Holistic Modernism: Virginia Woolf and Neuropsychology

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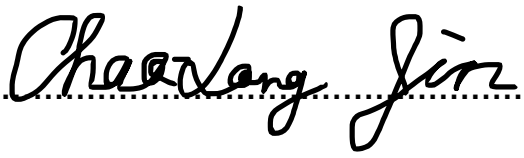
I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: …… 

Abstract

In this research, I aim to place Virginia Woolf's literary representation of the mind-body relation within the context of neuropsychology. To do this, I will draw a parallel, between her holistic understanding of the human mind and body, and the holism movement in early-twentieth-century neuroscience. In recent years, Virginia Woolf's literary representation of the mind-body relation has been discussed not only in the field of medical humanities, but also in the comparative studies of contemporary neuroscience and literature. Nevertheless, her biographical links and intellectual resonances with neuropsychology have not yet been widely explored. One might suggest that Woolf did not consider neuropsychological ideas in her work; she was not a neuroscientist, but a writer whose exploration of the mind-body relation is literary and aesthetic. It is possible to argue that Woolf's writing about the mind and body should be seen as more psychological than neurological; she was acquainted with several psychoanalysts and psychologists, and she did read their works. The current study, however, will explore Woolf's link to early-twentieth-century neuropsychology through her relationship with her doctor, Sir Henry Head. By extension, it will also explore her link to the neuropsychology that came after Woolf and Head. Using the historical/cultural framework, and textual analysis, the current study suggests that Woolf's understanding of 'the whole' in the mind-body relation, and of perception and experience, can contribute to our knowledge of the human mind, as well as the material world in which we live. I argue that Woolf can be seen as a holistic modernist; she embodied the concept of 'the whole' in her texts, which resonated with the works of the holistic neuropsychologists, including Henry Head, Kurt Goldstein, Alexander Luria, and Oliver Sacks.

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The Voyage In: Introduction

Exploring the workings of the mind is the most prominent recurring theme in Woolf's writings. Her belief that 'it is the mind which entices us and the ventures of the mind that concern us' ('Phases of Fiction' 86) has been a focus of a considerable number of studies. Critics have often compared Woolf's literary representation of the mind with psychoanalysis, psychological sciences, and psychological philosophies in early-twentieth-century Britain. In particular, her intensive use of subjective interiority as a literary device is often read alongside the psychological and philosophical discourses of Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson. Indeed, Freud and Bergson had a profound impact on the modernist movement that sought to interpret and represent the human mind through art. However, this is not necessarily to say that Woolf was directly influenced by their writings. In fact, she hardly mentioned having read Bergson's works, or expressed any interest in the philosopher. Her husband Leonard did not think that she had read or 'was at all influenced by Bergson' (*Letters of Leonard Woolf* 571). She did not even read *The Misuse of Mind*, published by her sister-in-law Karin Stephen in 1922 (486). With respect to Freud, Woolf was sceptical of the psychoanalytic approach to fiction. She criticised the method for making characters into 'cases' and simplifying the complexities of human beings ('Freudian Fiction' 153). However, finding a historical connection between Woolf, Freud, and Bergson is not a focus of the current study. Rather, Woolf's intellectual and biographical links with the Austrian psychoanalyst and the French philosopher were part of a more general cultural interest in mental lives and psychological processes, which spread throughout the first half of the

twentieth century (Childs 62). Her concerns about the mind were shared by psychoanalysts and philosophers who sought to understand the connection between mental life and the physical world.

Woolf was interested not only in the mind, but also in its relation to the body. She did not limit her writing about the body to the concept of sexuality, nor did she relate psychological phenomena to sexual drives, as widely explored in both psychoanalytic theory and modernist literature.[1] Instead, she saw the experience of illness, both mental and physical, as a way of understanding the body, which inextricably interacts with the mind. Although the theme of mental illness was not uncommon in the literature of her time, Woolf particularly explored how illness influences our perception, and possibly produces a feeling for 'the whole'. She suggested a holistic picture of the mind-body relation, and attempted to use this picture to move beyond dualistic parameters. Interestingly, in her much-quoted essay 'Modern Fiction' (1925), Woolf offers us two spectrums of the human body, through her reading of H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, and James Joyce.[2] She draws a clear distinction between these writers according to whether they focused on writing about the body or the mind. The essay describes Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy as 'materialists' who are 'concerned not with the mind but with the body' (104). In contrast, she calls Joyce 'spiritual', and says that his writing is concerned with 'the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain' (107). Identifying the focus on writing about external existences as

[1] See Mark S. Micale's edited volume *The Mind of Modernism* (2004) for more scholarship on the relationships between Freud, medical psychology, and modernism. Heike Bauer's chapter 'Literary Sexualities' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature* (2015) also provides a useful link between modernist fiction and sexualities influenced by psychoanalysis.
[2] Woolf first published 'Modern Novels' in the *Times Literary Supplement* in April 1919, and revised and extended it as 'Modern Fiction' in the first series of *The Common Reader* in 1925.

conventional, Woolf urges us to turn inwardly, to the inner life of the mind, so as to 'come closer to life' (107). Although she suggests both materialist and idealist aspects of the human body, her essay has led critics, such as Wyndham Lewis, to debate whether she was an 'orthodox idealist' (Lewis 161).[3]

In her works after 'Modern Fiction', both fictional and non-fictional, we can see that Woolf has shifted her perspective on the human mind; it has become a non-dualistic discourse. Her non-dualistic view of the mind-body relation was closely associated with her own experience of mental illness. She was aware that her mental distress could often trigger physical discomfort. In *On Being Ill* (1926), she asserts that the mind-body relation is inherently non-dualistic: 'All day, all night the body intervenes' (4). Because of this, she sees that physical pain associated with illness reminds us of the fact that the mind and body inextricably interact with each other, and also that this affects our perception. However, she finds that this sense of non-dualism, emerging from illness, is not properly discussed in the literature of her time. As she observes in her 1926 essay, the problem lies in the fact that writers predominantly focus on the mind, while ignoring 'the body in the philosopher's turret' (5). She sees this as a result of 'the poverty' of English language, from which one can borrow to describe love, but not headaches and shivers (6). Hence, she implores the reader to create a 'new language' (7), and a new form of literature that is dedicated to

[3] Roger Fry and Wyndham Lewis were involved in an argument concerning who should run the business of the Omega Workshop (Bell, *Bloomsbury* 40). Lewis publicly expressed his hostility against Fry, along with other Bloomsbury members, in his books; and especially in his satirical portrait of the group in *The Apes of God* (1930). It is not unlikely that Lewis's harsh criticism of Woolf's writings resulted from his bitterness or jealousy. Woolf believed that his chapter on her in *Men without Art* was 'an attack' rather than a fair judgment (*Diary 5* 250).

physical illness. In Chapter 4, I will explore further how Woolf envisioned the theme of illness in literature.

Woolf experienced various types of physical and mental suffering herself.[4] She was believed by many in her social circle and biographers to suffer from manic depression (Strachey 143).[5] Psychoanalyst Alix Strachey (née Sargant-Florence) was one of the early commentators who associated Woolf's creative mind with her mental suffering. As Strachey describes in her eulogy, Woolf's imagination seemed 'interwoven with fantasies' and indeed with 'her madness' (Strachey 143). She came to the conclusion that Woolf preferred to 'be mad and be creative than to be treated by analysis and become ordinary' (143). Her speculation implies that Woolf herself was aware of her mental illness, but used it as a source of creative output. However, we cannot simply regard Woolf's creative mind as a result of her mental disorder. Instead, she has shown us – both through her fictional and her non-fictional works – that her creativity is largely derived from her everyday experience. In this way, she explores how the everyday experience of physical and mental illness can be represented in literature. It is not only the idea of illness that interested Woolf, but also its quality of being an everyday and at the same time extraordinary experience.

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[4] Woolf's health condition has been well documented by several biographers, including her nephew Quentin Bell and the critic Hermione Lee. Leonard also recorded Virginia's medical history, in his autobiographical series published from 1960 to 1969. Yet Woolf herself gave a vivid description of illness in her diaries and letters, which offer us a complex picture of her mental and physical pain.

[5] Leonard, and Quentin Bell, described Woolf's insanity without giving sufficient medical details of her symptoms (*Beginning Again* 76; Bell 18, vol. 2). This alerted the attention of Roger Poole and Stephen Trombley, who tracked Woolf's medical history, and narratives from her doctors regarding her mental conditions. Trombley, in *Virginia Woolf and her Doctors*, further explored how the doctors' personal and cultural values influenced their diagnoses and medical treatments for Woolf, which would eventually determine her sanity or alleged insanity (9).

The connection between Woolf's mental condition and various socio-cultural factors has inspired a number of studies, such as Roger Poole's *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (1978), Stephen Trombley's *'All that Summer she was Mad': Virginia Woolf and her Doctors* (1981), and Hermione Lee's chapter 'Madness' in *Virginia Woolf* (1996). They have examined how Woolf's claimed madness came, not only from medical conditions, but also from the moral and social bias she experienced in early-twentieth-century Britain. Furthermore, scholars and critics have shifted their attention from a psychoanalytic theory of mind to medical and clinical approaches. In *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic-Depressive Illness* (1992), Thomas C. Caramagno explores Woolf's manic depression through the lens of biological medicine and its interpretation of mental disorders. What the above-mentioned studies share is an interest in how Woolf was able, despite experiencing certain severe manic symptoms, to fictionalise her experience of mental illness into her art of everyday life. Nonetheless, Woolf's own description of illness also involved her own physical pain. Her diaries and letters provide us with her vivid impressions of what she was experiencing in her body, such as headache, toothache, or influenza. Woolf's experience of physical illness – that it was a significant cause of her mental pain – inspired her to explore, specifically, the mind-body relation upon which her holism was based.

Before exploring further the mind-body relation, through the experience of illness, Woolf argues in her 1920 essay 'Body and Brain' that 'very little is yet known of the interaction between mind and body' (250). It is interesting to note that in the essay, Woolf uses the terms 'brain' and 'mind' interchangeably. She is ironic about how biographers tend to remember '[t]he life, dignity, and

character' in the brain as if it were 'a separate and superior organ attached to the instrument which is, happily, becoming obsolete' (250). By interchanging the mind with the brain, she implies that the mind is in fact embodied and that one's mind is capable of following what one's body can do. Theodore Roosevelt, used as an example in the essay, had his brain coming to partnership with his 'tough thick body capable of immense endurance' (250). Woolf believes that Roosevelt knew how to be involved in politics, both through his intellect and his body, which 'excelled immensely those of other men' (253). Eventually, his body succumbed to illness and died. Accordingly it is, as Woolf finds, difficult 'to have both body and brain' (253) when the body will perish one day. This statement clearly shows Woolf's attempt to think outside of dualistic parameters, despite previously giving, in 'Modern Fiction', the two pictures of the mind and body as distinct. Although she seems to suggest one can have either the body or the brain, her implication is indeed that it is not possible to choose one over the other. As in the case of Roosevelt, the mind ceases to be once the body dies. This also implies that Woolf's concept of the mind-body relation is based on her idea that the mind and the body cannot exist without each other. Here, what Woolf anticipates is a non-dualistic principle, through which she sees no distinction between the mind and body. In her later writings, such as *The Waves* (1931) and 'A Sketch of the Past' (1939), she also extends this non-dualism to a holistic view that the mind and body work as a whole. Particularly, she believes that our perception is affected by external influences, and vice versa. Thus, her holism, unlike the rigid mode of dualism, proposes that the mind and body are in an interdependent relationship, dynamically interacting with each other.

In one of her diary entries from 1933, Woolf observes that her ‘symptoms are purely physical & as distinct as one book is from the other’ (*Diary 4* 143). Although she was diagnosed with psychiatric disorders, such as depression, she was aware that her symptoms manifested physically rather than psychologically. These physical symptoms, allegedly caused by her mental disorders, were ‘distinct’ from one another. For example, she vividly describes in her diary how her body reacted when concentrating on writing *Flush* (1933) and *The Pargiters*, which was later published as *The Years* in 1937. Writing these two texts made her ‘old headache’ return and her heart ‘jump’ (*Diary 4* 143). These reactions left Woolf wondering “what connection has the brain with the body’ (143). This question is, again, not meant to be answered with a direct solution. Yet she concludes in the diary entry that ‘[n]obody in Harley St could explain’ (143).

Due to her recurring mental illness, often manifested as physical pain, Woolf was not unfamiliar with the medical treatments or diagnoses she received from her psychiatrists. According to Leonard, Virginia had at least ‘five doctors’, including George Savage, Maurice Craig, Henry Head, T. B. Hyslop, and Octavia Wilberforce, to treat her illness (*Beginning Again* 160). Although Woolf usually received medical treatments for the physical symptoms of her mental disorders, she understood that illness affected her perception as well as her experience of the body. In a letter to Ethel Smyth, Woolf described her brain as ‘the most unaccountable of machinery – always buzzing, humming, soaring roaring diving, and then buried in the mud’ (*Letters 5* 140). Like her doctors, Woolf described the phenomena in her ‘buzzing’ brain as purely physical. From the perspective of early-twentieth-century medical science, mental phenomena

were often identified as mechanistic (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 29). But even though Woolf used the word 'machinery' to refer to the brain, she described it very differently from the mechanists. Woolf did not accept diagnostic definitions of her symptoms. Instead, she was aware of the complexities of the mind-body interaction, which were not easily pinned down as completely physical phenomena. Woolf's exploration of the mind-body relation shows her high valuation of the inner life of the mind. Fundamentally, she was interested in exploring what it means to be human in this material world, via her knowledge of the body. Despite being dubbed 'the Invalid Lady of Bloomsbury' (Forster 226), she did not see herself as a victim of diseases, but as a writer who understood the experience of illness as an exploration of the mind-body relation.

Woolf's claim in her diary, that no medical practitioners in Harley Street could explain the brain-body connection, can be seen as her ironic response to the physicians she consulted. As Woolf observed, her doctors prioritised the physical basis of her mental illness. Nevertheless, there were some medical neuropsychologists, in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Britain, who shared an interest in the complex relation between the mind and the body. These physicians included John Hughlings Jackson, W. H. R. Rivers, and Henry Head. Their influences were recognised by their counterparts later in the twentieth century, such as Kurt Goldstein in Germany, Alexander Luria in Soviet Russia, and Oliver Sacks in the United States. These figures may initially appear to have little to do with Woolf; she provided an aesthetic representation of what could be inside the mind of characters, while the neuropsychologists often focused on so-called 'hard science', experiments, and

data.[6] However, this impression can be misleading. To some extent, Woolf's concept of the mind-body relation shares rhetorical strategies, and philosophical concerns about subjective and objective experience, with those of Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks. Those doctors were also concerned with the clinical, and included patients' experience of their neuropsychological illness. Woolf, alongside these neuropsychologists, saw literature as an alternative way to explore various complex themes that science could easily reduce to definitive answers: human character; the mind-body relation; and the existential phenomena associated with illness. She attempted to move beyond the materialistic limitations to look at life as 'a luminous halo' rather than 'a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged' ('Modern Fiction' 189). Her philosophy of seeing 'the whole' in life predominates in most of her writings. Her literary works, including *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves*, 'Modern Fiction', *On Being Ill*, and 'Sketch of the Past', engage intellectually in the complex phenomena of perception, thinking, memory and consciousness.

[6] The term 'neuropsychology' was not widely used until after World War II. Alexander Luria, influenced by the psychologist Lev Vygotsky, saw the need to supplement Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology with classical neurology that focused on material explanations of mental functioning (Sacks, *Foreword* viii). Yet Luria's goal of combining psychology and neurology was fundamentally to define neuropsychology as the science of the human brain and use it as practical medicine for the rehabilitation of his patients (Luria, *The Working Brain* 344). In the current study, I will describe Henry Head as a neuropsychologist, even though he was often remembered as a neurologist, and as a prominent figure in British neurology until his death in 1940. Head showed many characteristics that justify describing him as a neuropsychologist. In particular, he understood the workings of the human brain and mental functioning as a whole (Finger 58). He saw the importance of adapting the psychological and philosophical concepts that influenced the clinical observations and study of aphasia, a neurological condition associated with language disturbances (*Aphasia* ix; vol. 1). Like Luria, his goal was to help his aphasic patients retrieve certain mental capacities, so as to connect themselves to everyday life (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 2).

Inward Turns and the Holism Movement in Medical Neuroscience

Before any further exploration of Woolf's intellectual resonances with Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks, I will first briefly discuss the holism movement in medical neuropsychology. I will argue that neuropsychology experienced an inward turn, in a similar fashion to psychoanalysis. In the early twentieth century, psychoanalysis, as a breakaway from neurological science, represented medicine's inward turn.[7] The original goal of psychoanalysis was to increase understanding of 'the abnormal behaviour and the discovery of successful methods of treatment' (Woodworth and Sheehan 251). It went from the somatic treatments to cathartic methods, including 'talking' or giving the patient 'full expression to every idea as it came up' (257). In Britain, several contemporaries from Woolf's social circle, namely the Bloomsbury Group, participated in the development of psychoanalysis. These people, including Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes, and Leonard Woolf, whom Virginia married in 1912, expressed a great interest in Freudian psychology. They attempted to apply Freud's psychoanalytic theory to their own works in politics, history, philosophy, and economics (Winslow 786). Lytton's brother and sister-in-law, James and Alix Strachey, became qualified psychoanalysts under the mentorship of Freud. Freud also appointed the couple to be his English translators in London. In terms of Woolf's household, her brother and sister-in-law James and Karin

[7] Freud's medical career can be seen as a parallel with the change in early-twentieth-century medicine. Having worked as a neurologist, and having studied Jean-Martin Charcot's approach to hysteria, Freud went on to pursue more psychological aspects of mental disorders. He later collaborated with Joseph Breuer and participated in the development of the talking-cure therapy, which was a key component of psychoanalytic treatments. Ernest Jones documented Freud's life well, in *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (three volumes, 1953-1957). For a brief history of Freud's medical change, see Robert S. Woodworth and Mary S. Sheeran's *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (1931), and the shorter version of *Sigmund Freud*, edited by Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus (1964).

Stephen became psychoanalysts in the late 1920s. Leonard, on behalf of the Hogarth Press, agreed with the Stracheys to publish Freud's works in the English language. However, Woolf herself appeared less enthusiastic about psychoanalysis. In her letter to Harman Goldstone, who proposed to write a book about her, Woolf claims that she 'never studied Dr Freud or any psychoanalyst' (*Letters 5* 36).[8] She further explained that her knowledge of the mind came 'merely from superficial talk' (36). Despite this claim, she previously told Molly MacCarthy in 1924 that Hogarth was 'publishing Freud' and that she had had a 'glance at the proof' (*Letters 3* 134). A year after the first meeting with Freud in 1938, Woolf admitted that she began 'reading Freud' (*Diary 5* 248). Even though Woolf shunned reading Freud until 1939, the scholarship about Woolf and psychoanalysis has produced a number of works, and continues to be discussed to the present day.[9]

At about the same time as the rise of psychoanalysis, medicine also saw a need to turn to psychological aspects of neurology. Neuropsychologists, including Head, Goldstein, and Luria, did not confine their understandings of the brain to a biological and materialistic basis, but commonly accepted that mental phenomena were as complex as their physical counterparts. They expressed a great interest in the concept of mind, and worked with psychologists including Rivers, Adhémar Gelb, and Lev Vygotsky, respectively.

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[8] For more details about Woolf's historical and cultural links with Freud see Perry Meisel's 'Woolf and Freud: The Kelinian Turn' and Sanja Bahun's 'Woolf and Psychoanalytic Theory' in *Virginia Woolf in Context* (2012). Although Woolf mentioned little of meeting Freud in her diary, Leonard vividly recalled their dinner with him in his autobiography *Downhill All the Way* (1967).

[9] For example, Elizabeth Abel's *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (1989), Nicole Ward Jouve's 'Virginia Woolf and Psychoanalysis' (2000), and Heather Roetto's '"What a Lark! What a Plunge!" The Influence of Sigmud Freud on Virginia Woolf' (2019), look at how Woolf's connection with psychoanalysis could have shaped her literary psychology and her conception of the mind.

In collaboration with Rivers, Head severed some of the sensory organs on his arm as part of the nerve-division experiment. Goldstein's holistic approach to the organism was shaped by his long-time collaborator Gelb, who was a Gestalt psychologist. Luria was interested in how cultural-historical psychology can be applied in neuropsychology, which was closely associated with Vygotsky. Moreover, these neuropsychologists were also influenced by Freud, and even adapted his psychoanalytic theory to their clinical practices. Head was one of the first British neuropsychologists to bring the Freudian concept of repression to psychoneuroses such as distress (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 86). Goldstein considered Freud's principle of the pleasure and death instincts as central to the human organism (Goldstein 259). Luria, in his early medical career, was particularly interested in the works of Freud. In 1922, he set up a psychoanalytic society, and wrote to Freud for permission to translate his works into the Russian language (Homskaya 11). Freud's clinical practice of writing case histories into biographies would later inspire Sacks in the 1970s (*Awakenings* 229). Apart from the influence of Freudian psychology, Gestalt psychology impacted medical science, and challenged the reductionistic thinking which was widely accepted in medicine. The qualities stressed by Gestalt psychologists – human significance and the dynamic mind-body interaction – were closely associated with the holism movement in medical neuroscience.

Gestalt theory, with the literal meaning of 'form or configuration' in German, sought to retain a place for human significance in natural science, while also maintaining empirical and experimental standards (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 103). Its emphasis on human beings was subsequently

applied to neurology. Holistic neuropsychologists saw a dynamic relationship between the brain and body, and sought to understand the complex mental phenomena associated with brain damage (Finger 57). Inspired by philosophy and empirical psychology, the Gestaltists proposed ‘to continue the study of conscious experiences but to abandon the dismemberment of meaningful experiences into meaningless elements’ (Woodworth and Sheehan 214). As opposed to the behaviourists who ‘analyse[d] behaviour into its component reflexes and conditioned reflexes’, Gestaltists sought to understand the conscious experience, which ‘is learned by use of the “phenomenological” form of introspection’ (214). The Gestaltists suggested that the conscious experience determines how the human mind, or the perceptual system, perceives an object. Most importantly, a Gestalt quality was, as defined by Austrian philosopher and psychologist Christian von Ehrenfels, ‘to present in a whole but not present in any of the parts making up the whole’ (218). This Gestalt quality of ‘the whole’ in perception also shared a strong link with the holism movement in neuropsychology. Head and Goldstein understood that there is dynamic and active interaction between mental and physical functioning (Finger 57). Luria and Sacks promoted the idea that the brain function should be understood as a whole. These neuropsychologists proposed that the whole brain is home to all the psychological processes, such as speech and thinking. What they have in common is their fascination with the mind-body relation. Rather than follow the reductionistic approach, they were seeking alternatives in human psychology, to understand the brain and its relation to perception, while retaining empirical and scientific views of the body. In addition, their close interests in literary and philosophical discourse of the mind provided

them with further questions on what it means to be human, and its connection to life as a whole.

It is worth comparing cerebral localisation theory with holistic neurology, as the latter was essentially established upon the former.[10] The concepts of the brain in the late nineteenth century were predominantly influenced by localisation theory. Localisationists, such as Paul Broca and Carl Wernicke, generally believed that specific mental functioning could be localised in certain cerebral areas (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 15). Even higher mental functioning, such as language and speech, was believed to be located in one specific part of the hemisphere. The complexities of psychological activities and consciousness were therefore reduced to sensory and motor functioning based upon reflexes and the laws of associationism. The whole process proposed by localisation theory would, as Harrington observes, lead scientists to describe human brain function in terms of a mindless 'machine' (14). Because of this, the idea of functional and mental recovery after brain damage was believed to be impossible (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 262). People with brain injury were treated as if they were broken and unrepairable machines. Nonetheless, not every medical scientist completely agreed with the localisationists. Head and Goldstein believed that any type of brain lesion could throw the entire brain into disorder (Finger 58). With the holistic picture of neuropsychological functioning, they implied a dynamic relationship between the mental and

[10] Anne Harrington was one of the early historians who applied the concept of 'holism' to neurology. Her early works, such as the essay 'A Feeling for the "Whole"' (1990), *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain* (1987), and *Reenchanted Science* (1996), explore the position of holistic neurology within the history of neuroscience, from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century. In *Origins of Neuroscience* (1994), Stanley Finger also describes holism as an important philosophy that influenced neuroscience after John Hughlings Jackson.

physical reactions to brain damage. Jackson had mentioned a similar idea, that brain injury could affect the whole cerebral function, in his papers on aphasia. However he – heavily influenced by Herbert Spencer and Thomas Laycock, who promoted the philosophy of asssociationism – found it impossible to accept the dynamic view of the cerebral activities (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 208). Although Jackson was predominantly affiliated with the physiological side of the cerebral localisation theory, he still argued that the damage causing language disturbances might reside in the whole brain rather than in one localised area (209). This sense of wholeness in the brain function contributed to the development of holism, and its belief in the possibility of recovery. As Anne Harrington observes, the adherents of holism did not entirely rail against localisation theory, but sought to understand the brain beyond the mechanical model ('The Feeling for a "Whole"' 257). One distinction between holism and localisation theory is that holists looked upon the damaged brain as a newly organised brain system (Finger 58). According to the holism movement, this new integration suggests that the brain has the latent capacity to re-integrate itself into a new whole (58). Holists expanded their concept of integration to the belief that one can possibly regain some of one's mental capacities despite brain damage, and can therefore, possibly, recover.

As with her connection with Freud and psychoanalysis, Woolf was not directly involved with the holism movement in neuroscience, although she was once, after her attempted suicide in 1913, a patient of Henry Head (*Beginning Again* 157; Bell, *Virginia Woolf* 16 vol. 1; Lee 182). After that incident, Woolf hardly mentioned Head in her letters and diaries, except in recalling the conversation between Forster and Leonard, with regard to Head's claimed skill

to ‘convert the sodomites’ (*Diary 3* 193). As for Head, his second contact with Woolf was through his reading and discussion with the poet Robert Nichols about *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925 (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 274). Even though these biographical facts do not necessarily suggest Woolf’s literary work influenced Head’s medical studies, or vice versa, there is as Susie Christensen suggests an intellectual resonance between Woolf and Head, and between literature and neuroscience (‘The Modernist Anti-Mental’ 287). Indeed, Woolf and Head were aware of the complexities of the mind-body relation, which they associated with illness. In her letters, diaries, and memoirs Woolf offers us her intimate and introspective account of mental and physical phenomena resulting from illness. In *Studies in Neurology* (1920), and *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech* (1926), Head gives a vivid picture of the dynamic interaction between mental and physical functioning, which contributed to his understanding of the brain. Fundamentally, Woolf and Head both put their observations of the brain and its relation to the mind into words, or even into a narrative form.

However, in the early twentieth century, it was not uncommon for neuropsychologists or other medical specialists to use narratives to document their case studies and reports. For instance, Head’s 1926 publication was not only a record of his clinical observations about people with aphasic and other similar language disorders, but also a survey of the historical movement of aphasiology. By examining the history of brain science, Head attempted to use his own narrative to describe the phenomena emerging during his clinical practices. Also, in the late twentieth century, Sacks wrote his clinical cases into stories, as in *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* (1985). Simply put,

patients' narratives played a significant role in the development of holistic neuroscience. These neuropsychologists, including Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks, regarded their patients' first-hand descriptions as an immediate way of understanding how perception closely interacts with physical reality. In other words, their patients' words give the totality of subjective experience, as well as the objective facts of brain damage, thus suggesting the mind-body relation to be inextricable and dynamic. Fundamentally, language is a primary methodology for holistic neuropsychologists to maintain a place for human significance in science.

Interestingly, Woolf also developed her own concept of 'the whole' in human experience through her writing, putting perception into words to make a 'whole' ('Sketch of the Past' 85). As she writes in this autobiographical piece, this sense of wholeness in writing about memories brought her therapeutic power (85). Being conscious about what she had experienced in the past, Woolf empowered herself by putting 'the severed parts together' to take the pain away (85). The pattern behind the whole perception is that we are connected to the whole world through words. As Woolf found, it is language that creates a sense of wholeness (85). Hence, we can see there is a parallel between Woolf's idea of 'the whole', and the ideas of holistic neuropsychologists, in terms of linking narrative and language to holism.

Holism in Neuroscience and Literature

In this section, I will demonstrate how Woolf's concept of 'the whole' resonates with the holism movement in neuropsychology, and how Woolf found her own version of holism in her writing. Through narratives, Woolf suggested that humans are connected with the world, and so become an organic whole. To

understand the concept of holism, I will first explore its historical and cultural influences, which can offer a useful comparison with Woolf's holistic philosophy. The term 'holism' was first coined and introduced to the English language by the South African statesman Jan Christian Smuts in 1926. In his preface to *Holism and Evolutio*n (1926), Smuts expresses his belief in holism as 'the principle which makes for the origin and progress of wholes in the universe' (v). He boldly claimed that the holist point of view can solve major scientific and philosophical problems, such as the distinction between the mind and body, and the debates about mechanism and organism in the human body and the universe. However, his work has been generally seen as his political enforcement of the unification of laws and races in South Africa (Crafford 140). It was understood that his holistic ideas would serve his political purposes as a military leader and statesman, rather than as a philosopher or scientist. Nevertheless, Smuts' holism resembled some aspects of Gestalt psychology, especially his idea of revolting against reductionism (Poynton 181). Although Smuts' 1926 monograph did not make a direct impact on neuroscience, the general term 'holism' has been given a wide interpretation in different contexts, such as biological and psychological holism. Even though Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks did not refer to Smuts' concept of holism, they all shared a similar principle that the human body cannot be understood without considering its quality of being whole. These neuropsychologists even related their ideas of 'whole' in the mind-body relation to, broadly, life and attempted to create a holistic picture of subjectivity and external existences. Fundamentally, their holism suggests the subjective and objective nature of reality, which, as they believed, is necessarily seen as whole.

The holism movement was particularly important in the development of early-twentieth-century neuroscience, especially in studies of aphasia. Aphasiology had its root in the mid nineteenth century, when neurologists, including Jean-Baptiste Bouillaud, Paul Broca, and Franz Josef Gall, found that the phenomena of language disturbances after brain damage indicate the complex relations between language and the cerebral functioning (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 1). They attempted to locate the human linguistic capacity in the cerebral cortex, in accordance with their belief in localisation theory. Although Jackson also closely followed the localisation doctrine, he did not agree with the idea that language could be easily located in one particular area of the brain (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 209). As he further implied, the problem of linguistic capacity could be the problem of the entire brain (209). Jackson's disagreement with this particular linguistic issue would later inspire the holistic neuropsychologists who came after him. Especially, Head regarded Jackson's papers on aphasia as a milestone in his neurological as well as medical research. Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks referred to Jackson's alleged holism as some of the most influential thinking in the history of neuropsychology. In the holism movement, the concept of aphasia was not understood merely as a somatic disorder. Rather, holists often related the disease to a variety of psychological and philosophical aspects, such as memory, perception, and life. Fundamentally, they associated language with thought processes, subjectivity, and the human as a whole being (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 9). These attributes of higher mental functioning are intimately connected to each other. At a basic level, the ability to use language retains special importance for understanding what it means to be human.

Henry Head was one of the early commentators on the holistic relation of language, mental phenomena, and the brain. Having collaborated with several psychologists including Rivers, Head extended his study of aphasia to the complex interaction between language and thought processes. Before concluding his theoretical framework in the first volume of *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, he linked the process of thought to language and mental imagery, for his clinical examination and treatments, in a chapter entitled 'Language and Thinking'. In so doing, Head was able to detail distinct symptoms and various features of diverse types of language disturbances. Although Head focused, in this chapter, on his clinical observations, he suggested that mental disorders should be understood as equal to neurological syndromes. At the beginning of the chapter, he even argued that aphasia cannot be merely explained and understood through neurology itself. He believed that the philosophical and psychological aspects of language could provide more insight into the complexities of the neurological brain and mental capacities (*Aphasia* 513 vol. 1).

As previously mentioned, Woolf observed 'the whole' via her non-dualistic view of the mind-body relation. Specifically, physical pain and illness influence how we perceive the world externally. She implied that there is an interdependent relationship between the body and mind. The idea of interdependence can be related to Woolf's holism in her vision of literature and, broadly, human life. For example, in her 1919 review of Clayton Hamilton's *Materials and Methods of Fiction* (1908), she makes an analogy between literature and the human body. In the review, she questions Hamilton's literary approach to fiction, through which he reads a piece of work like a surgeon

anatomising the body. For Hamilton, all works of art can be ‘taken into pieces […] like the internal organs of a frog’ (‘The Anatomy of Fiction’ 138). However, we can put those pieces together, but not ‘make it hop’ (138-139). She argues that Mr Hamilton’s anatomical method is not adequate for fiction writing, as ‘there is such a thing as life’ in it (139). This suggests not only that fiction is inseparable from life, but also that life cannot be understood without reference to its property of being whole.

In ‘Modern Fiction’, Woolf explicitly addresses her concept of holism in human life. She regards life as ‘a luminous halo’ that surrounds our consciousness from the beginning to the end. According to her, life is in the shape of a halo, circular and only seen as a whole:

> 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 a 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? (106)

For Woolf, fiction writing is closely based upon the embodied experience of life. As with the semi-transparency of a halo, life is a complex concept that cannot be understood as if it were only a concrete image. Instead, life requires the understanding of both the objective and subjective natures of reality. She urges us to look within life, and find the moments of seeing inside the mind. With the ‘little mixture’ of external description, writing fiction should be thought of as a way of understanding life. The integration of inner and external existence is at the core of Woolf’s literary vision of everyday life. Although Woolf, in ‘Modern

Fiction', emphasises the strong link between life and writing fiction, she implies a deep exploration of the workings of perception. The nature of human perception, and its elusive workings with imagery, language, memory, and other mental phenomena, is crucial. Both external and internal attributes of perception make up our experience as a whole, which underlies Woolf's art of writing.

After 'Modern Fiction', Woolf continuously applied her holistic vision of human perception to her method of writing. Examples can be seen in both her fictional and non-fictional works. She experiments in using different characters and their interior perspectives; for example, to piece the fragments of Jacob Flanders together into the character as a whole, in *Jacob's Room* (1922). She creates a literary double to complete Clarissa Dalloway's character, and to understand her as a whole, in *Mrs Dalloway*. She uses Lily Briscoe, as an artist who aspires to find the synthesis of life among her chaotic moments of feeling, in *To the Lighthouse*. She merges six characters' voices into one narrative to create the picture of them as a whole being, in *The Waves*. She finally reveals her psychology of 'the whole' in 'Sketch of the Past'. These examples all demonstrate Woolf's holistic vision of life and art.

Woolf and Holistic Neuroscience in Context: Literature and Literary Texts

To explore, further, the intellectual resonance between Woolf's literary holism and the holism movement in medical neuroscience, I will begin with the question of what 'literature' means in the current study.[11] In the introduction to

[11] Patricia Waugh's edited collection of critical essays, *Literary Theory and Criticism* (2006) provides a wide range of literary criticism building up the complex nature of literature. Victoria Kahn, in *The Trouble with Literature* (2020), refers to the complex relation between literariness and literature as 'a source of trouble' for scholars from one generation to another (6).

Literary Theory, Eagleton gives a comprehensive survey of various theories intending to define literature. One definition of literature is that it 'intensifies ordinary language' and 'deviates systematically from everyday speech' (Eagleton 2). In formalist criticism, literature is stripped down to its linguistic function or narrative device, rather than having it reflect upon any relations outside its literariness. This formalist definition often regards literature as poetry, while overlooking the fact that there are various genres of writing, such as fiction, prose, and drama, that transform everyday language in peculiar ways (Eagleton 5). As Eagleton suggests, the essences of literature include form, creativity, and a close relation to social ideologies (14). Nonetheless, there is no definitive answer to what literature is; however, an interpretative approach to literary texts could possibly extend our understandings of the texts themselves. As those holistic neurologists published their clinical and medical findings in written texts, the current study explores literature, both as medical and fictional writings, as an organic whole, in its linguistic structure, social context, and subjective experience.

As for Woolf, her literary texts offer a nuanced and complex representation of human perception and its close link to experience as a whole. She understood that literature cannot be reduced to its language function or to the ideological instruments of the early twentieth century. Her literary texts are primarily experiential and intimately associated with her life. Even her life writing, such as letters and diaries, does not often give straightforward answers and definitions to the questions she has in regard to life itself. Yet, it provides considerable insight into her published works (Blyth 353). Her diaries are filled with her spontaneous ideas for the novels, which she would later adapt into the

finalised versions. She frequently incorporates her everyday life experience into the works, suggesting that her life is her art. A reciprocal relationship is formed between her life and her texts. What she encountered in life can be a good source of creative output. Woolf is widely regarded as a fiction writer, and this may lead the reader to think of her works as imaginative and subjective. However, this assumption is questionable, as it simply defines literature as fictional and creative, while other writings are deemed non-fictional and uncreative. Rather, fiction, as she articulates in her 1927 essay 'The Art of Fiction', has 'roused a thousand ordinary human feelings in its progress' (52). Indeed, her fiction intensifies language and feelings that are generally considered ordinary and then ignored. Essentially, her fictional writing represents her imaginatively real perception of the world. She writes her experience of medical consultation, and its general attitudes towards psychological wounds, in *Mrs Dalloway*. Mr and Mrs Ramsay, in *To the Lighthouse*, resemble her parents, Leslie and Julia Stephen. The shadow of her deceased brother Thoby Stephen is seen in *Jacob's Room* and *The Waves*. Woolf's decision to put her feelings into the form of fiction results from, borrowing her words, her 'desire to create' a world 'as inhabitable as the real world' ('Phases of Fiction' 56).

Woolf's essays do not aim to create an imaginative world that runs in parallel with the real world. Instead, they question and impose challenges on the social and cultural norms that shaped the early twentieth century. Her essays also include her reviews of literary works, from ancient Greek to modern writers, such as H. G. Wells and Dorothy Richardson. In her early essay 'The Decay of Essay-Writing', she criticises essay writing for being too 'personal',

showing ‘simply the expression of such individual likes and dislikes’ instead of including different perspectives (4-5). Her inclusion of other relevant texts implies that she was engaged in, and showed her critical attitudes towards, these texts. We can also see her essays describe some of the key accomplishments of modernist literature. She questions, in ‘Modern Fiction’, the external elements of existence that were preferred in Edwardian novels. She decries, in *On Being Ill*, the dualistic narrative of the mind-body relation. She proposes, in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), a feminist discourse, to examine women as professional writers, and fiction about them. She reflects upon the purposes of writing and reading fiction in ‘Phases of Fiction’ (1929). Woolf’s principle of essay writing is to ‘give pleasure’; it should ‘lay us under a spell with its first word’ (‘The Modern Essay’ 13). In this way, she intermixed various writing styles, such as confessional voices, biography and autobiography, prose, and fiction to create a conversation with her readers. This genre-mixing technique allowed Woolf to explore the complexities of the human experience of illness, and its relation to the mind-body connection. It supplements her novels, which blur the distinctions between reality, facts, and impressions.

Although the published works of Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks are commonly recognised as non-fiction, and medical writings, their texts demonstrate at least three traits that mean they can be read in a literary manner: their prosaic language, describing clinical and medical concepts; their personal impressions of clinical matters, such as patients and their stories; and their shared concerns about human character. This is not to claim that those neuropsychologists’ works should be read in the same way as Woolf’s. Rather, their texts suggest that medical writing can show not only bioscientific values,

but also aesthetic ones. In particular, the emphasis on human significance allowed Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks to write freely, in a certain form of narrative that combines both medical and literary discourse, which enabled them to explore the complexities of human character. This makes them, borrowing Luria's words, writers of 'romantic' neuroscience, who preserved 'the wealth of living reality', and retained 'richness' in science via the complex picture of human behaviour (*The Making of Mind* 174).[12]

In *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, Head included a brief historical account of aphasiology, his borrowings from some of the relevant philosophical and psychological concepts, and his patients' narratives during his examinations. Regarding his patients as whole and living organisms instead of machines, Goldstein in *The Organism* (1934) expands his clinical research to various philosophical aspects of life and mind.[13] Luria combined the journals and clinical biographies of his patients into what resembles the structure of a novel, with book-length plots, characters, and conflicts. His works *The Mind of*

[12] Luria's romantic philosophy was influenced by German traditions, and writers such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Wilhelm Wundt. Particularly, the physiologist Max Verwon, who divided scientists into classical and romantic groups, had a direct impact on Luria's attitude towards neuroscience. As Luria articulates in his autobiography, romantic neuroscientists or scholars did not follow the path of reductionism, which classical scientists proposed. Instead, they aimed to explore 'the rich and complex picture of human behaviours', including emotions, feelings, and action (*The Making of Mind* 176). See also Hannah Proctor's *Psychologies in Revolution* (2020) for more of the context of Luria's romantic philosophy.

[13] Stanley Finger, in *Origins of Neuroscience,* draws a comparison between Head and Goldstein. Indeed, they bear several close similarities with each other, in terms of interests in classical neurology, literature, philosophy, and the arts. Both were also interested in helping their patients recover from brain damage, and in understanding the plasticity of the brain (Finger 58). However, Goldstein's background as a Jewish German had a significant impact on his perspectives in neuroscience, which differentiates him from Head, whose medical career was mostly in London. After the Nazi government took over Germany in 1933, Goldstein stayed in the Netherlands in 1934 and completed *The Organism* with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. After emigrating to the US in 1935, Goldstein continuously worked on his holistic approach to American neuroscience. His ideas of neuroscience and its relation to Germany and the US are discussed in Oliver Sacks' introduction to the 1995 edition of *The Organism*, and in Anne Harrington's *Reenchanted Science*. Stefanos Geroulanos and Todd Meyers' 'Integration, Vigilance, Catastrophe' (2016) also provides an interesting comparative study between Head and Goldstein in terms of their thinking about integration after brain injury.

a Mnemonist (1968) and *The Man with a Shattered World* (1972) are prominent examples of medical cases turned into stories. Sacks, continuing Luria's legacy, used his storytelling technique to address neuropsychological phenomena rather than to adapt scientific research methods, such as data and statistics. His publications, including *Awakenings* (1973) and *A Leg to Stand On* (1984), are what he describes as 'clinical tales', which intermix medical and clinical facts with narratives ('Clinical Tales' 16). What these neuropsychologists attempted to achieve is to place human beings at the centre of medicine. Accordingly, their emphasis on human significance separates them from classical science, which prefers reductionistic and mechanical models of human bodies.

In addition to the literariness shared between Woolf, Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks, there are various historical and cultural aspects of their texts that are worth discussing. Among these, the post-war eras (both first and second World Wars) had a profound impact on their conceptions of what it meant to be a 'whole' human being. Reconstruction after the wars can be seen as a parallel with the core concept of holism that Woolf and those neuropsychologists sought to understand – how to achieve wholeness out of fragmentation. In her works, Woolf addresses a hope of understanding and rebuilding the self as a whole, out of fragmented memories and perceptions. In *The Waves*, the characters struggle with understanding themselves, and question how we can know a person from different perspectives. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith both attempt to re-adjust themselves to the present day and to re-establish their identities by retrieving fragmented memories. In *To the*

Lighthouse, Lily Briscoe mourns the deaths of the Ramsays, and aspires to finish, piece by piece, the painting of the family left undone before the war.

