



HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	Revision of Motherhood: Virginia Woolf's Creative Reproduction in Life and Art
Author(s)	金井, 彩香
Degree Grantor	北海道大学
Degree Name	博士(文学)
Dissertation Number	甲第11062号
Issue Date	2013-09-25
DOI	https://doi.org/10.14943/doctoral.k11062
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/53789
Type	doctoral thesis
File Information	Saika_Kanai.pdf



REVISION OF MOTHERHOOD:
VIRGINIA WOOLF'S CREATIVE REPRODUCTION
IN LIFE AND ART

by

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B.A.

Fuji Women's University, 2001

M.A.

Hokkaido University, 2004

Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Department of Languages and Literature

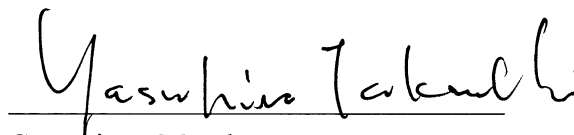
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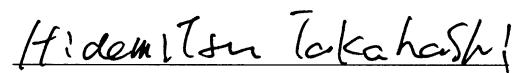
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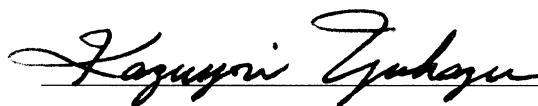
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Eijun Senaha for his extensive advice and invaluable encouragement throughout my graduate study. Since I met him in the summer of 2001, as my supervisor, he has successfully led me into the academic world of literature. All I learned from him during these years will be essential for the rest of my scholarly life.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Professors Yasuhiro Takeuchi and Hidemitsu Takahashi, members of the committee, whose advice and suggestions were indispensable to the completion of my dissertation.

I am very grateful to the faculty and staff of the Chitose Institute of Science and Technology. Without their support and understanding, I would not have been able to complete my dissertation. Above all, Professor Emeritus Eiichi Hanamura provided me endless encouragement and suggestions for my research activities.

I am also grateful to my colleagues at the Hokkaido University English Literary Society, especially Yoko Abe and Dr. Asami Watanabe, for our fruitful discussions and their advice, as well as their friendship. Dr. Watanabe also provided me technical advice for submitting the dissertation.

Last, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to my family for their encouragement, support, understanding, and sacrifice throughout my studies.

INTRODUCTION

Seeking Womanhood: Anxiety about Childlessness

Recent studies on personal experience of trauma shed light on Virginia Woolf's struggle with childlessness and her literary success as a manifestation of posttraumatic growth (PTG). Woolf wanted to have children at the time of her marriage in 1912, but was forced to give up this wish in the face of her husband's opposition. Despite her sadness about the decision, this was the period in which she started her writing career and grew into a mature writer. Creating novels was the process by which she expressed her sorrow, regret, and anger about being childless, which became gradually indispensable elements of her art. As Woolf went through her exploration of life as a childless woman, her novels traced the history of her suffering, awareness, change, and eventual growth of spirit and imagination. Woolf's experiences as a childless woman and as a creator of literature are closely interrelated, and illustrate her process of PTG.

In psychology, the negative aspects of childlessness are often observed and discussed, while the positive products are overlooked. However, a recent study has identified a sequence in which one's experience of a highly critical situation is followed by personal growth. R. G. Tedeschi and L. G. Calhoun in "The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the Positive Legacy of Trauma" (1996) created the "Posttraumatic Growth Inventory" (PTGI) to systematically observe and measure the positive legacy of trauma.

They followed this with “Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence” (2004). While the idea of experiencing positive aspects of negative events has been a common theme in history, they emphasized that, in using the term “posttraumatic growth,” they were focusing on conditions of major crisis rather than on mild stress, and on observing the consequent transformative life changes.¹

Developing the PTGI, Tedeschi and Calhoun indicate five major factors that bring positive changes after crises. The first factor is “relating to others,” which includes empathy with others and the acquisition of better human relationships. The second factor, “new possibilities,” includes finding a new direction in life and having new interests. The third factor, “personal strength,” involves developing self-reliance, and the fourth factor, “spiritual change,” particularly concerns religious faith and a deeper understanding of the mystical aspects of life. The fifth factor “appreciation of life,” means

¹ On the positive aspects of a critical situation, Calhoun and Tedeschi explain, “The possibilities for growth from the struggle with suffering and crisis is a theme that is present in ancient literature and philosophy and, at least in some ways, the problem of human suffering is central to much of both ancient and contemporary religious thinking (“Foundations” 3). For more details on Calhoun and Tedeschi’s invention of terminology, PTG, and other concepts, see “Conceptual Foundations” 3-4.

realizing the value of everyday life. Positive changes in or development of these factors are evidence of the individual's "positive legacy of trauma" after experiencing a stressful event, and enable him/her to see the meaning of that event.

PTG provides an opportunity to reconstruct one's way of thinking. After one went through a critical situation, one's views and thoughts will be destroyed or changed, and will be completely renewed. Tedeschi and Calhoun describe a PTG process using the analogy of an earthquake: "A psychologically seismic event can severely shake, threaten, or reduce to rubble many of the schematic structures that have guided understanding, decision making, and meaningfulness" ("Conceptual Foundations" 5). Through the traumatic events and their aftermath, one can follow the process of deconstruction and re-building of a new self.

Virginia Woolf's life is an exemplar. Woolf seeks to overcome anxiety about her childless life and expresses sadness, regret, and anger on her barrenness in her novels. Throughout the decades, Woolf's emotional turbulence gradually became a principal part of her writing. Critics have often neglected to see the relationship between Woolf's failure to have children and the social and medical circumstances surrounding motherhood in her time. Living in post-Victorian England, Woolf, through her experience of being childless, realized the impact of patriarchy, which repressed "improper" women. She contemplated the meaning of becoming a mother, the social and medical situation of the time, and her own

sexuality. Woolf sought a “proper” woman’s life, but the process of questioning motherhood and redefining the childless self became her art, and eventually formed her whole life.

While Woolf is generally regarded as a successful feminist, she failed in her own life to overcome patriarchy or to gain freedom from male-dominated ideology in her writing. She was not a radical, active member of the feminist movement, but she continually sought ways for women to have a voice in her literature. For Woolf, writing itself was actually a great challenge, offering resistance to patriarchy, and her rebellion took the form of helping to create a female literary history. In “Thinking Back through Our Mothers” (1981), Jane Marcus describes Woolf’s boldness as a feminist writer: “She was so hostile to the patriarchy and felt that her anger was so present in all her efforts that no evidence of literary ‘success’ was assurance enough of acceptance, and she collapsed after sending her books to the printer” (1). Her discussion of feminism occurred only within her literature: “Woolf never developed this female literary history in a sustained, systematic, non-fictional form . . .” (De Gay 62). Woolf’s fear and anger about patriarchy, expressed in her writing, formed the essence of her feminism.

Woolf’s desire for children was also a factor that bound her to patriarchy. The idea of wanting children evolves at different stages of a woman’s life. Achievement of motherhood primarily represents acquisition of the “mother-power.” For centuries, it was only by having a child that a woman could obtain a “power” to overwhelm

men and define her sex as female. In *Of Woman Born* (1995), Adrienne Rich explains that, by having a child and becoming a mother, potential power emanates from a woman, which is called “mother-power,” and is part of a “tradition of female power” (*Woman* 85). Women who have been weak, silenced, and oppressed in a patriarchal society can attain power and respect only in the role of a mother. For most women in history, motherhood was undoubtedly admired and idealized by men. Women’s autonomy and sense of identity are acquired almost exclusively through the experience of being a mother.

At the same time, to experience motherhood means to embrace a patriarchal ideology. According to some scholars, motherhood is a socially, not biologically, designated role for women. By becoming a mother, a woman achieves a patriarchally idealized gender identity. Nancy J. Chodorow, in *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1999), argues that “. . . women’s mothering, like other aspects of gender activity, is a product of feminine role training and role identification. Girls are taught to be mothers, trained for nurturance, and told that they ought to mother” (31). Moreover, Iris Marion Young affirms that, “For centuries, identification with that power [female power] has bonded women to the patriarchal order, and while today its seductive hold on us is loosening, it still provides women a unique position with which to identify” (84). Patriarchy educates a woman to become a mother and to carry out her social duty. This same process also deprives a woman of her sexuality. Young adds that motherhood is entirely

separated from sexuality, or even regarded as a substitute for sexuality: “. . . patriarchal logic defines an exclusive border between motherhood and sexuality” (85). Fulfilled motherhood, it is argued, robs women of certain aspects of their identity, gender, and sexuality. A motherly woman takes on exclusively the role of mothering, which satisfies the needs of the patriarchal society and becomes proof of her acquisition of patriarchal gender identity.

Even during pregnancy, women are forced to take on a role in the gender-identified sphere. Social and medical forces affect their bodies and their health. Although only a woman can experience pregnancy, she cannot always control her pregnant body by her own will. Emphasizing this helplessness, Young notes, “The control over knowledge about the pregnancy and birth process that the physician has through instruments, moreover, devalues the privileged relation she has to the fetus and her pregnant body” (47). Doctors seem to have absolute power over not only a woman’s body and the fetus but also over the nature of her motherhood.

A woman’s life is of course considerably influenced by her capacity to have children. Her fulfillment of the role of motherhood becomes a primary factor in measuring the perfection of her femininity in both physical and mental senses. Estela V. Welldon argues, regarding “women’s capacity for procreation,” that, “This capacity drastically affects not only women’s lives, but also their mental representations of their bodies and, concretely, their physical bodies . . .” In other words, women’s reproductive ability directly

relates to their womanhood (42). Fulfilled motherhood contributes maturity of a woman's physical and mental gender identity, and implicitly has a considerable effect on her feminine consciousness.

Seen from another point of view, motherhood may be interpreted as a success, as well as an ultimate liberation from the influence of the woman's own mother. By becoming a mother, a woman can walk the same road as her own mother. Chodorow explains, "They 'identify' with their own mothers as they grow up, and this identification produces the girl as a mother" (31). A woman emulates her mother, tries to be the same motherly figure as her mother was, and finally becomes a mother herself. In the end, becoming a mother frees a woman from her mother's shadow. In *The Second Sex* (1953), Simone de Beauvoir defines motherhood as a way to free women, noting:

Becoming a mother in her turn, the woman in a sense takes the place of her own mother: it means complete emancipation for her. If she sincerely desires it, she will be delighted with her pregnancy and will have the courage to go through with it by herself; but if she is still under maternal domination, and willingly, she, on the contrary, puts herself in her mother's hands. . . . (493-94)

Fulfilled motherhood gives a woman the place of the own mother and removes her mother's influence.

Further, motherhood is an act of reproduction, but, rather than simply producing another human being, a woman reproduces herself and the role of mothering. Motherhood is a re-creation of herself as

part of patriarchy and the same social system:

. . . people themselves need to be reproduced both daily and generationally . . . women as wives and mothers reproduce people. . . . Men are socially and psychologically reproduced by women, but women are reproduced (or not) largely by themselves. (Chodorow 36)

A mother reproduces mothers that are identified with her and the social roles that she takes on. In doing so, women eventually reproduce the whole social system. A mother who accepts her gender-identified social position becomes a primary factor in maintaining a patriarchal society.

Virginia Woolf's novels trace her emotional development, especially in her relationships with other women, her possibilities as a woman writer, and her spiritual change deconstructing her conception of gender. Woolf started her writing career with *The Voyage Out* (1915), followed by *Night and Day* (1919), which was born out of the traumatic experience of giving up all hopes of having children and her complex emotions about Victorian motherhood. While *Jacob's Room* (1922) presents Woolf's suffering in the context of Victorian ideology, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) shows the author's awareness of her own insanity, as defined in that context. Childlessness raises questions about sexuality, which features in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). In these novels, Woolf deconstructs her sexual identity to realize the meaning of being a woman and writing as a woman. Those writing history of

Woolf lead her writing liberated from any ideological bonds in *Orlando* (1928) and *The Waves* (1931). Each novel marks the next stage in the author's posttraumatic journey of spiritual growth and intellectual development. Woolf's self-expressive writing, dealing as it does with her life and with human relationships, charts the history of her PTG, and constitutes a rather positive literary legacy.

Behind the name of the canonical feminist writer Virginia Woolf, Woolf writes as a childless woman living in post-Victorian England. Her writings form a history of her anxiety about motherhood. Its interweaving factors kept stirring her emotion: they do not only include a simple problem of having a child, but also raise a problem of ideology, sexuality, and women's writing. Writing itself eventually became her life. Woolf's suicide further evokes her literary life, with its various traumas—of childhood, the war, and death—which continuously threatened her creativity as well as her life. In brief, Woolf's literature is the story of her traumatic life, her struggle, and her growth.

Although Woolf fought against unreachable motherhood for her whole life, in her writings she continued to seek for “everything—love, children, adventure, intimacy, work” (May 1, 1912; *Letters* 1: 496). This process formed the art, as well as the literary history, of Virginia Woolf.

CHAPTER I

The Trauma of Becoming a Mother: Society and Medicine in Post-Victorian England

In post-Victorian England, being childless was associated with problems in not only the female body but also the female identity, which placed women in a highly critical situation. Tedeschi and Calhoun define “trauma” as PTG caused by a highly stressful event, which is not always synonymous with psychiatric terminology. Childless women, such as Virginia Woolf, certainly experienced giving up children as traumatic. In particular, in the early twentieth century, English women struggled in a post-Victorian society that was still dominated by the Victorian ideology of controlling the feminine body and high expectations of motherhood while the practice of medicine was immature and unscientific. Although King Edward VII’s ascension to the throne in 1901 seemed to herald a new era of progress, English social and medical systems were still influenced by Victorianism. While “becoming a mother” was regarded as one of the most indispensable obligations and privileges for a married woman, it forced a woman to sacrifice her health and social life because of the mortal risk caused by childbearing. At the same time, contemporary society had become conscious of the population’s health. Social anxieties about the falling birthrate and infant mortality raised issues about the declining nationalism. Reflecting this social context, several laws regulating women’s sexuality and

reproduction were enacted. Behind its prosperous growth, post-Victorian England truly expected women to be “proper” by preserving Victorian conservativeness and exclusiveness.

Considering women’s hard experience in the conservative post-Victorian England, it sometimes left lifelong scars in their lives. In terms of PTG, the word *trauma* includes various meanings, such as the effects of a highly stressful event, life event, or crisis that causes serious mental distress. In “Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence,” Tedeschi and Calhoun apply a broader meaning to trauma than the American Psychiatric Association does.¹ By trauma and synonymous expressions, they mean a level of stress that is caused by the event, instead of the kind of event that is experienced:

With those expressions we are describing sets of circumstances that represent significant challenges to the adaptive resources of the individual, and that represent

¹ In *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* (2000), the American Psychiatric Association defines a traumatic experience one in which “the person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following are present: (1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others; (2) the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (467).

significant challenges to individuals' ways of understanding the world and their place in it. ("Conceptual Foundations" 1)

As a cause of PTG, traumatic events include various experience that can seriously influence emotions, thoughts, and quality of life.

Tedeschi and Calhoun focus on the process of coping with the event in relation to growth following a trauma.

The exclusive society and inadequate medicine of early-twentieth-century England placed childless women in a severe situation. Women who could not fulfill social and domestic obligations had to live with the trauma the rest of their lives. Women were expected to marry, become pregnant, and bear a healthy baby. Failure to do so meant that a woman was "improper," in that she had not followed the rules that had been laid down by Victorianism. Lagging behind the rapid growth of scientific medicine during this time, the practice of medicine for women was immature and often worsened the circumstances of infertile women. Although the strong influence of Victorian ideology made it hard for a childless woman to live in this society, the trauma of childlessness nevertheless enabled some to achieve positive outcomes. Although Virginia Woolf was dominated physically and spiritually by Post-Victorian ideology, which affected her attitudes towards her femininity, body, and barrenness, she became a feminist writer and a role model for many other childless women.

1. Tradition, Social Roles, and Fertility

Post-Victorian English society was greatly influenced by maternalism. On the one hand, early twentieth-century England was still under the influence of Victorianism, and women were required to be “proper” by being a good daughter, wife, and mother. On the other hand, in its weakened, unstable state, Britain tried to recover its national pride by producing “good” descendants of the race. Compared to the golden age of the Empire in the 1880s, Britain in the early twentieth century was confronting various problems both inside and outside the country. Economic conditions worsened, and people were struggling with the effects of the depressed economy. In the unstable national climate, the Boer Wars (1880-81, 1899-1902) and World War I (1914-18) weakened the national power of the British Empire and its men, and the nation began to expect women to strengthen society by adhering to the principles of good family care and motherhood. Eugenics became a mainstream topic of concern with regard to the population, which had been decreasing with the declining birth rate. By issuing various acts and establishing associations that seemed to protect women, governmental and social authorities tried to cage women and their bodies. Thus, as both producers and guardians of the race and the modern country, women and their reproductive organs were dominated by the nation.

Around the turn of the century, as a legacy of the Victorian era, the role of women was perceived in terms of a maternal ideal. Through intellectuals and activists, concepts of Victorian

womanhood continued into the next era and absorbed by the modern society. In Victorian England, a woman was expected to be “the angel in the house”: obedient, selfless, and domesticated. Motherhood was considered indispensable to her nature.² Kathleen Hickok explains the relationship between marriage and motherhood:

One’s own mother was represented as an ideal being to be emulated and adored. Furthermore, most young women could look forward to assuming the role of mother themselves, with all its attendant duties, trials, and obligations, almost immediately after they were married.
(75)

Daughters learned by watching the way their mother behaved, and it was taken for granted that she would assume the same duties after she married. In other words, motherhood was regarded as the initial premise of a married woman.

Added to the assumption that she would bear a healthy child, a married woman had to be a good wife and mother as well as taking care of the household:

The pure woman’s life was supposed to be entirely centered on the home. She preserved the higher moral values, guarded her husband’s conscience, guided her

² The phrase “the angel in the house” comes from the contemporary poet Coventry Patmore’s poem of the same name. It was published in 1854 and narrates Victorian womanhood.

children's training, and helped regenerate society through her daily display of Christianity in action. . . . As long as marriage held so central a place in the conception of ideal womanhood, it was not unnatural that women were trained to please men, help children, and suppress their own wants. (Mitchell 266-67)

A woman's life fully depended on her husband and children, and she lived only in relation to them. Society required women to live with the sole purpose of a fulfilled family life with her husband and children. Women had to be granted motherhood, which was their role and identity.

Some contemporary writers also identified womanhood with motherhood. William Acton (1813-75), a medical doctor known as a representative Victorian, indicated that good health in women was essential for them to bear their descendants and recommended it to men as an essential element in a good wife. In the *Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs* (1871). Acton gave advice on the health of the kind of women that men should marry:

The existence of insanity or consumption in her family to say any serious extent, should warn him, for his own sake and the sake of the children he might have, not to run the really terrible danger of marrying a woman whose family labor under either of these serious affections. (127)

Acton emphasizes that men have to choose healthy women in order to bear good children. In spite of the book's title and the fact that

childbearing rested largely on women, he does not mention much about women's nature and views women only in terms of their reproductivity. As "sexless, domesticated childbearing machines," women were limited to the home and were obliged to bear children.³

Even a contemporary socialist, such as Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), agreed that motherhood was synonymous with womanhood. While she is known as an active feminist of the time, Webb was however greatly influenced by the myth of motherhood.⁴ She believed that motherhood was the part of the most indispensable and respectable nature a woman could have. In her diary entry on July 25, 1894, Webb writes:

First and foremost I should wish a woman I loved to be a mother. To this end I would educate her; preserving her

³ For a further discussion of sexuality in the nineteenth century, see Stone 35.

⁴ In fact, many feminists and non-feminists of the time saw motherhood as an indispensable part of the nature of women. Indeed, "... a broad spectrum of women accepted the tenets of Victorian (male) social and medical scientists on sexual difference, which held that women's capacities were biologically determined and therefore different from those of men. Sexual difference ... was deemed to be a 'natural' phenomenon and women's lives were therefore inevitably going to be dictated by their capacity to bear children" (Lewis, *Social Action* 6-7).

health and vigour at all hazards; training her to self control and to capacity for sustained intellectual work so far as health permitted and no further. From the first I would impress on her the holiness of motherhood—its infinite superiority over any other occupation that a woman may take to. But for the sake of that very motherhood I would teach her that she must be an intellectual being—that without a strong deliberate mind she is only capable of the animal office of bearing children, not of rearing them.⁵

Webb praises motherhood as the highest priority for women and takes it for granted that their goal is to fulfill it. Jane Lewis views Webb's identification of womanhood with motherhood as a representation of late-Victorian women's understanding of their own sexuality.⁶

Webb's positive attitude toward motherhood in the context of Victorianism shows that a great part of society was indoctrinated to accept its ideology. Indeed, women accepted motherhood with respect and pleasure because they viewed it as a part of women's nature.

⁵ See Webb. Despite her earlier discussion on motherhood, Webb never had a child even after her marriage; for more details, see Himmerlfarb 66-67.

⁶ Lewis says "... Beatrice was able to acknowledge female sexuality in the context of her desire for motherhood, while otherwise abhorring the free expression of sexual desire" (*Social Action* 93).

Eventually, concepts of Victorian womanhood were rooted in the society and its traditions. As determined by Victorian ideology, the following generation also viewed womanhood in ideal terms. Angela Holdsworth observes that by the early twentieth century married women were expected to merge with the traditional female figure as angelic mother. The limitation of Victorian women's lives to the house in fulfillment of their duties to husband and children become a part of social tradition.⁷ Although women's maternal characteristics in the Victorian era were often noted and discussed as a major part of Victorianism, they were not confined to that era but persisted in society's expectations of women thereafter. Ideas regarding Victorian womanhood were directly brought into the new century, and motherhood became an eternal obligation of women.

In early twentieth-century England, in addition to Victorian ideas about womanhood, another factor in the rising maternalism was the advent of war. The war revealed the weakness of the country and encouraged people to make the race stronger by having healthy babies. The second Boer War, starting in 1899, impressed the nationals with the weakness and declining state of the country. According to Sally Mitchell, "... war against the Boers in South Africa revealed glaring weakness in the army's equipment and leadership," although the war at last enabled the nation to overcome the Boers (288). In recruiting soldiers for the war, the nation realized the serious problem that not

⁷ For more details, see Holdsworth 15-16.

enough men were able to meet the standards of health and strength in order to take part in the military. Susan Kingsley Kent notes that the process of recruiting soldiers for the Boer war revealed physical problems in the “New Town Type” of British man, such as “weak lungs, flat feet, or bad teeth,” which she calls “race degeneration.”⁸ This problem threatened not only the strength of British forces in the war but also the future of the British Empire. Facing the health problem of British men, people began to realize the urgency of becoming a stronger nation and advocated improving the health and strength of the nation. The Boer War made the nation aware of its physical weakness and it began to focus on nurturing the health of the population for the good of the British Empire.

Moreover, World War I led the nation to celebrating maternalism. The war provided an opportunity to confirm family bonds, and it reminded people that family life would ease their feelings of war fatigue the effects of social impoverishment. In 1918, suffrage was granted to some women thirty and over. Hence, World War I seemed to have improved women’s condition. However, it also strengthened family bonds, which made women more involved in the domestic sphere. People sought the happiness of family life as respite from the depression of war. Reflecting on the post-war social climate, the contemporary writer Marie Carmichael Stopes wrote in *Married Love: a New Contribution to the Solution of Sex Difficulties* (1918)

⁸ For more details, see Kent 237.

that “More than ever to-day are happy homes needed. It is my hope that this book may serve the State by adding to their number. Its object is to increase the joys of marriage, and to show how much sorrow may be avoided” (9). After the war, people wanted to be back in their homes in a family that consisted of a husband and wife with children, which was deemed necessary for the future of Britain. For “the joys of marriage,” women were supposed to maintain the family as a wife and mother. Eventually, “Britons sought a return to the ‘traditional’ order of the prewar world, an order based on natural biological categories of which imagined sexual differences were a familiar and readily available expression” (Kent 260). World War I reminded people of the importance of the family. Women were expected to improve their homes by taking care of their husband and bearing healthy babies for a happy family life. Since the family unit was the fundamental social and economic unit of the nation, motherhood was looked upon as a fundamental power in reconstructing the nation.

Despite the rise of maternalism after the war, Britain faced the problem of the great decline in the birthrate. In the early 1900s, the fertility rate dropped dramatically. Table 1 shows that while the number of births per 1,000 married women were 221.6 in 1901, it was 143.6 in 1921. The fall in the birth rate was caused by the practice of limiting the number of births within a marriage in order to restrict the size of family. Pat Thane adds complex factors to the causes of this phenomenon, such as “urbanisation, rising living and educational

Table 1

Fertility rates, England and Wales, 1901-1951^a

Period	Legitimate	Illegitimate
1901	221.6	8.2
1911	173.5	8.1
1921	143.6	6.3
1931	111.1	5.6
1941	113.7	11.6

Source: Lewis, Jane. *Women in England, 1870-1950 : Sexual Divisions and Social Change*. Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1984. Table 2.

a. Births per 1000 married/unmarried women ages 15-44

standards,” to explain the falling fertility rate (176-77). The decline in the number of newborn babies certainly encouraged the nation to control childbirth as well as motherhood. Enriching motherhood, or educating mothers, was certainly one of the easiest ways to increase the number of births. The nation not only promoted motherhood but also tried to control their role in reproduction.

Therefore, in the national crisis and the following rise of maternalism, motherhood was regarded as the central factor in reconstructing the nation. Mothers, their bodies, and their sexuality were controlled in the interests of reproducing babies to ensure the future of the nation. Indeed, the nation attributed its falling population to uneducated, unhealthy mothers:

Motherhood became defined as crucial to child health. High infant mortality and physical deterioration were attributed not to poverty but to ignorant motherhood, the solution seen as the education of working-class mothers better to fulfill their national duty as ‘guardian of the race.’ . . . Sex became the key to the question of population, both in its effects on the health of the individual (particularly via VD [venereal disease]), and on the future of the population (via the association of VD with sterility, and the higher infant mortality of unmarried mothers). . . . (Hooper 60)

Concerned about the population and its quality, the nation tried to keep mothers rich and vigorous so that they could nourish their children in a satisfactory manner. However, the nation’s efforts to regulate mothers under the name of protection limited the lives of women.

Consequently, the nation started controlling motherhood by enacting laws. Although laws had been established to regulate women’s sexuality and reproduction throughout history, in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries, Britain became increasingly active formulating legal control over women’s bodies. Hence, new laws regarding women’s lives and health were enacted. It was a time of “struggle over the use of law to regulate the feminine

body.”⁹ While these laws seemed to protect women and secure their life and health, they actually excluded improper, diseased women for the good of the nation. The Offences Against the Person Act (1861) criminalized infanticide, abortion, concealment of birth, and exposing children to danger. In the 1860s, the Contagious Diseases Acts excluded “unclean and unhealthy” working-class women, such as prostitutes, and prevented males from consorting with them. The Infant Life Preservation Act of 1872 and the subsequent amendment Act of 1897 established standards for mothering and disqualified poor working-class mothers by establishing baby farming. In the Maternal and Child Welfare Act of 1918, the government tried to educate pregnant women and those with infants by offering free clinics.¹⁰ These laws all interfered by emphasizing the quality of motherhood

⁹ For more details, see Smart 13. The information on laws regulating women is mainly based on Angela Holdsworth, *Out of the Doll's House: Story of Women in the 20th Century* (London: BBC Books, 1988) and Carol Smart, “Disruptive Bodies and Unruly Sex: The Regulation of Reproduction and Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century” in *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood, and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁰ While these clinics were almost the only opportunity for many women to have medical service, many women felt they interfered into their daily life; for more details, see Holdsworth 91-92.

and controlling the quality of mothers' lives, all in the interests of forming a stable and purified society. Thus, "The State showed little interest in women's wellbeing except when it thought their bad health might jeopardise future generations of workers and soldiers" (Holdsworth 90). Preserving healthy motherhood became one of the major national concerns, and women were regarded as "reproducers" under the control of the nation.

Ultimately, people's desire for a better nation led to the idea of eugenics. Anxiety about the declining race was met with a desire to improve the race. Based on positive eugenics—increasing the number of proper people—and negative eugenics—decreasing the number of improper people—doctors placed importance on educating both existing mothers and future mothers. Lewis argues:

Early twentieth-century male and female doctors used eugenic concerns about the quality and quantity of the race to argue that the welfare of future generations depended on girls being protected from rigorous examination schedules and receiving adequate training in house and mothercraft. (*England* 100)

To recover the population and improve the quality of the race, the nation focused on motherhood. To produce a stronger and healthier nation, both present mothers and future mothers had to be educated and qualified. The nation regarded mothers as an essential factor in producing good descendants. Eugenics became a fundamental theory in the regulation of mothers.

Physicians of the time, such as Havelock Ellis, justified control over maternal bodies and babies by the nation under the name of “Race-Regeneration.” They thought that they needed to prepare the best circumstances for children to live in even before they were born, and that genetic and environmental factors greatly influenced the characteristics of the child. In his *The Problem of Race-Regeneration* (1911), Ellis emphasized genetic factors in producing “feeble-minded people”:

It is necessary to remember that this feeble-mindedness is largely handed on by heredity. It was formerly supposed that idiocy and feeble-mindedness are mainly due to environmental conditions—to the drink, depravity, general disease, or lack of nutrition of the parents; and a few authorities on the feeble-minded still hold that view.¹¹

Ellis repeatedly argues that feeble-minded nature is caused by genetic factors. While the health of the present generation of concern,

¹¹ See 30. Ellis admits that there are some specialists doing scientific research who are against his study. However, he emphasizes that many notable physicians of the time agree with it. For example, Dr. Ahby argues that 75 percent of the parents of feeble-minded children are mentally defective; and Dr. Tredgold, known as the most notable researcher of the feeble-minded, insists that 82 percent of them are, and that he has never seen normal children of parents both of whom are feeble-minded; for more details, see 30-32.

it is far more important to keep the family in a good condition generation after generation. Thus, according to Ellis, mentally defective nationals should be never allowed to become parents.¹²

Encouraged by the idea of eugenics, the nation sought pure mothers without any disease that would threaten the future of the pure race, and they excluded others from a maternal role in society.

Throughout history women have been expected to be mothers; however, in 1900, facing a period of national crisis, Britain tried to exert authority over the female body as a national property. The country became more concerned with women's sexuality for its reproductive utility and realized the necessity of qualifying it. The mood of the nation was in a depressed state; women were expected to be good mothers who bore healthy children and contributed to rebuilding the prosperity and confidence of the nation. Maternalism

¹² Ellis clearly distinguishes "insanity" from "feeble-mindedness." He defines "insanity" as an acquired nature. Although it is related to genetic weakness, insanity is curable and not as dire as feeble-mindedness. He even emphasizes the behavior and intelligence of "insane" people; for more detail, see 41. In the case of Virginia Woolf, while she is often described as "insane," George Savage, one of the family doctors for the Stephens, points to insanity in the Stephens' genetic background. Furthermore, Woolf might not have been considered sufficiently proper to be a mother in terms of Ellis's definition.

was rooted in the nation, and “Middle-class men and women had accepted for some time now that the nurturance of children by their mothers constituted a significant aspect of their role and identity as women” (Kent 240). The nation put a greater burden of responsibility on women to enhance the weakened population by producing strong, healthy descendants. Consequently, being a mother was regarded as an essential part of a married woman’s identity. In the post-Victorian era, the British Empire expected women to be great mothers in order to save and reconstruct the nation.

2. Post-Victorian Medicine for Women

Despite the national climate of rising maternalism, the medicine of the time was not mature enough for mothers to place their lives in its hands. Because women were obliged to give birth to healthy babies, medicine should have been able to play a major role in supporting them. However, caught between the remarkable progress of modern medicine and the primitive medicine of the Victorian era, women were the primary victims of undeveloped gynecological medicine.¹³

¹³ Information on the medical and social history of England at the time is mainly based on Christopher Lawrence, *Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain, 1700-1920* (London: Routledge, 1994), Joan Lane, *A Social History of Medicine in England, 1750-1950* (London: Routledge, 2001), Irvine Loudon Ed., *Western Medicine: An Illustrated History* (New York: Oxford, 1997), Ornella Moscucci, *The*

On the one hand, the twentieth century was certainly an era for new medicine in England. The “Age of revolutions” started in the nineteenth century and reached its climax at the time of World War I. In this period of great industrialization, inventions and changes in the field of medicine were a major aspect. With the establishment of the educational system in universities and other institutions, many modern medical fields, such as immunology, endocrinology, genetics, and pathology, were born during this period. On the other hand, the Hippocratic ideal was still respected in reaction to those who promoted advanced medical care. Only gentlemen were privileged to conduct medical practice, which was natural outcome of the male-dominant society. In the patriarchal science and practice of medicine, gynecology had been neglected for a long time. The female body was still treated with superstition and prejudice. Contemporary medicine was not integrated into women’s lives and neither was it mature enough to exclude old-fashioned medicine completely. Consequently, women depended on both immature Victorian medicine and developing modern medicine. As in the Victorian era, the risk of childbearing still threatened women in twentieth century.

