]—compacting them in the text' (*D*4 146). This time Woolf does not say much about what made her shift back to the novel form; however, given that she is very explicitly thinking about 'the next stage' in the development of the genre, it is reasonable to assume that these revisions constitute the trial-and-error process through which she calibrated this particular incarnation of the modernist novel, such that it would express more fully what many of her other novels may have achieved only in part.

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[15] I have raised a similar objection to Saloman's reading of 'Street Haunting' in Chapter 3 as well.

[16] She also seems to have had some premonition of the troubles to come, for in the same entry she says, 'I feel, for the first time, No, I mustn't take risks crossing the road, till the book is done,' but then is carried away by the thought of completing *The Pargiters* (*D*4 132). Both Leaska (xvi-xvii) and Snaith (lxi-lxiii) provide an extended account of Woolf's trajectory over this period.

The manuscript of *The Pargiters* contains six essays and five narrative chapters interspersed among them. The ostensible aim of the essays is to frame the narrative episodes and unpack them by providing a social critique. In so doing, however, they also provide readers with instructions about how to engage with the text and discuss the writing process itself at length. These sections of the essays are especially important because they show us how Woolf is thinking about plot features, alternate story lines, the narrative structure of the entire work, and, more generally, the overall effect that she is trying to create. The introductory essay is based on the speech that Woolf gave to the London National Society for Women's Service for it takes as a central concern the challenges that women face in entering professions that have been primarily the domain of men (7).[17] The work as whole, Woolf explains, seeks to provide assurance to these women—often subsisting on meagre salaries in the vicinity of three hundred pounds a year, she reckons—that their collective efforts and hardships are akin to the work of explorers who are 'discovering new lands and founding new civilisations' (6-8). The argument Woolf puts forth, then, is that such lofty words are not a mere figure of speech, but a true measure of the impact of the change they are bringing about. In order to give these young women a sense of how the fabric of the present is changing, almost imperceptibly, into the future (see epigraph above), Woolf explains that one must understand how the past has changed into the present (8-9). The 'I' of the essays functions as a guide through history, decoding and interpreting events.[18] As I show below, however, the explicit marking of this 'I,' which seems indispensable at first and which is overtly didactic, becomes redundant as Woolf develops the characters who eventually demonstrate change within *Y*.

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[17] All references to *The Pargiters* are to Mitchell Leaska's edition of the text.

[18] Since the modern novel is a 'cannibal novel,' there may well be a sense in which it cannibalises the epic form as well, especially when dealing with a work that tries to conceive of 'life' in such broad terms (see below for scope of the story of the Pargiters, which Woolf claims is behind the novel-essay).

The inter-relation of understanding, becoming, and imagining is crucial for Woolf's project and it draws, both directly and indirectly, on the dynamic between reader and text that I have explored in my previous chapter. Moreover it is deeply intertwined with the idea of change that connects past, present, and future. As Woolf shows in 'Oxford Street Tide,' understanding the ways in which the past becomes the present enables one to envision the future.[19] This earlier essay ends with the image of Oxford Street, itself a symbol of modernity, being like a 'puzzle that never fits' (*E*5 284). If the (rhythmic) interactions between the various pieces of this puzzle were to stop, the puzzle itself would become static, ossified; change would be impossible. The next sections of this chapter argue that *The Pargiters* and its later incarnation, *Y*, are Woolf's attempt to provide us with an account of how different pieces of the puzzle change over time in order to create the pattern of interactions—more specifically, the dynamic—that we recognize as 'modernity.' *The Pargiters* does so primarily through the essays that intersperse narrative passages while *Y* does so, despite what its chapter headings may suggest, by offering various accounts of how life unfolds over certain periods of time. In other words, the chapter headings of *Y* suggest snapshots of time, but as Woolf herself points out in her diary, this is not an accurate representation; she sees them more like 'balloons' of time in which life unfolds (*D*4 142). This project in its entirety also bears some resemblance to both the interpretive and visionary aspects of what that the contributors of *Rhythm*, whom I discuss in Chapter 2, attempted to achieve through their magazine.[20]

The manner in which Woolf positions narrative episodes of *The Pargiters* in relation to her stated audience offers a defence of this initial mode of approaching her topic:

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[19] See my discussion of the London that 'is built to pass' (*E*5 285) in Chapter 3.

[20] See the opening pages of Chapter 2 in particular, which deal with the link among past, present, and future, but also my discussion of primitivism in the final section of that chapter.

> If we want to understand what it is that you are doing now, I must ask you to forget that we are in this room, this night. We must forget that we are, for the moment, ourselves. We must become the people that we were two or three generations ago. Let us be our great grand-mothers. (8)

The episodes Woolf offers from an 'unpublished novel . . . called "The Pargiters,"' which we are told would span the period between 1800 and 2032, are the mechanisms that enable her audience to 'effect this transformation' from the present into the past—to somehow understand the past by envisioning and embodying it (9). Given that Woolf's primary intended audience appears to be women in the workforce or women who are seeking to enter it, the first episode she presents from this (supposed) unpublished novel is precisely the scene which shows the Pargiter daughters, who, being young women in the 1880s, would be the grand-mothers or great grand-mothers of young women of the 1930s, in the domestic sphere to which they were often confined. Enabling women of the 1930s to see how their predecessors may have lived half a century earlier is meant to 'provide [them with] that perspective which is so important for the understanding of the present' (9).

Before launching into the first narrative episode, however, Woolf offers yet another defence for her methodology, but this time focusing specifically on the relationship between fact and fiction:

> If you object that fiction is not history, I reply that though it would be far easier to write history—'In the year 1842 Lord John Russell brought in the Second Reform Bill' and so on—that method of telling the truth seems to me so elementary, and so clumsy, that I prefer, where truth is important, to write fiction. This novel, 'The Pargiters,' moreover is not a novel of vision, but a novel of fact. (9)

She goes on to say that it is based on 'thousands . . . of old memoirs' and, slightly more tongue-in-cheek perhaps, that 'there is not a statement in it that cannot be verified' (ibid.). Although the 'truth value' of the fact does seem to be based on broad engagement with historical reality, the key is not in the number of historical facts that this novel includes but in

its ability 'to represent English life at its most normal, most typical, and most representative' (9). The circularity of this phrase—of representing something at its 'most representative'—is not merely a clumsy utterance on Woolf's part; on the contrary, it signals, quite explicitly, the tensions that exist in realism itself, which, in essence, are also the tensions inherent in the dynamic between part and whole of the society represented, and it draws attention to its own mode of representation.

As Deborah Parsons explains, the paradox of realism is that it has the idea of '*seeming* true to life' (my emphasis) as its central tenet (22). But the emphasis on representation is also linked to what *The Pargiters* itself tries to do by presenting fragments of a supposedly larger novel—the one that tracks the Pargiter family between the years 1800 and 2032—which themselves represent a broader reality. Here Woolf makes the argument that the 'short extracts' she offers 'from a novel that will run into many volumes' are adequate to represent a 'typical' English family—that is, one that is itself representative of English society (9)—thus bringing us face-to-face with something that is both general and particular, both part and whole at the same time. Saloman makes the point that what we have in *The Pargiters* is 'only a series of pieces broken away from an imaginary whole,' constituted by Woolf's 'own conception of an Edwardian family saga' (143-5).[21] However, the rhythmic framework that Woolf develops throughout her writings enables her to conceive of fragments as creating a dynamic whole. The multiple layers of representation we have—Woolf's conception of lived experience (both historical and projected) represented by the imaginary Edwardian family saga that is in turn represented, in different ways, in both the narrative and essayistic sections of *The Pargiters*—are precisely what one must contend with when one enters the realm of fiction, especially 'realist' fiction. They are not just a tongue-in-

[21] In some sense, this statement applies to *Y* also, for much of what she says about *The Pargiters* appears to extend to its later incarnation.

cheek response to Plato's condemnation of poetry,[22] but, more importantly, they also show us how Woolf sees parts morphing into and representing the entities to which they belong through this rhythmic framework.[23] Woolf prefers to deal with fiction instead of history in matters 'where the truth is important' precisely because historical fact is, in some sense, unidimensional (*The Pargiters* 9); in order to arrive at the multi-dimensionality of life via the historical route, one must do the work of recording every instant, of placing fact upon fact in order to build the structure of life. The path of fiction offers a shortcut because it can *represent*—that is, it can present, simultaneously, through its broad 'sweeps and circles' both the general and the particular (*E*4 438); indeed it presents the general *through* the particular.