The two World Wars also had a significant influence on Head, Goldstein, and Luria. Head left his private practice and joined the military medical service in 1916 (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 70). While offering brain-injured soldiers medical treatments, Head also attempted to apply and test the current localisation theory in his examinations; this would later inspire the composition of his 1926 work on aphasia and language disturbances. Goldstein's experience of treating and attending injured soldiers compelled him to 'broaden the medical framework of reference to a more biological orientation' (Goldstein 15). His goal was to evaluate the changes those soldiers suffered, and to offer aid to them (15). After emigrating to the US in 1935, he continued working on his holistic approach to the brain as a whole organism. His supporter and neurologist Karl Lashley introduced his holism to American neurologists (13). Luria documented the life of Lev Zasetsky, who attended Luria's hospital for 25 years. Zasetsky, suffering a severe brain injury during the Battle of Smolensk, documented the struggles he encountered after brain damage (Luria, *Shattered World* 7). His vivid depiction of his existence with brain injury gave Luria a deep insight into what and how this brain-injured soldier suffered, and how he lived his life. Although Sacks (born 1933) obviously did not personally engage with the two wars, his insistence on turning his patients and their diseases into stories formed a stark contrast with the mechanical and statistical model predominating in the medical community after World War II. These historical backgrounds behind the texts of Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks laid a foundation for their concepts of 'the whole' in human experience, perception,

and selfhood. In addition, with their belief in recovery, holistic neurologists promoted the idea that the brain-mind interaction can be active and dynamic instead of being fixed and mechanistic.

Overview of Related Studies

There are a number of studies intending to bring Woolf and neuroscience into discussion. Literary critics, such as Craig A. Gordon (2007), Patricia Waugh (2012), Sowon S. Park (2012), and Susie Christensen (2014), are aware of the challenge of exploring the literary epistemology of the mind in the context of science. However, Jonah Lehrer forcefully attempts to bring literature and neuroscience into one disciplinary method. In his 2007 publication *Proust was a Neuroscientist*, Lehrer finds that Woolf understood the mind as fragmented, while having a tendency to be bound together into 'the whole' (170).[14] He claims that Woolf's depiction of the self which emerges as a whole is not merely aesthetic or literary, but also neuroscientific. He thus concludes that Woolf's aesthetic exploration of the conscious self is strongly linked with consciousness theory in today's neuroscience (188). Given that Lehrer had experience of working in a neuroscience lab, his argument may be convincing as scientific discourse (ix). However, without considering the complexities of Woolf's writings, Lehrer subliminally undermines Woolf's artistic side of the mind, and reduces her literary works to instruments of the epistemology of science. Lehrer's approach does not sit easily with Woolf's criticism in 'Freudian Fiction'; although she focused on psychoanalysis in that essay, she observes that a merely scientific approach to novels 'simplifies rather than complicates,

[14] Lehrer's published works have been extensively discredited, as he was caught self-plagiarising his books and blogs in an unattributed way.

detracts rather than enriches', as it is 'dull and has no human significance' ('Freudian Fiction' 153-154). Indeed there are, as Park points out, methodological issues resulting from accommodating the epistemology of the mind ('The Feeling of Knowing' 108). Literature provides knowledge of the mind generally, through narratives, experience, and creativity. Science offers empirical approaches to human bodies. Nonetheless, literature cannot simply be a scientific instrument. Rather, my goal in exploring Woolf's writing of the mind is to present a historical and cultural context which resonates with that in medical and neurological culture.

In *Literary Modernism, Bioscience*, *and Community*, Gordon suggests that Woolf intended to supplement the literary discourse of the body with the language of biological science (1). In this way, he questions 'the epistemological authority of biomedical science' that seeks to conceptualise human subjectivity and incorporate individual subjects (4). As Gordon argues, Woolf – in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves* – shows that the concept of the body can be constituted both within literature and within biomedical science (4). Thus, Woolf sought to see beyond the materialistic definition of what it means to be human. Indeed, Woolf searched for alternatives, to explore the complexity of the human body, rather than follow somatic explanations as the definitive answer.

Waugh points out that 'a more complex, nuanced, and persuasive account of cognition' seems to bear out Woolf's literary performance of thinking through the body ('Thinking in Literature' 76). Waugh argues that reading Woolf reflects the feeling of self-presence, which, according to neuroscientific investigations of the brain, enters the perspectives of a fictional world. Hence, picturing the

movements of its characters seems to involve 'the same neuronal pathways as actual perception and movement in the world' (89). What is fictional in Woolf's novels, as well as other modernist writings, resembles the way we may perceive in the real world. Moving on to the context of the twenty-first century, Park studies Woolf's literary methods of consciousness alongside contemporary neuroscience. She argues that the theory of consciousness speaks across literary and scientific cultures, since both offer a form of knowledge of the mind ('The Feeling of Knowing' 108). Hence, Woolf's model of mind, Park asserts, parallels today's multidisciplinary studies of 'cognitive turn' (108).[15] Although literature and science provide various convincing arguments on how to understand the mind, there are still unresolved issues in relation to bringing these two cultures into one discipline (114). Yet, these published accounts of the neuroscience of the mind, at least, suggest that narrative is a possible way of showing the conjunction between the literary and neuroscientific aspects of the mind-body relation.

The published works mentioned above are convincing in their own way. However, the intellectual resonance between Woolf's writing on the mind-body relation and the neuroscience of her day has not yet been widely explored. Although Stephen Trombley was the first scholar to explore the connection between Woolf and Henry Head, he primarily focused on the doctor-patient

[15] Park later continues exploring the work of Woolf through the cognitive literary criticism in 'The "Hard" Problem from a Literary Perspective: On Cognitive Literary Criticism' (2014) and 'The Dilemma of Cognitive Literary Criticism' (2015). Woolf's psychological insight, in her literary texts, has become a popular focus on those studying the possible crossings between cognitive psychology and literature. Park's 2014 article echoes that of Lisa Zunshine regarding the similarities between Woolf's literary version of the mind and embodied cognition discussed in cognitive science (Zunshine 203). Zunshine's edited collections, *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (2010) and *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies* (2015) explore a strong link between literary and cognitive discourses of the mind.

relationship and how it could possibly affect Woolf's writing on medical cultures. Susie Christensen's 2014 article 'Neurology and Modernist Literature' is one of the few studies that look at literature and neurology using a historical approach. In her essay, Christensen argues that neurology played a crucial role within the modernist concept of embodiment (282). In particular, Woolf's engagement with the non-dualistic view of human bodies was similar to the approach of neuropsychologists in her time period, especially Henry Head. They both cast doubts on the idea of reducing the mind simply to the brain (289). In her essay, Christensen states her belief that historical approaches can ground the studies of literature and neurology, since each side has its own rich materials.[16] Indeed, to contextualise the texts of Woolf alongside Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks, who was writing rather later, is to see certain historical and cultural moments in which literary and neurological understandings of the mind co-generate and co-exist with each other. The parallel between Woolf and the holism movement is the result of an intellectual resonance that goes beyond disciplinary boundaries.

Research Content

In the current study, I will explore and solidify the complex interconnections between literature and neuropsychology. I will place Woolf's fiction, and holistic neuropsychology, within a historical and philosophical context. In particular, Woolf's major texts, including *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *On Being Ill*, explore the human experience that is built upon the unity between interiority and external existences. Each of these works, vis-à-vis the

[16] There are various studies on the historical approaches to literature and neurology, though they do not necessarily focus on Woolf. These include Anne Stiles' *Neurology and Literature, 1860-1920* (2007). Laura Salisbury and Andrew Shail's edited collection of essays *Neurology and Modernity* (2010) also explores the relation between neurology and the arts, later in the twentieth century.

philosophical and historical ramifications of the human brain, presents the materiality of perception and is concerned with the phenomenology of illness, and 'the whole' in experience. Woolf's texts provide a holistic picture of the mind-body relation, leading to a form of knowledge in which the dynamic interaction between perception and material reality plays a vital part. In addition, Woolf's diaries, letters, and autobiographical pieces are good companions to her literary works. Her life writing materials reveal her preliminary ideas and questions, which influenced the final versions of the novels. In the current study, I will work to trace the network by which different discourses – such as literature, philosophy, and medical neuroscience – resonate with each other, in their accounts of human perception and its relation to external existence as a whole. I aim to explore the complexity of the ways in which particular aspects of the material facts and functions of the phenomenal world become visible at certain historical and philosophical moments.

In Chapter 1, I will begin with a textual comparison between Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Henry Head's two volumes of *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*.[17] To read Woolf's novel alongside Head's monograph is to trace the network by which different literary and medical discourses resonate with each other in their accounts of human perception. It is to see the complexity of the ways in which particular aspects of the material facts and functions of the phenomenal world become visible at certain cultural moments. These two texts

[17] In the first volume, Head surveys the history of aphasiology, from as early as the first half of the nineteenth century to his present day. This survey is important to the development of Head's own aphasiology, as it shows how his approach to aphasia differs from that of his precursors. The second volume mainly consists of Head's clinical reports, and examinations, using his theory, of his aphasic patients.

articulate Woolf's and Head's affinities, in terms of how perception is closely linked to mental imagery and its relation to thinking and language.

While it is not clear whether Woolf read Head's published works, it is well documented that Head read *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Head, together with his wife Ruth (née Mayhew), lauded the novel as 'the most wonderful book' (R. Head, Letter to Siegfried Sassoon). According to his biographer, L. S. Jacyna, Head was immensely interested in literature. He was keen on exchanging with Ruth their annotations and opinions about various literary pieces, in their 'Rag Books' ('Head as a Reader' 186). He also attempted to engage in certain literary activities. These included sharing friendships with writers and publishing an anthology of his poems, entitled *Destroyers and other Verses* (1919). Although Head did not develop his views about *To the Lighthouse* in detail, I will argue in the Chapter 1 that Woolf's psychological insight into the mind of the characters not only gains Head's admiration, but also shares some similarities with his thoughts on mental imagery and perception. In his 1926 monograph on aphasia, Head sees that there is a close link between mental imagery and linguistic functioning. He then looks at how using mental imagery can help his aphasic patients retrieve certain mental functions, such as memory and speech. This indicates that Head does not limit his understandings of the brain to physical phenomena, but embraces the knowledge that is specifically acquired in the fields of psychology and philosophy. For Woolf, her exploration of 'the whole' runs parallel with Lily Briscoe's working progress in finishing her painting. Lily creates images in her mind by reminiscing about the Ramsay family, and imagining the deceased Mrs Ramsay. She eventually links those images to her vision of art, and projects

them onto the painting. The relation between mental imagery and external existences fundamentally concerns the subjective and objective experience.

In Chapter 2, I will continue to explore Woolf's holistic implications concerning the mind-body relation, in the context of the 'double brain' theory. I will argue that Woolf wrote of the 'doubleness' Septimus shares with Clarissa, in order to question the cultural obsession with a rigid mind-body dualism. She related the Clarissa-Septimus relationship to her holistic concept of human perception, which creates a sense of 'the whole' in experience. As Woolf set the novel in post-war London, her concept of 'the whole' shares a strong bond with the philosophical representation of the human mind in holistic neuroscience at that time. Through the interaction between Septimus and his doctors, Woolf questions the mechanistic view that mental processes are reducible to certain physical reactions. Accordingly, in Chapter 2 I will pay some attention to the philosophical importance of vitalism in holistic neuropsychology. The most influential vitalist in the early twentieth century was Henri Bergson, whose works on duration of time, free will, and memory were admired by many of his contemporaries. Bergson was intrigued by Head's investigation of the body-mind relation and its application to studies of aphasia (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernis*m 145). Likewise, Head also sought to learn and read Bergson's theory of philosophy to widen his horizons of the workings of the mind (252). For Woolf, her reading and admiration of Proust exposed her to the influences of Bergson. In addition, she was not unfamiliar with the Bloomsbury philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, who were also interested in Bergson.

In Chapter 3, I will extend some major philosophical implications behind Woolf's psychology of 'the whole' to the holistic neuropsychology of the second half of the twentieth century. I will first explore how Woolf's resistance to the idea of 'the human machine' – which creates paradoxes in terms of the mind-body relation – resonates with that of Kurt Goldstein. The chapter moves on to the comparison between Woolf and Luria, whose idea of writing neuropsychological conditions into stories seemed to be a solution to the gap between classical and 'romantic' neuroscience, which Goldstein unsuccessfully attempted to bridge. The second half of the chapter focuses on Woolf's concept, in *The Waves*, of fragmentation of the self and consciousness. In the novel, six characters merge into one single narrative, to tell their stories as they grow up with one another. Woolf saw the whole self through fragmented memories and consciousness. She formulated her concept of holism out of multiple and fragmented perspectives, which seems to relate to the feeling of shatteredness in Luria's *The Man with a Shattered World*. Interestingly, Luria thought of his 1972 work as a neurological novel, although its content is based on the autobiographical account of a brain-injured soldier. Nevertheless, Luria's writing up of Zasetsky's case as a neurological novel suggests, to some extent, his dramatisation and possibly imagination of the soldier's experience of the brain injury. Besides looking at the material facts of Zasetsky's neuropsychological disorders, Luria was interested in him as a person, who happened to live with a cerebral lesion. In the 'novel', Zasetsky embarks on a life-long journey of finding wholeness, after experiencing significant fragmentation in his perception. This close connection between fragmentation

and wholeness, implied in *Shattered World,* creates a useful comparison with that in *The Waves*.

In Chapter 4, I will conclude the journey of placing Woolf in the context of neuropsychology by moving on to the late twentieth century and onwards. While the third chapter compares the literariness and impressions in Woolf's and Luria's texts, the final chapter examines how the works of Woolf can be discussed in today's medical humanities criticism. I will compare her recognition of illness as a form of narrative, in *On Being Ill*, with Oliver Sacks' art of clinical tales. What Woolf and Sacks share is an interest in representing the experience of illness, although they came from the perspectives of literature and medicine, respectively. However, they understood that illness can inspire creativity and attempted to establish a new genre of literature. Woolf and Sacks went beyond disciplinary boundaries and reached the consensus that art can unfold the mysteries of the human mind. The resurgence of interest in *On Being Ill* and Sacks' clinical tales has implications for thinking about literature as a path to knowledge of the body and brain.

Fundamentally, my goal in this thesis is to give a nuanced picture of the intellectual resonances between literature and neuropsychology, from the early to the late twentieth century. Both Woolf and holistic neuropsychologists looked inward to the mind, as well as outward to its interconnection with the body. By using a historical and philosophical approach, I hope that the current study will add some new insight to the interdisciplinary studies of Virginia Woolf and medical humanities.

Chapter 1

'I Have Had my Vision': Intellectual Resonances between Virginia Woolf and Henry Head

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Woolf's aesthetic and literary representation of mental processes, in *To the Lighthouse*, shares a strong link with Head's theory of neuropsychological functioning. Their shared psychological interest enabled them to develop a complex idea of mental imagery and its relation to external physical reality. I will work through the theoretical and philosophical frameworks of early-twentieth-century neuropsychology to examine *To the Lighthouse*. I will thus argue that Woolf's text can be productively read alongside Head's sense of the qualities of neuropsychological functioning, in his *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*. Jacyna's biography of Head, *Medicine and Modernism*, and Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past', are substantial resources; a textually and biographically focused account will offer a distinctive picture of the relationship between literature and neuroscience in the early twentieth century. My aim is to investigate the way in which Woolf's novel and the holistic framework of neuropsychology are interlinked and complexly co-generative.

In her 1904 letter to Violet Dickson, Woolf declares that her life was 'a constant fight against Doctors [sic] follies' (*Letters 1* 159). According to Leonard's autobiography, she was believed to have experienced her first major mental breakdown soon after her mother died in 1895 (*Beginning Again* 76). Indeed, her resentment against the medical profession can be traced back as

early as 1903. Physicians David Elphinstone Seton and Frederick Treves took opposing views regarding Leslie Stephen's health condition. For Woolf, Seton in particular (who had been present at her mother's death) seemed to be a harbinger of her father's death in 1904 (Trombley 80). In the same year, psychiatrist George Savage took over Seton's place, and became a family doctor to the Stephens. Savage ordered Woolf to leave London, for fear of a possible mental breakdown caused by her grief at her father's death. In addition, Savage advised Woolf against writing and reading during her time away. However, Woolf was not satisfised with Savage's treatment for her mental health. In another letter to Dickson, Woolf describes Savage as a 'tyrannical' figure, who did not believe she would find 'peace' when reading at home (*Letters 1* 147). This proved to be just the beginning of her 'constant fight' with the doctors. Later in her married life, Woolf was occasionally involved in her doctors' disagreements about the treatments of her mental condition. Hence she often jotted down, in the diaries, observations on her own experience of mental and physical illness; these provide a detailed account of how she thinks about the mind-body relation.

Interestingly, Woolf often described her mental disorders, such as depression and rapid mood swings, as similar to physical symptoms. In 'The Modernist Anti-Mental', Susie Christensen recognises Woolf's physical description of her mind as 'anti-mental', or not entirely about her state of mind. As Christensen argues, Woolf's detailed account of sensations for her mental states shows that she considered the self primarily as a physical form rather than as an abstract concept (178). Christensen identifies the concept of 'anti-mental' as a modernist attempt to understand the mind through the nervous

system (9). Woolf's anti-mental concept of the human body, as Christensen argues, represents a primitive aspect of modernism, as opposed to Enlightenment reason and intellect (12). Christensen further suggests that Woolf's understanding of the self is seen as primitive and non-mental, as she often detailed in her diaries her observations about physical sensations (129). Woolf's writing about the senses, as Christensen finds, shares an interesting link with Henry Head's method of recording his observations about the sensory reactions to the cutaneous nerves. Head famously collaborated with Rivers and experimented with nerve division in his own body (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 148). They began the experiment after finding no available theories to describe the consequences of injury associated with the peripheral nervous system (Head and Rivers 324). In 1901, Head was determined to systematise his examinations of his patients who suffered from nerve injuries. However, his plan was challenged when his patients experienced fatigue during these examinations. In addition, it was not possible to see whether his patients misused alcohol, or had other causes that would affect the nervous system. So, Head experimented upon himself; in 1904, in St John's College, Cambridge, he closely studied the activities of his cutaneous nerves, with Rivers' assistance . Four years later, they published their experiment – in the neurological journal *Brain* – in the form of the paper entitled 'A Human Experiment in Nerve Division'. What Woolf and Head share here is an interest in writing the experience of physical sensation into a narrative (Christensen, 'The Modernist Anti-Mental' 178). However, their common concerns about their experiences of senses do not indicate that they undermined the existence of the mind. Instead, Woolf and Head suggested a similar idea, that the mind is embodied; in this way they

sought to maintain both bodily and mental integrity without reducing the mind to neurological functioning. For example, Head's collaboration with Rivers implies his acknowledgement of psychological processes as distinctive phenomena, which need to be aligned with the related field of psychology. In the same way, as we have seen, Woolf identified the complex connection between mental and physical consciousness, across her writings.

Although Christensen points out that Woolf's description of the materiality of senses resonates with that of Head, she does not explore the biographical fact that Head read Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* – a further interesting connection between these two figures. It is worth exploring in detail the shared intellectual link between Woolf and Head, and their participation in the modernist movement that sought to represent our experience of the mind and body. With an emphasis on the whole human experience, Woolf understood that one's subjective perception inextricably interacts with the physical world. For her, literature represents the embodiment of writers' minds, which actively engage in the material reality. As for Head, he expressed a great interest in psychological fiction, whose depiction of the mind closely resembles our mental states ('Head as a Reader' 182). This also suggests that Head, like Woolf, was fascinated with the characteristic of the mind as active and dynamic. Since Head was actively involved in both scientific and literary psychology, his interest in *To the Lighthouse* has implications for thinking about how Woolf's own psychology resonates with Head's understanding of the human mind. Writers of psychological fiction, especially Joseph Conrad, offered him a wider interpretation of human psychology, and showed him psychological realism, which Head regarded as scientific (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 216).

Head's extensive reading of psychological fiction indicates that the literary mind can be complementary to the mind of science ('Head as a Reader' 180). Narratives of subjective experience show that the relation between the mind and body is dynamic, as it represents how we perceive the material reality. On the other hand, neurology in the early twentieth century did not necessarily achieve goals similar to those of literature; neurologists, except for Jackson and Head, often developed their hypotheses from the corpses and dead brains they examined in the laboratory. Therefore, narrative was an immediate way for holistic neuropsychologists to see how the mind-body relation functions in a living human being.

The Two Encounters

Before this chapter considers the intellectual resonances between Virginia Woolf and Henry Head, their biographical parallels can serve as a pivotal moment, one in which literature and neurology offer a nuanced picture of interconnection. As previously mentioned, Stephen Trombley was one of the earliest critics to observe this connection between Woolf and Head. In his *Virginia Woolf and Her Doctors*, Trombley explores how Head's sympathetic character would make him a more adequate physician for Woolf than her other doctors, such as Maurice Craig and George Savage. According to Trombley, Head's understandings of Freud's concept of repression gave him a deep insight into the reality of subjective experiences, which empirical science at the time could not easily grasp (167). Unlike the doctors Woolf had previously consulted, Head did not overlook Freud's psychoanalytical approach to the mind. Instead, he took the Freudian theory into consideration when contemplating the patients' experiences of abnormal neuropsychological

phenomena. He was one of the first medical practitioners in Britain interested in Freud's theories on psychoneuroses, which he recognised as the important link between 'the mental conflict' and 'the failure of automatic control' (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 86). As Trombley notes, the position of Freud in Woolf's medical treatment was a complicated one (*Virginia Woolf and Her Doctors* 181). Even though she was closely associated with a number of psychoanalysts, Woolf did not appear enthusiastic about psychoanalytic theory. However, to study her creative mind simply, via either a psychoanalytic or a neurological approach, contradicts Woolf as a complex writer who sought to understand the mind-body relation outside the dualistic parameter. Head, as mentioned above, expressed a particular interest in the literary version of the human mind, and thus can be seen as an intellectual companion to Woolf.

Henry Head was the most well-remembered neuropsychologist among Woolf's attending physicians, and has continued to be discussed to the present day (Trombley 159). His contribution to British neurology can be seen in his published works, including *Studies in Neurology*, *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, and a great number of his articles in the authoritative medical journals such as *Brain* and *The Lancet*. Although biographical pieces about him were spread across various neurological and medical journals, Head was given a book-length biography entitled *Medicine and Modernism* by the American historian of neuroscience L. S. Jacyna. British novelist Pat Barker also fictionalised Head as a supporting character in her historical novels *The Regeneration Trilogy* (1991-1995). Apart from working as a neurologist, Head often engaged himself in a number of artistic activities, including attending theatre performances, writing poems, and reading novels (Jacyna, *Medicine*

and Modernism 212). His passion for literature connected him to Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Nichols, and Ruth Mayhew, whom he married in 1904 (67). Later, in his retirement years, Head developed ‘a special interest’ in Woolf’s novels (274). As Jacyna mentions in the biography, Head saw himself as a ‘scientific psychologist whose remit was to subject all aspects of mental activity to rigorous scrutiny’ (123). Similarly, we can borrow Jacyna’s words in order to describe Woolf, who also subjected all aspects of her perception, her memory, and her emotions for her family – especially for her mother – to ‘rigorous scrutiny’ in her 1927 novel. While drafting *To the Lighthouse*, she carefully examined ‘some very long felt and deeply felt emotion’ in a similar way as a psychoanalyst might (‘Sketch of the Past’ 93). Through her psychological insight into the characters, the novel reveals Woolf’s vivid impressions of the inner life of her mind and the minds of others.

Head’s first contact with the Bloomsbury Group was through Helen Fry (née Coombe), wife of the art critic and painter Roger Fry. Consulting several psychiatrists and neurologists, including Savage and Head, Fry was desperate to try ‘every method that held out at least chance of success’ for his wife’s deteriorating health (Woolf, *Roger Fry* 146). In December 1910, Head sadly announced to Fry that ‘the disease has beaten us’ (146). In 1937, Helen finally succumbed to her illness, which was found to be ‘an incurable thickening of the bone of the skull’ (148n1). Although Head’s treatment for Helen appeared to be ineffective, Fry personally recommended that Leonard should seek advice from Head concerning Woolf’s mental health. After Savage’s unsuccessful attempts to treat Woolf’s mental condition, Leonard consulted Head in the hope that he could be their ‘best bet’ (Lee, *Virginia Woolf* 330). As Jacyna describes, Head

himself was well-noted for his pioneering nerve-division experiment (*Lost Words* 148). Yet he was better known as 'a man of culture' (Bell, 14 *Virginia Woolf* vol. 2) and an intellectual, who convinced Leonard that he would understand 'a person like Virginia' (*Beginning Again* 152). Head was later brought to Woolf after she had attempted suicide by swallowing a hundred grains of Veronal in September 1913 (Bell, *Virginia Woolf* 16 vol. 2). Fortunately, with Head's treatment and the care of nurses, Woolf regained consciousness after a few days (L. Woolf, *Beginning Again* 156). Although Head was identified by Leonard as a suitable choice for Virginia, he did not continue further medical treatment after the incident in 1913. There are three possible reasons why Woolf's meeting with Head 'bore no fruit and was never repeated' (Trombley 181). Firstly, Leonard did not wish doctors to commit his wife, who had shown suicidal thoughts, to a mental asylum or nursing home.[18] Secondly, Leonard had persuaded Virginia to consult Head, despite her reluctance to see any doctors at that time. Lastly, Woolf had difficulty disclosing herself to a physician she had never met before. Speculation about Head not continuing his medical treatments for Woolf is, however, not a focus of this chapter. Instead, Head's re-encounter with Woolf, by reading her novels in the late 1920s, provides a useful link to establish a connection between them. This indicates that Woolf's literary representation of the human mind has some resonances with Head in terms of understanding human character.

In 1926, Head published his final work, *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, in two volumes. Unfortunately, Parkinson's disease cut short his

[18] After negotiation, the doctors gave Leonard permission to accommodate Woolf, alongside four nurses, at Darlingridge Place, owned by her half-brother George Duckworth (158-159).

career after his 1926 publication (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 11). The work was largely based upon his years of studies and clinical observations, on the phenomenon of aphasia resulting from cerebral lesions. He also expressed his great interest in the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the human mind, which he took into account for a better understanding of his patients. In the first chapter of his 1926 monograph, Head acknowledges that the mind and body are 'not separable' (*Aphasia* 1 vol. 1). This acknowledgement encapsulated, throughout the work, Head's idea that neurological and psychological functioning are seen as an organic whole. With his holistic attitude towards the mind-body relation, he extended the concept of 'the whole' in neuropsychological functioning to the possible human capacity of re-integrating the remaining mental abilities after brain damage. This idea of neuropsychological integrity laid a crucial foundation for his theory of regeneration in the human body and resilience for recovery. In the same year that Head's text appeared, Woolf published *On Being Ill*, in which she opens with a non-dualist concept that is strikingly similar to that of Head's – '[the mind] cannot separate off the body like the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea' (4). In her essay, she first asserts her non-dualism, and then explores how the embodied experience of illness can inspire a form of literature. It is interesting to note that their ideas of the embodied consciousness focus primarily on experience, which is shown through their similar methods – Woolf closely observed, and wrote down in her diary, her own experiences with illness and pain, while Head severed the nerves on his arms and wrote a detailed description of his sensory functioning and possible regeneration. Both show an attention to phenomenological experience. Woolf and Head recorded the

workings of the mind, in different styles of writing, and for different purposes. Despite these differences, their paths crossed intellectually, as both considered how the reality of subjective experiences can be represented in the material world, through their accounts of phenomenological experience.

Henry Head as a Reader and Writer

Beginning with the comparison between Woolf and Head, I will demonstrate in this section how Head can be seen as a reader and writer of literature, apart from being remembered as a medical neuropsychologist. Head's biographical relations with literary writers and critics give a nuanced picture of him, in the context of literature. The most notable example is his early interaction with and attraction to Ruth, which largely rested on their shared passion for literature (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 155). His preference for modern novels, by such writers as Woolf, Joseph Conrad, and Gustave Flaubert may also suggest his interest in exploring artistic forms that challenged existing convention.

A devout medical scientist, Head, unlike his empirically minded colleagues, appreciated the aesthetic and psychological values of modern fiction. There is no current evidence directly suggesting whether literary representations of the mind had a great effect on his scientific knowledge of neuropsychological functioning. However, Head's whole sensibility to human nature was closely influenced by German romanticism – Goethe and Heine, for example. He developed an interest in German art and literature during his time in Halle, before starting his medical education at the University of Cambridge in 1880. Engaging actively in various artistic events, he did not draw a definite distinction between his literary and scientific interests (Jacyna, 'Head as a Reader' 180). For Head, a good piece of psychological fiction offers a deep insight into

aspects of the characters' inner lives (182). He believed that the analytic and insightful writing of the mind in literary works is not necessarily dissimilar to that used in the consulting room (180). For example, his reading of Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900) provided him with a 'complete figure' of the soldier and his psychological states, which brought him closer to shell-shocked soldiers and writers, including Nichols and Sassoon (182). Nichols formed a lifelong friendship with Head, from their first meeting in 1915 (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 88). In this meeting, they spent more time discussing Conrad and his works than talking about Nichols' psychological scars, left by World War I (Jacyna, 'Head as a Reader' 182). For Head, Conrad's novel, dealing with the conflicts between duty and self-preservation, was a suitable choice for Nichols, who was physically undamaged but mentally wounded (186). Head's application of literary psychology to his clinical practices makes him a type of healer (98). He was willing to recognise the emotional effects literature exerted upon himself, and relate them to his patients at a humane level. He becomes, indeed, what Trombley regarded as a sympathetic neurologist.

Head was not only an avid reader of literature, but also a writer, a man of letters, and a poet.[19] Although he wrote predominantly about his medical research and experiments, his lyrical depiction of the human body in the natural world suggests science can be as aesthetic as the arts. His friendships with writers encouraged his own literary activities. Head's own literary achievement is seen in his 1919 publication *Destroyers and other Verses*, a collection of

[19] Stephen G. Reich was one of the first commentators who identified Head's contribution to literature. In his 1988 article 'Destroyers and Other Verses: Henry Head, the Poet', Reich examines how Henry, together with Ruth, was involved in literary activities, through poetry and introduction to Thomas Hardy, which were equally important as his medical career (1257).

poems focusing on his perspectives about, and protest against, World War I. Head was already fifty-three at the start of the war, and considered himself 'too old to fight' (*Destroyers* 7). He expressed in poetry his shame of not being able to fight the war. This may indicate that Head, seeing himself to be unqualified as a soldier due to his middle age, attempted to be a sympathetic doctor as part of his war effort. Providing medical treatments for brain-injured soldiers, Head's contribution helped assuage his guilt for his inability to fight the war due to his age. During his times spent with the soldiers, alongside W. H. R. Rivers, Head had a number of opportunities to test his own neuropsychological theories. He was particularly intrigued by his patients' descriptions of language disturbances after brain injury. He collected their clinical narratives, together with his clinical observations, into the second volume of *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*.

Head believed that his neurological ideas would be of value when they were communicated to the wider audience (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 108). To achieve this goal, he understood a need for a certain form of literary writing to convey the meaning of his research. However, he found writing more challenging than lecturing on his medical discoveries (113). Instead of being discouraged by his own writing skill, Head creatively used writing as a way of making scientific language more accessible. For example, he elucidated Jackson's complex thoughts on aphasia into simpler language, and even dedicated a chapter to Jackson in *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*. His consideration of the wider viewers was reflected through his use of simplified language. In the two volumes of his 1926 monograph, Head intermixes his patients' narratives with his medical analyses. The combination

of patients' descriptions and medical observations implies that Head was interested in a holistic approach to medicine. Thus, he explored how one's symptoms of disease can possibly affect one's experience, and vice versa. Investigating the personal backgrounds of his patients, Head combined clinical cases with biographical writings. His use of this style reflects his philosophical view of the mind-body relation, through which he considered one's subjective experiences to be as important as the objective phenomena. His 1926 text becomes not only a book full of neurological and scientific facts, but also one full of narratives, covering the holistic aspects of the patients and their diseases as a whole.

For Jacyna, Head's emphasis on subjectivity in his writings makes him a 'cognitive modernist' (*Medicine and Modernism* 4). Jacyna draws his argument from critic Dorothy Ross' idea of cognitive modernism, in *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences* (1994). In her book, Ross defines cognitive modernism as the movement which 'encompass[es] the late-nineteenth-century cognitive move toward subjectivity and its aesthetic ramifications' (2). As she finds, such a cognitive critique can be applied to literary modernism and connect the scientific, social, and aesthetic domains (2). Cognitive modernists, as Ross articulates, recognised 'the subjectivity of perception and cognition' (8). Accordingly, Jacyna believes that Head's recognition of the subjective and objective nature of perception 'contribute[s] to the questioning of the relationship of subject and object that Ross sees as definitive of the cognitive modernist' (*Medicine and Modernism* 4). We can usefully extend Jacyna's application of the term to Woolf, whose novels likewise focus on the nature of the human, and of subjective and objective experience. *To the Lighthouse*

exemplifies Woolf's intimate feelings about the losses of her family members, and the terror of World War I, through the perspective of her characters; particularly Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay. Woolf portrays her characters by turning inwards towards their thinking, and by using interior monologues in contrast with their action and conversation. This suggests that Woolf recognises the subjectivity of human mind and perception to be as important as the external reality. Hence, Head's admiration of *To the Lighthouse* was not a coincidence, but (again) a resonance with Woolf's insight into psychological reality.

'My Own Psychology': *To the Lighthouse*

That Head, together with his wife Ruth, lauded *To the Lighthouse* as a remarkable piece, is arguably due to his interest in Woolf's literary insight into her psychology of 'the whole'.[20] The novel contains reminiscences about Woolf's childhood in St Ives, Cornwall, and deceased family members including Leslie, Julia, and Thoby Stephen. As Woolf made considerable use of interior monologues in the novel, she considered how human perception of senses and external existences affects and simultaneously creates experience. According to her notes in the original holograph draft, the novel consists of '[t]wo blocks joined by a corridor' ('Appendix A' 48). The first block begins with the Ramsay family having their friends, Lily Briscoe and Charles Tansley, over for dinner in a beach house on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. Though the story may seem mundane and trivial, Woolf dives deeply into the minds of the characters as

[20] Ruth and Henry Head were not the only people who were aware of Woolf's version of psychology in the novel. Leonard, the earliest reader of the full draft, called the novel 'a masterpiece' and regarded it as an entirely new 'psychological poem' (*Diary 3* 123). Woolf's close friend Vita Sackville-West was impressed by the novel's characterisation of the Ramsay family. With Woolf's vivid portrayal of her life in the novel, Sackville-West wrote that it was 'ridiculous to call [*To the Lighthouse*] a novel' (*Letters of Vita Sackville-West* 171).

they interact with one another, especially in the dinner scene. The corridor is a radical distortion of time. A decade is condensed within a few pages during which: Mrs Ramsay dies unexpectedly; Prue dies in childbirth; and Andrew is killed in World War I. The other block centres on the rest of the Ramsay family returning to their abandoned beach house, and finally to the lighthouse, paralleled by Lily completing her picture of the family.

To understand Woolf's psychology in *To the Lighthouse*, we should briefly turn to her memoir piece 'Sketch of the Past'. The piece covers not only what Woolf remembers as a child, but also 'a digression' which explains '[her] own psychology' (83). In her 1939 piece, Woolf divides her psychology, closely associated with how she remembers things in the past, into the moments of 'being' and 'non-being' (83). Her idea of being is the feeling of knowing or being aware of things happening, whereas non-being includes everyday items and events that are 'not lived consciously' (84). Those moments of being in which one is aware of one's emotions are, as Woolf articulates, 'embedded in many more moments of non-being' (83). For example, she recalls three incidents (or moments of non-being) in the garden of Talland House in St Ives. The first incident is when she was fist-fighting with, and beating, her brother Thoby, while also being beaten by him. Then she moves swiftly to the second incident, where she felt the flower connected to the earth. The final incident is her imagination of Mr Valpy's suicide by hanging himself on an apple tree. Notably, she remembers the surrounding environments – the garden, apple tree, and flower – more vividly than she remembers her conscious feelings. According to Woolf, all those moments when she was aware of her feelings, and remembered the non-being surroundings, would eventually join as a whole –

> ‘If I were painting myself I should have to find some – rod, shall I say – something that would stand for the conception. It proves that one’s life is not confined to one’s body and what one says and does; one is living all the time in relation to certain background rods or conceptions’ (85).

As Woolf suggests, there is a sense of wholeness in human experience which inextricably interlinks subjectivity to the external existences. Linking the body to human life itself, Woolf proposes a psychological holism that brings the internal and material world into togetherness and creates a whole experience of being.

Woolf’s psychology consists of two main aspects that contribute to the holistic quality of human experience. One aspect suggests that expressing emotions in words brings therapeutic power. The other implies that to receive this power, one must write, not to remember, but to forget. These two attributes of Woolf’s holism are also an indication of achieving, ultimately, healing.

Firstly, Woolf saw writing fiction as a form of therapy. As she describes in ‘Sketch of the Past’, she pours out all her feelings into writing in order to make a ‘whole’ in her experience. By recording her emotions in words, she observes that she ‘ceased to be obsessed with [her] mother’ (93). As Woolf further confesses in the memoir piece, she ‘expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion’ while writing *To the Lighthouse*, which seemed to be ‘what psycho-analysts do for their patients’ (93). On the surface, Woolf’s confession, about using a method that resembles a psychoanalytical therapy, contradicts her lack of enthusiasm about psychoanalysis. Woolf seems to approve the idea of expressing one’s deep emotions, which is widely recommended by psychoanalysts. While expressing her feelings, Woolf explains and leaves her

emotions to ‘rest’ (93). However, she is questioning the point of explaining her emotions like a psychoanalytic treatment –

> ‘And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest. But what is the meaning of “explained” it?’ (93).

She raises this question due to her concerns about her own feelings and her memory of her mother. She worries that explaining her complex feelings would ‘weaken’ the impression of her mother, which could become ‘much dimmer and weaker’ (93). This observation about psychoanalysis echoes her argument in the previous essay, ‘Freudian Fiction’. There, she sees that there are complexities in the human character, while the psychoanalytical approach to explanation simplifies and reduces them into cases (‘Freudian Fiction’ 154). Instead of explaining her emotions for her lost ones, Woolf is assured that she should go on describing what she can remember. Although Woolf suffered the pain of losing Julia Stephen, she did not see her obsession with her mother as a psychological pathology. Rather, Woolf understood that she was able to exorcise the memory of her mother via expressing it in words. In writing, she maintained complete control over her emotions, and so created a reality in which she determined her vision of her mother.

Secondly, the fact that Woolf expressed her feelings in order to obtain control of her mind is subsequently seen as a therapeutic process. For Woolf, the therapeutic power one can experience through writing is based upon the act of forgetting. The purpose behind this act is to work through the expression and to embrace and relieve the pain.

Woolf’s psychology of ‘the whole’, which links to her idea of ‘being’ and ‘non-being’, is seen in *To the Lighthouse*. In the novel, the characters’

psychological states are seamlessly blended with the surrounding objects. This is first seen at the beginning of the novel, with James Ramsay's idea of going to the lighthouse. The lighthouse becomes a material motif, which interlinks with the characters' consciousnesses and affects their behaviours throughout the novel. Furthermore, each chapter is based upon the interaction between the characters' minds and the objects they are seeing. The first chapter, entitled 'The Window', primarily focuses on how the Ramsay family – especially Mrs Ramsay – think, observe, and interact with their guests. All of their movements and thoughts take place by the window in the beach house. The window, allowing people to see in and out, symbolises Mrs Ramsay's observation of other minds.[21] She, standing at the window and looking out, observes and speculates about what her husband is thinking. She feels she has 'triumphed' in understanding Mr Ramsay's character, as well as match-making for the dinner party (*To the Lighthouse* 100). The middle chapter, 'Time Passes', represents human life as transitory and fleeting. It heavily features the changes of the house throughout the years of the Ramsays' absence. Human activities are written in parentheses instead of as the main paragraphs. In this chapter, Woolf seems to experiment with creating a world in which the self is absent, and only objects remain. Her experiment can be tied back to her concept of being and non-being, which produces a sense of wholeness in our perception.[22] The final chapter, 'The Lighthouse', returns to the remaining characters and

[21] For more scholarship on Woolf's writing about the window see Maria-Kasia Greenwood's article 'The Window as Symbol in the Work of Virginia Woolf' (1983), and Martha C. Nussbaum's article 'The Window: Knowledge of Other Minds in Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse"' (1995).

[22] She would continue this experiment in her later work *The Waves*, which is discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

their trip to the lighthouse on the Isle of Skye. Although the title suggests that going to the lighthouse might be the major theme, Lily's painting is in fact the main focus. The painting is intermixed with her lingering memory of Mrs Ramsay, and her vision of art. Lily is exhausted when completing her picture, as if she has fulfilled her final destiny. These examples show Woolf's belief that one's perception is intimately connected to the material world, becoming a 'whole'.

Even though Woolf develops her own psychology predominantly through her observation and experience, her concept of psychology shares a strong link with the philosophical framework of '[s]ubject and object and the nature of the reality' (*To the Lighthouse* 22). In *The Phantom Table* (2000), Ann Banfield explores how Woolf's representation of subjective and objective reality resonates with that of the Cambridge Apostles, including Roger Fry and Bertrand Russell. As Banfield argues, Fry and Russell understood that reality is not presented entirely through material objects, but also through the senses (6). They shared the belief that our knowledge is built upon how we perceive the world (3). Essentially Woolf – alongside these philosophers – used art, such as literature and painting, as an alternative to empirical evidence of perception and physical sense-data. She acquired a form of knowledge through literature, to represent her concept of human experience in the material world (12). Indeed, the core concept of Woolf's psychology of 'the whole' involves the philosophical underpinning of how things are represented in reality. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf explicitly addresses the complex nature of reality, through the work of the novel's philosopher, Mr Ramsay. Here, Woolf alludes to Leslie Stephen, who wrote an essay entitled 'What is Materialism' (1893), on the nature of reality. In

his essay, Stephen argues that '[w]e know nothing directly except the modifications of our consciousness […] An object without a subject is a meaningless phrase' (135). In other words, our knowledge of reality is based on how our conscious minds process the material world. Stephen's idea of existence echoes Mr Ramsay's work on the subjective and objective nature of reality. His prominent example in the novel is the question of the existence of the kitchen table; this question challenges as well as inspires Lily to find her vision of art.