The development of medicine in England was influenced by

Science of Women; Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), and Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (New York: Norton, 1997).

hospitals and medical institutions that were established by doctors who had been educated in France. Around 1800, France, particularly Paris, was the center of medicine, and clinical medicine was born in close relation to hospitals.¹⁴ The new French medicine—“hospital medicine”—was “. . . typified by observation rather than book reading, by physical examination, pathological anatomy, statistics and the concept of lesions (Granshaw 203). Hospitals became places for medical research, treatment, and education. Doctors from all over Europe and North America came to study this new medicine in Paris and took their knowledge and techniques back to their countries. As in many other areas, doctors trained in Paris medicine returned to London and established hospitals, adopting clinical medicine and providing a systematic medical education.

¹⁴ In Paris, the doctors led modern medical research, which greatly developed clinical medicine. For example, the stethoscope, which was invented by Théophile Hyacithe Laennec (1781-1826), appeared in 1816 as a symbol of modern, scientific medicine. Pierre Louis (1787-1872) insisted on the significance of physical diagnosis and laid the foundation for the clinical trial by adopting a numerical method to evaluate therapeutics. For more detail, see Porter 311-13. On the rise of hospital medicine in France, Michael Foucault and Erwin Ackerknecht support the idea of a close relationship between the development of medicine and the institutionalization of hospitals; for more details, see Granshaw 202-4.

Under the influence of Paris medicine, the hospitals in London had become the center of medicine at the dawn of the twentieth century. Although hospitals had existed in England since medieval times, they were founded as religious charities instead of centers of medical care.¹⁵ During the nineteenth century, the hospitals in London became centers of medicine and medical care. Doctors began to practice medicine in the hospitals. Clinical medicine using modern technologies was introduced into English hospitals using the Parisian model. Pathological anatomy provided doctors and medical students a chance to experience practical medicine in hospitals, and anesthesia and antisepsis enabled doctors to carry out surgeries, and improved of nursing conditions brought public credibility to hospitals.¹⁶ In

¹⁵ While medieval hospitals were founded by the church, the later establishment of hospitals was regarded as a demonstration of charity. Even in early twentieth century, to “attend” a hospital, people had to be “admitted” by the governors, but undeserving patients, such as children, pregnant women, lunatics, and incurables were excluded; for more details, see Granshaw 199-202.

¹⁶ Introductions of anesthesia and antisepsis greatly decrease the risk of “hospital disease,” for which the mortality rate in hospitals was much higher than the mortality of the same class of patients treated in other than hospitals in 1830s; and many surgeries then carried out in hospitals; for more details, see Granshaw 210-11. On improvement of nursing, “Nursing reformers” such as Florence

addition, laboratories set up in hospitals started chemical analyses followed by bacteriological work. By the end of the century, x-ray equipment had been installed in some hospitals. As centers of medical research and treatment, hospitals became more and more systematic and towards the beginning of twentieth century offered scientific medicine to cure diseases.

In fact, behind the dramatic changes in London hospitals, there were close interrelationships among the medical profession, the education system, and the hospital. New medicine made hospitals a place for doctors and students to practice treatment and make observations. Consequently, hospitals began to serve as medical schools, which improved clinical medicine and related medical techniques. According to Granshaw, “The growing importance of teaching doctors further encouraged the development of the hospital, given the increased emphasis on the bedside rather than lecture theatre” (205). Because Paris-educated doctors promoted modern clinical medicine, London hospital schools, such as University College Hospital and King’s College Hospital, were established in 1837 and in 1840, respectively, thus modernizing the teaching of

Nightingale also played a significant part: while there had used to be public images of “drunkenness, dishonesty, immorality, corruption and laziness among nurses”; by the end of nineteenth century, “clean, neat, disciplined, uniformed nurses trained in nursing schools” appeared; for more details, see Granshaw 209-10.

medicine in London. Following the Paris model, London became a place for medical research, treatment, and education, leading an era of new medicine and medical professions.

With the rise of hospitals as educational institutions, doctors were professionalized. Although doctors had existed in England since medieval times, they had only to be good, dignified, and virtuous men. Their knowledge came from books as required by the Hippocratic Oath.¹⁷ Even at the end of nineteenth century, many doctors still practiced according to Hippocratic ideals.

One of the primary characteristics of the medical profession that it was male. Because of the Hippocratic ideal, the development of the medical education system in hospitals also meant the establishment of a patriarchal medical society. Women were excluded from these educational hospitals. Since the Apothecaries Act in 1815, all general practitioners were required to take lectures in anatomy, botany, chemistry, *materia medica*, and the theory and practice of physic as well as six-month bedside work at a hospital. Exclusion from medical schools prevented all women from participating in the medical field:

Women might do the same, for, though women were excluded from universities and guilds, they could and did practice as cuppers, bleeders, ‘surgeonesses,’ and

¹⁷ For explanations on the great Hippocrates and “the Oath” as well as Hippocratic medicine inherited, see Porter 55-63.

bonesetters. Female midwives might learn ‘on the job’ through their own childbirths and those of their friends and family. Hospitals run by nursing religious orders, like the Sint Jans Hospitaal in Bruges, also provided on-the-job medical instruction. (Rosner 150)

Women did not have any place in the medical profession or the opportunity to practice medicine.

Therefore, the medical education system caused the initial delay in the development of medicine specific to women. A major factor in encouraging the development of medicine was the education of doctors. Doctors who were educated in Paris brought back scientific medicine and its educational system to England, establishing the foundation of new medicine. However, college-educated male doctors did not want to specialize in women’s medicine—gynecology, obstetrics, and related fields, such as psychiatry. Although the tendency was towards “specialism,” specialties focusing on female health were avoided by male practitioners. Porter refers to obstetrics as an ignored field:

. . . the art of obstetrics languished because, although it was a specialized skill, none of the authorized bodies wished to shoulder responsibility for it. The Royal College of Physicians considered delivering babies ungentlemanly, while the College of Surgeons, committed to sustaining an elite devoted to ‘pure’ surgery, was equally indifferent. (382)

Male doctors did not desire to be specialists of female medicine. Consequently, even in the twentieth century, training in gynecology and obstetrics was often shortened to a few weeks and did not include “true” medicine, such as surgery and pathology.¹⁸ The medical profession did not recognize obstetrics and gynecology as a legitimate field of medicine until the 1920s.

Many doctors did not view women’s diseases as serious although women had long been coping with the hardships of childbirth and related physical disorders, which threatened their lives even in the early twentieth century. Holdsworth introduces a typical life of a woman who was struggling with deconditioning after childbirth:

In the past, when women were simply wives and mothers, they neither demanded nor received much professional attention. . . . They remember their mothers, some with as many as ten children, coping with miscarriages, difficult childbirth, untreated gynaecological disorders, painful varicose veins and constant tiredness (probably caused by amaemia). . . . Women had no alternative but to soldier on. Besides, one explained, ‘women were expected to be frail,

¹⁸ On the contrary, since The Midwives’ Act in 1902, the education and training of midwives had improved. For more detail, see Lane 126.

it was thought to be ladylike.’¹⁹

Women never had a chance to let the doctor see their deconditioning and even blamed their own weakness. Moreover, because under the aegis of Victorian virtue, they had been educated not to mention their body, women were reluctant to refer to their bad health condition. Many women lived with unwellness caused by childbirth or other female-specific diseases and struggled in silence.

Gynecology was developed primarily in close relation to women’s reproductive ability, which was identified with their social role. According to Moscucci, it was “a study of the ‘whole woman’; it thus fused the physical, the psychological and the moral aspect of femininity” (103). Instead of focusing on a certain part of the body, occasionally a healthy ovary was removed to cure diseases such as dysmenorrhea and epilepsia. Childbearing was considered a factor in puerperal insanity. George Savage, one of the notable doctors specializing in mental disorders at the time, refers to the danger of women with mental disorders extending even to marriage:

In no case should it [marriage] be allowed where there is a history of periodical recurrences, and it is certain that there is very grave risk in those cases of adolescents who

¹⁹ See 86. In the late 1920s, women finally were able to obtain medical treatment for their gynecological problems: “Respectability did not come until 1929 with the foundation of the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, now the Royal College” (88-89).

at puberty and with adolescence have periods of depression and buoyancy.²⁰

He claims that women who have repeatedly experienced depression should not marry or have children. Hence, doctors have interfered not only with women's health but also with their lives. Moreover, the diagnoses by doctors such as Savage were often unscientific, unstable, and rationalized accordingly: "Such disorders are very variable in *degree*" (Savage, "Mental Disorders" 394). The doctors tended to see female patients in their social roles as women, which was colored by Victorianism. Thus, the assumptions about women and their proper roles were carried out in the name of medical diagnosis and treatment.

While the immature system of medicine placed women in a critical position, even to the point of threatening their lives, society required them to be mothers. Society treated women with contempt for their gender-based natures and yet with respect for their childbearing capacity. Those who were unhealthy and incapacitated were excluded from society. Under the circumstances, maternal mortality was high, even at the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite the introduction of narcosis and caesarean operations, the

²⁰ See "Insanity" 98. In fact, Savage as the family doctor of the Stephens, was positive about Virginia's ability to have children in 1913 when Leonard Woolf consulted him, which is evidence that his diagnosis was unscientific.

immature medical education system and the poor technique of doctors made women fear for their lives during pregnancy and childbearing. Medicine claimed to maintain women's lives but, in actuality, it did not appropriately treat women's health problems. Moreover, it interfered with every aspect of women's lives in society. Consequently, the ambivalent relationship between poor medical conditions and the obligation to produce children for the nation's prosperity caused adversity in the lives of post-Victorian women.

Early twentieth-century England required women to assume a large part of the responsibility for its prosperity. Women were expected to be mothers of good future citizens of the nation and, to fulfill the obligation, they sometimes had rather traumatic, critical experience. Although their lives were threatened, women had to go through childbirth without the security of medicine. Women have been weakened without their own voice; and their weakness prevents them to have voice to improve the situation, or bring them out of it. The maternal angel in the house that was idealized in the Victorian era survived in the new century. Modern medicine and medical institutions focused only on men and left women behind to struggle with their maternal health in silence. For married women, becoming a mother was not only an obligation but also a major part of their identity. Nevertheless, it was still risky for them to bear children.

CHAPTER II

1895-1918: The Dawn of Post-Trauma Art

Virginia Woolf's PTG began with her abandonment of motherhood and subsequent start of her writing career. Around 1900, when her writing career began, Woolf had been enraptured by the motherhood, both that of her close friends and her own. However, the trauma of her mother's death triggered Woolf's writing career. Her mother, Julia Prinsep Stephen, had been an ideal mother, and her early death in 1895 made her presence an eternal ideal. Woolf pursued this ideal of motherhood throughout her life. However, her marriage was not an avenue for motherhood; her husband did not allow her to have children because he was concerned about her health. In contrast, her elder sister Vanessa Bell, who married in the early 1900s and soon became pregnant, was a realistic example of motherhood. Subsequently, Woolf's early writing career was marked by her anxiety about her failed motherhood as well as her ambivalent feelings towards her mother.

Childlessness has been a serious problem for many women and has often left a traumatic scar. Some women suffer greatly from a sense of failure, which can cause PTG. In their study on PTG after the experience of infertility, "Posttraumatic growth and social support in individuals with infertility," M. S. Paul and the coauthors explain:

Cross-culturally, the infertility experience is recognized as a stressor event with the potential to cause havoc in the

lives of individuals, couples and families. . . . As the experience of infertility and the medical interventions required to treat it may challenge one's concept of health, wholeness and physical integrity, infertility is often quite traumatic. This trauma may be further reinforced by complex and disenfranchised losses, i.e. hopes, dreams and social roles. . . . (133-34)

Being childlessness is a potential cause of stress for those who experience this loss. While the experience of childlessness is distinguished from trauma following other life crises involving the individual or those close to the individual, it is included as a stressor in a wider definition of PTG. The trauma of childlessness can occur in a complex relation to various factors, such as medical and social circumstances.

In her earlier life with her parents and siblings, Woolf realized that the Victorian ideal of womanhood was essential in a woman's life. She observed that her mother and sisters were satisfied with maintaining their families and feeling the delight of life as women in this role. Julia was an ideal mother to Woolf and was a model of the Victorian ideal of womanhood, which required devotion to husband and children. After Julia's death, Vanessa was a more realistic representation of the proper life of a woman who had married and borne children, Woolf's interaction with her mother and sisters made her see that supporting a husband and children was the perfect pleasure for a woman. Marriage and childbearing were essential

events in a woman's life.

However, Woolf was not able to have children, which became a lifelong trauma for her. After her marriage to Leonard Woolf, he decided not to have children because he was concerned about Virginia's health. Leonard consulted doctors about Virginia's vulnerability, mental instability, and sexual frigidity finally deciding that it is too dangerous for Virginia to have children. However, Virginia suffered from Leonard's decision and her own reluctance to argue against him, which contributed to her jealousy of her closest rival and sister, Vanessa. Her marriage with Leonard was the beginning of her struggle with childlessness.

Woolf's early novels illustrate her anxiety about the Victorian ideal of motherhood and her own childlessness, merging into her artistic ambition. Since Woolf's writing career started around the same time as her marriage in the early 1910s, the urge to have children notably influenced her early writings. These novels depict her interrelated anxieties about mothers, children, and writing. Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, reflects these moments in her life, presenting solitary, empty images of people on the voyage in contrast to the fertile image of the sea, which represents Woolf's anxiety about her forthcoming life. The final death of the protagonist just after her marriage foresees Woolf's consciousness of her limited womanliness, as defined by Victorian virtue. On the other hand, the second novel, *Night and Day*, illustrates her ambivalence towards Vanessa and her children. In the mother-daughter relationship in the

novel, Woolf ironically describes the parent-child relationship, as well as questioning conventional married life. Woolf's anxiety for mothers, childlessness, and Victorianism shaped her early novels and enriched her art.

As a daughter, woman, and even as a writer, Woolf, considered motherhood, which she had witnessed as a child growing up in the Stephen's household, essential. Her childlessness defined her as "improper" and traumatically obsessed her throughout her life, but her emotional turbulence regarding the matter truly formed her early novels. While Woolf never hoped to be a wife such as Julia and eagerly sought her career in writing, she still thought back to her mother and family, regarding them as her spiritual home. Julia and the family life maintained by Julia's motherhood were deeply rooted in her mind throughout her life. Woolf later wrote:

It is true that I enclosed that world in another made by my own temperament; it is true that from the beginning I had many adventures outside that world; and often went far from it; and kept much back from it; but there it always was, the common life of the family, very merry, very stirring, crowded with people; and she [Julia] was the centre; it was herself.¹

¹ See *Moments* 84. Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (1976, Orland: Harcourt, 1985) is a collection of autobiographical writings and contains five essays including

In this passage, Woolf admires, questions, and idealizes the presence of the mother and the family, as filled with maternal love. Virginia's motivation for exploring her unreachable motherhood and struggle with it became part of her literary art. To Woolf, writing meant to return to a memory of her family both to identify herself, and to re-create it in her own form of writing.

1. Ideal and Reality: The Stephen Mothers and the Childless Self

Virginia Woolf bore no children throughout her life; thus, her childlessness excluded her from the ideal of Victorian womanhood. Virginia was born Adeline Virginia Stephen in January 25, 1882 in the middle-class Victorian family of Julia and Sir Leslie Stephen at 22 Hyde Park Gate, London.² Julia was a typical Victorian woman

“Reminiscences” (28-63) and “A Sketch of the Past” (64-159).

“Reminiscences,” which she started writing in 1907, concerns Julia, Vanessa, and Stella Duckworth, her half sister, and addresses Vanessa's son, Julian Bell. “A Sketch of the Past,” written between 1939 and 1940, recollects the lives of Julia and the young Stephens.

² The biographical information on Virginia Woolf is based mainly on Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1972), Lyndall Gordon, *Virginia Woolf: a Writer's Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984), James King, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Hamish, 1994), and Mitchell Leaska, *Granite and Rainbow: The Hidden Life of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Farrar, 1998).

who devoted herself to her husband and children. Julia raised her daughters to be wives, mothers, and hostesses, which was distinct from their brothers who educated at Cambridge. Although she had the ambition to become a writer at an early age, Virginia was certainly enthralled by her mother's womanhood. With Leonard's decision not to have any children, she failed to fulfill the motherhood idealized in the Stephen's family and suffered lifelong trauma as a childless woman.

Julia spent almost all of her married life as a mother. Julia was born Julia Prinsep Jackson in 1846 as the third daughter of Maria Pattle Jackson and Dr. John Jackson. She was born in India, and came to England with her mother in 1848. In 1867, at the age of twenty-one, she married her first husband, Herbert Duckworth, a barrister.³ Herbert and Julia had three children: George, who was born in 1868, Stella, in 1869, and Gerald, in 1870, six weeks after his father's death. Herbert died of a bursting abscess in 1870. After her husband's death, Julia began to stay at her Aunt Cameron's house at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight and frequently visited poor and sick people. In 1875, after Harriet Marian Stephen, Leslie's wife and a friend of Julia's, died, she visited Leslie to help him and soon became a close friend. She finally agreed to marry Leslie in 1878. Julia had eight

³ Herbert was a friend of Herbert William Fisher's, whom Julia's sister Mary Louisa had married. Julia first met Herbert in 1862, when she visited her sister with her mother in Venice.

children, including three from her previous marriage, one from Leslie's previous marriage, and four with Leslie: Julia and Leslie's first child was Vanessa, born in 1879, the second was Thoby, in 1880, the third was Virginia, in 1882, and the last was Adrian, in 1883. Leslie brought a daughter, Laura, to their marriage. Hence, when Julia was a wife, except for a brief period at the beginning of her first marriage, she was also a mother.⁴ As a mother, Virginia observed, Julia was always the center of pleasure of the family and presented a certain dignity, giving the family calmness and peace: "Certainly there she was, in the very centre of that great Cathedral space which was childhood . . ." (*Moments* 81). Julia maintained stability in the family.⁵

By witnessing Julia's married life as she was growing up, Virginia identified a woman's life with the fulfillment of the role of wife and mother. Julia devoted almost all her life to her husbands and her children. Julia's married life included many children from the very beginning. On Julia's life, Virginia later wrote:

⁴ Leaska notes, "Julia's first five years as Mrs. Leslie Stephen were almost entirely consumed in pregnancy" (*Granite* 48).

⁵ Woolf even refers to her mother's great nature as overwhelming her father's: ". . . it would need a clearer vision than mine to decide how far her husband, though now so obviously her inferior in all ways, was able then to satisfy noble and genuine passions in his wife" (*Moments* 32).

Her life had been so swift, it was to be so short, that experiences which in most have space to expand themselves and bear leisurely fruit, were all compressed in her; she married, bore children, and mourned her husband by the time she was twenty-four. . . . She had been happy, as few people are happy, for she had passed like a princess in a pageant from her supremely beautiful youth to marriage and motherhood, without awakenment. (*Moments* 32)

Virginia perceived that Julia's life was wholly occupied by the responsibilities that the marriage placed on her. Even so Julia's life seemed sufficient, abundant, and always full of pleasure. Virginia saw her mother devoting her life to the relationships with her husband and children and regarded such a life as a proper for a woman.

In reality, the Julia that Virginia knew was always well loved by her husband and children. In Virginia's childhood memories, her mother was always surrounded by many children. She remembered her mother's presence and the Stephen children: "I see now that a woman who had to keep all this in being and under control must have been a general presence rather than a particular person to a child of seven or eight. Can I remember ever being alone with her for more than a few minute?" (*Moments* 83) Julia was essential to every Stephen child, and she spent almost all her time with her children. In addition, critics indicate that Virginia's summers at St. Ives were one of the best memories of her childhood from 1881 until Julia's death in 1895,

which Virginia later called “‘the best beginning to life conceivable’.” Indeed, “St. Ives was to become one of Virginia’s most cherished spots, the source of her happiest memories and the setting for *To the Lighthouse*” (Leaska, *Granite* 50). In Virginia’s remembrance, the center of this scene was “Julia Stephen sitting on the porch on hot afternoons, watching children at cricket” (Gordon 13). Virginia modeled *To the Lighthouse* on this memory of St. Ives, in which she had a strong image of a cheerful period in the Stephen family’s life, centering on her mother surrounded by many children.⁶ Julia was always viewed in relation to family happiness: “It was the happiest time of a happy childhood. . . . Julia could have created what Virginia called ‘The felicious family of Stephen in most situations’ (Quentin Bell 1: 35). Virginia came to admire the role of mother as embodying the ultimate love of the family.

Compared with the lack of Virginia’s self-confidence, Julia’s motherhood represented a needed presence.⁷ Virginia admired her

⁶ Woolf later recalled her stay at St Ives as “the first memory,” which included a vivid memory of the pattern on her mother’s dress (*Moments* 64-67). On the creation of the novel, she remarked, “I described her [my mother] and my feeling for her in that book [*To the Lighthouse*] (*Moments* 81).

⁷ Leaska explains her tendency towards self-minimizing: “She never, for very long, felt worthy of praise. The reason for this was simple enough: if she succeeded too consistently she would be denied

mother for her generosity, which she shared with others. Julia considered her role as a woman her contribution to the society. Julia had given people both mental and physical aid since before her marriage to Leslie. Soon after her death in May 1895, Virginia found in her mother's desk some letters that she had received:

There was a letter from a woman whose daughter had been betrayed, a letter from her son George, one from her sister Mary Fisher, one from a nurse who was out of work; there were begging letters, there were many pages from a girl who had quarreled with her parents. Everyone demanded some kind of help or sympathy, and everyone knew that, from her, they would get it. (Quentin Bell 1: 38)

Julia offered her help to anyone who needed it and, in doing so, became a mother of poor people. Virginia praised such deeds and envied Julia for having been such an important part of other people's lives.

Julia was a Victorian mother. She fulfilled her duty as a woman and decidedly opposed the ideas of feminists, which encouraged a woman's independence from men. Marcus describes Julia as a “princess to patriarchy”:

the privilege of making extravagant claims on others. But if she was a failure, then she suffered, and suffering justified an ever-increasing tendency to make demands” (*Granite* 261).

Julia Stephen was an anti-feminist, an active and staunch conservative on the question of rights. . . . She chose, even before her marriage to Leslie Stephen, to accept what her daughter was to 'detest' as 'the male point of view.' By signing Mrs. Humphry Ward's anti-suffrage petition, she gave her name and reputation to an infamous historical document which forever proclaims treason to her sex.

("Introduction" xix)

Julia praised feminine virtue and devoted herself to patriarchy. Julia certainly expected her daughters to live in the same way. King explains, "For her, women found their truest selves by becoming wives, mothers and hostesses" (23). Hence, Julia embraced Victorian motherhood.

While Woolf does not refer often to the influence of Julia's Victorianism, she evidently seems to be conscious of being a Victorian daughter. As Gordon points out, "there were insistent exemplars of womanhood, not least their mother, and they had the usual training in female accomplishments" (68). Because she was raised by a Victorian mother, Woolf had to be conscious of being a part of Victorianism. The biographer Louise DeSalvo interprets "A Sketch of the Past" as a representation of Victorianism. Since Woolf started writing it in September 1939 as the war started to threaten their lives, DeSalvo reads the essay as a "final document" and insists that she chose a Victorian atmosphere to represent her early life. DeSalvo explains:

Of all the possible ways she could have chosen to write this final document, one that might shape the way biographers would write her life, she wrote of her experiences as a daughter in an upper-middle-class Victorian family. Because she saw her family as representative, she was describing what could and probably did happen in other “typical” upper-middle class Victorian households.⁸

Woolf creates a Victorian atmosphere in her essay and embraces the memory of her mother. Through her re-creation of Victorianism as the representation of her daughterhood, Woolf accepts the Victorian nature rooted in herself.

Woolf was not able to escape her mother’s influence for a long time. Even though Julia died when Virginia was thirteen, in her forties, Virginia felt intensely the influence of her mother on her life. She wrote in 1939:

. . . the presence of my mother obsessed me. I could hear

⁸ See DeSalvo 101-2. “A Sketch of the Past” was not in fact the “final document,” though it could have been. According to DeSalvo, in September 1939, as the war began and Hitler became greater, the Woolfs decided that they would commit suicide if Hitler invaded England. After this decision, Virginia started to write the essay. For more details on the Woolfs’ reaction to World War II; see Leaska, *Granite* 412-14.

her voice, see her, imagine what she would do or say as I went my day's doing. She was one of the invisible presences who after all play so important a part in every life. (*Moments* 80)

Julia was still alive in Virginia's mind, conflated with the image of the Victorian mother. Christopher Dahl insists, ". . . she [Julia] is also an embodiment of a maternal or feminine ideal—a numinous presence . . ." (195). To Woolf, Julia was a definitive mother figure, and Woolf was compelled to engage in the daughter's obligation to follow her mother's lesson.

In her daughterhood as a Stephen, Virginia became captured by her mother's Victorian womanhood and was anxious to fulfill this role. In the early 1900s, as she entered her twenties, Virginia was concerned about marriage and having children. It became apparent when Vanessa Bell, her sister, became pregnant in August 1907.⁹ As Vanessa had been one of the closest siblings to her and a rival from early on, Vanessa's pregnancy seemed to induce Virginia to imagine having children herself. Virginia's concern about having children was strengthened by the birth of her first nephew, Julian Bell. Virginia made an early reference to having children in a letter to her friend Violet Dickinson—"Shall I ever bear a child I wonder?"—and seems

⁹ Vanessa married Clive Bell on February 7, 1907 and soon became pregnant their first child, Julian. For further detail, see King 131.

to have been a reaction to Vanessa's pregnancy (August 1907; *Letters* 1: 309). When Virginia realized that Julian was born on Feb 4, 1908, she started working on "Reminiscences," a biography of Vanessa, for him. At that time, Virginia was writing her first novel, *Melymbrosia*.¹⁰ The fact she put her novel aside for her nephew shows her great concern for the child (King 132). Vanessa's childbearing was obviously one of the triggers for Virginia awareness of the possibility of having children. Virginia wrote to Vanessa on June 8?, 1911: "To be 29 and unmarried—to be a failure—childless—insane too, no writer" (*Letters* 1: 466). Like many other women of her age, she was anxious about growing old without a husband and children. Marriage and childbirth became of greater concern to Virginia, and she worried about being in her late twenties and not yet married.

At the time of her marriage to Leonard Woolf in August 1912, Virginia innocently hoped to have a child in the near future. Virginia finally accepted Leonard's proposal for marriage in May 1912, and they married on August 10, 1912.¹¹ At the time, Virginia believed that she would naturally have children like other women. Quentin

¹⁰ *Melymbrosia* is later re-named the *Voyage Out*.

¹¹ By the end of 1911, Leonard realized that he wanted to marry her, but Virginia did not accept him until May 1912. Virginia seemingly decided to marry Leonard because of his understanding and future help in her writing career (Leaska, *Granite* 154).

Bell explains, “At this time, Virginia was still cheerfully expecting to have children. Leonard already had his misgivings but I do not think that Virginia became aware of them until the beginning of 1913” (2: 7). She “properly” expected to have children after her marriage and did not yet doubt her own capacity to fulfill the women’s role the same as her mother and sister did.

However, a primary problem for the newlywed Woolfs seemed to be Virginia’s rejection of male sexuality. Despite her expectation that she would have children, Virginia was not interested in sexual intercourse with her husband. Leaska explains that Virginia’s fear of physical interaction with men was a part of the reason that she first rejected marrying Leonard: “Virginia’s resistance to Leonard’s proposal may have been due in part to the passion he expressed and her fear of the physical aspect of marriage that passion implied” (Leaska, *Granite* 154). Virginia’s disgust did not disappear after the marriage. On September 4, 1912, Virginia wrote about the sexual aspect of marriage in a letter to her friend, Katherine Cox: “Why do you think people make such a fuss about marriage and copulation?”¹² To Virginia, sexual intercourse meant the domination of men over women, which was intolerable.¹³ According to Peter Dally:

¹² See *Letters* 2: 6. This implicitly criticizes Leonard’s attempt to have sexual intercourse, which ends up to causing “Virginia’s hysteria and panic”; for details, see Dally 93-94.

¹³ Many critics see that Virginia’s sexual frigidity regarding

Sexual intercourse lay at the centre of the marital struggle, and must end in a wife being subjugated and humiliated. The prospect terrified Virginia. If she could not be in control, sex was unacceptable. It was not the physical act of penetration, but the psychological effect of being overcome and defenseless that was so horrifying. (70)

Virginia could never be reconciled to the fact that male sexuality would invade her spirit as well as her physical body. Her sexual rejection of Leonard apparently became an obstacle for the Woolfs, who desired children.

A major problem, about which Leonard was greatly concerned, was Virginia's health and the influence that having children would have on it. While Virginia and Leonard were rather optimistic and seemed to believe that she would not have any mental breakdown, the

male sexuality was caused by the trauma of being sexually abused by her half-brother Gerald Duckworth. Leaska explains that "Whatever the truth was, it was George she later blamed for the sexual "cowardice" of her adulthood (*Gratitude* 66), although Dally adds that "the cause surely lays much deeper; perhaps genetic, partly the confusing relationships in early childhood" (71). Virginia herself refers to George's misconduct as a resentful, hateful memory in her later essay: "I can remember the feeling of his hand going under my clothes . . ." (*Moments* 69).

excitement of the marriage caused her headache and sleepless.¹⁴

Leonard confessed that he gradually realized the unstableness of Virginia's health after their marriage. In early 1912, when Virginia was working on *The Voyage Out*, Leonard later wrote: "We both wanted to have children, but the more I saw the dangerous effect of any strain or stress upon her, the more I began to doubt whether she would be able to stand the strain and stress of childbearing" (*Beginning* 82). The seriousness of Virginia's occasional breakdowns seemed to scare him, and he changed his optimistic attitude towards having children.

Leonard consulted four doctors about the possibility of Virginia's bearing children, finally deciding against it. Leonard first talked with Sir George Savage, the Stephen's family doctor and Leslie's friend.¹⁵ Although Savage approved of Virginia having

¹⁴ See Leaska, *Granite* 157. On the early optimistic attitude toward her illness, three days after the wedding, Virginia happily denies a future return of the breakdown to one of her friends, Janet Case, "I wish you were as happy as I am—and it's quite clear that I shall never be ill again because with Leonard I get no chance!" (August 13, 1912; *Letters* 2: 2).

¹⁵ Sir George Henry Savage (1842-1921) was one of the most eminent physicians of the time. He was a specialist in mental illness and known as an author of various publication of psychological medicine including a popular textbook for practitioners *Insanity and*

children—"Sir George, in his breezy way, had exclaimed that it would do her a world of good" (Quentin Bell 2: 8)—Leonard did not trust Savage since he was in his seventies. Other doctors, such as Sir Maurice Craig and T. B. Hyslop were somewhat negative, however. In their opinion, the instability of Virginia's mental state was not appropriate to the prosperity of the race.¹⁶ Leonard also saw Jean Thomas, whose nursing home Virginia had stayed at several times,

Allied Neuroses (1884). His view on insanity is mainly concerned with "moral insanity," which diagnosis is based on an old idea reacting against eighteenth-century rationalism. For more details, see Trombley 107-8, 111-12.

¹⁶ Sir Maurice Craig (1866-1935), like Savage, also devoted himself studies and treatment of mental disorders and held many key positions in the field such as Chairman of the Mental After-Care Association and President of the Psychiatry Section, Royal Society of Medicine. While he recommended Virginia rest and eat, his treatment also did not seem to have any consistent theoretical framework. For more details on Craig, see Trombley 183-84, 189-90. Theophilus Bulkeley Hyslop (1864-1933) was not only a successful doctor and lecturer but also an accomplished musician and painter, and was a widely known public figure of the time. With views on eugenics, he was preoccupied with the bad effect of women's suffrage, alcohol and other social problems on the race and applied it to the diagnosis of insanity. For more details on Hyslop, see Trombley 213-18.

and who knew her well. Thomas “was in favor of Virginia having a baby”.¹⁷ After obtaining the different opinions of the four doctors, Leonard decided not to have children: “. . . in the end Leonard decides and persuaded Virginia to agree that, although they both wanted children, it would be too dangerous for her to have them” (Quentin Bell 2: 8). Leonard’s concerns about her health ultimately lead Virginia to a childless life.