I shall return to the discussion of this relationship between part and whole, focusing especially on how fictional fragments can represent a version of reality, in my reading of *The Years*; however, what I would like to emphasize in this section of my analysis is that despite her initial insistence, both in the introductory essay of *The Pargiters* and in her diary, on writing a 'novel of fact' with exegetical interludes, the process of working through *The Pargiters* made explicit the artificiality of the generic division she imposed by alternating between essays and narrative episodes. The breakdown of the generic boundaries is in some sense dependent upon an expanding definition of what 'fact' means within the realm of fiction.[24] The subject of the second essay in *The Pargiters*, which Woolf started writing on October 23rd, is the plight of three of the Pargiter daughters, Eleanor, Delia, and Milly, whom she describes as 'three healthy girls . . .[,] sitting round a tea table with nothing better to do

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[22] See Book X of *The Republic*, especially passages 595a-608d.

[23] The argument I make here is, therefore, an extension of the objection I made to Saloman's reading of 'Street Haunting' (see Chapter 3). We find a similar synecdochic relationship in Ford's work (see Chapter 1).

[24] Saloman argues that *The Pargiters* fails because the fusion of the two genres is 'ultimately impossible without a surrender of the novel's authority' to the essayistic mode, a sacrifice she claims Woolf is unwilling to make (143). It seems to me, however, that Woolf is able to fuse the two by experimenting with different modes of addressing her readers (see my argument both below and in Chapter 3).

than to change the sheets at Whiteleys and peep behind the blinds at young men who happen to be calling next door' (33). She begins the essay, however, with a counterfactual: even if the daughters of Colonel Pargiter had asked their father for a better education or asked to be allowed to pursue their talents as a profession, their father would have declined on account of issues related to love and money. Wandering too far beyond the boundaries of the house may have exposed the girls to inappropriate forms of love (36-8) and it would also have cost additional funds, which were set aside for the education of the male Pargiter children (28-9).

In making this argument, Woolf starts grappling with the idea of 'fact' and of how one might move beyond it. In the note that she inserts into the text of the essay on November 5th, 1932, she explains that the 'effectiveness' of the narrative episode in the Pargiter drawing room depends 'largely upon the degree of . . . truth of fact' that it includes. However, she quickly goes on to clarify that the truth of fact here does not refer strictly to individual details that the scene includes (which would be the analogues of historical facts), but rather to the 'differences' that 'such a scene, though at such a place only some fifty years ago, reveals' (33). In other words, the difference measured here is the distance between the narrative and Woolf's present moment of 1932; the truth that the scene reveals is that, unlike the women Woolf addresses in her novel-essay, the young Pargiter women had nothing better to do than to sit around a table.

This concern with the 'effectiveness' of the narrative is an expansion of the opening passage that Woolf wrote in late October 1932, which is itself aimed at teaching the novel's audience how to read. The passage to which I refer encourages prospective readers of this new kind of writing (that is, of the novel-essay) not to 'spend too much time over . . . details' in the scene, but to 'try to realise the structure' of it (30). More specifically, they are asked to realise that the 'conviction which, though never explicitly stated, is yet always there' controls

'the apparently inevitable succession' of events in the story (30). This conviction is decidedly not the (implied) author's, for the break between the novel and the essays ensures that the persona—the 'I'—of the essays is dissociated from the convictions informing the narrative. Rather, the conviction seems to be internalised and expressed through different characters in the story, which is what the essays attempt to elucidate for us. As we can see from Woolf's analysis of the episode, the conviction is to some extent attributed to Colonel Pargiter, who is able to control the distribution of funds in the family and who can exercise some authority over his daughters' behaviour, but it is also a conviction that had, in her view, been absorbed by English society as a whole in 1880. Woolf begins this essay with a counterfactual precisely because she is trying to show that this conviction has been internalised in large part by the Pargiter girls themselves, for they are decidedly *not* rebelling. Indeed, even Delia, who, as we see both here and in *Y*, is the most headstrong of the three and is also the Colonel's favourite, would not want to 'get . . . [her] way at the expense of other people's feelings' or be in a position to be disliked by her brothers for limiting their funds (28-9).[25] In other words, the reluctance on the part of the Pargiter girls to force change is one way of internalising the same conviction that Colonel Pargiter—and, indeed, 'typical' English society—holds about the place of women in 1880.

Although this essay, which is almost as long as the narrative episode it glosses, is immensely useful in understanding how Woolf is thinking about the structure of the novel and why she would want to write a novel-essay, it also shows why the form itself, as instantiated in *The Pargiters*, is not entirely sustainable. One of the main reasons the

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[25] Rose Pargiter is, of course, an altogether different character, belonging to a different generation, for in *Y* we see her continuing to transgress norms through out her life. The second episode, which I am not able to discuss at length here but which provides a point of contrast to the first, signals one of the intermediary evolutional steps that women took between 1880 and 1932. It is also noteworthy that Rose speaks of her dash to Lamley's shop as a 'raid into enemy country' (41), which is perhaps an echo of the types of activities her father undertook in his military role.

distinction falls apart seems to be that explaining one episode often requires her to describe additional characters and events, which forces her into the narrative mode again, rendering the split between the narrative consciousness of the novel and that of the essays redundant. The third essay, for instance, which follows Rose's expedition to Lamley's, starts with a few remarks about the dangers that children on London streets face, but quickly turns to a discussion about the difference between Rose's and Bobby's experiences with 'street love' (51-56). The description of Bobby's experience, itself a narrative episode, is then followed by an introduction to another male figure, Edward Pargiter, whose own sexuality becomes the focus of the next chapter (56-9). This trend continues up until the very lengthy penultimate essay, which extends the narrative of the fourth chapter—that is, the Kitty chapter—with the story of the Master's Lodge at Oxford, where she and her family live. The blending of forms we see in these sections makes the essays virtually indistinguishable from the narrative itself. The passage that ends the sixth and final essay of *The Pargiters* is a description of Kitty falling asleep on a June evening. The narrative voice—a voice no different from the one we hear in *Y*—positions us in June 1880 and provides us with a few contextual/historical pieces of information, but it is no longer concerned with interpreting the information for us:

> The rain fell still in the garden over the syringas; the bells chimed out the hour: and Kitty fell asleep. This was in June 1880. Mr. Gladstone was in power; Mr Bradlaugh had declined to take the oath; and at the head of the Irish party was a new leader, Charles Stewart Parnell. (159).

The direct address to the audience—the 'I' that was so very starkly defined at the beginning[26]—fades and it is replaced by an impersonal narrator, who, in some sense, becomes the force that shows the inevitability of the sequence of events in this story and

[26] For a more extended discussion of the perils of having too strong a narrative voice can be found in my analysis of 'The Decay of Essay-writing' in Chapter 3.

contextualises information from within the narrative itself.[27] In short, Woolf has recalibrated the essay component of *The Pargiters* to speak from within the narrative itself.[28]

The Years: A New Kind of Realist Novel

The Years is not, as Jane Goldman suggests (see my discussion above), a return from the more experimental novel-essay to the Edwardian realist novel; rather, it is a movement towards a new kind of realism that incorporates aspects of the essay form without necessarily preserving its generic markers. The question of this new kind of realism hinges not on whether a novel is mired in historical detail but, as Woolf herself explains in the opening essay of *The Pargiters*, on how this information is being presented. Woolf's initial objection to 'facts,' which she voices in 'Modern Fiction' (1925) and 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (1927), appears to be an objection to the inclusion of fact for its own sake; what she herself is working out between 1932 and 1937 is the question of how much 'fact' or historical detail is required to give a sense of 'life' at a specific moment in time. In order to show the evolution in Woolf's thinking that leads to *Y* as it was published in 1937, I will provide some context regarding the debate around fictional realism during the period when she was writing. Although many of these ideas may seem self-evident, I revisit them here because they form the basis of Woolf's own discussion of her project.

Perhaps one of the clearest and strongest articulations of late 19th and early 20th century realism is put forth by H.G. Wells in a 1912 essay entitled 'The Contemporary Novel.' This essay addresses quite openly the objection that had often been levelled at the sheer length of realist novels, which makes the act of reading them seem a Herculean task

[27] See Leaska's note on page 159, which points out the absence of the essays from the manuscript in the sections that Woolf wrote starting in January 1933. Anna Snaith's assessment that 'abandoning the generic division signified the impossibility of separating fiction and non-fiction' (lxiii) is also relevant in this context.
[28] Also see n26 (above), which responds to Saloman 141-3.

