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MASCULINITY, IDENTITY, AND PERFORMANCE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MRS. DALLOWAY AND THE WAVES

Shannon M. Connors

MASCULINITY, IDENTITY, AND PERFORMANCE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MRS. DALLOWAY AND THE WAVES

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Shannon M. Connors

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Shannon M. Connors

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Dr. Rachel Hollander

ABSTRACT

MASCULINITY, IDENTITY, AND PERFORMANCE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MRS. DALLOWAY AND THE WAVES

Shannon M. Connors

By examining the male characters in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves,* this thesis seeks to explore the ways in which Woolf provides feminist commentary on masculinity, identity, and performance. In focusing on how these characters express emotion and perform masculinity, the novels highlight the ways in which men are expected to act as opposed to how they feel. This is seen in the interactions between Woolf's characters as she showcases relationships between men and women, as well as those men have with each other. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway both perform masculinity by expressing their emotions through tangible objects. In *The Waves,* Percival is a hypermasculine and idolized figure for the main characters and the novel revolves around him. His performance of a masculine identity makes it so that he does not need to have a speaking role in order to be important. However, Percival's lack of perspective hides everything about him that could be considered feminine, including his emotions. Bernard crafts the story of *The Waves,* controlling the narrative. This causes him to have a unique connection with the other characters and the events that take place in the novel, separating him from the emotions that they cause.

DEDICATION

For Finn-Finn

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INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf is well-known for her feminist literature, particularly her female characters. This can be seen in the strong female protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, of *Mrs. Dalloway* or in the characters of Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda in *The Waves.* However, Woolf also adds feminist commentary to her work using her male characters. Woolf depicts the men in the novel as full of emotions that they struggle to express given the expectations of masculinity that are placed on them by society. As a result, these emotions must be expressed somehow, in a way that is still considered masculine. The men in Virginia Woolf's novels represent the internalization of feelings and how feelings may be expressed in subtle ways. At times, the characters accuse one another of being cold or not caring, when in reality they are experiencing emotion but have no usable outlet to show how they feel. The men in Virginia Woolf's novels then turn to alternative ways of expressing themselves, whether that is through interactions with a physical object, writing stories, criticizing, or fantasizing. By looking at masculinity, identity, and performance in Virginia Woolf's novels alongside one another, it is clear that Woolf illustrates the performance of gender identity through her male characters.

In Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* she notes that feminism is often viewed as if it is in a vacuum, when in reality there are numerous societal structures that it interacts with, as seen when she writes:

> The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. (Butler 6)

Butler comments on the connection between masculinity and feminism and how both relate to patriarchal structures. In terms of Woolf's novels, these relationships are seen in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves* when the male characters interact with both one another and with the female characters. Gender is the performance of a masculine or feminine role that revolves around cultural norms. This performance may be taught to people when they are young and become standard practice, it can be conscious or unconscious. Performing a masculine identity is essential to each of Woolf's male characters, even when such actions oppose their true feelings. As a whole, the male characters internalize their emotions in order to act in a way that is socially acceptable for men. In each of these novels, though, Woolf approaches this concept differently. While *Mrs. Dalloway* features an entire cast of characters that put on an act for one another in order to fit into upper-class society, *The Waves* centers around a group of children whose homogenous identities limit their ability to hide anything from one another. It is also notable that Woolf uses the word "thought" in *Mrs. Dalloway*, whereas in *The Waves* she uses the term "said" for all dialogue, spoken and unspoken. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* the characters do not have the freedom to speak their minds because they are policed by societal expectations, everything they say is carefully thought through before they are said, presenting a heavily-filtered version of the person's true feelings. *The Waves* emphasizes that the characters are multiple sides of one person, and the term "said" shows how the other characters intrinsically know what one another are thinking. To them, it feels as if their friends are speaking everything that comes into their mind.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf illustrates an entire societal structure and how the people involved in it interact over the course of a single day. By following the streams of

