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Female Identities of the Interwar Period: A Feminist Narratological Analysis of British Literature

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FEMALE IDENTITIES OF THE INTERWAR PERIOD:
A FEMINIST NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
OF BRITISH LITERATURE

A Thesis/Capstone
Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment for Graduation with Honors Distinction and
the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

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FEMALE IDENTITIES OF THE INTERWAR PERIOD: A FEMINIST
NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BRITISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

During the interwar period (1918-1945), women in England were faced with conflicting roles and identities. The men had left to fight in the First World War, leaving the women, who had previously held domestic and, at times, subordinate roles, to take over jobs and leadership positions. Women were exposed to and able to participate in public spheres, which caused social changes to arise. However, as the men returned after the war, women were expected to fit seamlessly back into their earlier subordinate positions. Literature of the interwar period written by female authors represents the struggle of female identities for voice, agency, power, and relief from social oppression. This project explores the identities of women as represented in three British interwar period novels. In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway is conflicted between her differing identities in public and private spaces, and her daughter Elizabeth dreams of her future opportunities while exploring public spaces. In Rebecca West's *Return of the Soldier*, Jenny, a spinster, struggles to define her social position. Mrs. De Winter of *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier attempts to determine her place in a home haunted by the memory of the former mistress. These novels are analyzed through the lens of feminist narratology, a theory that is used to examine the narrative devices of a text, like setting, characters, and point of view, as they relate to gender. Primarily, this project serves to reveal how employing a feminist narratological perspective when analyzing a text provides an understanding of both female identities and the narrative's overall function. Secondly, this project contributes to a larger effort to recuperate female authors to disrupt the traditionally-accepted and male-dominated literary canon.

Introduction

Identity shapes human beings as individuals and is formed by one's own perceptions of his/her/their self, but identity can often be influenced by cultural perceptions and expectations as well. Female identities, however, have often been overlooked in the male-dominated world. Feminist movements, from the suffragist movement to second wave feminism and even into the modern intersectional feminist campaigns, have sought to change social and political disparities. These movements have brought about women's right to vote and have attempted to resolve sexist discrimination of various kinds. While certain movements have made strides of progress, many changes came, and are still coming, about slowly. At the start of the 20th century, women of England faced a tremendous shift in their roles and identities as their husbands, brothers, and fathers left to fight in the Great War. The women, who had previously filled domestic and often subordinate positions, were left to take over the jobs and leadership positions that the men had left behind. As the men returned at the end of the war, the lives of women were again shaken and disrupted as their husbands often expected the roles and routines of all parties to return to normal, whatever 'normal' may have meant. The interwar period was, for women, a time of immense struggle in and against culturally prescribed identities.

Because literature can often represent the issues present in the time of a piece's creation, this project seeks to explore the identities of females during the interwar period as represented through interwar period literature. Male authors have attempted to represent female identities in their writing, but it is arguable that men represent women as culture perceives them to be. Female authors, however, are more likely to accurately

represent the social positions and experiences of women because female authors have experienced those aspects of feminine identity and status themselves. For this reason, it is beneficial to study female authors' depictions of female identities over those of male authors. Many female writers of the interwar era, and other eras as well, have been overlooked or even completely eliminated from public recognition or from print altogether. The traditionally-defined literary canon of the interwar period is comprised mostly of male writers, with the exceptions of Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein. The interwar period was nestled within the modernist era of literature and art. Modernism is known for the breakdown of meaning and representation. The literary era and its authors were deeply influenced by the two World Wars. Modernist texts are often, therefore, imbued by the trauma experienced by the people of the time. This trauma is recognizable through narrative constructs, like time and perspective, or even just through the details that authors chose to include. The lack of stabilized meaning is recognizable within interwar period literature, including the texts I have chosen for this analysis by Rebecca West, Virginia Woolf, and Daphne du Maurier. Within modernist studies, the three chosen authors have varying degrees of recognizability and acceptance among readers and critics alike. Woolf is a very widely read and revered author; she received the recognition of scholars from as early as the 1930s while still in the midst of her writing career, and her work is still extensively studied and widely recognized to this day. Rebecca West is now known and read by a broad audience of readers and scholars, but this was not always the case, despite the extensive body of work that she produced. West gained attention in the late 1960s and remains a well-known name in modernist studies. Daphne du Maurier is by far the least known author studied in this project. Her work was

largely considered popular fiction and seen to have sole purpose of entertainment, so it was largely disregarded by scholars as unliterary. Her writing still fails to receive the attention it deserves. This project is an attempt to bring attention to how female identities are represented in literature, as well as to contribute to an effort to recuperate and bring significance to female writers and their messages by including authors of varying popularity in academic discussions of literature. Through this work, I have discovered more of what it meant to be a woman living in a world defined by man's experiences, specifically by studying female characters and narrators and other narrative elements that reveal qualities of their identities.

Narratology is a literary theory that is used to study narratives by analyzing the elements that they are composed of and the ways they function and produce meaning. Typically, narratology is divided into the categories of formal narratology, which critics use to study the structural elements of narratives, and contextual narratology, which places a focus on the more subjective elements instead of the structural. Many narratologists argue that the two approaches are not of equal importance, so they often cling to one and resist the other. An effective narratological study of literature, though, should include an examination of both formal and contextual aspects, which is what I seek to do in this project.

What follows is an exploration of female identities through an analysis of British literature from the interwar period. I have evaluated and examined the novels *The Return of the Soldier* (1918) by Rebecca West, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) by Virginia Woolf, and *Rebecca* (1938) by Daphne du Maurier through the lens of feminist narratology. Feminist narratology is a subcategory of contextual narratology used to examine narrative

elements through the lens of gender. I have made an effort to include some of the formal and structural elements of narratology in this contextual study. Each of these three texts reveals particular elements of the condition of female identities and of women's experiences of voice, social position, agency, and power in this period. The narrator of *The Return of the Soldier*, Jenny, holds the social status of a spinster, which provides her perspective with mental clarity and her body with the ability to move freely among gendered spaces in ways that the other female characters are denied. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the use of free indirect discourse as the narrative perspective demonstrates the ways that the voices, bodily experiences, and mental states of Clarissa and Elizabeth are influenced by narrative constructs of time and space. The internally focalized first-person perspective of *Rebecca* reveals the oppressiveness of names and spaces on the mental and emotional state of the narrator Mrs. de Winter. Before discussing the narrative features of these texts, though, it is necessary to outline the theory of narratology and the elements of narrative which I use in my analysis.

Narratology

All narratives are told through the perspectives of some type of narrator, and narrators shape their stories using various elements, such as setting, time, and voice. Narrators have immense impact on how readers perceive the stories that they share. When analyzed contextually, a narrative and its story can give insight into the culture and events at the time in which the narrative was produced. Narratology is a literary theory that is useful for studying the implications that narrators and narrative have on readers. Feminist narratology is a type of contextual narratology that is used to study how narratives and their narrators relate specifically to gender.

This project explores how literature, through the use of narrators and other narrative elements, represents the identities of women on their search for agency, voice, social position, and power during the interwar period. A feminist narratological analysis of literary texts will provide insight into British culture during this time period and will shed light on women's shift of and search for identities in a time of great social and political change.

Narratology, also frequently referred to as narrative theory, is a theory that is used to study narratives and their structures. The goal of narratology is to understand the perceptions of readers due to the influence of specific elements in a particular narrative. The study of narratives is somewhat convoluted, though, as the literature surrounding the theory notes that there has been debate over what specifically can be defined as a narrative based on specific criteria. Gerald Prince points out that "even if all narratologists agreed on a definition of narrative, they would still have to determine what in narrative is specific or relevant to narrative" ("On Narratology" 76). Beyond prose, narratives appear in the form of other texts, such as songs, paintings, and comic strips, but narratologists disagree about what should be considered a text to be read as narrative in the study of narratology. Mieke Bal attempts to apply narratological practices to other areas of study, specifically anthropology, scientific rhetoric, and visual arts. She ultimately argues that "if one does not confine narratology to 'narrative texts,' the discipline's range of relevance is extended without losing the specificity of its perspective" (750). Traditionally, though, narratology focuses on literary and film narratives, and these traditional narratives are the type that I have chosen to focus on for this study.

Narratology is divided into two main categories: formal narratology and contextual narratology. Formal narratology is the study of the more objective and structural elements of a narrative. Contextual narratology, on the other hand, is used to analyze the subjective and non-structural elements of a narrative. The differences of these two narratologies can be thought of as the framework versus the details of a story. Both formal and contextual narratologies are important to understand when analyzing and interpreting a text. Most narratologists choose one aspect of narratology to focus on in their studies, whether it be formal or contextual, and then reject the other aspect. While modern narratology often tends to stray from formal and structural studies, Dan Shen argues that both formalist and contextual studies of narratives are necessary and even complimentary to one another. He argues that formal studies are always present in the contextual studies, such as feminist or cognitive narratologies (“Why Contextual and Formal Narratologies” 165). My examination of the works by West, Woolf, and du Maurier demonstrates that using either formal or contextual narratology alone is insufficient because narrative elements are complex and interrelated. One cannot effectively study an element, whether structural or contextual, without consideration of other related elements.

Structural Elements of Narratology

Predominately, narratologists are concerned with the more objective and formal side of the study, which are the actual forms and functions of narration. The theory focuses on the structural or syntactic elements that create and define a narrative (Prince, “Narrative Analysis and Narratology” 183). Janine Utell defines a structural narratologist as:

one who studies a story by looking at its parts in the context of the whole and seeing how those parts all work together in relationship, and then thinking about how that individual story works within an entire system of all other narrative, especially whether or not that system has rules and what they might be— analogous to how individual words work in sentences, individual sentences work within the system of an entire language, and each individual language works within the system of languages as a whole. (*Engagements with Narrative* 16)

Utell lists the most significant structural elements of narratives as plot, character, narrator and narration, mood and voice, time, and perspective and focalization.

A narrator is the teller of a story, and the act of communicating that story to an audience is narration. The ways that readers think about narrators are typically influenced by “how present a narrator is, how visible, what it knows and how it chooses to share that knowledge with us” (Utell 24). Narrators can be understood through their mood, voice, and perspective, all elements which have been defined by Utell as structural. An analysis of the narrator’s function and its relationship to the characters and events which it narrates can reveal the answers to a myriad of important questions, including:

Can the narrator access all the characters’ mental states? Does the narrator move back and forth between and among different characters? Does the narrator sound like one of the characters, or does it have its own voice? How do certain choices about narrator and narration enlighten us as to the representation in stories of personhood, subjectivity, human nature and activity? (24)

Narrators can function as an active participant in the narration, usually as a character involved in the action, or they can function as a witness who communicates the story to

its audience. Typically, narrators that participate in the narrative only have access to their own mental states. Narrators that are more of a witness can access varying numbers of characters' mental states to varying degrees, sometimes even moving between different characters whose mental states they are narrating. Some narrators, known as third-person objective narrators, do not have access to the mental states of any characters. Narrators make choices on what information to share and how to frame it, which can cause issues of credibility and reliability to arise for readers. Narrators can often be found to be untrustworthy, but, without another source available, readers have no other choice than to believe the story told by that narrator. Despite the unreliability of many narrators, narrators and their narration are able to represent various aspects of identities and ways of thought, belonging to both the narrator and the characters.