Among the material objects in the novel, the kitchen table is an interesting one. The table is closely associated with what Stephen terms 'organised sense-impressions' ('What is Materialism?' 137). These impressions are crucial to Lily Briscoe as a painter, as she seeks to understand how to convey the idea that 'this is what I see' onto the canvas (*To the Lighthouse* 19). In a conversation about reality, with Lily, Andrew Ramsay suggests thinking of 'a kitchen table' –

> Whenever she "thought of his work" she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table. It was Andrew's doing. She asked him what his father's books were about. "Subject and object and the nature of reality", Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. "Think of a kitchen table then," he told her, "when you're not there". (22)

Andrew's words seem to perplex Lily, and affect how she projects her impressions of reality into her painting. Yet Lily, 'focus[ing] [on] her mind', is able to see the kitchen table, as well as a pear tree, through her mind's eye (22). Lily's associations of her past experience have an impact on how she now sees and paints the picture. Her vision of her art echoes Mr Ramsay's reflection upon how an object is present when one is absent from it. In the final chapter, Lily's

picture finally appears, when Lily associates the deserted house and kitchen table with her memories of Mrs Ramsay and James having beef stew. Lily realises objective reality can also co-exist with subjective experience. Through her own perception of reality, Lily draws her vision of Mrs Ramsay and James on the canvas, finishing what she left undone. She finally understands that her vision is created through associating things with others. Lily's perception of reality, regarding the associative method and memory, will be further discussed in the next section.

As I have just discussed, there is a strong link – both biographical and intellectual – between Woolf and the Cambridge philosophers, concerning the complexities of the subjective and objective nature of reality. Such a philosophical framework is intimately incorporated into Woolf's psychology of 'the whole'. In addition to the philosophical framework based upon such philosophers as Leslie and Russell, Woolf's version of subjective/objective reality puts an emphasis on embodied experience. Her literary representation of the mind inextricably interacts with the neurological body; which, as she observed, influences one's perception of reality. The experience of embodiment can also be expanded to the surrounding background. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf transfigures the impressions and sensations of the mind into neuro-psychological experiences, to embody the complex phenomenon of perception:

> Immediately, Mrs Ramsay seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself, so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page of Grimm's fairy story, while there throbbed through her, like the pulse in a spring which has expanded

to its full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation. (34)

Here, Mrs Ramsay is aware of her own sensational activities, while reading a fairy tale to her son.[23] She feels her rapture 'throbb[ing] through her, like the pulse in a spring which has expanded to its full width and now gently ceases to beat" (34). Here, what comes after Mrs Ramsay's mental activity is the feeling of exhaustion and throbbing. She is not aware of this sensation until she becomes conscious. Mrs Ramsay notices that 'there tinged her physical fatigue some faintly disagreeable sensation with another origin' (34). Her description of her physical reaction to sensations fits the cultural and historical ideas, about nerves, prevalent in the early twentieth century. The human brain was found to be not entirely responsible for every sensation and neurological activity. Rather, the nervous system could be volitional, and 'operate much of the time without needing to trouble intention' (Salisbury and Shail 10). Thus, Woolf's 'sensation with another origin' demonstrates her understanding that nerves are able to operate autonomously, without the intervention of the brain; they have their own consciousness and are in charge of the movements of sensations. Her understanding of the bodily sensations, again, refers back to her idea that the moments of being are embedded in those of non-being; the conscious mind inextricably interacts with the neurological body.

Subjective and Objective Reality in *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders*

Continuing the theme of subjective experience and objective observation, I will now turn to the writings of Henry Head. The holistic connection between

[23] Mrs Ramsay's description of how 'the whole fabric fell in exhaustion' seems to be an allusion to the biographical fact that Woolf herself once experienced nervous exhaustion; or, in medical terms, neurasthenia.

subjective experiences and external existence also plays a significant part in Head's understandings of the mind-body relation. He believed that human subjectivity could affect neuropsychological functioning, and even throw it into disorder. He expressed not only his concerns about the neurological and scientific facts of diseases, but also the philosophical and psychological values that his patients offered. Head's recording of his patients' experiences during their examinations was testimony to the fact that they were not dissimilar from himself. In *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, Head emphasises how the complex nature of human experience can be interlinked with mental functions such as speech and thinking. His concept of bodily integrity, both in terms of neuropsychological capacities and the conscious mind, suggests his non-dualist thinking. As a devoted neuropsychologist, Head asserts that '[b]ehind every conscious act lie many integrations, most of which take place on a purely physical level' (*Aphasia* 533 vol. 1). Nevertheless, he recognises the existence of the mind in a reciprocal relationship with the physical body – 'there are many physical reactions, which, though not themselves directly associated with consciousness, normally influence the operations of the mind' (533). Head including the workings of the mind in his neurological discourse can be seen as the result of two important events in his medical career: his discovery of Jackson's papers on aphasia; and his times spent with brain-injured soldiers during and after World War I. Jackson's papers offered him theories which seemed unusual in the history of aphasia, while those brain-injured soldiers provided Head with practical tests of his theories. These events kindled his interest in exploring his patients further as people, giving him a deep insight into their subjectivity in relation to their cerebral lesions.

Head was not satisfied with classical neurology, which seemed static and fixated on association laws, rather than attending to the dynamic interaction between cerebral lesions and mental functioning. In particular, he was highly critical of the localisation theory of aphasia which had dominated classical neurology since Paul Broca in the mid nineteenth century (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 120). The principle of the theory was to classify different forms of aphasia, and associate them with human linguistic capacity. Importantly, localisationists attempted to analyse and associate language disturbances in terms of certain parts of the cerebral cortex (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 139). In short, localisationists believed that most of the mental functions could be located in specific areas of the brain. Their doctrine became an enforcing uniformity that simplified the complexities of the mind. Head dubbed those exponents 'diagram makers' who believed 'all psychological problems [a]re stated in terms of processes or laws of association' (*Aphasia* 66 vol. 1). He was convinced that it was his time to destroy 'false gods' and to return to 'systematic empirical observation of the crude manifestations of disease' (66). Indeed, his experience of examining and treating brain-injured soldiers offered him clinical opportunities to test the theories of aphasiology.

Head found that only Jackson identified the phenomena of aphasia as primarily psychical and physiological, while understanding its anatomical explanation as a secondary consideration (*Aphasia* 32 vol. 1). Jackson was one of the few neurologists in the nineteenth century who identified the connection between language disturbances and brain lesions as 'inherently obscure and complex' (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 140). As Jacyna writes, he was perhaps the first medical writer and 'true modern' who acknowledged the

complexity of language itself (140). Hence, Head argued that in order to understand aphasia one should explore the body-mind relationship –

> The fact that speech can be thrown into disorder by a local lesion of the brain is the most wonderful means placed in our hands for investigating the relation of mind and body. But unfortunately most of the elaborated and careful work expended on this fascinating problem has been vitiated by certain fallacious conceptions. (*Aphasia* 143 vol. 1)

Head felt it necessary to explain the patients' conditions and behaviours. To carry out his theory of aphasia in practice, Head often asked his patients to perform various cognitive tasks, such as describing an object or remembering a past experience. Head maintained that the brain lesion affects the faculty of speech, while the patient's internal speech might remain intact. Though an aphasic person could not speak with a perfect use of language, it did not necessarily indicate that they were wordless. In this way, by examining disturbances of internal speech in his aphasic patients, he further observed that writing can be a way to understand the condition of internal speech, which is closely related to mental capacity. However, some people with internal speech were not able to write. As there is a link between writing and speech, the ability to write is 'invariably defective whenever internal speech [i]s disturbed' (43). He concluded that internal speech can 'be disturbed without of necessity producing grave intellectual defect, except for the loss of those functions which demand for their existence the perfect use of language' (143). In other words, writing does not necessarily suggest whether his aphasic patients suffer the deficits of internal speech, while their intelligence can be unaffected by brain injury. What Head was interested in, in the study of aphasia, was the fact that mental

capacity is also a crucial way of understanding neurological illness. This is tied back to his idea that the mind is not separable from the body.

Jackson's influence can be seen, in Head's 1926 monograph, in terms of his idea of higher mental functions being affected by brain lesions. Head's research on aphasia, and other types of language disturbance, was not completed until after the war, when many young soldiers with trauma and organic brain lesions were sent to him. He acknowledged that tests for his hypotheses were 'sufficient to permit their application to the remarkable cases of brain injury produced by the war' (*Aphasia* vii vol. 1). The aftermath of the war granted him the opportunity to apply to those wounded soldiers his holistic view of the brain as a dynamic entity. Head sought to explore the complex phenomena of perception to help his patients recover from cerebral lesions, and regain their mental capacities of speech. In his 1926 monograph, to understand the complex relationship between cerebral lesions and speech, Head argues that speech is 'a complicated psychical aptitude acquired during the life of individual' (143 vol.1). According to him, aphasia can reshape a linguistic function which has a potential to redefine the patterns of utterance and thinking, for the brain is plastic and dynamic rather than passive or mechanistic.

Head's views of language disorders were not completely against the doctrine of localisation theory. The theory, at a basic level, identified the parts of the brain responsible for certain higher mental functions. Instead, Head maintained that 'a much looser, dynamic, understanding [is] required of how particular sensations and movements [are] represented at the highest levels of the nervous system (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 149). Head was still in the process of

locating higher mental functioning to specific cerebral areas, in order to provide better treatments for his patients. Nonetheless, he looked for alternatives to classical neurology by challenging both the powerful scientific trend and its most influential representatives. Head has a reputation as an independent and original thinker of considerable courage, able to invent new theories (Breathnach 109). His motive for seeking a change in neurological medicine resulted from his disappointment with the classical neurological theories, which did not necessarily fit with his own clinical practices (*Aphasia* vii vol.1). To understand aphasia better in clinics, Head explored the behaviour of his patients, their experiences, and other psychological effects on how they behaved as individuals and as human beings, rather than as machines. Fundamentally, Head saw both the subjective and objective nature of aphasia; this can be seen in the two volumes of his 1926 text, which includes his theories, patients' narratives, and clinical practices.

Mental Imagery and Perception

In the preceding sections, I have demonstrated how Woolf shared with Head a similar concern with human subjectivity and its complex interaction with the material world. Interestingly, their exploration of perception is closely associated with pictorial expression. In *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe relates her painting to the way she thinks about and perceives herself, her vision of art, and the meaning of life. Although Lily often feels fragmented when associating her painting with the memories of the Ramsay family, especially of Mrs Ramsay, she persists in putting those fragments of her feelings into one piece. Finally, she finds her 'vision' through the completion of her art (170). That Lily expresses her vision of wholeness in pictorial art has implications for thinking about how

imagery inextricably interacts with our perception, and vice versa. Similarly, Head in his 1926 text investigates how the concept of mental imagery can affect, and link to, higher cognitive functions such as speech and memory. His practice with visual images, objects, and pictures in his medical treatment helped his patients gradually regain their mental capacities. These two examples imply that Woolf and Head understood that mental images resemble perceptual experience so as to function as a form of mental representation (N. Thomas, 'Mental Imagery'). Woolf wrote Lily's perception of the physical reality as embedded in her painting. Head employed pictures as 'a part of the general activities of the mind' of his aphasic patients (*Aphasia* 351 vol. 1). Essentially, they worked towards a similar goal of verbalising the inner life through mental pictures, as they found pictorial thinking to be closely connected with language.

The link between imagery and thinking was widely discussed in early-twentieth-century philosophy and psychology (N. Thomas, 'Mental Imagery'). Contrary to the rise of sense data and motion pictures, the general idea of mental imagery was to represent experiences, and use the introspective method to gain some glimpses of psychological processes. However, the idea of picture-like representation encountered a conflict, later termed the 'imageless thought' controversy. This controversy began with the French psychologist Alfred Binet, who proposed the idea of imageless thoughts after using pictures as an introspective method to examine his two daughters' thought processes. The images were originally designed so that his daughters could perform certain tasks, and solve problems associated with the tasks. However, his subjects did not report what they saw, and even denied the existences of images. As a result, Binet abandoned the theory that thought was

essentially associated with imagery, and turned to the idea that thinking happened solely in the thought process. However, his idea of imageless thought was not accepted by many psychologists, who criticised Binet's experiments and methods for not being scientific. Nevertheless, the school of Denkpsychologie (thought psychology) in Germany, under the leadership of Oswald Külpe, seemed to welcome this new idea. Külpe was a former student of the experimental psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, and he set up a laboratory with other psychologists at the University of Würzburg. Although the Würzburg School 'confirmed' Binet's imageless thought theory, they used its objective values as complementary to the introspective method (Woodworth and Sheehan 24). The Würzburg School presented a direct challenge to the dominant theory of thought process, by encouraging their students 'to extend the scope of the introspective method to the study of the "higher" processes of thought and reasoning' (N. Thomas, 'Mental Imagery'). The controversy was not satisfactorily resolved, and gradually scientific interest in mental imagery was lost. Nonetheless, the Würzburg School and Binet, as opposed to the behaviourists, suggest that introspection can offer some insights into the process of learning and making a decision (Woodworth and Sheehan 25).

What we gain from the imageless thought controversy in the early twentieth century is the concept of mental imagery and its complex connection to psychological processes. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that Woolf and Head were aware of the controversy. Yet it is clear that both considered verbalisation of mental pictures as an immediate way of seeing the mind. Woolf's depiction of painting in *To the Lighthouse*, and Head's clinical practices with pictures in *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, demonstrate their

engagement in the complex relations between imagery and perception. Woolf used an aesthetic and literary approach to mental imagery, in order to give vivid impressions of her characters' inner worlds. Similarly, Head considered the introspective values of mind-pictures as a crucial part of clinical examination; an immediate means of representing his patients' subjective experience. They shared underlying philosophical and epistemological motives through which they sought to understand both subjective and objective reality.

Woolf's perception of mental imagery has a close connection to her Bloomsbury circle. Her sister Vanessa Bell was an established painter, who designed most of the covers of Woolf's published works. Woolf also had friendships with other Bloomsbury painters, including Duncan Grant and Dora Carrington as well as Roger Fry. In addition, she was fond of impressionist and post-impressionist art, from artists such as Walter Sickert and Paul Cézanne. Among these painters, Fry had a profound influence on Woolf's art of writing as well as on her personal life (Lee, *Virginia Woolf* 289). He once suggested, though not seriously, that she should 'put into practice [her] theories of the biographer's craft in a portrait of himself' (Woolf, *Roger Fry* 5). Indeed in 1937 (after his death), on the request of his sister Margery, Woolf began such a biography (*Diary 5* 58). After three years of collecting and assembling his remaining documents into one piece, Woolf published *Roger Fry: A Biography* in 1940. Woolf wrote the biography in the style of a diary, creating a vivid impression of Fry as a painter as well as her close friend.

Fry's life was predominantly known for his theory of post-impressionism and his vision of art. As Woolf recalls in the biography, Fry hosted the first two exhibitions of post-impressionistic pictures at the Grafton Gallery in London, in

1910 and 1912 (*Roger Fry* 153). The exhibitions introduced the British public to modern French art, and the paintings of Édouard Manet, Paul Cézanne, and other artists of the same style. Fry argued that these post-impressionists attempted to 'arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality', to 'create form, not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life' (177-178). Their goal was to extend and express emotions beyond the complete imitation of reality (Spalding 72). Although the post-impressionists' unconventional approaches to representing reality were expected, they presented a challenge to the conventional form of reality, and demanded a new value in art (75).

The exhibitions of post-impressionistic art not only challenged how reality was represented in art, and its form, but also resonated with literature. For Woolf, the effects that various forms of arts, such as literature, sculpture, and painting, have upon each other are common. In her 1925 essay 'Pictures', Woolf argues that twentieth-century literature was especially 'under the dominion of painting' (140). Woolf takes the works of Marcel Proust as an example to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between writing and painting. She believes that Proust's writings can reflect how painters such as Pablo Picasso or Paul Cézanne displayed their creativity on the canvases (140). Nevertheless, there is no certainty that a writer should learn 'anything directly from painting' (141). Although writing and painting exert effects on each other, it is, as Woolf observes, 'extremely difficult to put one's finger on the precise spot where paint makes itself felt in the work of so complete a writer' (140). Regardless of this underlying distinction between literature and pictorial art, Woolf saw her art of writing as having a close connection to painting. She often compared her writing method with Vanessa's artistry. In a letter to Vanessa,

she asks if they ‘have the same pair of eyes, only different spectacles’ (*Letters 5* 34). She suggests that literature and painting, although there exists the divisive system between them, are intrinsically similar (Lacourarie 67). Woolf’s acceptance of painting into her writing can be seen as a result of her emotional dependence on, and rivalry with, Vanessa. As with Woolf’s close relationship with Vanessa, writing and painting are not fundamentally different from each other, but are essentially intertwined (67).

While Vanessa influenced Woolf’s artistry at an early stage, Fry was the one who profoundly shaped most of her writings later in her life. Woolf and Fry shared an interest in representations of reality that were based on senses and impressions. Especially in an era when motion pictures, X-rays, and photography were flourishing, they sought to use art to recreate, but not to imitate, how the mind perceives things through senses and records ‘sense data’ (Rosner 10). Woolf’s motivation for writing pieces of literature that can present subjective reality against the material world was her disappointment at the technological substitution of perception. For example, Woolf wrote an essay on cinema, after seeing the German expressionist thriller *Dr Caligari* in 1926. As she observes in the essay, motion pictures have ‘speed’ and ‘slowness’ to represent emotions in their utmost forms, such as facial expressions and action (‘The Cinema’ 174). Yet, as Woolf argues, words are a ‘compact of a thousand suggestions’ (175), while the motion picture offers straightforward interpretations of emotions and imagination. Through words, one has the ability to capture the complexities of human cognition, showing ‘the wonders of the actual world’ and ‘the fascination of contemporary life’ (173).

Woolf recognised Fry's 'theory of the influence of Post-Impressionism upon literature' (*Roger Fry* 172). Indeed, the fact that she created Lily Briscoe as a painter, who aspires to find her vision of art, suggests Fry's artistic influence on her experiment. Lily represents Woolf's aesthetics and her ideal artist, and the character appears to be largely based upon Fry. It is Lily's painting that reveals her art as a reflection of the reality she perceives. Lily perceives and expresses reality through art, by means of introspection on her conscious experience. Nevertheless, the process of making the painting is a struggle for her as she is frequently interrupted by her thoughts when drawing on the canvas. She even finds difficulty with capturing her own mind in her painting –

> Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in the moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made the passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself – struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: "But this is what I see; this is what I see", and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. (*To the Lighthouse* 19)

The demons in the quote can refer to Lily's own mind, which is also a key element for her mental images of Mrs Ramsay and James. Lily fails to comprehend her mind-picture as it is in 'the moment's flight between the picture and the canvas'. Facing a similar situation to Lily in the novel, in her essay 'Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown', Woolf describes the mind as a 'demon', which tends

to whisper and summon a little figure before she starts writing (319). She observes that the mind is indispensable to mental imagery. However, paralleling Lily, Woolf also finds it hard to capture her mind-picture and express it in writing, as it is flickering in the moment between the picture and the novel. The mind-picture even challenges Woolf, as if it were saying 'catch me if you can' ('Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown' 319). As for Lily, she continues to learn how to translate what she sees inwardly into her outward painting, regardless of the difficulty in visualising the mental picture of the Ramsay family through her own perception.

In the final chapter, Lily's perception of Mrs Ramsay and James reiterates Andrew's idea of the 'kitchen table', regarding reality through subjective/ objective experience. Returning to the house where she used to have dinner with the Ramsays, Lily thinks of the family when they are not there with her. While watching Mr Ramsay, Cam, and James sailing to the lighthouse, her vision is interwoven and fused with memories of Mrs Ramsay, so that 'the extraordinary unreality was frightening; but it was also exciting' (*To the Lighthouse* 122). This extraordinary 'unreality' even interrupts her painting. For Lily, it is a certain trick of her eye as a painter that 'the vision would come to her, and her eyes, half closing, sought something to base her vision on' (149). Suddenly, Lily has an epiphany that the vision she sees is as real as the truth, in her thoughts, of a kitchen table when she is not there to see it. Her mind-picture as a subjective experience becomes clear, and Lily is no longer ashamed of expressing her own mind-picture based on her own vision, because this is what she sees, and this is Mrs Ramsay and James that she sees in her vision. The picture is already there in Lily's mind, conjuring up a vision of the Ramsays. Despite experiencing self-doubt associated with

Andrew's complex philosophy of reality, and Charles Tansley's denigration of her capability to paint a picture, Lily spares no effort to re-orientate and prove, after returning to the house of the Ramsays, that she is able to paint. Lily goes 'on tunnelling her way into her picture, into the past' (142) by repeating her memories of the Ramsay family. Her intermixture, of the remaining Ramsays going to the lighthouse, with her memory, helps her put herself together, finish the painting, and find her own vision of art.

In respect to Woolf herself, she expressed her observation of imagery in the mind through her thinking and feeling when writing *To the Lighthouse*. In her diary, she wonders 'What image can I reach to convey what I mean?' (*Diary 3* 113). Despite giving no direct response to her own question, Woolf addresses, in 'Sketch of the Past', that she has found her own idea of the imagery-language relation, which she regards as attributive for remembering the past and emotions –

> The strength of these pictures – but sight was always then so much mixed with sound that picture is not the right word – the strength anyhow of these impressions makes me again digress. Those moments – in the nursery, on the road to the beach – can still be more real than the present moment […] Instead of remembering here a scene and there a sound, I shall fit a plug into the wall; and listen in to the past. (67)

Rather than using the word 'draft' or 'chapter', Woolf vividly describes writing about the past as working on 'a sketch', and her memories as 'pictures'. Her use of imagery for remembering the past explains her belief that memory is attached to imagery in the mind. At the same time, she sees imagery as the process of thinking, which is able to transform into impressions of the past.

However, Woolf identifies the fact that she tends to remember the moments of ‘non-being’ rather than ‘being’. She fails to remember what she felt and thought in past moments while remembering non-living things around her, such as cotton wool and the humming of bees. Her observation on remembering the past moments depends on the imagery of non-being, as ‘these separate moments of being [are] however embedded in many more moments of non-being’ (83). Without these images of the moments of being and non-being, the past cannot become a whole picture.

Like Woolf, Head himself was also interested in the plastic and pictorial arts. In 1904, during his honeymoon trip to Paris with Ruth, he was introduced to impressionist paintings. According to Jacyna, Head had a discussion with Ruth regarding his opinion about the pictorial arts (*Medicine and Modernism* 205). In terms of his evaluation of art, he shared an idea with Woolf and Fry that those pictorial artists did not aim to imitate reality, but to represent it through their creation (Woolf, *Diary 3* 196; *Roger Fry* 178; Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 205). He focused on the painters’ artistic intentions rather than the ‘scientific’ and ‘moral’ themes they might suggest in their art (Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 206). Although Jacyna compared Head’s theory of art with that of British painter James McNeill Whistler, whom Head admired, his view that the arts were not an exact likeness was shared by Fry’s theory of post-impressionism. Unlike Woolf, Head’s biographical contact with Fry was through his treatment for Helen’s mental disease, rather being of an intellectual or aesthetic nature. Nevertheless, Head’s view of mind-pictures, as related to the process of thinking, participates in a similar philosophical discussion with Woolf regarding the workings of the mind. The introspective values of mental imagery

afford certain glimpses of the aphasic patients' subjectivity, and the subsequent objective aspects of their behaviours associated with their brain wounds.

Like Jackson, Head observed that mental imagery can remain intact despite a brain lesion, and that it is closely associated with memory. He further suggested that 'visual images form isolated points in the complicated mechanism of thought' (*Aphasia* 521 vol.1). In other words, Head accepted visual imagery as having a central role in the process of thought; he recognised that aphasic people expressed things through their mind-pictures, which interacted with what they could remember. Firstly, by using visual imagery to analyse and treat his aphasic patients, he defined the picture 'as a means of conveying an impression which can be employed as part of the general activities of the mind' to test 'the capacity to formulate it in words' (350-351). In the treatment, Head showed his patients a photo of the tower with the leaning Virgin at Albert, and the corresponding printed description. It reminded one of the patients of the previous picture he had seen; when looking away from the picture, he recalled his memory to tell a story related to the tower in the photo. He also noticed the salient features of the picture, after recounting previous illustrations he had seen of the church at Albert. Hence, Head suggested that images have a close relationship with memory; they convey impressions of the past. Furthermore, in his self-experiment, Head thought of a horse; the picture of it came to his mind, but not the word. Thus, Head found that 'the image assumes a familiar general character; it is in reality a nominal symbol or visual noun' (520). He further explained that the image of the horse might differ in form or colour according to the descriptive details he heard, and such details reproduce adjective meaning (520). As with Mr Ramsay's perception of reality

with the ‘kitchen table’, Head supported the fact that the horse, as his mental image, was created even if he was not with horses, and that mind-pictures can be re-shaped by hearing words.

Head saw how some mental faculties remain intact despite brain damage in aphasia. Firstly considering the body-mind relation as a whole, he examined and helped his aphasic patients through several cognitive tasks, including repeating words and remembering. His finding of the relation of internal speech and uttered speech shows his interest in exploring the complex phenomena of perception. From his viewpoint, concerning speech disorders, Head categorised these aphasic people into various neuropsychological types. As he found in his research, thought and expression are ‘not dissociated as the result of organic lesions of the brain’ (*Aphasia* 514 vol. 1). Head identified these problems in the use of language with ‘disorders of symbolic formulation and expression’ (514). In other words, aphasia is more than dealing with the organic lesions of the brain – it affects how aphasic people think, and express their thinking, despite the defects in their use of language. When being asked to remember or describe something, Head’s patients with aphasic symptoms tended to express their thinking by means of relational objects or events. Head wondered if they could express their mind-pictures in a similar way to people who did not experience aphasia, and if his exploration of mental images could contribute to his examination of aphasia. Head’s observational and insightful method, as he asserted, made it ‘possible to correlate defective psychical aptitudes with the degree of loss of psychological function, and so with the situation and extent of an organic lesion’ (546). In this way, his research on the neurological body, alongside mental capacities, broadened not only his

understanding of aphasia and the brain but also his idea of ‘the whole’ in the mind-body relation.

Interested in the concept of mental images, Head observed how his patients expressed and described things via pictures. He believed their mental images were insulated within the brain. However, he identified the fact that their ability to convert mind-pictures into logical thought was greatly damaged (430). Knowing the subject of language and thinking was vast, he insisted on drawing attention to the mechanisms of thought and language to support his observation of aphasia (513). Head employed the term ‘symbolic formulation and expression’ as an empirical designation to signify that ‘the power to manipulate such symbols as words and numbers is of all most profoundly affected’ (428). Hence, by examining the organic lesion of the brain in terms of symbolic formulation and expression, Head noted that ‘it is not necessary that this should be expressed in actual verbal symbols’ (530). To prove mind-pictures can be expressed without words, Head helped aphasic people to regain their logical thinking, by repeating things to them. Unfortunately, formulation of thought and skilful expression can be affected as a result of an organic lesion of the brain, while emotional expression is not affected. Later, Head applied the idea of imagery to let his patients construct their thought.

In *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech*, Head argues that ‘visual images form isolated points in the complicated mechanism of thought’ (521). According to him, aphasic people's descriptions could be often elusive and fleeting. Unable to connect events in a sequence, they expressed them in fragments. In short, what aphasic people expressed did not follow conventional logical formulations. Head contended that ‘images are less manipulated than

words without [being] strictly connected in logical sequence' (521). As imagery requires no words, even people with aphasic symptoms were able to freely associate their mind-pictures with relational objects. Head found that even though his aphasic patients could not articulate words, their ability to associate things with one another often remained. When shown pictures and words, his patients could describe by associating them with things they could remember in the past. Head's observation implies that visual imagery can trigger past experience, and is the key element of associative thinking. Aphasic people's elusive and fleeting descriptions suggest that their associative thinking, with mental imagery and memory, is fragmented and inconsistent. As with Woolf's idea of mind-pictures, Head's discovery demonstrates the strength of mental pictures, which is to shape the way the mind perceives an association through memory. Their discourses of associative thinking in relation to remembering the past will be further discussed in the following section, as they simultaneously engaged with the theme of human perception, which links to experience. Returning to *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf's writing of Lily's mind-picture resonates with Head's understanding of the workings and functions of mental images, as shown in his 1926 monograph. In the novel, Lily struggles with capturing her mind-picture of Mrs Ramsay and James, and the actual reality indicates that images are followed by thoughts. This relation between association and mental imagery is the important theme that enables Woolf's and Head's texts to resonate with one another.

X-Ray Vision: What is its Relation to Mental Imagery?

It is worth noting another example Woolf uses to explore the subjective and objective nature of reality in *To the Lighthouse*: her writing about X-rays.[24] X-rays, also known as Röntgen rays, were discovered by the German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895. They revealed the technological power of seeing through solid objects, and were later used to detect human bones and organs for the purposes of examination and diagnosis in medicine.[25] On 9th January 1897, two years after Röntgen's discovery, Woolf, accompanied by her sister Vanessa Bell and her brother Adrian Stephen, attended a lecture on the subject, apparently by accident. In her diary, she writes that they were shown, in the lecture, 'photographs of normal hands and diseased hands, a baby, and a puppy (*Passionate Apprentice* 10). As she further recalls, a man in the audience felt a needle in his hand but the X-ray photograph could not detect it. Although technological advances allow us to see through one's body, they cannot easily picture our subjective experience. Nearly thirty years after the lecture, Woolf described the essayist Percy Lubbock's method of writing as an X-ray photograph, in the original version of 'On Re-reading Novels' (1922).[26] In the original essay, Woolf describes Lubbock's method of examining a piece of fiction as a 'Röntgen ray' –

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[24] Rachel Crossland's 2014 article 'Exploring the Bones of Desires: Virginia Woolf's X-ray Vision' offers an interesting link between impressionism in art and X-rays, which were influential in the early twentieth century. Crossland argues that Woolf's representation of X-ray vision alongside art and literature in *To the Lighthouse* exposes external and solid substances as being more internal (20). There is a sense of inward turn in Woolf's use of X-ray photographs, by which she attempted to capture the materiality of the senses.

[25] For more details about the medical use of X-ray vision see Laura Salisbury's paper 'Linguistic Trepanation' (2011).

[26] Although Woolf's passage about the X-ray analogy is omitted in most of the published versions, Andrew McNeillie includes it in the third volume of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*.

> But now – at last – Mr Lubbock applies his Röntgen rays. The voluminous lady submits to examination. The flesh, the finery, even the smile and witchery, together with the umbrellas and brown paper parcels which she has collected on her long and toilsome journey, dissolve and disappear; the skeleton alone remains. It is surprising. It is even momentarily shocking. Our old familiar friend has vanished. But, after all, there is something satisfactory in bone – one can grasp it. (‘On Re-reading Novels’ 341)

As Woolf describes, Lubbock mainly focuses on the solid structure and enduring theme in fiction, as if he read an X-ray photograph. Unfortunately, his method would make readers lose their focus on fiction as a whole. Lubbock’s approach of reading small parts of fiction instead of the whole echoes that of Clayton Hamilton, who ‘dissects’ literature like a frog but cannot make it ‘hop’ (‘The Anatomy of Fiction’139). Here, we can see that Woolf’s basic principle for reading and analysing literature is to see it as a whole and continue to be familiar with it as an ‘old familiar friend’.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf re-introduces the concept of X-ray vision, primarily through the central artistic figure Lily. As the discovery of X-rays implies and compensates for the limits of human vision, artists in the early twentieth century sought to move beyond their impressionistic devotion to visual sensation (Crossland 20). Returning to Woolf’s 1927 novel, we can see a parallel between Lily’s vision and that of X-rays. Like the X-ray machine, Lily attempts to detect, through her eyes, what is beneath one’s character. In the dinner scene, Lily, sitting opposite Charles Tansley, is able to read his mind by listening to his conversation. She can see inside the mind of Charles, and his desire to ‘assure himself’ as if he were in an X-ray photograph – ‘the ribs and

thigh bones of the young man's desire to impress himself lying dark in the midst of his flesh' (*To the Lighthouse* 74). In Woolf's novel, Charles Tansley is depicted as an insecure young protégé of Mr Ramsay, and his arrogant attitude and attention-seeking character often upset others, especially Lily. In Lily's analogy, Charles' characteristics can be easily read via the way he acts, talks, and interacts with others. This forms a stark contrast with Lily's attempt to read Mrs Ramsay's thoughts and feelings. While Lily is able to look deeply into Charles' mind, like examining an X-ray photograph, she is not able to read Mrs Ramsay's mind. Early in the novel, Lily spends an intimate moment when she 'lean[s] her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee' (44). Despite being physically close to Mrs Ramsay, Lily still finds it difficult to understand Mrs Ramsay's thoughts and her character. She believes that 'knowledge and wisdom [are] stored in Mrs Ramsay's heart' (44). Yet, she asks how 'one know[s] one thing about or another thing about people' if they are 'sealed' (44). Lily's answer is apparently that one cannot. She cannot see what is on Mrs Ramsay's mind, even though she seems able to read the mind of Charles.

Lily's description of reading people's minds like an X-ray implies the limit of X-ray vision. Although this 1895 discovery allows us to see through human flesh, it cannot easily detect and represent our perception. In this way, X-ray photographs can only offer images that resemble the physicality of the human body, while not being able to present our mental imagery, thought, and language. Interestingly, Woolf's juxtaposition of X-ray images and Lily's painting, in her 1927 novel, indicates the complexities of the human mind. For Woolf, the mind in the arts, including literature and painting, shows its quality of being active and dynamic instead of being static and determined like an X-ray

photograph. In the novel, Lily tells William Bankes that she makes ‘no attempt at likeness’, for her painting of Mrs Ramsay reading to James (45). William turns to ‘the scientific examination of her canvas’ and intends to see the painting ‘scientifically’ (45). He is interested in, and wants to explain, the shadows, lights, and shapes that resemble the mother and her child. However, Lily finds it difficult to show him ‘what she wish[es] to make of’ her painting. As she reveals, it is the unity of ‘the whole’ that Lily wishes to convey through her art. We can extend the concept of X-ray vision to William’s and Lily’s approaches to the painting. The X-ray vision can capture the exact shape of the human body and project it into pictures. The shadows and lights in the pictures suggest the locations of body parts or visible diseases. However, the body parts represented in the X-ray photographs do not present an image of ‘the unity of the whole’ in the human body. This notion echoes Woolf’s essay ‘The Anatomy of Fiction’ in which she makes an analogy between reading a piece of fiction and dissecting a frog – ‘you cannot make [a dissected frog] hop’ and there is ‘such a thing as life’ (139). Thus, Lily’s painting is not meant to be dissected into many parts, but seen as a whole. Woolf implies that art offers us the image of life as a whole. It reflects the artists’ mind, which actively engages with their bodies as well as with life. Therefore, their mental imagery is properly represented in their pieces, both pictorial and literary, and it shows the activities of the mind.

Henry Head was also interested in the artistic portrayal of the active mind. Jacyna has linked Head’s understandings of the human mind to his engagement with art. Head was particularly fascinated with the living mind as represented in literature. His serious reading of psychological fiction had

influence on his method of documenting his patients' illnesses. In this way, he attempted to capture their experiences and perceptions into words. Although there is no available evidence suggesting the use of X-rays in Head's clinical practices, he was possibly aware of them in the field of medical diagnosis; they were first used in this way in 1896, by English physician John Hall-Edwards (Reinarz, 'Edwards, John Francis Hall-'). Head listened to his patients and examined their narratives about brain damage. In doing so, he was able to put himself in their shoes, and understand how their minds worked in response to their brain injuries. This clearly shows that Head did not rely on technological power to interpret the human mind. Instead, by reading his patients' narratives, and psychological prose used in fiction, he believed that words have the ability to picture the human mind as active and dynamic, in opposition to the static and lifeless image of a brain shown by X-rays.

In an era where cinematography, photography, and X-rays influenced or challenged visual perception, Woolf and Head could have used that technological power to represent the likeness of the human body and life. However, they looked at the mind beneath the surface of the brain, through literature, art, and philosophy. Their exploration of mental imagery, projected through art and narrative, suggests a dynamic interaction between internal and external existences. Therefore, we can see another strong connection between Woolf and Head in terms of their interests in understanding mental imagery, as opposed to that presented via a technological vision.

Associative Thinking

Woolf's concept of mental imagery is often understood through associations. She developed her associative thinking, and used it to relate mental imagery

with external existences, especially material objects. As she implies in ‘Sketch of the Past’, she remembered some parts of early childhood by associating them with non-beings, such as wool, cotton, and flowers. In doing so, she projected her mental images onto words, to create a whole. Another example is how Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* associates the house, the kitchen table, and the lighthouse with her memories of the Ramsays. These associations re-shape her perception of reality, and later, her vision for the painting. Similarly, Head was interested in how associative thinking links to mental imagery. During his examinations, he found that some pictures would remind his aphasic patients of certain familiar things; for instance, pictures of places or buildings they had visited. Although they were not able to give proper descriptions, logically or illogically, of what was in the pictures, they could recall memories that were associated with those pictures. Head concluded that associations were a crucial way to see how the patients’ mental imagery was represented (*Aphasia* 513 vol. 1).

Before I explore further the associative thinking suggested in Woolf’s and Head’s works, I will make a brief digression to the British philosophical school of associationism. Early versions of what later came to be called associationism can be attributed to Aristotle, who made systematic observations about how we are reminded of things. According to him, there are three ways of relating things to one another – similarity, contrast, and continuity (Woodworth and Sheehan 60). British associationists saw these relations as the basic elements of ‘the laws of association’, and attempted to reduce human experience into ‘the single law of continuity’ (60). This law of association had a predominant role in neurology and psychology in nineteenth-century Britain. Neurologists, such as

Thomas Laycock, promoted the idea that all nervous functions could be counted as one in terms of reflex action, according to the law of continuity (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 208). Jackson followed Laycock's concept of associationism in the nervous system, along with associationist psychologists, especially Herbert Spencer, who applied associative laws to mental processes (208). With other influences, including reductionism and mechanism, the associationist philosophy of all-for-one was widely accepted; through this approach, philosophers identified the human mind as the mechanical part of mental functioning. Nevertheless, as Harrington observes, associationist theory also implied a fundamentally dynamic aspect of mental processes (208). Head, as an ardent disciple of Jackson, expanded these associative laws and argued that the mind is active and dynamic. His aphasic patients, who were capable of freely associating things with their mental images, suggested that there are diverse links to sequences in mental processes. As for Woolf, her conception of associative thinking is not necessarily in accordance with the law of continuity, nor with fixed sequential thought. Rather, Woolf's version of associative thinking resonates with Head's, in terms of the spontaneous and dynamic characteristics of the human mind.

It is clearly shown that Head was aware of the theory of associative thinking and related it to the use of symbols. As he found the power of registering relations in learning to speak and understand words, Head felt the need to call attention to 'the mechanism of thought and language' (*Aphasia* 513 vol. 1). Observing the relationship between language and thinking, Head based the clinical examination on his belief that 'thinking' could be tested without the exteriorisation of words. He understood the associative process, in which

aphasic people remembered an event by associating it with other relational objects. Head even adapted associative thinking into clinical practice –

> Acts of free associative thinking normally comprise a multitude of psychical procedures, both simultaneous and successive, bound together by the most diverse links to form a more or less coherent sequence. Examination of a silent train of thought shows that it depends on fragments of logical reasoning, frequently broken by the upward rush of reaction. To such processes may be added verbal associations, suggestions due to place and time, and images of all kinds. For example, in a stronger visualiser like myself the progression of thought is constantly illustrated, illuminated or confused by innumerable more or less appropriate mind-pictures. (513)

Head saw associative thinking as more complex than can be accounted for via the rules of language. In other words, mental processes cannot be fully understood by the intervention of obvious verbalisation. Head argued that thought is able to progress, as acts of associative thinking range from 'the fantasy of the day-dream to the formal logical though silent exposition of an orderly course of reasoning' (513). In line with his view that mental imagery follows thought, Head found through association that mind-pictures can be multiplied as thought is in progression, and can affect how one expresses one's mind in words. To help his aphasic patients regain the ability to speak in an articulated form, Head adapted associationist ideas of learning by having them do repeated exercises to reduce 'the products of thinking to a logical and grammatical form' (514). This examination supported his idea that aphasia covers certain psychological aspects, while others are physical, and there is no need to separate mind and body for the purposes of examination. Head's

transition from the brain lesion and language, to language and thought processes, demonstrates his holistic view of neurology, which means examining the brain from the prospects of both neurology and psychology. This application of a process of thinking addresses brain function and its structure.

Woolf's description of associative thinking, in *To the Lighthouse*, echoes Head's stance regarding thinking as related to expressions or actions. In particular, Lily's quest to complete the painting of the Ramsays resonates with Head's symbolic thinking; she relates objects to her memory of the family, and even translates her perception into the picture. For Lily, painting her vision of the Ramsays is the only way to express her free associative thinking about the memories of them as a family. Without it, she is unable to finish the painting. At the same time, Lily's feeling when associating her painting with Mr Ramsay is not pleasant, as she still deals with her fear of her own mind –

> The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together? she asked. As if any interruption would break the frail shape she was building on the table she turned her back to the window lest Mr Ramsay should see her. She must escape somehow, be alone somewhere. Suddenly she remembered. When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation. There had been a problem about a foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years. She would paint that picture now. (122)

When Lily is with the Ramsays she is afraid of her own mind, as she cannot accept the fact that what she sees is not what her mind perceives. After

abandoning the painting for years, Lily confronts ‘the demon’ again, here in the house. Lily observes that the empty places in the house may possess memories of their own, while at the same time they are fragmental. Although she wonders how she can put all the fragmented memories together, Lily tries to escape the memories she had with the Ramsay family. Paradoxically, it is by escaping that Lily retrieves her memories and projects her experiences onto artefacts. Up to this moment, she has been unable to see the whole picture of her perception of reality without associating it with her conscious experience and memories. She starts to believe that there is a hidden meaning behind actions, and behind the act of thought. Lily realises and accepts that this conscious experience, and these memories, can re-shape her perception of reality, or even how her mind perceives reality on its own. She evokes reality out of chaos, and out of fragmented memories. As such, Lily regains her confidence with painting; it is the best way for her as a painter to express how she perceives Mrs Ramsay and James.

To the Lighthouse conveys, and goes deeper into, the minds of characters and their perception of reality, as seen in Lily’s associative memories of the Ramsays. The novel is written in free indirect narrative style, with interior monologues following the train of thought of the characters, flowing through one after another. By writing in this style, Woolf created a whole in experience, by which she projected subjective reality to the external existences. In terms of the relation of words and thinking, Head followed Jackson’s doctrine that aphasic people could not be totally unable to use language; Head and Jackson both argued that some mental capacities regarding language, words, and speech remain intact, while other organs were injured. Woolf addressed a similar

perspective on words in relation to the mind, in her essay ‘Craftsmanship’, which was originally broadcast as a BBC programme in 1937 –

> It is words that are to blame. They are the wildest, freest, most irresponsible, most unteachable of all things. Of course, you can catch them and sort them and place them in alphabetical order in dictionaries. But words do not live in dictionaries; they in live the mind. If you want proof of this, consider how often in moments of emotion when we most need words we find none. Yet, there is the dictionary; there at our disposal are some half a million words all in alphabetical order. But can we see them? No, because words do not live in dictionaries; they live in the mind. (249-250)

In this essay, Woolf observes that the properties of words, especially English words, are ‘full of echoes, of memories, of associations’ (248). Due to these qualities, words become wild and free and are able to associate other things or meanings, as they live in the mind. Woolf seemed to agree with the idea that words are highly related to the mechanism of thought, and this mental capacity of speech is in progression due to its ability of association. Furthermore, Woolf and Head used associative thinking to explore the idea of recovery. The painting shows Lily’s understanding of the power of associative thinking, which inspires her to realise her vision. At first, she is anxious about whether others would understand her art, and Charles Tansley mocks her inability to finish the picture. However, through associating the memories with the Ramsays, Lily succeeds in finishing the picture without the fear of not being understood, for she has her own vision. Lily restores her confidence, and even progresses into the role of her own ideal artist. Likewise, Head used his theory

of associative thinking to help his aphasiac patients restore their mental capacities of speech, and rebuild their confidence in their normal lives. Fundamentally, Woolf and Head both explored the workings of the mind, which they regarded as inseparable from physical reactions. Thus, the concept of associative thinking is necessary, as it represents how the mind actively engages with the material world.