consciousness of the characters, she shows how the past and present are interwoven as well as how external stimuli cause the characters to think and feel things that they were holding onto in their subconscious. While the events of the day are in preparation for Clarissa Dalloway's party, the characters frequently reflect on the past. This is especially true for the characters that were close in their youth and are being reunited. There is a wide range of emotions felt by the characters as they prepare to confront their pasts at the party. Peter Walsh returns from India after about thirty years and is eager to see his former love, Clarissa. Richard Dalloway is reminded of his jealousy of Peter when he hears that he will be back in London. Clarissa is eager to host a party for both old and new friends as she is delighted to reconnect with Sally Seton. By focusing on the emotions of the characters and how they choose to express themselves, Woolf comments on how society encourages people to act, especially in response to emotional situations.

In her book, *Beyond Bodies: Gender, Literature and the Enigma of Consciousness,* Daphne B. Grace writes about the stream of consciousness narrative that Woolf uses to build the society of *Mrs. Dalloway:*

> Although I have argued that, through its inevitable superficiality, the "stream of consciousness" in Woolf's texts may have its limitations, in her texts can be found the counterpart in narrative technique to these so-called "spooky" entangled interactions. In the novel, as each individual consciousness is entered into and exposed—each voice merges for an instant (perhaps half a sentence on the page) and creates overlapping realities. Although each life seems unrelated—linked only in time and place—yet each impinges in subtle ways on the next. Whether in terms of a feeling, a comment or a criticism, each character is aware of the other, and each influences the other. Not only creating a dynamic way of perceiving individuality, Woolf here also creates a new clarity on what we mean by "society": and how the society is a holistic synergy of individual awarenesses. The dynamic paradigm of over-lapping, although not quite interconnecting, members of society determines social attitudes and the ability of characters to cast judgement over others.

Grace asserts that Woolf's narrative technique is essential to the novel because of the entanglement of the characters' perspectives. She describes this as overlapping realities, which accounts for the various identities that each character takes on. There is the version of themselves that they project to others in order to perform in a way that is palatable to upper-class society, but there are also the identities that come from the ways that they are viewed by others. For example, Peter often compares Clarissa to who she once was in young adulthood, creating a new identity within the novel for her. Peter's Clarissa is a romanticized version of who she was many years ago, neither true to the reality of the time or who she is now. This version of her is warped by his perspective in the present moment of the novel. While some traits from her past have continued into the present, she is a different woman now than who she once was. Grace's point about overlapping realities being created through the stream of consciousness narration of the characters allows for such identities to also emerge.

Woolf comments on masculinity through the characters of Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway. Both characters struggle with expressing their emotions. In order to maintain a performance of masculine identity they use objects to show their feelings. In Peter's case, he fiddles with his pocket-knife when he is feeling insecure. The pocket-knife represents a masculine sense of control, it appears when he is feeling the need to change his situation, especially regarding Clarissa. In some ways, it also represents his lack of maturity, how he plays with this tool that is held by adult men as if it is a toy. Richard Dalloway has difficulty with telling his wife that he loves her. He does not show his affection for her until he is reminded of her relationship with Peter when they were young. This jealousy leads to him getting her roses on his way home from a luncheon and

these roses become a symbol of his love for Clarissa that is referred to for the remainder of the novel. In both cases, the men interact with something tangible, placing the emotions they are experiencing into something that is separate from themselves. In this way, they remove themselves from their emotions while still showing how they are feeling. While for Peter his playing with the knife is a subconscious habit that he has held onto for several years, Richard buys the roses for Clarissa once in the novel, but he repeatedly emphasizes his desire to tell his wife that he loves her with them.

In *The Waves,* Woolf uses the unique structure of the novel to highlight internalization of emotions. Most of the novel takes place in the minds of the characters, with each of them reporting on what they think and feel in their own monologue. The interactions between the characters and the things they say about one another carry through each section as the characters get older. Woolf looks at masculinity in this novel through these character interactions and comments on the relationships between male characters. Regardless of gender, people crave intimacy in their relationships, whether they are romantic or platonic. In many ways, the reader develops a more intimate relationship with the characters than the characters do with each other. By internalizing their emotions and hiding their true feelings from one another the emotions they experience fester, developing as the characters get older. The same images that Woolf uses when they are small children are repeated later in the novel showing how there are still unresolved emotions amongst the six main characters, they return to the moments from the first section frequently. In many ways, Woolf presents *The Waves* as the origin story of internalized emotions, demonstrating how they stay in the characters'

subconscious minds until brought into their consciousness, where they are felt all over again.