For the rest of her life, Virginia was not able to escape the trauma of childlessness. In contrast, Virginia viewed Julia as a perfect and idealized Victorian mother. Vanessa was a close rival who had attained both a career and a family life. Her two sisters exemplified to Virginia fulfilled womanhood; they were “proper” daughters, wives, and mothers. Leonard’s resolution not to have children prevented Virginia from take her mother’s place, causing deep dismay in Virginia’s mind. In Virginia, this raised ambivalent feelings about Vanessa’s maternity as well as her children, which never disappeared from the depths of her mind. Throughout her life, in her mother’s feminine shadow, Virginia suffered from what she viewed as Vanessa’s superiority and her own imperfections as a woman.

¹⁷ See King 208. Jean Thomas was a proprietor of a mental nursing home for women in Burley Park, Twickenham, where Virginia was first sent in 1910; for more details on relationships between Thomas and the Woolfs, or Vanessa, see Leaska, *Granite* 145-47.

2. Flight from the Mother's Place: A Re-Creation of Victorian Motherhood in *The Voyage Out*

Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, deals with ambivalence regarding motherhood. Its strong autobiographical character has led to discussions of the novel in its relation to Victorianism, particularly marriage and motherhood. However, at the time that Woolf wrote the novel, although the Victorian motherhood, which she had learned from her mother, was rooted in the depth of her consciousness, her career in literature, which had just started, undoubtedly occupied her mind a great deal. As revealed in "A Sketch of the Past," although Woolf seemed to have re-created her mother's Victorianism in the novel, the writing of it was driven by her will to forge a career. Critics have often regarded *The Voyage Out*, which was written before her so-called first success when she achieved an original writing style in *Jacob's Room*, as a conservative novel and overlooked its literary value. However, considering the novel's relation to her biographical background, *The Voyage Out* reveals her rejection of motherhood as well as her will for a career.

Woolf's best childhood memory of her mother was preserved in the setting of the sea at St. Ives. In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf described "the first memory" of her mother, which began with a description of the pattern of her mother's dress—"red and purple flowers on a black ground"—and eventually assimilated it into images of the sea at St. Ives (*Moments* 64). Her description of herself on her mother's lap, supposedly in a train or an omnibus going to St.

Ives, led to the scene of the sea at St Ives, which she calls “the most important of all my memories”:

It is of lying half asleep, half awake, in bed in the nursery at St. Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. It is of hearing the blind draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out. It is of lying and hearing this splash and seeing this light, and feeling, it is almost impossible that I should be here; of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive. (*Moment* 64-65)

The unintended assimilation of the memory of her mother into the sea imagery emphasizes the implications of the mother figure in Woolf’s early memory of the sea. In Woolf’s memory, a fertile image of the sea is associated with her mother, who was always surrounded by many children.

Woolf’s representation of her mother in sea imagery indicates that the sea described in *the Voyage Out* embrace her mother’s memory. The conflict between the sea and land imagery in the novel represents her unconscious ambivalence towards motherhood. Critics often refer to the relationship between Woolf’s early memory of her parents and the sea in her later novel, *To the Lighthouse*. However, by representing the mother’s presence in a rich, fertile image of the sea, “the voyage” and the sea imagery in contrast to the land illustrate Woolf’s consciousness of her mother’s presence.

As symbolic of her mother, the sea scenery in *the Voyage Out* preserves the power of the maternal. The sea imagery represents both overwhelming dignity and the powerful unknown of the maternal ideal. The novel depicts a ship that advances to the sea, bearing great power and richness:

. . . an immense dignity had descended upon her [the ship]; she was an inhabitant of the great world, which has so few inhabitants, travelling all day across an empty universe, with veils drawn before her and behind.

She was more lonely than the caravan crossing the desert; she was infinitely more mysterious, moving by her own power and sustained by her own resources. The sea might give her death or some unexampled joy, and none would know of it. She was a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown of men; in her vigor and purity she might be likened to all beautiful things, worshipped and felt as a symbol. (32)

The description of the sea and the ship shows that motherhood has “descended” and possesses the power to maintain “her own resources.” The mysteriousness and unknowingness described in this passage may be read as Woolf’s fear and unfamiliarity with maternal subject.

More significantly, the symbolical disconnection between a world on the land and one on the sea predictably suggests Woolf’s unwilling rejection of understanding maternity. While the beautiful colors and nature on the land are described and the happiness and

pleasure people feel there are emphasized, the passage also underlines the gap between the land and the sea. People living on the land never try to sympathize with life on the sea:

But while all this went on by land, very few people thought about the sea. They took it for granted that the sea was calm; and there was no need, as there is in many houses when the creeper taps on the bedroom windows, for the couples to murmur before they kiss, "Think of the ships to-night," or "Thank Heaven, I'm not the man in the lighthouse!" (31-32)

The perception of the sea from the land is described negatively. On the other hand, people on the sea also feel isolated and are ignorant about life on the land: "The people in ships, however, took an equally singular view of England. Not only did it appear to them to be an island, and a very small island, but it was a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned. . ." (32). The gap between the sea and the land illustrates the gap between Woolf's and the mother's views of life. The passage even ironically implies a narrow, "singular view" of people "imprisoned" in the maternal world. Although it is true that in reality Woolf was ambivalent about the voyage, the empathy with the divide between the sea and the land indicates the presence of two different worlds: a maternal world and the other, non-maternal world.¹⁸ In both passages, the limitations of people's perceptions of

¹⁸ During a sea trip to Portugal and Spain in 1905, which is

life implicitly and predictively reveal Woolf's nervousness about her mother's maternity as well as her own childlessness.

As expressed in the sea imagery, Woolf's ambivalence towards the mother and consequent praise of a literary career are further illustrated in a love episode in the novel. The novel traces the voyage of an ignorant twenty-year-old girl, Rachel Vinrace, on her father's ship. Like many other characters in Woolf's novel, Rachel's character has been discussed as "semi-autobiographical."¹⁹ During the voyage, she meets many people, including a married politician, Richard Dalloway. Rachel's temporary relationship with Richard,

often referred as a model for *The Voyage Out*, Woolf wrote: "I feel as though I had been cut adrift from the world altogether; we lead such an odd dreamy existence" (Apr. 5, 1905; *Letters* 1: 184).

¹⁹ Characters in this novel are often referred to as Woolf herself and the people close to her. Gordon indicates the similarities between Rachel and Woolf: "Rachel Vinrace is not an exact-portrait but Virginia Stephen drew many details from her own situation: the uneasy innocence of a girl growing out of a Victorian childhood, motherless, oppressed by a shuttered existence, socially awkward, without formal education, ignorant and afraid of men, but fiercely guarding a sense of freedom . . ." (98). About other characters, Gordon explains, "Terence Hewet is given the exact background of Clive Bell" and "The beautiful aunt, Helen, is modeled on Vanessa" (99).

whom she met on the ship, symbolically ended at the end of the voyage and was definitely non-reproductive. However, their conversations indicate the infinite potentiality of a young woman. This relationship represents Woolf's ambivalence toward the sea as a maternal symbol and reveals her attitudes towards her non-maternal life.

In contrast to the representation of fecundity in the novel's sea imagery, Rachel's short relationship with Richard implicitly reflects Woolf's consciousness rejection of motherhood. Despite the plentiful images of the ship and the sea in this novel, the relationship between the young woman and the married man ends as soon as the voyage ends. Richard Dalloway is a politician traveling in Europe with his wife Clarissa. One stormy night during the voyage, Rachel meets Richard on deck, and they go to Rachel's room. As they talk about books, Richard suddenly kisses Rachel and says, "You tempt me" (76). The kiss makes Rachel feel "Life seemed to hold infinite possibilities she had never guessed at" (76). George M. Johnson refers to this as "Rachel's failure to come to terms with her sexuality" and emphasizes it as a factor in making a stronger bond between Rachel and her aunt Helen: "... it does awaken Rachel to her own sexuality, so long ignored. Her new sexual awareness brings her into closer intimacy with Helen Ambrose" (190). Rachel's relationship with Richard does not reflect her future as a woman or affirm that the objective of her sexuality is maternity. This temporary affair on the

ship is completely non-productive and contradicts the maternal imagery of the sea in the novel.

In terms of the woman's position, this relationship reflects the women's independence plotted out in Woolf's mind. While the relationship between Rachel and Richard seems to end meaninglessly, their relationship encourages Rachel to display her knowledge. Although Richard never allowed his wife to talk about politics and despite the conservative demands he makes on her, Richard tries to "talk" with Rachel and teach her about politics: "What solitary icebergs we are, Miss Vinrace! How little we can communicate! There are a lot of things I should like to tell you about—to hear your opinion of" (75). Richard's dialogue effectively illuminates a positive way towards the independent life of women. His expression of wanting to "hear" her points to an equal relationship between a man and a woman. His words, moreover, support the future growth of Rachel's potentiality: "'How strange to be a woman! A young and beautiful woman' . . . 'has the whole world at her feet. That's true, Miss Vinrace. You have an inestimable power—for good or for evil . . .'" (76). His words indicate their equal relationship and seem at odds with the conservative woman's position as obedient mother. This represents Woolf's rejection of re-creating or succeeding in maternity.

Rachel's eventual engagement and subsequent death further represent Woolf's abandonment of Julia's position in her decision to become a writer. According to the critical perception of the novel as a

female bildungsroman, Rachel's journey seems to end in a happy marriage.²⁰ However, Rachel's unsuccessful marriage shows Woolf's resistance to creating a "traditional" female life. After Rachel lands at the destination of Santa Marina, a South American island, where she stays with her aunt for a while, she meets a young English man, Terence Hewet, and falls in love with him. After a while, they become engaged to be married. Their reference to the word "marriage" gradually makes them conscious of being a man and woman. Their conversation explains the marital relationship:

. . . she exclaimed, "It will be a fight." . . . she added:

"Where I want to fight, you have compassion. You're finer than I am; you're much finer."

He returned her glance and smiled, perceiving, much as she had done, the very small individual things about her which made her delightful to him. She was his forever.

This barrier being surmounted, innumerable delights lay before them both.

"I'm not finer," he answered. "I'm only older, lazier; a

²⁰ Christine Froula explains that "Woolf's semi-autobiographical Rachel Vinrace shows how the paradigm of female initiation encourage the young woman to identify with nature rather than culture and to imagine marriage and maternity as the destiny that will fulfill her life." Avrom Fleishman also regards the novel as "a story of initiation and heroic quest" (4).

man, not a woman.”

“A man,” she repeated, and a curious sense of possession coming over her, it struck her that she might now touch him. . . . (282)

Rachel now recognizes that they will be connected by marriage and observes that their relationship is one of subordinate to superior. This reflects the idea that “Virginia Woolf disliked conventionally made ideas about female sexuality and what women ‘owe’ men . . .” (Hussey 133). This reaction to marriage was evoked in Woolf’s conception of marriage as expressed in her later essay, *Three Guineas* (1938). Here Woolf argues that marriage is a social system that places a woman physically and spiritually under the control of a man:

It was with a view to marriage that her mind was taught . . .

It was with a view to marriage that her body was educated . . . all this was enforced upon her in order that she might preserve her body intact for her husband. In short, the thought of marriage influenced what she said, what she thought, what she did. (38)

The relationship between Rachel and Terence represents Woolf’s own notion of marriage. Their repetitious references to unreality—“This body of his was unreal; the whole world was unreal”—predict the failure of their marriage (282).

The eventual failure of their relationship in Rachel’s death represents Woolf’s denial of her female character as a conservative, maternal figure. On a hot afternoon, Rachel has a headache and goes

to bed on Helen's advice. Rachel is then in bed for four weeks and finally dies. The window in Rachel's room has a blind that is moved by the air. Shirley Panken observes a similarity between Rachel's bedroom and Woolf's nursery in St. Ives: ". . . her description is similar to Woolf's ecstatic memory of the sound of waves and window-blind cord in the nursery at Cornwall." The bedroom of Woolf's parents was next to the nursery; Panken explains that Rachel's room symbolizes Woolf's consciousness of her parents' sexuality (84). Rachel's death unites her character with the maternal image but denies her the reproductive role of Victorian motherhood.

Although Woolf was in thrall to her mother's Victorian motherhood, *The Voyage Out* depicts her consciousness of being a writer. The several years before the novel was published were essential to the development of her literary career, not her marital life. One of the most significant events during these periods was her father's death. Woolf started writing a year after Leslie died in 1904. While Leslie was truly a respected and beloved father, he would never allow Woolf to write a novel, which prevented her literary success. On November 28, 1928, Woolf confessed the following:

Father's birthday. He would have been . . . 96, yes, today; & could have been 96, like other people one has known; but mercifully was not. What would have happened? No writing, no books;—inconceivable.²¹

²¹ Quentin Bell explains that Vanessa in this period left her

It is not accidental that Woolf completed her first novel during this period of her life. With her father's death, Woolf obtained the freedom to write. While Julia Stephen's Victorian shadow weighed heavily upon her, Woolf's consciousness of her writing career was represented in the unstable, maternal sea images in *The Voyage Out*. However, Woolf's wavering feelings about becoming a mother and being a writer were the basis of her literary art. *The Voyage Out* is not a simple representation of her desire for Victorian marital life, but it is a product of the complex stream of consciousness regarding her desire for her mother's role and her ambition as a writer.

3. Between Ideal and Reality: *Night and Day* of the Mothers

The second novel, *Night and Day*, represents Woolf's anxiety about childlessness as it related to the motherhood of Vanessa. While Woolf's desire to have children was related to her memory of her dead mother, as represented idealistically in *The Voyage Out*, Vanessa represents realistic motherhood. Vanessa was not only an actual maternal figure to the motherless Stephen children, but also a rival in their lives and careers. Woolf was highly concerned about Vanessa's maternity and her children. As the novel is dedicated to Vanessa, Woolf expresses her feeling for her sister rather than simply illustrate Vanessa's life. The novel conveys Woolf's despair over her childless life and her protest against the conventions of marriage and

husband Clive Bell and lived with Duncan Grant (2: 31).

childbearing in Vanessa's life. Woolf's protagonist, Katherine, is aware of the unreasonableness of the conservative morals and expectations of her parents' generation and creates instead a character modeled on Vanessa. By creating "an ideal Vanessa," Woolf ironically illustrates the parent-child relationship as well as questioning conventional married life with the woman's domestic role as a wife and mother. A childless aunt, Mrs. Milvain, is Woolf's double, which suggests the oppositional relationship with Vanessa. Woolf transfers to her characters her ambivalence towards Vanessa, including mixed emotions of jealousy and envy, perhaps to justify her own childless life.

If Woolf found sources for her new novel in Vanessa's life, one of its major themes is Vanessa's children. Although it is a well-known fact that Woolf modeled the main character, Katherine Hilbery, on Vanessa, Woolf was certainly fascinated with Vanessa's children. In 1916, Woolf wrote to Vanessa, "I greatly envy your brats. . . . I am very much interested in your life, which I think of writing another novel about" (Jul. 25; *Letters* 2: 108-109). Woolf was interested in Vanessa's life not only because of its self-indulgence but also because of her envy of Vanessa's two sons.²² As Panken notes, ". . . Leonard vigilantly supervised his wife's health and resented her immersion in Vanessa's children" (90). With no

²² Quentin Bell explains that Vanessa in this period left her husband Clive Bell and lived with Duncan Grant (2: 31).

expectations of her own children, Woolf was occupied by Vanessa's sons.

Illustrating her feelings not only for Vanessa but also for her children, Woolf completed *Night and Day* with a great deal of satisfaction. On March 27, 1919, she remarked that *Night and Day* successfully presented even trivial details about her mind: "In my opinion N. & D. [*Night and Day*] is a much more mature & finished & satisfactory book than *The Voyage Out*; as it has reason to be. I suppose I lay myself open to the charge of niggling with emotions that don't really matter" (*Diary* 1: 259). *Night and Day* includes the voices hidden in Woolf's mind and expresses her anxiety about her sister's happiness as a woman. Her feelings for Vanessa are mixed with envy and jealousy, which are eventually expressed as despair and sorrow over a childless life and are shown in the ironical representation of children, particularly in matters of marriage and parent-child relations, in *Night and Day*.

Although Woolf admitted that Katherine was based on Vanessa, the character also reflects a part of Woolf's mind.²³ Katherine Mansfield discusses the author's excessive control of events in the novel: "There is not a chapter where one is unconscious of the writer, of her personality, of her point of view, and her control of the situation" (108). This story centers on Katherine's life, and Woolf

²³ Woolf wrote to Janet Case: "... try thinking of Katherine [Hilbery] as Vanessa, not me" (Nov. 19, 1919; *Letters* 2: 400).

must have included her own perspective on life. It is difficult to exclude completely Woolf's voice from the character of Katherine.

Through the character of Katherine, Woolf first objectifies the strength of the parent-child bond, which evokes Vanessa's relationship with her children. Transformations in Katherine's feelings for her mother demonstrate Woolf's denial of the immoderate emotional dependence of parents on children and praises Woolf's own independent married life. Katherine is often presented in her relationship with her mother as well as with her grandfather, who is a great Victorian poet. Katherine's mother, Mrs. Maggie Hilbery, makes her tell Ralph Denham about her grandfather's achievement, thus emphasizing their parent-child bond. Mrs. Hilbery says:

“I'm sure Mr. Denham would like to see our things, Katherine. I'm sure he's not like that dreadful young man, Mr. Ponting, who told me that he considered it our duty to live exclusively in the present. After all, what *is* the present? Half of it's the past, and the better half, too, I should say,” she added. . . . (14)

In their relationship, Mrs. Hilbery has a sense of solidarity and dependence, which Ralph despises. Through the voice of Ralph, Woolf dares deny attitudes such as those held by the Hilberys. Opposing them, Ralph tells Mr. Hilbery and Katherine that they are overly proud of the family: “‘I shouldn't like to be you; that's all I said’” (19). Through the character of Ralph, Woolf implies that

Katherine gradually becomes aware of the meaninglessness of the relationship with her parents.

In the character of Katherine, Woolf demonstrates the changes she expects Vanessa to make. Gradually, she gives Katherine her own voice. In Katherine's rejection of the parent-child bond Woolf expresses her own objections to Vanessa's maternal relationship with her sons. Katherine gradually begins to have doubts about a project she is helping her mother with—writing a biography of her grandfather—as well as the closeness of the relationship with her mother. Her friend, Mary Datchet, asks about the biography:

“You are writing a life of your grandfather?” Mary paused.

Katherine seemed instantly to be confronted by some familiar thought from which she wished to escape. She replied, “Yes, I am helping my mother.” . . . (59)

Katherine is uncomfortable with Mary's mention of her helping to write her grandfather's biography. Compared to her earlier boastfulness to Ralph, she gradually realizes her own excessive dependence on the bond with her parents and begins to question its meaning.

Significantly, Woolf admits a certain mother-daughter biological bond in her characters. For example, her description of the relationship between Katherine and her mother does not indicate any

more sufficiency.²⁴ In consideration of Vanessa's excessive affection for her son, Woolf makes Katherine experience awareness of her mother's interference in her life. Katherine surely feels that her mother controls her:

Katherine, who had been looking at her mother constantly, while the chatter of tongues held sway, perceived that the look of straightforward indignation had already vanished; her mother was evidently casting about in her mind for some method of escape, or bright spot, or sudden illumination which should show to the satisfaction of everybody that all had happened, miraculously but incontestably, for the best. (123)

Katherine is annoyed with her mother's excessive dependence on her, and she certainly regards it as a burden. Panken suggests that a reversal of the mother-daughter relationship occurs in Woolf's novel: "Obviously Katherine felt manipulated by a family that reversed the role of parent and child, that thrust too much responsibility on her

²⁴ Katherine thinks about her mother's influence: "Katharine was unconsciously affected, each time she entered her mother's room, by all these influences, which had had their birth years ago, when she was a child, and had something sweet and solemn about them, and connected themselves with early memories of the cavernous glooms and sonorous echoes of the Abbey where her grandfather lay buried" (113).

alone” (93). Woolf gradually reveals Katherine’s doubt about the instinctive parent-child relationship, and in doing so, criticizes Vanessa’s extremely maternal relationship with her sons.

Woolf’s jealousy of Vanessa’s inheritance of Julia’s motherhood is represented in Katherine’s disagreement with her mother. Katherine shows distaste for her mother and insists on their differences in perception. Regarding a discussion by her mother and females relatives about immoral marriage, Katherine feels the following:

Growing weary of it all, Katharine turned to the window, and stood among the folds of the curtain, pressing close to the window-pane, and gazing disconsolately at the river much in the attitude of a child depressed by the meaningless talk of its elders. She was much disappointed in her mother—and in herself too. . . .How they talked and moralized and made up stories to suit their own version of the becoming, and secretly praised their own devotion and tact! (123-24)

Katherine cannot accept her mother’s conventional nature despite their biographical bond. She feels that she is different from her mother and obviously doubts her mother’s confidence in maintaining the conventions of the day. By illustrating Katherine’s opposition to her mother’s dependence and awareness of her separation from her mother, Woolf, animated by jealousy, raises objections to Vanessa’s assumption of their mother’s conventional maternalism.

Because Virginia questions Vanessa's choices in married life, there are no successful marriages in the novel. Katherine's opposition to the conventional attitudes toward marriage and her rejection of the role of domestic mother reflect Woolf's own infertility and criticize Vanessa's traditional marriage. One of Katherine's conflicts is with William Rodney, her earlier fiancé. William's character is patterned after the conservative male's requirements that women should be both wives and mothers. By Katherine's eventual disapproval of the convention of marriage, Woolf denies the conservative relation between marriage and childbearing in Vanessa's life.

In the conversation between Katherine and William Rodney about their coming marriage, Woolf distinguishes a clear gap in their perceptions of marriage. Through their relationship, Woolf criticizes the unreasonableness of people's identification of marriage with producing children. William implicitly requires Katherine to be not only his wife but also his children's mother. William tells Katherine "Certainly I should. Not for you only, but all women. Why, you're nothing at all without it; you're only half alive; using only half your faculties; you must feel that for yourself. That is why—" (66). William's words "your faculties" certainly include woman's capacity to have children. William's statement clearly opposes Katherine's hope for life as an independent woman.

In Katherine's conversation with her conservative cousin, Henry, Woolf shows her character's brave opposition to conventional marriage. Katherine objects to Henry because of his identification of

marriage with having children. Their conversation implies their concerns about having children. Katherine says to Henry, “‘I don’t care much whether I ever get to know anything—but I want to work out something in figures—something that hasn’t got to do with human beings. I don’t want people particularly . . .’” (195). Henry’s reply—“‘Perhaps marriage will make you more human’” (199)—calmly criticizes Katherine’s immorality, according to his perspective.

Woolf portrays the expectations of women not only by men but also by other women. Katherine hears elderly women voice their expectations that young women should fulfill the same role as they did, which Woolf also heard. Mrs. Hilbery writes to Mrs. Milvain: “. . . I felt so happy all of a second that I couldn’t help crying, “Oh, Katherine, when you come to my age, how I hope you’ll have a daughter, too!’” (143) This short sentence meaningfully reflects Woolf’s frustration that compared with Vanessa, she cannot meet her mother’s expectations. Moreover, Katherine’s consideration of the female relatives’ lesson on marriage evokes Woolf’s similar suffering. The female relatives explain to Katherine that marriage does not allow women to live in her own way:

“Aunt Charlotte was saying that it’s no good being married unless you submit to your husband,” said Katherine, framing her aunt’s words into a far more definite shape than they had really worn; and when she

spoke thus she did not appear at all-fashioned. Lady Otway looked at her and paused for a moment.

“Well, I really don’t advise a woman who wants to have things her own way to get married,” she said, beginning a fresh row rather elaborately. (211-12)

Woolf implies that Katherine imagines a “more definite shape” of her future dedication not only to her husband but also to her children. In the process of Katherine’s increasing resistance to the convention of marriage, Woolf criticizes the partiality of people’s perceptions of marriage, again reflecting Vanessa’s role as conventional wife and mother.

In Katherine’s breakup of her engagement with William, Woolf represents her opposition to the conventional perception of Vanessa’s marriage. Katherine realizes that she does not love William and therefore she should not marry him, after which her hope for an independent life is gradually revealed. The reasons for their breakup are not clearly given, except for William’s love for Katherine’s cousin, Cassandra. However, Katherine, who wants “something that hasn’t got to do with human beings” apparently does not accord with William’s requirement of a wife to do domestic chores. William objects to Katherine, who decides not to marry him: “‘Believe me, Katherine, before we came here we were perfectly happy. You were full of plans for our house—the chair-covers, don’t you remember?—like any other woman who is about to be married . . .’” (245). This dialogue directly expresses Woolf’s mind. William’s

“plans for our house” must require Katherine to become not only William’s wife but also the mother of his children. William’s conventional attitude towards married life dissuaded Katherine from marrying him. Katherine’s decision directly reflects Woolf’s ideas about marriage. Through Katherine’s attitude toward marriage, Woolf criticizes the conventional requirements of women to become wives and mothers, roles that Vanessa has fulfilled.

In this novel, Woolf further illustrates that a childless woman’s married life is sufficient. Woolf idealistically describes the childless marriage of Katherine’s aunt, Mrs. Milvain, as a rich relationship with Mr. Milvain. While the character of the childless Mrs. Milvain is Woolf’s double, she also makes Mrs. Milvain a model of the ideal life that can be led free from convention, which also seems a vindication of Virginia’s position to her sister Vanessa. Even though Mrs. Milvain often mentions her bitterness about her childlessness, her character is not pessimistic. She says of her life:

Feeling that the burden of proof was laid upon her, Mrs. Milvain now proceeded with her story. She was elderly and fragile, but her childlessness seemed always to impose these painful duties on her, and to revere the family, and to keep it in repair, had now become the chief object of her life. She told her story in a low, spasmodic, and somewhat broken voice. (120)

Despite her childlessness, the elderly Mrs. Milvain has proudly shaped her own history. As Woolf’s double Mrs. Milvain represents

her ideal life, with herself at the center. Thus, the character of Mrs. Milvain may be interpreted as a Woolf's representation of her childless life, in contrast to Vanessa's life.

Woolf eventually gave her own voice in Mrs. Milvain's attitude towards Katherine as "an ideal Vanessa figure." Mrs. Milvain hopes for the happiness of her niece, Katherine, and gives some advice about her marriage. She tells Katherine:

"One doesn't know any more, does one? One hasn't any advice to give one's children. One can only hope that they will have the same vision and the same power to believe, without which life would be so meaningless. That is what I ask for Katharine and her husband." (144)

Mrs. Milvain hopes that Katherine will "have the same vision," of the duties of a domestic wife and mother, fulfilling the conventional hopes of mothers.

Moreover, Mrs. Milvain is happy and maintains a sympathetic relationship with Katherine:

"Nothing would have made me say these things but your own good. I have not wished to interfere; I have not wished to give you pain. I am a useless old woman. I have no children of my own. I only want to see you happy, Katherine." (407-8)

Mrs. Milvain's confidence fills her life with great satisfaction. Woolf hopes that Vanessa's life will be happy, with the waning of her excessive mother-child relationships. Woolf represents her hopes for

Vanessa in the character of Mrs. Milvain and her relationship with Katherine.

In *Night and Day*, Woolf expresses her ambivalence towards Vanessa's married life and questions the conventional sequence of marriage and bearing children. Woolf created Katherine as an ideal representation of Vanessa and depicted the process of Katherine's awareness of unreasonable conventionalism to criticize Vanessa's conservative roles in married life and motherhood. Katherine, who tries to live a life independent of her mother and conventional marriage, is described as a character that justifies Woolf's childless married life. Woolf reflects her expectations of her married life without children in Mrs. Milvain's childless life, and at the same time, voices her criticism of Vanessa's married life. Woolf gives her own voice to Katherine, thus opposing conventional marriage and finds her own way of life without children.

Woolf's apprenticeship in the Stephen family taught her to become not only a Victorian mother, but also a writer, after all. The ideal of Victorian womanhood she learned in girlhood never vanished from her mind. Leonard's decision not to have any children dismayed Woolf deeply and caused to bear an eternal burden of childlessness. Woolf started her writing career as PTG process: she casted her emotional turbulence over traumatic experience of giving up children upon her early novels. Eventually, Woolf's admiration of the mother, questioning motherhood, and anxiety about childlessness shaped

three novels. In *The Voyage Out*, Woolf represented her early vague anxiety about motherhood as well as the emotional turbulence caused by conflicting views of herself as an ideal mother and an aspiring writer. *Night and Day* describes motherhood realistically, as represented by Vanessa. Woolf's novels were products of her anxiety about maternity, which ironically enriched her writing life.

Virginia Woolf was not able to escape the idealized mother figure, so the trauma of her childlessness persisted throughout her life, both of which are expressed in her novels. Woolf profited from her anxiety over maternity, which became rich material for her writing. Although Woolf is one of the most notable feminist writers of the twentieth century, she maintained the sense of duty to become a proper woman and aspired to have children. The conservativeness and anxiety hidden in Woolf was given positive expression in her novels. Although Virginia suffered from her own imperfections as a woman according to the values of the time, she transformed the barrenness of her anxiety into her fertility as a writer.

CHAPTER III

1919-1924: Art beyond Sane/Insane Truth

In the late 1910s, Woolf entered a stage of awareness and maturity. Her writing began to evidence her awareness of “new possibilities,” one of the major factors used in measuring PTG. Her writing was marked by the technical maturity of the stream-of-consciousness technique. In her novels, *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf revealed the exclusiveness of Victorian society and its oppression of “improper” women, as observed by the childless self. She saw her potential as thwarted by insanity, as it was defined by Victorian society. On the one hand, in *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf tried to reveal her inner self by creating Victorian characters in a traditional Victorian setting. In ironical depictions of a single mother, a miserable prostitute, and the ambiguous death of Jacob, Woolf insists on her opposition to society while reflecting the irritation brought on by childlessness. On the other hand, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf questioned judgments of saneness/insaneness as defined by society. Woolf displaced her anxiety about poor medical advice and subsequent childlessness on her characters and tried to come to terms with the facts of her life. In *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf questioned Victorianism’s exclusion of childless women and expressed her anxiety about her own childlessness.

1. Flight from the Victorian Aesthetic in *Jacob's Room*

In the third novel, *Jacob's Room*, Woolf's anxiety about maternity is rendered explicitly in relation to her questions about Victorianism. Woolf gradually realized that her anxiety about maternity was caused by social convention, not her incapacity or Vanessa's seemingly fulfilled life. The trauma caused by her childlessness was expressed vividly and concretely in her writing. Compared to *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*, Woolf's representation of anxiety in this novel was achieved by an optimistic process, thus affirming her identity in society. Woolf admitted that she tried to reveal her inner self, and by creating many Victorian characters, she rendered the Victorian world that existed in her consciousness. Woolf described the main character, Jacob Flanders, as a representation of her absent child. In the characters of Jacob's mother, Betty Flanders, and a prostitute, Florinda, she reflected the gender roles she experienced in the society. She dared to place these characters in the context of the Victorian conventions that she learned from her mother. Woolf's trauma regarding her barrenness was obviously increased by people's conventional attitudes towards gender roles. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf questioned the severity of Victorian attitudes towards childless women and expressed her anxiety about her own childlessness.

In late Victorian England, social roles were still decided by sexual difference. Woolf's desire to have children was certainly heightened by these social attitudes. Patriarchal society required men

to function as members of society and relegated women to the domestic sphere as good wives and mothers. Moscucci discusses gender role norms in the Victorian period:

By virtue of their intellectual abilities, it was maintained, men had gained eminence over women; as for women, their allotted task in life was to be the 'reproductive servants of the race.' But other writers disagreed: they argued that there were alternatives to childrearing, although these were still conceived as an extension of woman's functions within the family.¹

A clear division in the social roles of men and women was made by society and childrearing was still regarded as the main role of married women. This social condition not only confined women to their reproductive function but also expected men to be superior. Both men and women were required to fulfill the roles appropriate to their biological differences. Because childbearing was regarded as the essential role of women, Woolf's childlessness must have contributed to a sense of inferiority and failure.

As she wrote *Jacob's Room*, Woolf was concerned about creating effective characters. In this experimental novel, she tried to create characters that expressed aspects of her own life. In 1920, as was beginning to write *Jacob's Room*, Woolf wrote:

¹ Moscucci refers to an article from the *Obstertical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* published in 1897. See 36.

My hope is that I've learnt my business sufficiently now to provide all sorts of entertainments. Anyhow, there's no doubt the way lies somewhere in that direction; I must still grope & experiment but this afternoon I had a gleam of light. Indeed, I think from the ease with which I'm developing the unwritten novel there must be a path for me there.²

Woolf implies that her aim is to create a new style, breaking with the conventional narrative techniques used in her earlier novels. Regarding the challenges Woolf set herself in writing this novel, Judy Little observed:

If the form is right, she will find room for everything she wants to put in, including humor, gaiety, inconsequence. . . . The book's peculiarities of characterization and its patchwork design have often come in for criticism. (106)

Woolf was conscious of creating characters that represented aspects of herself. She expressed her inner self in this novel and the characters reflect her own voice.