Regeneration

In addition to the theme of the holistic relation between the mind and body, which affects human perception, Woolf's novel has another underlying theme that further allows the text to be read side by side with Head's 1926 monograph – the idea of regeneration. As revealed in 'Sketch of the Past', Woolf gained a psychological sense of regeneration through writing *To the Lighthouse*. By releasing her long-felt emotions into words, she received healing, and recovered from the grief of losing her mother. This form of recovery through art echoes Lily's use of painting as a way of recovering from her pain of Mrs Ramsay's death. Her recovery, like Woolf's, seemingly transfigures her into an accomplished painter who has found her vision. Lily gives an impression of how she is torn by her memories of the Ramsays, and by self-doubt, as well as how she reintegrates those fragments of feeling into a whole, recovering from her pain. Besides writing Lily's journey of retrieving a sense of 'the whole' in experience, Woolf carefully works out her original plan that the novel's structure resembles '[t]wo blocks joined by a corridor'. The first block sees a whole picture of the Ramsays gathering with their guests. The corridor sees fragments of the family, with some killed during World War I. The final block sees another whole picture, of the remaining Ramsays sailing to the lighthouse in a parallel

with Lily finishing her painting. There exists a movement – create, break, and recreate – towards the whole.

Woolf's sense of holistic movement runs in parallel with Head's conception of regeneration in his nerve-division experiment. As previously mentioned, Head's experiment in nerve division strongly suggests the latent human capacity for regeneration. He found that cutaneous nerves have a tendency to move into a new integrity. With this impression of the potential regenerative power of the human body, Head extended his idea of regeneration to a personal and individual level, showing his optimism for his patients' recoveries, and readjustments to life after disorders. What underlies Head's dedication to aphasiology is not only his keen interest in neurology, but also his hope for his patients retrieving their capacity for higher mental functioning. Head saw that those brain-injured soldiers needed to re-adjust and re-establish themselves to live in the present world. These soldiers' optimism towards life was in return rewarding to Head, as they were 'euphoric rather than depressed, and in every way contrasted with the state of the aphasic met with in civilian practice' (*Aphasia* 146 vol. 1). Their fight to adapt to life after brain damage encouraged and supported Head's belief in the integration of neuropsychological regeneration and its external social contexts.

The integration of the fragmented mind and the social environment can be taken not only as a clinical fact – as in Head's 1926 monograph – but also as a symbolic expression of a holistic outlook on life, as in Woolf's 1927 novel. Both possessed the strong intuition that the dynamic interaction between mental imagery and associative thinking lays a foundation for 'the whole' in human perception. This sense of wholeness is ultimately built upon the unity between

subjective and objective experiences. In the end, ‘the whole’ in perception brings a hope of regeneration/recovery, as opposed to the reductionist and mechanistic values predominant in medical science. With this intellectual resonance, the works of Woolf and Head can be read as texts that deeply engage in neuropsychological phenomena, simultaneously through narratives. Therefore, *To the Lighthouse* and *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech* intellectually correspond to each other. It is the impossibility of separating neuropsychological facts from socio-cultural aspects that intrigued Head, in terms of understanding ‘the whole’ in human perception. As for Woolf’s medical history, her observation of the workings of the mind and its correlation with the neurological body took her on a journey into the complex phenomenological discourse of perception. Their investigation of the body-mind relationship, and its extension to wholeness in human experience through words, established Woolf and Head as holistic writers of the mind-body relation.

Chapter 2

Woolf's Holistic Look into the Double: Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith

In this chapter, I will continue examining Woolf in the wider context of early-twentieth-century medicine in Britain, reflecting on an interesting parallel between her writing of 'the literary double' in *Mrs Dalloway*, and the medical concept of holism. During and after World War I, the epidemic of shell shock imposed a challenge for how medical practitioners and psychiatrists perceived the mind-body relationship. Writers such as Woolf were also interested in the phenomenon of shell shock, as a way to explore the workings of the mind and its interaction with the body. By comparing Woolf's exploration of the double with the medical perception of dualism associated with shell shock, I will argue that Woolf, paradoxically, attempted to move beyond a dualistic approach and create a sense of wholeness, in both our bodily and psychological experience. This is not to claim that Woolf overcame dualism simply by reducing the mind to molecular biology, nor that mental activities can be understood through solely somatic explanations (Waugh, 'Thinking in Literature' 80). Rather, Woolf understood the complexities of the mind-body relation, thought outside the fixed dualistic framework, and aimed to move towards 'the whole' in perception.

Three months after the publication of *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925, Robert Nichols expressed his views of the novel in a letter to Henry Head. What particularly interested Nichols was the novel's psychiatrist, Sir William Bradshaw. In the letter, Nichols speculates that 'Sir W. Bradshaw is partly drawn from Dr [Maurice] Craig', as 'the touch about him & his being "interested in" arts [i]s

good' (qtd. in Jacyna, *Medicine and Modernism* 274). In response to Nichols, Ruth wrote (on behalf of Head, who suffered with Parkinson's disease at the time) that Head agreed with Nichols' observation. Head praised Woolf for cleverly reproducing 'the consulting room and the general atmosphere of his place of business' (274). Although Woolf did not explain how Sir William was created, Nichols and Head were both able to relate the fictional psychiatrist to Craig, due to their similar characteristics. Indeed, we can link their comparison between the novel's and the real world's psychiatrist to the fact that Craig was one of Woolf's doctors, as recorded by Leonard in his autobiography, Bell, and Lee in their biographies (*Beginning Again* 160; Bell, *Virginia Woolf* 8 vol. 1; Lee 181). Encountering various medical professionals throughout her life, Woolf was aware of their different approaches to her bouts of mental and physical illness. For example, she vividly remembers in her diary that Dr Salisbury strongly recommended her to practise 'equanimity' after a consultation in 1922 (*Diary 2* 189). Although the doctor identified Woolf's illness as physical (possibly influenza and pneumonia) he insisted on practising a mental balance. She clearly found her appointment with Dr Salisbury 'unnecessary', as she had already been given medicine for her illness (189).

These biographical facts mean that Woolf's depiction of doctors in *Mrs Dalloway* can easily be associated with her own unpleasant experiences with doctors and their medical treatments of her mental condition, such as the rest cure or removal of teeth.[27] However, this is not to imply that Woolf wrote *Mrs*

[27] Woolf was infuriated by the medical treatments she received. For instance, the diary entry for 11th June 1922 contains Woolf's complaint about removing her teeth to reduce her body temperature (for depression). Her mental condition stopped her from writing for nearly two months, which she called '*Disgraceful! Disgraceful! Disgraceful*' (*Diary 2* 176).

Dalloway as a means of relieving her pain and anger about medical professionals. Rather, she alluded to the problems of following reductionism and dualism, in terms of understanding the relation between the mind and body. Reductionism and dualism, unfortunately, predominated at the time, and influenced both the medical and the social perception of the mind-body relation. Therefore, Woolf's goal in the novel was to offer us a complex picture of human character, which was not confined to purely physical and mechanistic terms.

Woolf expresses in her dairy that she wrote *Mrs Dalloway* to criticise 'the social system' (*Diary 2* 248). She attempted 'to show [the system] at work, at its most intense' (248). We can see that in the novel, the social system simplifies human character – and, broadly, life – by pursuing multiple dualities. She created an imaginary world in which things appear double – 'life & death; sanity & insanity' (248). She also suggests in the novel that a sense of doubleness exists in various aspects of life, including age, gender, social status, and political ideology. Thus, Woolf draws attention to the philosophy of dualism, which sparked major political debate in post-war London. In particular, the outbreak of shell shock divides her characters into people who live according to the mind, and those who live according to the body. Her writing about shell-shocked veteran Septimus Warren Smith gives us an impression of his troubled mind; while London socialite Clarissa Dalloway offers us the image of her ageing but seemingly healthy body, although she is recovering from influenza. This clearly shows that the society Woolf writes about in the novel conforms to the dualistic belief that reduces humans to either physical or non-physical beings. Her critique of dualism results in the creation of Septimus as a 'double' to Clarissa, a foil she discloses in the 1928 American edition ('An Introduction'

11). As suggested above, Woolf created the doubleness between Septimus and Clarissa as a way to explore the danger of reducing mental phenomena to physical functioning. Despite seemingly playing with the concept of the double in the novel, she uses it, ironically, against the reductionistic thinking embedded in mind-body dualism. She intends to show her readers that human character is inherently complex, rather than simply dualistic.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf intertwines her concept of the double with the phenomenon of shell shock, which was widely discussed and debated, in both medicine and literature, during and after World War I.[28] The controversy of shell shock began when Freud's concept of repression was introduced into British neurological medicine. Freudian psychology was not widely accepted in neurology, as neurology relied heavily on the physical explanation of mental illness and was hence 'brutally materialistic' (Hearnshaw 71). With the emphasis on somatic explanation of psychological disorders, British neurology failed to explain and understand the phenomenon of shell shock (Parui 122). In the novel, Septimus gives a complex version of shell shock, as opposed to Dr Holmes and Sir William, who attempt to simplify Septimus' condition as nervous breakdown due to his lack of physical strength. The novel's medical

[28] Woolf's writing about shell shock and World War I has been well documented. Essays such as Julianne Fowler's '"(for she was with him)": Lucrezia Warren Smith as Witness and Scribe in Mrs Dalloway', Philip D. Beidler's 'The Great Party-Crasher: Mrs Dalloway, The Great Gatsby, and the Cultures of World War I Remembrance', and Johanna Church's 'Literary Representations of Shell Shock as a Result of World War I in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Ernest Hemingway', contextualise the characters Septimus and Lucrezia Smith and Clarissa Dalloway. Through remembering the war, those characters vividly present the horror and trauma, and yet a hope beyond the suffering. Books, including Wyatt Bonikowski's *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction* and Karen L. Levenback's *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, offer Woolf's understanding of shell shock, and explore how she turned shell shock into a literary discourse. Avishek Parui's essay '"Human Nature is Remorseless": Masculinity, Medical Science and Nervous Conditions in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*' looks at the medical reception of shell shock and its links to the aspect of the male body.

professionals see Septimus' symptoms of shell shock from an observer's perspective, while not necessarily understanding what Septimus himself experiences. Septimus connects his experience of shell shock to his inner emotional conflicts in the post-war period, when he is overwhelmed by those emotions he repressed in the battlefield. These repressed emotions and internal conflicts can result in physical pain, and symptoms such as stammering and shivers. In particular, Septimus associates his shell shock with the memory of the death of his comrade Evans, who he sees killed in front of him. In contrast, Dr Holmes does not believe in shell shock, while Sir William defines Septimus' condition as a 'complete physical and nervous breakdown' (81). Accordingly, Septimus, Dr Holmes, and Sir William give a dualistic interpretation of shell shock in the novel, mirroring the medical and social reception of the phenomenon in early-twentieth-century Britain.

Although the characters in *Mrs Dalloway* offer a dualistic look into the workings of the mind and body, Woolf, interestingly, uses the doubleness between Septimus and Clarissa as a holistic representation of the mind-body relation, especially through their dependent relationship. In her letter to Gerald Brenan, Woolf explains that 'Septimus and Mrs Dalloway should be entirely dependent upon each other' (*Letters 3* 189). Although the title of the novel suggests an emphasis on Clarissa, Septimus is 'the most essential part' (*Letters 3* 189), who 'was invented to complete the character of Mrs Dalloway' (*Letters* 5 36). To further explore Woolf's implications, we can notice that there are two aspects by which she expands the dependent relationship between Septimus and Clarissa. She suggests that Septimus' doubleness with Clarissa links their relation to a non-dualistic aspect of the mind and body, and explores

the feeling of ‘the whole’ in human perception. Even though the literary double, and non-dualism, can explain the dependent relationship between Clarissa and Septimus, Woolf provides a more extensive exploration of the characters. She takes a holistic look at these two distinct minds via her conception of ‘the whole’. Despite positioning them as doubles of each other, Woolf implies a holistic quality in human character. Both Clarissa and Septimus strive to retain their bodily integrity relative to the material world. The former succeeds while the latter fails, due to the imbalance between his body and mind. I will further articulate Woolf’s holistic implication of the double in the final section of the chapter.

The Double in a Historical Context

I will begin this section with the origins of *Mrs Dalloway* and Woolf’s characterisation of Septimus and Clarissa. The changes Woolf made for the final version of the novel reveal progress towards her own artistic vision of holism. It is not a coincidence that her literary doubles share similarities with the work of Robert Louis Stevenson. She was not unfamiliar with Stevenson, due to her father’s personal friendship and publishing partnership with him. In addition, there were wider cultural aspects of the mind-body relation that influenced how Woolf represented her own version of the double. These aspects included the medical conception of the mind and body, the social implications of illness, and cultural changes after World War I. Woolf saw the theme of the double as mirroring these external influences, that shape our perception of the self and its relation to the material world.

Originally, in April 1922, Woolf had in mind ‘a long story’ for the character Mrs Dalloway (*Letters 2* 521). Four months later, she began planning for the

story and temporarily entitled it ‘At Home; or The Party’ (‘Appendix Two’ 411). Besides working on her novel, Woolf published a piece of short fiction, ‘Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street’, in *The Dial* in 1923. She later adapted and extended this piece into the published version of *Mrs Dalloway*. The novel’s structure and narrative flow generally resemble those of the shorter version. Both versions start with Mrs Dalloway going out shopping on a June day and encountering friends including Hugh Whitbread. She recalls memories during her walk in the centre of London. While the shorter version ends with ‘a violent explosion in the street outside’ (‘Bond Street’ 13), the novel continues from ‘the violent explosion’ (*Mrs Dalloway* 12) to the evening party. The creation of Septimus Smith as a shell-shocked ex-soldier forms a contrast with Clarissa Dalloway’s lively and sociable character. Nevertheless, Woolf created ‘the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side’ (*Diary 2* 207). In this world, Clarissa ‘sees the truth’, while Septimus ‘sees the insane truth’ (‘Appendix Two’ 412). By drawing this parallel between Clarissa and Septimus, Woolf wanted to ‘dig out beautiful caves behind [her] characters’ with ‘humanity, humour, depth’ (*Diary 2* 263). Her approach was later revealed to be her use of the literary double, through which she connected her characters and delved deep into their perception of the body in relation to life.

Woolf first mentioned Septimus Smith in October 1922, and intended him ‘to be more close to the fact than Jacob [Flanders]’ (*Diary 2* 207). Jacob Flanders was the titular character in her previous novel, *Jacob’s Room*. In 1925, when the novel was published, Woolf’s depiction of Septimus as a shell-shocked veteran divided readers. The novel received praise from Roger Fry, who identified Septimus as an essential role, and from E. M. Forster, who

'admire[d]' the character (*Diary 3* 24). But Lytton Strachey and Janet Case were doubtful about Woolf's writing 'method' and 'technique' in *Mrs Dalloway* (32; 109). Critic Gerald Brenan candidly criticised Septimus for having 'no function' (*Letters 3* 189). Despite these polarising views, Woolf was certain about the interdependent relationship between Septimus and Clarissa. Although Woolf seemed to explain the 'function' of Septimus in her response to Brenan, she later revealed the true purpose behind her creation of Septimus, who was designed as Clarissa's double.

Woolf's original intention in making Septimus a double of Clarissa has inspired several studies.[29] One of the early commentaries on Woolf's concept of the literary double is 'A Dangerous Day: Mrs Dalloway Discovers her Double', published by Alex Page in 1961. Page discusses how Septimus and Clarissa examine the 'self', and how these two characters metaphorically merge into one personality, in the context of Freudian psychology (115). Page's argument is primarily based upon the fact that Woolf was associated with a number of British psychoanalysts; and it is speculated that she was familiar with their theories. In 'Dr Jekyll and Mrs Hyde Park Gate' (2013), Joyce Kelley also makes a useful comparison between Woolf's and Stevenson's doubles, by looking at their biographical connections. As Kelley observes, the literary doubles in both Stevenson's and Woolf's texts are involved with the theme of personal identity. In particular, Woolf's exploration of the hidden self, which is implied in the character of Septimus, echoes that of Mr Hyde, who contrasts the benevolent

[29] Although the double in *Mrs Dalloway* has attracted the attention of many critics, a number of studies appear in the form of online essays and blogs, such as Molly Hoff's 'A Study in Likenesses: The Double in *Mrs Dalloway*' from *Blogging Mrs Dalloway*; while Alex Page and Joyce Kelley wrote on the subject in the form of journal articles.

and intellectual Dr Jekyll (40). Hence, Kelley suggests that Woolf's concept of double possibly originates from her own reading of Stevenson's 1886 novella.

As previously mentioned, Stevenson's connection with Woolf dates back to the late nineteenth century, via his friendship with Leslie Stephen. As an editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* from 1871-1882, Stephen helped develop Stevenson's writing career, and encouraged him to publish his works (Hammond 88). Stephen's literary acquaintance with, and mentorship of, Stevenson implies that Stephen, to some extent, appreciated and understood Stevenson's works. However, Woolf herself was less enthusiastic about Stevenson's writings; she once described him as 'a poor writer with obnoxious style' (*Letters 3* 201). In her overview of fiction throughout the centuries, Woolf writes that Stevenson is 'a man who combined most strangely boy's psychology with the extreme sophistication of an artist' ('Phases of Fiction' 67). She was aware of the 'strange' doubleness among his fictional characters (Kelley 40).

Nevertheless, we cannot simply link Woolf's writing of the double to her reading of Stevenson. Her version differs from most of the fin de siècle fiction, such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Oscar Wilde's only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). The double in these pieces often focuses on a particular character's transformation into another one, whose characteristics tend to be aggressive, violent, and bestial. As Linda Dryden writes, stories about the doubling self are 'tales about paradigms of good and evil' (38). Woolf's concept of the double in *Mrs Dalloway* does not necessarily exhibit the common features of literary doubles, such as evil twins, dual personalities, mistaken identities, or homicide. Septimus and Clarissa barely have any contact or relation, except for

the fact that Sir William brings the news of Septimus' death to Clarissa's party.[30] The doubleness between Septimus and Clarissa gives a sense that they are meant to co-exist, however different and conflicting they are, due to their dependent relationship within the structure of the text. Woolf's exploration of this dependent relationship allows her to explore Clarissa fully, as a whole person, by contrasting Septimus. This indicates that Clarissa cannot be understood as a whole without exploring Septimus' character. Therefore, Woolf's literary doubles are in fact represented via Clarissa's dependent relation with Septimus.

If Woolf was in any way influenced by Stevenson's writings, it is worth exploring the kind of influences that nineteenth-century psychological theorists might have had on Stevenson's psychology of the double. This necessitates an overview of the scientific discussions that were taking place at the time. It is possible to consider the origins of the idea of dual consciousness from a wider cultural perspective, despite the fact that its origins were complicated, and closely associated with the dual brain theory in the nineteenth century. Historians of neuroscience Anne Harrington and Stanley Finger were the first to recognise Stevenson's psychological realism, in his literary works, as a parallel with the double brain theory in late-nineteenth-century psychology.

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[30] Septimus' suicide has often been given a wide interpretation. E. F. Shields' 1973 article 'Death and Individual Values in "Mrs Dalloway"' argues that the meaninglessness of life, rather than insanity, causes Septimus' suicide (85); while Katt Blackwell-Starnes' 2017 short essay '"Life was Good. The Sun Hot." Septimus Smith, Sanity, and Suicide' describes Septimus' insanity leading him to kill himself, as his life should be paralleled with Woolf, and her own experience of mental disorders (32). Arthur F. Bethea's 2010 article 'Septimus, the War-Shattered Christ Substitute in *Mrs Dalloway*' associates Septimus' death with the Messianic sacrifice, as a contradiction to Woolf's atheism. In a wider context, the earliest publication on suicide is the French sociologist Émile Durkheim's 1897 monograph *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. According to the chronology, Woolf could possibly have read Durkheim, and she did write that with *Mrs Dalloway* she 'adumbrate[d] here a study of insanity and suicide' (*Diary 2* 207).

Although the double brain theory is interested in hemispheric separation of function, it strongly resonates with mind-body dualism, which generally promoted a distinction between mind and matter. Because of this duality in the brain, the theorists provoked a debate about whether the two brains possessed different minds (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 101). Stevenson's literary representation of dual personalities inspired psychologists and psychiatrists at the time to consider the possibilities of having two or more different personalities in one body (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 107; Finger 396). Those double brain theorists who were influenced by dualism considered the soul, which characterises human beings, as a separate property from the physical body. Despite seeing the distinction, they attempted to locate the soul in the human body in order to find a unitary point between these two properties. It is accepted that the French philosopher René Descartes identified the pineal gland as the physical location of the soul.

The situation of the soul was not linked to the neurological basis of the brain until after the early nineteenth century. Austrian neurologist Franz Joseph Gall boldly claimed the brain to be the organ of the mind, indicating the materialistic concept of the soul. Thus, he asserted that the brain consists of various distinctive faculties which function symmetrically in two cerebral hemispheres (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 11). Throughout Gall's career, he embodied not only materialistic thinking about the human brain, but also dualism, through which he saw consciousness as an independent entity. His disciple, Jean-Pierre-Marie Flourens, admired and generally agreed with this idea of linking the soul to certain brain functions. However, Flourens refused to accept Gall's materialistic views of the soul, and followed Cartesian doctrines

(9). Simply put, Gall attempted to materialise the concept of the soul as a part of the human brain, while Flourens retained a certain religious belief in the divinity of the soul. Regardless of their disagreement, Gall and Flourens were aware of different mental functions in certain areas of the brain; they attempted to conceptualise, within empirical and scientific contexts, the soul as the key determinant for human behaviours and decisions. Gall's theory that the brain is the organ of the mind provoked controversies in the Catholic community, which banned his discussions as a threat to morality (Tomlinson 58). He was identified as a 'materialist' (58) who offended Catholic orthodoxy and its religious values of the human soul and body. Nevertheless, Gall's theory of the materialised mind inspired many generations of medical psychologists and anatomists to come.

Gall's writing about the symmetrical hemispheres had a profound influence on brain scientists across the English Channel. In England, his teaching was introduced by Sir Henry Holland in the mid nineteenth century. Like Gall, Holland considered the two hemispheres to have similar characteristics to each other, and that they were able to function symmetrically. However, his follower Arthur Ladbroke Wigan was one of the first neurologists to emphasise that the double brain construction was asymmetrical. In his 1844 publication *A New View of Insanity: The Duality of the Mind*, he lists twenty points to support his theory that the brain functions asymmetrically. His theory was based on his belief that each cerebral hemisphere is 'a distinct and perfect whole' which 'is capable of a distinct and separate volition' (26). In other words, Wigan suggested that the two halves should be considered two minds, and that each cerebrum carried out thinking processes distinctly (25). His idea that the two

brains function differently also played an important role in psychiatric and neurological understandings of mental illness. He believed that the balanced or imbalanced functioning of the two cerebral hemispheres determines whether a person is sane or insane. Wigan's idea of hemispheric balance influenced how medical doctors labelled mental illness as 'cerebral dominance' in the late nineteenth century (Finger 390). Outside the medical and scientific community, the controversy of brain dominance had a literary equivalent in fin de siècle popular fiction (Harrington, *The Double Brain* 106). The most notable example was Stevenson's exploration of sanity/insanity in his 1886 novella, which I will explore further in the following section.

Literary Equivalence of the Dual Mind

To extend the double brain theory to a wider context, I will briefly focus on the interpretive level of the dual consciousness, which reached its heights in nineteenth-century literature (106). Ralph Tymms (1949), Masao Miyoshi (1969), and Karl Miller (1985), three of the first commentators on the literary double, made thorough explorations into the development of the double and its historical and philosophical implications. Linda Dryden (2003) links the concept of the spiritual double to the development of gothic writing, which was popularised in late-nineteenth-century fiction. Although the origins of the double in literature are varied, they share some characteristics in terms of exploring the nature of the soul. The idea of the double was originally about two people bearing some resemblance to each other within a family circle. The likeness between these two characters was often associated with supernatural elements, such as magic and unknown forces (Tymms 15). The concept of the double was later linked to spiritual contexts, and perceived as a religious belief. The

spiritual double was usually represented as a shadowy counterpart of the main character. Hidden in the shadows, the double conveniently symbolises the dark side of the protagonist. The above-mentioned studies offer insight into how the idea of duality shaped and influenced literary writing and its philosophical and psychological motives.

Stevenson's literary psychology has been associated with the dual brain theory. In *Popular Fiction and Brain Science in the Late Nineteenth Century* (2011), Anne Stiles compares the characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde to various psychiatric cases that were well-known in the medical and non-medical community. As Stiles observes, there are two possible sources inspiring Stevenson's literary doubles. The first source (from the Bordeaux physician Eugène Azam) is the case of Felida X, who displayed a dual personality. The other is Richard Proctor's article about 'Sergeant F', a patient who developed alternating personality after a brain injury. As previously mentioned, Wigan's dual brain theory influenced how psychiatric medicine in Britain perceived the concepts of sanity and insanity. Having researched the previous medical cases, he saw a link between insanity and brain injuries. In his opinion, the brain possessing 'two minds' (Finger 390) is usually in harmony, which creates a sense of sanity. He suggests that the diseased or disordered cerebrum takes control of the other, healthy side, resulting in insanity and other forms of mental derangement (Wigan 127). Simply put, when one of the two minds dominates a person, he or she becomes insane. Accordingly, the two cases that Stevenson was familiar with are closely linked to Wigan's theory of brain dominance, prevalent in late-nineteenth-century psychiatric circles. With the implication of a physical cause of mental illness, medical psychologists and

doctors referred to themselves as ‘alienists’, who focused on the nervous causes of disease (Finger 389). As with localisationists, alienists sought to understand the organic aspects of mental illness, rather than the psychological state itself. They attempted to examine various forms of psychological abnormalities and locate the causes in certain areas of the brain.

As Joyce Kelley observes, Woolf’s idea of the double in *Mrs Dalloway* resembles that of Stevenson in his 1886 novella (40). Indeed, as a double to Clarissa, Septimus displays some of the characteristics of Mr Hyde, who is a double to Dr Jekyll. Dr Holmes and Sir William’s mistreatment of Septimus suggests the societal cruelty against people with allegedly abnormal minds. Their emphasis on the nervous cause of Septimus’ shell shock echoes nineteenth-century alienists’ materialistic concept of mental illness. In contrast, Clarissa, seen as a lively character, does not need to go through what Septimus is suffering. Her status as the hostess of the evening party for Members of Parliament seems to welcome her into the high society of London. The lives of the characters are brought into confrontation during the party, when Clarissa overhears Sir William’s conversation with her husband; he said that ‘[a] young man had killed himself’ (*Mrs Dalloway* 156). The death of Septimus comes into Clarissa’s life as a sudden revelation, through which she contemplates life and death. While spending a moment alone, she confesses that ‘she fe[els] somehow like him’ (158). In that moment, the novel’s heroine becomes spiritually unified with Septimus. However, unlike a typical double described in nineteenth-century fiction, Clarissa chooses not to follow the path of Septimus via suicide. Instead of throwing herself out of the window in the room, she returns to the crowd. Here, Woolf meticulously follows her idea of the

dependent relationship between Clarissa and Septimus. The novel's hostess is able to think beyond life and death, and to become herself as a whole, in the light of the veteran's self-sacrifice. When he sees Clarissa, Peter Walsh notices her transformation. She is 'terror' and 'ecstasy' that fills Peter with 'extra excitement' (165).

Another difference Woolf made to her literary doubles is her non-dualistic thinking. This may appear contradictory in terms of the doubleness Septimus shares with Clarissa; however, Woolf incorporated her non-dualism to contrast the social system that adheres to rigid dualities, especially with the idea of being sane or insane, and being alive or dead. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf shows us that the strong dualistic beliefs prevalent in the social system have an impact on how we see the doubleness between Septimus and Clarissa. Septimus' elaborate depiction of his mental illness offers us a view of his inner world. Clarissa describes her body as 'a narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like bird's', and as a garment, 'this body she wore' (*Mrs Dalloway* 9). Her vivid description of her body can be related to her sex, social status, and age. In addition, Clarissa's nostalgia for her lost youth has particular import for thinking about the ageing body. Accordingly, Woolf gives us a psychologically damaged ex-soldier, who contrasts with the novel's hostess as an extreme reflection of this dualistic world. In her 1925 novel, Woolf's idea of duality touches upon an older debate about the mind-body relation; she questioned the definite distinction between body and mind. As she suggests, belief in the separation of the mind from the body can lead to misunderstanding humans as whole beings. With the concept of shell shock, which was not properly defined

(Showalter 168), Woolf addressed her criticism of the dualistic implication of the phenomenon, through the death of Septimus and the life of Clarissa.

On the surface, Septimus resembles a radical example of the mind-body distinction, through which he proposes death as a possible way of freeing his mind from his body. He creates this illusion in order to flee from Dr Holmes and Sir William, who are determined to send him to a mental asylum. As the doctors only see the nervous symptoms of his shell shock, Septimus believes that killing his body may release him from the unbearable pain of shell shock symptoms, although he does not want to end his life –

> He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings? Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared at him. Holmes was at the door. "I'll give it you!" he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs Filmer's area railings. (*Mrs Dalloway* 127)

Septimus' use of the impersonal pronoun 'it' in his final sentence could mean nothing but his expression of anger. However, 'it', in a sense, could refer to Septimus' body; he realises that Dr Holmes and Sir William only identify his mental disorders as part of a nervous breakdown, without listening to his experience. Septimus is torn by the conflicts he finds between his doctors' descriptions of shell shock and his own experience of it. Septimus sees Dr Holmes' intrusion, and his request to take him to the asylum, as a sign that his body is the definite cause of his mental suffering. Hence, Septimus is convinced that he needs to give up his body to relieve his shell shock symptoms. Nevertheless, his final decision for giving 'it' to the doctors leads him to death and nothing beyond.

Unlike Septimus, Clarissa appears to be able to manage her emotions and to feel them through her body. The following quote gives a clear picture of Clarissa, who is aware of her perception connecting to the physical world as a whole –

> Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the wave breaking, the dog barking, far away barking and barking. (*Mrs Dalloway* 34)

In the manuscript revisions, Clarissa unequivocally expresses that her 'heart subsides, remits to the body' ('Appendix Two' 428); she uses the sea as a metaphor to describe the body, which passively listens to the active mind. Clarissa knows the mind cannot leave the body, even though the mind has a strong impulse to be set free. Clarissa's association of her body with "non-being" echoes Woolf's psychology of 'the whole'. Like Woolf, Clarissa feels that her conscious mind is embedded in external existences. This implies that Clarissa is aware of the dynamic interaction between her mind and her body. Thus, she is able to expand the feeling for the mind-body interaction to the surrounding environments, and to make her experience whole. Clarissa's ability to feel 'the whole' shows her full control over her emotions, not allowing them to take over her action. This ability is crucial later in the novel, as it determines Clarissa's fate. At the end of the party scene, Clarissa gazes out of the window and stares at the elderly people in the opposite room, in a similar fashion to Septimus in his final moments. In the meantime, Clarissa reflects upon the death of 'the young man' and attempts to find out what his death means to her. At that moment, Clarissa almost merges into Septimus, and according to Woolf's

original plan, could have imitated him by ‘kill[ing] herself, or perhaps merely die[d] at the end of the party’ (‘An Introduction’ 11). However, she has ‘escaped’ her suicidal thought despite ‘the overwhelming incapacity’ and ‘an awful fear’ that life imposes on her (157). Although Clarissa empathises with Septimus, who has followed his decision to ‘escape’ his overwhelmed mind through suicide, she does ‘not pity him’ (158). As ‘the clock [was] striking’ (158), Clarissa reminds herself of life and reality, that her body is still living and feeling. She walks back to the party to meet her friends Sally and Peter, and embraces the moment with them.

Woolf provided a critique of mind-body dualism through the changes she made concerning her characters’ deaths. Clarissa is able to feel ‘the whole’ in her perception, while Septimus – forced by his doctors – must choose his mind over his body. Woolf’s linking, of the doctors’ disbelief in Septimus’ mental condition, to his illusions about the mind and suicide, implies the danger of reducing human beings to solely physical beings. As Woolf implies, humans are whole beings, consisting of both the conscious mind and the physical body. We see that Woolf’s choice of Septimus’ death instead of Clarissa’s indicates her attack on the reductionistic view of the mind that is closely associated with dualism. However, Woolf’s exploration of the Septimus-Clarissa relationship is far more complex. Returning to Woolf’s non-dualism, we can usefully link it to the mind-body relation Septimus and Clarissa represent in the novel. Woolf complicated and extended the doubleness shared by Septimus and Clarissa, into her theory of ‘the whole’ in the mind-body relation. This is not to claim that she overcame the doctrine of dualism. Instead, she metaphorically used the Septimus-Clarissa relation to demonstrate how the mind and body depend on

each other. In other words, she believed that there is no separation of mind from body. Hence, the dependent relationship between Clarissa and Septimus is needed in the novel, as it shows the non-dualistic quality of the human mind and body.

We can further extend Woolf's non-dualistic view of the mind and body to the neuroscientific discourse of body-mind interaction in the holism movement. There are several similarities or shared arguments between Woolf and the holistic neuropsychologists. Firstly, both proposed the idea that the mind and body cannot be separated. Secondly, World War I had a significant impact on their ideas of 'the whole' in perception. Lastly, they shared sympathy towards those who suffer from mental disorders, and opposed a mechanical idea of the human mind by adding a humanistic view. Although the first element was also true of localisation theory, the holists extended the concept to the dynamic interaction between mind and body. In addition, vitalism, a theory that a force or natural factor is diffused in living organisms (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 52), played a crucial role in both Woolf's and the holists' perceptions of the mind-body relation. The vitalistic idea was that the force particularly embedded in humans provided them with the symbolic value of being human. It is worth noting that Woolf incorporated the theme of shell shock into her concept of the double. Woolf wrote Septimus and his shattered mind to contrast Clarissa and her stable mind. There is an interesting parallel between Woolf's writing of the double and the wider social aspect of shell shock, which will be discussed in the next section.

Woolf's Perception of Shell Shock

Like Stevenson, Woolf engaged her literary doubles with some major debates in psychiatric and political circles, such as medical treatments and social attitudes for the ill-defined condition of shell shock. We can read *Mrs Dalloway* as a book of intertextuality, influenced by other texts on the subjects mentioned above. Among those texts, Woolf clearly alluded not only to her short story 'Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street', but also to the 1922 War Office report on shell shock treatments. Woolf's writing about the doctors' callous treatment of Septimus was clearly her 'angry response' to the War Office (S. Thomas 49). However, Woolf was not confined to her resentment in regard to the official treatments for the shell-shocked patients. Instead, she engaged in shell shock debates, by drawing a parallel with the medical culture in early-twentieth-century Britain. She also interwove her personal experience of mental distress with the phenomenon of shell shock. As Septimus' surname suggests, Woolf created Smith as an ordinary person, to whom she and her readers could relate. In the novel, even though Clarissa does not experience shell shock symptoms, she is able to empathise with Septimus regarding his decision to escape the authority of his doctors. With the political and philosophical implications of shell shock, Woolf intensified the dependent relationship between Clarissa and Septimus.

The possible origins of Septimus Smith have produced several studies on how Woolf 'morphed' into the character to engage in the political debates associated with World War I. Critics such as Sue Thomas (1987), Karen L. Levenback (1999), and Peter Leese (2002) have associated Woolf's version of the shell shock treatments with those recommended in *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell Shock'* (1922). Like most of her

contemporaries in the Bloomsbury circle, Woolf was a pacifist. According to Leonard, she was 'the last person who could ignore the political menaces under which [she] lived' (L. Woolf, *Downhill* 27).[31] She was also involved in the Labour Party and Co-operative Movement, and held the Women's Co-operative Guild meeting on a regular basis (27). Indeed, her engagement with the political issues of early-twentieth Britain can also be seen in her fictional and non-fictional works, such as women's suffrage in *Night and Day* (1919), and women's education and professionalism in *A Room of One's Own*, *The Years*, and *Three Guineas* (1938). Her writing in such social-political contexts evidently suggests Woolf was seriously concerned about politics and other social issues emerging during and after World War I.

There are various biographical links which point to Woolf having read and discussed the War Office's report in relation to the phenomenon of shell shock. Several members of her social circle expressed concerns about the governmental treatment of shell-shocked soldiers. For example, Adrian and Karin Stephen, and James and Alix Strachey, expressed a distinct interest in how the War Office handled the medical issues associated with shell shock (S. Thomas 51). Another useful clue about how Woolf was inspired by the War Office's report lies in her vivid portrayal of medical professionals in *Mrs Dalloway*. In the novel, Woolf precisely describes the treatments of shell shock recommended by the War Office (S. Thomas 49). In addition, her depiction of Dr Holmes and Sir William as unsympathetic doctors echoes the War Office's

[31] Karen L. Levenback, in the introduction to *Virginia Woolf and the Great War,* seems to misinterpret Leonard's description of Woolf's views towards politics. As Leonard asserts in his autobiography, Woolf was massively interested in people and events around her, so she was not least concerned about politics "under which [she] all lived' (*Downhill* 27).

attitude towards the shell-shocked patients. Her diaries offer a further link between the report and the creation of Septimus. She came up with the idea of writing a shell-shocked character on 14th October 1922, which was in the same year as the War Office report.

Presented to Parliament on 22nd June 1922, the report discusses how to identify the symptoms of shell shock and how to provide appropriate treatments. The War Office was prejudiced against the Freudian psychoanalytic approach, for fear of 'setting up sexual ideas' (*Report* 129). The fear derived from the expectation of soldiers being masculine in war, and hardly showing feelings for other men.[32] In particular, emotional shell shock was closely linked to 'cowardice', which was regarded as 'a lack of or failure to show requisite courage' (138). In addition, cowardice was 'a military crime for which the death penalty may be exacted' (138). As Simon Wessely describes, the report was a reflection of 'traditional Edwardian values of courage and moral fibre' (271) and relentlessly prevented a soldier from being a 'coward' (*Mrs Dalloway* 125). Without considering the individual perceptions of shell shock, the War Office clearly aimed to send those allegedly shell-shocked soldiers back to the battlefield. Sympathy thus became the last thing with which they felt they should be concerned. Rather, they focused on physical symptoms of shell shock and recommended somatic treatments, such as compulsory rest cure and various

[32] There have been several papers about the link between shell shock and male sexuality. Although Elaine Showalter in *The Female Malady* focuses on female expectations of mental illness, she also gives a comprehensive chapter about how shell shock challenged the idea of the male body, in medicine as well as in the military. George L. Mosse's 'Shell-Shock as a Social Disease' (2000) and Jason Crouthamel's 'Male Sexuality and Psychological Trauma' (2008) also explore how the conception of shell shock can be related to the conflict between masculinity and male sexual desires.

forms of exercise. Their treatments, however, received criticism for the lack of sympathy.

We can clearly see that Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* does not agree with the War Office Committee's focus on the nervous causes of shell shock.[33] They believed that a soldier became shell-shocked when the explosion of a shell triggered previous nervous exhaustion and prevented him from recovering (*Report* 94). Although the Committee attempted to include some psychological aspects of the disease, the ultimate goal of the treatments was to send the mind-shattered soldiers back to the battlefield. Woolf's linking of Septimus' death to his doctors' disbelief in shell shock can be seen as her irony about the medical and governmental reception of mental illness. Indeed, from a historical perspective, the term 'shell shock' was not widely accepted as, or associated with, a 'proper' medical condition. Without a specific definition, the meaning of shell shock changed throughout the twentieth century (Leese 3). The term was originally associated with witnessing the explosion of a shell. Yet, it became clear that the cause of the condition was related not only to explosions, but also to various types of psychological stress accumulating during the war (Luckhurst 54). The common symptoms include both physical and mental disorders, such as stammering, paralysis, fatigue, hallucinations, nightmares, and mental distress. Physicians and medical specialists attempted to grasp the meaning behind this epidemic, that caused a great number of soldiers fear and suffering. English physician Charles S. Myers was the first psychologist who studied, in

[33] Interestingly, Sir Maurice Craig was a contributor to *Report* as one of the War Office Committee. Woolf's criticism in *Mrs Dalloway* about the treatment of mental disorders could be seen not only from her own experience, but possibly from her connection with Craig, who was her primary psychiatrist for over twenty years. Head's speculation, about Sir William Bradshaw as a caricature of Craig, is linked to this coincidence.

depth, the phenomenon of shell shock. In his 1915 journal article 'A Contribution to the Study of Shell Shock', Myers offers some insight into this unprecedented disease.[34] As he observes, shell-shock conditions do not necessarily result from witnessing a shell bursting (Myers, "Study of Shell Shock" 320). Myers further links shell shock to the phenomenon of 'hysteria' (320), which indicates a more psychological aspect of the disease than the physical. Apart from publishing the article, Myers also dedicated his later life to the study of shell shock, writing a monograph entitled *Shell Shock in France 1914-1918*.

Another important figure who contributed to the study of shell shock is W. H. R. Rivers. Rivers, who went on the Torres Straits Expedition with Myers in 1898 (Langham 65), understood shell shock through 'a quasi-Freudian interpretation of psychological illness' (51). Rivers' research and analysis of shell shock was primarily inspired by the Freudian psychology of repression, even though Freud himself said little about shell shock (Luckhurst 56). In his 1917 essay 'The Repression of War Experience', Rivers asserts Myers' idea that shell shock is not simply the result of being exposed to shells during the war, but 'the [failed] attempt to banish from the mind distressing memories of warfare' (Rivers 3). Among the recommended treatments for shell-shocked patients, Rivers disagreed most with the advice that doctors should avoid

[34] A plethora of work on the study of shell shock was published after Myers' 1915 article. Similarly to Myers, G. E. Smith and T. H. Pear, in their 1917 article 'Shell Shock and its Lessons', propose that mild treatments for shell shocked patients could benefit their recovery. In addition, Smith and Pear suggest that the patients' mental lives should also be evaluated, as sympathy is important to patients. Rivers' 'The Repression of War Experience' (1917) also offers insight into more psychological aspects of shell shock and its treatments. Studies such as Peter Leese's *Shell Shock* (2002), Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely's *Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900 to the Gulf War* (2005), and Tracey Loughran's *Shell Shock and Medical Culture in the First World War Britain* (2017) detail the history of shell shock and its perception by medical doctors, writers, and soldiers. Another essential monograph is Roger Luckhurst's 2008 *The Trauma Question*, in which he focuses on the history of trauma and shell shock, and the contemporary term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

mentioning the patients' war experiences. Rather, he applied the concept of repression, despite it not being directly related to Freud's concept, to studying the problem of repressing memories of the war as well as emotions. He found 'repression under conditions in which it fails to adapt the individual to one's environment' was harmful (2). Indeed, the soldiers were usually trained to act calmly in disturbing situations, especially in the battlefield. So, they would focus on fighting their enemies without hesitation. Eventually, after the battle, those repressed soldiers needed to find ways of releasing their emotions. However, the problem was that their repressed emotions could often be too overwhelming. This type of repression made it difficult for soldiers to adapt to daily life. Hence, Rivers suggested that doctors should not prevent their shell-shocked patients from talking about and remembering the war. They should allow the patients to express their painful memories through words rather than repress emotions. Indeed, Rivers approached 'expressing' as a means of catharsis which would help the soldiers work through their traumatic war experiences (17). Fundamentally, Rivers urged doctors to be empathetic towards their shell-shocked patients, who he believed would benefit from understanding their own mental disturbances. In contrast with the War Office Committee, Rivers was a more empathetic psychiatrist, who was willing to listen to his shell-shocked patients, including Sassoon and Owen. He even developed lifelong friendships with them.[35]

[35] Rivers' colleague Lewis Yealland was an opposite figure to him. Yealland believed in the physical basis of shell shock, and supported various extreme medical treatments for his patients. In *The Female Malady*, Showalter offers a detailed comparison between Rivers and Yealland, in terms of their attitudes to and treatments for shell shock. She also compares the phenomenon of shell shock with its precursor, hysteria. The treatments for these two diseases were strongly based on gender differences and social status (190).