The character of Percival reflects the center of the novel. He is the glue that holds the group together and what draws them all back to reunite when they have his goodbye dinner. All six of the narrators document his every move. In their descriptions of him, he is an idolized figure that they all admire. They report others following him and trying to emulate his way of being but are unsuccessful simply because part of the appeal of Percival is that he is Percival. Bernard serves as the storyteller of the group and is a reflection of Woolf herself. He turns everything into a story and in some ways removes himself from the other characters to see situations clearer and to gather all of the details for his stories. He empathizes deeply with every entity, especially those in nature, considering what stories they may have within them and subconsciously connecting them to what he and the other characters are experiencing. Bernard as a character uses his storytelling as an outlet for his emotions, especially those that he absorbs from others, making him the one that internalizes his emotions the least by finding a method of expression that is still in keeping with masculinity. Neville is the character that internalizes his feelings the most, as evidenced by his relationship with Percival. The entirety of their relationship occurs in Neville's mind. He admires Percival from afar and never acts on his emotions. Neville goes so far as to not even tell others about his love for Neville, considering Bernard to be likely to make his feelings into a story and Louis to be too cold to understand him. At the same time, the feelings that Neville holds for Percival are not heteronormative, another hurdle he must face with acceptance of how he feels. Still, there are times in the novel where it is clear that Neville has fantasized about

Percival and played through potential scenarios in which they are together, even if he never brought them to fruition. In this way, Neville still works through his emotions, expressing them in his thoughts and, in the context of this novel, making them real to him. He utilizes his creativity to satisfy the desires of his heart and mind. In this way, the structure of the novel demonstrates the result of internalizing emotions.

In both novels, performance is a prevalent theme. Characters often act in a specific way in order to achieve a goal. When characters are not performing, it signifies a moment of vulnerability. Woolf uses the performances of characters for social commentary, demonstrating how society dictates how people act, as well as how people act in an unstructured space. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* the characters act performatively to fit in with societal expectations. The upper-class world in which the Dalloways live is highly critical of anyone who does not adhere to societal expectations. In *The Waves,* the characters act in a significantly performative way. While they are all part of a single group, each of them speaks in monologues. Each character gives their own perspective on situations and therefore slants the narrative into their favor. This is clearly seen with Bernard who considers everything as a potential part of a story, at times manipulating details to better fit his narrative. Woolf uses strategic language to highlight the communication between characters in the novels. This is clearly seen with the use of "said" in *The Waves* as opposed to "thought" in *Mrs. Dalloway,* illustrating the openness or lack thereof in their respective societal structures.

Identity plays an important role in both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves.* The ways in which characters identify both themselves and others show how they see the world. Both depict upper-class society, making class a very important part of each of the

character's identities across both novels. By having only upper-class characters highlighted and sharing their stories, Woolf makes a class commentary that shows how some voices are silenced because they are considered unworthy. However, class is not the only time Woolf discusses identity. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* the identities of the characters went through significant changes from the time they were young to the day of Clarissa's party. Their perspectives of one another also lead to completely separate versions of themselves to exist, as seen by Peter's Clarissa being very different from Richard's Clarissa, and both of them being extremely different from how Clarissa chooses to identify herself. Still, this change in identity is underscored by the ways that they have not changed over the previous thirty years. The characters consider the ways that they have all changed, but their idiosyncrasies and quirks betray just how similar they still are to their past selves. In *The Waves,* Woolf also paints a picture of how identity changes over time by showing the characters growing up. She takes this a step further, though, by including moments in which characters directly consider their own identities.