In this novel, Woolf re-created Victorian society in late

² See Jan. 26; Diary 2: 14. Moreover, Quentin Bell discusses the style of Woolf's experimental writing: "It is rare to find an author who sees so clearly and suddenly, not the plot, or indeed the method, of a particular novel, but the whole programme for a decade" (2: 73).

nineteenth-century England. Although nineteenth-century English society gave men public and extroverted roles, it gave women the roles of fulfilling the domestic obligations necessary to maintain their families. Hickok explains the condition of men and women in nineteenth-century England:

The twin doctrines of male superiority and the complementarity of the sexes together provided the chief justification in the nineteenth century for an extreme separation of “spheres,” with men commanding the public sphere of business, politics, and power, and women ensconced in the private sphere of emotion, spirituality, and moral influence. (16)

This attitude determined the social predominance of men over women. It furthermore required women to be domestic workers and obey their husbands. As Hickok explains, “. . . besides submission to her husband’s will, the wife was to cultivate not her intelligence, but her beauty and her domesticity” (50-51). Woolf lived in a conservative society, and she reproduced it in a novel that questioned its values.

First, while minor characters apparently do not influence the plot, Woolf created them to embody the Victorians whose attitudes caused Woolf to suffer. The predominance of men over women persists throughout the novel. In the novel, conventional women are discussing “‘Poor Betty Flanders,’” who lost her husband and has not remarried. Their conversation conveys their acceptance of the superiority of men: “‘A man likes to have a son—that we know’” (15).

In the novel, a male character, Mr. Dickens, is placed in a superior position and eschews domestic chores. Mr. Dickens is ashamed of his ‘womanly’ role in taking care of ‘a woman,’ Mrs. Barfoot:

. . . at home where he was made little of, the thought of being in the employ of Captain Barfoot supported him. He liked to think that while he chatted with Mrs. Barfoot on the front, he helped the Captain on his way to Mrs. Flanders. He, a man, was in charge of Mrs. Barfoot, a woman. (26)

Mr. Dickens who is “in charge of” the woman strikes us as a miserable and condescending man. As a woman in Victorian society, to Mrs. Duggan her husband and children were “everything”: “‘I am putting the life of Father Damian into verse,’ Mrs. Duggan had said, for she had lost everything—everything in world, husband, and child and everything, but faith remained” (153). Such episodes concerned women’s social conditions in the same society in which Woolf suffered. By realistically depicting Victorian society from her perspective, Woolf tried to indicate the injustice of forcing on women the role of dependency on husband and children.

Against this backdrop, Woolf created Jacob’s mother, Betty Flanders, as an ideal Victorian mother and a reflection of her own mother, Julia. While *Jacob’s Room* is acclaimed as an elegy for Woolf’s brother, Thoby Stephen, some critics also suggest that it is also a representation of Woolf’s mother, Julia Stephen. According to

Leaska, the interrelationships in the Flanders family are similar to those in the Stephen family:

Virginia certainly had Julia's attachment to Adrian in mind when she created Betty Flanders and Jacob; but Vanessa's extraordinary relationship to Julian could now have served equally well as her model of destructive bonding. For in both cases—Julia and Vanessa—Virginia was portraying the deadly, crippling reality lurking behind the excessively maternal façade. (*Granite* 262)

Jacob's relationship with his mother reflects the relationship between Woolf's mother and her brother, as Woolf remembered it. Woolf created a perfect Victorian mother in this novel, in a character that is modeled on her own mother, entrusting Betty to fulfill her expectation of becoming a mother. Through Betty's creative process, Woolf tries to reveal the distortions in the conservatism of Victorian society and to calm the anxiety about her own childlessness.

On the one hand, Woolf gave Betty the aspect of a Victorian mother, thus making her a double of her own mother, Julia. In the novel, Betty is described as a conventional mother who does not make an important decision regarding her son's future. Betty transfers this decision making to Captain Barfoot, who promptly complies: "He had heard from Mr. Polegate that he could advice nothing better than to send a boy to one of the universities," and he left a letter for Jacob about the universities. "Jacob Flanders, therefore, went up to Cambridge in October 1906" (29), but it was a man's decision, not his

mother's, implying that Jacob's future lies in the male realm outside the domestic sphere. In the character of Betty, Woolf portrays the conventions of society, which expect men to have a social role and women to fulfill a domestic role.

However, Woolf not only makes Betty not only a traditional mother figure but also a victim of Victorian society. Betty's life consisted of domestic chores and taking care of her children. Woolf depicts Betty, who has lost her husband and her son, as a lonely and empty woman. Betty's letter to Jacob, who has already finished his studies and is now working as a lawyer, emphasizes her present empty life:

. . . poor Betty Flanders writing her son's name, Jacob Alan Flanders, Esp., as mothers do, . . . and can never, never say, whatever it may be—probably this—Don't go with bad women, do be a good boy; wear your thick shirts; and come back, come back, come back to me. (90)

In her letter to her son, Betty tried to hide her loneliness and show her courage. Holding her letter in his hand, Jacob remembers his mother as "fresh and vigorous, running about the house" (91). In her portrayal of the loneliness of a woman who does not have a husband and has sent her children into society, Woolf questions the happiness of a Victorian woman's life, in which her identity depends on her husband and children.

Furthermore, Woolf's resistance to Victorian society, which

requires women to be obedient to men, is ironically represented in the prostitute, Florinda, who is an intimate friend of Jacob. She is simple, obedient, beautiful, and without intellect; thus, she presents no threat to male superiority. The figure of Florinda is an emphatic illustration, resembling the ideal woman that Woolf was expected by her parents to emulate. Woolf dared to make this figure of the ideal women engaged in the crime of prostitution.³ Jacob's attitude toward Florinda reveals his Victorian perspective on female modesty. Jacob is attracted to Florinda's disguised chastity and beauty although he admits her to be "horribly brainless" (80): "Jacob took her word for it that she was chaste. . . . Wild and frail and beautiful she looked, and thus the women of Greek were, Jacob thought; and this was life; and himself a man and Florinda chaste" (79). Jacob attaches higher value to Florinda's beauty and avowed chastity than to her personality. Jacob looks only for modesty in a women's character and avoids intellectual brightness. Florinda also beautifies her own chastity:

Thus deserted, pretty into the bargain, with tragic eyes and the lips of a child, she talked more about virginity than women mostly do; and had lost it only the night before, or cherished it beyond the hear in her breast, according to the men she talked to. (77)

Florinda deceives men by "confessing" her virginity in conversations

³ Barbara Dennis and David Skilton emphasize that prostitution was certainly regarded as evil in the Victorian society. See 162.

with them, even disguising herself as a virginal woman. She admits that such modesty is one of the most necessary elements that men hope for in women. In the relationship between Jacob and Florinda, Woolf presents the Victorian aesthetic with regard to the female sex, thus revealing the distorted values of this society.

Woolf concludes the presence of Florinda in the novel by her unfortunate pregnancy, thus pointing out the contradictions in Victorian social values. By becoming pregnant out of wedlock, Florinda, who was portrayed as ‘an ideal woman,’ unexpectedly deviates from social propriety. The pregnancy of Florinda outside marriage evokes the figure of Woolf herself, who deviates from society by being childless. Victorian society, which regarded marriage and then childbearing as the proper sequence of events, excludes not only a woman without children but also a woman who has children outside of marriage. With her realization that she is pregnant, the adverse conditions of Florinda’s life are compounded.⁴ She became pregnant after she had a sexual relationship with Jacob:

Florinda looked at it with a dull expression, like an animal. She looked at the clock; looked at the door; looked at the long glass opposite; disposed her cloak; drew closer to the table, for she was pregnant—no doubt about it, Mother Stuart said, recommending remedies, consulting

⁴ In addition to her unfortunate background, especially regarding her dead father, “Florinda was sick” (77).

friends; sunk, caught by the heel, as she tripped so lightly over the surface. . . .

The door opened; in came the roar of Regent Street, the roar of traffic, impersonal, unpitying. . . . (168-69)

This passage conveys the wretchedness of Florinda. A woman who is unprotected by a man or family ends in solitude and is isolated from society. In the character of Florinda, Woolf tried to reveal the social injustice of Victorian society by presenting in the same character what it considered ideal and what it considered deviant, thereby expressing her own suffering.

While Woolf's characterization of Betty Flanders as an ideal mother was a portrayal of herself, the absence of Betty's husband symbolically evokes the figure of Woolf's husband, Leonard Woolf. Betty's husband, Seabrook Flanders, died years before and does not actually appear in the story.⁵ Significantly, Woolf identified Betty's dead husband with Leonard. As discussed in the previous chapter, Woolf has ambivalent feelings toward Leonard, who decided that they would not have any children. In the absence of Betty's husband, Woolf enables her double to have a son, Jacob.

The novel ends with Jacob's death, which critics have interpreted as Woolf's identification with her unborn children. The character of Jacob is insubstantial, and he remains an ambiguous and

⁵ It is particularly worth noting that Betty recollects her life without her husband. See 15.

shadowy figure throughout the novel. The details of Jacob's death are also unclear. We learn about his death in the war through Betty:

“The guns?” said Betty Flanders, half asleep, getting out of bed and going to the window, which was decorated with a fringe of dark leaves.

. . . There was Morty lost, and Seabrook dead; her sons fighting for their country. But were the chickens safe?
(175)

Betty then visits Jacob's room and realizes that he is dead:

“Such confusion everywhere!” exclaimed Betty Flanders, bursting open the bedroom door.

Bonamy turned away from the window.

“What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?”

She held out a pair of Jacob's old shoes. (176)

Jacob fades from the story. His presence was delineated by the voices of other characters, but he never appears directly in the narrative. After the completion of this novel, Woolf wrote, “It is true, I expect, that the characters remain shadowy for the most part . . .” (Nov. 23, 1922; *Letters* 2: 588). Jacob does not have his own voice or a definite character. Woolf created Jacob as an unstable and obscure figure in the shadow of Victorian society. His vagueness reflects Woolf's impression of her absent child. Thus, Jacob represents Woolf's anxiety about the absence of children as well as her uncertainty about childbirth.

While Woolf illustrated the ideals of Victorian society in *Jacob's Room*, she revealed the injustice and distortion that were caused by its exclusive conventions. Woolf describes this society as seeking an ideal woman figure, and at the same time, clarifies its distortion values and portrays the suffering of deviants by identifying them with herself. In the ironical depictions of a widowed mother, a miserable prostitute, and the ambiguous death of Jacob, Woolf opposed conventional society and represented the anxiety caused by her childlessness. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf expressed her conflict by representing the exclusion by conservative society of those it deemed deviant and sought a way to affirm her own childlessness.

2. A Sane/Insane Scheme in *Mrs. Dalloway*

While Virginia Woolf struggled with her childless self, she projected her voice on social outsiders, such as a non-maternal mother and a madman, making them tell the truth about their lives. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf appeared to treat childbearing and child rearing as ambiguous, inefficient acts although her autobiographical writings, such as her diaries, letters and essays, clearly show her strong desire for children. This ambivalence reveals that childlessness had occupied a great part of her mind for years and even was the hidden motive for her to write novels. It is easy to imagine that Woolf, living in a patriarchal society that required women to have children and raise them, struggled, unconsciously if not

consciously with the view of herself as a failed woman, seeking a way to overcome her sense of failure through writing.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf expresses her higher consciousness about childlessness. Several episodes and characters are concerned with maternity and childbearing, which represent in the novel as Woolf's anxiety as well as her ambivalence towards society. It is well known that the novel challenges society by projecting "sane truth" and "insane truth" on its characters. In its achievement of portraying "sane truth" and "insane truth," the novel offers a realistic presentation of Woolf's true inner feelings. *Mrs. Dalloway* is a narrative stream of Woolf's own consciousness as a childless woman.

Woolf's novels were often influenced by her life, and the creation of *Mrs. Dalloway* is not an exception. When Virginia started writing *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1922, ten years had passed since Leonard decided not to have children. However, her anxiety about childlessness was increasing. A major contributor to her anxiety was Vanessa. Virginia often mentioned her anxiety in relation to Vanessa and her children. Virginia yearned for the same kind of happy married life as Vanessa, who had three children.⁶ She wrote the following about Vanessa's children on January 2, 1923:

. . . what is it & why? A desire for children, I suppose; for

⁶ Panken refers to Woolf's letter: "Inbued with Vanessa and Clive's happiness, Virginia writes Violet that she now thinks of marriage," see 58.

Nessa's life; for the sense of flowers breaking all round me involuntarily. Here's Angelica—here's Quentin & Julian. . . . They make my life seem a little bare sometimes; & then my inveterate romanticism suggests an image of forgoing ahead, alone, through the night: of suffering inwardly, stoically; of blazing my way through to the end—& so forth. . . . I said to myself, . . . never pretend that the things you haven't got are not worth having; good advice I think. At least it often comes back to me. Never pretend that children, for instance, can be replaced by other things. (*Diary* 2: 221)

In this entry, Virginia admits wanting her own children and exposes her jealousy of her sister's successful maternal life. To Virginia, Vanessa seems to have a perfect life as a woman. Virginia had been struggling with her desire for children for more than ten years and should have sought a way to overcome it.

In a letter to a friend, which was written about the same time as the novel was published, Virginia indicates a close relationship between the novel and her concerns about not having children. In this letter, she conveys her nervousness about her new novel and, in the same letter, refers to her personal state of childlessness. On March 11, 1925 Virginia wrote to Gwen Raverat, whose husband, Jacques Raverat, had often given Virginia advice about *Mrs. Dalloway*, just before its publication:

. . . I was on pins and needles about sending it [*Mrs.*

Dalloway] to Jacques; and now I feel exquisitely relieved; not flattered: but one does want that side of one to be acceptable—I was going to have written to Jacques about his children, and about my having none—I mean, these efforts of mine to communicate with people are partly childlessness, and the horror that sometimes overcomes me.

(*Letters* 3: 172)

Virginia even expressed that her anxiety about someone accepting her novel was to some extent caused by childlessness. The letter shows that she was highly conscious about her childlessness, even as she was anxious about her new novel. Indeed, writing *Mrs. Dalloway* seemed a way to ease her anxiety. *Mrs. Dalloway* was written in the context of Woolf's consciousness of her childlessness; it eventually became a way for her to express this loss in order to be accepted by people.

Virginia's desire for children underlies the close relationship between herself and the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In fact, critics have often remarked about the influence of autobiographical factors in the novel, particularly regarding characters modeled on people that were close to her. Actually, at the time of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia was faced with the death of her female friend, Kitty Mexe, and it has been discussed that she modeled the character of Clarissa Dalloway on her. However, in addition to Virginia's grief at this loss, this sad incident surely made her think further about life, not only

that of her friends' but her own.⁷ She was unquestionably concerned with the theme of life and death as well as the sanity and insanity in her own life. While working on *Mrs. Dalloway*, she wrote the following about her characters:

Mrs. Dalloway has branched into a book; & I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide: the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side—something like that. Septimus Smith?—is that a good name?—& to be more close to the fact than Jacob (8 October 1922; *Diary 2*: 207-8)

Virginia tried to make the new novel express something close to real life, which implies a connection to her own life, that is, to her experience with a mental disorder. Actually, she often protested that the doctor sent her by force to the hospital, which was a bitter experience.⁸

⁷ Kitty died in October 1922. Kitty fell down from the top of the stairs and Virginia believed that she committed suicide. For more details on the relationship between Kitty and Clarissa Dalloway, see Quentin Bell 2: 87. On this matter, Panken further claims that for Woolf, Kitty's death merged with the impact of Violet Dickinson's death, which made her recollect her mother's death. See 115-16.

⁸ While she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia suffered from the mental instability as she had experienced for years. In fact, she had "a short but violent mental tremor" and made entries in her diary

Virginia's grief over her friend's death made her expose a long-standing disgust against doctors in *Mrs. Dalloway*.⁹ Although Virginia had been repeatedly plagued by her mental disorder since her first breakdown in 1895, her breakdown in 1913 seemed to influence the decision not to have children. Several studies, such as Trombley's

that imply a connection to the work, especially her description of the insanity of the character of Septimus Warren Smith. For further discussion, see Quentin Bell 2: 100-1. On Virginia's feelings about the doctor, she wrote to Gwen Raverat, "you can't think what a ranging furnace it is still to me—madness and doctors and being forced," see *Letters* 3: 180.

⁹ Virginia seems to have distrusted doctors for the treatments prescribed to her parents early in her life. She repeatedly refers to their inadequate treatment and diagnoses in her letters and diary entries. For example, a year before Leslie died, Virginia wrote about her distrust of doctors to Violet:

Treves is rather worrying. He thinks father not so well, and says he will probably have to have the operation in about six weeks.

But Seton says just the opposite: he thinks Treves has forgotten how bad father was in the summer, and doesn't see he is better now than he was then.

. . . then great doctors are so queer, and Seton won't say anything decided. (*Letters* 1: 61)

All That Summer She Was Mad, showed that the treatments prescribed by Virginia's doctors often did not seem reasonable enough to persuade her to obey them. Her feelings about doctors became even more negative when she was working on *Mrs. Dalloway*. She wrote to her friend, "you can't think what a ranging furnace it is still to me—madness and doctors and being forced" (*Letters* 3: 180). By modeling doctors in the novel on her own doctors, Virginia sought a way to fight against their authority and tried to reveal the truth by writing about it. While her distrust of doctors and medicine increased, illness became a way to practice her art of writing. Illness and even insanity were a part of her creation and enabled her to expose her truths.

Working on *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf dared to mention in her diary "sane truth" and "insane truth" when reflecting on her characters Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith. She explained these terms as her challenge to resolve her questions about life. In fact, Panken identifies Woolf with Clarissa and Septimus: "Woolf hopes to achieve the "sane truth" as seen in Clarissa's character and the "insane truth" noted in Septimus' emotional crisis, the crescendo reached as Clarissa's party approaches."¹⁰ Woolf wrote *Mrs.*

¹⁰ See Panken 120. In addition, since Virginia had thrown herself out of a window in 1904 in her first suicide attempt, but was not injured, several critics have posited parallels between the suicides of Septimus and Woolf. See Leaska, *Granite* 98.

Dalloway to examine the theme of life, projecting her truths onto her characters. In meeting this challenge, she seems to have made some connection to her own life. For Woolf, the challenge in writing *Mrs. Dalloway* was presenting her observations of various aspects of reality and finding answers to the question of her non-maternal identity.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, by achieving both “sane truth” and “insane truth,” Woolf projected her anxiety about her childless self onto her characters and tried to clarify the facts of her own life. Clarissa Dalloway the personification of “sane truth,” feels pursued by the sense of obligation to be a “perfect hostess” and to maintain good social relations because she has failed to be a maternal woman. On the other hand, the shell-shocked Septimus, who personifies “insane truth,” is rational and calmly faces reality, and soberly judging society as not good enough to father a child. The final unity of Clarissa with Septimus, that is to say, unity of “sane truth” and “insane truth,” reveals the reality represented by them both. For Woolf, the creation of *Mrs. Dalloway* is a process of seeing and telling the truth about life.

Regarding the notion of “sane truth” and “insane truth” in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway, and her alter ego, Septimus, can be interpreted as products of Woolf’s strategy to expose her anxiety about her childlessness. The novel includes episodes that depict children and maternity, but they are often ambiguous and hopeless. Clarissa is described as a virgin mother, and Septimus rejects having

children. Woolf did not directly allude to her desire to be a mother, but by analyzing these characters against the social background of the time and in the context of her autobiographical writings, the novel displays Woolf's consciousness as a childless woman and the social limitations she faced as a non-mother. On the one hand, while Clarissa, who represents the "sane truth," feels a sense of obligation to fulfill the role of a "perfect hostess," maintain social relations, and carry out the party smoothly, she fails to be a maternal woman. On the other hand, Septimus, who represents the "insane truth," is interpreted as a rational man who calmly faces reality and judges that society is not good enough for him to father a child. By projecting the notions of "sane truth" and "insane truth" on her characters, Woolf unconsciously tried to mask her anxiety about childlessness, which lay buried in the depths of her narrative. For Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* was as a way to observe various aspects of the facts and to find answers to questions about her non-maternal self.

Clarissa Dalloway is a middle-class wife whose husband is a politician; they have a teenaged daughter. She seems to have attained a perfect married life, yet her character is not particularly maternal. Despite Clarissa's experience of childbearing, she seems to have preserved her virginity and even seems to live her life as someone between a mother and a non-mother. In the sense that Woolf projects "sanity" onto her character, Clarissa tries to be a perfect hostess by responding to social expectations and communicating with people; however, it is ironical that she cannot be both a perfect hostess and a

perfect mother. Her consciousness of being “sentimental” and sociable make Clarissa a “sane” woman, who accepts the exclusiveness of her society, which expels childless women like Woolf. The novel shows that being a perfect hostess is not compatible with being a mother:

But often now this body she wore . . . this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing—nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible, unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them . . . this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (10-11)

This passage is often interpreted as Clarissa’s loss of the matriarchal environment associated with maternity and her transition to a public self, which is patriarchal. In other words, she has to lose her maternal self to be needed and accepted by people.

Upon completion of the essential events of life for a woman, that is marriage and childbearing in that order, Clarissa starts to question her role as a woman and in motherhood. This loss of the sexual self is further explained:

. . . she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. . . . She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated: something warm

which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contract of man and woman, or of women together. (31)

Clarissa's ambivalent virginity not only denies her maternity but also diminishes her female self. Emily Jensen notes, "For Clarissa, there is no self but those things" (176). Clarissa tries to be "a perfect hostess," which is rather "unreal, or artificial" (Jensen 177), and, at the same time, she assumes the ambivalent maternal self. Woolf ironically re-creates the socially required deficiency of women, in which social conditions confine women to the domestic sphere where they are required to be both a good hostess and a good mother.

In fact, with the recollection of her youth, Clarissa's maternal self is implicitly diminished by the relationship with her daughter, Elizabeth Dalloway. While Clarissa's reunion with old friends brings her back to her young days, it also emphasizes that the relationship between Clarissa and Elizabeth resembles that between sisters instead of a mother-daughter relationship. On the morning of the party, Peter Walsh, Clarissa's former boyfriend, makes a sudden visit to her, and at this moment, Clarissa seems to revert to her former self: "When Clarissa noticed that someone was at the door, 'She made to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy' (40). This symbolically shows Clarissa's recovery of her maidenhood and implies an absence of the maternal self. Clarissa introduces Elizabeth to Peter, repeating, "Here is my Elizabeth" (48), which annoys Peter. Her emphasis on "my Elizabeth," indicates her intention to expel him from her relationship with her daughter, and even reflects Peter's

interruption of Clarissa's interaction with Sally Seton in their youth. When Sally, Clarissa's old friend, whom she felt that she loved, once kissed Clarissa, making her extremely happy, Clarissa felt that Peter interrupted them (35). Similarly, Clarissa seems to prevent Peter from getting close to Elizabeth as she did in her intimate relationship with her female friend, thus freeing her from maternity.

Moreover, Clarissa's non-maternal attitude Elizabeth is exposed in her attitudes toward Miss Doris Kilman. Clarissa is jealous of the history teacher's relationship with Elizabeth. Miss Kilman prays with Elizabeth in her room and goes out to the Store. Clarissa is even worried that Elizabeth's relationship with Miss Kilman is too intimate. She says to her husband, Richard, "'Elizabeth turns pink. They shut themselves up. I suppose they're praying'" (119). Jensen indicates "the similarity between Kilman's feeling for Elizabeth and Clarissa for Sally" (175). Clarissa is jealous of "Elizabeth's seducer: the woman who had crept in to steal and defile" (175), but she does not care maternally for her daughter. Clarissa cries to Elizabeth as she goes out with Miss Kilman, "'Remember the party! Remember our party to-night!'" (126). Her words "our party" indicate her consciousness of sharing a womanly bond with Elizabeth, excluding Miss Kilman from their relationship. Clarissa's feelings towards her daughter are similar to those one feels for female friends, perhaps extending to homosexual bond, which is enough to deny her maternal affection.

Clarissa's lack of maternal feeling is compared with Sally

Seton's robust maternal presence. Sally has become "Lady Rosseter," a married woman with "five enormous boys" (171). While Clarissa's "feeling for Sally" used to be "completely disinterested," with "a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up" and "a sense of being in league together" (34), she can no longer share the same feeling with her. When Clarissa reunites with Sally after many years, she responds with "Not like that!" and "The luster had gone out of her" (171). This is also compared with Peter's impression of Sally as "the softness of motherhood" (187) at their reunion. Clarissa's lack of maternal attitude and the words "my Elizabeth," which annoy Peter, show that Sally projects a maternal atmosphere. Sally's change from vivid, bold Sally Seton into maternal Lady Rosseter emphasizes Clarissa's non-motherly mood, and their relationship does not change to one between mothers.

The ambiguous representation of Clarissa as both mother and non-mother is obviously connected with Woolf's uncertainty about maternity. Woolf wrote to Vanessa about her attitude to motherhood:

I'm sure, to return your letter, that I should make a vile mother. For one thing (though this I try to hide from you) I slightly distrust or suspect the maternal passion. It is obviously immeasurable and unscrupulous. . . . In fact what you feel about marriage I feel about motherhood, except that of the two relations motherhood seems to me the more destructive and limiting. (April 21, 1927; *Letters* 3: 365)

For Woolf, motherhood cannot be described with confidence. The presence of the maternal emotion is vague and unclear. While Clarissa is depicted as “a perfect hostess” and a “respectable” woman in several scenes while she prepares for the party and meets many people, her maternal aspects are not concretely described throughout the novel. Clarissa’s failure to be a perfect wife, mother, and woman ironically presents the limitations of Woolf as the writer of her childlessness.

On the other hand, Septimus Warren Smith, whom Woolf created as Clarissa’s double, retains “insanity” as an indulgence and calmly observes society. The presence of Septimus, who takes a pessimistic view of his own fate, is also a double of Woolf, implicitly representing Woolf’s resistance against her own social imperfections. The creation of Septimus was Woolf’s challenge to society’s presumptions about “insanity.” Gilbert Keith Chesterton, who lived in the same age as Woolf did, argues that an insane person is more logical than a sane person is because of his loss of human affection or love-hate:

He [the madman] is more logical for losing certain sane affections. Indeed, the common phrase for insanity is in this respect a misleading one. The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason. (11)

Chesterton argues that a madman preserves only the beneficial parts of human nature. Moreover, noting the fact that Septimus’s insanity

is described as caused by war, the nature of shell-shocked men is to observe reality.

Elaine Showalter performs a Freudian analysis of shell-shocked men:

. . . war “brings a man a little closer to the realities of existence, destroying shams and remolding values. It forces him to discover what are the things that really matter in the end, what are the things for which he is willing to risk life itself. It can make life as a whole greater, richer, fuller, stronger, and sometimes nobler.”¹¹

According to both Chesterton and Showalter, the faithfulness of Septimus’s character is in contrast to doctors who have social status but finally cannot save Septimus from death. As a shell-shocked “insane” man, Septimus is often forced to see the doctor, but he is reasonable enough to think of his own life, pursue literature, and criticize social injustice. He does not hesitate to refuse to bring children into the society, rejects his wife without sympathy, and finally tries to escape from life by committing suicide. Through his insanity, Septimus “called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now at last, after all the toils of civilisation” (67). Through the character of Septimus and his

¹¹ Showalter refers to the Freudian scholar, Ernest Jones, and his study on manliness and war in *Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (2004). See 169.

“insanity,” Woolf criticizes society for excluding her childless self and subsumes her true feelings in Septimus’s death

Septimus tries to think about life by reading literature. In the sense that Septimus is created by “literary allusion” as Jean M. Wyatt explains,¹² life is his literature. His criticism of life is implicitly connected to Woolf, who questions life and death, the sane and the insane through her creation of literature. Septimus logically examines the guilt of mankind and its future, referring to Shakespeare:

That boy’s business of the intoxication of language—Antony and Cleopatra—had shrivelled utterly. How Shakespeare loathed humanity—the putting on of clothes, the getting of children, the sordidity of the mouth and the belly! This was now revealed to Septimus; the message hidden in the beauty of words. The secret signal which one generation passes, under disguise, to the next is loathing, hatred, despair. (88)

He now realized the meanness of mankind, of which he was not aware in his youth. He criticizes people for obliging society by having children. On the other hand, his wife, Lucrezia Smith, who hopes to have their children, ignorantly asks, “Was Shakespeare a difficult author?” (89) Lucrezia’s ignorance implies a hidden, logical idea underlying the insanity of Septimus’s thought. Finally, Septimus

¹² For further discussion, see “*Dalloway*” 346-64.

refuses to have children because “One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that” (89). Although Lucrezia earnestly wishes for children and envies people who have babies, she says, “*She* could not grow old and have no children!” (90), Septimus coldly rejects her. Septimus’s criticism of life is underlined by his decision not to have children.

In Septimus’s suicide, Woolf’s true inner feelings hidden in his voice are distinguished. Septimus felt “forced” by his doctor, Holmes, and the psychiatrist, Sir William Bradshaw, just as Woolf felt forced by her own doctor, and he chooses death. Septimus jumps out of the window:

. . . he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings—what did *they* want? . . . 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. (149)

Wyatt interprets Septimus’s suicide as a merging with society, explaining that it indicates “the fear that if one’s identity is undefined and continuous with the environment, one disappears into it” (“Self-Definition” 124). The death of Septimus presents the fact that conservative society forces its undifferentiated values on all, which can only end in tragedy. The insane Septimus seems to tell a meaningless story, but he calmly criticizes society for blindly

encouraging people to have children. Septimus voices Woolf's position; and his grievous claims disappear in his death, echoing Woolf's own suffering. The novel was a process for Woolf to comfort her childless self and to resist the exclusiveness of society. His message that mankind is not good enough to have and raise his children is implicitly delivered by Woolf in order to criticize the conservative society as well as to ease the pain she feels by not having children.

Eventually, Woolf's challenge to see the facts of life clearly ends in the unity of "sane truth" and "insane truth." The merging of Clarissa and Septimus finally resolves Woolf's ambivalence towards childlessness. Both Clarissa's ambivalent maternity and Septimus's resistance of society by refusing to have children represent Woolf's feelings. By writing this novel, she worked through her suffering to an acceptance of her childless self and criticized the exclusiveness of society.

The novel closes with Clarissa's party, and the characters Clarissa and Septimus are finally united. At the party, Clarissa first learns about Septimus and, at the same time, about his suicide. During the day, Clarissa saw an old lady in the house next door and felt, "it had something to do with her" (127). In some ways, the old lady eases Clarissa's mind. Just after she heard about the young man's death at the party, she goes alone into a little room and again sees the old lady. She is attracted by the silence of the scene that surrounds the old lady: "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” (186). Despite her emotional turbulence in finding out about Septimus’s death, the sight of the old lady calms her. Wyatt regards the old lady as a representation of “the privacy of the soul,” and by identifying with the lady, Clarissa can accept Septimus’s death and achieve the unity of life and death (“*Dalloway*” 361): “She felt somehow very like him—the man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away” (186). Clarissa feels that Septimus committed suicide partly in her place.

Woolf’s fragmented presentations of the ambiguity of maternity as well as her resistance to childlessness are reflected in Clarissa and Septimus. In Septimus’s suicide and Clarissa’s acceptance of it, Woolf achieves a unified identity, which allows her to come to terms with her non-maternal self. Throughout the novel, Shakespeare’s phrase—“Fear no more the heat of the sun”—is repeated, implying the sequence of those repetitions between scenes. As she sees the old lady, Clarissa’s response recalls the first appearance of the phrase at the beginning of the novel:

Fear no more the heat o’ the sun

Nor the furious winter’s rages.

This late age of the world’s experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears. Tears and sorrows; courage and endurance; a perfectly upright and stoical bearing. (9-10)

The unity of Clarissa and Septimus evokes this scene and implies the acceptance of the facts of life. When Clarissa feels her connection to the old lady, she is not afraid of the world and the trials and tribulations to be overcome in one's life. Clarissa gains peace of mind regarding both her own life and the "scapegoat" death of Septimus. Reflecting on her ambiguous maternal self, resistance to bring down a child in society appear as Septimus. The novel shows Woolf's conscious attempt to accept the truth of her own life and free herself from the anxiety caused by her childlessness.