A narrator is intrinsically linked with its perspective and focalization, or who is telling the story and the point of view from which a story is being told respectively (Utell 32). Internally focalized narrators describe the internal thoughts and emotions of the narrator or characters, while externally focalized narrators only focus on what is externally visible. Narrator, perspective, and focalization together are vital to understanding a narrative. A shift in a narrator's perspective or focalization can entirely alter the meaning of a story. For example, the difference in perspective between the book and the film adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example, ultimately changed the focus of the story and, thus, its meaning (Shackleford 101). The book is told from the first-person perspective of Scout, but the film adaptation does not have the ability to portray Scout's interior subjectivity. The ability, or lack thereof, to represent the perspective of the narrator is the fundamental difference between visual texts and prose.

Adaptations from written text to film, or vice versa, result in different meanings to the story. Books with more complex forms of narration are even more difficult to adapt to the screen. Virginia Woolf has written books from very unique and intricate perspectives that do not translate easily into film, resulting in few, if any, adaptations that are able to capture the narrative complexity of her work. Woolf often manipulates perspective and voice through the use of indirect interior monologue, a form of narrative perspective that is similar in nature to stream of consciousness. The distinction is, though, that “a character's thoughts are presented in the third person by the narrator. The narrator enters the mind of the character and reports his or her thoughts verbatim, but the first- and second- person pronouns of direct interior monologue are absent” (Snaith 134). Anna Snaith points out that the use of indirect interior monologue allows the narrator to share both the public and the private voices of characters by sharing both what is said and what is thought (134). Knowing the perspective and focalization of the narrator provides readers with an understanding of the voice and the overall story, so it is necessary to understanding narratives in general.

In narratives, the construct of time involves ideas such as the amount of time that passes throughout the narrative, how long the narrator focuses on specific events, and the order in which the events are presented. As explained by Utell, “The ways that time is presented, and the ways we can experience time, chronology, and order in narrative, is complicated. Events must occur in a particular order, but as long as that order is discernable to a reader or viewer, those events can occur in any order, not necessarily chronologically” (30). The time of a narrative progresses forward but can do so with various disruptions, including analepsis and prolepsis. Analepsis is, as defined by Prince

in *A Dictionary of Narratology*, “an anachrony going back to the past with respect to the ‘present’ moment (or moment when the chronological recounting of a sequence is interrupted to make room for the analepsis)” (4). A prolepsis, on the other hand, is “an anachrony going forward to the future with respect to the ‘present’ moment; an evocation of one or more events that will occur after the ‘present’ moment” (77). These shifts in time create anachronies, which are chronological misplacements or “[discordances] between the order in which events (are said to) occur and the order in which they are recounted” (4). In other words, they are the interruption of events with other moments that often occur outside of the discourse time. Discourse time is “the time taken by the representation of the narrated; the time of narrating” (21). The events that occur at the “present” moment take place within the discourse time, and anachronies occur outside of that timeframe. Time can be manipulated and complicated in the ways that narrators choose to shape their narratives. The inclusions of memories and flashbacks or foreshadowing and mentions of future events can shape the story and the readers’ perceptions of that story.

Semantic Elements of Narratology

The more semantic and subjective side to the study of narratology is concerned with how structural elements, or other elements not generally considered structural, create interpretive meaning within a narrative. The elements analyzed in this division of narratology are often more detail-oriented rather than structural. Typically, narratology will not focus on these aspects of a narrative. Nilli Diengott states, “I am not sure theoretical poetics [narratology] is capable of or interested in handling what is basically a psychological phenomenon” (48). Diengott asserts that the semantic elements are too

subjective, thus they can be more difficult to clearly define and objectively discuss in a literary study like narratology. While they are not traditionally considered structural and are more subjective in nature, these elements, including the setting of the events and the characteristics of the narrator, such as age or maturity, social status, and gender, still contribute to the narrative and are important to interpreting and understanding a text's meaning. These factors function to create a narrator, and they contribute to the narrator's credibility and believability.

The settings of stories are formed by two main types of spaces: the interior and the exterior. Interior spaces are usually those that are contained by walls or other physical or figurative structures and are private in nature. Interior spaces are most often thought of as homes and other domestic realms but can also be the interior of a narrator's "mind". The interior space of the mind is where fantasy and dreaming occur; this setting is shaped solely by the narrator's thoughts, feelings, and imagination, which can lead to an unreliable telling. Exterior spaces, on the other hand, are those that are public in nature and are typically unbound and unconfined, such as cities and wild spaces. Public venues and workspaces are also considered exterior because they are not private and, even though there are often physical boundaries surrounding them, they are not confined and contained in the ways that interior spaces are considered to be. Characters and narrators interact with different spaces in ways that are influenced by their identities and the characteristics that define them.

The age and mental maturity of a narrator contribute to how the narrative is told and perceived by readers, such as whether or not a narrator is reliable. There are many ways this factor can take shape in a text. Child narrators may create a sense of ambiguity

and even unreliability due to their youth and immature perspective of the world. The “coming of age” story is known as the *bildungsroman*. This genre of story is shaped further by the gender of characters and the narrator, as there is a different type of *bildungsroman* for males than there is for females. The male *bildungsroman* focuses on male protagonists “growing up,” while the female version focuses on female protagonists “growing down” (Lazzaro-Weis 17). In a female *bildungsroman*, the young female protagonist is faced with the social responsibility to become more lady-like and to fit within the typically docile and domestic roles that society has prescribed for women. A male *bildungsroman*, though, is more often filled with adventure and excitement as the male protagonist follows his dreams and grows up to become “manlier,” fitting the masculine roles that society has prescribed for him.

The education, socio-economic status, and race or ethnicity of a narrator are factors that could also contribute to readers’ perceptions of the narrator’s reliability, but these are factors that have not been studied by many, if any, narratologists. Reliability of a narrator is contributed to by these factors, but it is also subject to cultural and historical perceptions, as well as the reader’s personal interpretations. One’s cultural and individual perceptions of certain identity factors influence the way that he or she is able to believe the narrator’s telling. Thus, it is entirely subjective in nature, and historical and cultural contexts must be examined in determining a narrator’s reliability (Zerweck 157-158).

Gender is another semantic characteristic of a narrator that has significant implications on the narrative’s structure. It has so much influence that Susan S. Lanser argues that structural analyses of literature should include a study of a narrator’s gender,

as well as its other characteristics, approached through feminist theories in order to gain a better understanding of a narrative's meaning ("Toward a Feminist Narratology" 344).

The narrator's gender plays an important role in how a story is perceived, as noted in Lanser's interpretation of "Female Ingenuity." Lanser refers to a discourse of "women's language" that contributes meaning to the text ("Toward a Feminist Narratology" 348).

She concludes that the language of a man is different than that of a woman, so the ways that men and women narrate stories are also different. The gender, sex, and sexuality of a narrator are structural elements that are entirely narratological and contribute to meaning, even if they are left ambiguous in the text (Lanser, "Sexing the Narrative" 90). Without knowing the gender of the narrator, two story lines develop, one for a male narrator and one for a female narrator. A narrator's gender is an element of narrative that cannot be ignored, as it dictates how a story is perceived based on the roles and relationships that the narrator holds in the text.

Lanser ultimately proposes the development of a feminist narratology, which is a narratological study that is used to evaluate narrative elements as they relate specifically to gender. Feminist narratology is used to discover what deeper meaning arises from analyzing the semantic characteristics of a narrator in conjunction with the structures that form the narrator and its narrative. This allows for a more holistic understanding of the narrator and the story. Often, a feminist narratological analysis reveals information about the cultural and historical background of the novel in study. Through this project, I will use a feminist narratological framework to observe the representation of female identities from the interwar period.

Conclusion

Narratology is an important theory for studying narratives, but there are gaps in its focus. In its formal use, it concentrates primarily on the structural elements of narratives, but the ways that those structures create meaning within a narrative through contextual and semantic elements are just as important in studying narratives. These factors give insight into the culture of the time in which the narrative was created and help readers to better understand the meaning of any and all narratives. An effective narratological study cannot successfully draw from only one aspect; it instead must use both formal and contextual elements in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of a narrative. Feminist narratology poses a solution to the divisiveness of narratological studies because it blends the studies of structure and semantics for a more comprehensive understanding of a narrative.

Within this project, I use feminist narratology to study three primary texts written by female authors to explore and evaluate the ways that narrators and other narrative elements, such as gender, perspective, and time, are used in interwar period literature to represent female identities. I hope to demonstrate that the ways narratives represent identities are indicative of the actual condition of female identities of certain periods as seen and experienced by female authors writing in that period.

***The Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West**

Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*, written in 1918, is the story of Chris Baldry's return from the front lines of the Great War with shellshock syndrome. The story is narrated by Chris's spinster cousin Jenny, and she mediates between characters in conflict since Chris's return is accompanied by the loss of his memories surrounding his

wife Kitty. Chris's mind has reverted to much older memories, and he finds himself once again in love with his lover from about fifteen years prior. Jenny shares the events both past and present, many of which she was not present for herself but were shared with her years after their occurrence. Throughout the story, Jenny's narratorial function is that of a mediator. All narrators are mediators by nature; they collect stories and translate them to readers as an act of explanation or even justification for the events that occur. Narrators filter the events and information and frame the narrative using the specific elements and structures on which they choose to focus. A narrator's way of filtering the narrative, though, calls into question the reliability of the narrator and the story they have told. Jenny's function as a narrator is necessary to understand as it causes readers to closely analyze the certain structural and semantic elements she has chosen to highlight. Jenny's mediation is purely narratological, and it serves to reveal insight into the identities of the story's female characters, herself in particular. Jenny's first-person perspective, spinster status, and function as a mediator allow her to experience both mental clarity and an ability to move freely among the domestic and wild spaces of the narrative in ways that other female characters are unable to experience.

Jenny tells the story of her cousin Chris Baldry's return from the Great War and the results that his afflictions of shell shock syndrome and amnesia have on those around him. Jenny narrates through her own personal perspective, but she tells the experiences of others. Specifically, Jenny focuses her narration on Chris and Margaret Grey (or Margaret Allington, as he remembers her), Chris's lover from fifteen years earlier. When Margaret and Chris are together at Baldry Court, the Baldry family's estate, Chris tells Jenny of the last day he remembers spending with Margaret, and Margaret shares her

own recollection of the end of their romance as well. Jenny narrates these memories from Monkey Island, Margaret's home in the days of their relationship, with such great and specific detail that one could be led to believe that she had been present for those moments herself. Her narration even detaches itself from her physical being in a way that causes readers to even forget she is the one narrating the story. Her telling cannot be entirely trusted because it is unknown what pieces of the memory are accurate and what pieces are exaggerated or even fabricated entirely by herself or by those who have told her the stories. Jenny's telling is complicated even further by the fact that an unknown amount of time has passed between when she was told of the memories and when she actually relays them to the reader. Right before sharing her version of the memory, Jenny states, "I have lived so long with the story which he told me that I cannot now remember his shy phrases. But this is how I have visualized his meeting with love on his secret island. I think it is the truth" (West 72). Jenny acknowledges that her own memory has lapsed, much like Chris's has, due to the length of time she has held onto the stories she has been told. The distance of time between when she was told the story and when she herself narrates it causes her to become an unreliable narrator. Her memory of his exact telling has failed her. Instead, she shares Chris's memory in the way that she herself envisions it, not in the way that it truthfully occurred. But even still, Jenny "[thinks] it is the truth" (72). There is the potential that Jenny has romanticized, exaggerated, and molded the memory to suit the experience that she wishes or believes to be true, but, with Jenny as the only narrator, readers can never be certain if it is true or not.