(863-5). Wells' response is, in short, that the novelists of his generation are trying to write about 'all'—that is, that their approach is to write 'about business and finance and politics, and precedence and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum, until a thousand pretences and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear air of our elucidations' and until 'all life [is encapsulated] within the scope of the novel' (873).[29] The method Wells outlines here is, in essence, the historical method I describe above, for it tries to build life one detail at a time.[30]

Wells' position was heavily criticized by Henry James in 1914 in an essay entitled 'The New Novel.' James' objection to this approach—much like Woolf's—is that novelists such as Wells and Bennett present nothing more than 'an extraordinary mass of gathered and assimilated knowledge' that 'saturates' their works and that provides only a 'superficial measure of life' (James 250-3). Woolf's 'bushels of fact' and condemnation of materialism echo precisely James' critique (*E*4 158-160, 438-9).[31] When Woolf returns to the realist mode in an attempt to capture 'life,' she does so with the notion of character as a central focus.[32] As we can see from her introductory essays in *The Pargiters*, the goal of this work is coextensive with what she says in 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future': that is, that the novelist's role is 'to generalise rather than to split up' (*E*4 439). But here, too, we see a departure from convention for, as Anna Snaith explains, early critics of the novel were often struck by the

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[29] Wells speaks in the future tense in this passage, but does so partly because the essay is an argument for preserving a writing style that has already been formed.

[30] An added dimension to this debate and one that I do not have time to explore in detail is the way in which materialism maps onto the Victorian/modern divide. One of the relevant examples is Galsworthy's anti-modernist sentiment and his effort to present *The Forsyte Saga* as a bastion of Victorianism even as late as the 1920s. As Rudolf Glitz explains, Galsworthy's 'invocation . . . "the Victorian era"' appears only in the preface that was added in 1922. In a related vein, also see Tracy Hargreaves' discussion of the relationship between genre and tradition in Galsworthy's work (138-140) and Alison Hurlburt's '"Sentiment Wasn't Dead": Anti-Modernism in John Galsworthy's *The White Monkey*.'

[31] It is worth noting here that both Woolf and James seem to be echoing much of Ford's own distaste for fact (see Chapter 1). Additionally, James ends his essay with an injunction to readers to develop an ability to 'generalise' (260), which is precisely what Ford aims to teach the readers of *ER*.

[32] Woolf discusses this most explicitly in 'Character in Fiction', but see also my analysis in Ch3, pages 9-11.

lack of a protagonist in the novel—an idea to which I return below—and some even suggested that time itself may fulfill that role (xc-xci). For example, Pamela Hansford Johnson concluded in her 1937 review of *Y* that the novel as a whole was a 'biography of Time' (508). And indeed, Johnson's reading is very astute, for much of what the novel tries to do is to show different points in time through the perspective of multiple characters. What is more, the absence of a clear protagonist is intertwined with the absence of a marriage plot, which Snaith notes lead many early critics to label the novel as formless (xc). In this regard, we see a similar assessment in later critical discourse: in 'Looking at the Monuments: Woolf's Satiric Eye,' Joanna Lipking argues that *Y* 'lacks a center or a central architecture,' using instead 'the forward motion of the chronicle' (142). My own reading, however, attempts to show that Woolf creates a very intricate, albeit decentralized structure through this 'forward motion of the chronicle' by making use of an echoing pattern.

I discuss Woolf's technique in more detail in the following section; for the moment, however, I merely wish to highlight that the approach Woolf employs in *Y* is in support of what Deborah Parsons calls the 'new subjective realism' (53) with one qualification. Parsons argues that this kind of novel exchanges 'the traditional representation of a character's social development for the expression of his or her individual psychological being' (53). In *Y*, however, Woolf refuses to exchange one form of representation for another, choosing instead to pursue both. This is precisely the dual approach that Woolf begins to develop through her novel-essay about the Pargiters and that has a fuller expression in *Y*.[33] *Y*, therefore, is not a departure from earlier, seemingly more 'experimental' works of fiction, but an attempt to fold them into this narrative in order to produce a more complete account of modernity.

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[33] By the same token, and despite not having been taken into consideration, *Y* also passes Parson's test of self-reflexivity (see page 12).

Rhythm as a Structuring Principle in *The Years*

The essential element of the essay form that Woolf transplants into *Y* is the encounter with a 'presence' or a 'personality' that she discusses in 'Montaigne,' and she does so within the rhythmic framework that she had been developing since 1905. In this regard, *Y* is a continuation and extension of the technique Woolf used both in 'Street Haunting' (which, as I have noted earlier, is also written in a hybrid form) and in her earlier novels. 'Street Haunting' features an essayist-protagonist who, through a skilful slip in pronouns, folds us into the narrative so that we too wander the streets of London, encountering various characters and experiencing the changing rhythms of the city through interpersonal contact. *The Pargiters* makes this generic hybridity more conspicuous, but the dynamic it embodies is, in essence, that of 'Street Haunting.' The analysis of social forces that inform the behaviour of various characters, however, is reminiscent of the kind of analysis we have seen Woolf undertaking in 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide.' *Y* moves yet another step further: while also placing the reader on London streets, often following different fictional characters and preserving some of the analytical mode of *The Pargiters* (described below), it does so in a less conspicuous manner. The narrator, though still present, is no longer a character within the story but becomes purely the 'inevitable succession' of events that Woolf mentions in the second essay of *The Pargiters* (30). Since rhythm is, as I demonstrate in my previous chapter, one of Woolf's preferred frameworks for exploring inter-personal dynamics, these types of rhythmic interactions are a central concern for the novel as a whole. What is more, rhythm is also the novel's primary structuring principle. Although it would be impossible to speak exhaustively of the functioning of rhythm in *Y*, my aim in this section is to provide a few key examples of how rhythm operates on different

levels of the narrative, beginning with the novel's structure and ending with an analysis of communal interactions.

The structure of *Y*—the choice of which years to include in the narrative and the specifics of every chapter—has puzzled many critics, for there seems to be no definite pattern to the passage of time in the novel. In early January 1933 Woolf herself makes a note on the structure that she envisions for the work:

> I visualise this book now as a curious uneven time sequence—a series of great balloons, linked by straight narrow passages of narrative. I can take liberties with the representational form which I could not dare when I wrote Night & Day. (*D*4 142)

But if we consider the structure of the novel from a rhythmic perspective, it becomes clear that the 'unevenness' of the sequence Woolf presents functions against the background of the evenness of time passing in measured units—years. And indeed, as measured units of time, years are equal; the variations are negligible, making the passage of one year almost indistinguishable from the passage of the next. Woolf's chapter headings, however, mark the years that are somehow different—the years whose passage cannot be accounted for by the mechanical measurement of time. In other words, the unevenness of the novel's time sequence works against the background of the evenness of measured time, thus creating that interplay between similarity and difference that is characteristic of rhythmic interactions, especially as outlined in the Lefebvrean theoretical framework (see above). Each year that is named in the novel signals some form of change against a background—against a rhythm—that had been previously defined. Similarly, the presence of time-stamps at the beginning of every chapter's narrative (often noted as seasons or as months that one cycles through from chapter to chapter, but on occasion also designating a specific time of day) further reinforce

this duality: the passage of time reminds us of evenness suggesting continuity, while the act of naming specific times marks shifts or differences.[34]

This interplay of similarity and difference governs individual chapters as well, and perhaps the clearest example of the way in which individual chapters both instantiate the rhythm of 'the past' while also suggesting a new one can be found in the very first chapter, '1880.' The majority of this chapter is spent defining the rhythm of life as it had been for the Pargiters for, seemingly, a considerable though indeterminate amount of time. The Colonel's wife 'was dying; but she did not die. She was better today; would be worse tomorrow . . . ; and so it went on' (5). And since his wife had been ill for some time, the familiarity Woolf shows us in the Colonel's interaction with Mira (6-9) suggests that their relationship had also been continuing for a significant period of time. The future tense in the formulation of the Colonel's thoughts is merely an expression of the momentum of a pattern that had been set, but named here, paradoxically, to mark the change that is about to take place. Delia's frustration (which echoes the Colonel's) that her mother, who was 'an impediment to all life,' refused to die (20) and that '"nothing's going to happen"' (41) further reinforces both aspects of this dynamic. These opening scenes and the family's ritual of gathering for tea, punctuated by the way in which they each recognize the patterns of the other's behaviour, are representative of the Pargiters' state of affairs—of the rhythm of their lives—for quite some time;[35] it is the background against which the rest of the novel unfolds. The death of Mrs. Rose Pargiter and the funeral scene at the end of the '1880' chapter (which is itself the

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[34] It is for this reason that I disagree with Middleton's statements that '[t]he weather interludes that preface the chapters [of *Y*] . . . seem to announce a structure that is not to be found' and that 'repetition [in the novel] seems to become an end in itself' (163). As I show both here and below, both the repetition and the variation are necessary to constructing a rhythm.