Masculinity plays an important role in both novels, especially in how Woolf uses it to emphasize her feminist themes. All of Woolf's male characters try to adhere to the societal expectations that are in place for men in order to be perceived as masculine figures. Because of this, they all have difficulties expressing their emotions and look for alternative outlets for their feelings. Peter Walsh's knife is a commonly held tool for men during the time period in which *Mrs. Dalloway* is set, but the way that he plays with it makes it an important symbol that Woolf uses to allow the reader to see more about his character. When he is feeling emotionally vulnerable, he plays with his knife, reminding himself of his own masculinity and using this nervous habit as a method of expressing

how he feels. Richard uses the roses as a vehicle for showing Clarissa his love. The roses themselves then become an important symbol to Clarissa too because looking at them is the same as looking at her husband's feelings for her, only in physical form. This reminder that he cares is a source of comfort for her as she is hosting the party because they represent emotions that Richard had not previously expressed but Clarissa needed to know about.

Bernard writes stories in *The Waves,* projecting emotions onto the characters in his stories. He keeps himself detached from other characters and does not allow himself to be intimate with them. In return, some of the others also distance themselves from Bernard because he makes them feel afraid to be vulnerable. When Bernard does learn about the emotions of others, he handles these feelings in the same way he does his own, by turning them into a story. The problem with this is that the story is then shared with others, leading to the other characters not trusting Bernard with the intimate details of their lives. With this, Bernard then struggles to write about intimate moments because he lacks experience with them, both first and secondhand. Neville is an example of this, he internalizes his love for Percival and does not share the way he feels with anyone. This leads to him fantasizing about Percival, only expressing his desires to himself in his own mind. To drive this point home, Woolf does not include the details of this in Neville's monologues, only small hints that are left to the interpretation of the reader. Neville holds onto this love for Percival even after Percival dies in India, showing how Neville held onto his feelings for so long that he got to a point where it was physically impossible to express them. Percival plays a crucial role in *The Waves.* He is at the center of the novel and the lives of the other characters and monologues revolve around them. Despite never

speaking, he would be considered the main character of the novel. It is not coincidental that he is an exaggeratedly masculine figure. He is very athletic and is frequently seen playing sports with the other boys. He hides his emotions so much that he does not even speak. His perspective is never given, but the force of his presence is felt by all. The only time one of his emotions is revealed it is by Bernard, stating that Percival loves Susan. However, Bernard is also known for guessing at the backstories of people, as seen with his conversation with the man on the train, so he may be an unreliable narrator in this instance if he is furbishing Percival's backstory as well. Essentially, Woolf highlights how men need feminism too. The men in her novels illustrate how the societal pressure to perform masculinity regardless of how a man wishes to present himself is an example of this.

Both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves* comment on the connectedness of people. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* the societal structure is used to show how all of the characters are connected. They are all acquainted with one another or have a degree or two of separation between them. In both novels, a web is used as a symbol of society and Woolf uses it for several critical points. For Richard Dalloway, he feels a spider's thread of attachment between Clarissa and himself, illustrating the bond between them. This bond could be considered emotional, as it appears when he is bringing her the roses, or it could be a societal construct between the two as partners in marriage. This spider's thread leads Richard to her as he follows it home, showing how it draws him closer to family life, as is societal expectation. In *The Waves,* Bernard considers freeing a fly from a spider's web. This fly could represent how people can become trapped in society, particularly in social groups to which they do not belong. In this case, they then become food for the spider,

showing how the stakes of living in a society can be life or death for both oppressor and those who are oppressed. For the fly, he is defenseless and trapped, waiting to be eaten, but if he is freed, then the spider will be going without food. In a similar fashion, Bernard plays a significant role as he can manipulate the web and decide the outcome of this story. This image makes a larger point about the power of authors and storytelling.