Jenny's first-person narration differs greatly from that which will be seen from Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca*. Mrs. de Winter's narration is marked by deep emotion that

often clouds her judgement, her ability to make sense of the events, and her ability to rationally communicate that which she is attempting to narrate. Jenny's narration, however, tends to focus on what is actually occurring rather than on her thoughts and feelings during the moments of which she is telling. She merely narrates the events as they happen. Of course, there are still emotions that make their way into her narration. Her neutrality as the mediator of the situation does not make her immune to any sentiment. For example, when Margaret comes to Baldry Court to meet Chris for the first time in fifteen years, Jenny cannot help but feel envious at the connection that the two share. As Margaret goes off to find him on the grounds, Jenny "[becomes] conscious that [she] was near to a bodily collapse," which she attributes to the fact that she is "physically so jealous of Margaret that it [is] making [her] ill" (91). Despite this intense jealousy she feels, Jenny refuses to let it get the best of her, and, as far as can be told, she does not allow it to taint her depiction of the characters and events. Once realizing her jealousy, she consciously decides to shift her mindset. She says:

But suddenly, just like a tired person dropping a weight they know is precious but that they cannot carry for another moment, my mind refused to consider the situation any longer and turned to the perception of material things. I leant over the banisters and looked down at the fineness of the hall: the deliberate figure of the nymph in her circle of black water, the clear pink and white of Kitty's chintz, the limpid surface of the oak, the gay reflected colours in the paneled walls. I said to myself, 'If everything else goes there is always this to fall back on,' and I went on, pleased that I was wearing delicate stuffs and that I had smooth skin, pleased that the walls of the corridor were so soft a twilight blue, pleased that through a

far-off open door came a stream of light that made the carpet blaze its stronger blue. (91-92)

Instead of dwelling on her emotions, Jenny focuses on what is real and tangible, in this case, the décor and design of the home's corridor, the quality of her clothing, and the smoothness of her skin. Jenny even compares herself to these decorative elements of the home. She is dressed in "delicate stuffs" (92) much like the with its delicate and beautiful details that surround her, like the nymph figurine, the chintz, and the oak-paneled walls. These details add to the value of both Jenny and the home. The smoothness of her skin, though, is where Jenny becomes most connect to and even absorbed by the home. She relates her skin's texture to the soft "twilight blue" (92) of the corridor. The skin and the walls flow together like one continuous, velvety surface. Jenny has equated herself to the material things of the home; she is not human but is wood, glass, and wall. As Jenny's figure fades into the blue of the wall, readers can forget that she is there, that hers is the voice narrating the events that unfold. Because of her role as a mediator, Jenny herself often becomes lost and forgotten in the midst of the other character's words and actions. She is, in a sense, a wallflower, merely hiding among the home's décor, observing the events so she can translate them to the readers. When among the material, the real, Jenny keeps most focused and sane, and her presence in reality, due to her connection to the material, is what allows her to maintain clarity in her narration.

The women from this text who fill more feminine and domestic roles, such as wives and mothers, lack this sense of mental clarity. Chris's inability to remember Kitty, his own wife, leaves her crushed and inconsolable. Jenny notes that "Kitty lay about like a broken doll, face downward on a sofa with one limp arm dangling to the floor, or

protruding stiff feet in fantastic slippers from the end of her curtained bed” (93). Kitty finds herself broken, useless, and discarded, despite the fact that “all a wife should be she’s been to [Chris]” (71). Jenny recognizes Kitty’s abandonment by Chris and equates her to a broken doll, much in the same way that Jenny equates herself to the material things of the home. When both women are objectified, they are no longer active participants in the action of the story but are items who merely witness the events that go on around them. Dolls specifically have associations of being very feminine and domestic, and the brokenness of such a toy indicates the failure of one’s attempt at domesticity. Kitty can be recognized as a failure in her domestic pursuits; her son passed away at a very young age, and her husband has forgotten her and the life they have built together. Kitty’s role is to be Chris’s wife, but his loss of memory nullifies his need and desire for her to fulfill those duties. Her world is shattered in this way, so her emotional and mental clarity are compromised. Jenny’s role, however, is to mend this broken doll and to reinstate Kitty to be able to fulfill her roles and purposes. By mediating the situation between all involved parties, as will be seen especially between Kitty and Margaret, Jenny is able to help mend Kitty and to help mend the Baldry’s marriage.

As a method of coping with her husband’s rejection and the overwhelming emotions she feels, Kitty attempts to win back her husband’s memory through a display of her domesticity. Before dinner on Chris’s first night back in the home, Kitty emerges from her room “dressed in all respects like a bride” (66) with her white gown, curled hair, and collection of jewelry. She sat and began to mend some flannel, a very domestic duty. She even moved from one chair to another so as to be noticed and to be in the light that caused her to look “cold as moonlight, as virginity, but precious” (66). Kitty arranges

herself in this way in the hopes that her bride-like presence and domestic habits will bring back Chris's memories of her.

Jenny, on the other hand, does not hold the roles and positions that are considered to be the most feminine and domestic, which contributes to her ability for mental clarity throughout the majority of the narration. Instead, Jenny is an aging, unmarried woman, making her a spinster. The term "spinster" is the former legal designation for "a woman still unmarried; *esp.* one beyond the usual age for marriage" ("Spinster"). Culturally speaking, these women were considered to be those who "failed in the main business of a woman's life, the marriage market" (Oram 414). Singleness among women became a greater societal concern in Britain after the First World War because of the "eugenic concern about the quality and quantity of the nation's children," which "reinforced the failure of spinsters to be mothers" (414). This increase in single women during the interwar period came about in part because of political decisions and strategies to benefit suffragist feminism (417). Many women were unable to even choose to be married, though, because of the surplus of single women that Britain experienced as a result of the loss of so many marriageable men in the war. Singleness was viewed as a true detriment to women, and psychologists asserted that "heterosexuality [was] desirable and indeed necessary for women's health and happiness: single women faced the dangers of sexual repression and frustration, leading to complexes and neuroses" (415). Society valued marriage not only for the procreation of new generations but also for the supposed insurance of mentally and emotionally stable women. Jenny's singleness is a concern to her society because of her inability to contribute to the nation and the instability that she is more prone to. Jenny seems to contradict these very assumptions, though, as she has

already been shown to be more mentally stable than her counterparts and contributes to the causes of marriage and motherhood through her mediation that keeps Kitty and Chris together.

Despite the ways that Jenny contradicts the societal beliefs about spinsters, she is still unable to fill the roles that the society of her time often viewed as most significant for a woman, namely a wife and mother. This inability is viewed as a sort of deficiency, and Jenny is, in a sense, stripped of her femininity and made nearly gender neutral.

Jenny, like many spinsters of her time, is regarded as socially less feminine than married women of her age so she is not bound by many of the same roles and expectations as the other female characters who hold positions as wives and mothers. Jenny is also more removed from the intensity of the situation than the other characters. She is not invested due to romance or desire in any way but is only involved because of a duty she feels to see her loved ones reconcile and experience happiness together. This gender neutrality and emotional distance allows for Jenny to mediate between parties who need help understanding one another's needs and desires.

Frequently, a first-person narrator is an active participant in the story. Jenny is no exclusion to this, but her position as a participant in the narrative is more of a secondary role. Jenny functions primarily as a witness and mediator. This function, though, allows Jenny to become easily forgotten. Her focus while narrating is on the actions and emotions of the other characters whose interactions she is facilitating and mediating. She rarely places excessive attention on herself, so she easily becomes a bodiless voice telling the stories of what she witnesses. She becomes less and less of a participant, almost to the point where, at times, she seems to be a third-person narrator instead.

Jenny witnesses the experiences of love and loss for each character, and she then relays those in the hopes of bringing another party to the point of understanding so that there can be reconciliation and relief of any tension or stress that might arise. Jenny's primary role is to bring together separated parties and to mediate between the past and the present. There is conflict between the loyalties and desires of former and current relationships. Specifically, Chris's lives with his past lover and his current – but forgotten – wife collide through his amnesia, and Jenny must help him to sort through his memories and desires. Jenny herself recognizes her need to mediate between Chris and the women he loves. Margaret and Kitty are strikingly different in appearance, status, and attitude, and this develops very different relationships between each woman and Chris. Jenny, while trying to make sense of these convoluted relationships, notes:

I suppose that the subject of our tragedy, written in spiritual terms, was that in Kitty he had turned from the type of woman that makes the body conqueror of the soul and in me from the type the mediates between the soul and the body and makes them run even and unhasty like a well-matched pair of carriage horses, and had given himself to a woman whose bleak habit was to champion the soul against the body. (97)

Chris has turned his affections away from Kitty, a love more of the body, toward Margaret, a love of the soul. He has even, in a sense, turned himself from Jenny since he only remembers the Jenny of his youth. The love of the body is formed by physical attraction and by the socially expected attractions and relationships. This love is primarily rooted in social status. Kitty holds the same social standing as Chris does, so they are viewed as compatible for one another. The love of the soul, though, is more internal and

intimate than the love of the body. It is deep, intimate affection not based on status in any way. Margaret is from a much different world than Chris. Even fifteen years earlier, Margaret and Chris were divided by their differing economic and social statuses, but that has not prohibited their love. With Jenny, Chris has a type of love that is both body and soul. She is of the same social status as him, and they share a genuine affection as cousins and companions. With the love of both body and soul, Jenny becomes a mediator between the two extremes, and, because Jenny can mediate between body and soul, she knows that she can still reconcile Chris to his wife despite his passionate love for Margaret.

Jenny most clearly acts as a mediator between Margaret Allington and Kitty Baldry, Chris's wife, especially in their initial interactions. Upon first meeting, Kitty is determined to shame and shun Margaret from their home, but Jenny insists that they hear Margaret out and consider the message she brings. At first, Jenny sides with Kitty, expressing disgust at Margaret's presence, "[hating] her as the rich hate the poor" (56), but she soon changes her mind and wishes to be open and receptive to Margaret. She recalls, "I said checkingly, 'Kitty!' and reconciled her in an undertone, ('There's some mistake. Got the name wrong, perhaps.) Please tell us about it, Mrs. Grey'" (57). Jenny, before even realizing it, has already begun mediating between the body and the soul. In her parenthetical aside to Kitty, she attempts to calm and soothe her in order to maintain harmony between the two women. She then speaks directly to Margaret, giving her permission to speak so that she and Kitty can be reconciled. Kitty, the love of the body, represents the more physical aspects of marriage: attraction, wealth, and social status. She has shared these things with Chris, and she takes pride in that. Margaret, the love of the

soul, on the other hand, represents the passionate and emotional qualities of love and marriage, namely emotional connection and companionship. Margaret's love with Chris is real and pure, despite the fact that she lacks the attractive qualities and social status that the Baldry's have. Jenny is only able to reconcile the body and soul because she herself is simultaneously both and neither. She holds wealth and status through the Baldry name, even though she also lacks status through her spinster identity. Jenny is also soul, though, because her relationship with Chris is more than her physical being and social status. There is obvious affection between the two, though not necessarily in a romantic sense. Because she possesses both body and soul equally, she can bring the two together and reconcile them, making "them run even and unhasty like a well-matched pair of carriage horses" (97).