[35] Eleanor, for instance, is able not only to recognize but also to interpret these patterns accurately: as soon as she walks into the house, Eleanor intuits that her father had had 'another row with Mira' (13) and that there is tension between Milly and Delia (14). Her ability to 'read' the situation quickly suggests that these patterns of behaviour have been well-established in the Pargiter household.

prequel to the gathering at Delia's party in the 'Present Day' chapter) marks change—the beginning of something different, of a new way of life.

Each successive chapter denotes yet another shift in the rhythm of life through the change it represents. The continued presence of the same characters across chapters helps anchor the moving parts of this dynamic system. The first few chapters suggest change partly through death—the death of Parnell in '1891' (101),[36] the deaths of Digby and Eugénie mentioned in '1908' (132),[37] and the death of the King in '1910' (172)—but they also develop a number of other mechanisms that account for the rhythmic interplay between stasis and change. Once such mechanism is character development. As time passes, the Pargiter children grow up—or, as may be the case, grow old—and as the limiting forces on their lives, often embodied in parent figures, die away, we see them express this tension between similarity and difference in themselves and often in relation to each other. Although the novel offers many examples of this symbiosis, my discussion here addresses only those that are most relevant. Rose, for instance, is a character whose defining traits—the rebelliousness and non-conformity that we encounter, for the first time, in her excursion to Lamley's in '1880' (23-6)—persist amidst all the changes in her life.[38] Although by the end of the novel she had grown old and 'stout' like many of her siblings, she still looks and walks 'like a military man' (323, 374). Equally important is the suggestion that Rose and Martin develop in tension with one another. Their constant bickering as children seems to have marked them both (16,

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[36] Although the death of Parnell may seem somewhat peripheral to the action of the novel, there seems to be way in which it embodies something essential about the historical moment, for Eleanor feels as if 'something had broken loose . . . in her, in the world' just before she finds out about the death of Parnell (99-100). Eve Patten has made a similar point in a 2016 talk entitled 'Joostice and Liberty: Virginia Woolf and Charles Stewart Parnell.'
[37] '1907' seems to function as an interlude of sorts: primarily we hear music from a party entering Sara's room as she reads Edward's translation of *Antigone* (115ff), itself an echo of the music that Edward hears in his rooms at Oxford (45-6) as he turns his attention to the play. But the ease of life and peace which the '1907' summer's night party creates a background for the basement gathering in Maggie's and Renny's house in '1917' during the War, and for Delia's party in 'Present Day.'
[38] See pages 140-5, 154 for more information about her activism and her sexuality.

140-2, 323), but in ‘1908’ they seem to complement each other. Martin is an architect and dandy, who had shaved his moustache and left the Army (139), while Rose ‘should have been a soldier’ (141); when she walks down the street she walks ‘as if she were leading an army’ (145).

Eleanor, on the other hand, seems to embody more of the principle of change. Once Colonel Pargiter fades from the narrative, she travels widely, visiting Spain, India, and China (177, 277, 321). Although she appears in subsequent chapters, she comes to represent the consciousness that contemplates society in relation to change. If *Y* could be said to have a protagonist in the conventional sense of the word, Eleanor would probably come closest to fulfilling that role. She does so, however, not necessarily on account of being present throughout the span on the novel, but on account of being the voice that seems closest to the narrator, for she often provides a quasi-analytical perspective on her historical moment, particularly in the second half of the novel.[39] I have already noted that she seems to be in touch with the essential feature of the age—to be ‘feeling its quality’—in ‘1891,’ when she thinks that ‘something had broken loose . . . in the world’ (see n38). Her insights deepen and develop over subsequent decades; for instance, she often considers technological advancements, their impact on and value to society (297). But she hits upon something that is central to the concerns of the novel in ‘1908’ when she wonders, ‘What were atoms, and how did they stick together?’ (139).[40] In ‘Present Day’ she returns to the notion of atoms during

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[39] For one example of Eleanor seeming to know as much about the situation in the Pargiter household as the narrator, see the free indirect discourse passage in which she appears to know that her father has had a row with Mira (13) that I mention in n37 above. The rest of the Pargiter children find out about the affair only later on, after the Colonel passes away (see, for example, page 200, which shows Martin thinking about the letters they had found after Colonel Pargiter’s death, confirming his affair with Mira).

[40] Eleanor here echoes something that Woolf herself has raised about the relationship between the novel and life/consciousness in ‘Modern Fiction’: ‘Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?’ (*E*4 160-1)

Delia's party and wonders how they 'composed life' and if there might be an '"I" in the middle' of each atom (331). She contemplates the various members of her extended family present at Delia's party, their experiences and their interactions, implicitly once more raising the question of how they stick together. This question encompasses the essence of the rhythmic framework, for it not only describes the tension between similarity and difference, but, in so doing, brings to the fore the tension between part and whole, individual and community, that is central to the novel. I shall return to this discussion shortly by considering the character of North, but in order to understand the dynamic in that section of 'Present Day' it is necessary to speak about change on a broader, societal level first.

A related mechanism for denoting temporal shifts on this scale—and one that is also informed by the multi-faceted concept of rhythmic interactions—is the constant focus on street noises, punctuated by the bells that mark the passage of time and, therefore, denote both similarity and difference through the decades. For example, the strikes—the 'circles of time'[41]—emanating from Big Ben that penetrate into Abercorn Terrace in the '1880' chapter in London, are echoed, spatially (for the time is 10 p.m. in both places), by the bells that Kitty and Mrs Malone hear in Oxford (37, 73), but also temporally, by bells heard in subsequent chapters: in '1891,' Ellen hears another clock striking when she finds out about the death of Parnell (101); in '1907,' Eugénie hears it as she is trying to persuade Sara and Maggie to go to sleep (107); in '1914,' Martin hears it while he is staring out of the window of his room (202). But in '1914,' something changes: we hear multiple 'irregular' clocks striking from multiple steeples, 'as if the saints themselves were divided' (202). They continue to strike insistently throughout the chapter (202, 214 213, 220, 223),[42] marking the

[41] This phrase is itself an echo of the 'leaden circles' of time in *Mrs Dalloway* (6).
[42] The aural clocks are also complemented by a set of visual clocks in this chapter. See page 247.

inevitable approach of the War. And indeed, the last sentence of the chapter, 'Time had ceased' (251), which refers in part to Kitty feeling that she is standing outside of time while she enjoys a spring day in the country, away from the inescapability of measured time that she is forever trying to catch up to in the city (238-242), also has the ominous overtones of time ending—be it in the sense of the ending of the experience of time through death or in the sense of the ending an epoch—with the start of the First World War.[43] More literally, it also refers to the fact that Big Ben was silenced for a two-year period starting in 1916 for security reasons (Betts 'Big Ben'). It is therefore no surprise that the '1917' chapter marks the silence of the 'clocks that used to boom the hour in Westminster' (266), which is replaced by the booming of guns and wailing of sirens (260, 275). But despite the silencing of public clocks, those in private houses continue to strike (269), and the resounding phrase of the '1917' chapter is Eleanor's thought that perhaps 'another'—or 'a new'—'space of time' had somehow been issued to them. Time continues, as does the narrative, but it does so slightly differently: although the clocks may have resumed striking in London after the end of the War, their ringing seems to have been drowned out in the 'Present Day' chapter by street noises designating a different age.

The ubiquitous street noises and their analogous city street-scapes are perhaps the most accurate measure of both stasis and change within the novel.[44] The '1880' chapter provides what Ford calls in *SL* the 'ground bass' (11) of the city through the 'stream of landaus, victorias and hansom cabs' that drive along main streets and the organ-grinders and street musicians that play their music on quieter streets (3, 7-8, 18, 77). We still hear street musicians in '1891' (81), but the noises seem to be noticeably louder and to have changed in

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[43] At the beginning of the train ride, Kitty tellingly thinks that she is 'passing from one world to another' and that the present is 'the moment of transition' (244).

[44] In her introduction to *Y*, Snaith notes that 'urban geography is laid out through aural markers; the city read as much through its changing acoustic environment as its visual terrain' (xliv).

quality: there is a ‘dull London roar’ created by larger vehicles such as (horse-drawn) omnibuses and vans moving through the city (83), and Eleanor takes pleasure in the ‘customary, rhythmical’ quality of movement on London streets (84). By ‘1908,’ London is ‘a polluted city’ (131)[45] and in ‘1910’ vehicles ‘ran along the streets as if they were slots; stopped and jerked; as if a puzzle were solved, and then broken’ (144). This puzzle that gets broken repeatedly is, of course, yet another direct reference to the puzzle in ‘Oxford Street Tide’ that ‘never fits’ (*E*5 284) and it denotes precisely the same kind of dynamism and perpetually changing rhythm of the city which is audible as the ‘rush of traffic’ (118, 146).[46] The ‘roar of the traffic,’ and, specifically, of motorised vehicles is so loud in the spring of the ‘1914’ chapter (202, 211) that Sara cannot hear Martin speaking in the street.[47] The war period is dominated by the sound of guns and sirens (see above). When normal city traffic does resume in ‘Present Day,’ there is yet again a change in density and magnitude: vehicles ‘crash’ (382), streets are ‘blocked,’ and everyone is ‘hooting’ in frustration (278). Horse-drawn carts are no longer part of the normal flow of traffic but, due to their slower speed, create congestion (280); they are relics of a previous age.