Woolf uses images of nature as symbols and to emphasize the ways in which her points are deeply ingrained in human interaction to the point of feeling natural. Flowers appear in both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves* as symbols. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Woolf begins the novel with Clarissa going out to get the flowers she needs for her party. This errand shows how she is taking the task into her own hands, exercising her autonomy. Later, Richard buys Clarissa flowers as an expression of his love. In this case, the flowers are used to hold Richard's emotions and express them to Clarissa. In *The Waves,* there is a flower at the table on the table at Percival's goodbye dinner that begins as one but changes form to represent all seven of the characters. When the characters first sit down, they do so as individuals. They are just being reunited after years of separation and are coming from all different places where they have each formed their own unique identities. This is illustrated by the single flower. However, soon after the dinner has begun, the flower morphs into one with seven sides, representing how they have all once again become seven pieces of a single whole. This is caused by Percival bringing them all back together and reunifying the group.

Woolf's experiments with masculinity, identity, and performance in *Mrs. Dalloway* are discussed in the research of Ban Wang, Johanna X.K. Garvey, and Jean M. Wyatt look at how Woolf writes about Peter Walsh's identity, especially how it connects

with Clarissa and the relationship between them. Alex Zwerdling and Molly Hite connect Dr. Bradshaw's ideas about Proportion and how the upper class subscribed to his ideas about mental health, even though they encourage internalization of emotion. In addition, Bradshaw represents the threat that the professional class presents to the upper class, leading to class insecurity and an upset to the societal structure of *Mrs. Dalloway.*

Similarly, *The Waves* has been explored as an experimental novel, the story line focuses entirely on the individual perspectives of its narrators. The importance of the structure of *The Waves* to understanding the novel is discussed by Leila Baradaran Jamili and Qiuxia Li who emphasize the characterization that is at the center of the story. They assert that Percival is at the center of the novel and is the glue that holds all of the characters together. Bernard also plays a key role in *The Waves,* Liisa Saarilooma, Gabrielle McIntire, and Francoise Carter all look at Bernard as an authority figure within the group who tells the others' stories. Bernard is both one of the characters and the storyteller, warping the events to be from his perspective and to highlight his interpretation of them. Similarly, the relationship between Neville and Percival is discussed by Jean E. Kennard. Their relationship, and its existence in Neville's mind, illustrate how Neville internalized his feelings to such an extent that their relationship became somewhat of a reality to him.

CHAPTER 1: MEN AND EMOTION IN MRS. DALLOWAY

Mrs. Dalloway is often cited as being a feminist novel due to its strong female protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, but there are several male characters who contribute to her story and Woolf's feminist commentary. In a more subtle way, the men in this novel highlight Woolf's feminism by redefining what it means to be a man in post-war Britain. Woolf places emphasis on the vulnerability of her male characters and the ways they express emotion. Woolf illustrates the relationship between masculinity, identity, and performance using these characters, showing how societal expectations impact the ways in which they act and the aspects of their identities that they choose to perform in a given situation. It is important to connect masculinity, identity, and performance while reading *Mrs. Dalloway* because of how these three ideas work together and an enhance one another. While masculinity is a part of identity, its performance may contradict the way the character feels. This leads to Woolf's male characters expressing their emotions in ways they believe maintain their masculinity. Similarly, this leads to the externalization of emotion that was previously internalized. This is the case with Clarissa's husband, Richard Dalloway, and Peter Walsh, her old friend and former suitor. Peter Walsh struggles with the feelings for Clarissa that he has held onto for many years and Woolf's depictions of him illustrate the ways that this internal struggle is shown through his physical action with a pocket-knife that he plays with. Peter Walsh's knife is a synecdoche for his emotions. He has maintained this habit of toying with the knife whenever he is feeling strong emotions and the knife is referenced in Woolf's text in virtually every scene that he is in. The knife is a part of Peter Walsh's identity, just as his emotions are. Richard Dalloway, on the other hand, has been married to Clarissa for a

long time, yet has difficulty expressing his love for her. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* he uses roses as a symbol of his love and to show Clarissa that he cares for her. While both men have an object that is used to symbolize their feelings, Peter's knife is a synecdoche because of its consistent presence in his life and in Woolf's characterization of him. The roses that Richard gives Clarissa, however, are a temporary vehicle that Richard uses to communicate how he feels to Clarissa without explicitly saying that he loves her. Similarly, Peter does not play with the knife with the intention of revealing his deeper feelings.