The perspective of Jenny's narration is shaped and influenced by the physical spaces of the story's setting. The plot of *The Return of the Soldier* takes place almost exclusively at Baldry Court, the family's country estate. The estate is made up of both domestic and wild spaces: the home and the natural grounds beyond respectively. Descriptions of the setting and the interactions among characters within the different spaces indicate that the home is feminized, a belief that was held by many people at the time of this novel's creation. The house at Baldry Court is where Kitty spends all of her time. Because of her role as a wife, she is confined to the boundaries of the home and is never seen leaving. The rooms and their décor represent the feminine and motherly ideals that British interwar high society typically valued.

One specific room most clearly represents the expectations held for women of this time period: the nursery. Kitty and Chris had a young son who died a few years before

the events of the story take place. Despite the years that have passed, Kitty has kept his “in all respects as though there were still a child in the house” (47). She is caught retreating here to reflect on her role and identity as a should-be mother. Jenny describes this nursery as full of light that:

threw dancing beams...on the white paint and the blue distempered walls. It fell on the rocking-horse which had been Chris’s idea of an appropriate present for his year-old son and showed what a fine fellow he was and how tremendously dappled; it picked out Mary and her little lamb on the chintz ottoman. And along the mantelpiece, under the loved print of the snarling tiger, in attitudes that were once angular and relaxed as though they were ready for play at their master’s pleasure, but found it hard to keep from drowsing in this warm weather, sat the Teddy Bear and the chimpanzee and the woolly white dog and the black cat with eyes that roll. Everything was there, except Oliver. I turned away so that I might not spy on Kitty revisiting her dead. (47)

The nursery represents what could have been, what *should* have been for the Baldry family and, more specifically, Kitty. Kitty was stripped of her role as a mother too soon. By “revisiting her dead” (47) in the child’s carefully preserved room, Kitty’s is reminded of the societal pressures to raise children and of her failure to do so, though it does not seem to produce shame in her but propels her desire to fulfill her duties. Like in many other moments of this text, Jenny’s presence is lost in this portion of the narration. Her focus is on the tangible details of the space around her rather than on any of her thoughts and feelings in that moment. She is so detached that she almost ceases to exist other than as the voice in the reader’s head. Her nearly bodiless voice narrates that which she views

in the nursery, but this space, despite her tendency to provide details of her own emotions, has underlying implications on her identity as well. Jenny, like Kitty, has failed at the culturally and socially prescribed roles of a woman. Because of her spinster status, Jenny is unlikely to bear children, and the nursery serves as a reminder to herself that she is not fulfilling what is expected of a woman like herself. Jenny “had not meant to enter [the nursery] again after the child’s death” (47) for fear of the reminder of this failure, both for herself and for Kitty, but the room’s very presence in the home has made that reality difficult to ignore for either woman.

Because of his masculine identity, Chris is out of place inside the home. Even the gift he bought for his son, “the rocking-horse which had been Chris’s idea of an appropriate present for his year-old son” (47) feels out of place as if he has little understanding of the domestic space or of the developmental stages of a child. A mother would attune to the inappropriateness of such gift for a young child; even Jenny, though not a biological mother herself, is aware of this. The war has made him even more masculine than when he had left months before due to the trauma and brutality he has faced; he has lost any bit of innocence that he might have had before because of his experiences on the front lines. The house and its physical structure seem to actually reject his presence because of the changes he has undergone. His lapse in memory has caused him to forget the renovations that have been made to the home since the days when he lived there in his youth. He even says, “This house is different” (65) though nothing has changed since he has been away. While on his way down from preparing for dinner that first night, he stumbles over a few stairs. Jenny blames this on the fact that the stairs are new; they were added in the years that his mind has forgotten (66). That stumble, though,

causes Chris to become aware of the feeling that he is out of place in this domestic space. The seeming rejection from the house only deepens Chris's discomfort in the house and in the whole situation in general, and that discomfort discourages Chris from spending any unnecessary time in the home.

Because Chris is out of place in the interior and feminine spaces of the home, he retreats to the woods instead. The wild portions of Baldry Court are found to be characteristically more masculine. After returning from the front lines, Chris can nearly always be found outdoors on the pond or in the woods at almost any time. Even before he had experienced the traumas of war, he enjoyed the grounds far more than the home itself. While saying goodbye to Kitty and Jenny on the day he left for war, he:

broke off suddenly and went about the house, looking into many rooms. He went to the stables and looked at the horses and had the dogs brought out....Then he went to the edge of the wood and stood staring down into the clumps of dark-leaved rhododendra and the yellow tangle of last year's bracken and the cold winter black of the trees. (50)

He briefly walked through the home as a parting gesture, but he spent far more time moving about the grounds of Baldry Court, saying goodbye to the creatures and the scenery. Outside is where he feels most comfortable. Chris often takes the skiff out on the pond and stands "in the stern...using his oar like a gondolier" (79). Jenny notes that he specifically spends time at the pond because he has been "driven from the house by the strangeness of all but the outer walls, and discontented with the grounds because everywhere but this wet intractable spot bore the marks of Kitty's genius" (79). Chris feels the need to escape even hints of domesticity. The truly wild spaces of Baldry Court,

not the manicured lawns and gardens but the untamable ponds and forests, are where Chris feels most at home. The stifling domesticity cannot touch him there, but he can freely be the masculine figure that he is. It is on the grounds, too, that Chris ultimately finds his healing from amnesia.

Even though the wild spaces of this setting are portrayed to be characteristically masculine, Jenny is still able to experience freedom and release outdoors, much like Mrs. de Winter does in *Rebecca*. When Jenny is faced by the stress that accompanies meeting Margaret for the first time, she feels “so ashamed that such a scene should spring from Chris’s peril at the front that [she] wanted to go out into the garden and sit by the pond” (57). To Jenny, the outdoors, and the pond specifically, are a peaceful place where her mind can be cleared for her to contemplate and process the news of Chris’s injury. Most female characters are not seen traveling onto the grounds alone, at least not without express purpose, but Jenny is able to wander freely between the gendered spaces of the setting because of her spinsterhood and subsequently neutral identity. Jenny takes unaccompanied walks just to experience the beauty and serenity of the property. She not only walked, though, but she sat and enjoyed the scenery. She says, “I liked it [the view] so much that I opened the gate and went and sat down on a tree that had been torn up by the roots in the great gale last year” (94). She felt such peace and joy there that she “wished [she] had someone with [her] to enjoy this artless little show of the new year” (94). Jenny is not confined to one space because, as a spinster, she is not confined to any specific roles that can be dictated by interior or exterior spaces. For this reason, Jenny is able to find Chris in the wild spaces as she wishes.

Jenny’s narrative perspective is ultimately shaped by her social position as a

spinster in the interwar period, and her interactions with the spaces that make up the narrative's setting reveal aspects and qualities of her identity and experience as a spinster. First-person narrators tend to relay their personal thoughts and emotions in conjunction with the events of the story, but instead her spinster and, thus, neutral identity allows her to have a far more removed perspective than most first-person narrators, so much so that she sometimes seems to disappear altogether, becoming a bodiless voice. The narrator of *Mrs. Dalloway* functions much differently than Jenny does, as the text's third-person perspective is able to share the perspectives of multiple individuals through the use of free indirect discourse. Readers are exposed to the similar yet distinct identities of two women who experience the world and its feminine roles and expectations uniquely due to their generational differences.

***Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf**

Mrs. Dalloway, by Virginia Woolf, is the story of a day in London. Clarissa Dalloway, the book's namesake, is preparing to host a party in her home that evening. She spends the day in the city gathering flowers for decorations and in her home mending clothing and doing last minute preparations for the party. In the midst of it all, she is caught up in memories and flashbacks of the days of her youth, and as she goes about her day, she encounters several people from her past. Clarissa's day is interwoven with the lives and experiences of her family, friends, acquaintances, and even the strangers that she meets on the streets of the city. Clarissa's thoughts and actions are juxtaposed with those of her seventeen-year-old daughter Elizabeth. The stark generational differences between the two Dalloway women are apparent in their narrated thoughts and movements and in their interactions with the people and spaces around them. Woolf employs a

narrative strategy known as free indirect discourse to share the perspectives of Clarissa and Elizabeth, as well as the individuals they encounter. In this section I explore how that use of free indirect discourse represents the identities of two female characters, Clarissa and Elizabeth Dalloway, in Woolf's narrative. Along with the unique narrative perspective, constructs of time, with the recurring image of Big Ben as an anchor to the present moment, and space influence the interior voices and bodily movements of the Dalloway women.

The narratorial point of view of this story, known as free indirect discourse or, for all future references, FID, is defined by Prince as “a type of discourse representing a character's utterances or thoughts... [that] has the grammatical traits of ‘normal’ indirect discourse, but it does not involve a tag clause... introducing and qualifying the represented utterances and thoughts” (*A Dictionary of Narratology* 34). In the case of *Mrs. Dalloway*, FID is a third-person omniscient narrator who has access to the thoughts, feelings, and memories of all characters. Often in FID, thoughts and utterances are not directly connected to a specific character but are narrated like any other detail of the story. The narrator frequently shifts its perspective to align with the views, experiences, and understandings of certain characters in the text. The shift of perspective allows for the exclusive opportunity for readers to see both how female characters perceive the world and how male characters perceive the world and the female characters of the narrative.

First-person narration, as seen in both *Rebecca* and *The Return of the Soldier*, allows for a very personal and intimate telling of the story. Third-person narration, on the other hand, often lacks intimacy to a certain degree. The third-person narrator is often

detached and removed from the story in some ways. Even omniscient or limited omniscient narrators, who have access to the thoughts and emotions of some or all characters, cannot share a story as intimately or internally as a first-person narrator can. FID, a form of third-person narration, remedies this lack of internal intimacy by sharing the thoughts and feelings of many different characters throughout the story. *Mrs. Dalloway* does not have quite the dizzying intimacy that will be seen in *Rebecca*, but the ever-shifting focalization of the narrator gives readers a deeper understanding of the story from multiple sides.