Since insanity was a tool of her writing, Woolf needed insanity to write about the truth, that is, her childless self. While Woolf actually suffered from mental illness, she saw continuity between sanity and insanity. In her creation of the character Septimus Warren Smith, an insane man, she addressed the challenge of expressing her ideas more effectively. In spite of her mental instability, Woolf felt that insanity would benefit her writing: "As an experience, madness is terrific. I can assure you, and not to be sniffed at; and in its lava I still find most of the things I write about. It shoots out of one everything shaped, final, not in mere dribblets, as sanity does" (*Letters* 4: 180). Makiko Minow-Pinkney explains, "Woolf here reverses the normal hierarchy of values, not by claiming for insanity the power to see a different kind of truth, but the power to see the same truth more intensively and completely than through sanity" ("Psychoanalytic" 62). For Woolf, insanity forms a part of her art and is necessary in her writing in order for her to see things more deeply

and precisely. Using Septimus's insanity as an extended metaphor, she addressed the psychological issue of her childlessness.

Mrs. Dalloway is known as Virginia Woolf's first mature novel. In the theme of sanity and insanity, she successfully depicted her doubts about maternity, resistance to her own childless life, and her conscious acceptance of her imperfect womanhood. As a part of her art, the notion of insanity enabled Woolf to express her childless self in the depths of the novel. She ironically created "a perfect hostess" in a sane female figure who was an imperfect mother, thereby revealing the limitations of her own childless self. The insane man's protest against society evokes Woolf's own voice, highlighting the distorted structure of the closed society and concealing her distress with her own fate as an outsider. The final fusion of sanity and insanity implies Woolf's ambivalence towards motherhood. Representing Woolf's eternal desire for children as a primary fact in a woman's life, for Woolf, the creation of *Mrs. Dalloway* was a process of overcoming her anxiety about her childlessness as well as expressing it in her art.

Woolf's literary challenges in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* corresponded to the challenges in her own life. She tried to find something fruitful in Victorianism, and she struggled with insanity, trying to see them from a new perspective. Critiquing Victorianism and questioning sane/insane definition, Woolf's consciousness led her to renew her way of thinking. Posttraumatic period gave Woolf a

chance to re-think about existing notion to define her life, and gradually ease, change, and overcome childless self. Resultantly, it enabled her to write those novels as its fruits.

The PTG process enlightens Woolf's nature as a writer. It uncovers her unique way to see, observe, and find things in daily life and to make it as a part of her literature. In his autobiography *Beginning Again* (1963), recalling the time of their marriage, Leonard Woolf writes about "the quality" of Virginia:

One has to call it genius because the mental process seems to be fundamentally different from those of ordinary or normal people and indeed from the normal mental process of these abnormal persons. Virginia had a great enjoyment of ordinary things, of eating, walking, desultory talking, shopping, playing bowls, reading. (28)

Woolf knew the way to see things differently, and found the way to express it. In both *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf questions the conventions of society to give new possibilities for her childless self.

CHAPTER IV

1924-1927: Challenging Femininity

Woolf's deconstruction of the conception of femininity is achieved through her relationship with other women. As PTGI includes relationships with others as one of the factors to encourage PTG, Woolf finds homosexual relationships to liberate herself from heterosexual restraints and sought to live free from the mother's maternal shadow. While most of Woolf's novels have autobiographical aspects with characters modeled by actual people in her life, her relationships with women became keys to enlighten her especially with the increase in lesbianism in the 1920s. As a childless woman, Woolf sought lesbian love liberated from heterosexual bonds consisting of patriarchy and tries to be free from the mother's shadow of Victorian ideology and its femininity. Through relationships with women—especially with Vita Sackville-West, which deepened from the early 1920s until her parting from Vita in 1927—Woolf obtains a sense of nurture, security, and being mothered.

Woolf wrote to reveal the true experience of being a woman. Woolf wrote to tell the truth of being a woman. While she felt that fulfilling Victorian femininity was to be one of the Stephen women, she was somewhat afraid of becoming conscious of her own sexuality as a woman. Her ambivalent perception of her own sex is only solved by writing. Primarily the femininity of the Stephen women is rooted in Woolf. She later refers to "femininity" in "A Sketch of the Past":

. . . femininity was very strong in our family. We were famous for our beauty—my mother’s beauty, Stella’s beauty, gave me as early as I can remember, pride and pleasure. What then gave me this feeling of shame, unless it were that I inherited some opposite instinct? (*Moments* 68)

In the same essay, noticing her shame of looking at herself in the glass, Woolf also confesses her ambivalent emotion toward her own body as a woman: “I must have been ashamed of my own body.”¹ Woolf has been raised as a Victorian woman without sexuality. As one of the adventures of the professional writer, Woolf indicates, “telling the truth about my own experience as a body” (“Profession” 72). The unfulfilled femininity of the Stephen’s as well as complex emotion about the body enables Woolf to write to explore the female sex and bore the novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*.

1. Re-Visioning the Anxiety of Maternity: Virginia Woolf’s Lesbianism and *Mrs. Dalloway*

Her lesbian lovers keep their childless daughter, Virginia Woolf, under their maternal protection and liberate her from patriarchal oppression. Since she first found attraction in an elder cousin, Madge

¹ Woolf also adds in the same essay that this shame might be caused by her half-brother Gerald Duckworth, who explored her body under her clothes. See *Moments* 68-69.

Symonds, in the late 1890s, Woolf had several homosexual relationships with women. In relationships with those women, Woolf hoped to be their spiritual child. For years before she met and married Leonard,² Woolf had had constant and close relationships with women. Though Woolf wanted to have her own child in her marital life, the presence of dependable, protective women enabled Woolf to remain in her position as a child. While Woolf's childlessness is considered a result of her health problems as well as her sexual frigidity, her relationship with women was also a great factor in determining her fate as a childless woman. This aspect of Woolf's lesbianism also reflects on lesbian themes in *Mrs. Dalloway*, which shows Woolf's immature maternity maintained by the homosexual relationships and further reveals Woolf's desire for other women as a guardian from heterosexual relationships. Through relationships with women, Virginia Woolf obtains a sense of nurture, security, and being mothered, and the maternal women preserve her spiritual daughterhood both in her life and literature. Woolf's lesbianism is interrelated with childlessness and defines *Mrs. Dalloway* as a representation of childless self.

Early death of her mother left Woolf with an eternal desire for

² Dally even sees that some aspects of Leonard were maternal to Virginia: "Leonard loved Virginia, but looked on her as a child, 'never completely sane,' needing to be closely watched and protected" (109).

the absent mother. King analyzes Woolf's attractions for women as follows: "Such inclinations were triggered by a psychic search for the dead mother, who, when alive, had never had much time for her youngest daughter, and by the conviction that the sexual demands of men were dangerous" (79). Woolf has sought a spiritual mother to provide her maternal protection. In the context of her relationships with women, some critics have regarded her lesbian characteristics as a result of her sexual frigidity and, consequently, as a cause of her childlessness; however, Woolf's female partners certainly are not only for the sexual comfort she feels in women, but also for their fulfillment of her desire for the absent mother. Through her mother's death, father's death, the start of her writing career, and mental breakdowns, Woolf needed women to keep her secure in place of the mother.

Woolf's quest for maternal guardians restrained her from becoming a mother herself. One of the maternal women to Woolf is Violet Dickinson. Their relationship enables Woolf to be engaged with immature maternity. In 1897, a few years after Julia's death, Virginia first meets Violet, who used to be a friend of the Duckworth's and intimate with Stella. They start to exchange letters in early 1902 (Quentin Bell 1: 82). Virginia soon becomes more intimate with this 13-year-old friend. Violet supports Virginia during the depressing years facing her father's illness.³ In place of

³ Leslie was first diagnosed with cancer of the intestine in

the absent mother, Violet provided Virginia a secure place, in which Virginia can eternally stay.

Especially in their earlier relationship, Virginia spiritually depended on Violet and seems to be satisfied with the child's role. She writes to Violet in 1902: "Why the D—can't you come up to London? Then I should be petted again perhaps, and mine is such a singularly loveable nature don't you think so?" and also in 1903: "I wish you were a Kangaroo and had a pouch for small kangaroos to creep to" (*Letters* 1: 54, 79). With an emphasis on the erotic nature in the relationship between Virginia and Violet, Jane Lilienfeld contends that, "Having seen Woolf's merger of the maternal with the sexual image, the reader might ask whether maternal images, in addition to acknowledging the lost mother, may also have provided Woolf a safe and available language of female love" (43). Violet's maternal care, as well as the homosexual love, restrains Virginia from becoming a mother.

Violet satisfies Virginia's earlier desire for having children. Following her second nervous breakdown in the summer 1904,

April 1902 (*Diary* 1: 40n1); his health had been declining. One of his physicians, Dr. David Elphinstone Seton, told the Stephens in April 1903 that "the disease was spreading and that the patient must soon die," and at last died on February 22, 1904 (Quentin Bell 1: 84, 86). Leslie's final years are recorded in Virginia's letter to Violet (1902-1904; *Letters* 1: 49-127).

Virginia continually shows her desire for a baby. Violet's superficial fulfillment of Virginia's maternity without heterosexual love restrains Virginia from obtaining real motherhood. Violet devotedly cares for Virginia by offering a stay at her house, and tries to find a baby for her, though in the end she was unable to (King 92). In October 1912, two months after the marriage to Leonard, Violet sends Virginia a cradle. On the cradle, Virginia writes:

Yesterday, happening to go into one of the bachelor sitting rooms, I discovered a cradle, fit for the illegitimate son of an Empress. When I brought forth my theory, however, they fathered the cradle on me. I blushed, disclaimed any intention, and so on; and blushing leant my elbow on a table. 'What a beautiful table this is anyhow!' I exclaimed, thinking to lead the conversation away from my lost virginity and the probable fruits of it. The table was disclaimed too. Bit by bit I pieced together the story—how a great packing case had arrived, how Miss Dickinson etc. etc. Nobody but Miss Dickinson could deal with the facts of life so boldly of course. Nobody else ever routed old shops to such effect. My baby shall sleep in the cradle; I'm going to eat my dinner off the table tonight. (Oct. 9?, 1912; *Letters* 2: 9)

Violet's maternal care as well as her homosexual love encourage Virginia's rather naive expectation that she will still have children for the children, drawing her gaze from loss of virginity. Although

Violet is one of the people who understood the importance of Virginia's idea of having a baby, her anxiety is eased by being a 'child' of Violet, "... almost as if she wanted to nurse or mother the wounded child within herself" (King 92). Violet's constant support of Virginia through her mental breakdown and desire for children further restrains Virginia from becoming a mother.

On the other hand, Vita Sackville-West is Woolf's literary guardian. While many biographers have already discussed Vita's maternal, protective nature of Woolf, Woolf's relationship with Vita, who preserves "literary heritage," is rather due to Vita's role in supporting Woolf's life as a writer.⁴ Virginia met Vita for the first time on December 14, 1922, but they did not become close for a while.⁵ Their first private meeting is held in late March 1923 on the grounds of Virginia's request of Vita, who is already a famous

⁴ On Vita's maternal image in the relationship with Virginia, for example, Leaska explains that, "The tall, arrogant Vita would lavish her privilege and protection on the lost and wandering child living inside Virginia" (*Gratitude* 230). On Vita's lineage and its relation to literature, Quentin Bell notes that Virginia was attracted by Vita for "a certain literary heritage; the child of an historic house, but also a house where the art of letters had been worthily cultivated" (2: 115).

⁵ They were both invited to a dinner party given by Clive Bell; for the details, see Leaska, *Gratitude* 223-24.

novelist, to write a book for the Hogarth Press.⁶ Their relationship started by their shared love for literature; and continued driven by Virginia's need of Vita's maternal protection over her writing for 19 years.

In terms of the critiquing of Virginia's novels, Vita seems to take over Julia's place. During the period of their intimate relationship, Virginia asks Vita for her impression on every new novel and expresses her relief at Vita's letter informing her that she values her role as literary critic. Anticipation of Vita's reaction to *Orlando*, which is written as a biography of Vita, especially makes Virginia anxious. Virginia sent a copy to Vita with a telegram, "Your biographer is infinitely relieved and happy" (Sackville-West 289n1), on the same day as it is published and longs for her reply. After she received Vita's letter of open admiration nine days later, she reveals: "What an immense relief! . . . It struck me suddenly with horror that you'd be hurt or angry, and I didn't dare open the post: Now let who will bark or bite; Angel that you are."⁷ Virginia certainly seeks a

⁶ The Hogarth Press is a publisher Virginia and Leonard started in July 1916 with its first pamphlet, *Publication No. 1 Two Stories*, which includes Virginia's "The Mark on the Wall" and Leonard's "Three Jews"; for the details, see Quentin Bell 2: 42-43.

⁷ See Sackville-West 289. For more details on Vita's critical responses to other novels, such as *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, and Virginia's counter responses, see Sackville-West

mother's approval of her writing.

This episode evokes Virginia's childhood concern about her mother's reaction to her writing. When she was nine years old, Virginia started to write for the weekly family paper, *Hyde Park Gate News*, with her siblings and eagerly sought her mother's criticism.⁸ The paper suddenly stopped at Julia's death, implying that Virginia apparently wrote articles, in part, to satisfy her mother. Upon completion of an article, At her completion of Virginia's sister observes Virginia's anticipation about her mother's reading her article and appreciating it. Vanessa Bell recalls her sister in "Notes on Virginia's Childhood," collected in *Sketches in Pen and Ink* (1997):

I remember putting the paper on the table by my mother's sofa while they were at dinner and then creeping quietly into the little room to look at it through the window and hear criticisms. As we looked, [Virginia] trembling with

59-60 and 195-98, respectively.

⁸ *Hyde Park Gate News* was a weekly paper Virginia produced first with her brother Thoby. Virginia soon became entirely responsible for it. It started publication on Monday, April 6, 1891 when Virginia was nine years old, and lasted until April 1895, a month before Julia's death. Virginia was watching grown-ups' reactions to her writing and was always sensitive to criticism of each paper (Quentin Bell 1: 28-29, 45).

excitement, we could see my mother's lamp-lit figure quietly sitting near the fire, my father on the other side with his lamp, both reading. Then she noticed the paper, picked it up, began to read. We looked and listened hard for some comment. 'Rather clever, I think' said my mother, putting the paper down without apparent excitement. But it was enough to thrill her daughter—she had had approval and been called clever, and our eavesdropping was rewarded. (64-65)

Virginia had ambivalent feelings mixed with fear and anticipation about her mother's judgment and shows modesty and nervousness over showing her writing, traits she would retain for the rest of her life. Later, in *A Sketch of the Past*, Virginia mentions the extreme pleasure she felt from her mother's compliment on the paper: "Never shall I forget my extremity of pleasure—it was like being a violin and being played upon" (*Moments* 95). Virginia's writing career is primarily motivated by a desire to satisfy the mother, and Vita takes over Julia's role, which accounts for her sensitiveness to Vita's reception of her novels. ". . . Virginia's artistic roots stretched back to the unsettled world of a childhood dominated by an often absent mother" (Leaska, "Introduction" 15). Thus, Virginia seeks to satisfy her substitute mother for whom she writes, and aspires for Vita's love and literary gift.

Ultimately, Woolf's relationship with these surrogate mothers precluded her from becoming a mother. Through her relationships

with women, Woolf tried to satisfy her desire for the dead mother and fulfill her need for a mother's attention and love in childhood: but she never does. Woolf's early separation from the mother handicaps her in seeking a maternal role as a woman. Even through her relationships with maternal partners, Woolf did not obtain a real mother to enable her to succeed at motherhood. Ultimately, her pursuit of the maternal figure keeps her spiritually within the daughter's sphere.

Mrs. Dalloway reflects on these interrelations between Virginia Woolf's lesbianism and childlessness. In the novel, Woolf's unsatisfied desire for maternal guardians forms lesbian characters and immature maternity. Through female characters, Woolf illustrates that female homosocial bonds can save women from patriarchal oppression. Lesbianism in her novels, including *Mrs. Dalloway*, has been one of the major themes. In this novel, Woolf's lesbianism in relation to her immature maternity interconnects the protagonist Clarissa Dalloway's rejection of men, preserved virginity, and her adolescent female love as a representation of her childless life. Clarissa's unknown sympathy with the old lady further symbolizes Woolf's desire for maternal protection from homosexual guardians, which enables her to be liberated from the heterosexuality in patriarchy. *Mrs. Dalloway* embodies the inextricable bond between Woolf's women-identified nature and childlessness.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's desire for women and immature maternity firstly appear as the protagonist's symbolical separation

from her husband and the following re-emergence of virginity.

Clarissa Dalloway is a middle-aged wife of a politician and a mother of a teenage girl. Her husband, Richard, who is concerned about her health, offers her a separate bedroom. In spite of her experience of childbearing, Clarissa considers herself as having preserved virginity. Clarissa reflects on her virginity in the isolated attic room:

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went upstairs, paused at the window, came to the bathroom . . . the room was an attic; the bed narrow; and lying there reading, for she slept badly, she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment—for example on the river beneath the woods at Clieveden—when, through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again. (31)

Her solitude reminds her of virginity as well as of her rejection of heterosexual love. Wyatt reads the sheets and bed in the bedroom of the attic room as a symbolic fusion of “death and sterility” (*“Dalloway”* 355). Clarissa’s expellant of men and her desire for virginity only maintained by female homosexual relationships correspond to Woolf’s own lesbian experience.

Clarissa’s rejection of men makes her aware of her own admiration for the female homosexual relationship. Her separation from the husband enables her to think of the security and sympathy

women can share. Clarissa continues her self-reflection:

She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated: something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contract of man and woman, or of women together. For that she could dimly perceive. She resented it, had a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, sent by Nature (who is invariably wise); yet she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. (31-32)

References to the attraction of grown-up women evoke Woolf's maternal women. Clarissa's mystic virginity and consideration of "the charm of a woman" imply Woolf's own consciousness of the interrelationship between a lesbian relationship and immature maternity.

Clarissa's consciousness of preserving virginity is further connected to the sense of security homosexuality provides women. Sally Seton is Clarissa's close friend from youth.⁹ Clarissa recalls

⁹ Critics have noticed that the character of Sally Seton is based on Margaret (Madge) Vaughan: for instance, Eileen Barrett remarks:

Numerous critics notice that Woolf modeled the relationship between Clarissa and Sally Seton upon her own love for Madge Symonds Vaughan, the oldest daughter

the female friend and adolescent love with her. Obtaining comfort from her feeling for women, Clarissa now recounts her memory with Sally. Clarissa recollects days that she spent with Sally and that their relationship at the time was pure and exclusive:

The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it has a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up. It was protective, on her side; sprang from a sense of being in league together, a presentiment of something that was bound to part them (they spoke of marriage always as a catastrophe), which led to this chivalry, this protective feeling which was much more on her side than Sally's. (34)

of John Addington Symonds. . . . In the passionate friendship of Sally and Clarissa, Woolf captures the intermingling of the intellectual and erotic, the personal and the political that she experienced in her own feminist friendships" (151).

Madge, Julia's nephew, is Virginia's first woman lover and another surrogate mother. Virginia "had a crush" on this 13-year-old cousin, and, in a letter to Madge, Virginia calls her "Mama Vaughan" and herself "your infant"; for the details, see Quentin Bell 1: 60, King 74 and *Letters* 1: 161.

The scene emphasizes the purity of their relationship, which implicitly shows its homosexuality.

Moreover, the lesbian relationship is described as a woman's resistance against the heterosexual social system. Clarissa's feeling of peace surrounding her relationship with Sally is contrasted with the scene in which male friends invade. When the relationship between Clarissa and Sally reaches a climax with their kissing, their male friends break into the scene and the peace is suddenly and completely destroyed:

Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it—a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked. . . , she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!—when old Joseph and Peter faced them:

“Star-gazing?” said Peter.

It was like running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!

Nor for herself. She felt only how Sally was being mauled already, maltreated; she felt his hostility; his jealousy; his determination to break into their companionship. All this she saw as one sees a landscape in

a flash of lightning. . . . (35-36)

Sally's kissing represents homosexual peace without men, which is in contrast to the moment disturbed by men and to Clarissa's unsettled mind. While Peter's "determination to break into their companionship" indicates male ideological intrusion as well as its oppression of women, Clarissa's disgust toward his attitude expresses a desire to maintain the exclusiveness of female homosexuality rooted in this novel.

Clarissa's female homosexual relationships implicitly indicate Woolf's desire for security from the heterosexual social system. Woolf obviously feels pressure from the heterosexual social system due to childlessness. In her essay, *Three Guineas*, Woolf refers to marriage, a primary form of the heterosexual relationship, as invasion into women's inner self:

It was with a view to marriage that her mind was taught. . . . It was with a view to marriage that her body was educated . . . all this was enforced upon her in order that she might preserve her body intact for her husband. In short, the thought of marriage influenced what she said, what she thought, what she did. (38)

Woolf criticizes that every young girl is educated to marriage as 'the goal' throughout her girlhood, and that marriage puts "her body," which implicitly shows her role of having children, under the complete control of her husband.

Reflecting Woolf's resistance against heterosexual ideology, a

relationship between Clarissa and an unknown old lady symbolizes a woman's achievement of inner peace. Earlier in the day, Clarissa finds an old lady in the window of the neighbor, who later brings her calmness through their spiritual connection. Hearing Big Ben, Clarissa observes the old lady and feels solemnity and security:

How extraordinary it was, strange, yes, touching, to see the old lady. . . move away from the window, as if she were attached to that sound, that string. Gigantic as it was, it had something to do with her. Down, down, into the midst of ordinary things the finger fell, making the moment solemn. She was forced, so Clarissa imagined, by that sound, to move, to go—but where? Clarissa tried to follow her as she turned and disappeared, and could still just see her white cap moving at the back of the bedroom . . . when, thought Clarissa, that's the miracle, that's the mystery; that old lady, she meant, whom she could see going from chest of drawers to dressing-table. She could still see her. (126-27).

Clarissa identifies the old lady with Big Ben because of her dignity and privacy.

The old lady liberates Clarissa from the heterosexual social system. At the end of the day, Clarissa hosts a party and invites several public notable figures, such as the prime minister, as well as old acquaintances. By the reuniting with the old lady, Clarissa successfully absolves herself from the duties of the party, which

symbolizes the heterosexual social system. When Clarissa again finds the lady in the window during the party, their relationship produces a sense of security in Clarissa. Clarissa notices that “the old lady stared straight at her,” and thinks:

It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed. . . . 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. (186)

The moment in which Clarissa observes the lady provides her with spiritual freedom from the party. Leaving the party, which represents her social life, Clarissa obtains a peaceful mind in relation to the old lady. While “. . . the noise of the party represents the life of the world,” “The old woman represents the privacy of the soul”(Wyatt, “*Dalloway*” 361). The old lady allows Clarissa to reject the heterosexual community by forming a homosexual relationship with Clarissa. Clarissa’s identification of herself with the old lady reveals Woolf’s consciousness of female homosocial bonds as liberation from a heterosexual social structure.

Lesbianism in *Mrs. Dalloway* derives from Woolf’s childless life. Clarissa’s virginity recovered beyond childbearing, and her bond with the old girlfriend indicates Woolf’s immature maternity preserved by the maternal women. The novel shows Woolf’s consciousness of female homosexual relationships as closely related

to her flight from the heterosexual social system. While Woolf remains childless under a maternal women's protection, she is secure from patriarchal attacks against a childless woman. Lesbianism in *Mrs. Dalloway* is not a simple feministic rejection of male-dominated ideology, but is a representation of Woolf's survival as a childless self.

After all, lesbian partners of Virginia Woolf do not only keep her in childless daughterhood, but also give her spiritual peace, free from heterosexual ideology. There were always women in Woolf's life. Woolf has women partners as her guardians and seeks ideological, spiritual peace above sexual refuge in her relationship with them. They helped her to get over her parents' death and several health problems, and eventually to reach her own art. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, women's homosexual bonds exclude men, maternity, and the heterosexual social system, and present a woman's ultimate calmness of spirit, which only exists between women. While deep in her mind Woolf desires women's maternal protection and hesitates to have children, she is still captured by a socially derived desire to become a mother. Woolf exposes this ambivalent feeling in *Mrs. Dalloway* and asks lesbian mothers to save her from patriarchy.

2. Love and Shadow: Myth of Motherhood in *To the Lighthouse*

To live as a writer, Woolf had to kill the angelic mother's shadow. While Woolf desires to have children just like her mother does, Woolf's ambition to be a writer prevents her from succeeding in

the mother's place. For Virginia, Julia was a perfect mother even though she did not live a perfect life. Becoming a mother is not the only desire Woolf wanted to satisfy; she also hoped for success as a writer, which her mother never hoped to do. *To the Lighthouse* is not a simple fictionalized biography of Julia Stephen or elegy for her,¹⁰ but it is Woolf's way of dealing with the challenge of her mother as well as for her literary life. The novel represents Woolf's consciousness as she liberates herself from her mother's shadow and enables herself to be a writer. Living as a writer is a complete separation from the mother's presence and represents the choice of a different life from the mother's.

For Woolf, writing means to have a voice against patriarchy. Feeling hostile toward 'the Angel in the House' as a symbol of patriarchal woman, Woolf essentially writes to express herself free from patriarchal oppression. In a later essay "Professions for Women" (1942), which is based on a speech given to the London and National Society for Women's Service on January 21, 1931, Woolf argues that writing is a process to liberate herself from patriarchal ideology.¹¹

¹⁰ Gillespie F. Diane calls *To the Lighthouse* a fictionalized novel of Julia Stephen's biographies; for more details, see "Elusive Julia" 2.

¹¹ The National Society for Women's Service was founded by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, a president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), and a sister of Lytton Strachy.

Throughout the essay, Woolf identifies “a woman writer” as being different from a male writer and criticizes being “the Angel in the House”:

Had I not killed her [the Angel in the House] she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. For, as I found, directly I put pen to paper, you cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel in the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women; they must charm, they must conciliate, they must—to put it bluntly—tell lies if they are to succeed. . . . Killing the Angel in the

Philippa Strachy, was a secretary of the society. Philippa invited Woolf to speak to the meeting at the London branch; for more details, see Black 42; Holton 285; and *Diary* 4: 6. On relationships between suffrage groups and Woolf, while she was not certainly an active participant, some had significant influence on her literature: for instance, Naomi Black points out that NUWSS provided Woolf some ideas on “women’s activism in England” and the vote discussed in *Three Guineas*; and the People’s Suffrage Federation, which Woolf only joined, “. . . had some impact on Woolf’s perception of the suffrage struggles and also on her writing about the relationship between women and war” (42-43).

House was part of the occupation of a woman writer.

(“Professions” 59-60)

Woolf shows much annoyance at being betrayed by the ‘angelic’ women under patriarchal control and has obvious determination to oppose them, which is defined as a women writer’s obligation. Trying to fulfill it, Woolf had to destroy her bond to the patriarchal angel.

Julia Stephen was a primary ‘Angel in the House’ for Woolf. Julia was not only playing a proper Victorian mother’s role in the Stephen family, but she had been also familiar with various notions of women’s convention of the time. Especially after the death of her first husband, Julia was comforted by several books on conventional sentiments about women’s roles, which were given to her by her parents.¹² As Julia possessed one of the canonical books, Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1966), from which the phrase came, she certainly idealized the notion of the Angel in the House and practiced Victorian womanhood. Opposed to Virginia, Julia Stephen was a typical Victorian mother who expected her daughters to fulfill a ‘proper’ woman’s role.

Her mother’s angelic life did not attract Virginia. While Virginia wanted to succeed in Julia’s place as a mother, she somewhat laments the mother’s life, which ends up leaving nothing more than seven children. Julia did not write or her thoughts were not often

¹² Julia did not leave any specific vision on those books; for more details, see Gillespie, “Elusive Julia” 10-11.

recorded. Virginia observes her mother, who “married two very different men”:

For what reality can remain real of a person who died forty-years ago at the age of forty-nine, without leaving a book, or picture, or any piece of work—apart from the three children who now survive and the memory of her that reminds in their minds? There is the memory; but there is nothing to check that memory by; nothing to bring it to ground with. (*Moments* 85)

Virginia sympathetically criticizes her mother’s life. Unlike Vanessa a painter or herself a writer, Julia did not leave anything for herself in history. While Virginia continued to record her life in writing; as Gillespie notes that “We know some facts about Julia Stephen’s life, largely because of her family,” Julia only lived within the others’ memory (“Elusive Julia” 1).

Eventually, Woolf’s desire to be a mother was never compatible with her art of writing. As a writer, she chooses to have her own voice against patriarchy and hopes to leave an impression of herself in history instead of becoming one of the mothers like Julia. As Rich insists: “. . . to be a female human being trying to fulfill traditional female functions in a traditional way *is* in direct conflict with the subversive function of the imagination,” implying that women cannot fulfill both roles as a ‘proper woman’ and as an artist (“Dead” 43). Woolf cannot write above her desire of becoming a mother. To survive as a writer, Woolf had to give up her child and

fight against her patriarchal mother.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf tries to liberate herself from her mother by breaking the Victorian image. In the Victorian mother's shadow and idyllic scenery from her childhood, Woolf conceals her voices against patriarchy. The novel presents not only Woolf's mother but also her feeling about her mother's life. As Woolf admits, "I described her [my mother] and my feeling for her in that book [*To the Lighthouse*]," her ambivalent feeling about the mother controls herself to create the mother figure (*Moments* 81). Woolf did not simply re-create Julia Stephen or her childhood, but did form an ideal life of the woman.

The female protagonist, Mrs. Ramsay, gradually unveils the novel's unconventional nature hidden behind the Victorian atmosphere. Mrs. Ramsay is a fifty-year-old wife and mother of eight. Taking a role of a perfect hostess hosting the guests in the summer house, Mrs. Ramsay surely evokes Julia Stephen at the Stephens' summer house in St. Ives;¹³ however, despite the similarity in the situation, Woolf depicts Mrs. Ramsay as a spiritually independent, confident woman. In contrast with the Victorian setting and appearance of the conservative mother, she observes men with a sense of superiority. Mrs. Ramsay's sentiments about men are explained:

¹³ Leaska notes that, "St. Ives was to become one of Virginia's most cherished spot, the source of her happiest memories and the setting for *To the Lighthouse*" (*Gratitude* 50).

Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain; for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential. . . .(6)

Mrs. Ramsay insists that women also have a certain role in society as men do and asks for as equal respect as women have for men. As one of Mrs. Ramsay's admirers, Lily Briscoe, adds to Mrs. Ramsay, ". . . she pitied men always as if they lacked something—women never, as if they had something" (94). Behind the conventional setting, Woolf emphasizes the female protagonist as a more authorized, controlling presence over men.

On marriage, Mrs. Ramsay is also critical of the Angel in the House. Opposed to her image of the conventional wife and mother, she praises women's more independent life. Mrs. Ramsay insists on maintaining her independence: "She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband" (66). Mrs. Ramsay begins to doubt her own marriage and now expects her daughters to marry in a different way from hers:

. . .whatever she might feel about her own transaction, she had had experiences which need not happen to every one . . .she was driven on, too quickly she knew, almost as

if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children.

Was she wrong in this, she asked herself, reviewing her conduct for the past week or two. . . . (66-67)

Speaking for Woolf, Mrs. Ramsay questions a Victorian woman's duty to fulfill marriage and motherhood.

The image of the lighthouse symbolically expresses Woolf's struggle with women's fate that is forced to reflect patriarchal ideology. The scene that Mrs. Ramsay illuminated by a light from the lighthouse ironically emphasizes the variability of a woman's life. One night, after all of her children went to bed, Mrs. Ramsay alone saw a light from the lighthouse and compares herself with the light:

Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. (69-70)

Mrs. Ramsay identified herself with the light, which symbolically expresses a power to define her as a mother.

The figure of Mrs. Ramsay illuminated with the light evokes

Elisabeth Badinter's notion in *Mother Love* (1980), which explains women's variable situation forced on them by patriarchy:

When the ideological spotlight illuminates only the man-father and gives him all the power, the mother retreats into the shadows and her status is reduced to that of the child. In contrast, when the society shows an interest in the child, in its survival and in its upbringing, the spotlight turns to the mother, who becomes the essential person, to the detriment of the father. (3-4)

Badinter criticizes, by comparing the light with patriarchal ideology, that the light has a power to value a woman and insists that there is no maternal instinct but an ideology to define a woman. The entire happiness Mrs. Ramsay feels as well as the perfect attraction to her husband, as Mr. Ramsay observes her in her illuminated light—"Ah! She was lovely, lovelier now than ever he thought" (72)—ironically represent a woman defined and praised by patriarchal ideology.