When North is re-introduced into the ‘Present Day’ narrative (he had appeared previously in ‘1911’ as a child [182-7]), it is as if he too belonged to a different age. He

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[45] The remainder of this passage, which describes the refuse floating in the river, seems to be based on ‘The Docks of London’(*E*5 277).

[46] In this chapter street musicians are replaced by hawkers and ‘general cries’ (146), but this is a result of the neighbourhood that Sara and Maggie live in rather than an overall change in the London sound-scape. See page 162 for another mention of the halting movement of cars on the road. In this scene, Kitty gives Eleanor a ride to the tube station, but the car’s engine is ‘so powerful’ and sweeps ‘in and out of traffic so smoothly’ that it reaches its destination before Kitty has time ‘to say any of the things she wanted to say’ to Eleanor. This is one of the first instances in the novel of technological advancement interfering with human interaction.

[47] During that episode, Martin thinks that ‘it was odd how soon one got used to cars without horses’ (190). The narrative voice also expresses this change through the use of similes informed by technological advancements. In ‘1914,’ for instance, Sara gazes ‘as if the engine of the brain were suddenly cut off’(209)—a phrase that she uses in relation to Patrick as well in ‘Present Day’ (363).

seems to belong to a different age, however, precisely because he has lived in a different place—Africa.[48] North's exact location in Africa does not seem to be of any importance, except for the information that he lived on a quasi-isolated farm for an extended period of time (287).[49] In other words, the designation 'Africa' merely emphasizes that North had been accustomed to a completely different rhythm of life—one that is not urban and not Western; London's rhythm is entirely foreign to him. Woolf uses his re-introduction to London society in order to explore the relationship between an individual and the community from a rhythmic perspective. Moreover, the contrast she offers between different characters' rhythmic relationship to the city effectively provides us, in Lefebvrean terms, with a range of metronomes according to which we can measure the rhythm of the age.

The opening passages of 'Present Day' provide a detailed account of North's attempt to navigate through London on his way from Eleanor's lodgings to Sara's. This episode has been prefigured in the '1914' chapter which I mention above and in which Martin makes his way from St. Paul's to Hyde Park, accompanied by Sara, through the lunch 'rush hour' traffic (205). The contrast between these episodes illustrates the distinction between two, opposing modes of relating to modernity: the first, rendered through Martin's perspective, entails engaging with it as a form of dynamic unity in spite of experiencing momentary fragmentation; the second, rendered through North's experience, is dominated by the feeling of being overwhelmed on account of perceiving fragmentation as debilitating. The difference between these two modes of relating to modernity hinges, as we find out by the end of the

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[48] See Anne McClintock's statement that 'in colonial discourse . . ., space is time' in 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term Post-colonialism' (84). In this context it is relevant that the narrative refuses to provide us with any precise information regarding North's whereabouts in Africa: when Renny asks North about where his farm was, the narrator switches focus before North can answer, effectively covering over that information (314).

[49] There is a very clear distinction between Eleanor's travels to India, which take her out of the rhythm of London life only temporarily, and North's work in Africa, which seems to remove him from London life completely. However, there is a way in which both of these characters serve to underline aspects of modern metropolitan life to us. Eleanor does so through her musings about life and society and North does so by clashing with London.

North episode, on the individual's ability to embody the changing rhythms of the larger structure. At the beginning of '1914,' for instance, Martin perceives himself to be in a dynamic unity with his immediate surroundings: as he stood outside St. Paul's Cathedral

> [a]ll the weights in his body seemed to shift. He had a curious sense of something moving in his body in harmony with the building; it righted itself: it came to a full stop. It was exciting—this change of proportion. (205)

In other words, this episode begins with Martin calibrating himself, on the stroke of One, to the place in which he finds himself (205). The feeling of being in harmony persists, despite minor interruptions while moving through traffic, such as having people brushing past or bumping into him or having to shift on and off the narrow sidewalk in order to be able to keep up with Sara (205, 211). But none of these interruptions appear debilitating to him in any way—on the contrary, he seems to take pleasure in the change he perceives in himself. The only unpleasant effect of the noise and movement around him is that he is unable to sustain any particular conversation he begins with Sara (208-211). But even this is only a minor annoyance, for there is nothing in particular he wants to say or to discuss with Sara; he is merely passing the time and wanted company—any company (205)—which he gets despite the interruptions. His thoughts move from one idea to another, cycling through the topics that come, in time—and in dialogue—with the very things that interrupt him. There is no sense of profound distress on account of the quick shifts from one topic to another or, indeed, from one mode of being or moving to another; both he and Sara appear to be enjoying the experience of the city as they make their way to their destination (205-211).

Sara is the common element in both scenes and she is equally comfortable with the world around her in these chapters. North, on the other hand, clashes with modernity and finds the initial experience deeply unsettling. His inability to keep pace, in a very literal

sense, with the rate at which life around him unfolds becomes the source of his feelings of fragmentation and alienation. Although he feels excitement at being back,

> the noise of London still seemed to him deafening, and the speed at which people drove was terrifying. . . . He had only been back ten days, and his mind was a jumble of odds and ends. . . . People sprang up everywhere. . . Children he had left in the nursery were grown-up. . . . He was still confused by it all; they talked so fast. . . . [T]hey had lines cut; phrases ready-made. (278-9)

Here we see Woolf drawing a parallel between the speed of communication and the speed of transportation in the metropolis in the same way that Ford did in *SL*.[50] North's inability to navigate the city smoothly is directly linked to his inability to find his place within his social circle. As I show below, North begins feeling more at ease in London only once he is able to embody, in at least one area of his life, the rhythm of those around him.

When North leaves Eleanor's lodgings she warns him that '"driving in London . . . isn't the same as driving in Africa"' (277), which is precisely what his experience proves. She attempts to say something more to him, but the noise of his sports car's engine—for he seems to be trying to embrace speed by acquiring a sports car—drowns out her voice. The clash in rhythms is noticeable from the very first moment of his journey to Sara, for we are told that the car springs into motion 'with a jerk' (277). This quality of movement persists for the duration of the drive. As he is driving, North tries to process the encounters he has had in London in relation to his experience in Africa, but his thoughts are constantly interrupted by the challenges of driving. At one point he hears, absentmindedly, that cars are hooting 'persistently,' but it takes him a moment to realize 'that they were hooting at him' because he was impeding traffic (278). He starts off with another 'violent jerk' and tries to pay attention to his surroundings, but he is distracted by the variety and sheer 'plenty' that he sees around him. He slips once more into thinking about the contrast between 'the finished article' of

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[50] See *SL* 27-8, as well as my analysis in Chapter 1.

Oxford Street and the ‘raw goods’ that he was accustomed to seeing in Africa (278),[51] but he is yet again interrupted by a changing traffic light, so ‘on he jerked’ (278). The drive does not get any better for he finds himself lost (279). He briefly considers getting flowers for Sara but realizes he cannot stop because ‘cars were hooting behind him’ again, so he keeps moving forward in a haze until he chances upon the right street (279-280). When he gets out of the car, however, he remarks to himself that ‘he was always finding himself now outside the doors of strange houses,’ which leads him to feel that he is ‘no one and nowhere in particular’ (281).