Because FID uses a third person narrator to represent the internal perspective of characters without always tagging the character from which it originates, there is frequently a sense that two, sometimes more, voices are being presented. Most often, the two voices are those of the omniscient narrator and the character whose perspective is being represented at that instant, but this is not always the case. The voices can be the author, other characters, or even a collective voice from the society. The presence of multiple voices in a certain moment is known as heteroglossia. Sometimes, though, one voice, often that of the character being represented at the moment, is influenced by the voice of someone else, frequently another character or figure in the narrative, adding another layer of voices that interact with the others. This interaction of voices that influence one another is known as dialogism. FID uses collective voices to make heteroglot and dialogic statements. FID can be understood as an embodiment of the trauma that modernist authors have sought to represent because, through the fragmentation and distortion of the narrated events that make FID so distinct, FID overlaps with ideas of trauma and modernism. *Mrs. Dalloway* acknowledges the trauma

that she and all of the world has experienced due to the Great War: “For it was the middle of June. The war was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favorite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven—over” (Woolf 5). This heteroglot statement breathes the collective sigh of relief from people in London and all over the world. The war is over, but that does not mean the trauma has passed. The structure of the narration itself is an emulation of the residual effects the war has had on the people; it mirrors the mind of one who has undergone trauma of some kind.

The use of FID as the point of view also results in a unique structure of time within the narrative. Different events are shown multiple times, all from different characters’ or bystanders’ perspectives. With each perspective comes a new understanding of the event. Each witness perceives an event somewhat differently, giving it unique meaning because of the thoughts and experiences that person brings with them to the moment. With the various perspectives that are represented, a reader’s understanding of the event can become complicated. Whose interpretation is to be believed? Are any of the sources reliable and trustworthy? By looking at the perspectives collectively rather than individually, one can gain an understanding of how the events likely transpired based on the similarities and differences among the perspectives. In many instances, the perspective shifts with proximity. As characters pass one another or interact, the narrator jumps from one to the other to take on that new perspective. With these perspective changes frequently come time changes as well. The narrator backtracks

to tell of a past event from that new perspective. This non-sequential passage of time complicates and confuses the narrative, but Woolf's recurring reference to Big Ben and its leaden circles refocuses the reader on the events that occur at the present moment.

The recurring image of Big Ben reminds readers that the passage of time and the change that time brings are beyond human control. It acts as an organizing force of the novel to anchor readers to the present moment while characters are continuously traveling backwards in their minds. As will be seen, who Clarissa is in the story's present discourse time is very different than who she was in her days at Bourton, the days that she and other characters flashback on throughout the story. This is a harsh reality for characters to face, particularly when Clarissa and her old friends meet up for the first time in years. Each occurrence of Big Ben's striking pulls both the characters and the readers back to the present moment, reminding them that times have changed, and they are existing now, not in the past. The statement "the leaden circles dissolved in the air" first appears on the second page of the text., and it appears again numerous times throughout. The word "leaden" indicates a sort of heaviness, the weight of the anchor that ties both characters and readers to the present moment. The passage of time is central to this story, and it does not pass lightly. These leaden circles have no beginning and no end, but they pass hour by hour. With each journey of hands around the clock, time is racing by, and the characters, Clarissa especially, are all too aware of this. They can feel the ephemeral and fleeting qualities of time as the minutes and hours dissolve into the air with the striking of Big Ben, reminding them that they cannot hold onto the past. With each passing hour, both Clarissa and Elizabeth are conscious of times and clocks, and Big Ben reminds them of their roles and identities as women.

This narrative, like that in *Rebecca* and *The Return of the Soldier*, is a story about memories of the past. Clarissa and many other characters reflect on their past selves and the relationships those selves once had. In many ways, there seems to be a longing for those past selves and times, but the harsh contrast between memory and reality serves as a reminder of the changes in time and society. For Clarissa, the passage of time signifies a removal from her days of youth, health, and freedom. She looks back nostalgically on her time at Bourton where she was carefree and did not need to consider her image in the same as she does in present times. In her youth she had the freedom to kiss Sally and pursue someone so unfit for her as Peter Walsh. Both of these actions in her present, grown state would be unacceptable, yet she looks back on them wishing for that time in life again. This reality weighs heavily on her, but the time continues to pass in its never-ending cycle. Clarissa is caught between her past and present selves, and the contrast of identities is brought out more clearly by the construct of time in this novel with its cyclical passing and many flashbacks.

Clarissa struggles to stay grounded in the present moments of the narrative. Her mind is fixated on the past, specifically the summers that she once spent on Bourton. She frequently reflects back on her adventures, conversations, and kisses with Sally Seton, Peter Walsh, and Richard Dalloway. The way that she experiences the world around her is through the lens of what has been. Her preference to the past indicates her desire to be back in those more care-free days. While she must have dealt with the societal pressures of a young woman in that time, such as who she ought to marry, Clarissa was not held to the same tight expectations, like those of the wife of a prominent man, that she experiences at the present point in her life. Mrs. Dalloway is overcome with nostalgia,

especially as many of her past companions make unexpected appearances throughout her day.

Clarissa's fixation with the past and her contrast of selves become even more clear even through the use of her name. Like Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca*, Mrs. Dalloway is known by her married name. However, unlike Mrs. de Winter, Mrs. Dalloway is also known by her first name, Clarissa. Her two names are used practically interchangeably, and sometimes the name in use changes without perceptible reason. Even if uses are not clear, though, the two names have different meanings and implications on her identity. Her married name of Mrs. Dalloway closely ties her to her husband Richard; sometimes she is even referred to as Mrs. Richard Dalloway to make that connection even more explicit. In these instances, Mrs. Dalloway is not her own person or identity. She is merely the wife of Richard, playing the roles and living out the identity that comes with being the wife of a prominent male figure in society. Other characters may call her Mrs. Dalloway or Clarissa depending on their relationship to her and on the formality or general nature of their interaction. The narrator, too, often changes the way that it refers to her, sometimes in the same scene and paragraph. These shifts reflect the fluctuations of her complex identity. While in her home preparing for the party and mending her dress, she is referred to as Mrs. Dalloway. In this instance she is fulfilling her wifely duties in the domestic space by acting as a homemaker and caretaker. These are tasks that were often expected of a wife of this time. The name Clarissa, on the other hand, is her personal name, which represents herself at her core, and it stirs up powerful memories of herself as a young, unmarried woman. In the same instance as above, though, her name shifts to Clarissa with the arrival of a special guest: Peter Walsh. Peter is a friend from

Clarissa's youth, and the two had even considered marriage at one time. Peter's presence brings her back to memories and feelings of who she was before her marriage to Richard. With Peter, she is only herself; she is just Clarissa. The title of this narrative, *Mrs. Dalloway*, is significant because of the differences of meanings for the two names. The story is about the aging, married woman Mrs. Dalloway, not the young, single woman so many of the characters remember.

Narrative voice gives or denies power to characters, which translates into the spaces in which they are situated and the ways that they interact with those spaces. FID gives readers insight to the ways in which the characters experience the world around them. The thoughts and narration of characters are shaped by the spaces in which they are located and by the roles that they are expected to fill while in those spaces. The events of this narrative, similarly to both *The Return of the Soldier* and *Rebecca*, take place primarily among two spaces, this time being the public and the domestic spaces. As mentioned previously, public spaces are those that are out in the public world that are often considered masculine, such as cities and places of business. The city of London is an overwhelmingly masculine space. It is the space of work, commerce, and industry, which are not, especially during the early twentieth century, considered to be feminine things. Male characters have the ability to freely experience these, while the women are restricted in their experiences. There is little for them to do in the city except to get from one place to another as necessary.

Mrs. Dalloway is a very spatial and mobile narrative. Woolf situates the plot around actual streets, parks, and landmarks of her own present-day London. The narrator notes specific locations as the characters pass through the city. Because Woolf chose to

provide specific locations for the events, it is possible to actually map the movements of certain characters throughout the day. The difference in distance, route, and purpose of the characters' journeys are striking. Male characters' routes are winding, unplanned, and driven by desire. Female characters, on the other hand, experience the city much differently. They have much less freedom in walking, especially while alone in the city. Clarissa's walk is purposeful and straightforward. She leaves her home to go buy flowers, and buying flowers is, in fact, the only thing she does on her journey through the city. She travels from her home at Dean's Yard to Mulberry's, the floral shop on Bond Street, and then back home in a fairly straight line, only stopping to buy the flowers for which she came.

Clarissa spends much more of her time at home than she does out and about in the city. Inside the house, Mrs. Dalloway is still controlled by the expectations of who it is she is supposed to be. On this day in particular, Mrs. Dalloway is preparing to host her party that evening, and her role as a hostess reveals details about her role as a wife. It is expected that a wife of a prominent man such as Richard Dalloway would host important social gatherings, and Clarissa feels the pressure to do so. She busies herself throughout the day with preparations, such as buying flowers, mending dresses, and fretting over the guest list. After visiting Clarissa in the middle of her mending, Peter acknowledges that her parties "were all for [Richard], or for her idea of him" (77). She is consumed with the need to prepare parties that honor him and that demonstrate their status for others to see. Clarissa becomes so wrapped up in the details of the events that she loses sight of herself. During that evening's party, Clarissa thinks, "Every time she gave a party she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that everyone was unreal in one way; much

more real in another” (170-171). The parties are merely a show of herself, her husband and daughter, and her home, nothing more. Her home, a place that is often thought to be more private, is instead a place of spectacle where her identity and roles are under the influence of public expectations and are put on display for all to witness.

The attic of the home, however, is a sacred and private space where Clarissa is able to be her true self to its fullest extent. The attic exists in the domestic realm, but it is hidden in the head of the home, much like the self that exists deep in Clarissa’s mind, the self that can only be expressed in her attic bedroom. The attic represents Clarissa’s small glimmer of hope; she has not lost herself entirely, and this room is the place where she can retreat to be her true self. Clarissa spends her time in the attic reading late into the night and contemplating her affections toward other women, both activities that are thought to be fairly transgressive to her gender at the time. The attic is an unruled and undefined place where Clarissa can explore this side of herself freely. In these moments:

She [resents] it...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. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident—like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. (31-32)

Clarissa is intrigued by women who have made transgressions of their own, whether by “scrape” or “folly” (32); in them she finds both attraction and comradeship in not being the only one to have committed infractions in her roles as a woman. While in the attic, though, Clarissa becomes sexless, like a nun. After withdrawing to her room upstairs,

Clarissa notes her narrow bed, meant only for one, and she “could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment...when, through some contraction of the cold spirit, she had failed him” (31). The attic room became hers after an illness, and though she often longs to escape the pressures of marriage, she cannot help but feel that she has let Richard down. She feels as if she is missing something inside herself, but “she could not 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 contact of man and woman, or of women together” (31). What is missing for Clarissa is the attraction between herself and her husband that would likely cause her to feel more connected to him and would dispel her nun-like virginity. The attic is both a place of freedom within the domestic space to express her true desires and “an emptiness about the heart of life” (31): a reminder of her failure to effectively fulfill the roles and expectations that society has for a woman like herself.