In Virginia Woolf's *A Writer's Diary,* Woolf reflects on the writing process of *Mrs. Dalloway* in her entry on June 19, 1923, then entitled *The Hours*:

> what do I feel about *my* writing? – this book, that is, *The Hours, if* that's its name? One must write from deep feeling, said Dostoievsky. And do I? Or do I fabricate with words, loving them as I do? No, I think not. In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense. (A Writer's Diary 56)

In her diary, Woolf lays out the goals she has for *Mrs. Dalloway.* She wanted to paint a picture of daily life and highlight the flaws in the social system, but most importantly, she wanted to show feelings. In the novel, Woolf writes about the internalization of emotions and how they may be expressed in unconventional ways. This is especially the case for Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway who hide their emotions while performing masculinity but reveal the ways that they feel using tangible objects.

Peter Walsh returns from India and attends Clarissa's party, revisiting their personal history, stirring up old emotions. From his narration, it is evident that he is stuck in the past and has trouble coping with the way things turned out. He deals with these difficult feelings by critiquing those around him, particularly women. He judges them

based on their outward appearances and seeks to control them. He struggles with expressing his emotions and maintaining a masculine sense of control in social situations, primarily those involving women.

Richard Dalloway is an upper-class gentleman who is primarily characterized in the novel as "Clarissa's husband." Being defined in terms of his wife directly contradicts the societal norm where the women are defined by their role as a wife or mother. Richard has difficulty showing how he feels, particularly towards Clarissa. They have been married for about thirty years and have a child together, yet he is unable to tell his wife that he loves her, that is, until a luncheon at Lady Bruton's where he decides to buy her roses to express his love for her brought on by his jealousy of Peter Walsh returning. Woolf emphasizes how important this gesture is to both him and Clarissa. For Richard, this is a release of emotion that he has been unable to express and for Clarissa it is a visual reminder of the love in their marriage.

Woolf's experiments with identity are discussed in the research of Ban Wang when he emphasizes Peter and Clarissa's connection with one another that causes their respective identities to converge at times, allowing for the deeply intimate moment in which Peter breaks down in tears while talking to Clarissa at her home, physically releasing the emotion he had internalized. Wang's interpretation of their identities as being interconnected shows how time can change some aspects of identity, but not all, especially in regard to connections between people. Johanna X.K. Garvey furthers this when she looks at how external objects are used in Woolf's novel to allow the externalization of previously internalized emotion, as seen with the fountain which connects the past with the present and shows how the characters have and have not

changed. This adds a new layer to the motifs in the novels, showing that the fountain holds special significance to Peter and has the power to transport his consciousness back in time. Garvey looks at the character of Peter Walsh and how he represents the masculine identity, highlighting the ways in which Woolf's characterization of him is also a social commentary. Jean M. Wyatt argues that Clarissa gave up passion when she gave up her relationship with Peter Walsh, leading to the isolation she experiences now. Wyatt's interpretation sets the stage for further argument about why Clarissa made this choice and how she chose feminism, pushing back against Peter Walsh's hypermasculinity. Alex Zwerdling and Molly Hite connect Dr. Bradshaw's ideas about Proportion and how Richard Dalloway and the rest of the upper class embody it, illustrating the issues with mental health that are caused by societal pressure, in turn highlighting the insecurity of members of the upper class, when confronted with the professional class, as seen with their interactions at Clarissa's party. This shows the only other place in the novel where Richard displays insecurity, apart from in his relationship with Clarissa.

Peter Walsh's Knife

Throughout the novel, Peter Walsh carries a pocket knife that he has a habit of playing with. This seems to have started when he was young and continued into adulthood, as Woolf writes, "That was his old trick, opening a pocket-knife, thought Sally, always opening and shutting a knife when he got excited. They had been very, very intimate, she and Peter Walsh, when he was in love with Clarissa." (187) While Sally attributes this habit to excitement, it seems to appear anytime Peter is experiencing any strong emotion, particularly one where he is experiencing insecurity and, as Sally noted, a

connection to Clarissa and the intimate past Peter shared with her. This is just one example of characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* influencing one another to act as they did in their youth. This knife is a symbol of insecurity, but also a tool for change.