The first part of his meeting with Sara also has much of the same quality of arrested movement in it, extending his feelings of fragmentation and alienation. When he walks in he recognizes her ‘in sections’—‘first the voice; then the attitude,’ and finally the face (282). But he also has that sense that he himself is somehow fragmented for he thinks that she, too, is ‘trying to put two different versions of him together; the one on the telephone perhaps and the one on the chair. Or was there some other?’ (282). His discomfort is not only on account of ‘half knowing people’ and ‘half being known,’ but for half knowing himself and his relationship to these people, which accounts for the confusion and bewilderment he experiences. He tries to make conversation with Sara but they are repeatedly interrupted by voices in neighbouring apartments, by the noise of children playing in the street, and by the noise of large vehicles ‘crashing down the street’—that is, the traffic he had just been in (283-8). Amidst all this, his thoughts drift back and forth from Africa to his present

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[51] This passage is an echo of the opening of ‘Oxford Street Tide’ (*E*5 283). See my discussion of it in the final section of Chapter 3.

surroundings through the broken conversation. Then, just as the conversation begins to flow more organically, the telephone rings again and interrupts them (292).[52]

Although there are moments of ease for North during the afternoon, such as the eventual re-emergence of his familiar patterns of interacting with Sara (312) or his conversation with Renny (313-4), he feels to a great extent like an outsider. For example, when asked about Africa at the party, he tries to communicate but has trouble conveying anything substantial about it. He stops talking because 'it was difficult to describe a place to people who had not seen it' (327).[53] Talking, it seems, does not offer North a way of re-integrating into the community of those present at the party, and he disappears from the narrative for some time. When he re-emerges later on in the evening, however, he has undergone a transition—'he had lost his puzzled look completely' (334). The catalyst for this transition is his ability to embody in some essential way the rhythm of the society he finds himself in: in short, he is able to dance.[54] The narrator informs us that

> his adventure had turned out well. The girl [with whom he had danced] had written her name in his pocket-book. 'Come and see me tomorrow at six,' she had said. (334-5)

Having been able to move in time with those around him, even if only for a short while, provides him with an access point into a society that had seemed in many ways impenetrable and confusing up to that point. North loses his puzzled look because he is suddenly able to relate to other members of that society and, perhaps, to find a potential partner. Through the dance he is able to begin the ritual of courtship, which itself provides a possible path for him

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[52] North finds some forms of technological innovation amusing, such as Eleanor's 'shower-bath' (278), but the telephone seems to be particularly disturbing to him in the way it dissociates the voice from the image of a person (see passage quoted above).

[53] This is one of the many passages that is written in free indirect discourse, which often has the effect of generalising an individual perspective. Indeed, the technique as a whole offers a way of presenting the general within the particular (see my discussion of Woolf's view on the limitation of history [above], which she defines in contradistinction to the representational flexibility of fiction).

[54] See page 332, but also see his comment about Nicholas and Sara not knowing how to dance (335), implying that he himself does.

to follow in the future. In his earlier conversation with Renny, North had revealed that he was not sure whether he would stay in London or return to Africa. However, since his ‘adventure’ in London had ‘turned out well,’ he may not need to return to his previous adventure in Africa or, if he does, he may be able to return to it in a different way. Therefore, when he catches sight of a couple standing together, held ‘still in that position by some powerful emotion,’ he is overcome with ‘some emotion about himself, about his own life,’ and he re-imagines ‘another background for them *or for himself*’ accompanied by someone else (my emphasis, 336). Eleanor’s comment that ‘“marriage isn’t for everyone,”’ which interrupts his reverie, startles him, further suggesting that the thought of marriage may well be what had brought him back to London (334). The change he undergoes after the dance, however, persists over the course of the evening, for he begins to radiate an altogether different state of being (335): he is now able to engage in that rhythmic exchange with the group around him. This ability to relate enables him both to feel that he belongs to it and, by virtue of belonging, to pursue his own desires—to somehow change the resultant harmony with his own presence. Indeed, the very principle of harmony depends on the existence of different elements that together make up a unified but dynamic whole.

The gathering we see in ‘Present Day’ is in many ways an echo of all the gatherings we have seen in the novel already, beginning with the gathering of the Colonel’s family at tea and the larger gathering of the extended Pargiter family for the funeral in ‘1880.’ Through North Woolf illustrates that the key to communal interactions lies in rhythm. The ability to instantiate certain rhythms is what determines whether one is or feels part of a community. Agency within that community at any particular moment in time depends, however, on whether one is able to enter into a creative relationship with those rhythms and bring about

the ends one seeks. In other words it depends on whether one is able to remain in harmony with the group while also expressing one's individuality. This is so because, as the novel shows us in its entirety, life itself, both on an individual and a societal level, unfolds rhythmically. From a diachronic perspective, this dynamic denotes a structure of repetition with variation—a 'recurring theme' with slight alternation, as Eleanor thinks to herself during Delia's party (333). Everything around her seems as if it had 'happened before,' so she wonders:

> Does everything come over again a little differently? . . . If so, is there a pattern; a theme, recurring, like music; half-remembered, half foreseen?...a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible? (333)

The pattern is 'momentarily perceptible' only, of course, because life is a dynamic, complex system. The difference between the two modes of relating to modernity (above) depend on whether one is able to move forward even when the 'pattern' or the harmony is fleeting, even when it must be reconstructed moment by moment. Moreover, as my analysis shows, the notion of a theme with variations describes precisely the structure of the novel as a whole, for Woolf's success in capturing 'life' in this novel depends precisely on being able to instantiate the rhythmic pattern of life in a literary work. But this idea of variations on a theme is also a useful concept in understanding the relationship among Woolf's fictional works. Since critics have tended to dismiss *Y* as an anomaly in Woolf's fictional writings, the final section of this chapter will focus on positioning it in relation to a number of Woolf's canonical works.

The Years in Relation to Woolf's Fictional Canon

Many critics have overlooked *Y* on account of its affinity with late 19th and early 20th century realist, historical fiction, and have, therefore, defined it in contradistinction to Woolf's more overtly experimental works. This critical tendency was perhaps influenced, at

least in part, by Leonard Woolf's comments about his wife's state of mind while she was working on editing the novel, including the false praise that he offered for it on account of her fragility (*Downhill All the Way* 155),[55] and by Virginia Woolf's own worries about the project's failure. The arguments I present in the previous section demonstrate that *Y* is anything but a conventional historical and realist novel. In this section I extend that argument by positioning *Y* in relation to a number of Woolf's other novels that have come to be regarded as quintessentially 'modernist,' such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Between the Acts* (1941), and *The Waves* (1931), and by showing that there are significant structural, stylistic, and thematic continuities between each of these novels and *Y*. *Mrs Dalloway* is predominantly regarded as Woolf's London novel and, as such, it occupies a special place among Woolf's canonical works. I discuss *Y* in relation to it at the end of this section precisely for this reason. *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts* constitute different experiments with understanding communities in time, and are therefore closely related to what *Y* as a whole attempts. I begin with *The Waves* not only because it is Woolf's most experimental novel from a stylistic perspective, but also because I have discussed some of its key features in my previous chapter.[56]

Woolf began the project that lead to *Y* by defining it as a departure from *The Waves* (*W*): in the November 2nd, 1932 journal entry I quote above, she speaks of her fact-based novel-essay as moving in a different direction from her previous novel of 'vision' (*D*4 129). Although Woolf does not make explicit reference to *W* in the mid-1930s, during the later stages of writing and editing *Y*, the structure of the latter bears much resemblance to the former, despite their difference in texture and style. If Woolf wrote *W* 'to a rhythm' (*L*4 204),

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[55] Leonard Woolf has influenced critical practice on a number of occasions: 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future,' for instance, was republished by Leonard Woolf under the title 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' (see McNeillie *E*4 440n]), a title that has been absorbed into critical practice.
[56] The comparisons I draw in this paragraph are based on my analysis of *The Waves* in Chapter 3.

we can see from the previous section that she wrote *Y* to a rhythm as well. The 'swoops and circles' (*E*4 438)—the mechanism of repetition with variation that defines the notion of a rhythmic interplay—is as much a part of *Y* as it is of *W*. What is more, we see Woolf using similar structural markers: the time stamps that mark the beginning of every chapter in *Y* are based on those that mark the chapters of the earlier novel and suggest the same kind of temporal succession. Both novels span long periods of time, but *Y* marks the passage of time more insistently while *W* makes it implicit in the voices that speak to us from within the novel. This treatment of time is directly related to the way each novel negotiates the relationship between unity and separation, part and whole, on an inter-personal plane. *W* presents us with an intermingling of voices that '"melt into each other"' (10), that echo one another, and that are ultimately synthesized in the 'many-sided' character of Bernard (87), the novel's narrator-protagonist; where *W* seeks to compress and to render symbolically, *Y* expands and makes explicit. In other words, while the latter treats characters as distinct entities, they are nevertheless shaped by their interactions with one another, suggesting that they belong to a 'whole' outside of themselves. The various gatherings we witness throughout the novel serve as moments in which these distinct entities become unified as a loosely-defined family.[57] Instead of exploring this dynamic of similarity and difference through speech patterns, *Y*, as the North episodes of 'Present Day' show, does it by studying group dynamics from a rhythmic perspective. The difference between the two novels is that *W* articulates the essence of communal interactions primarily musically, through speech patterns, while *Y* does so through a more 'conventional' approach to character development across time.