Though the narrative is focused primarily on Clarissa and the relationships and interactions that others have with her, Clarissa’s teenage daughter plays a significant role in the narrative and reveals the identities of another type of woman. Elizabeth serves as both a contrast to and a reflection of her mother through her thoughts, movements, and interactions. Elizabeth is of a newer generation, so the roles and expectations of her differ from those of her mother, but in some ways, they are still the same. For one, Elizabeth is not rooted in the past and in her memories like Clarissa. Instead, Elizabeth focuses intensely on the future, which enlightens readers on her position as a woman of the newly rising generation. Instead of reminiscing on her past self and experiences, Elizabeth’s

mind is concerned with who she will be in the future. Elizabeth fantasizes about opportunities that lie ahead of her. She thinks:

She liked people who were ill. And every profession is open to the women of [her] generation.... So she might be a doctor. She might be a farmer. Animals are often ill. She might own a thousand acres and have people under her. She would go and see them in their cottages.... In short, she would like to have a profession. She would become a doctor, a farmer, possibly go into Parliament, if she found it necessary, all because of the Strand. (136)

Elizabeth considers the opportunities she has to build her life on, which are far different than any that her mother would have had before her at the same age. Elizabeth does not once consider marriage or children but hopes for jobs and positions of power and influence, and this is “all because of the Strand” (136). The Strand is a road along the River Thames in a neighborhood of London with which the Dalloways would not likely associate. Elizabeth’s experience of traveling alone on the Strand, where she pushes boundaries and seeks freedom has encouraged her to consider new opportunities for her future. She is determined to be more than a house wife and mother. Her experience on the Strand “made her quite determined, whatever her mother might say, to become either a farmer or a doctor” (137). Clarissa’s hopes for her daughter are quite different; she is from the generation where women are expected to be wives and mothers, so she believes that her own daughter should be held to these same expectations. Despite what her mother says, though, Elizabeth is determined “to become either a farmer or a doctor” (137). She is rebellious against what other generations have been held to, and that nature of hers is reflected in her interactions with space.

Elizabeth's journey through the city simultaneously contrasts and mirrors that of her mother's, representing the type of woman that she is as a member of a newer generation, though of the same social class as Clarissa. The generational differences are present in the two women's purposes for walking. Elizabeth, a young woman of a new era, walks out of leisure and desire for experience, and it is permissible for her to do so, but she is still restricted because of her gender identity. While still restricted and straight-forward like Clarissa's, Elizabeth's path is far less purposeful and planned. Elizabeth leaves from having lunch with a friend and mentor and boards an omnibus to the Strand, a street in an area of the city with which she is not familiar because "no Dalloways came down the Strand daily" (137). Her decision to board an omnibus to begin her journey is completely spontaneous. She stands and waits for a bus while thinking, "perhaps she need not go home just yet" (134). She exits the omnibus and begins walking down the street while contemplating her place in the world. While Elizabeth's walk is more daring, uncharted, and purposeless than her mother's, Elizabeth is still regulated by societal roles and expectations that are reflected by space, and these roles and expectations shape the direction of her travel. Her path, like her mother's, is also a straight line, a direct route to and from her destination. Elizabeth is conscious of her transgression in going down the Strand. The narrator says of her journey:

[Elizabeth] walked just a little way towards St. Paul's, shyly, like some one penetrating on tiptoe, exploring a strange house by night with a candle, on edge lest the owner should suddenly fling wide his bedroom door and ask her business, nor did she dare wander off into queer alleys, tempting bye-streets, any more than in a strange house open doors which might be bedroom doors, or sitting-room

doors, or lead straight to the larder. For no Dalloway came down the Strand daily; she was a pioneer, a stray, venturing, trusting. (137)

Despite the wonder and excitement in her mind, Elizabeth's body moves forward shyly and uncertainly. She forces her way through the social barriers set up for her, penetrating her way deeper down the Strand, but she does so on tiptoe, with the gentleness and timidity of a lady and not the brute force of a man. Elizabeth wishes not to draw attention to herself, knowing that she has trespassed into territory where she does not belong, much like the strange house of the analogy above. She is "on edge" for fear of being caught and that someone might "ask her business" (137). Her journey is without business or purpose, though, which would likely cause more trouble for a woman like herself. Interestingly, Elizabeth's movements through the city are compared to movements within a house. The domestic realm is what she is likely most familiar with as a female character, though very little is seen of Elizabeth within the Dalloway home since she is not a character of primary focus within the narrative. The city is unfamiliar to her, especially down the Strand, so the only way for her to make sense of the new sights and feelings she experiences is to compare the city to a strange and unfamiliar house. Elizabeth considers herself both a pioneer and a stray. She is the first of the Dalloways to explore the Strand so freely, but she is also separated from the people and places where she belongs.

Much like her mother's, Elizabeth's voice is influenced by the expectations that are held for her. While travelling through the city, Elizabeth's narration reveals the pressures of being a young woman from an affluent family such as the Dalloways. For a brief moment, Elizabeth forgets these expectations, though, and is able to experience freedom in the public spaces. When she boards the omnibus, her mind is swept away by

fantasy, comparing herself to a pirate entering foreign territory. The narrative voice describes her, saying, “The impetuous creature—a pirate—started forward, sprang away; she had to hold the rail to steady herself, for a pirate it was, reckless, unscrupulous, bearing down ruthlessly, circumventing dangerously, boldly snatching a passenger, or ignoring a passenger, squeezing eel-like and arrogant in between, and then rushing insolently all sails spread up Whitehall” (135). Elizabeth’s actions are rebellious, unruly, and uncharted, like that of a pirate who steals and transgresses upon territory that is not his/her own, but “she [is] delighted to be free” (135) in a way that she has not been before. She is aware that she has overstepped boundaries, though, and her fantasies of freedom and voyaging are once again clouded by the expectations that others have of her. Her narration is marked by anxiety as she thinks of what she should be doing. She worries, “She must go home. She must dress for dinner. But what was the time?—where was a clock?” (137). While her focus has generally been on the future, her anxiety surrounding the expectations for her life calls her back to the present moment. She wishes for a clock to chime or be visible for her to know how soon she must be back home. Her mind is aware that she must attend her mother’s party as a way of upholding the family image and fulfilling her roles as a young woman and probable future wife, yet her body continues down the Strand.

As she reaches the peak of her journey, Elizabeth realizes that “it was later than she thought. Her mother would not like her to be wandering off alone like this. She turned back down the Strand” (138). In an instant, Elizabeth’s journey comes to an end because of the expectations that she knows her mother has of her as a young woman and as a Dalloway. Clarissa would not approve of her voyage in this unfamiliar

neighborhood, so Elizabeth turns back, following her original path – still in a straight line – back to the omnibus to go home. The world of the Strand loses its original romance luster in that moment, and “the omnibuses suddenly [lose] their glow” (138). Elizabeth knows that the city has nothing to offer her; it is a space in which she knows that she does not belong, much like her mother Clarissa. Elizabeth boards the bus and returns to who it is that she is required to be, no longer a pirate, trespassing in places she does not belong, or a pioneer, penetrating deeper into unknown territory, but once again the obedient and present daughter; her transition is as direct as her path.

The Dalloway women and their interactions with time and space demonstrate a generational shift in women’s roles and experiences that emerged at the end of the war. Clarissa, the embodiment of the older generation, is preoccupied with memories of the past; she longs for her former self, who was not dictated by as many social expectations and who did not know the traumas and hardships of war. Elizabeth, though, dreams of the future, where opportunities abound for young women such as herself because of the progress made during the war. Woolf’s use of a third-person narrator and FID exposes these two women’s identities and experiences, both physically and mentally. The narration of *Rebecca*, though, is told through an internally focalized first-person perspective, which results in a far more intimate telling of the narrative than is possible with FID or that is seen with Jenny in *The Return of the Soldier*.

***Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier**

Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca* is the story of a young, unnamed woman who marries a wealthy older gentleman, Maximilian de Winter. Maxim’s first wife, Rebecca, has only recently died in a tragic boating accident. Manderley, the beautiful and famous

de Winter home, is haunted by the memory of its late mistress. The new wife struggles to fill the position of the new lady of the house, and terrible secrets are uncovered about Rebecca's past and passing. In this gothic-style novel, du Maurier makes use of narrative elements and the generic form to present female identities, representing her claims through Mrs. de Winter. This chapter of my project specifically focuses on the narrative voice of Mrs. de Winter and her roles and identities as the wife of a wealthy and influential man. Her internally focalized first-person narration reveals the overbearing power that names and domestic spaces have on her voice and on her mental and emotional state throughout the narrative.

The narrator's perspective and voice inform readers about female identities through the representation of her own identity and its contrast to that of the late first wife Rebecca. This narrative is told from the first-person perspective of the new Mrs. de Winter. She refers to herself only through first-person pronouns throughout the entire text. She is only ever named when addressed by her married name of Mrs. de Winter. For many, a personal name is what signifies and defines one's identity and sense of self. Names are how people are known and recognized by others. To be stripped of a name is to be stripped of individuality and autonomy; a person without a name lacks voice and recognition. The narrator's absence of a first name implies that the narrator lacks a personal identity or any sense of individuality. Her only identity is through marriage. She is seen not as an individual but as a wife; she does not even view herself as an individual because she refrains from calling herself by any name other than Mrs. de Winter. She does not clue readers into a personal name or identity prior to marrying Maxim but persists in using only personal pronouns. It is as if she is incomplete but is finally made

whole and is granted an identity upon marrying Maxim. When Maxim first proposes to her, the narrator relishes in this new identity, repeating over and over to herself, “Mrs. de Winter. I would be Mrs. de Winter” (du Maurier 55). To be identified as a wife, and the wife of a man as distinguished as Maxim de Winter, is her greatest achievement and honor.

The narrator’s attachment to her married identity is in stark contrast to the individualistic identity of Rebecca de Winter. Rebecca, the namesake of the novel, was independent and had held onto herself once she was married to Maxim. Rebecca’s identity was developed prior to marrying and was not gained in becoming Mrs. de Winter. She refused to let go of that self. Shortly after their wedding, Rebecca went so far as to bargain with Maxim to let her continue as the Rebecca she was before their wedding day; she would run the Manderley estate and keep up the image of their marriage so long as she could do whatever she wished (277). The very position of being named allows for Rebecca to be autonomous and to have at least some amount of power and choice in her own life, but the narrator, in her namelessness, is not granted such privileges.

The narrator’s first-person point of view allows for readers to see the thoughts, feelings, and memories that could not otherwise be seen. Readers are given access to Mrs. de Winter’s personal experiences as a wife and to her perspective of the events that have occurred. The events of the story all take place in the past and are told through the narrator’s memories. As the plot unfolds in the discourse time, the narrator is unaware of the twists and turns that would take place. Her retelling, though, is an analepsis, or a flashback, from her actual present time, but it is told as if she is still in the moment of the discourse time. When reflecting on the start of the story and the day she met her husband,

Mrs. de Winter says that she can still imagine that day “as though it were but yesterday, on that unforgettable afternoon—never mind how many years ago” (12-13). She makes clear early on that her narrative is a reflection of moments in the past. The narration is marked by her reflections and by her knowledge of what is to come in the end. She chooses to keep readers in the dark, just as she was kept at the time. This choice to hide the truth builds a sort of empathy between the narrator and the reader. The reader feels how Mrs. de Winter feels and is surprised the way she was surprised. Her story becomes more believable and understandable because the readers relate to how she feels and why she does what she does.