There is an interesting parallel between Woolf's perception of shell shock and that of Rivers. Both writers address the problem of repressing emotions, despite giving two different aspects – literary and medical. In his 1917 essay, Rivers argues that stopping the shell-shocked patients from remembering their war experiences, and repressing their emotions, could prolong their suffering; patients were unable to cope with the returning emotions they repressed during the war. These overwhelming emotions could thus become disruptions to their everyday lives. In her 1925 novel, Woolf also explores the problem of emotional repression, which can be manifested in the form of shell shock. Septimus – who initially represses a great deal of his emotions during the war – has to re-encounter returning feelings. The act of processing repressed emotions causes him to dissociate himself from reality. It is worth noting that Septimus is aware of his returning emotions, summoned by his memory of the war, but yet not able to feel them.

> The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive. He was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference […] he could not feel. (*Mrs Dalloway* 73-74)

In this quote, Woolf vividly describes Septimus' internal conflict about his numbness to feelings, which are not necessarily caused by witnessing a shell exploding. Even though Septimus does not exhibit physical symptoms, his shell shock is magnified through his repressed emotions and inability to feel. He is taught, at an extreme level, not to express his emotions. He feels nothing about his comrade Evans, killed in front of him. Yet, returning from the battlefield to

post-war London, Septimus struggles with releasing his repressed emotions and dealing with his war experiences. As a result, his conflict between feeling and non-feeling causes him to be, in Rivers' terms, dissociated from reality in the post-war era (Rivers 320). Septimus calls out to Dr Holmes and Sir William for help with his conflicted mind. Nevertheless, Dr Holmes shows little concern about his mental disorder, and refers him to Sir William, who believes Septimus' shell shock is 'complete physical and mental breakdown' (*Mrs Dalloway* 81). Like Rivers, Woolf also recognised that disruptions to mental functioning cannot be fully understood purely in physical terms. We can conclude that both Woolf and Rivers saw empathy as a key element in the treatment for the shell-shocked patients. Their texts suggest that understanding patients' experiences of shell shock can help achieve certain forms of recovery. This means that they should be able to reconnect and adapt to their post-war lives (Rivers 2).

The empathy Woolf and Rivers expressed for the shell-shocked soldiers can be linked to their biographies. Both formed friendships with the war poets, including Sassoon, Owen, and Rupert Brooke. Sassoon was sent to the Craiglockhart war hospital in 1917; during his stay there he received Rivers' treatment, and befriended Rivers and Owen (Wilson 387). As a doctor who put 'sympathetic insight into the mental life of his fellows' (Langham 53), Rivers developed a special bond with Sassoon, due to his understanding of the patient as a person. Sassoon wrote two poems, 'To a Very Wise Man' and 'Revisitation', to express his gratitude to Rivers (53). Rivers also believed the works of Sassoon showed him 'the real problems of life' after World War I (Wilson 392). Similarly, Woolf had frequent contact with the war poet, both for literary activities and personal interests. She reviewed his two collections of poems

The Old Huntsman and *Counter-attack, and Other Poems*, in 1917 and 1918 respectively. She admired his gift for creating realism by putting 'the most sordid and horrible experiences' of the war in a poetic form, which she believed no other war poet had achieved ('Mr Sassoon's Poems' 120). With mutual admiration for Woolf, Sassoon read *Jacob's Room* at Garsington in 1923, and dined with her alongside Leonard in their kitchen. Sassoon avoided mentioning his war experience too much, except during his days at Craiglockhart and in the friendship shared with Owen (Sassoon 78). The meeting with Woolf was a pleasant memory to Sassoon. Woolf described Sassoon as a 'good fellow' (*Diary 2* 287) and encouraged him to publish his work with the Hogarth Press (304). One might argue that Sassoon was a possible inspiration for the character of Septimus. Woolf could have drawn on some of Sassoon's war experiences and struggles in order to construct Septimus' state of mind. In any case, Woolf in the novel does not aim to imitate the reality of World War I, but explores how her characters cope with the war trauma and live on as human beings.

Returning to Woolf's perception of shell shock, we see that she was aware of the complex nature of the phenomenon, which was not easily defined as a nervous breakdown. Yet, Woolf did not rail against the materialism-orientated British medical culture, nor perhaps did she prefer the psychoanalytical methods for treating shell shock. Like Rivers, she instead approached the disease from a holistic angle, recognising that its symptoms included both psychological and physical disturbances. With the implication that the mind inextricably interacts with the body, she extended the phenomenon of shell shock to the relation between subjective experience and objective reality. This

relation also creates a form of empathy, which Woolf suggests in *Mrs Dalloway* as an alternative approach to Septimus' shell-shocked mind. In the novel, Dr Holmes and Sir William fail in their treatment of Septimus, not because they do not fully understand his condition, but because they find it difficult to empathise with him. Septimus sees 'the insane truth' about World War I, which causes him to suffer. In contrast, his doctors, who did not necessarily fight the war or experience shell shock, cannot comprehend their patient's experience. Even though Septimus tries to convey his troubled mind, Dr Holmes and Sir William choose not to listen, and dismiss him after a short appointment. In contrast, Clarissa, after hearing of Septimus' suicide, is willing to contemplate the idea of death and life. She seems to be able to understand what Septimus has been through. Later in the novel it is revealed, through her thoughts about Sir William, that she may once have been his patient – 'Sir William Bradshaw, a great doctor, yet to her obscurely evil' (*Mrs Dalloway* 157). Hence, Clarissa shows us her ability to emphasise with Septimus, which Dr Holmes and Sir William, who are medically trained, fail to do.

This lack of empathy also creates a tension between the doctors and their patient, in term of understanding the disease from the objective and subjective perspectives. As Dr Holmes rejects the concept of shell shock as a medical condition, he quickly dismisses Septimus with the words 'nothing whatever the matter with him' (*Mrs Dalloway* 78), and recommends Sir William in Harley Street. Sir William believes that his unrivalled reputation is built upon his skills and 'almost infallible accuracy in diagnosis' (81). He further claims that he has 'sympathy' and 'understanding of the human soul' (81). However, Sir William is not, ironically, able to listen patiently to Septimus describing his experience of

shell shock. He simply diagnoses a 'complete physical and nervous breakdown' (81), which was a common term for mental illness in the early twentieth century. Treating his patient's shell-shocked mind as a physical symptom, the psychiatrist associates the cause with 'not having a sense of proportion' (82).[36] Sir William's practices of proportion and conversion, including compulsory rest cures, and confinement to mental asylums, strongly and ironically link to Septimus' suicide. The fact that his suicide occurs immediately after his consultation with Dr Holmes and Sir William implies his disagreement with their idea that his shell shock can be treated simply as a physical ailment. Through Septimus' death, Woolf urges us to consider shell shock as a complex picture of the mind-body relation; the experience of the disease is both physical and psychological. Fundamentally, by writing the interaction between Septimus and his doctors, Woolf asserted that empathy is a crucial element of medical treatment. In the novel, the problem she describes in the doctor-patient relationship is that doctors do not necessarily know how to listen to and understand their patients, as they are not the patients themselves. This results in the lack of empathy, and can potentially lead the patients to desperation.

The Trouble with the Human Machine

In the previous section, I suggested that Woolf presents empathy, in *Mrs Dalloway*, as an alternative approach to shell shock. She implies that listening to a patient's experience of the disease can allow others to reach a better understanding of their condition. For Woolf, the concept of shell shock offers insight into the complexities of human perception, experience, and the mind-

[36] As David Bradshaw suggests, Dr Salisbury's emphasis on 'equanimity', as Woolf remembers in her diary, could be a possible model for Sir William's mantra of 'proportion' in her 1925 novel (*Mrs Dalloway* 180 n82).

body relation. In this section, I will demonstrate how Woolf extended her concept of empathy to the basis of being human. This concept was, thus, opposed to the reductionistic and mechanistic model of British medicine in the early twentieth century. Woolf sees Septimus essentially as a human being, rather than a case of shell shock. His experience of mental disorder can be seen as his transitioning, from being an emotionally repressed soldier, to being an everyday man. It is worth noting that he is aware of the fact that those emotions he previously repressed in the war gradually return to him, despite not being able to feel. His awareness of his returning emotions reminds him that he is a human, rather than an emotionless and broken machine.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf digs deeper into her characters by contemplating what it means for them to be human and to have 'the human soul' ('Appendix Two' 415). Woolf's search for understanding of humanity is her fundamental quest in the novel. By intermixing the themes of the double and shell shock, she shows us how Septimus and Clarissa seek to know themselves, both through both their conscious minds and through their physical bodies. In the novel, Dr Holmes and Sir William believe only the physical explanation of Septimus' shell shock, and overlook his complex condition as a whole. Sir William writes that if science deals with what 'after all, we know nothing about – the nervous system, the human brain – a doctor loses his sense of proportion, as a doctor he fails' (*Mrs Dalloway* 84). The psychiatrist regards proportion, a practice of mental balance through physical activities, such as exercise and staying at home, as a solution to the neurological disorder that was unfamiliar to doctors. Sir William's belief in proportion determines his diagnosis of Septimus, whose shell shock is regarded as nervous breakdown, due to lack of

strength and ‘proportion’. Yet, previously in the novel the Harley Street psychiatrist claims to know ‘the human soul’ (81), while during the appointment he simply advises Septimus to practice proportion, and then dismisses him. He clearly sees Septimus’ shell shock as a problem of the human brain and nervous system, without in fact looking at how it is experienced psychologically. The concept of shell shock in the novel may be considered a challenge to the then existing perception of mental disorders. So, Sir William finds ‘proportion’ to be a proper treatment for Septimus and his complex experience of shell shock. Sir William, without showing signs of sympathy, attempts to put his patient in a mental asylum, due to his condition.

Woolf’s urge to treat the human soul ‘more seriously’ and to ‘emphasise character’ (‘Appendix Two’ 415) was particularly relevant at the turn of the twentieth century. At this time, British medicine was strongly inclined towards the mechanistic view of the body, which perpetuates the reductionistic concept of the mind as a physical phenomenon. Scientists and mechanistic physicians also extended this philosophy to their perception of the world that was built upon the mechanical functions. With this lack of focus on the human soul, those mechanistic thinkers suggested a pessimistic attitude to illness, as they believed that ill people were broken machines and could not be healed. Interestingly, Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* also implies the mechanistic concept of the workings of the human mind, through the novel’s medical professionals. Being pessimistic about Septimus’ illness and possible recovery, their solution of putting him in a mental asylum suggests that they see him as a broken machine who needs to be isolated from the rest of society. Yet, Septimus shows us that he would rather die as a human than live as a machine, and so he has ‘escaped’

from his doctors by suicide. Septimus' suicide, though extreme, can be seen as Woolf's criticism of the mechanistic view of the mind-body relation, the view that results in the lack of sympathy towards the human soul.

The trouble with treating a person as a human machine is that the mechanistic view of body and mind shows little meaning to life. This argument is based on the idea that both mechanism and holism were rooted in their philosophical ramifications. As Anne Harrington argues, their polarising views of the mind-body relation resulted from their different views of the epistemology of human beings ('A Feeling for the "Whole"' 259). Mechanism was deeply rooted in the British empirical philosophy of mental process, and in its influence from the philosophy of associationism in the nineteenth century (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 14). According to the theory of fixed laws, the whole mental process was believed to be automatic and passive (14). In addition, disciples of mechanism developed the idea that the brain as well as mental functions could be understood and broken down into small components; this was denounced as 'atomism' (xvii). Their philosophy, in other words, emphasised external reality and the materialistic world. On the other hand, holism looked at the truth in a different way. The philosophy of holistic neuroscience was highly associated with vitalism, a rethinking the human body as a living being instead of as a machine. The body, as a living organism, could possibly re-integrate itself, despite injuries. The basic concept of self-integration and adaptation inspired the later neuroscientists Goldstein and his follower Sacks (Harrington, 'A Feeling for the "Whole"' 269).

We can see that in her works, Woolf contemplates some of the philosophical implications of the mind-body relation. Indeed, she was an avid

reader of the philosopher G. E. Moore and the novelist Samuel Butler, who anticipated the theories of the French philosopher Henri Bergson, especially his theory of mind and memory (Lehan 311). Bergson's vitalistic philosophy arose in an era when science was predominantly based on empirical process and mechanical realities (Lehan 308). His theory was, in general, seen as a counterpart to Darwinian evolution and its mechanical and objective knowledge (308). Although mechanism cannot evolve further, Bergson in his *Creative Evolution* (1907) sought to think outside the mechanistic parameters that were closely associated with Darwin's theory of evolution (47). Bergson's vitalistic thinking centred on the *élan vital*, or life impulse, as the force insulated in the human body which enabled humans to continue creation (177-178). Bergson felt the need to seek an alternative to scientific and material reality, as there was also a 'subjective, intuitive, and holistic' way of understanding the universe and human beings (Lehan 308). Leonard doubted that Woolf was 'influenced in the slightest degree by Bergson's ideas' (174).[37] However, Woolf avidly read and admired Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, which were possible resources of Bergsonian philosophy. Similar concepts of the distortion of time to those we see in, for example, *Mrs Dalloway*, can be found in Proust's and Richardson's novels. The strike of Big Ben reminds the characters of objective clock time, as opposed to their perception

[37] Despite Woolf's claim, there have been several studies on Bergsonian resonance in Woolf's theme of time and memory in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Critics, such as David Daiches, Floris Delattre and James Hafley, disagreed with Leonard's claim as they found various Bergsonian influences and traits in Woolf's fiction. Mary Ann Gillies' 1996 book *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* and 2013 edited volume *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism* also included possible Bergsonian influences on Woolf's fiction. Hafley argued that Woolf was not completely influenced by Bergson. Rather, she went beyond Bergson as an artist rather than a philosopher.

of time. Another example is the mid-section of *To the Lighthouse*, where ten years are radically distilled within a few pages. Woolf's representation of time as a subjective experience shares some similarities with Bergson's philosophy of time, which resembles a vitalistic view of the nature of being, or energy. This vitalistic interpretation of time was in the living process, and contradictory to the mechanistic view of the universe, and humans, as mindless machines. Woolf shared, with other philosophers and writers in her time period, a common interest in how we perceive time and space.

Arguing whether or not Woolf might have been influenced by Bergson is not a focus of this section; Woolf's philosophical perspectives in relation to her philosophical contemporaries have been well documented.[38] Rather, the overview above demonstrates that Woolf's concept of the mind-body relation shares several vitalistic and holistic traits, through which she contemplates the feelings in the body instead of psychological prospects. In *Literary Modernism, Bioscience, and Community*, Craig Gordon has pointed out that Woolf's writing about the feelings in the body makes her a vitalist (5). Also, in her 2013 monograph, *Modernism and the Rhythms of Sympathy*, Kirsty Martin argues that vitalism linked to Woolf's perception of her bodily feelings. As Martin further articulates, Woolf understood that there was an unknown life energy circulating her body, creating different sensations (97). Woolf's fictional characters, especially in *Mrs Dalloway*, often feel their inner lives with the body (97). Indeed,

[38] Ann Banfield explores the intellectual resonances between Woolf and the Cambridge philosophers – such as Russell, Stephen, and Fry – in *The Phantom Table*. Derek Ryan in 'Woolf and Contemporary Philosophy' (2012) also provides an interesting account of how contemporary philosophy resonates with Woolf's literary experiment in narrative devices, such as the six characters merging into one voice in *The Waves*.

the vitalistic idea of the life force within the human body shaped her knowledge of emotions in physical terms –

> What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party – the Bradshaws talked of death. He had killed himself – but how? Always her body went through it, when she was told, first, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. (*Mrs Dalloway* 156)

Clarissa's vision suggests that she is empathetic towards Septimus, though they never meet each other. She is also identifying with him in an embodied way. Her mental projection, through the body, gives her a vivid impression of Septimus' struggle, and the pain of his suicide, as if there was a force in her mind through which she projects herself onto Septimus. Clarissa's empathy towards Septimus could have led her to be in a similar situation. She even regarded Septimus' death as a victory over Sir William; his death is 'an attempt to communicate' (156). Clarissa understands that death is not dreadful, as death can be an assertion of 'defiance' against authority and life (156). Septimus' death triggers her memory of Bourton and the loss of her youth. She walks to the window, and she could potentially jump to end her life as Septimus does. However, Clarissa chooses to go back to the party, when the lines from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* come to her – 'Fear no more the heat of the sun' (158). The words are, accordingly, metaphorically linked with a vital force which

convinces Clarissa that ‘she must go back’ (158). The force emerging after she hears about Septimus saves Clarissa from imitating his suicide.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf’s empathetic attitude towards the human soul shares a strong link with vitalistic thinking, through which philosophers believed human life to be distinct from that of other beings. Believing the life force dwells in human bodies, the vitalists commonly recognised that humans are by no means mindless machines. In the early twentieth century, vitalist-influenced scientists and philosophers rebelled against the nineteenth-century philosophy of the human machine (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 3). The nineteenth century was a crucial time for the mechanistic view of the universe and of human beings, as the industrial revolution intensified. Although it is not an easy task to investigate the origins of vitalism, the philosophy was cited and revivified prominently in late-nineteenth-century biology. Compared to the materialist idea of embodiment and the dualist search for the soul, vitalism was a belief that a spiritual life force or energy, not a materialist one, existed in living organisms. It accepted ‘spiritual animation amidst the workings of physical laws’ (Burwick and Douglass 1). Scientists, including German biologist Jakob von Uexküll and his friend Hans Driesch, believed that natural factors, or energy, were responsible for the intelligence of living organisms (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 52). However, Uexküll and Driesch’s views of organism were still not quite out of the shadow of mechanistic thought. They embraced the idea of partial mechanistic and partial vitalist processes in human body, which provoked criticism from Jacques Loeb and Martin Heidegger. Loeb’s 1916 monograph, *The Organism as a Whole*, attacked Uexküll and Driesch’s compromising view of vitalistic-mechanistic biology; while Heidegger

recognised Uexküll and Driesch as key advocates of the new vitalistic biological science (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 53). This vitalistic-mechanistic controversy paved the way for the future holistic movement, as the concept of 'the whole' in biology was at the core of holism.

The theory of vitalism can be seen in Woolf's holistic concept of the mind and body, through which she intermixed 'being' with 'non-being'. However, Woolf's metaphorical use of objects, such as windows, curtains, and doors, makes it more appropriate to describe her as a holist. As previously discussed, Woolf puts forward her idea of 'the whole' when considering how we perceive and experience the world through our own bodies. In *Mrs Dalloway*, she links Septimus' and Clarissa's perceptions to material objects, especially the window, so as to create a sense of wholeness in their experiences. In both their final moments in the story, Septimus and Clarissa go to the window, while contemplating or making crucial decisions in their lives. Septimus chooses to end his life, while Clarissa chooses life and goes back to the party. However, Woolf does not simply suggest the mind-body relation through her writing of the window. She explores how the mind and body should work as a whole, although the dualistic view of the mind-body relation still remains in the novel. Woolf regards the window as the meeting point of the physical reality and the conscious mind. She starts with a possible way of viewing the mind and body as two different separate entities; while in the scene where Septimus jumps out of the window to free his mind, Woolf strongly shows her critique of mind-body dualism. In the end, Woolf maintains that the mind cannot be separated from the body, through her decision to let Clarissa live on after ruminating by the window and imaging Septimus' death. Woolf's dramatisation of the mind-body

relation also reflects the dominance of materialism and mechanism in the human body and mind. Bearing in mind the materialistic model of neurological and medical science, Dr Holmes and Sir William in *Mrs Dalloway* are believers in objective and scientific truth; which leads them to dismiss Septimus' subjective experience of shell shock as a purely nervous breakdown, instead of a complex phenomenon that affects both mental and physical functioning. However, Woolf contemplates the mind-body relation outside materialistic philosophy. She did not attempt to investigate the mind-body relation in medical or neurological terms, but saw it as a whole.

Holistic Implications of the Double

Woolf's holistic implication about the double has links to the philosophers in her social circle. Among them was Bertrand Russell, who shared a link with Woolf when considering the unity of the mind-body relation. His philosophy of logical atomism broke from idealism. He understood, metaphysically, that the world was divided into different independent and singular elements, which would eventually come together as a whole (Klement, 'Russell's Logical Atomism'). However, holism is the very opposite theory, that cannot understand the world without referring to 'the whole'. Woolf's holism intellectually resonates with the neuropsychological idea of 'the whole' in the human body. The holists drew inspiration and influence from psychology and philosophy. Head attended a Congress of Philosophy in Oxford in 1920, at which Henri Bergson was a speaker. Bergson expressed his interest in Head's studies on the mind-body relation through the phenomenon of aphasia (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 145). Head also corrected Russell's use of neurological terms, and befriended Alfred North Whitehead (145). Head's connections with those philosophers and

metaphysicians suggest that Head understood the complexity of brain and mind, which the materialistic view of British neurology could not fully perceive.

Although those philosophers mainly focused on how reality was represented through objective and subjective experience, Russell could have introduced Woolf to the 'Cartesian question' in terms of the search for the soul (Banfield 65). In any case, Woolf had her own vision of the mind-body relation, which is apparently non-dualistic and moves towards a holistic picture of humans. Departing from the legacies of the mechanism theory in the nineteenth century, Woolf, in a similar fashion to the holistic neurologists, understood humans as complex beings rather than simply mechanistic beings, relying simply on the physical basis of life. In an era of mechanism, when human bodies were treated as machines, the mind was thus reduced to a materialistic product attached to the body. Woolf, although the complexity of the mind-body relation may not overcome Cartesian dualism, maintained that the relationship between the mind and body should be based on the idea of dependence, just as Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith are dependent on each other. We can extend Woolf's novel to be read as an allegory of the union of mind and body. Paradoxically, Woolf begins with a dualistic image of mind and body, as Clarissa unfolds her day by opening 'the French windows and plung[ing] at Bourton into the open air' (*Mrs Dalloway* 3). While opening the window, Clarissa allows her reminiscences of the past spent at Bourton to blend with the present. As the window is left open, Clarissa walks out to buy flowers, and her thoughts are interwoven with her youthful memories and the London of her time.

The sequences of Clarissa opening the window and heading off to the florist's shop suggest a possible aspect of separating the mind from the body.

Clarissa recalls her past, and sees the change of London, as the window remains unclosed. This analogy foreshadows the similar use of the body as glass in her 1926 publication *On Being Ill* – 'the body is a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear' (4). Clarissa's opening of the window seems to suggest that the mind is able to go freely, once the body is opened to experience. Woolf carries the dualistic view of the mind-body distinction further through Clarissa's disembodiment. Septimus also has moments in which he feels departed from his body –

> Every power poured its treasures on his head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen his hand lie when he was bathing, floating, on the top of the waves, while far away on shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away: Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more. (118)

At this stage, Septimus' psychotic experience of dissociating himself from reality gives a sense of the mind-body separation. The heart in his body seems to encourage Septimus that he does not need to be afraid of letting his mind float away from his body. Septimus becomes unafraid of setting his mind free and indulging himself in 'Shakespeare's words' (119); however, the presence of Dr Holmes pulls him back to reality, and his mind to his body. He later realises that his mind should be set free via the death of his body. With this premise, Septimus goes towards the window and makes the decision with regard to his body and mind.

The concept of viewing the mind as distinct from the body is revealed as impossible for Septimus. Again, the open window re-emerges in Septimus' final moments –

> There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury lodging-house window; the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw liked that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. (127)

According to mind-body dualism, the mind could be split from the body so that Septimus' shell shock could be cured. Septimus creates this suicidal fantasy in desperation, and so seeks an ultimate solution for freeing his mind – 'throw[ing] himself from a window' (156). In *On Being Ill*, Woolf expresses a similar concept of dualism, which supports the possibility of separating the mind from the body – 'the body smashes itself to smithereens, and the soul (it is said) escapes' (5). Septimus' suicidal belief, and his solution to his shell-shocked mind, is highly influenced by the mind-body distinction. Septimus follows his belief by smashing his body onto 'Mrs Filmer's area railings' (*Mrs Dalloway* 127), but never comes back in the form of the free mind, as he expected. Septimus' act of killing his body, which fails to heal his broken mind, suggests that the mind-body relation is not dualistic but holistic. Likewise, as Woolf confirms in *On Being Ill*, there is no evidence for the mind being able to leave the body (5). The body is as fragile as the glass; so the mind dies when the body disappears.

Clarissa's final moments by the window also reveal a holistic attitude towards the mind-body relation. After hearing how Septimus ends his life, Clarissa departs from the crowd, walks towards the window in the drawing room, and contemplates her past and unhappy life. When she opens the curtains, Clarissa sees an old lady opposite the room, and watches her while she is about

to sleep. All of a sudden, the old lady opposite brings a new perspective on her life –

> She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising! – in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! […] It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady, crossing the room. Could she see her? […] There! The old lady had put out her light! The whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. (*Mrs Dalloway* 158)

This 'seeing' scene echoes Clarissa's mental projection on to Septimus' death. In contrast to Sir William, who claims to be sympathetic, Clarissa is able to feel and imagine the vision of Septimus' death. Her empathy gives her the ability to feel what Septimus is experiencing. Clarissa is aware that she only imagines the vision of Septimus' suicide, instead of actually experiencing it. In addition, Clarissa's act of seeing the old lady through the window creates the image of her body as 'a sheet of plain glass' (*On Being Ill* 4). Clarissa in 'the creature within can only gaze through the pane' (4). Likewise, Clarissa can only gaze out of the window at the lady outside the room, while not being able to go out. When the lady puts out the light, the room becomes dark and Clarissa 'must go back' to the party (*Mrs Dalloway* 158). Septimus decides not to fear freeing his mind through killing the body. Although Clarissa does not fear death, she chooses to embrace her life and herself as a whole.

Throughout the novel, Woolf still maintains certain elements of the mind-body dualism. However, she adds a more holistic approach to the mind-body relation, through the image of the house. The dark house can be seen as a metaphorical revelation that the mind and body should not separate; instead,

they should be dependent on each other. Metaphorically seeing a house as a body, Clarissa is unable to see the old lady when the lights are out. In the same way, when ‘the creature within’ the ‘plain glass’ ceases to be, nothing should exist. Without the body, the mind can longer live, and vice versa. This dependent relationship between the mind and body is represented by Septimus and Clarissa. Woolf embodied her holistic idea, interwoven with the literary double, through the Septimus-Clarissa relation. She thus created a complex picture of human body, perception, and life, as opposed to the reductionistic, scientific, philosophical, and medical portrait that predominated in early-twentieth-century Britain.

Chapter 3

‘All Sorts of Separate Feelings’: Fragments and The Whole

As previously discussed, Woolf’s exploration of ‘the whole’ in perception, through the mind-body relation, can be read not only in literature but also in wider contexts such as medical psychology, neuropsychology, and philosophy. This comparison provides a holistic concept of the human body, mind, perception, and life in Woolf’s works. In this chapter, I will continue exploring the parallel between Woolf and the neuropsychologists who came after Henry Head, especially Kurt Goldstein and Alexander Luria, in order to trace how Woolf’s concept of ‘the whole’ was relevant to, and resonated with, the holism movement in neuropsychology in the early twentieth century.

Goldstein and Luria saw that there is a pattern of movement towards ‘the whole’ in human mental capacity, despite brain damage. This indicates that, following brain injuries, human organisms can integrate their remaining and intact capacities in order to maintain a sense of wholeness (Goldstein 49). By integration, Goldstein and Luria suggested that there is a latent mental capacity in humans that moves towards ‘the whole’ in perception (Goldstein 49; Cole and Levitin, ‘Introduction: The Historical Context’ 10). This underlying ability was particularly relevant to the post-war periods, both first and second, as it offered a possibility of healing and recovery. It is worth noting that Woolf was also aware of a similar phenomenon in which she experienced ‘all sorts of separate feelings’ and attempted to ‘collect oneself to one Virginia’ (*Letters 4* 397). She implied that she had the drive to put herself together as a whole when experiencing ‘separate feelings’. Especially in *The Waves*, she interweaves the

six characters' disparate perceptions with one another, to make them a whole. In this chapter, I will contextualise the concept of 'the whole' within the larger cultural and philosophical framework. Fundamentally, Woolf, Goldstein, and Luria sought to understand the pattern of movement in human beings that goes from fragmented experiences towards the feeling for 'the whole'.

The first half of this chapter looks at how Woolf used paradoxes to realise the holistic philosophy in her works. Her holism emphasised not only the unity of both mental and physical experience, but also the integration of disparate experience. Her emphasis on 'the whole' in perception allowed her to create some paradoxical statements regarding her methodology. Her paradoxes can be read in 'Modern Fiction', where she discusses different methods of fiction writing. As she points out in the essay, the Edwardian writers such as Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy, focused primarily on writing external existences and plots. In contrast, the modern writers such as Joyce did not aim to imitate the 'likeness to life' by giving detailed descriptions of the plot (106). Woolf argues that focusing too much on representing the likeness to life can constrain modern writers to the material form of life. Believing that life is 'very far from being "like this"', she urges writers to look 'within' and examine 'an ordinary mind on an ordinary day' (106). As the essay progresses, Woolf seems to prefer a more spiritual account of life to a materialist account. However, she also encourages us to 'record the atoms as they fall upon the mind' (107), offering a material and fragmented sense of mental processes. Later in the essay she asserts that 'every method [of writing] is right' (108). Woolf's paradoxical statements about the methods of writing are closely associated with her non-dualism. As I have argued, her non-dualistic thinking allows her to explore, freely, both the spiritual

and material representation of life, and hence to blur the distinction between them. She also further extended her non-dualism to holistic thinking, through which she projected her perception to the material objects and created a sense of wholeness in her experience. As she explores in 'Sketch of the Past', Woolf's purpose in using holism is to produce a sense of the materiality of perception, centring on the embodiment of feelings. I will argue that her paradoxical approach is meant to show a complex picture of the everyday human mind. In the meantime, I will draw attention to Goldstein, who also developed his holistic thinking by means of paradoxes. He emphasised the material facts of the brain, and accepted most of the localisation doctrines. However, he put human beings at the centre of his research and believed that the holistic approach to the human body is 'the consequence of a well-understood scientific perspective' (Ludwig 41). His holistic philosophy, despite having a certain paradoxical quality, shows the importance of integrating the human mind within the material world. Therefore, I will explore how a parallel may be formed between Woolf and Goldstein, concerning the materiality of human perception.

Following the comparative analysis of Woolf's and Goldstein's holism, the second half of the chapter turns to her fictional writing. It explores how Woolf's use of paradoxes captures her holistic picture of human character in *The Waves*. As she reveals in her letter to Goldsworthy Dickson, the novel's six characters are 'supposed to be one' in order to give a 'sense of continuity' (*Letters 4* 397). Nevertheless, like Woolf herself, these characters encounter particular difficulty with their fragmented consciousnesses. She demonstrates this difficulty via the form of the novel – the minds of all the characters come together as a whole, collapse, and re-integrate. With this pattern, I will argue that the novel's literary

form resonates with Luria's *The Man with a Shattered World*. Luria's work also contains a pattern of movement that allows collective experiences to be unified, broken, and unified again. This pattern enabled Luria to delve into the inner life of the brain, through Zasetsky's writing of his fragmented experiences, as well as 'the whole' in his perception. We can see that Woolf and Luria recognised writing as an immediate way of producing a sense of wholeness. As Luria observed, his brain-injured patient Lev Zasetsky found a new purpose of living after discovering the ability to write (*Shattered World* 84). He could revisit his lost memories to ensure his present and future. By putting his fragmented experiences together, Zasetsky was able to re-learn something of himself and the world around him. For Woolf, she could feel 'whole' when putting her fragmented feelings into words ('Sketch of the Past' 85). In so doing, she was able to examine her experience and 'take away the pain' (85). I will demonstrate how Woolf's writing about wholeness is also in parallel with Luria's 'romantic' neuroscientific ideas (*The Making of Mind* 174). Woolf and Luria can be seen as holistic writers, according to their use of a similar literary form, and writing about fragmentation and 'the whole'. The internal world the characters experience in *Shattered World* and *The Waves* is broken. Nevertheless, they aspire to re-integrate their fragmented experiences and feel whole again.

Beyond the Human Machine

I will draw attention to certain similarities Woolf shared with Goldstein and Luria in developing the concept of holism. They looked to understand human life as whole by thinking through the body and its relation to our perception of reality. To place the human subject at the centre, they valued one's subjective experience as equally important as how they act in the material world.

Essentially, they were writing about humans and their lives as holistic and dynamic, instead of being like mindless machines. The underlying crisis Woolf, Goldstein, and Luria confronted was the mechanistic concept of the body and the world; this existed in various guises in the twentieth century, such as materialism, reductionism, determinism, and atomism. Their exploration of how the human mind works was by no means a simple task. Woolf was aware of the materialist theory in fiction, that is concerned more with external existences and plot than with mind and human character. Goldstein argued that overvaluing atomistic and materialist thinking would undervalue the nature and spirit of humans (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 143). Luria did not agree with the reductionist philosophy that oversimplified human organisms and life (*The Making of Mind* 174). What Woolf, Goldstein, and Luria share are their philosophies of holism in life. For them, the mental and physical facts of life are indistinguishable from each other. In a similar fashion, they extended their views of the body to a philosophy of life which is holistic and non-mechanistic.

The philosophy of mechanism had a long history, but was widely used in the seventeenth century (Pecere 23). René Descartes, Hermann von Helmholtz, and Isaac Newton understood mechanics as the foundations of the physical world (Craver and Tabery, 'Mechanisms in Science'). They believed that all the phenomena in the world were concretely represented through interaction, causation, and organisation of different particles and matters (Schofield 15). Accordingly humans, as parts of that world, could be seen as machines with different mechanisms that operate the body. Mechanists reduced mental activities to a series of material atoms interacting and functioning with each other (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 14). Humans thus became 'mindless'

machines (14). The mechanisation of the mind and body could lead to the idea that bodily and mental activities occurred separately. It was at the core of mechanism to regard humans as machines. The concept of mind was thus considered part of neurological functioning. Nevertheless, holists gave a call to wholeness or holism in order to re-evaluate what it meant to be human in the physical world. This is not to claim that they attempted to reject the mechanistic view of life. Instead, they did not see life and the world as merely based on the idea of mechanism.

Holism in the early twentieth century was often regarded as an alternative approach to classical and mechanistic neurology, which centred on detailed histories of patients and therapy (Jacyna, *Lost Words* 17). The approach of holistic science was to explore a patient's subjectivity rather than reduce them to neurological functioning. A holistic approach could give scientists freedom to see human life and its relation to the physical world, rather than limit it to experiments in the laboratory (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* xvii). Firstly, holists –including Head, Goldstein, and Luria – considered that bodily and mental phenomena are inseparable and that they complexly engage with each other. Secondly, holists came to terms with the plasticity of neurological functioning, through which a human organism is able to re-integrate and adapt to a new environment (8). Therefore, they created a picture of wholeness in human capacity, which is not isolated from external factors. For example, in his 1934 publication *Der Aufbau des Organismus*, translated to English in 1939 as *The Organism*, Goldstein looks at 'certain general rules' that could possibly affect organismic life as a whole. He believes there exists a type of order in the human organism, determining whether one is generally healthy. On the other

hand, illness indicates that one loses a certain ‘order’, causing one to feel unwell, or to be unable to experience ‘a feeling of smooth functioning’ in their body (48) –

> The individual himself experiences them with a feeling of smooth functioning, unconstraint, well-being, adjustment to the world, and satisfaction, that is, the course of behaviour has a definite order, a total pattern in which all involved organismic factors – the mental and the somatic down to the physicochemical processes – participate in a fashion appropriate to the performance in question [...] Hence, ordered and normal behaviour are synonymous inasmuch as the behaviour is normal because it is “ordered”. (48-49)

Goldstein considers that mental factors, such as ‘feeling’, ‘adjustment’, and ‘satisfaction’, are also attributes of organismic behaviour. He suggests that there is an order in human experience that synthesises mental and physical processes. In other words, the ‘performance’ of human behaviour is based on the mutual interaction between biological activities and psychological phenomena. A ‘normal’ behaviour is the result of an order that integrates internal and external experiences.

Goldstein was clearly aware of the human capacity for integration, or ‘order’, in the neuropsychological function. At the turn of the twentieth century, English neurophysiologist Charles Scott Sherrington introduced the concept of integration to neurology. Sherrington suggested his concerns about nervous integration being central to the body, in his 1906 publication *Integrative Action of the Nervous System* (Geroulanos and Meyers 115). Henry Head observed that so-called abnormal phenomena, after cerebral lesions, were

manifestations of ‘a fresh integration’ arranged by the remaining nervous system (*Aphasia* 549 vol. 1). Similarly, Goldstein cited Sherrington’s evaluation, of the organism’s ability to integrate the remaining nervous system, as an inspiration. However, he did not agree with the idea that all the phenomena in the organism are constituted according to the reflex laws. The results of Sherrington’s approach, as he found, were primarily in ‘animals’ instead of humans (Goldstein 86). Unlike Sherrington, Goldstein was concerned more with human beings than with animals, in his study of the brain. With his concept of ‘order’, Goldstein believed that the human organism functions and interacts in a holistic way with the external world (95).

Woolf’s primary focus lies in the idea of seeing humans and the world as a whole, which resonates with Goldstein and Luria. Ultimately, their holistic approach to organisms, and to life, is to seek to understand the fragmentation associated with injuries and to search for a meaning in life. Their philosophies of holism therefore reflect the works, as well as the people and events that have shaped them. To borrow Luria’s language, these figures exhibited ‘romantic traits’ by exploring what lies underneath the surface of the brain, and its relation to the nature of human beings (*The Making of Mind* 174). Intellectually, Woolf, Goldstein, and Luria regarded their valuation of human beings and life as an alternative to the mechanistically orientated world. When World War I and World War II shattered the world, physically and psychologically, these writers saw the need to bring the importance of being human back to life. However, this is not to claim that Woolf, alongside Goldstein and Luria, preferred an idealist account of life to the material. Rather, they were interested in how humans are inherently capable of making a whole through the embodiment of

the mind. Woolf emphasised materiality of perception, and urged us to capture ‘atoms’ or ‘myriad impressions’ falling on the brain. Goldstein was interested in the Gestalt concept of ‘the whole’ in human perception, while holding on to his biological and material view of the human organism. Luria’s purpose behind his romantic philosophy was to retain both mechanistic/materialist and humanistic/holist values of life. Understanding human life has implications for thinking about what makes us human, beyond the objective and mechanistic world. A humanistic trait is needed when exploring the wonder of human nature, which includes phenomena occurring in both the neurological body and the intelligible mind. With their holistic narratives about the human subject, Woolf, Goldstein, and Luria each contemplated what it means to be human.

‘Make an Artistic Whole’: An Epiphanic Moment

I have suggested that Woolf’s holism focuses on the embodiment of perception through everyday objects. To understand Woolf’s paradox about the mind-body relation, I will first explore how she used an epiphany to express her concept of ‘the whole’, and how she created a paradoxical statement. In ‘Sketch of the Past’, Woolf writes that her receiving of ‘sudden shocks’ makes her a writer (84). By shocks, she means her ability to capture and understand an epiphanic moment in life. Woolf’s epiphany is, as José Ángel García-Landa (2020) observes, based upon the idea of ‘emergence and synthesis’, which eventually comes to terms with a state of consciousness (111). As García-Landa argues, Woolf’s conception of epiphany explores how the mind makes ‘a new acquaintance of itself through a sudden understanding of the way things hang together, with ourselves and our outlook in their midst’ (111). For Woolf, life can be understood based on how the mind processes and interprets moments of

being and non-being. She even finds an epiphany behind ‘the cotton wool of daily life’ (‘Sketch of the Past’ 85) that indicates an emergence and synthesis of certain fragmented experiences. To Woolf as a writer, to put the epiphanic moment into words is to understand the meaning of ‘sudden shocks’. Writing is a method for Woolf to make sense of her fragmented experience and memory, to understand human life as a whole.

There are several types of epiphany in Woolf’s literary works. Some are emotional, mystical, and religious, while others are philosophical and aesthetic. Despite these subtle differences, the epiphanies are often ‘a revelation of some order’ (‘Sketch of the Past’ 85). Life exists amongst everyday matters, including memories and feelings. However chaotic one may feel about life, it has its way of finding an order to become whole. She gives us this exact picture of life being capable of holding disparate feelings together in *To the Lighthouse*. Lily Briscoe is faced with a crisis over her fragmented experience, as a result of being overwhelmed by the death of Mrs Ramsay, Charles Tansley’s doubts about her gift as an artist, and her memories of the Ramsay Family. After returning to the Ramsay’s house, Lily asks a ‘simple’ but profound question –

> What is the meaning of life? That was all – a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years. The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs Ramsay bringing them together saying, “Life stand still here”; Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something

> permanent) – this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs Ramsay said. “Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!” she repeated. She owed it all to her. (133)

To respond to the question, Lily recalls her personal memory of Mrs Ramsay, attempting to interpret Mrs Ramsay’s words to her. However, Lily does not seem to answer her question directly. Instead, she notices a pattern among her fragmented experience – ‘in the midst of chaos there was shape’. It dawns on Lily that life itself has the ability to stay stable, although life can be as ‘passing and flowing’ as ‘the breaking wave’. Ten years have passed since Lily’s last visit to the Ramsays. Lily finally understands Mrs Ramsay’s mantra that ‘life stand[s] still here’. In the epiphanic moment, Lily sees a pattern or principle in life that offers her a sense of unity among chaotic experiences. Though she feels fragmented, life can put those pieces of memories and feelings together, forming a pattern which moves towards the unity of disparate states of experience. Here, in Lily’s epiphany, Woolf makes a clear allusion to her philosophy of wholeness in life. Life would eventually move towards the state of the harmonious whole and ‘stand still here’.

Similar to Lily Briscoe, the six characters in *The Waves* – Bernard, Rhoda, Susan, Jinny, Louis, and Neville – as well as the one silent character, Percival, share a common burden of experiencing chaos and fragmentation. Among them Bernard, as a main narrator, eventually receives an epiphany that there is an order in life unifying his fragmented experience. Unable to distinguish himself from the other characters, Bernard suffers from an identity crisis.