Lily Briscoe further reveals Woolf's attempt at liberation from the heterosexual bond. Lily is a young and unmarried painter, and her attitude toward her art as a painter is often interpreted in relation to Woolf as a writer.¹⁴ Conflict between Mrs. Ramsay's

¹⁴ Like other characters in this novel, Lily Briscoe is also discussed as a double of the people closest to Woolf: for example, Gillespie regards Vanessa Bell as a model of Lily (*Sisters* 198); and Hermione Lee sees her father Leslie Stephen in Lily's nature (*Novels*

conservativeness and Lily's progressiveness represents Woolf's own inner conflict between her desire to become a mother and have a literary career.

Lily Briscoe's quest for the meaning of her existence and need to obtain a vision through the process of painting are assimilated with Woolf's struggling attitude toward career. Lily is one of the guests who gathered at Ramsay's summer house and often struggled with the idea that she is not needed by anyone. In other words, Lily is contrast with Mrs. Ramsay, who is always surrounded by friends and family and devotes herself to them. Lily thinks of her painting and the pressures she experiences from her art:

It was in that 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 this 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. (21)

Lily feels that painting is an act of resistance to some great power, which implicitly forces women to be engaged in domestic life. A "thousand of forces" implicitly represents Victorian ideology such as

137).

shown in a conservative young philosopher and one of the Ramsay's guests, as explained in Charles Tansley's words: "Women can't paint, women can't write. . ." (53). Lily, who hates to be watched during her painting and always feels unidentified pressure, presents Woolf's feelings about her writing career.

In spite of the clear difference between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily's nature as a woman, there is an ultimate bond between them. Their bond reflects Woolf's emotional turbulence on her career as a woman. One of the main interactions between them is Lily's painting of Mrs. Ramsay. Lily has been struggling to complete the picture throughout the story. Although Mrs. Ramsay does not understand Lily's art or her life as a painter, she is somewhat fond of Lily: "With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face, she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; she was an independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it . . ." (19). Also, Lily admires Mrs. Ramsay as she ". . . had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself . . . at Mrs. Ramsay's knee and say to her—but what could one say to her? 'I'm love with you?' No, that was not true. 'I'm in love with this all'. . ." (21). Despite the differences in their nature as women as well as disagreement over life, they rather sympathize with each other. On the gap between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily, Rachel Bowlby notes that "The unification or bringing together of disparate things, of the 'discomposed', which Mrs. Ramsay seeks to achieve by marryings and motherings, is also what Lily attempts in the field of art" (63). The bond between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily represents the

incompatibility of being a mother and being an artist as well as Woolf's own conflict about her career.

Lily's eventual achievement of her art without Mrs. Ramsay implies Woolf's success as a writer. As ten years has passed, Mrs. Ramsay has passed away, and Lily is again in Ramsay's summer house and recalls her. Lily now realizes that she is not under Mrs. Ramsay's influence anymore:

Mrs. Ramsay has faded and gone, she thought. We can override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas. She recedes further and further from us. . . one would have to say to her, It has all gone against your wishes. They're happy like that; I'm happy like this. Life has changed completely. At that all her being, even her beauty, became for a moment, dusty and out of date.
(198)

Lily now feels liberated from the influence of Mrs. Ramsay. As Lily describes Mrs. Ramsay and her picture as, "she could not achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces," their nature as an angel in the house and new woman are hardly compatible (218). By Mrs. Ramsay's disappearance from Lily's mind, Woolf 'kills' the angel in the house as a part of her art. To Minnow-Pinkney, "She [Mrs. Ramsay] is the 'Angel in the House' whom Lily must kill so that she can establish her own identity as a new woman, professional, unmarried, independent" (*Problem* 111). Lily does not only choose to live as an independent woman by her own but also her interaction of

Mrs. Ramsay—painting Mrs. Ramsay—enables her to depict her life as a painter. In addition to an ambivalent but necessary relationship between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily, Lily's final triumph, or establishment of her identity, represents Woolf's conflict between an angelic life and life as a writer.

While Mrs. Ramsay is partly a re-creation of the Victorian mother, Julia Stephen, Lily Briscoe and her relationship with Mrs. Ramsay represent Woolf's conflict between angelic life and her life as a writer. Reflecting Woolf's desire for a sufficient marital life with husband and children, the presence of Mrs. Ramsay satisfactorily fulfills a role as a wife and mother; however, at the same time, she seeks the art of writing.

After all, writing *To the Lighthouse* was Woolf's challenge for emancipation from the feminine mother. By critically re-creating the mother's figure and the Victorian family scene in the novel, she tries to kill the angelic mother's shadow. She later wrote about the relationship between Julia and the novel:

. . . I wrote the book [To the Lighthouse] very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her.

I suppose that I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest. (*Moments* 81)

She expresses her ambivalent feelings about the conservative mother;

and, at the same time, she creates a voice against patriarchy. On writing about her mother, Woolf confesses, “I found it now curiously difficult to describe both my feeling for her, and herself” (*Moments* 80). *To the Lighthouse* is not a simple re-creation of the Victorian childhood from her memory and her decision to live another life from her mother’s. Woolf ultimately used the novel to project her voice as a woman writer.

Woolf sought another aspect of female sexuality in her homosocial bonds. Woolf’s relationship with Vita and others encouraged her PTG and gave her a matriarchal protection to securely write. Lesbian relationships enable Woolf to have sense of security, instead of exclusiveness of Victorian femininity. The whole process of easing and growing Woolf’s spirit provided by female guardians produced *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, homosocial relationships between women present Woolf’s desire for liberation the heterosexuality. *To the Lighthouse* shows Woolf’s flight from the shadow of the dead mother and her choice of writing instead of seeking motherhood. Being childless, while femininity of the Stephens often made her feel excluded and failed, Woolf could see herself more secure in her relationships with women and ultimately finds to write without restrain of patriarchy.

Ultimately, Woolf’s challenge to heterosexuality is to reconstruct the category of sex. A French feminist theorist Monique Wittig in “The Category of Sex” (1992) insists that women are forced

to be a category of “oppression” and “reproduction” defined by men. She discusses:

The category of sex is the product of a heterosexual society in which men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women and also their physical persons by means of a contract called the marriage contract. (6)

The category of sex is created only for the purpose of maintaining heterosexual society and forcing women to fulfill the obligations given by men. Woolf struggled with anxiety about her childlessness, and her revision of sexuality and the feminine self produces her literary art. To Woolf, writing becomes a process to flight from the mother and reconstruct the category of sex.

CHAPTER V

Years after 1927: Wisdom to Live and Write

Woolf breaks off her love relationship with Vita Sackville-West in 1927, and this becomes the sign of her literary independence as well as her liberation from ideological and sexual bonds. Woolf's PTG stage seems to end up with her spiritual freedom and causes her to reflect back on moments of her mundane life. As some PTG scholars note meaning-making is one of the goals to realize PTG, and Woolf's writing of novels at the time shows re-thinking of various aspects of her life things and finding meaning in them. Changes in Woolf's actual life enable her to write novels to better understand her mind and thoughts and to expose her mind and thoughts as part of the process. In the late 1920s—Woolf was now in her late 40s—as she comes to terms with her recognition of a loss of reproductive capacity, ideological liberation after years of struggle, and growing self-awareness, her anxiety about having children is replaced by her reproduction of writing.

Through experience relating to the PTGI factors, 'meaning-making' has been regarded as one of the significant goals of PTG. The five factors of PTGI—"relating to others," "new possibilities," "personal strength," "spiritual change," and "appreciation of life"—enable one to find ways of meaning making in events in one's life. Kanako Taku, in *Research on Posttraumatic Growth: Psychological Changes as a Result of Stressful Experience*

among Japanese Adolescents (2010), emphasizes meaning-making as cognitive processes to show one's growth after one has gone through a crisis and gained a new perspective about things. According to Taku, the processes of meaning-making include 'focus on positive aspects,' 'self-evaluation after the traumatic event,' and 'accepting a message out by the event.'¹ The traumatic events can deconstruct and reconstruct self to see, think, and accept things, and establish a new self with new perspectives and thoughts.

Woolf's eventual liberation from desire for children led her to mature writing. The novels of the time, *Orlando* and *The Waves*, show Woolf's desire for children merging into her desire for writing. In *Orlando*, Woolf defines the androgynous vision as a factor to break the inner conflict between 'to write' and 'to be a mother.' With her ambition to be a writer and desire for having children, Woolf sought her androgynous character to liberate her from any ideological bonds and define her as a writer. The images of connections and continuities as well as the ideologically free setting in *The Waves* symbolize a re-production of women's writing, which is free from male language and culture and simply renders moments of life. Both in *Orlando* and *The Waves*, Woolf embraces her childless life as a writer and presents

¹ Although Taku limits her focus to Japanese adolescents, the idea of 'meaning-making' is regarded as a common goal to achieve PTG. For more details on the clinical research on meaning making, as one of the goals of PTG, for example, see Taku, chap. 7.

a form of writing. Woolf's flight from desire for children in later years enables her to be free from ideological bonds within her writing and forms a part of the history of women's literature.

1. Flight from Maternity: Writing as Re-Vision

Woolf's physical and spiritual liberation from maternity refines her writing. Adrienne Rich interprets a woman's liberation from maternity as a process to re-vision her writing. In her autobiographical essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (1980), Rich created the term "re-vision." The process of re-vision is closely related to her process of looking back at her maternal identity. While the term influences following feminists, it is a way to give her self-respect as a writer by giving a meaning to her early poems under the control of her maternity. Her treatment of the poems in this essay is the primary example of re-vision. By re-vision, each of her poems has connections between themselves as well as with writings by other women and contributes to the whole history of Rich's activity as a poet. Re-vision is a literary act, which resultantly enables Rich's poems to have a value in her subsequent literary activities following her liberation from maternity.

The essay empathetically illustrates Rich's maternal anxiety—anxiety about being maternal—as a poet and her awareness of it; and it shows that her frustration over writing poems is actually the primary anxiety she has. The difficulty of writing under the conditions of a wife and mother made her consider her whole life as a

woman. She refers to her early marital life and writing starting at the same time of her life:

I went on trying to write; my second book and first child appeared in the same month. But by the time that book came out I was already dissatisfied with those poems, which seemed to me mere exercises for poems I hadn't written. . . .

About the time my third child was born, I felt that I had either to consider myself a failed woman and a failed poet, or to try to find some synthesis by which to understand what was happening to me. ("Dead" 42)

This shows that her struggle and awareness of her life as a woman comes after her dissatisfaction with herself as a poet. She was not able to satisfy herself as a mother and a poet at the same time.

Writing is a primary interest in her life, and to achieve great success as a poet, Rich had to abandon her maternal identity.

Rich's creation of the term re-vision in this essay is a process of awareness of being a woman writer. Through re-vision, Rich recognized the immaturity in her earlier poems and its relation to her early identity as a mother. By re-vision, which is "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" ("Dead" 35), her early poems that she was "dissatisfied with" are re-evaluated to satisfy her literary spirit. She practices re-vision of her own writing to find a meaning in each of her poems as a part of the whole poetic history of herself fleeing from

herself as a mother, as well as of other women writers living in patriarchy.

Rich's notion explains Woolf's eventual separation from her bond to maternity as a process of re-vision her writing. Beyond her exploration of the female sex and her eventual acceptance of childlessness in later years, Woolf's desire for children becomes more complicated and ambivalent. Since her husband's decision became her agony for life, Virginia regretted her own agreement for a long time even in the late 1920s. Although she did not talk much about this matter at the time in 1913, she actually mentions it more than ten years later. Virginia gradually admitted the trauma rooted in her, as is evident when Virginia wrote to Ethel Sands in 1927:

By the way I was very absurd about children last night? I was rather shocked that you should think I didn't care for Nessa's [Vanessa's]. They are such an immense source of pleasure to me. But I see what it is: I'm always angry with myself for not having forced Leonard to take the risk in spite of doctors; he was afraid for me and wouldn't; but if I'd had rather more self-control no doubt it would have been all right. That's I suppose, why I don't talk of Nessa's children—it's true I never do—whom I adore. This is only a small contribution to feminine psychology, and I don't beg dream of answering. (Feb. 9; *Letters* 3: 329)

This letter reveals Virginia's regret of Leonard's decision to have no children and her ambivalent feelings of jealousy and love toward

Vanessa's children. Virginia's inferiority complex for the failure of becoming a mother still obsessed her.

For Virginia, motherhood became one of the most delicate subjects and even caused a conflict with Vanessa. Virginia was not able to share maternal feelings with Vanessa, whose married life was almost equal to motherhood. As Leaska points out, "The subject of motherhood was a sensitive one with the sisters" (*Granite* 262). Vanessa never knew of Virginia's emotional turbulences due to Vanessa's proper life as a Victorian woman. Virginia realized the difference in their perspectives on marriage, as she wrote in 1927:

For one thing (though I try to hide from you) I slightly distrust or suspect the maternal passion. It is obviously immeasurable and unscrupulous. You would fry us all to cinders to give Angelica a day pleasure, without knowing it. You are mere tool in the hands of passion. Other mothers are much worse, and I've no doubt should be worst of all—Helen Anrep and Faith [Henderson] appal me when they talk of their children: In fact what you feel about marriage I feel about motherhood, except that of the two relations motherhood seems to me the more destructive and limiting.²

² See Apr. 21; *Letters* 3: 365-66. This is a response to Vanessa's letter on April 16, 1927: "I wonder how you'd really like the problem of children added to your existence. I don't feel at all

Virginia admitted her own incomprehension of maternity and lack of maternity. This shows the amount of Virginia's suffering. Although they are beloved sisters to each other, maternity became a difficult matter to discuss. Virginia reaffirmed her unknowingness of motherhood and expressed her isolated feelings as a woman.

On the other hand, Virginia was now in her late forties and showed her recognition of a loss of reproductive capacity; and her abandonment of motherhood seems to be replaced by her reproduction of writing. Virginia writes in 1928: "Often that image comes to me with some sense of physical state being colder now, the sun just off one; the old disc of one's being growing cooler—but it is only just beginning: & one will turn cold & silver like the moon" (September 10, 1928; *Diary* 3: 196). While this fully shows a sense of barrenness, as Panken interprets it as "irrevocable loss of her reproductive powers" (187), it still implicitly presents a maternal image in the "silver like moon" compared with the paternal "sun." By her eventual acceptance of her loss of physical reproductive power, Virginia presents the 're-production' of women's writing as continuously regenerated in history.

After losing hope for becoming a mother, Virginia turned her despair into a vitality for writing. Although she wrote from her girlhood about ambitions to become a writer,³ her despair of having

equal to dealing with it myself" (*Letters* 3: 365n).

³ Gordon describes young Virginia: "She meant to become a

longed for children encouraged her to create novels. There are psychological similarities between creative activity and having children. Samuel Slipp introduces Lou Andreas-Salomé's comparison of conception, childbearing and child rearing to the creative process of artists: ". . . this preoedipal relationship, characterized by a lack of differentiation, was employed by the artist also in creative work."⁴ The creative process of artists is connected with women having children. Writing actually allowed Virginia to have a similar feeling to that of having children.

Writing was one of the most essential activities in Virginia's life, and she had intimacy with each of her creations. On the meaning of writing, Virginia discussed in a letter to Gerald Brenan:

At any rate, at 20, 30, 40, and I've no doubt 50, 60, and 70, that to me is the task; not particularly noble or heroic, as I see it in my own case, for "all my inclinations are to write; but the object of adoration to me, when there comes along someone capable of achieving. " (Dec. 25, 1922; *Letters* 2: 599).

Virginia had an affectionate feeling for her own writing. Such a

writer, and for a young woman of her generation to take up a profession or art . . . she had to make a dash for freedom" (115).

⁴ According to Slipp, Andreas-Salomé applies those ideas to her lover and the famous poet, Rainer Maria Rilke's creativity in his *Duino Elegies*; for more details, see 101-2.

feeling is even similar to maternal emotion. For Virginia, writing was one of the processes to express herself; in other words, she wrote to embody herself in another form.

Actual publication of her novels has given to Virginia a cherished feeling similar to maternal care for children in her literary life. At the time of publication of her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, Virginia was as anxious as if she had sent her own children into the world. Quentin Bell explains Virginia's misguidance about *The Voyage Out*: "A book is so much a part of oneself that in delivering it to the public one feels as if one were pushing one's own child out into the traffic" (2: 11). Virginia almost identified the book with herself and was concerned about the book leaving her for society. Such anxiety about her book was again expressed with novels published later, and it was again mentioned in connection to the more realistic matter of children. Virginia showed almost the same nervousness about *Mrs. Dalloway*. She wrote to Gwen Raverat on March 11, 1925:

. . . I was on pins and needles about sending it [*Mrs. Dalloway*] to Jacques; and now I feel exquisitely relieved; not flattered: but one does want that side of one to be acceptable—I was going to have written to Jacques about his children, and about my having none—I mean, these efforts of mine to communicate with people are partly childlessness, and the horror that sometimes overcomes me. (*Letters* 3: 172)

Virginia is always worried about each of her new novels, and this

concern evokes behavior similar to a mother caring about her children. Virginia kept her maternal anxiety over her own creation during her life as a novelist and regarded writing as one of the ways to present a part of herself. The creation of novels enables Virginia to experience maternal affection and care.

Furthermore, Virginia created novels as a product of her childlessness. She later in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) indicated having no children as one of the requirements for a woman writer. Harvena Richer explains, "In addition to a separate room and five hundred pounds a year, she dare not have children of her own."⁵ None of the major women in *A Room of One's Own* actually have any children or hope to do so. Virginia actually had the conflict between becoming a writer and having children. She felt that her instinct as a writer might not make her a mother. She wrote about her complex feelings at a party for Vanessa's children in 1927:

And yet oddly enough I scarcely want children of my own now. This insatiable desire to write something before I die, this revenging sense of the shortness & feverishness of life, make me cling, like a man on a rock, to my one anchor. I don't like the physicalness of having children of one's own. . . . I can dramatize myself as parent, it is true. And

⁵ For more discussion, see 1. One of the most evident episodes in *A Room of One's Own* is that Judith Shakespeare killed herself when she realized her own pregnancy; for more details, see 52.

perhaps I have killed the feeling instinctively; as perhaps nature does. (Dec. 20; *Diary* 3: 167)

She doubted her own instinct to have children. This implies that her nature as a writer makes her a parent in her writing.

Ultimately, Woolf's desire for children merges into her desire for writing, and this process refines her writing. Susan Gubar points out Virginia Woolf's 'flight from maternity' of the time: "... the new born social and literary productions of women, as well as the reimagining of birth itself, are a direct of a new—found independence from pregnancy" (20). Instead of her having children, Woolf gave birth to great novels. King says, "... Virginia felt as fertile as a tea pot which found it necessary to empty its brew, in the form of letters, on someone" (131). Childlessness provided Woolf fertility as a writer and contributed to her growth into a mature writer.

2. Writing as Her Choice: A Quest for Androgyny in *Orlando*

While Virginia Woolf was conscious of being a woman, her androgynous vision changes her desire to have children into her ambition for writing. In spite of her desire for having children, she was often free from gender-based roles in her marital life with Leonard Woolf. Their sexually free life actually enables Virginia to write novels and liberates her from anxiety from failing to be a mother. The fantasy novel *Orlando* illuminates Woolf's androgynous vision to break the inner conflict between 'to write' and 'to be a mother.' Representing Woolf's ambition to be a writer and desire for

having children, the ambiguity of the sexes in the novel reveals her ambivalent nature toward becoming a female writer. To many critics, Woolf's creation of the androgynous protagonist has often brought out her lesbian relationship with Vita-Sackville West, which defines the novel as trifle entertainment.⁶ However, Woolf's rare attitude of lightheartedness toward writing this novel promises to reveal her real

⁶ Woolf herself refers to Vita-Sackville West as a model of Orlando: "Vita should be Orlando, a young noble man" (*Diary* 3: 157); and she wrote to Vita that ". . .suppose Orlando turns to be Vita; and it's all about you and the lusts of your flesh and the lure of your mind. . . ." (*Letters* 3: 428-29). At the time of its publication, while it sold well as a gossip novel on her affair with Vita, some reviewers who had praised her previous novels like *To the Lighthouse* did not find any literary value in the novel. Arnold Bennett, for example, writes, "Her best novel, *To the Lighthouse*, raised my hopes of her. *Orlando* has dashed them, and they lie in iridescent fragments at my feet" (423). Woolf herself also made an entry in her diary confessing that she did not work on the novel as seriously as she did the earlier novel and: "Orlando is of course a very quick brilliant book. Yes, but I did not try to explore. . . . I never got down to my depth & made shapes square up, as I did in *The Lighthouse*" (November 7, 1928; *Diary* 3: 203). Also, critics such as Sherron E. Knopp identify androgyny with the lesbian relationship with Vita; for the details, see 25-26.

motives out of her instinct for art, as Minow-Pinkney explains that “The intensity of Woolf’s ‘will-to-joke’ suggests some significant psychic impulse . . . ” (*Problem* 117). Through *Orlando*, Woolf exposes depth of the inner self as well as androgynous vision, which liberates her from the ideological bond and defines her as a writer.

The marriage of Virginia and Leonard was never about fulfillment of the conventional gender roles. Beyond Virginia’s sexual disinterest in Leonard, the Woolfs never hoped the other to fulfill the male or female role. As “He assured her that physical intimacy was secondary, that her work as a novelist came first,” the relationship between Virginia and Leonard was mostly maintained by their passion for writing (Leaska, *Granite* 156). In fact, Virginia economically supported their early marital life. To marry Virginia, Leonard had resigned from his work as a civil servant in Ceylon and was actually “a penniless Jew.”⁷ They both hoped to earn their living

⁷ When Leonard realized that he was in love with Virginia during his one-year leave from the Civil Service in Ceylon at the end of 1911, he decided not to go back to Ceylon after the leave was over in May. As a result, he lost the salary of 22 pounds a month and only had his savings of 600 pounds; for details, see Leonard Woolf, *Beginning* 52-55. Virginia wrote to Violet on June 4, 1912: “I am going to marry Leonard Wolf [sic]. He’s a penniless Jew” (*Letters* 1: 500).

by writing but did not do enough for a few years until around 1916;⁸ and they seemed to live by Virginia's inheritance from her father, brother Thoby and the aunt Caroline Emelia Stephen.⁹ On the other hand, Leonard supported Virginia as a mentor and nurse. Virginia's mental breakdowns never deterred Leonard from marrying her, and he devotedly takes care of her throughout their life. As Leaska noted, "In the end Virginia would make claims on Leonard equal to those Leslie had made on Julia," although she did not always ask Leonard to assume the role of a man (*Granite* 157). Virginia and Leonard never expected each other to form a stereotypical family of patriarchy.

Reflecting their gender consciousness, in the relationship between Virginia and Leonard, gender was often reversed. King has noticed some gender reversal in the Virginia's ' writing. Seeing their nicknames "Mongoose"—Leonard—and "Mandrill"—Virginia—as gender images, King explains:¹⁰

⁸ By that time, Leonard was doing some journalism and Virginia was writing some articles, and both started to prepare for their own publication by ordering a press; for more details, see Quentin Bell 2: 41-42.

⁹ For more details, see Quentin Bell 2: 38-39.

¹⁰ Virginia often uses names of animals to indicate herself and her intimates. In the summer of 1913 during her stay at a nursing-home in Twickenham, Virginia uses the names "Mongoose" and "Mandrill" to refer to herself and Leonard in her homesick letters

There is also a certain amount of gender reversal at work: a mandrill is an exceedingly aggressive animal, whereas the tiny mongoose gets its way by conniving. In their relationship, Virginia felt free to take on some stereotypical male roles, while Leonard could at times take on a seemingly feminine role. (212)

Virginia did not have to be conscious of fulfilling a socially determined woman's role in the marital relationship with Leonard as she wrote, "I will not look upon marriage as a profession" (May 1; *Letters* 1: 496). Gordon further refers to Virginia's ambition to be a writer: "She meant to become a writer, and for a young woman of her generation to take up a profession or art . . . she had to make a dash for freedom. It meant not only a break with the family circle but with accepted notions of womanliness and decency" (115). In terms of gender roles, Virginia and Leonard freely pursued their literary life.

The sexual freedom in the marital life provides Virginia a choice to write instead of having children. Virginia satisfies her desire for children by writing about it. On December 20, 1927, when she was working on the novel *Orlando*, she exposes to her diary her thoughts of having children, which are now being assimilated with writing:

And yet oddly enough I scarcely want children of my own now. This insatiable desire to write something before I die,

to Leonard (*Letters* 2: 32-35).

this revenging sense of the shortness & feverishness of life, make me cling, like a man on a rock, to my one anchor. I don't like physicalness of having children of one's own. This occurred to me at Rodmell; but I never wrote it down. I can dramatise myself as parent, it is true. And perhaps I have killed the feeling instinctively; as perhaps nature does. (*Diary 3*: 167)

She comes to realize that she is not able to have children not only because of her primary health problem but also due to 'instinct' and 'nature.' Also, this entry emphasizes her 'literary instinct' to reject her desire to 'physically' become a mother.

The desire to have children and write evokes femininity and masculinity, respectively. Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1999) argues:

The female model her mother represented led to self-annihilation, to what the Victorians called selflessness. The masculine model offered more opportunities for self-realization, but to choose it meant to renounce womanhood, to declare herself deficient in sexual and maternal energy. (266)

Fulfillment of femininity and motherhood do not allow one to express oneself. Each sexual identity is incompatible with the other.

Preserving both femininity and literary art, to Woolf, sexually free identity, or androgynous vision, was indispensable for writing. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf indicates androgyny as a writer's

quality:¹¹

. . . it is fatal for any one who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly. It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is no figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death. It ceases to be fertilized. Brilliant and effective, powerful and masterly, as it may appear for a day or two, it must wither at nightfall; it cannot grow in the minds of others. Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. (114)

Woolf's notion of androgyny supports her own life of being sexually free and defines it as a writer's nature.

Considering Woolf's anxiety about childlessness, the notion of androgyny, which has been one of the major topics in studies of *Orlando*, enables her to liberate herself from the ideological bond to define herself as a writer or a woman. The ambiguity of the sex presented in the novel is related to her quest for an ideal figure,

¹¹ Critics often regard *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own* as companion volumes; for example, see Marder 26.

which has both writing, a ‘traditionally’ masculine act, and marriage and childbearing, a ‘traditionally’ feminine act, and satisfies Woolf’s incompatible desire for children and for writing.

One of the most notable factors influencing the protagonist’s life in this novel is the age. The protagonist Orlando, who liberally lives from Elizabethan age to Edwardian age, depicts Woolf’s consciousness as an oppressed woman writer living under Victorian ideology. Especially, the description of the Victorian era is captured by dark, oppressive images, which seem to reflect Woolf’s ambivalent emotion about Victorian life and ‘Angel in the House.’ The novel empathetically depicts not only fanciness and fertility represented as a home but also a humid, dark image of the time:

Men felt the chill in their hearts; the damp in their minds.

In a desperate effort to snuggle their feelings into some sort of warmth one subterfuge was tried after another.

Love, birth, and death were all swaddled in a variety of fine phrases. (229)

Compared to the rich appearance, the spirit of the era maintains a foreboding darkness. On this emphasized shadowy image of the Victorian era in *Orlando*, Julia Briggs underlines that Woolf characterizes the Victorian age in terms of “growth and fecundity” as well as “the repressive and excessive respect for marriage and family life.” Bowlby further points out the ‘heterogeneous’ nature of the

age.¹² This overwhelming influence on the age induces Woolf's struggle over Victorian ideology.

Furthermore, Victorianism is personified as "the spirit," which embodies the resistant power of the convention. "The spirit," which often appears in Orlando's consciousness, represents a power to require a woman to be a Victorian angel in the house. It somewhat develops Orlando's sexual awareness of being a woman and determines the fate of her marrying and writing. Orlando living over the ages claims its particularity and exclusiveness:

Such is the indomitable nature of the spirit of the age, however, that it batters down anyone who tries to make stand against it far more effectually than those who bend its own way. Orlando had inclined herself naturally to the Elizabethan spirit, to the Restoration spirit, to the spirit of the eighteenth century, and had in consequence scarcely been aware of the change from one age to the other. But the spirit of the nineteenth century was antipathetic to her in the extreme, and thus it took her and broke her, and she was aware of her defeat at its hands as she had never been before. (244)

Victorian spirit is described as an absolute power of influence. The enormousness of the Victorian spirit is shown in Orlando's change:

¹² For further discussion on the passage, see Briggs, "Novels" 73; and on 'excrescences' of the age, see Bowlby 104.

while Orlando had seemed to live recklessly pursuing “Life! A Lover!” but not “Life! A Husband!” during previous ages, she finally “was to yield completely and submissively to the spirit of the age, and take a husband” (243-44). This rather exaggerated story of the master-subordinate relationship between Orlando shows Woolf’s own fate living under the repression of Victorianism.

Considering resistance against Victorianism in the novel, Orlando’s androgynous nature symbolizes Woolf’s quest for writing. Liberation from the female sex enables her to write by invading into the traditional male-dominated sphere. While the change in Orlando’s sex from male to female suddenly happens, it does not cause much influence on Orlando’s life, and she just seeks a way to write a poem. Orlando’s change is even interpreted as one from male into androgyny rather than into female. After the change, Orlando, who still remembers the experience as a man, obtains both sexes:

And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each. (158)

Orlando now has an advantage of knowing both sexes. Androgynous Orlando’s exploration around the sexual boundary gradually makes her sexuality unclear and disappear with her desire for writing: “The distraction of sex, which hers was, and what it meant, subsided; she thought only of the glory of poetry. . .” (164). Belonging to either

category of sex does not seem to show any importance in a writer's life.

However, the nature of writing as a traditional male act is also rooted in this novel. By accepting socially the male sex, Orlando tries to obtain a right to write. The change in Orlando's writing circumstances as a result of the sexual change is remarkable. In his boyhood, he was able to write as he likes: "'I will write,' she had said, 'what I enjoy writing'; and so had scratched out twenty-six volumes" (175). He, for the only reason that he is a man, has a right to write. In contrast, when Orlando becomes female, she necessarily loses the right being aware of "the spirit" as "a deep obeisance to the spirit of her age" (265). Female Orlando now has to be conscious of writing as a rebellion against the gender role of the time: "Thus she was now striking out a phrase in the depths of despair, now in the heights of ecstasy writing one in, when a shadow darkened the page. She hastily hid her manuscript" (177). This evokes the famous quotation from Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*: "... it is necessary to have five hundred a year and a room with a lock on the door if you are to write fiction or poetry" (115). Orlando experiences a society that does not allow women to write.

Orlando's disguise as a man represents Woolf's impulse to write by having an androgynous vision. Orlando pretends to be a man when she writes poems. She accepts physical masculinity in society to obtain spiritual freedom to write for the sexual difference does not mean much to Orlando:

Thus she often occurs in contemporary memoirs as ‘Lord’ So-and-so, who was in fact her cousin; her bounty is ascribed to him, and it is he who is said to have written the poems that were really hers. She had, it seems, no difficulty in sustaining the different parts, for her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive; nor can there be any doubt that she reaped a twofold harvest by this device; the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied. (220-21)

Orlando’s acceptance of male sexuality is rather positive. This is certainly not a rebellion against Victorian ideology, but is an acceptance of herself captured by an absolute power of the ideology, which indicates the possibility to be a writer beyond the traditional sexual boundary.

Orlando’s final achievement of both sexualities symbolizes Woolf’s life as a writer. Orlando’s passionate, positive attitudes toward poems, which are assimilated with the scene of Orlando’s childbearing, prove that Orlando comes to obtain both sexes. Orlando exposes her vivid passion for literature:

. . . we are not going, this time, visiting the blind land. Blue, like a match struck right in the ball of the innermost eye, he flies, burns, bursts the seal of sleep; the kingfisher; so that now floods back refluent like a tide, the red, thick stream of life again; bubbling, dripping; and we

rise, and our eyes (for how handy a rhyme is to pass us
safe over the awkward transition from death to life) fall
on. . . . (295)

The scene just after this, Orlando gives birth to a boy as shown in the midwife's words that "It's a fine boy, M'Lady" (295). Vitality in Orlando's words and reference to "death" and "life" is associated with the childbirth. The final unification of writing and childbirth is interpreted as an appearance androgynous in nature, which enables Woolf to achieve the ideal life as a feminine writer.

Considering Woolf's childlessness and her aspiration for writing, these incompatible elements enable her to create the world of androgyny, *Orlando*. The androgynous vision in *Orlando* presents Woolf's desire for both spiritual masculinity and femininity and indicates a way of life as a feminine writer. Her androgynous vision is never her resistance against patriarchy or her desire for liberation from the concept of the sex; but rather it is her quest for an ideal woman writer's life.