The first several chapters of the book make analeptic and proleptic shifts between her memories of meeting Maxim in Monte Carlo and her present life with him, years after Manderley is no longer their home. This anachronic narration is eventually abandoned, and she tells only of the events from their distant past at Manderley during the early months of their marriage. She narrates as if she is in the moment, but she occasionally slips back to the present, noting some sort of reflection with phrases such as, “I can close my eyes now, and look back on it” (67). These statements are infrequent, though, so it can be easy for readers to forget that the events are in the past. When readers forget that the events are from the past, they can forget to be wary of the information that the narrator provides. Memories are faulty since they can be clouded by intense emotions and the distance of time from when the events occurred.

The novel opens with the narrator recalling a dream from the night before. She visits Manderley, which has, in her mind, undergone many changes since she and Maxim had last been there. The narrator reflects on these changes, subtly comparing the current

dream state of Manderley to the one she remembers in her mind. There is a sense of both familiarity and foreignness as the narrator travels the winding drive toward the house. She says, “The drive wound away in front of me, twisting and turning as it had always done, but as I advanced I was aware that a change had come upon it; it was narrow and unkept, not the drive that we had known” (1). Despite the changes in the trees and flowers that have grown to overpower the once well-manicured driveway, the narrator senses that inside the house there would be no change from when they had last left. She states, “As I stood there, hushed and still, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell but lived and breathed as it had lived before. Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door would stand half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn roses. The room would bear witness to our presence” (3). It was “as though we ourselves had left but yesterday” (2). The timelessness that Mrs. de Winter experiences in her dream is carried into the way in which she narrates the events of the story; there is no sense of time, whether it be an hour, day, or year, but there is a deep attachment to the memory, nostalgia, and romanticism of her time at Manderley. It is unclear as to how long ago the events at Manderley took place. Have months or even years passed since then? Without the reference of time, readers are unable to determine whether or not the memories can be fresh enough in the narrator’s mind to be trustworthy.

The act of telling through memory creates a narrative that is potentially unreliable, as does her intensely personal narration. The narrator’s lack of name, on the surface, creates the illusion of detachment and distance from the narrative, but this is far from true because of the emotional nature of the telling. The internally focalized first-

person perspective allows the narrator to closely relay her personal experience and perspective, include all of her intimate thoughts and emotions. Frequently, she is swept away by her emotions and insecurities. She details long passages – pages, even – of her internal ramblings, drawing readers into her mind to get lost in her contemplative daze. Mrs. Danvers, the head housekeeper, nearly convinces Mrs. de Winter to commit suicide. As she contemplates the act, the narrator causes the reader to also believe that, yes, suicide would be so easy and so freeing. She says:

If I jumped I should not see the stones rise up to meet me, the fog would hide them from me. The pain would be sharp and sudden as she said. The fall would break my neck. It would not be slow, like drowning. It would soon be over. And Maxim did not love me. Maxim wanted to be alone again, with Rebecca.... I shut my eyes. I was giddy from staring down at the terrace, and my fingers ached from holding the ledge. The mist entered my nostrils and lay upon my lips rank and sour. It was stifling like a blanket, like an anesthetic. I was beginning to forget about being unhappy, and about loving Maxim. I was beginning to forget Rebecca. Soon I would not have to think about Rebecca anymore.... As I relaxed my hands and sighed, the white mist and the silence that was part of it was shattered suddenly. (251)

The first four sentences of this passage are written in the subjunctive mood with modals before every main verb. The word “if” at the beginning of the passage indicates that the following statements are subjunctive and explore hypothetical and imaginary situations. The first modal, “should,” indicates that the narrator is making a prediction about what will happen if she follows through and jumps from the window’s ledge onto the terrace.

The subsequent modals, all being “would,” describe the possibilities that might follow the event of her jumping. Mrs. de Winter quickly abandons the use of modals and hypothetical considerations, and she moves into considering what she believes to be factual. She says, “Maxim *did not* love me. Maxim *wanted* to be alone again” (251). Considering what would happen if she jumped sends her mind spiraling downward, thinking of her marriage she believes to be failing and giving her more reason to throw herself from the ledge. If it were not for the sound of a rocket that pulls her back to her present moment, we can only assume that Mrs. de Winter would have made the jump, and she would have convinced the readers to come along with her.

The windowsill where Mrs. de Winter stands gripping the ledge and considering her suicide is a liminal point, an in-between space. To her back is the home and, more specifically, the bedroom of her husband’s dead first wife. Before her is the misty expanses of the Manderley grounds and the woods and sea beyond. Where she stands in between, she can easily enter either space, and the external and wild spaces seem to be calling her to freedom. Mrs. Danvers knows that the house suffocates the narrator with its expectations for her role and identity as a wife, so she taunts Mrs. de Winter with the idea of release from that place and its pressure upon her.

Mrs. de Winter’s overly emotional mind is often caught up with circumstances and events that she fabricates herself. She imagines situations that she fears will happen, such as the loss of her husband, but she takes them so far, narrating these fantastical events with such detail, that readers can be easily deceived into believing that the events to actually have transpired. Mrs. de Winter is made out to be an unstable and unreliable narrator because of her deceiving and distracting narration, and du Maurier crafts this

narrative perspective to represent and critique common beliefs about women's weaknesses. Especially in and before the early twentieth century, women, have been considered unreliable and overly emotional beings, even to the point of instability. If women are viewed as unstable, they are less likely to be seen as capable of performing tasks, whether emotional, mental, or physical, that would be required of certain jobs and positions, thus perpetuating women's traditionally domestic roles and advancing male positions in a patriarchal society. Du Maurier intentionally critiques this belief about women by making the narrator and, by effect, all women out to be neurotic through the use of the gothic form. Gothic stories have a blend of elements from both romance and horror genres. Female characters often go mad within stories of the gothic tradition, and the genre is considered allegorical for colonial oppression and power dynamics, which can be representative of oppression of female sexuality.

Gothic stories often include supernatural elements, merging the real with the imaginary, which creates a sense of suspense and unpredictability. Rebecca's intense presence at Manderley after her death, though she does not appear as a ghost, is very supernatural and haunts Mrs. de Winter. Rebecca's scent lingers on her former possessions with which Mrs. de Winter finds herself interacting. Even without having known Rebecca, Mrs. de Winter knows Rebecca's scent, and it haunts her. The lingering fragrance of white azaleas, though grown musty on many of her things, marks Rebecca's presence and ownership. A handkerchief in a borrowed mackintosh first introduces Mrs. de Winter to the perfume of her predecessor. The fragrance's meaning is further understood and feared when Mrs. de Winter visits Rebecca's living quarters and finds the scent lingering and growing stale on all of her belongings. Rebecca's presence is kept

alive by Mrs. Danvers's endless devotion to her mistress. Mrs. de Winter, in an act of curiosity, decides to explore Rebecca's old rooms. Mrs. de Winter describes the room as if she has suddenly entered the past. She says:

For one desperate moment I thought that something had happened to my brain, that I was seeing back into Time, and looking upon the room as it used to be, before she died....In a minute Rebecca herself would come back into the room, sit down before the looking-glass at her dressing-table, humming a tune, reach for her comb, and run it through her hair. (167-168)

Rebecca's living quarters have been preserved so intently that it is as if she is still living and is still managing the activities of Manderley. The ghost-like presence of presence of Rebecca causes Mrs. de Winter to creep into mental and emotional instability. Mrs. de Winter is constantly brought back from her emotional fantasies by the sobriety of time. When she finds herself locked in a trance, visualizing Rebecca herself in her still made-up bedroom, Mrs. de Winter is only brought back to her present moment by the ticking of the clock. She states, "I went on standing there, waiting for something to happen. It was the clock ticking on the wall that brought me to reality again. The hands stood at twenty-five past four. My watch said the same. There was something sane and comforting about the ticking of the clock. It reminded me of the present" (168). The present moment is reassuring to her and reminds her that neither Rebecca nor her ghost are overseeing Manderley. Mrs. de Winter is the mistress of the home now.

Another common trope of the gothic is an isolated protagonist. Mrs. de Winter is in many ways isolated. She is unable to share her thoughts with her husband, and she has no daily companionship other than Manderley's servants. She has found herself in a

world where she does not truly belong because of her unrefined upbringing; her attitude, apparel, and actions do not coincide with her expected position as the wife of a wealthy and influential man. Manderley itself is an isolated place. There seems to be no other world outside of the woods that surround the home. This isolation and the stifling nature of the home cause the narrator to feel trapped and confined, and these feelings bleed into her narration, which causes her to come across as unstable and unreliable.

Interestingly, the moments when the narrator most intensely loses control of herself to her thoughts nearly always occur when she is indoors. The walls of the house are a cage in which she is confined and suppressed, stirring up intense and mentally-clouding emotions. Outside the home, Mrs. de Winter thinks more clearly, even if with elaborate language. The space in which the narrator is located at any moment of the story impacts the clarity of the narratorial voice and perspective. The narrative of *Rebecca* is set among two main spaces: the domestic space and the wild space, each with its own implications on gender roles and its own ability to shape and influence identities.

Domestic spaces, those within the walls of a home, are typically thought of as feminine spaces, and they contrast the public spaces that are thought to be more masculine, such as cities or places of business. Mrs. de Winter spends the majority of her time at home, while Maxim attends to business in the city and is very rarely at home, although no detail is ever given to his workplace or to the public realm of the city. In fact, it is almost as if the public realm does not even exist because it is not really experienced or described by the narrator. The only time she describes a public space is when driving through London on the way to meet Rebecca's doctor. Frank Crawley, Maxim's assistant, had worried that Mrs. de Winter would grow over-tired on the trip (365), and it is not

until they reach London that Mrs. de Winter feels tired because of “the noise and the traffic blocks [that] started a humming in my [her] head” (367). The fatigue is brought on in an instant. The narrator describes the city as congested with “too many people, too much noise. The very air was irritable and exhausted and spent” (367). The city is not the place where she belongs, and she is aware of that. Mrs. de Winter’s lack of experience in the public realm and lack of connection she feels while there causes a sense of claustrophobia for both the narrator and the readers. However, this sense of entrapment does not exist solely in the public realm; it is even more oppressive in the domestic spaces of Manderley.

The domestic realm is often considered to be a solely feminine space based on the traditionally-accepted roles of women as the house-wives and care-takers. Du Maurier constructs the Manderley home with its many rooms, as well as the other spaces that make up the explicitly described or silently implied setting, to represent the traditional roles of each sex through the characters and their daily affairs. Mrs. de Winter elaborates on the details of the spaces of the setting to illuminate what her identity is as a wife through the details that she chooses to share and how she interacts with each room.