Although he is aware from an early age that he is 'not one and simple, but complex and many', he cannot understand his life shared with others as a whole (*The Waves* 44). Throughout his life, Bernard keeps searching for the meaning of the unification of several selves. In his later years, he finally understands and accepts the fact that he already 'became six people' in his childhood (166). Bernard realises there is 'no division between [him] and them' (172). He is no longer 'I' but becomes 'you' (172). In his final hours, Bernard relates his whole life to his impression of the wave. It rises and breaks on the shore. Yet, life still stands here, staying unified.

'Let us Trace the Pattern'

Woolf believes 'sudden shocks' or epiphanic moments can occur in everyday life. However, she does not suggest that life is only found and understood through a materialist account. Instead, there is a complex pattern in life that is built upon the unity of subjective experience and objective reality. In her 2005 article 'Virginia Woolf Tracing Patterns through Plato's Form', Lorraine Sim argues that Woolf's exploration of the pattern in life relies on a compromise between 'her commitment to empirical reality and her repeated allusion to a metaphysical reality that subsists behind everyday appearances' (38). Woolf maintained that our experience is embedded in everyday objects such as 'cotton wool', which makes it common as well as extraordinary. Sim asserts that Woolf, in a similar fashion to Plato, believes in a 'non-material principle that provides order and meaning to life' (46). This 'principle' is in fact at the core of Woolf's holistic philosophy, through which she saw the materiality of perception in everyday life. Her goal was to represent the common experience of the

embodied mind. Life has its quality of bringing an order to our subjectivity, and its relation to the material world.

Woolf anticipates the feeling for 'the whole' by projecting her perception onto material objects. She further suggests that there is a complex pattern towards wholeness in human perception, emerging from the fragmented experience. She exemplifies this pattern of 'the whole' in *The Waves* by mixing six characters into one single voice. Nevertheless, one can recognise that the motif of being fragmented was what most modernist writers dealt with in their writings, especially during and after World War I. Critics such as Peter Childs (2008) have suggested that the recurring idea of fragmentation and discontinuity in modernist literature is 'not just change but crisis' (Childs 16).[39] Writers including T.S. Eliot (who expresses the uncertain and broken future in his 1922 poem *The Waste Land*), and Ford Madox Ford (who speaks of irreparable relationships, shattered by unfaithfulness and desire, in his 1915 novel *The Good Soldier*) undergo the fragmented experience as a perpetual crisis, seemingly impossible to break.[40] They hardly show, in their works, any sign of recovery, or any positive response to the fragmented self and experience. Woolf also addresses the fragmented self as a crisis in her novels. An oft-quoted example is Septimus Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*. Septimus suffers from shell shock in post-war London, and the resultant crisis over his broken

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[39] Peter Childs, in his second edition of *Modernism*, has pointed out that although the concept of modernism was accentuated in the post-war period, modernism was involved in 'the broader social structures' and 'the mass movements and popular cultures of modernity' (4). In this respect, Woolf developed her modernism primarily after the Great War. Her modernism also engaged with medical or neuropsychological cultures; this once seemed overlooked, but is now being re-evaluated in today's medical humanities criticism.

[40] Sara Haslam offers insightful research on the concept of fragmentation and its relation to modernism in her 2002 monograph *Fragmenting Modernism*. Although she focuses on Ford Madox Ford, Haslam associates the fragmented feelings with the Great War.

selfhood is a possible link to his suicide. However, his 'double' Clarissa Dalloway is able to maintain herself as whole, despite possessing fragmented memories of the past. The fragmented experience found in everyday life may provoke a crisis over how one perceives reality, or the world. Yet there is a pattern, as Woolf found, that brings those fragmented pieces together, achieving a unity and stability in life. Life, as Mrs Ramsay sees in *To the Lighthouse*, 'stand[s] still here', conglomerating the fragmented experience into a shape. Ultimately, life exists as a 'luminous halo', that surrounds our consciousness and creates a sense of wholeness. In this respect, Woolf's exploration of wholeness in human experience, despite fragments of perceptions, distinguishes her from other modernist writers.

Woolf's philosophy of holism indicates that she saw a latent human capacity to preserve wholeness, despite living in 'the midst of chaos'. Although her idea of 'the whole' can be seen in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, it is in *The Waves* that Woolf conceptualises a holistic view of life through an overtly non-dualist approach.

Woolf's Non-Dualism

Woolf sees that it is important to make an artistic whole through non-dualism. For her, non-dualism serves as a crucial way of thinking about holism. She gives her non-dualistic vision of how life should be represented in 'Modern Fiction'. In this essay, she implores the reader to look beyond the materialist and spiritual methods of writing about life, as they do not aim to 'secure the thing we seek' (105).

Woolf's non-dualistic attitude towards the mind-body relation often led her to make statements that may appear paradoxical, but which in fact articulate

something well-founded. This notion can be further associated with her social and intellectual background. As previously mentioned, Woolf was certainly exposed to the influences of Bertrand Russell and other Cambridge philosophers, including A. N. Whitehead and G. E. Moore. Apart from these intellectual influences, Woolf was aware that the reductionistic view of life – closely associated with scientific and technological advances – had detrimental effects on one's mental and bodily integrity (Wood 484). Woolf and the philosophers were aware of the bodily fragmentation, and spared no effort to restore a unified experience of the body. This suggests that literature and philosophy share the burden of searching for re-establishment, in order to unify the experience of both mind and body as a whole (484).

In 'Lighthouse Bodies' (1994), Joanne Wood associates Woolf's concept of bodily integrity with the neutral monism of Russell. Neutral monism is a philosophy that looks at a repatterning of shared underlying substance into oneness. However, neutral monists do not see any form of monism as materialistic nor idealistic but 'neutral'. (Stubenberg, 'Neutral Monism'). Wood argues that both Woolf and Russell attempt to relieve the experience of bodily breakdown during World War I through neutral monism. Thus, they seek to 're-establish an experience of bodily integrity' (484). Woolf and Russell share similar qualities of neutral monism, through which they see outward reality to be just as important as inward (493). The integrity Woolf and Russell find relies heavily on sensation, which blurs the distinction between physical and mental phenomena (493). In other words, whatever sensations one has represent the experience of the world. The two writers believed that internal feelings could be identical to the external reality that one may experience (493). In addition to

Woolf's intellectual resonance with Russell, Wood asserts that Woolf's concept of bodily integrity differentiates her from many other modernists, who concentrate on the broken and incomplete body (484). As Wood observes, Woolf moves towards 'a sensory experience of integrity' which emphasises the dependent and continuous relationship between the physical senses and the conscious mind (486). Wood in her essay seems to suggest that Woolf be seen as a monist and radical empiricist who observed and experimented in writing her sensations into novels. Yet Woolf's approach to bodily integrity differs from that of monists such as Russell. Her version of non-dualism has holistic elements, which allow her, similarly to Goldstein, to avoid determinism and to be more intuitive about her narrative. This gives her the flexibility to shift from spiritual to material integrity and vice versa. Fundamentally, the mind and body inherently function as a whole, which Woolf extends to a wider social context: what one experiences externally and internally has definite impact on how they perceive the physical world.

In *On Being Ill*, Woolf explicates her non-dualist view about the mind-body relation – '[The mind] cannot separate off from the body like the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea for a single instant' (4). She insists that the body is an immediate way of feeling sensations and emotions. In other words, the mind cannot be expressed without the intervention of the body. Although Woolf primarily discusses, in the essay, how a language of the body in literature tends to be overlooked, her non-dualism – which serves as her 'robust philosophy' – permeates the essay and her literary works (5). It is worth noting that Woolf's non-dualism has a strong link to her ideas about being and non-being. In both cases, she suggests that the physical body can be an immediate vehicle

through which one experiences the material world. This echoes Woolf's core philosophy of wholeness, that the moments of being are embedded in those of non-being. Although her philosophy of being/non-being, and non-dualism, both point to a monistic view of the mind-body relation, the former is clear on the point that the mind is embodied and materialised, while the latter gives a more flexible solution. Non-dualism does not fully embrace the materialistic principle that all substances, including consciousness and mental states, are reduced to material interactions, which can be replaceable and accidental (Schofield 5). This is not to claim that non-dualists reject materialist monism, or that they prefer idealism; instead, they fundamentally accept the position that the nature of human beings is neither completely physical nor completely mental (Stubenberg, 'Neutral Monism'). It is a mixture of the two, with different patterns of integration emerging at different moments through particular modes of attention.

Woolf's non-dualist understanding of the body also has a paradoxical quality that is mixed with the idea of the machine. Especially in *The Waves*, she explores bodily integrity by adapting a mechanistic narrative. In the novel, the characters understand the world through the complex interaction between the conscious mind and the body (Gordon 159). However, they seem to be overly concerned with bodily sensation, embodying their feelings in neurological and physiological expression (159). In so doing, the characters are able to understand and learn of their selfhood in the material world. Bernard, in the novel, experiences a mechanistic moment when feeling 'complete' –

> […] simple words for those who have inherited the spoils of all the ages not as said then, day after day, in the full tide of life, when one feels

> complete, entire, at breakfast. Muscles, nerves, intestines, blood-vessels, all that makes the coil and spring of our being, the unconscious hum of the engine, as well as the dart and flicker of the tongue, functioned superbly. Opening, shutting; shutting, opening; eating, drinking; sometimes speaking – the whole mechanism seemed to expand, to contract, like the mainspring of clock. (*The Waves* 156)

The image of 'clock' for the body may appear automatic and mechanistic. However, Woolf uses the materiality of sensation to represent the exact feeling Bernard experiences. Bernard thinks through his inner organs, inspecting his whole body as the 'unconscious hum of the engine'. He is aware of the fact that the body can function unconsciously as a machine. Interestingly, Bernard processes the feeling for 'the whole', or completeness, by surveying inside his body. Although he relates bodily functioning to a clockwork and mechanistic view, his expression of bodily thinking is, in a sense, 'complete' and 'entire'. As much as Woolf identified the body as a convenient way of translating sensations and emotions into material reality, Bernard is aware of his bodily integrity. The feelings cannot exist without the body; the body cannot live without the consciousness of feelings, experiencing them as part of a legible pattern.

'Record the Atoms': The Materiality of Perception

I have suggested that Woolf's holism touches upon the materiality of perception, which represents immaterial feelings in the material world. She explores this sense of wholeness in *To the Lighthouse*, where Lily Briscoe contemplates the subjective and objective nature of reality by thinking about the existence of 'the kitchen table'. Woolf even explains, in 'Sketch of the Past', her own psychology, through which she embodies the conscious mind in everyday objects. Her idea

of materiality has been widely studied, and associated with embodiment of life and matter, by critics such as Lorraine Sim (2005) and Bryony Randall (2007). In 2013, Derek Ryan published a monograph on the subject, entitled *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory*.[41] In his book, Ryan asserts that Woolf is concerned with 'various aspects of materialism and immanence rather than abstraction and transcendence' (3). She creates her aesthetic form of new materialism via language to unify beings and non-beings, and life and matter (3). Indeed the body is, as Woolf emphasises in *On Being Ill*, a 'daily drama' and it 'intervenes' in the mind (4-5). In other words, the body is an immediate vehicle through which one experiences feelings, cognition, and everyday life. In fact, Woolf did not completely reject materialism; rather, she actively engaged in the material aspect of the everyday, shown in the language of embodiment. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that Woolf was a materialist, in the sense she describes in 'Modern Fiction'. She was not deterministic about the language of either materialism or idealism, and this results in paradoxes. Her paradox is under the influence of non-dualism, which allows her to obtain a sense of aesthetic unity. She would extend her non-dualism to her literary vision, stating that 'there is no limit' nor specific method in writing fiction, as 'everything is the proper stuff of fiction' ('Modern Fiction' 110). Thus, Woolf was able to explore life by going beyond the materialist/idealist dichotomy and seeing 'the whole'.

[41] Woolf Miscellany published a special issue, on Woolf and her concept of the materiality of perception (Czarnecki 2014). In this issue, scholars such as Ryan, Randall, and Crossland provided interesting comparisons between material objects and Woolf's art of writing. The essays in Pamela L. Caughie's edited volume, *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2015) also explore how Woolf's writing and philosophy were influenced by the mechanical advances of the early twentieth century.

To understand Woolf's paradox about her methodology, we need to return to her attitude towards materialist writing in 'Modern Fiction'. In the essay, Woolf uses the materialist and spiritualist approach to fiction to distinguish the Edwardian writers from the modernists. Here, she does not suggest that her contemporaries have improved on the past; rather, they progressed by establishing a new form of writing, giving the spiritual account of life. Woolf argues in the essay that the materialists – Wells, Bennett, and Goldsworthy – 'spen[t] immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring' (105). Nevertheless, she suggests that the other side of the material world is the fleeting and the evanescent. She urges us to concentrate on the materiality of perception by looking 'within' and examining 'for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day' (106). In contrast to the materialists, Woolf recognises James Joyce as a 'spiritual' writer who is concerned with 'the flickering of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain' (107). Woolf commends Joyce's spiritual method of writing for coming closer to 'life' itself (108). In this sense, she suggests that life exists inside rather than outside the physical body. Therefore, Woolf associates the perception of interior life with 'messages' that flash through the brain.

It is clear that in 'Modern Fiction', she adopts the language of materialism to address her concept of life as a whole. Woolf acknowledges that life can also be materialised, as it exists in various objects that we relate to our everyday life. However, she suggests that the concept of life should not be reduced to material objects like 'gig lamps' ('Modern Fiction' 106). Life has its quality to retain, full and whole like a 'halo'. She seems to imply that life is not merely an

elusive but comprehensible concept, but is as accessible as daily objects. Everyday objects have their meaning when we associate our consciousness of feelings with them. As she would later describe in ‘Sketch of the Past’, life exists both in the moments of ‘being’ and ‘non-being’, embedded in each other as a whole. Woolf’s analogy between life and everyday artefacts carries the implication that life exists in things with which we are familiar. Hence, as she notes in the essay, there is no need to look outside but ‘within’ (106). Her idea of looking ‘within’ life, however, is not a purely spiritual one. Woolf sees that life should include ‘the alien and external’, but as little as possible. Gig-lamps are designed to generate halos or lights so that people can see in the dark. A halo cannot exist without its physical generators; generators would not be the same without producing lights. Halos cannot be touched, yet one can see and know their existence. The image of a halo indicates that both material and immaterial qualities are attributes of life. When it comes to life, one should consider it as a whole rather than as parts. Her analogy of life as a ‘semi-transparent envelope’ also shares a paradoxical quality of unity. Life is not transparent, but semi-transparent, allowing a certain, but not yet full degree of light to pass through physical matter. The ‘envelope’ is itself material, concrete, and visible. However, one can hardly see through the envelope, due to its semi-transparency. Because of the quality of being not clearly seen, one is, however, able to ‘see’ things merging with the surroundings, creating a whole like a ‘halo’. Hence, Woolf associates life with the materiality of perception, as it has both an abstract and a material basis.

The characteristic of life being inherently whole also plays a role in her view of writing. She argues that adopting either a materialist method of writing or a

spiritual one could impose limits on the writer's creativity. Writing about life is far more complex than simply choosing one method or the other. Such a distinction between those two methods of writing, in her time, would have lain, as she observed, in 'the dark places of psychology' ('Modern Fiction' 108).[42] Woolf urges us not to be restricted to a dualist method, as there is no proper way or 'method' of writing when it comes to human life (108). Life is not limited to materialist or spiritual understandings. Rather, there is a sense of wholeness in life that reflects both the material and spiritual realities. Woolf finds that this sense of wholeness in life already exists, 'from the beginning of consciousness to the end' (106).

Cross-Cultural Reflections: Kurt Goldstein and his Holistic Philosophy

In the section, I will explore the ways in which Woolf's holistic philosophy resonates with that of Kurt Goldstein, through their responses to paradoxes in human perceptual experience. Through the lens of the concept of 'the whole', Woolf was able to move freely beyond a restrictive dualism, in writing about human character and its relation to life. The combination of holistic philosophy and paradox in Woolf's writings can be compared with Goldstein's holistic approach to the human body as an organism. Unlike Henry Head, Goldstein did not have any personal contact with Woolf; nor did he express interest in her works. Nevertheless, Woolf and Goldstein shared some concerns about the

[42] There has been a great body of work done on psychology and Woolf's writing. Critics have been discussing, for many years, from whom Woolf drew inspiration; and they have speculated about her understated perspective towards Freud. However, other critics, such as George Johnson in '"The Spirit of the Age": Virginia Woolf's Response to Second Wave Psychology', Judith Ryan in *The Vanishing Subject*, and Laura Salisbury in 'Modernism, Psychoanalysis and other Psychologies', have recognised other schools of psychology which might have shaped Woolf's concepts of the mind, consciousness, and the body. Indeed, the Bloomsbury Group with which Woolf was associated was fond of psychoanalysis and psychology. She could have been inspired by her father, Leslie Stephen, who was a devoted reader of psychologist James Sully.

multifaceted quality of the human character, which cannot be understood via a solely mechanistic account of life. They shared an interest in embracing paradoxes to create a whole in perception.

Goldstein's holistic philosophy plays a significant role in his theory of the organism. However, in dealing with the mechanistic philosophy of life, Goldstein's concept of 'the whole' can appear paradoxical (Noppeney and Wallesch 372). He often described bodily functioning as mechanical and automatic. Indeed, he was influenced by the classical aphasiologist Carl Wernicke, who was committed to a mechanistic doctrine of brain science, and theories of brain localisation. During his days in a neuroanatomy laboratory, Goldstein was supervised by Wernicke. But he was also interested in Kantian philosophy, and 'the philosophical issues raised by the breakdown of mind and brain' (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 141). Goldstein was also strongly attached to 'the humanistic insights of literature and interest in idealistic philosophy' (142). His idea of holism could be traced back to his early classical education. His holistic and humanistic understanding of human organisms, or life, grew stronger in response to the belief in 'therapeutic nihilism' that gained some prominence in the medical community in the late nineteenth century (144). The social critic Matthew Arnold was quoted as saying that 'the stream of tendency of modern medical thought was toward a therapeutic nihilism' (Clarke 199).[43] Indeed, the 'therapeutic nihilists' abandoned medical therapies, and prescribing drugs for the patients, as they did not wish to interfere with 'natural

[43] Unfortunately, there are no available resources directly pointing out Arnold's view on therapy, except for the quote from the American physician Maurice D. Clarke. Regardless, the references to Arnold in Clarke's medical article and in Philip Rieff's *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1966) suggest Arnold's critique is relevant to the medical culture of the late nineteenth century and onwards.

processes' – including diseases, suffering, and death (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 144). Rather, they thought it was important to understand the natural processes of disease, and that it was hard to understand how brain damage might be improved clinically. This belief in therapeutic nihilism was thus considered relevant for aphasiology, as doctors saw that aphasic people were not easy to treat in clinics. They chose the method of 'laissez faire' (Clarke 199), or letting aphasic people go through the natural process of illness without interfering.

Goldstein's approach was humanist, however, and he was committed to rehabilitation via the clinic. Deeply disappointed by the nihilistic view of therapy, Goldstein sought to understand alternative medical treatments, which dealt with his patients as humans, damaged by injury or disease. (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 144). The world he discovered was not necessarily mechanistic; rather, there were other values that science could not fully understand and realise. Goldstein thus searched widely for a philosophical answer to the meaning of life. By adopting a non-dualist and holistic narrative, he was able to explore the richer version of human beings, and the motivation he found outside medicine and natural science (142). To borrow Goldstein's language, all creatures, including humans, 'represent wholes having the character of an individuality' (Goldstein 361). For humans, the mind is 'as much part of this individual whole' as feelings and physical processes (361).

The psychological impact of World War I gave Goldstein the opportunity to enrich his holistic perspective on human life, via the medical treatments he developed for brain-damaged soldiers (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 145). In addition, the collaboration with Gestalt psychologists, especially

Adhémar Gelb, helped Goldstein explore extensively the meaning of being human. During the war, Goldstein was invited as an assistant by his mentor, the neuroanatomist Ludwig Edinger, to the Neurological Institute in Frankfurt, and joined by Gelb. He later went to the Institute for Research into the Consequences of Brain Injuries set up in the same city in 1916, where he remained until Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933 (145). At the Institute, Goldstein was able to rehabilitate, and carry out associated health care for, brain-injured soldiers. Having actively worked with Gelb in the 1920s, Goldstein began to reflect on the meaning of his medical diagnoses and treatments, looking for a philosophical and neurological understanding of human beings (146).

The case of Schneider, a young soldier with a brain wound, gave Goldstein insights into a holistic way of thinking about the human organism. The classical neurological approach, however, did not successfully categorise Schneider's mental disabilities, such as alexia. Goldstein thus looked, in his clinical examination, at Schneider's overall behaviour. To his surprise, Goldstein found that Schneider could deliberately 'compensate' for his impaired perceptual abilities. Schneider was able to read the texts Goldstein and Gelb provided, but could not understand the contents. In other words, he was unable to perceive abstract meaning, even losing 'the capacity to see the world holistically' (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 147). He was no longer able to see or experience unified but isolated images through his perceptual abilities. This observation led Goldstein to argue that the brain could create or 'actualise' an order during chaos, as the brain-injured patients could act normally without

revealing obvious deficits, while suffering from a fragmented experience inside (Goldstein 28).

Goldstein's purpose in publishing *The Organism* was to show that 'a reliable comprehension of biological phenomena is attainable' through a holistic approach (28). Dissatisfied with classical neurological theories, Goldstein aimed to test whether biology had 'a strictly scientific basis' or included 'transcendental and vitalistic factors' (28). Simply put, he aspired to go beyond the existing theoretical speculations and understand his patients and their illnesses holistically. In the meantime, he embraced both scientific and humanistic approaches, in order to obtain the knowledge of life. Goldstein was looking for a bigger picture of human life, while seeking to understand neurological diseases related to brain damage. His emphasis on the patients' rehabilitation and recovery derived from his idea of 'the total behaviour', which he divided into 'ordered' and 'disordered' (48). In order to help them achieve an ordered behaviour, as well as a stable relationship to the world, he studied 'the subjective experiences of the patients, as well as their objective behaviour' (50). From this, Goldstein understood that it is important to see the totality of experience and behaviour, to clinically improve the patients' health.

Another discovery Goldstein made in the case of Schneider was strongly associated with the psychological study of language. He extended his understanding of Schneider's perceptual inabilities by referring to the relation between language and cognitive disorders. His thinking was influenced by philosophers and linguists, including Ernst Cassirer (his cousin), Johann Gottfried Herder, and Alexander von Humboldt, whom Goldstein referenced the most (Geroulanos and Meyers 118). Thanks to their philosophical insights into

the relation between language and human beings, Goldstein saw that language could express how one experiences the world, both through the concrete and the abstract meanings of words (Goldstein 213). Goldstein's patients with brain wounds were able to see the concrete meaning, while not being able to grasp the abstract. Thereafter, Goldstein understood that the inability to comprehend the abstract concepts of words, which he called 'categorical behaviour', could lead to disengagement from the real world (44). Life, as Goldstein found, is based on how one can associate and integrate the concrete meaning with the abstract concept, and vice versa. The loss of the ability to understand categorical behaviour implied a restriction of the freedom to make choices –

> [W]e might point to the patient's inability to emancipate and withhold himself from the world, the shrinkage of his freedom, and his greater bondage to the demands of environment. The most general formula to which the change can be reduced is probably that the patient has lost the capacity to deal with that which is not real – with the possible. (44)

The purpose of offering the patients suitable therapy or post-wound care was not only to 'cure' but also to help them retrieve certain capacities, such as the capacity to organise abstract experience into logical categories, to live in the real world (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 154). Goldstein found there is a 'drive' towards 'self-actualisation' (163).[44] Therefore, Goldstein's patients

[44] There is another interesting comparison between Woolf and Goldstein in terms of their understanding of will and self-actualisation. The core concept of Goldstein's self-actualisation is based upon his empathy towards his patients, who were not necessarily curable in clinics, but able to return to health and their daily life. There was a drive among the patients that led them to desire recovery, and fight to live as people instead of broken machines. His ideas were also influenced by Gestalt psychology, promoting a more humanistic approach to rehabilitation. Similarly, Woolf suggests, in *Mrs Dalloway*, the importance of empathy in clinical observation. Psychologically wounded patients such as Septimus need a doctor's empathy most; it could have possibly prevented Septimus from killing himself. The failure to understand patients, or to see them as equal human beings, is for Woolf the central problem

needed to regain the drive to actualise their personalities in order to avoid the state of anxiety, which Goldstein called a 'catastrophe', so as to 're-experience the world' (Goldstein 48-49).

The historical and political situation that Goldstein faced in Germany also increased his commitment to holism. His holistic idea about human organisms reflected the changes and crises in German history. The German crises Goldstein met included not only the existing mechanistic conception of human beings, but also the change in the 1930s from Germany as a democratic nation to Germany as a dictatorship under Hitler. He also lived through the traumas of World War I and World War II. As a Jewish scientist in Germany, Goldstein eventually emigrated to the United States, due to the rise of antisemitism. However, all these crises did not discourage Goldstein from developing his holistic approach to human life. He continuously extended his holism in his writings and research after his emigration to the US. Goldstein valued democracy and individual freedom in the holistic and non-mechanistic world he sought (Harrington, *Reenchanted Science* 156). That there was a holistic ability in human organisms, bringing a certain order to the 'catastrophe', was a sign, in Goldstein's case, of the solution to the shattered world. The hope, of healing what the machine theory and the German crises had broken, was thus reflected in his philosophy of wholeness, both in the human body and in life.

We can thus see a parallel between Woolf and Goldstein, in terms of their paradoxical thinking being closely associated with their holism. They were interested in both the mechanistic and the humanistic aspects of the human

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in the medical system. For more discussions about self-actualisation in medicine, see Goldstein's *The Organism* and Harrington's *Reenchanted Science*.

body, and related them to life as a complex whole. Fundamentally, Goldstein saw that the scientific method, in isolation, failed to grasp the complexities of life (Goldstein 18). Rather, he found that wider contexts, such as human experiences and existence, are valuable and relevant to the matter of life (19). Similarly, Woolf asserted that there are the 'infinite possibilities of art' ('Modern Fiction' 110); life, as represented in art, has no limits and accepts any account of interpretation. The concept of holism, in the works of both Woolf and Goldstein, offers a picture of human life complexly interacting with perception and experience of the body.

Alexander Luria: Romantic Science

Following on from the comparison of Woolf and Goldstein, I will now explore further how Woolf's holism influences her fictional writing, particularly through the theme of wholeness emerging out of fragmented feelings. Her literary representation of 'the whole' has a link with Alexander Luria, who expresses great interest in putting neurological disorders and human perception into a literary form resembling a novel. Before the analysis of Woolf and Luria, I will first give a brief introduction to Luria, which may offer some social and cultural connections to his holistic philosophy.

Luria, almost twenty-five years Goldstein's junior, was born to a Jewish family in the city of Kazan, Russia (Homskaya 9). His life had parallels with that of Goldstein, as he also lived through both World Wars and saw major changes in his nation, which became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922. In addition, Luria was assigned by his government, in 1943, to tend to nearly 800 patients with brain injuries and traumas caused by World War II. Those patients provided a large testing place for Luria's approach to neuropsychology (Sacks,

'Foreword' ix). In a similar fashion to Goldstein, Luria firstly investigated cases of aphasia, loss of memory, and other mental disabilities by the classical neurological method (viii). Secondly, he turned to a more humanistic and therapeutic approach, that studied the inner life of the patients' minds, as opposed to the therapeutic nihilism of classical neurology (ix). Luria eventually met Goldstein while visiting Berlin in 1925 (Homskaya 124). Although their meeting does not necessarily suggest mutual influences upon each other's view of the body, their concepts of holism can be seen as complementary. While Goldstein's organismic theory centres on bodily and nervous integration, Luria's 'romantic science' looks at bodily functioning and its relation to the world as a whole.

Concerned about his patients as people, Luria extended his understanding of the functions of brain and mind to their social circumstances. Such a notion, that external factors may have shaped an internal experience of the world, was largely inspired by his mentor Lev Vygotsky.[45] Luria named Vygotsky as his major influence in developing a personal connection with his patients, within the scope of cultural-historical psychology. Luria also elaborated how Soviet psychology, in general, differed from classical neurological doctrines. In his 1967 article 'L. S. Vygotsky and the Problem of Localisation of Functions', Luria shares Vygotsky's view that one's mental functioning cannot be understood without references to one's external sociocultural and historical factors –

[45] In his early medical career, Luria applied Freud's idea of sub-consciousness to the psychiatric clinic. However, Freud's psychoanalytic theory produced no useful results in Luria's actual practice. Luria attributed the failure to the fact that one's social history was often overlooked in the constitution of one's behaviour (Homskaya 12). Indeed, Luria would find Vygotsky's emphasis on the link between psychology and socio-cultural contexts highly suitable for his own principles.

> Vygotsky saw the way out of "the historical crisis of psychology" in a radical reappraisal of basic psychological concepts. "Higher mental functions" must have an origin; but this origin must not be sought in the depths of the spirit or hidden properties of nervous tissue: it must be sought outside the individual human organism in objective *social history*. (18)

In Luria's view, a wholeness in the higher mental processes, such as feeling, language and memory, cannot exist in a completely biological sphere. Rather, the human faculties, both elementary and higher, can be conditioned by 'living and formative influences', including culture and history (Sacks, 'Foreword' viii). In other words, there is an interaction between society and neurobiology. One's social history can play a significant role in how one perceives the world, and makes decisions for action (Luria, *The Working Brain* 246). By exploring how internal and external experiences can complexly interact with each other, Luria's comprehensive approach to neuropsychological phenomena opened 'new ways of understanding neurological process' (Sacks, 'Foreword' ix). Fundamentally, his holistic perspective suggests that understanding the human organism has implications for reflecting on life, and importantly, the properties of the living whole.

Like Goldstein, Luria's development of holistic neuropsychology was grounded in a biological and social materialism. He was invited to the Institute of Psychology in Kazan in 1922 and was supervised by K. N. Kornilove, who was a defender of materialism in line with the dialectical doctrine of Marx and Engels (Homskaya 15). These materialistic views in psychology gave Luria a more comprehensive and concrete picture of 'cultural-historical psychology', which identified mental functioning as inseparable from external social history

(15). However, Luria's sympathetic and empathetic understanding of human life moved him away from being simply a materialist and mechanistic scientist. Luria, like Goldstein, saw that philosophy and literature can enrich human character and complement neuroscience. As neuroscience was dominated by the classical materialist method, Luria looked at the other side of science as 'romantic' and humanistic. In his autobiography, Luria articulates his theory of romantic science –

> Classical scholars are those who look upon events in terms of their constituent parts. Step by step they single out important units and elements until they can formulate abstract, general laws. These laws are then seen as the governing agents of the phenomena in the field under study. One outcome of this approach is the reduction of living reality with all its richness of detail to abstract schemas […] Romantic scholars' traits, attitudes, and strategies are just the opposite. They do not follow the path of reductionism, which is the leading philosophy of the classical group. Romantics in science want neither to split living reality into its elementary components nor to represent the wealth of life's concrete events in abstract models that lose the properties of the phenomena themselves. It is of the utmost importance to romantics to preserve the wealth of living reality, and they aspire to a science that retains this richness. (*The Making of Mind* 174)

The notion of 'romantic science' was Luria's solution to the crisis in classical neurology, which reduced the idea of being human to machine-like behaviour and a series of laws. As Oliver Sacks described, Luria infused his belief in 'romantic science' into a new discipline of neuropsychology ('Foreword' xi). However, he saw those two enterprises, namely classical and romantic

neurology, not as antithetical but as complementary (xi). The combination of the mechanistic and humanistic approaches to the human subject results in accounts of human life that may at time appear paradoxical. These paradoxes show, however, the complex interaction between bodily functioning and outward experience, which together shape our perception of the material world.

The essential feature in Luria's romantic science is the idea of storytelling, both from doctors and patients. Although Jackson, Head, and Goldstein understood and cared about their patients too, Luria was the first to record and write his patients' perspectives, together with his analyses, into stories. According to Sacks, Luria was inspired by the nineteenth-century anonymous text *Confession of a Ticqueur* ('Foreword' xiv). The intermixture of patients' narratives and physicians' comments in this tradition influenced Luria's narrative, in *The Mind of a Mnemonist* and *The Man with a Shattered World*. In these books, Luria encouraged his patients to express their subjective experiences in their own words, to achieve a mutual understanding of their struggles and lives. His willingness to read his patients' stories implied that he saw them as people instead of simply medical cases. He believed that humanistic insights in storytelling can help patients strengthen their ability to cope with cerebral and mental deficits; and more importantly, to re-evaluate their lives. His *Shattered World* celebrates how Lev Zasetsky, the 'hero' in the book, moved towards an experience of subjective and social reintegration, which motivated him to 'fight on' after recovering from a brain wound ('From the Author' xxi).

The Man with a Shattered World

In this section, I will explore how the form of Luria's *Shattered World* resonates with a modernist text. Like Head, Luria's storytelling method, capturing his patients' neuropsychological diseases and their perception in words, makes him a writer of neurological novels. His interest in writing about Zasetsky's experience with his fragmented self, due to brain injury, provides a further useful link to Woolf's modernism. There are various aspects of his book *Shattered World* that resemble Woolf's text, such as his focus on consciousness, perception, and non-linear narrative. It is Luria's emphasis on Zasetsky's feeling for 'the whole' in his experience that resonates with Woolf's exploration of 'the whole' in *The Waves*. These two texts see the emergence of wholeness following the feeling of fragmentation, showing a move towards patterns of integration that, Luria argues, exist inherently in human experience.

Luria's 1972 text is based upon the story of Lev Zasetsky, who fought to retrieve his higher mental functions (such as memory and speech) after severe brain damage in 1943. Although he recovered from his physical brain injury, Zasetsky's neuropsychological disabilities meant that he encountered enormous difficulty in living everyday life. From their first meeting in 1943, Luria saw Zasetsky regularly over a period of twenty-six years, and became his friend (17). Luria became intrigued by Zasetsky's journey to regain his mental capacities, despite his neuropsychological disorders.

In *Shattered World*, Luria interweaves Zasetsky's account of his disabled mental functioning with the medical analysis of his neuropsychological disorders. The form of Luria's book echoes that of Head's *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders*. Like Head, Luria included a brief history of brain science, and his in-depth analysis suggesting how unusual Zasetsky's case was. Luria explored

his patient's life in relation to brain damage by examining his clinical observations, but also by examining Zasetsky's diaries. Zasetsky not only wrote his journals to help himself retrieve his memories, but also with the intention that they should be studied by specialists and doctors (86). Indeed, his exceptionally clear description made him the best narrator to tell the story of his journey from illness to recovery. Luria was impressed that Zasetsky wrote his psychological insights as precisely as experts in the field of brain science (92). Luria was thus assured that Zasetsky's description of his brain wound might 'unravel some of the mysteries of the human brain' (86). According to Luria, Zasetsky lost most of his higher mental faculties, such as memory and language, due to the damage in the posterior parieto-occipital regions of the brain (21). Although his cerebral lesion healed, Zasetsky suffered from cognitive disabilities that disrupted his everyday life. Throughout the years, Zasetsky continued to feel fragmented in his visual capacities, and suffered from agnosia – the loss of recognising and sensing objects and people. Due to his inability to understand the meaning of words, he found it difficult to connect himself to the world. Luria was much in agreement with Goldstein that the world was understood both through the objective and the abstract meaning of reality. As Zasetsky lost his ability to mobilise categorical behaviour, he no longer saw the world as coherent, but chaotic. Fortunately, Zasetsky did not lose his 'fight' to recover his mental capacities. Over the course of twenty-six years, Luria witnessed Zasetsky becoming increasingly confident with himself and the life he was living. Zasetsky's fight to avoid succumbing to the brain injury, for Luria, is a 'romantic' tale, which shows the richness of his character as a human.

Although it is hard to establish whether Luria, in *Shattered World*, fully preserved Zasetsky's original account of his shattered mind, the text's form has intrigued a few critics in the field of medical humanities literature. Lynn Solotaroff, the English translator of the book, has noted that Luria retained Zasetsky's repetitions and inconsistencies in order to represent his conditions (*Shattered World* 11). However, Anne Hawkins in her 1986 paper 'A. R. Luria and the Art of Clinical Biography', argues that Luria used rhetorical and descriptive language to parallel Zasetsky's subjective experience (Hawkins 10). For example, he remembered his first meeting with Zasetsky in a confessional voice, which is tied to Zasetsky's first-person perspective. Deliberately relinquishing his authoritative voice as a doctor, Luria used empathetic language in a novelistic way, which allowed him to synchronise his impressions with Zasetsky's dramatic language. He submitted to a humanistic concern with the subjective experience in preserving 'the wealth of living reality' in humans. Accordingly, Luria's purpose of dramatising the objective and subjective narratives can be understood as an alternative way of engaging with the complexity of the mind, and finding a meaning in Zasetsky's shattered world (10).

Oliver Sacks also recognised Luria's storytelling method of medicine in *Shattered World*. In his foreword to the 1987 edition, Sacks describes the text as a 'neurological novel' ('Foreword' x). As Sacks observes, there is a sense of 'dramatic tension [and] of a story' in both Zasetsky's and Luria's account of the brain wound (xiv). It is interesting to note that Luria meticulously selected Zasetsky's journal entries, and included his own observations, over the course of twenty-six years. Luria's wish to 'share some of [his] impressions and

thoughts with others' hence resulted in the creation of *Shattered World* (xx). Luria claimed that 'there is not a trace of fiction' in Zasetsky's 'story' (xx). Nevertheless, *Shattered World* is on the whole based on Luria's 'impressions' and his adaptation of Zasetsky's subjective experience. Luria even begins the 'novel' by emulating the opening sentences from the Book of Genesis. He later becomes an omnipresent narrator who recounts all the events in *Shattered World* –

> In the beginning it was all so simple. His past was much like other people's: life had its problems, but was simple enough, and the future seemed promising. Even now he loves to recall this, the pages of his diary reverting again and again to that lost life […] (3)

These sentences foreshadow a story-like narrative of Zasetsky's case, rather than a merely medical and scientific report. Indeed, Luria cares more about Zasetsky overcoming hardship after the cerebral damage, than about his actual symptoms and complex phenomena. As Luria emphasises in the preface, *Shattered World* is 'a book about a person who fought with the tenacity of the damned to recover the use of his damaged brain' (xx). Hence, Luria's book is not only read as Zasetsky's history of his brain wound, but as a story about Zasetsky as a 'person'.

The American psychologist Jerome Bruner, in his foreword to *The Mind of a Mnemonist*, argues that Luria established a new literary form in *Mnemonist* and *Shattered World*, by reaching out to his patients' narratives as whole (Bruner xi). Bruner seems to suggest that Luria experimented with a new form that defied the constraints of the existing medical or scientific genre. Indeed, his prosaic expression and novelistic language resonates with the form of, as

Sacks observed, ‘novels’. However, there are scarcely any works comparing Luria’s books with those of literary writers. Avishek Parui, in his 2018 chapter ‘“Human Nature Is Remorseless”: Masculinity, Medical Science and Nervous Conditions in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*’, footnotes a potential comparison between Septimus Smith in *Mrs Dalloway* and Zasetsky in *Shattered World*. Although these two books are set in different post-war eras, they offer similar accounts of the changing medical perspective on the male body and mind (Parui 126 n22). In terms of literary form, *Shattered World* shares several stylistic characteristics with, in particular, *The Waves*. These similarities include, but are not limited to, confessional monologues, prosaic language, and novelistic details of characters’ minds. These features may develop a sense of intimacy with readers, and invite them to explore the complexity of the mind and its relation to the physical world.

Embodiment, Narrative, and Everyday Life

The characters in *The Waves* and *Shattered World* express their struggles to achieve mental and physical stability. However, when the feeling for ‘the whole’ is aroused, the characters begin to experience the feeling of fragmentation. This implies an inseparable relation between the feeling for ‘the whole’ and fragmented perception. For example, in *The Waves*, the reunion with Susan, Louis, Rhoda, Jinny, and Neville gives Bernard a sense of togetherness – ‘in a moment, when I have joined them, another arrangement will form, another pattern’ (125). He is aware that there is a ‘pattern’ towards wholeness, following years of separation from his childhood friends. Like the waves returning to the ocean, Bernard feels ‘another arrangement’ of being whole again. However, he is expecting to feel fragmented again once he departs from his friends, as he

realises that he is ‘not one person’, but ‘many people’ (165). There is an inherent power within that propels these characters to reach unity amid chaotic feelings. Although Woolf and Luria developed their approaches to life in different cultural contexts, both suggested that one can revisit and restore those broken perceptions through writing. Indeed, language plays a crucial role in human cognitive functions. Through words, Woolf and Luria, together with Zasetsky, unfold the complexity of the mind.

In Woolf’s and Luria’s novels, the relation between the human body and the environment plays a crucial role in developing the narratives. The way the body interacts with its surrounding environment shapes how the characters perceive the world. Zasetsky, in *Shattered World*, learns to adapt himself to a new life that includes his cognitive disabilities; the six characters in *The Waves* gradually come to realise their relations with one another. Hence, their embodied language reflects their understanding of the self and its interaction with the world. Although Luria did not express an interest in modernist literature, he was under the influence of Vygotsky, who was, apart from being a psychologist, a literary critic. Luria praised Vygotsky for his psychological analysis of language, in his 1916 dissertation on Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (*The Making of Mind* 39). Like Vygotsky himself, Luria’s fascination with language was largely influenced by several linguists, including Roman Jakobson and Ernst Cassirer (Goldstein’s cousin), who were interested in how language functioned and was structured in the early twentieth century.[46] Throughout his

[46] There are no available sources suggesting Jakobson and Cassirer were interested in literary modernism. However, their theories on the function of language and its relation to modernity were influential in the development of Russian and German modernism respectively. For more details, see David Lodge’s *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (1977).

career, he gave various talks and lectures on neurolinguistics, which were collected and published posthumously as *Language and Cognition* in 1982. Another medical field, that shaped Luria's thoughts about language and cerebral functioning, was aphasia. His investigation, together with Vygotsky, would later lead Luria to base his theory of aphasia on the dynamic organisation of higher mental functions (Homskaya 22). His interests in aphasia advanced him into the medical and clinical domains.

In a similar fashion to Head and Goldstein, Luria was interested in aphasiology at the start of his medical career. He recognised both Head's and Goldstein's contribution to the study of aphasia, and to his understanding of language and thinking. Nevertheless, as he found, although Head attempted to categorise different aphasic symptoms to certain localised areas of the brain, he did not clearly link various linguistic functions to certain regions of the brain (*Language and Cognition* 214). Goldstein also addressed the difficulty of understanding linguistic abilities without taking the brain and organism as a whole into account (Ludwig 40). Luria agreed with Goldstein in considering language and the whole organism. However, through Vygostsky's cultural-historical aspects, Luria went even further into the development of modern linguistic and neuropsychological research on language and thought (*Language and Cognition* 2). This cultural-historical framework led him to consider various syndromes that are not normally included in the study of speech disturbances (4). The role of language itself, according to Luria, is also to engage with consciousness, through which humans experience the real world, forming 'a subjective image of the objective world"'(17). Language 'is not simply a means of communication but a crucial part of the entire process of

cognition' (*Shattered World* 32). In other words, one's perception of the world is significantly dependent on the ability to use symbolic functions. Pivotal to higher mental functions and behaviour, language organises, as Luria simply puts it, our inner world (33).