3. To be a Writer, not a Mother: Writing Unbound in *The Waves*

In *the Waves*, Woolf realizes writing liberated from patriarchal ideology. The narrative of the six characters in this novel forms the stream of consciousness that tells the whole life of Woolf. Woolf creates connections between people and continuity in life free from any ideological bonds and presents a community only existing in the nature of life. The novel, known as an autobiographical novel, has six

main characters and each represent Woolf. The connection between the six and their respective connections to Woolf are the meanings of their existence. They are significantly described as free from society or any certain ideology, and even from the body to identify them in terms of physical features. Their bodies only exist to “communicate,” and only their voices prove their presence. The lack of each of their identities, as shown in their repetitious questions about self, also emphasizes the fact that they only exist in relation to others. Woolf creates stories of absent individuals and life-death circles in *The Waves* and presents this novel as a result of her ‘re-productive’ writing instead of maternal reproduction.

The narrative of the six characters and their absent selves is a technique to tell Woolf’s own life. This novel depicts six people of the same age—Bernard, Louis, Jinny, Susan, Neville, and Rhoda—and their life from young age to middle age by each of their narratives. While they emphasize absence of their identity and their body existing apart from its mind, Woolf gave them a role to tell her own life.

Throughout the novel, none of the six characters are described, and each of them does not seem to present any ideology to them. They all keep asking the meaning of their presence. Rhoda describes herself: “. . . But here I am nobody. I have no face. This great company, all dressed in brown serge, has robbed me of my identity” (33). All other characters also empathize with the absence of the self. Susan says,

But who am I, who lean on this gate and watch my setter
nose in a circle? I think sometimes (I am not twenty yet) I
am not a woman, but the light that falls on this gate, on
this ground. I am the seasons, I think sometimes, January,
May, November; the mud, the mist, the dawn. . . . (98)

She tries to deny any characteristics to define herself. Neville also
says, “. . . I do not know. I do not know myself sometimes, or how to
measure and name and count out the grains that make me what I
am” (83). Neither of them indicates any way to define themselves.

Furthermore, a mirror is used as a symbol to show a lack of
subjectivity or identity. Jinny says, “‘I hate the small looking-glass
on the stairs. It shows our heads only; it cuts off our heads’” (41).
She hates that the small mirror reflects only her head. As she says,
“‘I have sat before a looking-glass as you sit writing, adding up
figures at desks. . . .’” (221), to her, she is a present only shown in a
mirror. Rhoda also refers to the mirror: “. . . But I will duck behind
her to hide it, for I am not here. I have no face. Other people have
faces; Susan and Jinny have faces; they are here. Their world is the
real world” (43). Magdalen Wing-chi Ki points out that Woolf
preferably uses the metaphor of ‘the looking-glass’ “to describe
women’s victimized state” (432). They all have unstable identities
and gradually merge into Bernard, who is known as a double of Woolf,
and comes to form a narrative: “. . . I am not one person; I am many
people; I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville,
Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs” (276).

Minow-Pinkney points out that Bernard is an androgynous model, which reflects the androgynous mind of Virginia Woolf herself.¹³ Bernard is a storyteller and, at the same time, unifies the six.

Moreover, the characters often refer to their physical body independent from the spirit. Louis, who has an inferiority complex as an immigrant, feels disgust about his body: “. . . But when darkness comes I put off this unenviable body—my large nose, my thin lips, my colonial accent—and inhabit space . . . ” (52-53). On the other hand, Jinny describes as if her body is separated from herself:

“. . . My body instantly of its own accord puts forth a frill under his gaze. My body lives a life of its own. Now the black window glass is green again. We are out of the tunnel. He reads his paper. But we have exchanged the approval of our bodies. There is then a great society of bodies, and mine is introduced; mine has come into the room where the gilt chairs are.” (63)

Jinny defines them as “Our bodies communicate” and determines themselves as a medium to communicate: “. . . This is the prelude, this is the beginning. . . . Our bodies communicate. This is my calling. This is my world. All is decided and ready. . . .” (101). The six seem to exist only as their bodies separated from their characteristics and spirit. Neville defines the characters as Woolf’s narrative: “‘In a world which contains the present moment,’ said Neville, ‘why

¹³ See Minow-Pinkney, *Problem* 158-59.

discriminate? Nothing should be named lest by so doing we change it. . . .”(81).

Woolf created characters liberated from any ideological bond. By giving them a blank body, she made them autobiographical. As she says, “Autobiography it might be called,” as the characters as a medium to communicate with her own life. The complicated narrative by the six forms comprises a simple autobiography uncontrolled and unlimited.

It is known that *The Waves* is inspired from a description of the moth in Woolf’s sister Vanessa’s letter: “. . . I sit with moths flying madly in circles round me & the lamp.”(Quentin Bell 2: 126). Woolf writes about the moth in “The Death of the Moth” (1942):“It was as if someone had taken a tiny bead of pure life and decking it as lightly as possible with down and feathers, had set it dancing and zig-zagging to show us the true nature of life” (443). The description of “the moth” evokes Vanessa’s maternal life with her children, who are collecting butterflies and moths. On this episode, Panken shows its relationship with maternity: “Vanessa also wrote that her “maternal instinct,” which Virginia deplored so much, did not permit her to leave the moth. Most likely, Virginia imagined she was the moth hovering about Vanessa’s flame or rather, her illuminated window in Cassis” (185). Suzanne Raitt further notes, “If *The Waves* is preoccupied with death, it is also concerned with reproduction. The depression that drove Woolf to write it was partly a response to her own childlessness. . . .” (158). Woolf’s extraordinary interest about “the moth” drawn by

Vanessa represents her desire for Vanessa's ideal maternal life. The characters in *The Waves*, who are not manipulated by patriarchy, are a depiction of herself.

Reading the novel as a representation of Woolf herself, the ambivalent narrative of two characters—Neville and Louis—shows her ambivalent emotion. They pour out their feelings about Susan as a mother. On the one hand, Louis respects Susan's motherhood: "'Susan, I respect; because she sits stitching. She sews under a quiet lamp in a house where the corn sighs close to the window and gives me safety . . .'" (96). On the other hand, Neville criticizes Susan's maternal life as "' . . . You say nothing. You see nothing. Custom blinds your eyes'" (212). Neville adds: "' . . . I want to diminish your hostility, your green eyes fixed on mine, and your shabby dress, your rough hands, and all the other emblems of your maternal splendor . . .'" (213). The narrative of the two represents Woolf's ambivalent feelings toward Vanessa's maternity.

Susan's criticism of Neville as a homosexual reflects Woolf's struggle with the difference between Vanessa's life as a woman and hers. Woolf writes to Vita, on Vanessa, who criticizes her lesbian relationship, on April 5, 1928.

. . . My body has been used daily, rightly, like a tool be a good workman, all over. . . . Lying deep in a chair with one person, one person only, but one person who changes, you see one inch of flesh only; its nerves, fibres, the sullen or quick flow of blood on it; but nothing entire. . . .

But I have seen life in blocks, substantial, huge. . . . (215)

Woolf's letter evokes Susan's conservativeness. Also, Rhoda's words also reflect Woolf's feelings about Vanessa. Woolf wrote earlier as, "Nessa has all that I should like to have" (May, 1908; *Flight* 334). Rhoda also says, "' . . . so I put off my hopeless desire to be Susan, to be Jinny. . . .'" (27). Characters in this novel speak for Woolf. Vanessa, who succeeds in her career, has children, is in love, seemed to remind Woolf of her lack.

The image of the circle repeatedly appearing in the novel evokes maternal life. This shows Woolf's struggle of 'the circle of marriage,' which she sees in Vanessa's life. The six talk about Bernard's engagement: "' . . . Bernard is engaged. Something irrevocable has happened. A circle has been cast on the waters; a chain is imposed. We shall never flow freely again'" (142). Also, they say: "'For one moment only,' said Louis. 'Before the chain breaks, before disorder returns, see us fixed, see us displayed, see us held in a vice. "But now the circle breaks. Now the current flows. Now we rush faster than before. . . .'" (142). Woolf tries to escape from 'the circle' of Vanessa. Rhoda also says:

"They are immune," said Rhoda, "from picking fingers and searching eyes. How easily they turn and glance; what poses they take of energy and pride! What life shines in Jinny's eyes; how fell, how entire Susan's glance is, searching for insects at the roots! Their hair shines lustrous. Their eyes burn like the eyes of animals brushing

through leaves on the scent of the prey. The circle is
destroyed. We are thrown asunder.” (143)

Louis’ words also show Woolf’s flight from the patriarchal ‘circle’ to her own life as a writer without children: “‘Now once more,’ said Louis, ‘as we are about to part . . . the circle in our blood, broken so often, so sharply, for we are so different, closes in a ring. Something is made’” (145).

In *The Waves*, Woolf embraced her childless life as a writer by liberating her writing from patriarchal society. Woolf’s liberation from anxiety about childlessness means flight from patriarchal ideology. Keeping the variousness of the six characters, Woolf successfully creates them as a medium to communicate and makes them take her own voice to tell her life. Through this narrative technique, she exposes her desire for children in writing free from patriarchy. Woolf’s flight from the desire for children in later years enable her to write a novel liberated from any ideological bond and establishes the history of women’s literature distinct from one of men’s.

Woolf had long been conscious of men even when she writes. Even though *A Room of One’s Own* is known a canonical feminist essay, addressing to women, she is still captured by patriarchal ideology. Rich discusses the tone of the essay:

. . . I was astonished at the sense of effort, of pains taken,
of dogged tentativeness, in the tone of that essay. And I

recognized that tone. I had heard it often enough, in myself and in other women. It is the tone of a woman almost in touch with her anger, who is determined not to appear angry, who is *willing* herself to be calm, detached, and even charming in a roomful of men where things have been said which are attacks on her very integrity. Virginia Woolf is addressing an audience of women, but she is acutely conscious—as she always was—of being overheard by men. . . . (“Dead” 37)

Rich shares with Woolf frustration and anger over men, or in other words, their own attitude of being conscious about men.

Orlando and *the Waves* ultimately render Woolf’s attempt to liberate herself from ideological bond. While she presents an androgynous vision to depict herself both as a writer and childless woman in *Orlando*, *The Waves* is an achievement of writing outside of any social, gender limitation. Although her writing had been often captured by Victorian settings she went through, these novels present the way Woolf more freely depicts characters and settings disengaged from ideological bond and show her spiritual change from the time of writing previous novel. Woolf writes, “I feel that by writing I am doing what is far more necessary than anything else” (*Moments* 73). By writing, she was able to ease, change, and liberate herself. Experiencing being childless, Virginia Woolf wrote to live as a woman, and writing enabled her to live.

CONCLUSION

Writing Traumas: A Writer's Life

Virginia Woolf's life was a ceaseless fight against traumas and a quest to express herself through her writing. On the one hand, her childlessness caused her to struggle with issues of ideology, gender, and sexuality; and writing out of her anxiety and sadness was part of the process of her growth as a woman writer. On the other hand, her suicide reveals that she was never able to liberate herself from traumas of the war and childhood memories, which cast shadows of death throughout her life. Though her writing represented her efforts to overcome trauma and anxiety, it never allowed her to conquer the past.

Examination of Woolf's failure to become a mother and her literary success through PTG theory illuminates her relationships and development of her thoughts on femininity and literature shown in her novels to follow the path of PTGI factors. Her choice of death was the culmination of a lifelong struggle rooted in her mind. Following female precursors, Woolf traced her spiritual growth in her writings and assimilated it into her creative power.

Writing itself was a PTG process. Narratives and storytelling are regarded as possible mediums to promote PTG. Robert A. Neimeyer, a clinical psychologist, observes:

. . . identity can be seen as a narrative achievement, as our sense of self is established through the stories that we tell

about ourselves, the stories that relevant others tell about us, and the stories we enact in their presence. Importantly, it is this very self-narrative that is profoundly shaken by “seismic” life events, instigating the process of revision, repair, or replacement of basic thematic assumptions and goals. . . . (70)

In terms of PTG, narrative is a certain means of establishing and showing a growing self by reflecting processes of change after a traumatic experience.

While her writing had been ensuring her spiritual growth and stability, Woolf’s life continued to be dogged by various traumas, such as the war and the loss of her nephew. On March 28, 1941, at the age of 59, Woolf drowned herself in the River Ouse.

The war had come to occupy Woolf both physically and spiritually from the late 1930s, and threatened her life and writing. Evoking the suicide of the shell-shocked war veteran Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the war also prompted the Woolfs to plan to end their lives. Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, and by May 1940, as bombs and air raids were getting closer, Virginia and Leonard planned their suicide. Hermione Lee, in her classic biography *Virginia Woolf* (1988), mentions that Hitler’s blacklist had their names on it:

They had good sources of information, and it was known that with the invasion plan for July 1940 the Gestapo had drawn up an “Arrest List” or “Black List” for Great Britain,

the “Sonderfahndungsliste G. B.” which ran to 350 pages (and had blank spaces for more names to be added). On this list, alongside many of their friends and acquaintances, were “Leonard Woolf, Schriftsteller, RSHA (‘Nazi Central Security Agency’) VIG (‘North-West’) I, and Virginia Woolf, Schriftstellerin, RSHA VIG.” No one in 1940 could have been sure of being on the list, but they could have taken a reasonable guess, and Leonard and Virginia were not the only people to make a careful, practical suicide plan. (730)

Leonard actually prepared petrol with which to poison themselves in their garage on May 13. Knowing the humiliation to be inflicted on Jewish people, Virginia and Leonard hoped to choose their own fate.

The war brought death closer to Virginia, and she made frequent references to the suicide plan: “Behind that the strain: this morning we discussed suicide if Hitler lands. Jews beaten up. What point in waiting? Better shut the garage doors. This is sensible, rather matter of fact talk” (May 19; *Diary* 5: 284-85). Throughout the following August and September, Germany attacked Britain. Paralyzed by terror of the air raids, she wrote: “My books only gave me pain, Ch. Bronte said. Today I agree” (311). The diary entries show her concern had been diverted from writing to the war, which thus threatened not only her life, but also her art.

Besides the war, Virginia was laid low by the sudden death of Julian Bell. Julian died in Spain while working as an ambulance

driver for Spanish Medical Aid on July 18, 1937. Virginia loved her nephew as much as did his mother, and his death gave her great sorrow. She wrote: "At the moment the private sorrow is so great one can't get anything clear in one's mind. He was a great joy to us; her children are like my own" (July 26, 1937; *Letters* 6: 150). Virginia loved Julian like a son,¹ and shared her grief with Vanessa: ". . . Virginia abandoned her own work and social engagements to sit with her in her despair . . . Even writing, her usual consolation, collapsed, and the last chapter of *Three Guineas* turned 'stiff & cold'" (Briggs, *Inner Life* 326).

Virginia had had mixed feelings of jealousy and pleasure about Julian's wish to become a writer. Unlike his parents, who were engaged in fine art, Julian pursued politics, literature, philosophy, and writing, and published two books of poetry, *Winter Movement* (1930) and *Works for the Winter and Other Poems* (1936). Even though Julian and Virginia had been discussing a biography of Roger Fry, when, in 1936, he sent an essay on Fry to Virginia to complement the biography, for consideration for publication by the Hogarth Press, she found it unsatisfying.² Although Virginia's love for Julian

¹ Woolf's concern is shown in the fact that Leonard ". . . frequently accused her of greater involvement with her sister's [Vanessa] family than with his own . . ." (Panken 231).

² During this period, Virginia had been working on a biography of Roger Fry, which was later published in July 1940. Virginia's

seemed to stem partly from for his passion for writing, which she shared, it also aroused a sense of rivalry. After Julian's death, in a memoir of dated July 30, 1937, Virginia wrote:

I was always critical of his writing, partly I suspect from the usual generation jealousy; partly from my own enviousness of anyone who can do in writing what I can't do . . . I thought him very careless, not 'an artist,' too personal in what he wrote, & 'all over the place.' This is the one thing I regret in our relationship: that I might have encouraged him more as a writer.³

Nevertheless, Virginia acknowledged Julian as a talented writer and drew attention to some of the good characteristics of his writing. However, his death at such a young age and his talent occupied Virginia's mind for the rest of her life.

criticism of Julian's essay even caused resentment in Vanessa:

"Despite the greater rapport between the sisters and Woolf's genuine grief regarding Julian, Vanessa could not forgive her for holding back publication of Julian's writings when he was alive" (Panken 232). We do not know the exact date when Julian sent the essay to Virginia, but his reply to her is dated December 5, 1936.

³ See Quentin Bell 2: 256. After his death, Woolf wrote a memoir of Julian, which is "Appendix C: Virginia Woolf and Julian Bell" collected in Quentin Bell's *Virginia Woolf: Biography*, vol. 2 (London: Hogarth, 1972) 255-59.

Julian and Vanessa had given Woolf a strong motivation to write. She wrote to Vanessa: "I never wrote a word without thinking of you and Julian and have so longed to do something that you'd both like. As for thanking me—well, when you've given me Julian and Quentin and Angelica—" (March 15, 1940; *Letters* 6: 385). A few days before her suicide, Virginia wrote to Vanessa: "I can hardly think any more. If I could I would tell you what you and the children have meant to me. I think you know" (Mar. 23?, 1941; *Letters* 6: 485). Until the very last days of her life, Woolf was concerned with Vanessa and her children, who had not only left her with a sense of failure to become a mother, but had also contributed to her enduring life as a writer.

Nearing the end of her life, Woolf's obsession with her mother's early death became much more manifest. She confessed her misery at the time of her mother and half-sister's death to Octavia Wilberforce, a physician and friend of Woolf's mother. Wilberforce recalled:

Poor Virginia—thirteen when her mother died—her [half-sister, Stella] died at twenty-five and both were irreparable blows. And her father rather went to pieces, I think, after her mother's death and "threw himself too much upon us. Made too great emotional claims upon us and that I think has accounted for many of the wrong things in my life. I never remember any enjoyment of my body."⁴

⁴ Wilberforce in her autobiography, *Octavia Wilberforce* (1989),

One of the last conversations between Virginia and Wilberforce revealed how Virginia's life had been irreparably scarred by the early deaths of women who had been close to her.

Woolf's emotional attachment to her childhood, overshadowed by death of her mother, may have made her feel that death was never far away. Leonard Woolf wrote in his autobiography: "Death, I think, was always very near the surface of Virginia's mind, the contemplation of death. It was part of the deep imbalance of her mind. She was 'half in love with easeful Death'" (*Journey* 73). Death to Woolf seemed to be both close and distant, just as her parents were, and to be embraced with both intimacy and fear. Quentin Bell concludes Woolf's biography by her own definition of death as "'the one experience,' as she has said to Vita, 'I shall never describe'" (2: 226). To Woolf, death seemed something she wanted to reach but could not. Writing eased and enriched her life, but could not break her ultimate spiritual tie with death.

As early as 1939, she wrote: "Yet if one can't write . . . one may as well kill oneself. Such despair comes over me. . ." (*Diary* 5: 239). In late December of 1941, Woolf confessed: "I've lost all power over words—can't do a thing with them" (Wilberforce 167). Referring to suicides of other writers plunged into a creative crisis, Briggs points

includes a letter to Elizabeth Robin, an actress, about her conversation with Woolf on March 14, 1941; for more details, see 176-78.

out: “Woolf’s three suicide notes speak of her terror of going mad again, yet the evidence suggests that she was severely depressed, or in despair, rather than ‘mad’ (or mentally disturbed)” (*Inner Life* 399). Briggs denies that insanity was her final state, and emphasizes that Virginia retained her dignity to the end. A crisis of creativity threatened the presence of the writer Virginia Woolf, and the decline of her writing power led her to end her life to keep that power alive.

Notions of “wanting children” illuminate another aspect of the feminist writer’s life. Although Woolf was never able to overcome the war, the deaths of close relatives, and childlessness, she nevertheless embraced these for her art. Woolf’s attempt to liberate herself from anxiety about childlessness was entwined with her act of writing, and her nature as a writer encouraged her spiritual growth. Like other female literary precursors without children, Virginia Woolf lived a classic example of women’s life through a literary life full of traumas and struggle, making herself therefore an immortal of the literary history of women.

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APPENDIX I

Life of Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf has casted her own life and personal relationships on her literature. Her novels are mostly biographical, and their characters and settings often evoke people and situations in her actual life. The genealogy trace the complicated family environment forming Virginia's characteristics and leading her to be a writer. Her personal relationships shown in the chronology encourage her spiritual growth and maintain her literary life. The history of her family, friendship, and life events including Virginia's medical history reveals her spiritual turbulence, change, and growth hidden in her novels.

The genealogy illustrates Virginia Woolf's family structure. It includes four generations. Beyond generations, the paternal family, the Stephens, lived among intellectuals in London. Virginia's grandfather Sir James Stephen was Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge writing literature such as *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography* (1842). He, like his father, had been involved in the Clapham Sect, a group of evangelical philanthropists in London. His marriage to Jane Catherine Venn in 1814 retains the bonds of the Clapham families. They had four children including Leslie. Caroline Emelia, an aunt "Nun," was also a writer who left books such as *The Service of the Poor* (1871). She is known for her literary influence on Virginia as well as the legacy of 2,500 pounds

she left for Virginia. Leslie first married Minny, William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter, in 1867. After she died in 1875, in 1878, Leslie married the widow of Herbert Duckworth and a mother of three children, Julia. Julia was a daughter of Maria Pattle Jackson, who was from the Pattle family known for their beauty, and Dr. John Jackson, who had been a doctor in Calcutta. Leslie and Julia had four children together including Virginia.¹

The chronology especially focuses on Virgin Woolf's personal relationships. It clarifies history and events of herself, her family, doctors and close people. Especially, Virginia's relationships with other women show their deep influences on her mental state as well as her literary activities. Close women, such as Violet Dickinson and Vita Sackville-West as well as Vanessa Bell, supported Virginia's several mental breakdowns and recovery often followed by her publications of literature.

Biographical information on Virginia Woolf for the genealogy and chronology is mainly based on the following biographies as well as collections of diaries and letters:

Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1972)

Lyndall Gordon, *Virginia Woolf: a Writer's Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984)

¹ For more details on Julia's biographical background including her marriage to Leslie, see the first section of chapter 2.

James King, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Hamish, 1994)

Mitchell Leaska, *Granite and Rainbow: The Hidden Life of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Farrar, 1998)

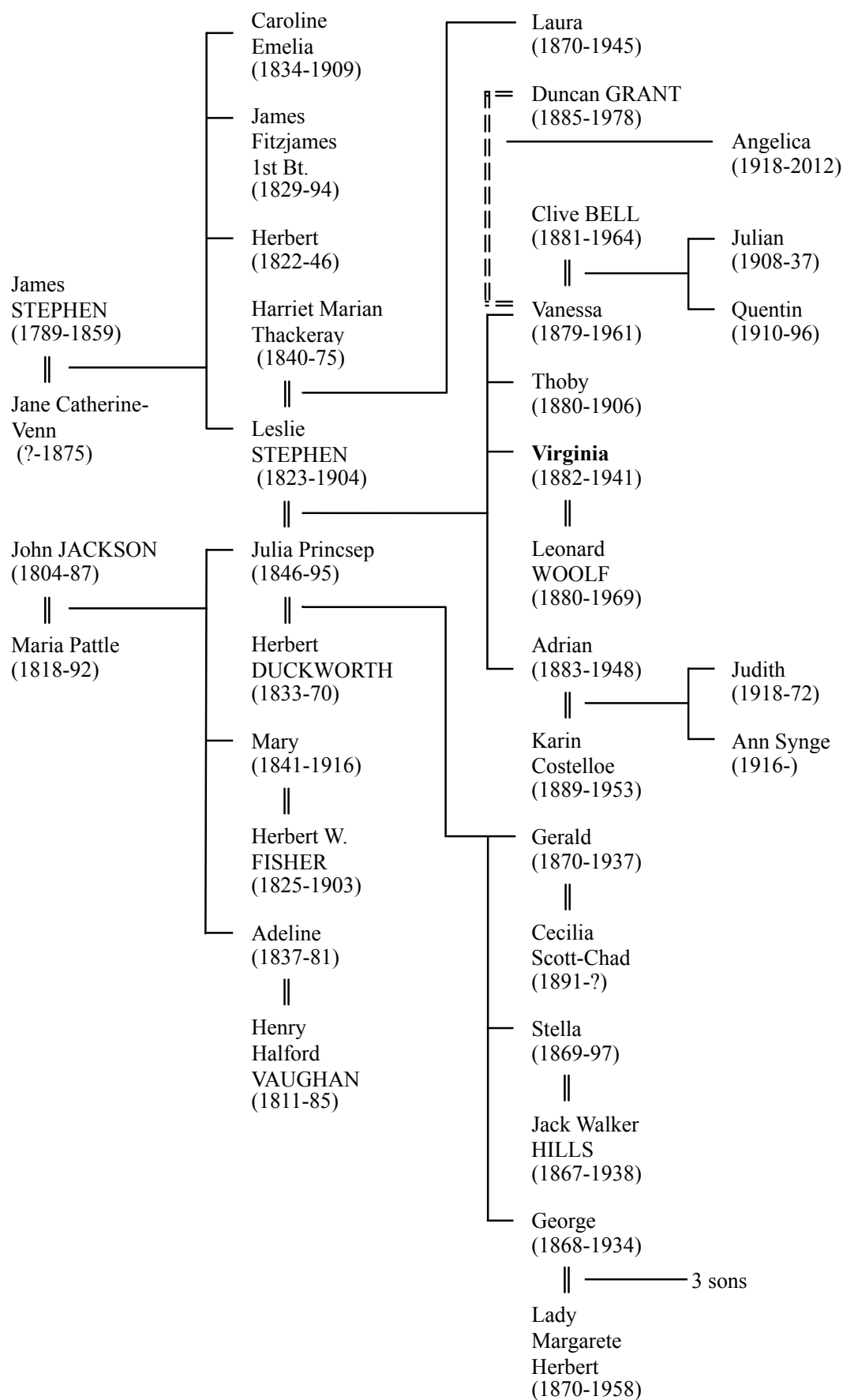
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1. Genealogy



2. Chronology

Year	Date	Age	Events
1832	Nov 28		Birth of Sir Leslie Stephen
1846	Feb 7		Birth of Julia Prinsep Jackson in India
1848			Julia returns to live in England
1867	May 4		Julia marries Herbert
	June 19		Leslie marries Harriet Marian (Minny) Thackeray
1868	March 5		Birth of George Herbert Duckworth
1869	May 30		Birth of Stella Duckworth
1870	Sep 19		Death of Herbert Duckworth
	Oct 29		Birth of Gerald Duckworth
	Dec 7		Birth of Laura Makepeace Stephen
1875	Nov 28		Death of Minny
1878	Mar 26		Leslie marries Julia.
1879	May 30		Birth of Vanessa Stephen
1880	Sep 8		Birth of Julian Thoby Stephen
	Nov 25		Birth of Leonard Woolf
1882	Jan 25	0	Birth of Adeline Virginia Stephen
	Nov	0	Leslie becomes editor of the <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> .
1883	Oct 27	1	Birth of Adrian Leslie Stephen
			Julia publishes <i>Notes from Sick Rooms</i>
1891	Apr 6	9	The <i>Hyde Park Gate News</i> begins
			Thoby tries to throw himself out of the window

1895	May 5	13	Death of Julia
	Summer	13	Virginia makes first suicide attempt by jumping out of the window
1896	Aug 22	14	Stella agrees to marry Jack Hills after two refusals
			Vanessa goes to Arthur Cope's School of Art three times a week
1897	Jan 3	15	Virginia starts keeping diary
	Apr 10	15	Stella marries Jack
	Jul 19	15	Death of Stella
	Nov	15	Virginia attends Greek and history classes at King's College, London
			Virginia meets Violet Dickinson; Sir George Savage recommends Virginia to create garden, thinking the intellectual work disturbs her
1898			Margaret (Madge) Symonds becomes Virginia's first woman in love
	July 9	16	Madge marries William Wyamar Vaughan
	Oct	16	Virginia takes Latin lessons with Clara Pater
1899	Oct 3	17	Thoby goes to Trinity College, Cambridge and meets Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sydney-Turner and Leonard Woolf
1900	Mar	18	Virginia has measles
			Vanessa is accepted into the Painting School of the Royal Academy of Art

1902	Jan	20	Virginia starts taking Greek class with Jane Case; starts exchanging letters with Violet
	Apr	20	Leslie is first diagnosed with cancer
	Summer	20	Vanessa meets Clive Bell
1903		21	Virginia increases love for Violet
1904	Feb	22	Virginia has depression
	Feb 22	22	Death of Leslie
	Apr 1	22	Virginia sets off for Italy with siblings; writes Violet and shows sign of depression
	Apr 13	22	Virginia suffers irritation; meets Violet in Florence
	May 1	22	Virginia goes from Florence to Paris and meets Clive
	May 9	22	Virginia returns to Hyde Park Gate from Paris
	May 10	22	Virginia has the second nervous breakdown and stays at Violet's house in Burnham Wood, Welwyn; Violet helps Virginia; Savage is called
	Sep	22	Virginia is transported to the Manor House, Treversal and becomes better
	Sep 10	22	George marries Lady Margaret Herbert
	Oct	22	The Stephens move to 46 Gordon Square; Savage suggests no excitement in London
	Nov 17	22	The Stephens dine with Leonard who is leaving for Ceylon
	Dec 14	22	The first publication, an unsigned review in the <i>Guardian</i> , appears

1905	Jan 14	22	Virginia starts teaching literature once a week at Morley College
	Feb	23	Thoby begins "Thursday Evenings" at 46 Gordon Square
			Virginia attempts suicide; Violet takes care of Virginia; Savage has treatment
			Virginia travels to Spain and Portugal with Adrian
1906	Sep	24	Virginia travels through France and Italy to Greece with Vanessa and Violet; Thoby and Adrian join the sisters in Olympia after traveling on horseback through Albania
	Nov 20	24	Death of Thoby for typhoid fever after misdiagnosis of malaria
	Nov 22	24	Vanessa agrees to marry Clive Bell
1907	Feb 7	25	Vanessa marries Clive Bell
	Feb 16-18	25	Virginia visits Caroline Emelia Stephen at Cambridge; stays with Violet
	Mar 28	25	Virginia travels Paris with Adrian, Vanessa and Clive
	Apr 10	25	Virginia moves to 29 Fitzroy Square with Adrian; Vanessa remains in 46 Gordon Square
	Aug	25	Vanessa becomes pregnant
	Oct	25	Virginia starts working on <i>Melymbrosia</i> , which later becomes <i>The Voyage Out</i>
1908	Feb 4	26	Birth of Julian Bell
	Aug 10	26	Virginia moves to 5 Cathedral Green; witnesses two children playing all day long beneath her window