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[57] Perhaps, as Woolf suggests in the first essay of *Pargiters*, one that is itself representative of a considerable subset of English society (9)

Woolf's engagement with issues of unity among distinct individuals continued beyond *Y* and became the dominant concern of her final novel, *Between the Acts* (*BA*), as well. In this novel, the tension I discuss above is embodied in the phrase 'unity-dispersity' (136), designating the interaction between the two poles of the rhythmic dialectic that resound throughout the novel. Despite its size, the scope of *BA* is far broader, both temporally and socially, than that of *Y*: the variety of characters that we see among the audience members is reflected, through England's history, in the pageant itself; they represent not merely a certain class of society but a nation. This act of reflection becomes literal at the very end of the pageant: just before the audience 'had come to any *common* conclusion' about it (my emphasis), the players lift mirrors to the audience and the 'anonymous' voice on the megaphone informs them that they are 'orts, scraps, and fragments' (126), a phrase echoed a number of times in the narrative (127, 146). This dynamic is reiterated by Rev. Streatfield, who, having also seen himself 'reflected' in his own mirror, suggests that the audience members and, by extension, humanity 'act different parts . . . but are the same' (130-1).[58] This statement applies not only to the diversity of characters in the village, but also to the progression of humanity as a whole through time. Here, as in *Y*, Woolf suggests unity across time through a structure of echoing, and she envisioned *BA* musically, much as she did *W.* In October 1937 she writes about the form of a 'new novel':

> Its to be first the statement of the theme: then the restatement: & so on: repeating the same story: singling out this & then that: until the central idea is stated. (*D*5 114-5)

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[58] The presence of mirrors is itself part of the echoing structure of the novel, but I wish here to draw attention to Isa, herself echoing and quoting an unnamed lady, when she remarks that '"books are the mirrors or the soul"' (12-14). Isa goes on to add, however, that if books 'reflected the soul sublime, [then they] reflected also the soul bored' (12-14). Implicitly, therefore, just as the mirrors that the players raise reflect the audience, so does *BA* reflect its readers, not in their better natures but as they are.

The central idea is, of course, precisely this dynamic between individuals and communities and between the repetition with variation of history.[59]

In broadening the scope of *BA* to include English history up to 1939 and to account for a more diverse community than the one we see in *Y*, however, Woolf leaves out one crucial aspect of modernity from this 'new novel,' which is the city—the locus of modernity. And indeed, the difference in length between the *Y* and *BA* can be accounted for precisely by the in-depth engagement with the way in which modernity both emerges from and expresses itself in the metropolis. The kind of compression that we see in *BA* is possible only on account of the rural setting, which allows for the pageant to unfold, more or less, in its own time, without forcing the rhythms of modernity upon it. Among the few markers of 'the present,' of modernity, and of the impending war are the 'twelve aeroplanes in perfect formation' that fly overhead during the Rev. Streatfield's address (131).

This aspect of modernity is precisely the element that Woolf leaves out of *To the Lighthouse* (*TL*) as well, for the First World War in this novel is as subdued as the threat of the Second World War is in *BA*. However, in the early stages of writing *Y*, Woolf seems to have imagined some continuity between *Y* and *TL*. *TL* explores different temporalities, in part, by superimposing two distinct time frames, one represented in the first chapter and the other in the third, onto the same geographical and physical space. It also does so, however, through the 'Time Passes' section of the novel, which outlines the rhythm of change between these two temporalities. Woolf must have seen the *Y*, in its early stages, as connected to the earlier novel because one of the titles she considers for this project is 'Time Passes' (Snaith lxvii), which signals that she is seeking to expand upon the ideas that inform that section of

[59] For a more extensive discussion of rhythm, repetition, and echo in *BA*, see Melba Cuddy-Keane's introduction to the Harcourt edition of the novel, pages xlviii-l, as well as her article entitled 'The Politics of Comic Modes in *Between the Acts.*' As I note in my previous chapter and also my discussion of 'Street Music,' I see these echoes as creating a rhythmic harmony—that is, a diachronic principle of harmony.

TL. While there are some parallels between the two works, including the focus on one specific family and their immediate circle, and the figure of the aged servant that serves to record change but is never able to effect it, there are some notable differences between the two novels. The mechanisms of change in *TL* are the 'airs' (103-112), which embody the forces of nature and which become the focus of the middle section of *TL*. While these forces act upon the house, we hear echoes of a war and of human lives unfolding only in parentheses; the focus shifts completely in this middle section of the novel. Although the passage of time is the topic of concern for both novels, *TL* explores the effects of time by offering us a snapshot of a group of people at two separate points in time. *Y*, on the other hand, provides us with multiple segments of life over a longer period of time, but shows us these characters embedded in the city—in the place where modernity unfolds and takes shape.

The only other novel in Woolf's fictional corpus that focuses as insistently upon London as *Y* does is *Mrs Dalloway* (*Mrs D*). I address it last because it is often hailed as the paradigmatic modernist novel in Woolf's corpus against which *Y* is measured and on account of which it has often been dismissed. Its narrative technique is deeply intertwined with characters' experience of the city. This is especially pronounced in the opening pages of the novel, which demonstrate, through the stream of consciousness technique,[60] the ways in which the rhythm of the city shapes the rhythm of Clarissa's thoughts (3-16). The episode of North driving in London in the 'Present Day' chapter of the *Y* seems to be based precisely on Clarissa's experience of the city, though in the later novel it is rendered somewhat differently. The technique of shifting narrative foci based on commonly observed phenomena

[60] This kind of analysis has become a critical commonplace and often the use of stream of consciousness technique (and its implicit link to notions of fragmentation) becomes the deciding factor in labelling a work 'conventional' or 'experimental'/'avant-garde'.

in *Mrs D* informs narrative transitions in *Y* as well.[61] Time in both novels is represented by 'circles' emanating from Big Ben that punctuate the narrative—'leaden circles' in *Mrs D* (4) and 'soft circles' in *Y*—but it is also a complex intertwining of past, present, and future.[62] The difference between the novels, however, is the scale of the time-line that they include: while *Mrs D* unfolds in one day, *Y* unfolds over the course of roughly five and a half decades. This difference in scale is the key to what they each seek to capture: *Mrs D* captures the experience of modernity on a day in June 1923, while *Y* traces the emergence of modernity itself. Because the notion of development of modernity over time is the nucleus of *Y*, both its form and its narrative style are tailored to show the process by which change occurs. In other words, *Y* is able to show the way in which the 'modern mind' develops through its structure.[63] And in this regard it is important to note that the dominant narrative technique Woolf employs in *Y* is not stream of consciousness, as it had been in *Mrs D*, but free indirect discourse, which works as the mechanism for uniting the general and the particular within the text.[64] This mechanism is precisely what makes fiction superior to history in presenting 'truth' on a broader, societal level (see *The Pargiters* 9).

Y is a rhythmic palimpsest. Each of its chapters captures the rhythm of the particular moment it describes both from the perspective of the characters we track through the novel and also, more broadly, from the perspective of the changing city in which these characters live. Within each chapter, rhythm becomes a shorthand for the way in which characters form

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[61] See, for example, the way in which the narrator moves along a telephone line in the 'Present Day' chapter (292).
[62] See the Rhythmists assessment of the way in which these three temporal frames interact in Chapter 2.
[63] As Woolf explains in 'Modern Fiction,' the new 'cannibal' form of the novel is constructed precisely such that it is able to capture this development (*E*4 436).
[64] Also see Radin's account of Woolf's choice to replace words with ellipses in sentences in order to suggest 'generalized emotion' (220-6).

relationships, move together and move apart in all areas of their life, be they social, emotional, political, or economic. Every chapter offers us a different configuration of its characters, with harmonies and dissonances that are slightly altered from the previous one. Through this technique, the novel constructs rhythms not only synchronically but also diachronically, demonstrating that progression through time, even on a large scale, is a form of repetition with variation. In so doing, it provides an account of how each generation relates to both its past and its future. It also traces the relationship between history and fiction, thus resolving some of the issues related to the question of representation that Woolf considered during the early stages of the project (which are documented both in the text of *The Pargiters* and in the diaries she kept at the time). What we see through Woolf's almost decade-long period of engagement with this project is her response not only to her own earlier works (as I have shown above, both her fictional and non-fictional writings grapple with the same issues in different ways), but also to works by other modernist writers, such as those I discuss in the early chapters of my dissertation, who are working through similar challenges. The notion of rhythm that Woolf explores throughout her writing thus provides us with a way of conceptualizing the relations among individual texts in her own varied corpus, but also, more broadly, with a way of understanding more fully the meaning of 'modernism' itself.