In *Shattered World*, Zasetsky's story is written in the form of a journal, which gives his first-hand perception of his experience after the brain injury. The injury enabled him to be sensitive about his bodily and mental reaction to neuropsychological deficits. His language clearly shows his embodied consciousness, which puts the reader into his state of mind. For example, Zasetsky wrote about how brain injury disrupted his ability to process his internal sensations. As a result, he could not feel half of his body –

> But suddenly I'll come to, look to the right side of me, and be horrified to discover half of my body is gone. I'm terrified; I try to figure out what's become of my right arm and leg, the entire right side of my body. I move fingers of my left hand, feel them, but can't see the fingers of my right hand and somehow I'm not even aware they're there. And I get terribly upset. I know there's something I should keep in mind […] so often I'm terrified when part of my body disappears. (*Shattered World* 42)

According to Luria, Zasetsky 'losing' the right side of his body was due to an injury in the parietal area of the left hemisphere (42). Consequently, he felt his body going through a form of fragmentation. In a few 'peculiar' cases, his feeling of the fragmented body led him to remember how his body used to function (45). Unable to remember the meaning of words, Zasetsky struggled to associate names with his body functions. Fortunately, Zasetsky later relearned how to 'hunt' those missing body parts by checking and repeating the

names of his body parts with doctors (43). In the cited passage, Zasetsky spoke of his insecurity, about the absent feeling of his body, in words. This suggests a dynamic interaction between body and cognition, as the body and perceptions have a reciprocal influence on each other.

Luria's understanding of language and cognition requires the materialisation of language. The embodiment of language creates structures or objects of perception by materialising thoughts in words (Clark 370). As I have previously argued, non-dualist narratives can represent the intricately complex human consciousness, which blurs the distinction between the mind and matter, and broadly subjective and objective experience. However, embodied language that describes both bodily sensations and feelings can be considered to take part within non-dualism, as it merges thoughts into the narrative of the physical body and vice versa. The embodiment allows one to translate one's intricately complex consciousness and its somatic functions into language, through which one feels 'human'. In addition, with a nod towards classical Marxism, Luria believes that language can be seen as the form of human consciousness transiting from 'inorganic to living matter' (*Language and Cognition* 18).[47]

Like many other modernist writers, Woolf demonstrates her linguistic abilities in writing *The Waves*. Although she also does so in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, she has a more explicit goal for her linguistic experiment in her 1931 novel, which is to make 'a note of a curious state of mind' (*Diary 3* 113). This returns to the inception of the novel, which is largely based on her

[47] There is a variety of studies on Luria and Soviet psychology, such as J. M. Glozman's 2007 article 'A. R. Luria and the History of Russian Neuropsychology', Hannah Proctor and Laura Salisbury's 2016 paper 'The History of a Brain Wound: Alexander Luria and the Dialectics of Soviet Plasticity', and Proctor's *Psychologies in Revolution*. These studies give insightful details of how Luria's concept of neuropsychology developed in the Soviet context.

sister Vanessa's account of a gigantic moth crashing into her house. Fascinated, Woolf experimented with connecting the story of the moths to human thought, as a flow of ideas –

> Slowly ideas began trickling in; and then suddenly I rhapsodised and told over the story of the Moths, which I think I will write very quickly: the play-poem idea; the idea of some continuous stream, not solely of human thought, but of the ship, the night, &c, all flowing together: intersected by the arrival of the bright moths. (*Diary 3* 139)

As non-dualism permeates most of her writings, Woolf again intends to break down the barriers between human perception and the surrounding environment, and make them indistinguishable from each other. The form of *The Waves* as a 'play-poem' suggests not only that the novel should differ from her earlier novels, but also that Woolf draws here on a poetic device in which language is used in a specific way. Her goal is to keep her ideas 'flowing together' via her poetic language, which is shown in the characters' monologues in a certain order, hence making the novel read as a 'continuous stream'.

Similarly to Zasetsky's account of his disabilities, the language in *The Waves* has a direct association with mental pain. In the novel, the six characters begin thinking through their bodies, even when they are at nursery. As the sun is rising, each character sees different things and materialises what they have seen, through human organs such as ears, mouths, or eyes. Susan sees the spider's web as a 'pointed ear'; Louis can see the sunlight as if it were 'the beast' or 'elephant with its foot chained'; Bernard sees the 'finger-shaped

shadows of leaves beneath the windows' (*The Waves* 5). Left alone, Louis summarises his sensations, describing himself as part of nature he lives in –

> I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre. All tremors shake me, and the weight of the earth is pressed to my ribs. Up here my eyes are green leaves, unseeing. I am a boy in grey flannels with a belt fastened by a brass snake up here. Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans. I hear tramplings, tremblings, stirrings round me. (6)

Louis expands the feeling of being alone to the stalk he is holding, transfiguring himself into a wider scale. Interestingly, Louis uses his imaginary 'eyes' and 'ears' to 'see' the desert, the women and camels by the Nile, and 'hear' the sound. Combined with his imagination, Louis adopts a language that embodies his feelings, clothing his internal sensations in the narrative of his body, such as veins and ribs. In addition, he further extends his embodiment with the imagery of 'fibre', which suggests his ability to consolidate his intangible feelings with the surrounding reality. This is the world Louis perceives and understands through his embodied consciousness. Apart from Louis, the other characters can materialise their thoughts in external surroundings through language. For example, Susan's feeling of agony after seeing Jinny kissing Louis has become a physical sensation, as if she could touch and examine what she feels. She can wrap her 'agony inside [her] pocket-handkerchief' and 'examine' it with her fingers (7). Susan's narrative of her embodied feelings is

contagious. Even Bernard can feel how Susan 'spread[s] her anguish out' as '[h]er pocket-handkerchief is laid on the roots of the beech trees and she sobs, sitting crumpled where she has fallen' (7). Interestingly, Woolf's description of Susan's agony echoes her retelling of Lady Waterford's grief, in *On Being Ill*. In the essay, Woolf uses the image of the character grasping 'the curtain', transmitting the inner state of the mind to touchable reality (28). Her agony is imprinted on the velvet of the curtain. The concept of the mind is not merely spiritual or abstract; instead, it can be concrete and touchable. At this stage, Woolf's non-dualism fuses mental and physical attributes of reality, which are not distinguishable from each other.

Louis' understanding of himself through the image of 'fibre' breaks down the boundaries and allows connectivity among the characters. However, the fibre imagery does not make its first appearance in Louis' monologue. Instead, Woolf uses the analogy of fibres in the prelude, to represent how creatures and nature are all connected, creating a sense of wholeness –

> […] *the sky cleared as if the white sediment there had sunk, or as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow spread across the sky like the blades of a fan. Then she raised her lamp higher and the air seemed to become fibrous and to tear away from the green surface flickering in red and yellow fibres like the smoky fire that roars from a bonfire. Gradually the fibres of the burning bonfire were fused into one haze, one incandescence to a million atoms of soft blue* (3).

The sun breaks through the dawn; the sky is personified as a woman resting her arms; the sunlight expands like the nervous fibres connecting to

other organs. These images create a relationship among the sun, sky, sea, as they are connected through the fibres. This prelude foreshadows the prevailing tone of embodiment throughout the novel, setting the atmosphere of the embodied world through the narrative.

One of the most important results of the novel's use of the fibre imagery is that Woolf was led to develop an account of neurological functioning and mental phenomena that is just as complex as Luria's in his conception of the brain. According to Luria's diagnosis, a bullet penetrated Zasetsky's cerebral cortex and destroyed the nerve fibres that connected the primary and secondary visual cortex (28). As a result, his vision went through a dramatic change; he could no longer synthesise what he saw. This later affected his other higher mental functions, including perception and memory. Therefore, as the nerve fibres were severed, Zasetsky was not able to mend all his broken impressions, perceptual abilities, and memory as a whole. Nerve fibres play a significant role in the human brain, as they provide connections within the nervous system, and psychological functioning. Metaphorically, Woolf draws on the fibre imagery to synthesise individuals as a whole, while the destruction of Zasetsky's nerve fibres shattered his perception and affected his feeling of wholeness. However, there is a hope for recovery and integration lurking in the two authors' embodied language and understanding of non-dualism.

In contrast with Zasetsky, who understood himself as whole by assembling pieces of his memories, the characters in *The Waves* attempt to interpret their fragmented feelings. One of the features those characters have in common is that each is able to feel a sense of wholeness out of the fragmented self. Although they are 'separate bodies' (*The Waves* 145), the sense of wholeness

often blurs the distinctions between them. Bernard, the spokesman for the six characters, is aware of this fragmented feeling for each other –

> But what is the difference between us? Wait though, Neville; let me talk. The bubbles are rising like the silver bubbles from the floor of a saucepan; image on top of image. I cannot sit down to my book, like Louis, with ferocious tenacity. I must open the little trapdoor and let out these linked phrases in which I run together whatever happens, so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another. (68)

Bernard's image of bubbles seems to draw an allusion to Woolf's idea that life is a 'luminous halo'. The line of bubbles indicates a transparent spot, rather than a 'semi-transparent' halo. Indeed, Bernard, Louis, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, and Jinny are separate individuals, going on different paths and living different lives. Yet, transparent as bubbles, life brings these characters altogether. Bernard thus sees a pattern in life that leads the characters towards 'joining' one another. The pattern he finds can be as incoherent or separate as individuals. Regardless, those fragmented patterns will ultimately lead to a wholeness. Life, as Bernard describes it, is 'a wandering thread' that sews pieces of self and experience altogether.

Form

As Joseph Frank argues in 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature' (1945), the art of literature shows 'the relation between the sensuous nature of the art medium and the conditions of human perception' (225). However, time and space place restrictions on the relation between senses and perception in literature, which is primarily based on 'some form of narrative sequence' (223). Regardless,

modernist literature tends to oscillate between these two domains and move in ‘the direction of spatial form’, which is ‘in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence’ (225). Indeed, such characteristics are exemplified by, as Frank notes in the essay, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce. Although Woolf is not included in Frank’s essays, she does write of breaking the sequence of time and space. With the focus on her fictional characters’ subjective interiority in the material world, the forms of Woolf’s novels often move beyond the limits of time and space. A notable example is in *The Waves*, where Woolf allows her characters’ ideas to ‘flow’ like a continuous stream, surpassing the boundaries of time and space.

Another route Woolf takes, to free herself from the limitations of conventional writing, is through the theme of memory. In her literary works, memory is often an immediate vehicle through which time is distilled and distorted in a moment. Examples are flashbacks of Big Ben striking, in *Mrs Dalloway*, and the radical presentation of time in *To the Lighthouse*. Nevertheless, *The Waves* is Woolf’s most experimental work, in which the form is paralleled with the ocean waves. It rises, falls, and rises again. Despite an intense sense of discontinuity, there is a pattern in the novel that moves toward integration and simultaneously breaks into fragments.

Even though Luria’s *The Man with a Shattered World* is commonly read as a piece of clinical pathography, his description of ‘the whole’ emerging from a fragmented perception has a link with *The Waves*. In neither text is the self fixed and stable; rather, it is discontinuous and fragmented. Luria subtitles *Shattered World* as ‘the history of a brain wound’, and the concept of historicity in the text usually indicates certain events occurring to Zasetsky. Woolf uses different time

periods of the sun as an indication of the characters' timelines. However, time is often disrupted by their memories and mental pain. Embedded in one's experience of mind, time becomes perceptual rather than chronological. What Luria and Woolf attempt to convey in *Shattered World* and *The Waves* is the inner life of the mind, and its holistic relationship with the body as well as the material world. They suggest that the mind can be understood through the totality of subjective experience and physical reality.

Experiencing the fragmented self is a common theme in *The Waves* and *Shattered World*. The six characters are aware of the fact that the self is not one but 'many' (*The Waves* 165). However, they examine and attempt to piece their fragmented selves together. They express a desire to heal what is broken and reach wholeness in experience. For Woolf and Luria, alongside Zasetsky, writing is an effective way of producing wholeness in perception. Woolf sees that it is by writing that she could make her fragmented experience 'whole' ('Sketch of the Past' 85). Her purpose in putting the severed parts together was to 'take away the pain' (85). By doing so, she was able to discover 'what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together' (85). Writing becomes an immediate way of retrieving the lost past and understanding the self. In a similar fashion, Zasetsky is able to assemble his 'memory fragments' through writing. He can compare and arrange them into a coherent view of himself, from the past and present as a whole.

Writing, according to Luria, is an automatic skill built upon what he calls 'kinetic melodies' (*Shattered World* 72). Zasetsky's mental capacities are affected by his brain wound, but his kinetic motor functions normally (72). He is able to write while struggling to understand words and meanings. Luria was

amazed at how Zasetsky's automatic skill, or kinetic motor, guided him through a chaotic state of mind. This simple discovery is his turning point in the journey of recovery and reconnecting to the world. Writing enabled Zasetsky to regain some control of his executive functions. Simply put, if Zasetsky could manage to put his vocabulary together from his fragmented memory, and associate words with specific meanings, he could re-adjust himself to the world. What encouraged Zasetsky to write his story was his ability to develop 'a way of thinking', which could consequently improve other mental functions, such as speaking and remembering (85). In addition, he found another purpose in writing about his illness, which was simply to share with people –

> Another reason for this story was that I wanted to develop and expand my memory, to break through this aphasia. And writing this "Story About My Illness" really has done more than anything to help me develop my memory and use of language, of words and meanings. That's a fact. I know that my writing may also be a great help to scientists who are studying how the brain and memory work (psychologists, neurologists, and other doctors). (86)

Indeed, Luria, as a neuropsychologist, has optimism that Zasetsky's story will 'unravel some of the mysteries of the human brain' (86). Piece by piece, Zasetsky is able to fight against his illness and show 'some vital power of [his] organism' (12), which moves towards positive signs of recovery.

Zasetsky is automatically able to write due to his intact 'kinetic' ability. Such an ability allows him to put impressions, however fragmented they appear, into words, even though he often struggles with meanings. Woolf shares a similar view about the mind being capable of receiving 'impressions' automatically –

> The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old […] if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style […]
>
> ('Modern Fiction' 106)

Woolf primarily suggests to novelists that they should be observant about everyday life and not be confined to any existing methods of writing. Zasetsky is a writer who freely wrote down his impressions of the world. The world to him was shattered, owing to the brain injury. However, his kinetic-motor skill allowed him to put his 'innumerable atoms" into words, although he often struggled with remembering meanings. He was the writer of his life, basing his work upon his immediate feelings. Hence, both Woolf and Luria, together with Zasetsky, suggest writing has become a crucial part of reaching a sense of wholeness. By wholeness, they mean the ability to heal what has been shattered; thus, writing carries a therapeutic power.

Luria's concept of 'kinetic melodies' can be extensively mapped to Woolf's *The Waves*, in which the characters frequently have mechanical and automatic reactions. The prelude foreshadows the form of the novel, which follows the movement of the waves. At this stage, Woolf's non-dualism not only pursues a bodily intentionality but also an extension of the mind into the environment. After

examining how his body reacts to the feeling of being complete, Bernard muses on ‘the process of life’ –

> Life is pleasant. Life is good. The mere process of life is satisfactory. Take the ordinary man in good health. He likes eating and sleeping. He likes the snuff of fresh air and walking at a brisk pace down the Strand. Or in the country there’s a cock crowing on a gate; there’s a foal galloping round a field. Something always has to be done next. Tuesday follows Monday; Wednesday Tuesday. Each spreads the same ripple of well-being, repeats the same curve of rhythm; covers fresh sand with a chill or ebbs a little slackly without. So the being grows rings; identity becomes robust. What was fiery and furtive like a fling of grain cast into the air and blown hither and thither by wild gusts of life from every quarter is now methodical and orderly and flung with a purpose – so it seems. (*The Waves* 157)

There is a sense of kinetic melody in Bernard’s musings on the totality of life and nature. In his monologue, human life has a certain ‘rhythm’ through which one repeats one’s daily movements, such as sleeping and eating. As ‘something always has to be done next’, Bernard relates such repetitions in human life to the fact that ‘Tuesday follows Monday’. He seems to suggest that life can be lived automatically and mechanically. However, those repetitions are not merely monotonous regularity. Instead, they have a rippling effect on human identity, which ‘grows’ and ‘becomes robust’. Bernard believes that there is a purpose behind ‘the same curve of rhythm’, which is ‘methodical and orderly’.

Although Bernard holds a positive view about the repetitive movements in human life, his identity sometimes does not become ‘robust’ but confused. He

knows the self can be ‘many’, and his life automatically connects to other characters. He expresses his conflict in differentiating himself from other characters: ‘I do not altogether know who I am – Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs” (*The Waves* 165). Bernard sees his life as indistinguishable from that of others, while the fragmented self confuses his feeling for ‘the whole’. However, in his final hours, Bernard realises repetitions in human life are ‘the eternal renewal’ (177). By this, he means the contradictory feelings of wholeness and fragmentation can co-exist in life. It dawns on Bernard that life is ‘the proud horse whose rider first spurs and then pulls him back’ (177). Life rises and falls and rises and falls again. Only death can break such a ‘rhythm’.

There is also a ‘proud horse’ living within Zasetsky, perhaps. The ‘vital power’ he discovered in his body indicates the latent ability to integrate, while simultaneously severing the self. Writing became his approach to integration. He forced himself to write down his everyday life, and learn to associate his words with meanings. By doing so, he gained the ability to re-adjust himself to an unfamiliar environment, which was outside the battlefield and hospital, and he lived for another twenty-five years, until his death in 1993. Zasetsky’s story thus suggests that there can be a sense of wholeness weaving fragmented feelings into integration. Even though Zasetsky felt fragmented, his vital power prompted him to feel for ‘the whole’. Were it not for brain wounds as a disruption to the continuity of his life, and the self as a whole, Zasetsky would not have been aware of the vital power in his body.

Plasticity

I have demonstrated how Woolf's holistic philosophy creates a paradoxical picture of life, which resonates with Goldstein's holistic approach. She also projects her holism into her fictional writings. Especially in *The Waves*, Woolf explores the two contradictions – fragmentation and wholeness – in human experience. All these points have strong links to the concept of plasticity. The general idea of plasticity is that the neural system can be modified and synchronised with the changes caused by external influences, such as physical trauma. The term was first associated with the nervous system by the American psychologist William James, in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). As James observes, there is a potent capacity in organic matter for being plastic enough to maintain integrity (68). He further relates this phenomenon to the idea of habit in psychology, which is based upon the new form and set of the neural pathway due to its plasticity (68). After James first put the concept of plasticity on a neurological basis, the term continued to receive various interpretations in medicine, neuropsychology, and philosophy. In 1906, the Italian psychiatrist Ernesto Lugaro linked neural plasticity with synaptic plasticity, whose adaptive nature enables mental and functional recovery after brain injury (Berlucchi 305). Canadian psychologist Donald O. Hebb extended this idea, to describe the changes involved in synaptic plasticity as the basis of behaviour and learning (Berlucchi and Buchtel 316). The concept of plasticity has since been further extended, from a neurobiological phenomenon to a cultural and historical interpretation. French philosopher Catherine Malabou (2012) believes individual experience and history can also modify the synaptic connections in the brain, due to the latent faculties of compensation and reparation in the human body (180). Hannah Proctor and Laura Salisbury (2016) assert that a

historical sense of plasticity is important, as it demands 'the deconstruction of the idea of any given "brain fact" on which selves are built' (164). The self is built, not solely upon the neural system, but also upon experience of the world. David Bates and Nima Bassiri (2016) maintain that plasticity, which enables a person to respond to and change after brain injury, suggests the transformation of the subject, and allows us to 'make in a way a new human being' (xii).[48]

We can associate the concept of plasticity with Woolf's holistic attitude towards the mind-body relation. Especially, her fictional characters often show the ability to shape, and be shaped by, the external environment. Her purpose is to maintain a sense of wholeness in experience, as well as her artistic integrity. In *The Waves*, each episode starts with the movements of the natural phenomena, including the sun and waves, which indicate what stage of life those characters have reached. For instance, the characters' growth from childhood to adulthood is paralleled by the rising sun and waves. Although these phenomena are not stable, there is a changing pattern among them that repeats (borrowing from Bernard's words) 'the same curve of rhythm'. The waves congregate themselves into a mass, crash against the shore, and draw back to the sea. Woolf uses such repetitive movements to synthesise the characters' receptions of the self and the world. Growing older, the characters confront different issues, including jealousy, the untimely death of Percival, and Rhoda's suicide. These issues break and confuse them, leading them to an existential crisis. However, Louis finds that there is 'some sudden perception' that pieces the shattered mind together –

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[48] Bates and Bassiri's *Plasticity and Pathology* (2016) collects various essays on how the idea of neural plasticity has been conceptualised in literature, the arts, and philosophy. It also covers the historical and cultural link between neuroscience and artistic representations of the brain.

> From discord, from hatred (I despise dabblers in imagery – I resent the power of Percival intensely) my shattered mind is pieced together by some sudden perception. I take the trees, the clouds, to be witnesses of my complete integration. I, Louis, I, who shall walk the earth these seventy years, am born entire, out of hatred, out of discord. Here on this ring of grass we have sat together, bound by the tremendous power of some inner compulsion. (*The Waves* 22)

Louis experiences an epiphany, that the 'inner compulsion' within him can re-integrate his fragmented feelings and merge with nature. Despite the fragmented character of the perception, Louis is aware of the life force within, that compels him to change to a new perception and be reunified with the surrounding environment. The 'tremendous power of some inner compulsion' helps Louis maintain a 'complete integration' of his mind. The notion of 'inner compulsion' shares characteristics with the concept of plasticity, in terms of adapting a new state of the mind. With her idea of being and non-being, Woolf here implies that what comes after the feeling of fragmentation is necessarily integration, as there is a life force that compels us to feel whole again, by immersing our perception in the material objects, such as a tree or everyday materials. As Louis states, human life is a striking 'gong', 'clamour[ing] and boasting', that ultimately makes a whole in our perception (*The Waves* 22).

Woolf's characters in *The Waves*, and Zasetsky in *Shattered*, both show a desire to amend what is broken and see the whole picture. These stories of achieving integration and wholeness imply the complex relation between the human body and external social history. They show that changing environment or cultures can shape one's perception of the world. Zasetsky was previously a

highly educated student at a polytechnic institute (*Shattered World* 3). Before the brain injury, the Nazi invasion motivated Zasetsky to defend his own country by joining the army. His life permanently changed after his brain was wounded during the war in 1943. Discharged from hospital, Zasetsky's perceptions of the world were turned upside down. He was aware of the change in his world and personality, and described himself as the 'man who had been killed in the war' (12). However, he later learned to deal with the change in his life – from recovering to adapting to a new life, and from being fragmented to being whole. Likewise, Bernard, Jinny, Louis, Rhoda, Neville, and Susan in *The Waves* grow to learn about themselves, despite often feeling fragmented. Merged with the waves, life composes a rhythm that breaks and comes together – a movement from fragmentation to wholeness to fragmentation. During chaotic experience, 'life stand[s] still'. Thus, the shape of life, in *The Waves* and *Shattered World*, is a whole.

Because of the concept of 'the whole' in the mind-body relation, perception, and experience, Woolf and Luria applied, to some extent, empathy to human beings. Fundamentally, Woolf and Luria understood that empathy can be aroused through storytelling. Indeed, Luria was able to empathise with Zasetsky. Towards the end of *Shattered World*, Luria addresses this empathy – 'I'm terribly worried about him, grieve for him with all my heart' (155). Although his brain wound devastated Zasetsky, he aspired to learn about himself as a person. In a similar fashion, Woolf found the path to understanding human character and selfhood through her mental and physical disorders. Writing became a turning point for Zasetsky, as it helped him regain his memory function (72). His personal account of his mental deficits forms his language of

the brain wound, and his monologue of struggle. Overall, as Luria describes it, the story of Zasetsky's journey and his quest to understand himself has no end (159). Likewise, the story of six characters learning their selfhood in *The Waves* has become an ongoing story. Another function of writing a 'novel' is to show a richer and more sophisticated version of human beings and life. *The Waves* and *Shattered World* represent complex human consciousness, feeling, and the material reality existing outside the body, as a whole. Literature and neuropsychology, at this point, share an interest in understanding 'the whole', in the mind-body relation and in human life. They embrace the human subject as a holistic being, and celebrate the 'unvanquished and unyielding' nature of humans (*The Waves* 177). The role of 'neurological novels' is to invite readers to go further inside the mind of the author, in their fictive and factual worlds. Therefore, Woolf and Luria can be seen as holistic modernists, who explored the inner life of the mind, and its relation to the world as a whole, through language and storytelling.

Chapter 4

Representation of Illness: Narrative and Medical Humanities

In this final chapter I will argue, by drawing a parallel between Woolf and Sacks, that writing about the experience of illness creates a convergence, in which medical and literary discourses become complementary to each other. Despite disciplinary differences, both writers discussed the relation between sympathy and illness, from the perspective of a sick person. Although Woolf was more interested in understanding her own experience, and wrote explicitly against sympathy, in *On Being Ill*, she paradoxically implied the importance of sympathy, in *Mrs Dalloway*, for those who suffer mental pain. Sacks, at one point a patient, saw that a doctor's unwillingness to listen to his or her patients is the result of a lack of understanding and sympathy. Furthermore, the two writers' ideas of sympathy can be associated with their search for the totality of subjective experience and material reality. In this chapter, I will firstly discuss how Woolf's writing about illness, especially in *On Being Ill*, is currently received in the field of medical humanities. Secondly, I will demonstrate how Woolf, in her fictional and non-fictional works, expresses how illness is closely related to the mind-body interaction. Sacks also explores this concept in his idea of clinical tales, which influenced most of his work. Lastly, I will argue that Woolf and Sacks established a new form of literature, that moves beyond the limitations of medical and literary discourse. This chapter concludes the journey of contextualising Woolf within the holistic neuropsychology influenced by Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks.

The previous chapters focused on how Woolf's understanding of the mind-body relation can be read in parallel with the development of holistic neuropsychology in the first half of the twentieth century. In this chapter, I will move on to the current reception of Virginia Woolf within the medical humanities literature. Woolf's literary works, both fictional and non-fictional, have contributed to understandings of the mind-body connection, and have received recognition in medical humanities in recent years. In addition, her writing about the experience of mental and physical illness has been discussed in several papers that focus on narrative medicine, neuroscientific literature, and medical psychology. In particular, her 1926 essay, *On Being Ill*, has gained increased recognition, both in literary criticism and in medical humanities criticism, despite being overlooked for years. The latest edition of *On Being Ill*, from 2012, includes not only an introduction by the literary critic Hermione Lee, but also an afterword by the American physician and scholar of narrative medicine, Rita Charon. The inclusion of these items of front and end matter suggests that illness narratives are understood in a variety of contexts, offering a complex picture of the phenomenology of illness that Woolf alludes to in the essay. Also, it clearly shows that Woolf's narrative about the experience of illness continues to speak to the audiences of both literary and medical humanities cultures.

As Woolf suggests in *On Being Ill*, illness influences our perception by distorting our senses (7). In the opening paragraph, Woolf finds that there is a 'spiritual change' in ill health, such as fever and influenza, that enables us to see what is beyond the surface, and that throws us into fantasies (3). For example, she suggests that we may find ourselves in the presence of 'the Deity' while having 'a tooth out' at the dental practice (3). As Woolf had an unpleasant

memory of losing three of her teeth, as a treatment for a continued temperature in May 1922, there is a perhaps a hint of irony here. Despite her ironic tone, she further implies that the experience of illness, as exemplified above, can be a good source of material for creative writing (Fifield 99). As she observes, illness distorts our senses and fires our imagination with its curious sensations. Woolf often related the experience of illness to a form of mystical feeling. One of her diary entries, from 1930, exemplifies this –

> One is too conscious of the body & jolted out of the rut of life to get back to fiction. Once or twice I have felt that odd whirr of wings in the head which comes when I am ill so often […] I believe these illnesses are in my case- how shall I express it? – partly mystical. Something happens in my mind. It refuses to go on registering impressions. It shuts itself up. It becomes chrysalis. I lie quite torpid, often with acute physical pain – as last year; only discomfort this. Then suddenly something springs. (*Diary 3* 286-287)

Woolf believed there was 'something' in her mind that tricked her into hearing the whirring sound of wings, and even immobilised her body. Later, she became aware of mystical energy that gave her access to 'a tremendous sense of life' (287). She was then set free and felt her ideas for writing rush in her mind like a 'moth shaking its wings' (287). This mystical phenomenon, as Woolf observed, was not easily expressed through words. Woolf's difficulty in expressing her sensations echoes the problem she saw in literature, that there is hardly a language to describe the body and physical illness. Nevertheless, she managed to find some words to describe how she felt about the embodied feeling of her troubled mind. For Woolf, language is a useful means of expressing and processing her embodied perception, despite the lack of

representation in literature. Especially in illness, words possess ‘a mystic[al] quality’, which enables one to grasp what is beyond ‘their surface meaning’ (*On Being Ill* 21).

It was not only modernist writers, such as Woolf, who were interested in exploring the theme of illness; neurological writers, such as Henry Head, Alexander Luria, and Oliver Sacks, also found that the subjective experience of being ill can be as important as objective medical observations, in terms of the clinical understanding of neurological diseases. Kurt Goldstein proposed a holistic approach in order to emphasise the unity between mental and physical phenomena, although he did not suggest the use of narrative for medical practices. In contrast, Head, Luria, and Sacks acknowledged that their patients’ experiences of illness, narrated by themselves, played a crucial role in a wider understanding of the mind-body relation. As previously discussed, Head’s two volumes of *Aphasia and Kindred Disorders of Speech* were primarily based upon his patients’ responses during examinations. He considered their narratives to be important for testing his own methodology against the localisation theory of aphasia.

However, it was Luria who was one of the first twentieth-century neurologists to put the human experience of diseases into a narrative form. Fundamentally, he saw these relations as crucial attributes of human beings. Rather than follow ‘the path of reductionism’, Luria aspired to retain the richness and complexities of human beings in medicine, through his writing of human experience (*The Making of Mind* 174). He believed that the aim of true science is to ‘view an event from as many perspectives as possible’ (177). He found that the combination of clinical observations and biographies, in the

nineteenth-century medical traditions, showed 'the beauty of the art of science' (179). The narratives of human characters, against the background of neurological disease, represent a form of aesthetics in medicine. Writing clinical observations into narratives thus became Luria's particular approach to preserving the abundant richness of his subjects. Although he noted, in a letter to Sacks, that the narrative tradition used in the nineteen-century medical literature was lost (Sacks, *On the Move* 178), this tradition actually continued in the twentieth century. Physicians such as Henry Head and Pierre Marie attempted to describe, in an explicit way, the complex relation between human consciousness and neuropsychological functioning. Sacks later carried on the legacy of medical writing, and re-introduced it to audiences from professional and populist backgrounds. From the time of his debut publication, *Migraine* (in 1970) onwards, Sacks authored books on a wide range of neurological disorders, and his writings have continued to be published posthumously.

Luria and Sacks shared an interest in exploring, and recording in words, the experience of illness. Sacks closely followed Luria's 'romantic' approach to the human body, by in-depth study of case histories and clinical biographies (Cole and Levitin, 'Luria in Retrospect' 262). However the methods of the two writers, of investigating and presenting disease to the public, have significant differences. With the aim to 'revive the traditions of romantic science' (*The Making of Mind* 176), Luria intermixed original journal writing from his subjects with his medical analyses. His two publications *The Mind of a Mnemonist* and *The Man with a Shattered World* make him a writer of 'neurological novels' (Sacks, 'Foreword' x). In addition, he wrote several books on empirically based neuropsychology, including *High Cortical Functions in Man* (1966) and *The*

Working Brain (1973). In contrast to Luria, Sacks adopted a more literary approach to the experience of illness. He tended to recount his patients' stories of neurological symptoms and syndromes on their behalf, recording them into his 'clinical tales'.[49] The use of these tales suggests that Sacks dramatised, and possibly fictionalised, the phenomena that the patients experienced themselves. He insisted on writing clinical tales instead of medical reports, to create a possible intersection of scientific facts and human experience. Sacks embraced a humanistic vision, through which he regarded 'the lives of individual patients' as valuable for neuropsychological medicine (*On the Move* 173 n2). Compared with Luria, Sacks focused more on writing stories about his patients and their neurological diseases, than about their symptoms. His goal was to narrate and emphasise 'the lives of the patients' through storytelling (*The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* xi).[50]

One can make a strong link between Woolf's writings about illness and those of Sacks. Sacks' belief in humanistic medicine was inspired, not only by the holistic neuropsychologists who came before him, but also by his enthusiasm for literature and philosophy. Like his precursor Henry Head, Sacks was an avid reader of literature and philosophy, and shared close friendships with the poets Thom Gunn and W. H. Auden, and the biologist-turned-

[49] Although Sacks published a few articles in scientific journals, such as JAMA and *Brain*, his idea of clinical tales, as a medical route towards better understanding of neurological diseases, was not included. However, he dedicated an article to his clinical tales and published it in *Literature and Medicine* in 1986. Even though he believed the combination of medical reports and clinical biographies should be accepted as a medical approach, he knew it might require a long time, at that stage, for scientists to accept clinical tales as a way of understanding diseases.

[50] Sacks' published works generally received positive reviews from literary critics, news media, and magazines. Among his publications, *Awakenings* was adapted into the 1991 film of the same title, starring Robin Williams and Robert De Niro. Sacks' life was also made into a documentary film in 2019. However, disability critics and activists, such as Thomas Shakespeare, regard his method of publishing his patients' stories as improper. There will be further discussion of this subject later in the chapter.

philosopher Gerald Edelman. He often compared his medical knowledge of the brain with the literary versions of mind, by citing poems from T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and Thom Gunn, and other literary works. His use of these citations suggests that, apart from his feelings and attitudes towards his patients and their illnesses, he saw literature as complementary to science. He did not have a biographical or literary connection with Woolf, except for the fact that he reviewed Jonah Lehrer's *Proust was a Neuroscientist*, which includes a chapter on Woolf. However, the connection between illness and life was also explored by Woolf, who sought to understand how writing about illness creates a form of knowledge of the body. Fundamentally, Woolf and Sacks both used literary narrative as a way of deepening their understandings of the mind-body relation.

A Brief History of *On Being Ill* and Illness Narrative

The publication history of *On Being Ill* runs in parallel with the development of medical humanities as an established field. This suggests that Woolf's narrative of illness is not limited to a literary discourse, but worth exploring alongside narrative medicine, which is seen as a way of promoting healing through expressing illness in words. In this section, I will focus on how Woolf's 1926 essay can be compared and studied alongside medical humanities criticism.

Virginia, together with Leonard, believed that *On Being Ill* was 'one of [her] best' essays (*Diary 3* 49). Although T.S. Eliot was not particularly enthusiastic about the essay, he eventually published it in his literary magazine *The Criterion* in January 1926 (Lee, 'Introduction' xx).[51] According to Hermione Lee, the composition of the essay originated from a faint Woolf experienced 'in the

[51] According to Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, who published Woolf's six volumes of diaries, Eliot's lukewarm comments on Woolf's essay were not clearly documented. Woolf only described his response as 'not enthusiastic' (*Diary 3* 49).

middle of [Quentin Bell's] birthday party' on 19 August 1925 (*Diary 3* 38). Despite remaining in a delicate condition for several months, she managed to write the essay for Eliot in November. Three months after its first publication, Woolf's essay was shortened and republished under the title 'Illness: An Unexploited Mine' in the New York magazine, *The Forum* (Lee, 'Introduction' xxi). With small changes, the essay was republished as a stand-alone volume by the Hogarth Press in November 1930. This 1930 version was reprinted posthumously by Leonard, in *The Moment and Other Essays* and in the fourth volume of *Collected Essays*, in 1947 and 1967 respectively. In 1986, Andrew McNeillie annotated and included *On Being Ill* in the fourth volume of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. Moving into the new millennium, the essay was reissued as a single volume by the Paris Press in 2002, and included in David Bradshaw's *Selected Essays* in 2008. The inclusions of Julia Stephen's 'Notes from Sick Rooms' (1883), and Rita Charon's afterword in the 2012 edition, suggest a mutual relationship between medical professionals/patients and Woolf's exploration of the way in which the experience of illness inextricably interacts with the conscious self.

Woolf's *On Being Ill* has gained recognition in recent years. It has become a much-quoted text in medical humanities literature, as well as in literary studies. Sarah Pett (2019) gives an in-depth analysis of Woolf's 1926 essay, and re-evaluates Woolf's position in medical humanities. Peter Fifield (2020) uses *On Being Ill* as an epitome of modernist concern with the phenomenology of illness. Other critics, such as Ann Jurecic (2012) and Laura Salisbury (2016), also recognise that Woolf used her narrative of illness as a ready source of creative output (Fifield 99). Although the illness experience is as common as 'love and

battle and jealousy' it is, as Woolf found, not widely explored in literature (*On Being Ill* 3). Woolf saw that the problem of language lies in its failure to embody and communicate physical as well as mental suffering (Jurecic 5). Therefore, the lack of literary representation of illness is inevitable. As Pett observes, Woolf also invited her readers to think beyond the restraints of literature itself (Pett 58) and challenged us to write about illness with 'a new language' (*On Being Ill* 7). If one can express the workings of the mind through literature, there must, as Woolf believed, also a way of bringing the embodied experience of illness to literature (Salisbury, 'Aphasic Modernism' 448). In *On Being Ill*, Woolf's primary concern with illness is about how the embodiment of mental and physical pain can be expressed in words, and how the literary form needs to be remade for the theme of illness. Before explaining her concept of embodiment, Woolf tests the dualistic theory of the mind-body relation that was widely accepted in her own period, and previously. She sets out an argument that seems to suggest the possibility of separating the mind from the body. When the body 'smashes to smithereens', the soul is said to 'escape' (*On Being Ill* 5). Nevertheless, in illness, this dualistic philosophy cannot work, as physical ailments affect our perception. Woolf recalls her experiences of illness, such as fever and melancholia. As she describes it, her body and mind suffered, and battled simultaneously against the assault of illness, as if these experiences were 'great wars' (5). She argues that the feeling of mental and physical illness is embedded in the body, as the mind is 'a slave' to the body (5). In other words, the experience of illness is an instant embodiment of mental and bodily feelings. Woolf thus proposes that we need 'a new language' to express the bodily phenomena associated with illness, on a par with that of the mind (7). She sees

‘a hierarchy of passions’ in the new language, which fully describes mental pain within physical torment (7).

In the final section of *On Being Ill*, Woolf shows how a new language of the body could depict the active embodied experience of illness. She retells Augustus Hare’s story about Countess Canning and Lady Waterford in her own words.[52] The story begins with Charlotte and Louisa marrying Canning and Lord Waterford respectively, and ends with Louisa’s agony over her husband’s death. As Lee writes, this event may appear desultory and discontinuous, compared to her previous argument in the essay (‘Introduction’ xxxiii). Nevertheless, the final scene in which the curtain is ‘crushed together’ reveals Lady Waterford’s grief (*On Being Ill* 28). She grieves for her deceased husband and grasps the curtain in her bereavement. These words echo what Woolf mentions in the essay about a sick person who is ‘forced to coin words himself’ (7). Combining pain and ‘a lump of pure sound’, the person produces ‘a brand new word’ to express his or her suffering (7). Though not explicitly expressing Lady Waterford’s affliction, Woolf’s description of the ‘crushed curtain’ clearly shows a strong emotion, and leaves us to imagine Lady Waterford’s mourning for her husband. Her grief leaves an impression on the material world. Hence, Woolf produces a new word that embodies mental pain, and shows how it can be represented in the material world via her characters’ actions.

Before *On Being Ill* was re-introduced as a key text in the current discipline of medical humanities, an increasing number of neuropsychologists, medical

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[52] It is not clear how Woolf turned to this story, based upon Augustus Hare’s *The Story of Two Noble Lives* (1893), for her 1926 essay. Mark Hussey, in *Virginia Woolf: A to Z*, suggests that Woolf was reading Hare while planning to write ‘The Life of the Obscures’ (Hussey 196; Woolf, *Diary 3* 37). Hermione Lee, in her introduction to the essay, explores the purpose of inserting Hare’s account of Charlotte and Louisa, which Woolf used to demonstrate how the existing story can be remade for the narrative of illness.

specialists, and psychiatrists had published books on how illness influences our experience and perception of the body in relation to the world as a whole. Since Luria introduced his 'neurological novels' to the public, it has become relatively common for medical writers to transform diagnoses and patients' experiences into stories. By using metaphors and parables, these stories also reflect upon the meaning of being human. There is a parallel genre in which medical doctors or specialists also explore illness through its narrative representation. For example, Oliver Sacks' *A Leg to Stand On* (1984), Arthur Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (1995), Rita Charon's *Narrative Medicine: Honouring the Stories of Illness* (2006), and Atul Gawande's *Being Mortal* (2015) explore how illness narratives benefit medical doctors and researchers in understanding the complex mind-body connection. As Sacks observes in his 1984 text, sickness, injuries, and patients are the substance of medicine (ix). The patients' stories provide their 'internal affairs' associated with diseases, and attempt to convey their experiences to others (184 n1). Their perceptions of illness are seen as valuable to doctors' medical observations of patients' diseases. The influence of Sacks' version of romantic philosophy in medicine can be seen in contemporary medical writings such as Paul Broks' *Into the Silent Land* (2003). Exploring 'the human dimension of neuropsychology' (Broks 246), he sees his patients more as individuals than as cases. Their neurological symptoms are closely associated with their lives and cultures as a whole. To place human beings at the centre of medicine, Broks interweaves his clinical observations with patients' narratives of neurological disorders and transforms them into a clinical tale.

With his insistence on a storytelling approach to medicine, Sacks assured us that the patients' narratives of their illnesses could be utilised in clinical practices and research. Quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, Sacks claimed that experience is 'the only touchstone of reality', in which philosophical viewpoints were grounded in our understanding of the body (*Awakenings* 279). Counter to the mechanistic thinking commonly accepted in neuroscience, his philosophy of the mind-body connection suggests a dynamic relationship between objective and subjective phenomena. Interestingly, although most of his works were based on Sacks' clinical observations of different neurological diseases, they received favourable reviews mainly from writers and literary critics. For example, writers including Auden, Gunn, and Lessing praised Sacks for his portrayal of human characters in his well-known publication *Awakenings*. His other popular work, T*he Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, received praise from newspapers and magazine such as *The Guardian* and *The Times*.

Sacks' clinical tales of the holistic relations between his patients and their neurological diseases attracted Luria's attention. In a letter that Luria wrote to Sacks, he said Sacks demonstrated that 'the important tradition of clinical case studies can be revived and with a great success' (Sacks, *On the Move* 202). Indeed, Luria's appreciation for Sacks' literary gaze in neuropsychology encouraged Sacks to press on with further clinical stories. Sacks envisioned that by writing the lives and diseases of his patients as a whole, both the scientific and the romantic sides of medicine could come together in order to contribute to the knowledge of medicine.