		26	Virginia meets Ottoline Morrell
1909	Feb 17	27	Lytton Strachey proposes Virginia for marriage
	Mar 30		Virginia dines for the first time with Lady Ottoline Morrell
	April 7	27	Caroline Emelia dies, and Virginia receives a legacy of 2,500 pounds
	May 16		Vanessa writes Virginia to criticize Virginia's relationship with Ottoline
			Virginia goes to the Richard Wagner festival at Bayreuth with Adrian and Saxon Sydney-Turner.
1910	Jan		Virginia volunteers to work for Women's suffrage
	Feb 10	28	Adrian devises the Dreadnought Hoax with Horace Cole
	Mar-Summer	28	Virginia is ill in bed and remains uncertain during the summer
	Summer	28	Virginia spends time at Jean Thomas's nursing home
	Jun 21	28	Vanessa consulted Savage about Virginia's health
	Aug 19	28	Birth of Quentin Bell
1911	Jan		Virginia meets Katherine (Ka) Coxe
	April	29	Virginia travels to Turkey where Vanessa has a miscarriage
	May 24	29	Leonard takes one-year leave from Civil Service in Ceylon
	Jul 3	29	Leonard dines with the Bells, and Virginia later joins
	Nov-Dec	29	Virginia moves to 38 Brunswick square with Adrian and

			starts sharing the house with John Maynard Keynes, Duncan, and Leonard
			Vanessa begins affair with Roger Fry (until 1913)
1912	Jan 11	29	Leonard proposes Virginia for marriage
	Jan 16-19	29	Virginia becomes ill
	Feb	30	Virginia spends a few days at Thomas's nursing home
	May	30	Leonard's resignation is accepted by the Colonial Office
	May 29	30	Virginia agrees to marry Leonard Woolf; finished <i>The Voyage Out</i> except a chapter
	Jun	30	Virginia is unwell in bed
	Aug 10	30	Virginia marries Leonard
	Aug 18	30	The Woolfs leave for six-week honeymoon in Italy and Spain
	Oct	30	Violet sends a cradle to Virginia
	Dec	30	Leonard and Virginia talk about having children with Vanessa
1913	Jan 13	30	Virginia had headaches and insomnia, and Leonard starts recording Virginia's condition
	Jan		Virginia discusses about having children with Vanessa; consults doctors and decides not to have any: Savage and Thomas agree to have children; Sir Maurice Craig and T. B. Hyslop disagrees
	Mar 9	31	The manuscript of <i>The Voyage Out</i> is delivered to Gerald

		by Leonard
Apr	31	<i>The Voyage Out</i> is accepted for publication
Spring	31	Virginia has battle with Leonard on the garden, which seems to be associated with the unsolved issue on sex and baby
Jul 1	31	Virginia throws herself from her horse and result no injury; Thomas is sure that her depression was related to <i>The Voyage Out</i>
Jul 3	31	Virginia becomes unwell; enters Thomas's home in Twickenham again; Savage gives instruction
Jul 27	31	Virginia writes the "Mongoose"- "Mandrill" letter to Leonard
Aug 11	31	Virginia goes back to Asheham; Leonard consulted Savage; Leonard rings Henry Head for Roger Fry's suggestion
	31	Virginia goes to Plough Inn; her symptoms are back
Sep 8	31	Virginia goes back to London
Sep 9	31	Virginia attempts suicide by veronal at night while Leonard is gone; Leonard sees Maurice Wright in the morning, sees Henry Head in the afternoon, and sees Savage at night; Geoffrey Keynesv washes out Virginia's stomach after the suicide attempt
Sep 13	31	Virginia goes to George's country house, Dalingridge Place in Sussex; Savage becomes angry with Leonard for

			him consulting others on Virginia's health
		31	Vita Sackville-West marries Harold Nicolson
1914		32	Vanessa falls in love with Duncan Grant and starts living with Duncan and David Garnett
1914	Oct	32	Adrian marries Karin Costelloe
	Nov-Dec	32	Virginia becomes well
1915	Feb 18	33	Virginia has headaches and sleeps badly, having recurrence of mental breakdown
	Feb 22	33	Virginia talks with the mother
	Mar 25	33	Virginia enters a nursing home
	Mar 26	33	<i>The Voyage Out</i> is published
	Apr 1	33	Virginia is taken to Hogarth House with nurses, being violently against men in general and Leonard in particular
	Sep 11	33	Virginia moves back to Asheham
1916		34	Birth of Ann Stephen (Adrian's daughter)
	Oct	34	Vanessa moves to Charleston in Sussex with Duncan, David, and sons
1917	Jul	35	The Hogarth Press makes the first publication, <i>Publication No. 1 Two Stories</i> : Virginia's <i>The Mark on the Wall</i> and Leonard's <i>Three Jews</i>
	Jul 29	35	Virginia dines with Katherine Mansfield at Hogarth House
	Nov		Virginia starts writing <i>Night and Day</i>

1918	Nov 15	36	Virginia first meets T. S. Eliot
	Nov 21	36	Virginia finishes <i>Night and Day</i>
	Dec 25	36	Birth of Angelica Bell (a daughter of Vanessa and Duncan)
		36	Birth of Judith Stephen (Adrian's daughter)
1919	May 12	37	<i>Kew Gardens</i> is published
	Oct 22	37	<i>Night and Day</i> is published
1920	Mar 4	38	Virginia attends the first meeting of the Memoir Club
	Apr 16	38	Virginia starts writing <i>Jacob's Room</i>
1921	Apr 7	39	<i>Monday or Tuesday</i> is published
		39	Virginia finishes <i>Jacob's Room</i>
1922	Oct 27	40	<i>Jacob's Room</i> is published
	Dec 14	40	Virginia meets Vita at a dinner party given by Clive
1923	Jan 9	40	Death of Katherine Mansfield
	Feb 8	41	Virginia starts writing <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
	Mar	41	Virginia has private lunch with Vita and asks her to write for Hogarth Press
		41	<i>Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown</i> is published
		41	Adrian starts training to be a psychoanalyst with Dr. James Glover
1924	Jan	42	Virginia writes about Montaigne's Essays for Times Literary Supplement
	Oct 8	42	Virginia finishes <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
			Elinor Rendel becomes Virgin's doctor

1925	Spring	43	Vita goes to Tehran with Harold
	Apr 23	43	<i>The Common Reader</i> is published
	May 14	43	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> is published for the first time simultaneous publication in U.S. and England
	May 26	43	Violet likes <i>Common Reader</i> and <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
	Nov	43	Death of Madge
	Dec	43	Virginia sleeps with Vita at Long Barn
1926	Jan	44	Virginia becomes ill again; Rendel diagnoses German measles
1927		45	Virginia becomes distanced with Vita
	Apr 16	45	Virginia exchanges views on motherhood with Vanessa
	May 5	45	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> is published , and the sales are so good that she buys a car
	May 10	45	Violet likes <i>To the Lighthouse</i>
1928	Oct 2	46	<i>Orlando</i> is published
			Violet likes <i>Orlando</i> , which Virginia sends to her on the publication day
1929	Summer	47	Vita goes for the Alps with Hilda Matheson
	Oct 24	47	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> is published
1931	Oct	49	<i>The Waves</i> is published
1932		50	<i>The Second Common Reader</i> is published
	Sep	50	Rendel advises Virginia to take digitalis and rest
1933	Oct 5	51	<i>Flush, A Biography</i> is published
1935		53	Dr. Wolf reads Virginia's palm

1937	Jan	55	Virginia meets Elizabeth Robins and Octavia Wilberforce
	Mar 13	55	<i>The Years</i> is published
	July 18		Death of Julian in Spain
1938	Jun 4	56	<i>Three Guineas</i> is published
1939		57	Virginia meet Melanie Klein at the twenty-fifth anniversary Dinner of the British Psychoanalytical Society, where Adrian brought Virginia
1940	May	58	The Woolfs make a suicide plan, and Leonard prepares petrol
	Jul 25	58	<i>Roger Fry</i> is published
1941	Jan 13	59	Virginia revives death of Katherine Mansfield
	Jan 19	59	Octavia becomes Virginia's new lover, referred in a letter to Vita
	Feb	59	Virginia becomes nervous
	Mar 14	59	Virginia travels to London with Leonard; talks on publishing <i>Between the Acts</i> with John Lehmann
	Mar 18	59	Virginia makes suicide attempt by drowning herself
	Mar 28	59	Virginia drowns herself in the river Ouse
	Jul 17		<i>Between the Acts</i> is published
1948	May		Death of Adrian
1961	Apr		Death of Vanessa at Charleston
1962	Jun 2		Death of Vita

APPENDIX II

An Annotated Bibliography: Historical Perceptions of Motherhood in Victorian and Edwardian England

This project completes an annotated bibliography of historical perceptions of motherhood, which have had great influence on women's lives. Sociological, medical, and philosophical studies on motherhood observe that motherhood and related issues such as pregnancy, childbirth, and the choice not to be a mother play a major role in women's condition in society and are a factor in feminine anxiety.

Pregnancy and childbearing have always been regarded as among the most delightful privileges women can experience; nevertheless, at the same time, being the primary obligation of women, they raise anxiety for women. Studies reviewed in this project speak about repressed women who struggle with the social expectation that they should become mothers and who sacrifice themselves at the hands of unsophisticated medical procedures. Several authors, including scholars such as Michel Foucault and Adrienne Rich, note that an infertile woman is often regarded as a failed woman or even not a proper woman. Scholars—some from their own experience—describe women's struggle within patriarchal expectations of pregnancy and childbearing. Because medicine was still in its infancy at the time, women were isolated from the rapid social development that took place around the turn of the 20th century.

Patriarchal pressures on women to become a mother made them feel that infertility was a sign of failure.

Some authors have undertaken a theoretical analysis of pregnancy. Simone de Beauvoir defines pregnancy as an act by which a woman can replace her mother with herself. Pregnancy is the only activity in which a woman can retain her own internal autonomy. Philosophical ideas such as the structuralism of Jacques Lacan, the existential analysis of *Dasein* of Martin Heidegger, and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud theoretically and conceptually interpret pregnancy as a unique phenomenon, and contribute to analyses of women's literature by encouraging us to read the authors' consciousness in their writings.

Both sociological and theoretical studies of pregnancy reveal a consciousness of female sexuality lying in the depths of women's minds as well as in their writings. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar conceive the notion of the "anxiety of authorship" in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), seen in women's literature in the emotional turbulence that they share with one another and with their literary forebears. A study of historical perceptions of pregnancy illuminates women's complex feelings about their femaleness, and inspires another aspect of their writings.

The collection is mainly based on the following bibliographical databases:

Academic Search Premier

*Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied
Health Literature (CINAHL)*

Book Review Digest [New York: Wilson, 1905-]

Humanities Index [New York: Wilson, 1975-]

MLA International Bibliography [New York: MLA,
1922-]

ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source

ProQuest Health & Medical Complete

Sociological Abstracts

Social Services Abstracts

Sources are sorted by the terms pregnancy, childbirth, or childless, in Britain or England in late 19th century and early 20th century, and should mainly focus on cultural, social, philosophical, or medical observations in relation to women and their lives. Sources are alphabetically ordered.

1. Bibliography

¹ Badinter, Elisabeth. *The Myth of Motherhood*. London: Souvenir, 1980. Print.

Badinter argues that the essence of maternal emotion changes according to circumstances and individual experiences.

Maternal love is not instinctive, but should grow between a mother and child. The patriarchal perception that maternal love is instinctive is an ideology that does not admit of women as personalities, which forces them to carry out maternal functions,

and eventually expels from society women who do not meet social expectations such as demonstrating affection for children.

² Bartlett, Jane. *Will You Be Mother?* London: Virago, 1994. Print.

This work draws on interviews with 50 British women who have chosen to remain childfree. While childfree women are often regarded as women who are not living a “normal” life, there has certainly been progress in historical and social conditions, as reflected in the establishment of organizations such as ISSUE and BON.

³ Bem, Sandra Lipsitz. *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Equality*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1993. Print.

The author focuses on gender polarization and androcentric and biological essentialism, and traces aspects of Western culture such as Judeo-Christian theology, ancient Greek philosophy, and Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The author accepts the patriarchally gendered placement of women in society, and argues that pregnancy is paradigmatic of female experience, which carries what many consider to be the inherent disadvantage for a woman of sharing her husband’s career by being a homemaker.

⁴ Bernazzani, Odette and Antonia Bifulco. “Motherhood as a

Vulnerability Factor in Major Depression: The Role of Negative Pregnancy Experiences.” *Social Science and Medicine* 56 (2003): 1249-60. Print.

Bernazzani examines negative experiences of pregnancy as a risk factor for lifetime emotional disorders in women. Any adverse pregnancy/birth experiences are said to be associated with an increased rate of marital problems. Whereas adverse *live* pregnancy/birth experiences may be associated with prior childhood neglect/abuse, *non-live* experiences show a link with depressive disorder.

- ⁵ Billough, Vern L. “Female Longevity and Diet in the Middle Ages.” *Speculum* 55 (1980): 317-25. Print.

The author suggests that Jacques Lacan’s symbolic analysis of cultural order based on patriarchy provides the basis for identifying women with femininity. In the Middle Ages, prohibition of abortion could not be implemented, because pregnancy was thought to have no inherent meaning. While lamenting the practical destruction of the labor union movement, the authors acknowledge that the union as a form of popular organization is still viable.

- ⁶ Cahill, Heather A. “Male Appropriation and Medicalization of Childbirth: An Historical Analysis.” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 33 (2001): 334-42. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

This article discusses historical perceptions of pregnancy and childbirth, noting that men have claimed female inferiority in relation to professional medicine, including medical education and practice. These attitudes enabled doctors to continue to define a woman's body as defective, and reinforce women's lowly social position. Especially in the field of maternal care, doctor-patient interactions construct existing gender orders.

- ⁷ Carr, Karen L. "Optical Allusions: Hysterical Memories and the Screening of Pregnant Sites." *Postmodern Culture: An Electronic Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism* 5 (1995): 23 paragraphs. Print.

Referring to Foucault's notion of panopticism, the author describes the reproductive body as a spectacle: it is always a sighted body that does not exist apart from when it is seen. The pregnant woman is engaged in a role of surveillance by humanizing and making real the fetus inside, and sight rather than language becomes the crucial determinant of power.

- ⁸ Callahan, Joan. *Reproduction, Ethics, and the Law*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1995. Print.

This work focuses on the "beyond-abortion sea change," and expands on recent topics such as genetic testing, disability rights, infertility, adoption, gestational mothering, and fatherhood. Reflecting current anxieties over barriers to

childbearing, the author points to more profound anxieties suffered by poor women and those from ethnic minorities (*Hypatia* 12 [1997]: 202-).

- ⁹ Cole, Marcy Leslie. "The Experience of Never-Married Women in Their Thirties Who Desire Marriage and Children." *Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 60 (2000): 3526-A. Print.

Cole notes the emergence of three distinct groups of women whose experience of being single were quite different: some suffered acute distress at being single; others described it as a volatile affective experience; while still others demonstrated a capacity to maintain a healthy self-image and a fulfilling quality of life as a single individual. (UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations)

- ¹⁰ Corea, Gena. *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs*. New York: Harper, 1985. Print.

Corea argues from a feminist perspective that in a patriarchal system, women's bodies have the status of commodities for reproductive purposes. Just as women engaged in prostitution sell certain parts of their body such as breasts, vagina, and buttocks, so too they offer their wombs, ovaries, and ova to sustain questionable scientific efforts to help infertile women.

(Frayser, Suzanne G. and Thomas J. Whitby, *Studies in Human Sexuality: A Selected Guide* [Englewood: Libraries, 1995])

- ¹¹ Cornell, Drucilla. "Interview: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Law." *Radical Philosophy* 73 (1995): 23-34. Print.

The author suggests that Jacques Lacan's symbolic analysis of cultural order based on patriarchy provides the basis for identifying women with femininity. Abortion prohibition cannot be implemented because pregnancy has no inherent meaning. While lamenting the practical destruction of the labor union movement, the union as a form of popular organization is still viable.

- ¹² de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley. 1953. New York: Vintage, 1989. Print.

The author insists that a woman fulfills her physiological destiny by maternity, and that all women are adapted for perpetuation of the species. Pregnancy is one of the only life dramas in which a woman acts the part of herself. A woman's experience of becoming a mother means emancipation from her own mother.

- ¹³ Donchin, Anne. "Feminist Critiques of New Fertility Technologies: Implications for Social Policy." *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 21 (1996): 475-98. Print.

Donchin discusses the objectification of infertile women, naturalizing constructions of motherhood, hostility to technology, and overly simplistic conceptions of power relations, from feminist theoretical and practical perspectives. She argues that feminists need to reclaim women's agency to revalue motherhood and to reappraise female power.

- ¹⁴ Drife, J. "The Start of Life: A History of Obstetrics."

Postgraduate Medical Journal 78.919 (2002): 311-15. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article notes that the foundations of modern obstetric and midwifery practice were laid in late Victorian times. The Obstetrical Society of London began issuing certificates of competence to midwives in 1882, and the Midwives Act in 1902 was passed to regulate the profession, following the establishment of the Midwives' Institute in 1881. Obstetrics remained a branch of surgery until 1929, when the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was founded. In the 20th century, techniques of instrumental delivery were developed.

- ¹⁵ Eisenstein, Zillah R. *The Female Body and the Law*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. Print.

The author contends that sexual inequality is encouraged both by the law and by the insistence that men and women are

biologically different, which confines women to reproduction. The reality entails not simply the biological fact of childbirth but also the social issues of pregnancy such as childcare and abortion.

- ¹⁶ Ellis, Harold. "The Early Days of Ruptured Ectopic Pregnancy." *The Journal of Perioperative Practice* 21.1 (2011): 38-39. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article discusses the work on ruptured ectopic pregnancy done by Robert Lawson Tait, who also pioneered surgery for ovarian cysts and tumors.

- ¹⁷ ---. "Salpingectomy for Ruptured Ectopic Pregnancy." *The Journal of Perioperative Practice* 18.8 (2008): 361-62. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The author explains that a ruptured ectopic pregnancy constituted a death sentence as late as the end of the 19th century. Robert Lawson Tait successfully performed operations in three unusual cases that were the first of their kind: in the first case, in 1881, he saved a patient who suffered a hemorrhage from a ruptured tubal pregnancy by opening the abdomen and removing the tube; in the second, in 1882, he successfully operated on a dying patient; and in the third, in 1884, the patient had a fixed mass in the pelvis and her

menstruation had stopped; she made a full recovery after Tait successfully removed the clot in her abdomen.

- ¹⁸ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. 1978. New York: Vintage, 1990. Print.

Foucault introduces the notion of “other Victorians,” according to which, the hypocrisy of bourgeois societies requires everyone to contribute to procreation, and those who do not should be expelled, denied protection, or subject to other sanctions.

Repression is used as an instrument to make someone disappear, as an injunction to silence, and as an affirmation of a person’s nonexistence.

- ¹⁹ Greene, Michael F. “Magnesium Sulfate for Preeclampsia.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 348 (2003): 275-76. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Historically, convulsions during pregnancy indicated a serious prognosis for both mother and fetus. In the late 19th century, it was discovered that eclampsia was associated with albuminuria and hypertension. The discovery made it possible to give mothers prenatal care in the 20th century. In 1906, intravenous use of magnesium sulfate for women with eclampsia was introduced, reducing maternal mortality.

²⁰ ---. "Two Hundred Years of Progress in the Practice of Midwifery."

The New England Journal of Medicine 367.18 (2012): 1732-40.

Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article illustrates progress in the practice of midwifery in the past two hundred years, including improvements in general medicine such as aseptic techniques, anesthesia, treatment of blood, and imaging technology. Also focuses on changing attitudes toward women and their roles in society.

²¹ Gutzke, David W. "'The Cry of the Children': The Edwardian

Medical Campaign Against Maternal Drinking." *Journal of Addiction* 79 (1984): 71-84. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Focuses on a critique of alcohol in relation to infant mortality in the years 1899-1907. Anti-drink doctors of the time saw alcohol as a significant source of infant deaths, as well as of and national inefficiency. In addition to ignorance and the fact that mothers were working, especially during the Boer War, maternal drunkenness was also regarded as an important cause of infant deaths and "race deterioration."

²² Henning, Gert and Joachim Rothe. "Weltanschaulich-ethische

Fragestellungen bei der Schwangerschaftsunterbrechung

[Philosophical-Ethical Aspects of the Interruption of

Pregnancy]." *Deutsche Zeitschrift fur Philosophie* 30 (1982):

892-902. Print.

The article reviews the beginnings of human life based on knowledge of embryonic development, from a Marxist-Leninist perspective. The fact that a woman has the right to decide to terminate her pregnancy up to the twelfth week is recognized as an achievement of the feminist movement in terms of the equal rights of women. (*Sociological Abstract*)

- ²³ Ireland, Mardy S. *Reconceiving Women: Separating Motherhood from Female Identity*. New York: Guilford, 1993. Print.

Ireland contemplates the societal view that every middle-aged woman is a mother. Interviews with over 100 childless women from various ethnic and educational backgrounds present their visions of self-defined adulthood and the recognition that every woman is the mistress of her own life, whether or not she follows the traditional path of motherhood.

- ²⁴ Keniston, Ann. "Barrenness: An Argument." *Gettysburg Review* 13 (2000): 75-84. Print.

Affirming motherhood to be the culminating event of a woman's life, Keniston describes her experiences, which turned an infertile patient into a scholar, sympathizing with Adrienne Rich's personal and academic language on motherhood and studying women poets and feminist theory. The author claims that the medical establishment's manipulation of women's bodies encourages female subjugation, and that assisted

reproduction is a means of male control over women.

- ²⁵ Kovacs, Kalman. "Sheehan Syndrome." *The Lancet* 361.9356 (2003): 520-22. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Kovacs introduces Sheehan syndrome, postpartum hypopituitarism. Professor Harold Leeming Sheehan (1900-86) recorded many cases of acute postpartum pituitary necrosis, described the effects in detail, and concluded that the condition was caused by arrest of the blood flow to the adenohypophysis; ischaemia caused the development of necrosis.

- ²⁶ Lang, Susan S. *Women Without Children: The Reasons, the Rewards, the Regrets*. Holbrook: Adams, 1996. Print.

Having interviewed various women who were willingly or unwillingly childless, the author observed the difference between their lives and those of women with children. She argues that, as feminist liberation movements have enabled women to exercise more choice, women should have the freedom to choose whether they have children or not, without losing their dignity or their feminine identity.

- ²⁷ Lawrence, Ghislaine. "Laminaria Tents." *The Lancet* 360 (2002): 497. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Dried stalks of laminaria were a standard medical device in the late 19th and early 20th century. They were slim cylinders, five

to ten centimeters long, which were inserted into the cervical canal, where they absorbed water and slowly expanded, dilating the cervix. They were used for non-urgent situations such as cephalopelvic disproportion.

- ²⁸ Loudon, Irvine. *Death in Childbirth: An International Study of Maternal Care and Maternal Mortality 1800-1950*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993. Print.

This work is a monumental study of changes in maternal mortality, Loudon evaluates the biological, social, and medical causes of death in childbirth, analyses problems of measuring maternal mortality, and discusses maternal care. He also discusses some more minor problems such as puerperal fever and the capabilities of midwives and doctors.

(Borst, Charlotte G., *The New England Journal of Medicine* 329 [1993]: 1586.)

- ²⁹ Mander, R. "An Analysis of Simpson's Notebook Data on the Wet Nurse." *Midwifery* 19 (2003): 46-54. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article traces the real history of wet-nursing in mid-19th-century Edinburgh, as recorded by Sir James Young Simpson. The ages of wet-nurses' babies, which showed the age of the woman's milk, ranged from three weeks to eleven months; the quality of the nurses' milk and of their mothering skills was considered to judge her suitability to be employed. Wet nurses

usually volunteered to perform the role, and often breastfed their own babies. They did not always take part in “baby farming.”

- ³⁰ Marland, Hilary. “Under the Shadow of Maternity: Birth, Death and Puerperal Insanity in Victorian Britain.” *History of Psychiatry* 23 (2012): 78-90. Print.

Marland points out the fear of death in cases of puerperal insanity that was one of many anxieties surrounding childbirth in Victorian Britain. While a number of women, having suffered from puerperal insanity, died from exhaustion or pre-existing chronic conditions accompanied by mental breakdowns, others in fact recovered. The fatal potential of puerperal insanity was noted in obstetrics and psychiatry, which emphasized the physical and psychological vulnerability of women through the processes of pregnancy and childbirth.

- ³¹ May, Elaine Tyler. *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness*. New York: Basic Books, 1995. Print.

May examines reproduction as a tool of political and social control from Colonial times to the present, using historical sources and responses to illustrate changing attitudes toward childlessness. There is a continuing American obsession with

reproduction, and this public embrace of childbearing has inflicted anguish on childless women across the centuries.

- ³² McIntosh, Tania. *A Social History of Maternity and Childbirth: Key Themes in Maternity Care*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

McIntosh examines the history of maternity in England in its wide societal context, highlighting areas of both change and continuity, and charting the development of pregnancy and birth. McIntosh also focuses on the significance of regulation and training of midwives and doctors to teach them more about important aspects of maternity care, such as maternal death and new birth methods.

- ³³ Michaels, Meredith W. "Other Mothers: Toward an Ethic of Postmaternal Practice." *Hypatia* 11 (1996): 49. Web. 1 June 2004.

The article focuses on feminists' conflict over reproductive practices. Motherhood becomes a source of dangerous subordination and transformative potential, owing to social, maternal, and symbolic contradictions. The new reproductive practices produce "other mothers," who paradoxically deconstruct motherhood by their resistance to patriarchy.

- ³⁴ Moscucci, O. "Holistic Obstetrics: The Origins of 'Natural Childbirth' in Britain." *Postgraduate Medical Journal* 79.929 (2003): 168-73. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The author points out that the term "natural childbirth" is mostly interpreted to mean physical and mental hygiene in the management of pregnancy and childbirth. Appearing in the early 20th century, it was portrayed as providing a holistic approach to maternity care, and became a means of expressing anxiety about the social, economic, and political evolution that was taking place. Moscucci observes that the idea of natural birth is now no longer associated with pronatalism and eugenics, but with feminism and consumerism.

- ³⁵ Nuttall, Alison. "'Because of Poverty Brought into Hospital: ...' A Casenote-Based Analysis of the Changing Role of the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital, 1850-1912." *Social History of Medicine* 20.2 (2007): 263-80. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article focuses on the shift from a social to a medical function occurring in late 19th and early 20th century maternity hospitals. The Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital changed from being a provider of shelter during childbirth to a place that gave skilled medical care. The change came about because of national anxiety regarding the health of babies and their mothers.

³⁶ Oakley, Ann. *Women Confined: Towards a Sociology of Childbirth*. New York: Schocken, 1980. Print.

Oakley argues that the sociology of childbirth contributes to an essential understanding of women in their primary identity as human beings. Although patriarchy emphasizes the biological effects of giving birth and objectifies women, Oakley sees childbirth as a symptom of a woman's assumption of the feminine role, as well as a means of constructing society.

³⁷ Powers, Bernard. "Formation for Childbearing: Crisis and Resolution." *Studies in Formative Spirituality* 7 (1986): 103-24. Print.

According to Powers, to be human is to be an embodied spirit, embracing a mandatory dialog between spirit and body. In the vital dimensions of one's life, particularly in the generative or childbearing phase, the body expresses its sexuality. Events in the formation field are form-giving and form-receiving.

³⁸ Raymond, Janice. *Women as Wombs: Reproductive Technologies and the Battle over Women's Freedom*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. Print.

Raymond argues that there is publicly sanctioned subjection of women and their bodies to invasive "medical violence" and "unsafe, experimental and demeaning" procedures. These technologies are erroneously supported by many feminists, but

are opposed by a more radical group that refuses to yield control of the female body to men. (Amazon.co.jp)

- ³⁹ Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1986. Print.

Rich examines motherhood in a social context. Having a child is a means by which a female assumes full adult womanhood and proves a woman to be “like other women.” Motherhood is a social rather than a physical function. Throughout history, the childless woman has been regarded as a failed woman, and has not been allowed to speak for the rest of her sex.

- ⁴⁰ ---. “Motherhood in Bondage.” In *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York: Norton, 1979. 195-97. Print.

The essay presents motherhood as a political institution under the male dispensation of childbirth. Fathers often prescribe the way a woman should conceive, bear, nourish, and teach their children. Even the choice to be or not to be a mother does not always belong to a woman, and the experience of motherhood by a woman is only the start of a process whereby she can come to describe her own identity.

- ⁴¹ Rigg, Patricia. “Aestheticism, the Maternal and ‘that Extremity of Love’: Women’s Poetic Representations of Pregnancy,

Childbirth and Mothering in a Society in Transition.” *Women’s Writing* 19 (2012): 507-24. Print.

In the late 19th century, women poets conveyed the female empowerment that came from bearing a new life. Pregnancy, delivery, and mothering redefined “beauty,” and poetry depicted aesthetic moments specific to female experience, such as pregnancy and the relationship between mother and child. Women poets have tried, through their work, to embed themselves more deeply into society, in preparation for more active and authoritative roles.

- ⁴² Ring, Malvin E. “A Victorian Physician Ahead of His Time.” *New York State Dental Journal* 69.9 (2003): 34-37. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

This is a biography of Sir James Crichton-Browne, a renowned Victorian psychiatrist. Concerned about the poor condition of children’s teeth in this country, he pioneered the addition of fluoride to the diets of pregnant women and children. He believed that poor sperm and poor ova had a bad effect on the quality of offspring and, as a result, on children’s teeth. His research at the Royal Albert Asylum in Lancaster showed that patients tended to have dental disease because of the stress of modern life and also of hereditary factors.

- ⁴³ Robinson, Warren C. "Population Policy in Early Victorian England." *European Journal of Population* 18.2 (2002): 153-73. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

This is a critique of the social consensus from about 1800 onward in England that rapid population growth would threaten the future of the nation, an idea on which leaders and the government based their actions. This social climate discouraged marriage and childbearing, and couples chose options such as contraception, abortion, and even child neglect, to avoid having the responsibility for bringing up children. Although it is believed that there was no population policy in Britain during its fertility transition, society actually affected decisions about family size, resulting in high abortion and infant mortality rates and contributing to a decline in fertility.

- ⁴⁴ Rodemeyer, Lanei. "Dasein Gets Pregnant." *Philosophy Today* 42 (1998): 76-84. Print.

The author interprets pregnancy according to an existential analysis of *Dasein* as a fundamental factual condition in relation to one's ontological existence. In pregnancy, a woman experiences her body both as herself and not as herself.

- ⁴⁵ Secombe, Wally. "Starting to Stop: Working-Class Fertility Decline in Britain." *Past and Present* 126 (1990): 151-88. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article traces the decline in working-class fertility in Britain from the late 1870s, the result of many married women working outside of their home. After the turn of the century, modes of regulating fertility within marriage became available. Seccombe notes evidence of change in increasing numbers of abortions, a decline in coital frequency, and use of contraceptive devices.

- ⁴⁶ Spitler, Patricia D. "Reproductive Religion." *The Humanist* 52 (1992): 22-23+. Print.

Spitler discusses the cultural background that complicates women's reproductive decisions. While motherhood is regarded as politically and religiously superior to other roles, problems such as lack of childcare and the push for fetal rights become reasons to choose childlessness. The author argues that the doctrine of motherhood-as-womanhood should be discarded, and non-motherhood needs to be as well accepted as motherhood.

- ⁴⁷ Shorter, Edward. *A History of Women's Bodies*. New York: Basic Books, 1982. Print.

The essence of traditional childbirth was that the care of women giving birth was the province of women. Shorter believes that the physical basis for equality between the sexes has now been achieved. While women were victimized by patriarchy for centuries, with better nutrition, medical discoveries, and the

feminist movement, conditions for women began to improve.

(Suzanne G. Frayser and Thomas J. Whitby. *Studies in Human Sexuality: A Selected Guide* [Englewood: Libraries, 1995])

- ⁴⁸ Vissing, Yvonne Marie. *Women Without Children: Nurturing Lives*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2002. Print.

Tracing the social context of childlessness, its causes, and its meanings, Vissing explores the cultural myths surrounding the reasons why these women do not have children, and how not having children affects their everyday lives. Because our society perceives the bearing and nurturing of children to be central roles for women, having no children can significantly impact a woman's view of herself and her place in the world.

- ⁴⁹ Walker, Michelle Boulous. *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Walker investigates the relationship between maternity and philosophy from a feminist perspective by tracing the ideas of Plato, Marx, Freud, Klein, Irigaray, and Kristeva. Women are effectively silenced by their relationship with maternity, and the maternal body is the site of women's radical silence uncovering strategies such as exclusion, repression, denial and foreclosure.

- ⁵⁰ Welden, Estela. *Mother, Madonna, Whore: The Idealization and*

Denigration of Motherhood. 1988. New York: Guilford, 1992. Print.

Welden explores the reason why the quality of their bodies is fundamental to women's psychology. Dissatisfaction with her body may lead a woman to self-mutilation, and such perverse behavior may also be aimed at objects that she sees as her own creation, specifically her baby. The potential causes and consequences of these conditions, including maternal and paternal incest and its frequent offshoot, prostitution, are also discussed.

- ⁵¹ Wickham, Ann. "The Nursing Radicalism of the Honourable Albinia Brodrick, 1861-1955." *Nursing History Review* 15 (2007): 51-64. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The article introduces the life of Albinia Brodrick, including her determination to enter the profession of nursing and her commitment to the rights of nurses. By 1909, she was a certificated nurse at the District Infirmary in Ashton-under-Lyne. Embracing Irish nationalist ideals, she contributed to nursing politics in Ireland in the early 20th century, and took an active role in training and state registration for nurses and in issues related to venereal disease.

- ⁵² Woods, Robert. "Lying-in and Laying-Out: Fetal Health and the Contribution of Midwifery." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 81.4 (2007): 730-59. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Woods considers midwifery skills and practice, using stillbirth mortality as an indication of the quality of midwifery skills. He notes the advantage of delivering in London and as a hospital outpatient. He stresses the value of taking a "fetal health" perspective, rather than regarding midwifery in terms of maternal well-being.

- ⁵³ Wyatt, Gail E. and Monika H. Riederle. "Reconceptualizing Issues That Affect Women's Sexual Decision-Making and Sexual Functioning." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 18 (1994): 611-25. Print.

Wyatt considers faulty assumptions about women's sexuality that have been purveyed in order to decrease women's sexual risk taking. To understand women's sexual decision making, it is necessary to assess women's levels of factual knowledge about sex, their sexual experience and skill, and their literacy. Ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, relationship factors, and psychological issues all come into play.

- ⁵⁴ Young, Iris Marion. *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Young reviews the work of seminal 20th-century philosophers

including Simone de Beauvoir, Martin Heidegger, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, constructs analytic categories for interpreting power and autonomy, and goes on to reconsider the category of gender in terms of feminist theory, as well as aspects of women's experience.