The first time Peter's knife appears in the novel is when he arrives at the Dalloway home and is talking to Clarissa, observing her after being away for several years. Woolf writes:

> She's grown older, he thought, sitting down. I shan't tell her anything about it, he thought, for she's grown older She's looking at me, he thought, a sudden embarrassment coming over him, though he had kissed her hands. Putting his hand into his pocket, he took out a large pocket-knife and half opened the blade. Exactly the same, thought Clarissa; the same queer look; the same check suit; a little out of the straight his face is, a little thinner, dryer, perhaps. but he looks awfully well, and just the same….He had his knife out. That's so like him, she thought. (40-41)

Peter notes Clarissa's advanced age since their last meeting and appears uncomfortable. In response to this discomfort, he takes out his knife. In turn, Clarissa notes his appearance. The knife does not go unnoticed by her, who thinks of his habit nostalgically, recalling it as something Peter would always do. The exact moment in which Peter reaches for his knife is when he sees Clarissa looking back at him and taking in his appearance in the exact same way he had just taken in hers. It is as though he does not like how Clarissa returns this gesture, one of many examples of times these characters challenge one another. In this scene, the knife represents Peter's insecurity, particularly the feelings that arise being in Clarissa's presence, a figure from his past, as well as a former lover.

The knife appears every time Peter experiences emotion. Every moment between them that makes Peter feel uncomfortable is punctuated with the knife, which is seen a few moments into their visit when Woolf writes, '"And what's all this? 'he said, tilting

his pen-knife towards her green dress. He's very well dressed, thought Clarissa; yet he always criticises *me*. Here she is mending her dress; mending her dress as usual, he thought;" (41) In having his knife out and using it as a tool in this conversation to indicate her dress, he is displaying confidence because he feels superiority. To him, the dress represents Clarissa's life of domesticity that he does not lead. Clarissa does not appreciate his criticism of her dress, nor her repairing it. Woolf continues:

> here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to see the House and back and all that, he thought, growing more and more irritated, more and more agitated, for there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage, he thought; and politics; and having a Conservative husband, like the admirable Richard. So it is, so it is, he thought, shutting his knife with a snap. (41)

Peter dramatizes this image of Clarissa working on her dress as the summation of her life since he left. The knife here is being used as a symbol of his desire for change. He wants Clarissa to have a completely different life, not the life of a hostess and wife of a politician. In shutting the knife, he accepts that the battle between Richard and himself over her is long lost and that Clarissa's life is going to remain the same whether he likes it or not. With this motion, he also snaps himself out of his fantasizing about what she had been doing while he was in India and snaps back into reality. In returning his thoughts to the present moment, Peter also shuts down the flow of emotions that he was experiencing. He puts an end to the irritation and agitation of thinking about Clarissa's life with Richard Dalloway, closing himself off to feeling. Notably, he is still holding it in his hand, showing that he is still poised for battle. While he is done for now, he is still ready for the next wave of emotion that confrontation with Clarissa invokes. In a similar fashion, Clarissa's sewing needle becomes her equivalent to Peter Walsh's knife. While his knife is a symbol of his masculinity and is a tool that he has held onto throughout his

adventures, she has been mending her dress with a sewing needle, representing the domestic life that she has been leading. While this is not the entirety of her life while Peter was away, it is notable that the activity he acknowledges her doing involves a tool that is so similar to his synecdoche. As he continues, he refers back to her domesticity as he critiques her current lifestyle, being married to a conservative husband, and how it is all bad for her. In this respect the wife also takes on another role in that his criticism metaphorically cuts into Clarissa like a knife. Years after their last encounter she remembers the way that Peter has made her feel.