Sacks' use of narrative in medicine has implications for thinking about how he adapted various styles of writing to explore the complexities of the human

experience. Sacks cited as influences medical writers, who explored the mind through the use of literary devices such stories or novels. These writers included, but were not limited to, Silas Weir Mitchell, Sigmund Freud, and Alexander Luria. Sacks' idea behind the clinical tales was to integrate experiential writing into medical observations through one narrator, often himself. In his 1986 article 'Clinical Tales', Sacks articulates the importance of evaluating patients' narratives as indispensable to medical analyses –

> The patient presents his "story" with a naive immediacy and force – this is what he has been experiencing, been feeling; the physician (it is to be hoped!) listens not just sympathetically but knowledgeably, with a knowledge of other "cases," and of the physiological and pathological processes of the organism, which he is able to correlate, creatively, with what the patient is telling him. (16)

Such a combination is necessary, as it creates a whole picture of how patients respond to diseases, and how diseases affect patients' lives. In his clinical tales, Sacks re-imagined and wrote about the patients' conditions with language that was accessible to non-medical audiences. Sacks suggested that by listening to his patients' stories, one is able to see something that scientific discourses cannot fully describe. As he further explains in the article, patients provide personal experiences of illness to their doctors, who offer in return factual and clinical knowledge. Each is a way of presenting 'reality' (21). For Sacks, medicine is not only about 'diagnosis and treatment', but also 'quality of life' (*On the Move* 37). These stories of neurological conditions are 'alternative states of being [or] other forms of life' (*An Anthropologist on Mars* xvi). Most

importantly, people who live with neurological diseases are ‘no less human for being different’ (xvi).

On Being Ill: What the Experience of Illness Tells

As Woolf observes in *On Being Ill*, the ill body plays a trick on our perception by mixing senses with mystical feelings (6). She incorporated this phenomenon in her fictional characters, who often experience some unusual feelings and reactions resulting from illnesses, including unknown physical pain, hallucinations, and imaginary voices. This fusion of the physical and the mystical experience of illness also resonates with Sacks in *A Leg to Stand On*. His 1984 text was based on his experience of having an injured leg, and its effect on his neurological as well as psychological functioning. The leg injury led Sacks to experience ‘almost supernatural’ phenomena he could hardly explain, especially his inability to perceive his own body (*A Leg to Stand On* 124). He saw his leg as an alien and inanimate object that did not belong to him. In this section, I will demonstrate that Woolf and Sacks shared an interest in exploring embodied consciousness. For them, illness is a representation of this embodied experience, which affects how we perceive the body. This also suggests an active interaction between the mind and body, and it influences our perception of the world.

In the very first paragraph of *On Being Ill*, Woolf urges us to consider ‘how common illness is’ (3). At a personal level, Woolf frequently experienced various types of disease, both mental and physical, and spent a great deal of time recuperating in bed. However, she did not see herself as a victim, but as a writer who saw her experiences of illnesses as sources of creativity. For Woolf, those experiences of illness were both common and extraordinary. She often

alluded to the mental and physical disorders of her fictional characters, such as Rachel Vinrace's fever in *The Voyage Out*, Clarissa Dalloway's influenza and Septimus Smith's shell shock in *Mrs Dalloway*, and Louis' and Rhoda's depressive episodes in *The Waves*. These sufferings change the ways her characters perceive the world. As with Woolf herself, illness opens her characters' eyes and allows them to see their experiences of illness as part of their physical reality. They recognise how illness affects their mental states, and often associate it with their imagination or fantasies. Rachel experiences delirium due to an unknown fever. Septimus is often forced into recalling his war memories, triggered by shell shock. These examples indeed show that illness is not only a common experience, but also an extraordinary event, where we contemplate the mind-body relation and its association with life.

As Woolf implies in *On Being Ill*, her characters' raptures caused by illness are as common as everyday experiences such as love and jealousy. This is not to suggest that they are able to escape their pain via mystical feelings. Rather, they advance towards a kind of transcendentalism, through which they acquire certain knowledge of their bodies and the conscious self. As Woolf observes, this embodied transcendentalism that illness creates brings 'the spiritual change' that distorts our perception and enables us to see what is beyond our usual sense perceptions (*On Being Ill* 3). When 'the lights of health go down', one becomes more sensitive and observant with things in 'the act of sickness' (3). An ill person imagines 'the presence of angels' and confuses dentists with deities after having their teeth out (3).

In her 1926 essay, Woolf suggests that 'a robust philosophy' is needed when considering the embodied experience as literary material (5). There is a

mystical quality in illness that allows us to transcend the limits of the conceptual sphere of the body. To start with the new philosophy of the body, Woolf examines the mind-body dualism which is commonly explored in literature. She argues that the feelings caused, by physical as well as mental illness, remind us that the body interferes with the mind. The body that intervenes with the mind implies that the conscious mind is essentially embedded in the body. Woolf thus urges us to rethink the body in relation to illness.

Taking on the role of a philosopher of the body, Woolf continues to articulate in her 1926 essay how mystical phenomena emerge when we experience 'the spiritual change' due to illness. Apart from throwing us into fantasies, illness often plays 'the same old tricks' as love (6), causes us to question sympathy, and gives words 'a mystic[al] quality' (21). Firstly, Woolf argues that illness can be a plot in a novel; people 'express their affection' towards ill people in a similar way that they show love towards healthy people (*Diary 3* 47). We add 'a new significance' to people and things that we neglect by 'wreathing' their faces and seeing them with 'divinity' (6). This phenomenon can be good material for a plot, concocting 'a thousand legends and romances' (6). However, there is 'the poverty of language' that hinders the depiction of illness from being used in literature (6). As the existing literature primarily focuses on the mind, one 'is forced to coin words' to describe one's 'shiver' and 'headache' (6). Woolf suggests producing a new word for suffering by combining pain with 'a lump of pure sound' (7). Although illness can leave our senses vulnerable, Woolf here argues that to create a word one needs to first search for sounds, as if we were the people in Babel speaking different languages (7). Later, we 'crush' sounds and meanings together and invent a

brand new word (7). So she puts an emphasis on the materiality of language, which suggests a bringing together of mind/idealism and body/materialism. Her idea that language can be materialised links to how illness leads one to transcendence, through which one's perception of physical and mental reality is distorted, and merged into a new kind of word describing one's experience of illness.

As the essay progresses, Woolf focuses primarily on the ill people, pondering what the experience of being ill can actually convey. Although a sick person can experience, as Woolf exemplifies above, a change in his or her perception of the world, others cannot fully understand. The experience of illness 'cannot be imparted' (8), as a person's illness often reminds others of their own experiences of illness. Instead of sympathising with the sick person, those who are not ill cry for 'the divine relief of sympathy' for their own sufferings (8). As Woolf observes, in her day the burden of sympathy was mostly imposed on women, who were expected to spend time 'upon fantastic and unprofitable excursions' to attend people who were in need of health care (10). Woolf alludes to Julia Stephen and Stella Hills, who dedicated their time to tending those in need, including the illness-stricken Leslie Stephen. This is not to imply that Woolf railed against the act of caring for others, since she nursed Vanessa and Thoby Stephen when they contracted typhoid fever in 1906. Instead, Woolf disagreed with the Victorian norm that women were chiefly responsible for showing sympathy and care for others.[53] Women, as Woolf was assured,

[53] There is no direct evidence that Julia Stephen was on Woolf's mind while writing *On Being Ill*. She did fictionalise Julia as Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, and she did regard her as the most crucial figure in her autobiographical pieces, including 'Reminiscences' and 'A Sketch of the Past'. Critics such as Mark Hussey and Kimberly Coates have suggested the intertextuality between Woolf's 1926 essay and Stephen's *Notes from Sick Rooms*. However,

should have professions such as being a writer. However, they must kill the image of 'the angel in the house' first, before continuing as, specifically, a writer ('Professions for Women' 142). What remains after the death of the angel is themselves, and women 'in a bedroom with an inkpot' (142).

Woolf's scepticism about imposing the duty of sympathy on women was not only a result of her resistance to the social norms, but also because 'we don't know our own souls, let alone the souls of others' (*On Being Ill* 11). She argues in her 1926 essay that our claim to understand other people's sufferings is an illusion, as we do not even understand ourselves. The sympathy we claim to have is in fact not for the ill people, but for ourselves. Accordingly, illness reveals that we are not able to 'go hand in hand' with each other in terms of knowing how to sympathise with those who are ill (11). Finding that we lack understanding of ourselves and others, Woolf placed the subjectivity of the human experience of illness at the centre of her philosophy. She emphasised that our experiences are as sacred as a 'virgin forest' and 'snowfield' (11), which we should explore ourselves.

Although Woolf is questioning the limits of sympathy, and the gendered expectations around it, she still believes that by looking at something 'very small and close and familiar' we may find sympathy (14). Yet, her definition of sympathy is based upon the idea that we express our emotions in everyday life. As she explained, we project our feelings onto ordinary things, such as roses, or people, without being aware of it. Roses are often used by human beings to symbolise 'their passions, decorate their festivals, and lie upon the pillows of

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it is the theme of illness that Woolf related to; social and cultural aspects of being ill, causing her to re-examine, and break free from, the Victorian feminine values.

the dead' (15). Roses themselves do not possess consciousness in the way human beings do. It is we who give our feelings to things that are ordinary and everyday. Roses' 'indifference' to emotions provides us with comfort (15). Woolf also finds that great artists commonly have the ability to create art by observing and using everyday life as part of their creative processes. Similarly, it is in illness, which Woolf regards as a common and extraordinary experience, that we are able to discover what we do not see in health.

The final stage of the phenomena of illness is that words can become mystical. As illness distorts our perception, we are not necessarily able to 'command' our minds and be aware of our behaviours and actions (18). However, there seems to be a 'mystic[al] quality' in words that affects how we understand their meanings (21). Woolf's mention of such a mystical quality echoes what she previously discussed about the new language of the body; that this new language is primitive and full of sensuality. As Woolf continues, in illness, our mental faculties – which usually dominate our senses – are 'off duty' (21). Hence, we can no longer grasp the meanings of words, but our senses, such as hearing and taste, become dominant. This results in 'rashness', through which we perceive the words via our senses instead of through reason (22). As words become sensuous in illness, the great writers who usually intimidate and bore us suddenly provide us with 'pleasure' (22). In conclusion, the essay clearly shows that physical illness breaks down the mind-body dualism. Illness gives a sense of embodiment, as it affects both our mental and physical perceptions of reality. By exploring the theme of illness, Woolf again reminds us that there is a holistic relation between the mind and body, which is also addressed at the very beginning of *On Being Ill*.

Although Sacks attempted to explain scientifically the phenomena he experienced while a patient, he does not eschew, in *A Leg to Stand On*, his literary expression. This turning point in his medical career came in 1974, when he injured his leg while escaping a bull in the Norwegian mountains. Sent back to London for further treatments, Sacks was hospitalised, and then under the care of other medical professionals. Prior to the accident, Sacks wrote his books from the perspective of an observer, who did not necessarily experience what his patients underwent in terms of illness. After the accident, Sacks – whose status changed from neurological doctor to patient – wrote *A Leg to Stand On*, honouring those who had previously suffered similar injuries. As Woolf describes in *On Being Ill*, it is not uncommon to experience illness. Even doctors, such as Sacks, have moments of being sick or injured. Nevertheless Sacks, like Woolf, experienced some unexplainable phenomena while 'lying recumbent' (*On Being Ill* 13) at the hospital. Even though his body was nearly paralysed, he was still able to think, and observe the phenomena occurring at the hospital. Interestingly, his wounded leg did not cause him much physical pain; instead, he mainly went through psychological disturbances, such as body-image disorders, visual deprivation, and numbness. In the meantime, he was dealing with two contradictions related to his status. Firstly, he was forced to change his identity, from that of a medical neuropsychologist to that of a patient who needed to rely on others. Secondly, he could not explain the phenomena he was experiencing, despite having studied and encountered numerous neurological diseases. These conflicts tormented him as greatly as his injury. Fortunately, he later recovered and returned to health again. He recorded his own experience of being ill, in order to attain a better

understanding of those strange neuropsychological phenomena that had befallen his previous patients.

Sacks' patienthood changed his usual narrative from that of a medical specialist to that of a person who seeks medical care. In particular, his inability to perceive his leg allowed him to explore further the way his body complexly interacted with his mind. During his days at the hospital, he often felt that his leg was misplaced, or that it appeared strange to him. As he quotes Luria in his 1984 text, the body is 'a unity of actions' and it becomes 'alien' when any part of it slips from action (*A Leg to Stand On* 166). Experiencing the broken-body image, he grows to understand that even he as a medical professional can hardly explain such a phenomenon, but only express it (168). His emotional expression of his plight, which borrows from religious texts, forms a stark contrast with his usually logical and explanatory narrative. He has essentially become a character in one of his own clinical tales, who embarks on the journey of strange neuropsychological symptoms.

On Writing about Illness

Woolf's and Sacks' writings about illness focus on how subjective interiority is represented in the body in relation to the concept of life. Illness is, as Woolf observes in *On Being Ill*, a 'daily drama', and an extraordinary experience on a par with that of health. Likewise, Sacks in his 1984 piece deals with the 'drama' of his body, especially his body-image disturbances. Sacks did not engage in a literary movement like modernism; nor did Woolf anticipate the use of narrative in medical practice. However, they both explored the complexities of the mind-body relation by thinking through the experience of illness. Their adaptations of various writing styles, such as fiction, prose, and autobiography, indicate that

the idea of experience is not simply one incident, but is associated with other aspects of life as a whole. In this sense, the movement across multiple genres in *A Leg to Stand On* resonates with that in Woolf's *On Being Ill*. At this point, Sacks has entered literary territory, in a similar way to Woolf acquiring a form of knowledge of the body in literature.

To bring Sacks into the territory of literature with Woolf, I will first consider him as a writer who also explored how illness can inspire a certain form of narrative in the field of medical humanities. Most of Sacks' works are stylistically blended with symbolic imagery and novelistic language. By doing this, Sacks focused on representing his patients' subjective interiority. Unlike typical medical writers, Sacks often told his clinical stories by combining 'fact and fable' (*The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* xi). This blurs the lines between fiction and non-fiction in his works. His works are saturated with the concept of being human, through which he explores how intricately neuropsychological conditions affect our understandings of the self, and indicate 'the whole pattern' of someone's life (*On the Move* 149). The common theme among Sacks' stories is how his characters live with certain unusual symptoms after brain damage – symptoms that disrupt and potentially re-integrate their cerebral or mental functioning. In his stories, there are barely any indications that the characters succeed or fail in overcoming their diseases. Rather, Sacks was interested in how the human ability to recover from difficulties enables people to adapt to a new norm of living. This links back to Goldstein's idea of the holistic 'integration' of the organism (Goldstein 86). Sacks' purpose in writing about illnesses was not just about diagnoses and treatments, but also about 'the quality of life and whether life was even worth living in some circumstances' (*On the Move* 37).

His focus, turning from diseases to his patients themselves, allowed him to overlap and adapt different genres to describe the human experience of illness.

It is worth noting that Sacks' clinical tales are based upon a narrative structure, which is primarily about the subject and plot. As he suggests in *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, medical narratives should not only focus on what the symptoms of diseases are, but also those who experience them –

> To restore the human subject as the centre we must deepen a case history to a narrative or tale: only then do we have a "who" as well as a "what", a real person, a patient, in relation to disease – in relation to the physical. (x)

With the emphasis on human beings, Sacks chose firstly to understand 'who' experiences diseases, and then investigated 'what' their cases were. He compared examining clinical cases to reading stories, which generally consist of subjects, themes, and conflicts. In his clinical tales, the patients' lives and their conditions inextricably interact. For Sacks, the phenomena of illness are embedded in the physical body. It is the sufferers who know their internal experience, better than doctors. This is not to undermine doctors, as they provide patients with objective opinions and medical facts. Each side aims to order experience and represent reality. Sacks asserts that clinical tales, which are intermixed with his patients' stories and his clinical observations, and medical facts, would benefit physicians or specialists in understanding the whole picture of one's condition ('Clinical Tales' 21).[54]

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[54] Sacks' literary approach to medical neuropsychology has also received some criticism, famously from the American columnist Alexander Cockburn, and from Thomas Shakespeare. Neither Cockburn nor Shakespeare found Sacks' publication of his patients' stories to be legitimate. In his 1993 article 'Wonders in Barmy Land', Cockburn accuses Sacks of misconduct and mismanagement in regard to medical ethics. In the piece, Cockburn describes Sacks as a showman who puts the patients on display by writing them into books and even televised documentaries (Couser 76). Unfortunately, Cockburn's essay is not available in any format. Yet, G. Thomas Couser in *Vulnerable Subjects* (2004) and Dario

Sacks often investigated rare neuropsychological diseases by referring to medical traditions or previously-recorded case histories. He was able to recognise the diseases that complexly interacted with human experience as a whole. At the core of his studies was the human side of neuropsychology, by which he showed a strong belief in wholeness and recovery. He focused on individuals' narratives, and resisted classical neurology, which emphasises systematic and analytical practices (Howarth 104). However, Sacks has received criticism for his approach of looking back at traditions and case stories from medical authorities, such as his former supervisor Arnold P. Friedman. Their disagreement resulted from their polarising methods of practising medicine. For example, in 1970 Sacks explored the unusual 'migraine' through a historical and cultural framework, while Friedman preferred treating the symptoms of migraine, according to his experiences as an authority in the field, and in line with the scientific facts available at the time. Holding on to his faith in romantic philosophy, Sacks resigned his post due to his disagreement with Friedman, and continued writing his clinical tales about the strange phenomenon of migraine, which were later published as *Migraine* (153).

Krpan and Alexander O'Connor in their analysis of *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* (2017) briefly mention Cockburn's criticism. Thomas Shakespeare made a similar critique of Sacks' method of describing people with physical and mental disabilities. In his 1996 review of Sacks' *An Anthropologist on Mars* (1995), Shakespeare opens with a sentence that deliberately parodies Sacks' *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*: 'the man who mistook his patients for his literary career' (137). As he further argues, Sacks' act of exposing people with diseases to a general audience, through his published works and televised documentaries, violates 'every principle of disability equality' (137). However, William Howarth, in 'Oliver Sacks: The Ecology of Writing Science' (1990) suggests Sacks' status as a healer, speaking on behalf of his patients who could not speak or explain their illnesses (109). The characters in Sacks' works were his patients, who might recognise themselves in his tales. Ethical matters should still be considered, whenever clinical cases are presented; either for medical professionals or for the public. Replacing the patients' names with pseudonyms does not necessarily solve the ethical dilemma. For more discussion about the ethics of Sacks' work, see Thomas Couser's *Vulnerable Subjects*.

Awakenings is another publication which illustrates an extreme example of the schism between Sacks' romantic philosophy and the scientific approach in medicine. He based his 1985 text on his stories about his patients and their experiences of encephalitis lethargica, or the sleeping-sickness epidemic, at Beth Abraham Hospital. The epidemic swept the world, and claimed the lives of thousands of people from the 1920s to the 1930s (Sacks, *On the Move* 169). According to Sacks, many sufferers tended to be frozen in catatonic postures, in which their consciousness was suspended as if they had been put into a long slumber (169). Sacks succeeded in waking those patients up via the use of L-Dopa (*Awakenings*, xvii). However, after 'awakening', they lost their capacity to move freely and were likely to develop post-encephalitis Parkinsonian syndromes, including tremors and rigidity (6). In 1969, Sacks began writing nine cases about people with postencephalitis, which were later included in the published version of *Awakenings*. In the following year, he wrote letters about those cases and send them to JAMA (*Journal of American Medical Association*) (*On the Move* 176). Although he received positive feedback from his colleagues at the *Lancet*, JAMA at first greeted Sacks with silence; until they issued negative responses and even delivered attacks against him. His colleagues from JAMA doubted his use of L-Dopa, and disbelieved his method of narrating the complex side-effects of L-Dopa on the patients (178). Frustrated, he expressed how the existing medical culture railed against his ideas about the romantic or human side of neuropsychology –

> I knew that I had been given the rarest of opportunities; I knew that I had something important to say, but I saw no way of saying it, of being faithful to my experiences, without forfeiting medical "publishability" or acceptance

> among my colleagues. I felt this most keenly when a long paper I had written about the postencephalitics and their responses to L-Dopa was rejected by *Brain*, the oldest and most respected journal of neurology. (178)

Indeed, Sacks' 'storytelling" style of medicine makes a stark contrast with typical medical journals, which prefer a mechanical narrative or quantitative data (Howarth 109). Despite being rejected by the medical journals, Sacks' clinical tales were well received, and praised by Luria. In his letter to Sacks, Luria asserts that 'a good clinical description of cases plays a leading role in medicine' (*On the Move* 202), as its narrative values could enrich medical understandings of human beings. Encouraged by Luria, by literary critics, and by writers, Sacks continued his story-telling method, and wrote up rare neurological diseases in the form of clinical tales and novels. His empathy towards his patients prompted him to march forward with his faith in romantic science. Medicine, as Sacks emphasises, should reach a goal to 'restore to us our lost health and wholeness, and give us a sense of perfect well-being' (*Awakenings* 29). Writing is a key method of putting neurological and psychological disorders into a whole. In doing so, Sacks exemplifies an alternative side of medicine, which emphasises human character through narratives.

In a similar way to how Sacks preserved his patients' narratives in his clinical tales, Woolf's writing about illness also suggests the autonomy of a patient. As Woolf writes in *On Being Ill*, her ideal of expressing the experience of illness is about a sense of autonomy or self-exploration, through which she emphasises personal experiences (11). Experiences are 'a virgin forest' in which we are explorers ourselves (11). It is exploring this unknown territory in

experience that gives us pleasure – ‘here we go alone, and like it better so’ (12). The idea of illness serves no longer as a misery, but as an opportunity to discover various aspects of life, such as existential phenomena, human relations, and everyday scenery, as a whole experience.

Neurological Novels

In this section, I will continue the textual analysis of Woolf and Sacks by focusing on their literary engagement with the idea of the neurological novel. It is worth noting that Sacks, instead of Luria himself, defined the neurological novel as a story combining both ‘personal experience and neurological fact’ (*A Leg to Stand On* ix). Neurological novels primarily focus on how someone who deals with one specific medical occasion lives as a whole person, showing the totality of subjective experience and objective clinical observations. The novel contains a book-length mixture of medical discourse, and personal accounts by the sick people. For example, as previously discussed, Luria took a ‘medico-literary’ approach to the case of Lev Zasetsky in *The Man with a Shattered World* (Benjamin, ‘Neurological Novels’). He did not see Zasetsky as being confined to his neurological condition, but cared for him as a person who was living with brain damage. By reading Zasetsky’s diary entries Luria turned, with his own impressions and perhaps imagination, the brain-damaged soldier’s story into a novel. Because of the focus on patients as people, writers of neurological novels are able to represent the mind-body relation in depth, and explore further the experience of illness. These writers aim to see how illness can be represented in narratives, creating a holistic picture of human character in the face of predicaments in both physical and mental health.

Sacks was one of the early commentators who identified Luria as a writer of neurological novels. He recognised Luria's literary achievement, especially in *The Mind of a Mnemonist* and *The Man with a Shattered World*, transforming case studies and clinical biographies into a prose narrative (Hawkins 5). By doing so, Luria attempted to relate his patients' subjective interiority to their neurological conditions, and vice versa. His neurological novels share several elements with Sacks' clinical tales, including the combination of case histories and biographies, clinical observations, and experiential narratives of neuropsychological disorders. These characteristics of a neurological novel also echo Woolf's concerns about the theme of illness as a 'plot' for a novel (*On Being Ill* 6). As suggested in *On Being Ill*, her main concern about writing is how language can capture the whole experience, especially that of illness. This is not to claim that Sacks and his neurological novels should be regarded as modernist. Instead, Woolf and Sacks use a form of narrative to express the whole experience of illness to broaden the knowledge of the mind-body relation.

In the preface to *A Leg to Stand On*, Sacks writes that his story of his injured leg 'may be regarded as a neurological novel' (x). His purpose was to emulate Luria's *Shattered World* – a text rooted in clinical observation and personal story. Luria even asserted that Sacks' medico-literary approach to his clinical observations would 'open the way to a deeper and more human medicine' (xi).

Indeed, in terms of form, Sacks' 1984 neurological novel shares some similarities with Luria's *Shattered World*. The role of Luria in the novel is to present Zasetsky's story of brain damage, albeit from the perspective of an outsider. In his own neurological novel, Sacks plays the characters of both Luria

and Zasetsky himself. With this double identity, he was able to examine the phenomena associated with his injury from the point of view of an observer, as well as that of a patient. Although Sacks shared several similarities with Luria, in writing about themes and styles in his *Shattered World*, Sacks associated his own version of neurological novels with the complexities of the doctor-patient relationship.

As he expresses in the 1984 work, what truly brought him to despair during his days as a patient was his doctor's refusal to listen to his description of the unknown phenomena he experienced. The concept of darkness later became a metaphor for describing the misunderstandings and miscommunications between medical doctors and patients. He suggested that the universal problem of medical care lies in doctors' refusal to listen to patients' experiences (*A Leg to Stand On* x). As all his own narratives about his neurological conditions were denied by the doctor, Sacks was thrown into a 'limbo' in which he suffered from his doctor's refusal to listen (84). In his 1984 text, Sacks dramatises his language by putting his suffering into a clinical story, which simultaneously resonates with those literary works he cited. His citation of the Book of Job – which is primarily about the testament of Job's faith in God, despite the losses of his wife and children – suggests, literally and figuratively, the darkness he suffered, both from scotoma and from his doctor's refusal to listen (*A Leg to Stand On* 84). Due to the phenomenon of scotoma, Sacks wrestled with nothingness in his vision. He then turned to the works of T. S. Eliot, John Donne, and the Biblical Psalms for comfort and encouragement. By doing so, his language shifted towards acceptance and hope for recovery.

Sacks' narrative was about the neuropsychological phenomena he was experiencing.

Consisting of seven chapters, Sacks' novel explores themes like existential phenomena, the physician-patient relationship, and the experience of patienthood. Each chapter opens with an excerpt from writers and philosophers, such as John Donne, Thomas Mann, Friedrich Nietzsche, and William James. These excerpts foreshadow and symbolise what is coming in the chapter. The plot of *A Leg to Stand On* is mostly autobiographical. His act of writing his story into the form of a novel reflects the complexities of human experience. As there are no definite rules on how he should express his experience, Sacks adopts a literary narrative to explore various medical issues, to which he related his experience of being ill. Unlike his earlier works, where the patients are the subjects, Sacks in his novel introduces himself as the protagonist. He embarks on the journey of learning about the self, and about empathy towards both patients and doctors, by confronting fears, miseries, and misunderstandings. In *A Leg to Stand On*, Sacks begins his story by relating his accident, which resulted from escaping from a mountain bull, and his consequent hospitalisation. The injury to his knee not only inflicted great physical pain, but also caused some neurological conditions – numbness and paralysis. Like Woolf, Sacks transformed his illness into creativity, through which he was able to reflect and explore the meaning of being ill. While Sacks focused on his patients' diseases, and his discourse as a medical doctor, in most of his clinical tales, he explored in his 1984 novel his experience of illness, and reconsidered what it means to be a patient.

In *A Leg to Stand on*, Sacks also relates his accident and hospitalisation to the existential crisis and broken body image he experienced. In the chapter 'Limbo', Sacks describes how his knee injury caused him a great deal of mental pain. Although his doctor claimed nothing was wrong with his body, Sacks attempted to find explanations for his mental pain. For example, he describes his inability to see clearly as a symptom of neurological scotoma. This phenomenon of scotoma resulted from his confinement to a narrow space, and limited mobility, which are possible causes of 'visual deprivation' (127). This visual disturbance gave him a sense 'of the shadow of death, without any order' (*KJV Bible*, Job 10.22). Sacks' narration of his chaotic state of mind resonates with that of Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*. In a similar fashion, Lily is negatively affected by her memories of Charles Tansley and Mr Ramsay, who both dismiss her as not being able to paint. Their voices block her 'vision' of the unfinished painting. Torn by these traumatic experiences, Lily is thrown into 'the midst of chaos' (*To the Lighthouse* 133). However, Lily reminisces about her recollections of Mrs Ramsay and her words 'Life stand[s] still here' (133). Those words become a revelation for Lily, that life will find a way to hold her up as a whole. She finally finds her 'vision' and finishes the undone painting. Lily's finished work suggests that art has the ability to piece her fragmented experience together and make a whole.

Sacks' use of literary expression about his ordeal forms a stark contrast with his previous status as a neurologist. In fact, he was not clear about what happened, and no explanations satisfied him. With little understanding about the phenomenon he was experiencing, his narrative turned to how he could borrow from literature to express his suffering. Accepting his new identity as a

patient, Sacks shifted from his explanatory method of exploring diseases and illnesses to expressing them in words. By finding a way to express himself, he was able to relieve his anxiety, pain, and fear about his uncertain recovery. Regardless, with the comfort and therapeutic power he found in literature, Sacks recognised the pain he encountered and transformed it into his personal version of a 'clinical tale'. In this way, his psychological wound began to recover, which brought him a hope for his bodily recovery in the future.

Apart from showing his admiration for Luria, Sacks recalls in his autobiography that he was able to release the pain by putting it into words, and by making a whole out of the experience. In the alternative world created through words, he could maintain control over his emotions and release the traumatic experiences. As he continues in his piece, he finds that writing 'involve[s], too, an exposure of some of [his] own intimate feelings in a way which [his] more "doctorly" writings have never done' (219). At a personal level, writing about his illness in the form of a novel suggests that Sacks maintained a creative freedom through expressing his traumatic experience. This expression took place without the formal limitations associated with 'doctorly' writings, such as the data-driven approach. At this point, Sacks can usefully be regarded as a writer whose novel *A Leg to Stand On* is dedicated to the theme of illness. This premise allows Sacks to enter the conversation with Woolf, who believes a novel devoted to illness is of no lesser value than one dedicated to love.

In her novels, Woolf often used experiences of illness as an underlying influence on how her characters understand themselves and the world surrounding them. Her literary version of the mind was not necessarily based

on case studies, or medical analyses of her mental illness. However, in *Mrs Dalloway*, her writing on the complexities of the doctor-patient relationship, medical care, and empathy towards sufferers, can be linked with the aims of the neurological novel. Interestingly, decades prior to the publication of *A Leg to Stand on*, Woolf had already noted, in her 1925 novel, the difficulties in communication between doctor and patient. In the novel, Woolf's literary representation of medical treatments is juxtaposed with the complex doctor-patient relationship. The tension can be read through their dialogues, which often result in misunderstanding and misjudging each other. The complex doctor-patient relationship was also not unfamiliar to psychoanalysts, such as Sándor Ferenczi and his disciple Michael Balint. Ferenczi (1949) spoke of 'the confusion of tongues' resulting from traumatic experiences, and paid close attention to the communication between doctors and patients (225). Balint explored descriptive analysis in clinical practice, and the complex psychosocial relationship between physicians and patients, in *The Doctor, His Patient, and The Illness* (1957). These texts emphasised the importance of phenomenological experience, and the totality of subjective experience for the clinician and the artist.

Like Woolf, who valued the personal and subjective experience of illness, Septimus develops his own method of expressing his pains. His method is to express his conditions via the poetic and lyrical language of Shakespeare. In expressing himself, he is able to interpret the plight he is confronting, and gradually understand the meaning behind his suffering. For example, being mentally ill gives Septimus a new discovery of Shakespeare's *Anthony and*

Cleopatra.[55] It is suddenly revealed to Septimus that Shakespeare 'loathed humanity' in his tragedy, which has been passed on to future generations (*Mrs Dalloway* 75). For Septimus, the hatred and despair that he experienced during World War I may continue, as Shakespeare does in the text. Here, we can link Septimus' reference to Shakespeare to his experience of being mentally ill. What he interprets about his own suffering is the fact that 'he could feel' (74). His personal experience of shell shock shapes the way he perceives his world. However, Dr Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw do not listen to Septimus' narrative, and have no intention of investigating his condition further –

> But if he confessed? If he communicated? Would they let him off then, Holmes, Bradshaw? "I– I–" he stammered. But what was his crime? He could not remember it. "Yes?" Sir William encouraged him […] Was there anything else they wished to ask him? Sir William would make all arrangements (he murmured to Rezia) and he would let her know between five and six this evening. "Trust everything to me", he said, and dismissed them. (*Mrs Dalloway* 84)

Here, one may argue that Sir William is not particularly interested in Septimus, his experience or his symptoms, as he sees Septimus' illness as a weakness of character. However, as previously discussed, medicine in the early twentieth century did not fully understand shell shock; its symptoms were not entirely accepted as neurological or psychological. The concept of shell shock was not only one medical and clinical event, but closely associated with socio-cultural contexts, such as the pressure to conform to extreme ideas of

[55] Septimus' new interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy occurs while experiencing shell shock. It has an interesting link to Woolf's discussion in *On Being Ill* about how illness makes one understand Shakespeare better due to the distortion of perception.

masculine stoicism. For instance, Dr Holmes cries out 'the coward' when seeing Septimus commit suicide by jumping out of the window (127). Here, it is revealed that Dr Holmes regards Septimus' shell shock as revealing a non-manly character, and his suicide as an act of cowardice. The dismissive manner both Sir William and Dr Holmes display towards Septimus' suffering can be read as a result of the extreme moral demands the medical culture imposed on soldiers.

The trouble Septimus has with his doctors is their lack of sympathy for him. Like Sacks, Woolf was aware of the importance of listening to patients' experiences, which give the totality of subjectivity and clinical observation. The act of listening is, in a sense, sympathy. As Sacks describes in *A Leg to Stand On*, sympathy emerges from communication between doctors and patients –

> This would be tolerable, or more tolerable, if it could be communicated to others, and become a subject of understanding and sympathy – like grief. This was denied me when the surgeon said 'nothing', so that I was thrown into the further hell – the hell of communication denied. (85)

Sacks also saw that the doctor's refusal to listen to the patient was the problem he suffered the most. The surgeon's articulation of 'nothing' echoes that of Dr Holmes, who also emphasises that there is nothing wrong with Septimus' body. Woolf and Sacks both describe doctors believing that 'nothing' is wrong; which suggests that, unfortunately, the problem of communication had existed for at least half a century before Sacks' *A Leg to Stand On*. In this work, Sacks has come to the point where he plays the role of Septimus, who is not given a fair chance to communicate his mind. Throughout Woolf's novel, Septimus is unable to speak properly, due to his shell shock symptoms, which

disrupt both his bodily and his mental functions. Although he is almost a silent character, his mind remains active and dynamically interacts with his past. He begins to recognise his conflicting feelings, such as affection and sorrow towards a deceased comrade, Evans. Septimus is, in fact, aware of his own condition and takes it as 'his own affair' (*Mrs Dalloway* 83). The intervention by Sir William and Dr Holmes appears to be intrusive to his private field of the mind. Reluctantly compromised by the doctor, Septimus attempts to 'communicate', while his stammering prevents him from conveying his mind in words (83). Without much patience, Sir William dismisses Septimus and his wife Rezia, leaving them with no result but dismay. Sir William's refusal to listen to Septimus, which contradicts his reputation for 'sympathy' (81), throws Septimus into 'the hell of communication denied'. Therefore, he sinks more deeply into his psychosis.

Woolf's version of uncaring treatment, in *Mrs Dalloway*, also shows her impression of her doctors. Like Septimus, Woolf herself was often subject to unpleasant medical treatments, due to her mental and sometimes physical illnesses. In her diary, she unapologetically declares that she will proceed to 'criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense' (*Diary 2* 248). As previously suggested, Woolf's literary representation of the social system can be associated with the medical culture of early-twentieth-century Britain. Her critique of the medical system suggests the barriers in the doctor-patient relationship, that can potentially cause patients to suffer beyond physical measure. Her writing about the doctor's refusal to listen to Septimus has some implications for thinking about the concept of patienthood. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Septimus is easily reduced to a medical case by his doctors, and so

their treatments are fairly mechanical. The act of reinforcing ‘nothing’ can be seen as synonymous with rejecting patients’ identities as human beings, who are complex rather than reducible and simple. From the perspectives of Dr Holmes and Sir William, Septimus is nothing more than a case of shell shock, which could be associated with a lack of character; whereas for Woolf, Septimus is a man with a shell-shocked mind. The medical system often overlooks the importance of human identity among patients. Regardless of his doctors’ less sympathetic attitudes to Septimus, he finds an alternative reality in literature, where he is able to express his thoughts freely, through metaphors and images. He often cites Shakespeare’s words, ‘Fear no more, says the heart in the body’, whenever finding a peaceful moment (*Mrs Dalloway* 118). In his world, full of emotions and imagination, he constantly implies to himself that he is still a human being; even though, due to shell shock, he is not able to feel. Literature becomes a parallel world in which Septimus is able to place his humanity at the centre of his life. He allows himself to weave his fragmented perception into a whole, through words and free expression. Accordingly, he has the power to manage his imaginary world, and to see material reality through his subjectivity. However, Dr Holmes, Sir William, and Rezia impose on Septimus their beliefs that he lacks the strength to cope with his shell shock symptoms. His balance between mind and body is wrecked by their misjudgement.

The neurological novels of Woolf and Sacks are fundamentally based upon their impressions of medical culture. Woolf critiques the medical system through Septimus’ illness and suicide. Sacks’ description of medical care as uncaring urges doctors, as well as readers, to consider the idea of human

beings in medicine. We can also see that these neurological novels extend the theme of illness to wider contexts, such as the professional attitudes of doctors, and patients' perceptions of medicine. As Woolf anticipates in *On Being Ill*, the theme of illness can be a good plot for a novel, and inspire a new form of literature. Indeed, she had achieved her goal of exploring the experience of illness, in *Mrs Dalloway*, before her 1926 essay. Sacks' 1984 neurological novel resonates with Woolf's idea in terms of finding a literary form for depicting how it feels to be ill. By looking at their works together, we see that literature is a good way to promote the holistic vision of human life, experience, and the mind-body relation.

The Voyage Out: Conclusion

In the final scene of *Mrs Dalloway*, Lady Rosseter (née Sally Seton), asks – before saying good-night to Richard Dalloway – 'What does the brain matter […] compared with the heart'?(165).Her question may appear baffling, as she neither explains nor gives us her own answer. However, her question concludes Woolf's exploration in the novel – the human as a whole being. One can argue that Lady Rosseter's question derives from her relationship with Clarissa Dalloway and Peter Walsh, from their youth until mid-life. Although her brain and body have aged, her heart is still moved by Clarissa's presence. However, if we read through the novel, we can see that Lady Rosseter's question is in fact Woolf's question for the social system, especially medicine. Through comparing and contrasting Clarissa with the shell-shocked Septimus, Woolf contemplated the mind-body relation in an era when dualism predominated the medical culture. Even though early-twentieth-century medical doctors regarded mental disorders as neurological conditions, Woolf explored how the subjective experience of illness is as important as clinical observation. With the theme of wholeness in the mind-body relation, Woolf believed that humans are not only physical/biological beings, but also emotional/psychological. To answer Lady Rosseter's question, Woolf implies that 'the brain' does not matter when 'the heart' is not taken into account, as human beings are inherently whole.

In this research, I started exploring how Woolf's concept of 'the whole' has a strong link with medical neuropsychology in the early twentieth century, via

the historical and philosophical framework of holism. Woolf contemplated the relationship between the mind and body primarily from her experience of illness, both physical and mental. She understood that the mind and body are not separable, but function as a whole. In addition, she found that our perception of past experience can be fragmentary, as we often associate emotions with various inanimate objects and 'non-being'. Nevertheless, she argued that recording these fragments of perception in words is a way to produce a whole experience. Thus, we are able to associate one type of feeling with another, piecing fragmented perceptions into a whole. As she further implied, a feeling for the whole eventually emerges out of disparate experience. There is thus a holistic picture of the overall connections between the human mind, body, experience, and life. Woolf understood literature as an ideal vehicle for representing the holistic relation between the mind and body, and for creating the whole experience. Literary representation of 'the whole' is also evident in the work of the neuropsychologists Henry Head, Kurt Goldstein, Alexander Luria, and Oliver Sacks. These neuropsychologists took individuals' experience of illness into account in order to explore the complexities of human experience and character. They also pointed out that the totality of subjective experiences and objective observation could clinically improve their patients' health. For them, recording the dialogues with the patients was a good way to engage with their perception, as it shows the mind in a dynamic relationship with the body, producing the whole.

I mentioned in my introduction that Woolf's writing about consciousness, perception, and the mind have been studied alongside cognitive neuroscience in recent years. Her novels, such as *Mrs Dalloway*, have been compared to

‘neuronovels’. As Marco Roth writes in his online essay ‘The Rise of the Neuronovel’ (2009), writers of neuronovels have shifted their attention from the mind to the brain itself as ‘the source of who we are’. These novels share an interest in exploring neurological and psychiatric disorders such as Tourette’s syndrome and paranoid schizophrenia, in line with the trend of writing the medical-materialist world into fiction. The neuronovel, as Roth concludes, presents ‘the experience of cognitive defeat’, by which the writers imagine ‘science might get there, but it has not yet’ (Roth). Ultimately, the neuronovel allegorises the novelist’s ‘fear of isolation and meaninglessness’, and the fact that they may understand themselves better through neuroscience (Roth).

Although Roth regards these novels with the theme of the brain, and in particular brain damage, as ‘the neurological novels’ or simply ‘neuronovels’, his use of the term differs from that of Alexander Luria and Oliver Sacks. For Luria and Sacks, neurological novels are primarily based upon historical events and intermixed with facts and fictional writing. They often contain neuropsychologists’ comments and analyses, and are told in a scientific and medical manner, as the writers tend to be neurologists or other medical professionals. In addition, in line with their professions, their neurological novels usually offer readers a complex picture of the doctor-patient relationship. By contrast, neuronovels focus on probing the experience of illness as the main plot, and on how that influences ‘literary’ forms. Although the writers are not necessarily physicians or medical specialists, they usually use the theme of illness as a way to explore human character, perception, and life.

As I have suggested in Chapter 4, Woolf’s writing about the doctor-patient relationship has an interesting link with Luria’s and Sack’s idea of neurological

novels. However, Woolf also anticipates, as Marco Roth briefly mentions in his essay, the rise of the neuronovel in contemporary literature; especially in *Mrs Dalloway*, where she provides her vivid impression of shell shock and the medical system that focused on its physical symptoms. Although the theme of shell shock serves as a subplot, Woolf had already incorporated other illnesses, such as influenza and the historical trauma of World War I, into her characters and their perceptions of the world. The literary form and theme in the novel also inspired writers that came after Woolf, including Ian McEwan and Rachel Cusk. McEwan's *Saturday* (2005) and Cusk's *Arlington Park* (2007) emulated the form of *Mrs Dalloway*; both writers explored how the experience of illness and trauma affected their characters in the course of a single day.

What we can learn from Woolf and her intellectual resonances with holistic neuropsychology is the holistic quality of human life. Life, upon which our minds and bodies, neurological functions, and perceptions depend, exists as a whole, like 'a luminous halo […] surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end'. Language – as Woolf, Head, Goldstein, Luria, and Sacks understood – has the function of showing life as a whole by pointing out the complexity of the mind-body relation.

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