Conclusion: Patterns of Recurrence

In the second chapter of *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, Caroline Levine recounts the story of the arrival of Constantin Brâncuşi's *Bird in Space*, which became the source of much legal and artistic controversy, in New York in 1926. The problem arose when United States customs officials classified the sculpture, which had just arrived from Paris, as a household good, levying a tariff that amounted to 40% of its purchase value. The court case that ensued revolved around this object's status: if *Bird in Space* was to be considered as a good, its entry into the U.S. would be subject to a customs tax; if, on the other hand, the object was classified as a work of art, it would not be subject to any tax whatsoever (68-9). As Levine explains, the pivotal moment in the Brâncuşi vs. United States trial was Jacob Epstein's testimony, which positioned Brâncuşi's work in relation to a commonly-accepted artistic tradition (71-2). Up to that point, the problem for Brâncuşi's legal team had been that the sculpture was considered '*too* original' (Levine's emphasis, 71). In other words, if the work had neither an artistic precedent nor a direct relation to what it sought to represent, there would be no grounds for making the argument that it belonged to the category of art at all; it would, by elimination, be classified as a household good. Epstein helped tip the balance in favour of Brâncuşi by demonstrating that the form of *Bird in Space* had a precedent in ancient Egyptian sculpture, which was comparable in its degree of abstraction and its approach to representation.[1] In Levine's words, it provided a 'definition of the avant-garde not as a rule-breaker but as a repetitive and self-regulating institution' (72). This self-regulating mechanism is, of course, a kind of rhythm—a form of repetition with

[1] For more information on how this case unfolded see not only Levine's account of it (68-73) but also the published proceedings of the trial edited by Margit Rowell, *Brancusi vs. United States: The Historic Trial, 1928*.

variation: ‘Epstein’s reliance on precedent revealed a real, though rarely acknowledged, rhythm of the avant-garde’ (73).

The prevalence of this way of defining rhythm, especially as it relates to modernist art and to modernity itself, is precisely what my dissertation has aimed to show. Epstein’s argument regarding precedents recalls in many ways the parallel approach that the Rhythmists took in London in the early 1910s. They too resisted the definition of avant-garde art as a rupture from the past, seeking instead to create ‘new’ art that responded to the conditions of modernity while remaining in dialogue with artistic traditions of the past. The primitivism that characterises the Rhythmists’ work is especially important in this regard because it demonstrates, much as Levine’s example does, the historical scale that a rhythmic framework can encompass. As I have shown throughout my dissertation, however, this kind of rhythmic relationship between the past and present, old and new, is not an isolated phenomenon, but is instead a way of defining modernism as a whole. All of the writers I discuss in my dissertation are engaged in understanding the rhythmic dynamic between past and present, which serves, for them, as a precondition for understanding the analogous rhythmic relationship between present and future. My only contention with Levine’s analysis is, therefore, that she underplays the extent to which this rhythmic relationship with past traditions has been acknowledged, especially during the first half of the 20th century.

This divergence of opinion stems primarily from the difference in scope and focus between Levine’s study and mine. While Levine’s project ‘makes a case for expanding our usual definition of form in literary studies to include patterns of sociopolitical experience’ in the present (2), mine is primarily concerned with showing how a number of representative early 20th century writers used rhythm in order to articulate a response to modernity. The work I undertake in showing how these writers understood rhythm—that is, that they saw it

as a principle of coherence in a seemingly fragmented world and as a means of accounting for the relationship between observer and phenomenon observed, self and other, part and whole in a dynamic system—offers both support and historical precedent for the argument that Levine puts forth about the applicability of the idea of form to the sociopolitical sphere. In this work, Levine defines form as 'an arrangement of elements—an ordering, patterning, or shaping' in general terms (3)—and although her account of structure and mine converge in many ways, there is an important point of contrast in our respective approaches to the hierarchy of forms. Levine suggests, both in the title and the structure of her study, that rhythm is merely one type or subset of possible forms; however, as I argue throughout my dissertation, rhythm is the primary and dominant structure for the human subject because it emerges out of the superimposition of space and time. This is an important distinction not only from the point of view of the theory of rhythm, whose lineage I trace from Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic of Time and Space to Lefebvre's notion of the 'measuring-measure' (*RA* 8), but also for each of the modernist writers I discuss. Indeed, the choice of authors for my study was based partly on the clarity with which these authors articulate the primacy of rhythm in understanding both art and lived experience. In what follows, therefore, I wish to move towards a conclusion with a few summary remarks about the range of authors and texts I analyse in my study.

I have chosen to focus my dissertation on Ford Madox Ford, the Rhythmists, and Virginia Woolf not only because their works demonstrate a sustained engagement with the idea of rhythm but also because they themselves are representative, although in different ways, of the modernist project. Ford, for example, was instrumental in shaping modernism through his editorial work. As I note in the opening of Chapter 1, Ford published many of the

writers who are now considered central to modernism, and he received significant recognition for this work even from among his contemporaries.[2] Moreover, as my analysis of a number of his own essays shows, Ford was a particularly astute observer of his own historical moment and was able to articulate contemporary cultural crises with great lucidity. The prominence of the idea of rhythm in Ford's own discussion of modernity suggests that this conceptual framework is pervasive in many artistic and intellectual currents of the early 20th century. And while I did not have time to discuss a number of other important modernist writers such as Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and D. H. Lawrence, whose works are also relevant to the conception of rhythm I explore throughout my dissertation, my analysis of Ford's work provides a shorthand reference to many of the issues related to modernity—and to the urban experience that is characteristic of modernity—in the works of these authors as well.

The Rhythmists I discuss in Chapter 2 of this dissertation are representative of an intellectual current that spanned many different forms of art. Primarily their writings capture a fundamental aspect of a Fauvist or Post-Impressionist tendency in painting, which, in turn, draws inspiration from other art forms such as music and dance. The way in which the magazine *Rhythm* began—and, indeed, the manner in which it fell apart—followed the pattern of many other small magazines of the period; what makes it stand apart for the purposes of my analysis is, however, the wide range of works and contributors it featured. Taken together, these contributions demonstrate how various forms of art and various artistic traditions can—and do—interact across multiple spatial and temporal frames. In other words, these ideas about rhythm take shape not only in the more abstract claims we find in John Middleton Murry's position pieces but, equally importantly, in the structure of echoes that

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[2] See, for example, Ezra Pound's comments on Ford's contribution in 'Small Magazines,' which I have quoted in Chapter 1.

emerge through the publication. *Rhythm*, therefore, instantiates the very concept it seeks to explain and, in so doing, offers readers a way of engaging with, on the one hand, the notions of past, present, and future and, on the other, with modernism as a distinctly metropolitan and global phenomenon.

These various strands of thought culminate in the works of Virginia Woolf, whose range, scope, and level of engagement with the notion of rhythm far surpasses that of many of her contemporaries. The chapters I dedicate to Woolf serve a dual purpose: they extend the connection between life and art through the framework of rhythm I outlined in previous sections of my dissertation and they provide an illustration of how these ideas of rhythm inform interpersonal interactions within the modernist metropolis. As I argue in Chapter 3, the critical essays Woolf wrote over the course of her literary career were published and read widely on both sides of the Atlantic. The same could be said about her fictional works, which also pick up many of the issues she explores in her critical writings. Her engagement with rhythm as it relates to the experience of the early 20th century metropolis, to the modernist mindset, and to literary form begins in 1905 and continues up until the very end of her life, and much of her literary career is dedicated to developing literary forms (be they within the realm of fiction or non-fiction) that capture the rhythms of 'the other' and make these accessible to her readers.

My analysis of Woolf brings together the most important aspects of the other works I discuss throughout my dissertation because it shows that literature is the medium in and through which communities form. Literary works serve as a buffer between the individual and a seemingly chaotic and fragmented universe for all of the writers I discuss. To put it differently, literature itself offers—or, to use a term that Levine herself employs, 'affords'[3]—

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[3] Levine notes that 'affordance is a term used to describe the potential uses or actions latent in materials and designs' (5).

not just a form or a structure but a way of apprehending and devising structure in general. And it is precisely for this reason that, for Lefebvre, the rhythmanalyst is most like the poet and his or her task is to create works of art with which others can interact.[4] The common element among the writers I include in my dissertation is the understanding that literary forms, especially those that make themselves conspicuous (as modernist forms often do), can help readers find and develop principles of coherence in their world. Moreover, what makes forms translatable—or, more precisely, transmutable—from one medium and context to another is the pervasiveness of rhythm, which, by virtue of being the synthesis of time and space and the source of the interplay between similarity and difference, is also the basic structure of all experience.

[4] See the discussion of Lefebvre in the opening sections of my Introduction.

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