Overall, the Manderley house is portrayed to be a more feminine space, but certain rooms are more masculine or more feminine in order to allow male characters to be present in the home while still maintaining a sense of separation and hierarchy among gender roles and identities. The different rooms are able to impact the identity and voice of the narrator more specifically. The library is the most strikingly masculine room of Manderley Place. Maxim escapes here to unwind after long days of work, and it is the space where he attends to the masculine duties of the household. If in the home at all, he

is almost always to be found here. The library is described as:

A deep comfortable room, with books lining the walls to the ceiling, the sort of room a man would move from never, did he live alone.... There was an old quiet smell about the room, as though the air in it was little changed, for all the sweet lilac scent and the roses brought to it throughout the summer. Whatever air came to this room, whether from the garden or from the sea, would lose its first freshness, becoming part of the unchanging room itself, one with the books, musty and never read, one with the scrolled ceilings, the dark paneling, the heavy curtains.... A room for peace, a room for meditation. (69)

The air of the library feels unchanged. Any sort of scent from the world outside the window, whether from the flowers of the garden or from the sea breeze, “would lose its first freshness, becoming part of the unchanging room itself” (69). This room represents a masculine unwillingness to change ideals, coupled with a need to assimilate all other ideas to the male-centered ideals. If nature symbolizes freedom, the stale air of the library eliminates any hint of freedom that tries to make its way into the masculine space. The fresh and floral air from the grounds is instantly suppressed and made to resemble the musty air that had previously and eternally existed in the room. The unchanging air is “one with the books” and “one with the scrolled ceilings, the dark paneling, the heavy curtains” (69). The very air that is breathed there is intrinsically connected to classic décor elements and to the books, which hold knowledge and serve to suppress the feminine identity of Mrs. de Winter.

Knowledge, like that stored in the books that fill the library, is traditionally male-possessed. Until more modern times, men were usually far more educated than women.

There was no need for women to be knowledgeable or literate in order to fulfill their roles as the caretakers of homes and children. Knowledge was stratified and unequally distributed between men and women, and du Maurier represents this disparity through the physical possession of books. When Mrs. de Winter is sent a set of books as a wedding gift by her sister-in-law, she attempts to display them in the morning room even though “they [are] out of place in that fragile delicate room” (141). However, there are no bookshelves in the room and the volumes are too heavy to be propped up. The books collapse, knocking over and breaking a piece of expensive china. The gift of books and, therefore, knowledge from one woman to another ought to be an empowering experience, but instead something so delicate and feminine as china is shattered beyond repair. The books themselves reject being stored and used in such a feminine space, so Mrs. de Winter relocates them to a shelf in the masculine library, perpetuating the lack of education, literacy, and subsequent empowerment for women like herself. The books in Maxim’s library, however, are “musty and never read” (69). They are withheld from Mrs. de Winter as a way of taunting her with her lack of power and knowledge that could come with reading. The very décor and environment of the library serve as a reminder to Mrs. de Winter that she is of a lesser status and that she has no way to change this reality.

After finding Mrs. de Winter using the library without Maxim present, a servant suggests that she instead spend time in the morning room, a far more feminine room that was consistently used by Rebecca for her duties as a wife (83). The morning room, in contrast to the library, is beautifully decorated and is a space used to oversee the household. Mrs. de Winter describes the space as “a woman’s room, graceful, fragile, the room of someone who had chosen every particle of furniture with great care, so that each

chair, each vase, each small, infinitesimal thing should be in harmony with one another, and with her own personality.... There was no intermingling of style, no confusing of period, and the result was perfection in a strange and startling way” (84-85). She notes that the room seems as if it “would be a place of decoration only, languorous and intimate,” (85) yet it is the space in which the woman of the house is meant to run the household and fulfill her domestic duties. This conflict of appearance and purpose imply that Mrs. de Winter’s role, too, is to run the household, but more out of the image than out of necessity. The household was maintained smoothly between the time of Rebecca’s death and the arrival of Mrs. de Winter at Manderley. Her assistance does little to support the routines of the home but serves to uphold value, even if only in appearance, of the wife’s role as a homemaker.

The house, with its defined roles and physical walls, is like a cage to contain women in domestic positions. The morning room is lined with windows that overlook the garden, taunting the narrator with a false sense of freedom, as freedom presumably exists outside the house in wild spaces. When her first guests arrive at Manderley, Mrs. de Winter panics and attempts to sneak through those windows to find relief in the garden but is unable to make her way outdoors (90). She flees the morning room but finds herself lost in a maze of corridors and stairways with which she is unfamiliar. She is trapped in domesticity even though she feels unprepared for her duties as a wife and homemaker. There is no way for her to escape.

Similar to the domestic and wild spaces of *The Return of the Soldier*, the Manderley home is juxtaposed to the natural lands that surround it. The house’s domestic confinement is a stark contrast to the wild spaces that surround the home. These expanses

of land are not tamed like the domestic spaces. The grass, flowers, and trees grow in unruly patterns and are nourished by a freedom that cannot be found elsewhere. The narrator spends a significant portion of her time in the wild spaces that surround the domestic realm she inhabits, and her identity seems to change when she is in the wild spaces of Manderley. She is given a sense of freedom she never experiences indoors, and she about runs wildly and youthfully. For Mrs. de Winter, her voice is most free and clear when in the wild spaces of the Manderley property. Here, she is released from the stifling roles and expectations that she experiences inside the house. She is less likely to be caught in fantasies when she is outdoors breathing in fresh air. In the wild spaces of Manderley, Mrs. de Winter finally finds freedom from the social constructs that confine her within the interior and domestic spaces. While Maxim is away in London at a dinner, Mrs. de Winter goes on a solitary walk through the Happy Valley and to the cove. Her only company is her dog Jasper, and she expresses her gratefulness to be alone. She says:

I wondered why it was that places are so much lovelier when one is alone. How commonplace and stupid it would be if I had a friend now, sitting beside me, someone I had known at school, who would say: "By-the-way, I saw old Hilda the other day. You remember her, the one who was good at tennis. She's married, with two children." And the bluebells beside us unnoticed, and the pigeons overhead unheard. I did not want anyone with me. Not even Maxim. If Maxim had been there I would not be lying as I was now, chewing a piece of grass, my eyes shut. I should have been watching him, watching his eyes, his expression. Wondering if he liked it, if he was bored. Wondering what he was thinking, Now I could relax, none of these things mattered. (153-154)

Mrs. de Winter is grateful to be alone in the Happy Valley. She is able to breathe deeply and peacefully take in the flowers and birds around her. When alone in this space, she is free from anxiety, especially that revolving around her relationship with Maxim. She is able to lie in the meadow and relax, but if Maxim were present, she would be conscious of his expressions, desires, and thoughts. If he were dissatisfied or bored, she would feel pressure to appease him in some way. Without his presence, though, Mrs. de Winter is actually able to relax and enjoy the moment.

Public spaces are often considered masculine and domestic spaces, as previously noted, are more feminine. These gendered spaces promote specific roles. What, then, are wild spaces? Why do they allow the narrator to feel so free and to think so much more clearly and rationally? In this case, wild spaces are where neither gender necessarily belongs; they are where one can be free from gendered roles and expectations. Characters of any identity are able to come here without regulations and inhibitions. Males and females can both experience these spaces without stipulations on how to act or of how the relationship should appear. The wilderness is a place of freedom and relaxation. The open expanses of the wilderness are free from boundaries, and there are no roles specific to gender identities as there are at home or in public. In the wilderness, Mrs. de Winter's narration focuses on the real, the present. She describes her movements and experiences, the things that she sees around her. Indoors, though, is where her mind seems to slip away from the present. She tends to describe that which has been and that which might come to be just as much, if not more, than that which is actually happening in the moment. It is outdoors where she is most free.

Constructs of time and space have significant effects on the voice and mental state

of Mrs. de Winter. While narrating, Mrs. de Winter is reminiscing on the events and experiences of her past. The narration feels almost as if it is timeless, like a dream in which the narrator is trapped. Because she tells the story through her memories in this dream-like state, she becomes unreliable and is taken less seriously, which contributes to the sense readers have that she is emotionally unstable. Because only her married name and first-person pronouns are used as identifiers, readers are only exposed to her external married self and her internal view of herself. Because she has married, Mrs. de Winter is no longer herself in the world; she is merely Maxim's wife, but she holds onto a shred of her true self in her mind. This remaining sense of individuality is frail and impressionable, though. The spaces in which she finds herself greatly influence her internal voice and mental clarity. In the domestic confines of the home, Mrs. de Winter's emotions spiral out of control due to the stifling expectations held for her. She often feels the need to escape the home, especially when she is facing windows that overlook the wild spaces of the setting. It is outdoors, in the woods and meadows of Manderley, that Mrs. de Winter's mind is most free and clear.

Conclusion

The use of feminist narratology to analyze literature provides a way to see of seeing female minds identities. It opens up the opportunity to think about women in domestic and natural spaces in new ways that go against the existing paradigms. Its use proposes a solution to the failures of formal and contextual narratologies by blending analyses of both structural and semantic narrative elements in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the narrative being studied. With all three texts, I have focused my analysis primarily on the structural feature of perspective and on the semantic

feature of space in order to demonstrate the interconnectedness of formal and contextual narratologies. Both structural and semantic elements create extensive meaning within a narrative, and an in-depth understanding of a text requires the inclusion and analysis of both aspects. Together, the structural and the semantic have exposed the identities and experiences of female characters as they have been represented by narrative elements.

While not indicative of every woman in interwar-period Britain, the identities and experiences of the female characters from the texts studied in this project, Jenny from *The Return of the Soldier*, Clarissa and Elizabeth from *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Mrs. de Winter from *Rebecca*, suggest identities and experiences to which other women of the period likely could have related. Wives, daughters, and spinsters, these women navigate a war-influenced society dominated by the male experience. Each woman struggles for voice, social position, power, and agency within her world. Chronologically, the women of these texts demonstrate changes in society and in beliefs about women over the course of the interwar period. Jenny, whose story was written in 1918, right at the tail-end of World War I, experiences freedom from feminine roles and expectations due to her social position as a spinster. The women around her, Kitty in particular, are unable to travel among gendered spaces and achieve mental clarity the way that Jenny is able to, as demonstrated in her first-person perspective, because of the societal roles they must fulfill as wives and mothers. A few years later in 1925, Clarissa's story is written, and its third-person perspective and free indirect discourse allow her daughter Elizabeth's story to be told as well. Her experience is much like those of the women surrounding Jenny. Her movements through spaces are dictated by the roles she must adhere to as a wife and mother, but her narrated thoughts demonstrate her desire to return to the past, a time

when, in her youth, she was much freer to experience the world as she pleased. She is burdened by the roles she must fulfill. Narration surrounding Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth exposes the generational differences of female experiences and identities. Elizabeth, in both mind and body, is more able to do as she wishes; she travels alone without reason and dreams of future careers and endeavors, neither of which Clarissa could ever imagine doing. The world has opened itself to young women like Elizabeth, but there is residual anxiety that plagues her mind about what she ought to be doing at any given time. Mrs. de Winter, whose story was published in 1938, finds herself caught between the experiences of Clarissa and Elizabeth. She is a young woman who, before being married, had freedom in the world, but now, as a wife, the domestic space and its accompanying roles expected of her are practically suffocating to her physical and mental states. Her internally focalized first-person perspective displays her mental and emotional instability experienced in the home. It is only when she is outdoors in the wild expanses of Manderley that she actually encounters freedom and peace; there she is relieved of all oppressive expectations.

The use of feminist narratology in literary analysis opens avenues to understand literature in new and exciting ways. All narratives, even those considered to be popular fiction with little literary value, are formed by narrative elements, both structural and semantic, that are worthy of being studied narratologically. This theoretical framework allows for a much deeper, more comprehensive understanding of a text and its meaning, one which can benefit scholars, teachers, students, and the average reader alike, because narratives of any literary value and from all time periods are capable of providing significant insight into female identities and experiences.

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