As the conversation between Peter and Clarissa continues, his playing with the knife begins to affect her, she becomes frustrated with Peter. While she is accustomed to his playing with the knife, she does not understand why he does it but, indirectly, this translates to a frustration with Peter's emotions and how he is choosing to express them. At times, Clarissa takes his actions with the knife as a personal offense, such as when Woolf writes:

> And this has been going on all the time! he thought; week after week; Clarissa's life; while I – he thought; and at once everything seemed to radiate from him; journeys; rides; quarrels; adventures; bridge parties; love affairs; work; work, work! and he took out his knife quite openly – his old horn-handled knife which Clarissa could swear he had had these thirty years – and clenched his fist upon it. What an extraordinary habit that was, Clarissa thought; always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox, as he used. (43-44)

Although the knife represents Peter's feelings of insecurity and desire to change the past or present while talking to Clarissa, she takes his habit as an attack on herself and is preoccupied with what Peter is trying to express through this action. The only thing that is being communicated to her by Peter is his desire to change her, which she takes

offense to. She connects Peter's playing with the knife to these traits that have nothing to do with the present situation but feels that he is trying to push on her, projecting her own feelings onto him and his habit. It is also possible, though, that she is seeing through to Peter's insecurity about his social class and that is why she is responding with annoyance. She does not want to be reminded of where she came from, nor does she want someone from her past to draw attention to the more shallow aspects of her new life. She knows that Peter is constantly criticizing her every move and takes the knife to be a physical reminder of that, associating it with him and his insecurity. She relates this activity to a time when she was of a similar social standing to Peter, but now looks down on him for it. In turn, this attitude of being too good for Peter and his silly habits now that she is a society woman feeds directly into the original source of his insecurity that led to playing with the knife in the first place.

Even when Peter is not using the knife for a specific gesture, he has it in his hands and fiddles with it. At one point, he begins grooming his fingernails. Clarissa eventually loses her patience with Peter and his picking at his fingers with the knife:

> And he actually pared his nails with his pocket-knife. For Heaven's sake, leave your knife alone! she cried to herself in irrepressible irritation; it was his silly unconventionality, his weakness; his lack of the ghost of a notion what any one else was feeling that annoyed her, had always annoyed her; and now at his age, how silly! (46)

This scene shows the knife in a new role. Peter is using it to groom himself while talking to Clarissa. She is more upset with the knife, once again, than the habit itself of cleaning out dirt from under one's fingernails in polite company, she reads more into this, accusing him of not caring about the feelings of others as he is already expressing his insecurity and discomfort with the situation by openly fiddling with the knife. She is

unintentionally shutting down his expression of anxiety, the only means he has of showing these emotions in a relatively socially acceptable way that also maintains masculinity. Woolf continues:

> I know all that, Peter thought; I know what I'm up against, he thought, running his finger along the blade of his knife, Clarissa and Dalloway and all the rest of them; but I'll show Clarissa – and then to his utter surprise, suddenly thrown by those uncontrollable forces thrown through the air, he burst into tears; wept; wept without the least shame, sitting on the sofa, the tears running down his cheeks. And Clarissa had leant forward, taken his hand, drawn him to her, kissed him. (46-47)

This moment serves as a crescendo for their visit, ending with Peter Walsh breaking down in tears. When Clarissa draws attention to Peter fidgeting with the knife and expresses her annoyance, Peter tailspins into thinking about the upper-class society being against him, Clarissa and her husband included. In running his hand along the blade, he appears to be petting the knife as a companion, almost like it is a comfort animal, looking for someone, or in this case, something, to be on his side. By Clarissa making Peter feel that he cannot fidget with his knife, he loses the sense of masculine control that comes along with it, resulting in him breaking down crying. While Clarissa has Richard, and with him all of upper-class society, in her corner, Peter feels isolated and looks to the knife for a sense of stability and comfort. Later in the novel, Peter reflects on this moment and criticizes himself for giving into his emotions. Clarissa, on the other hand, comforts him in this moment of vulnerability, kissing him. Peter leaves soon after this, embarrassed, but Clarissa does not judge him for expressing his emotions. Even though she does not understand why he is upset, she still offers him sympathy. In displaying his own vulnerability, Peter creates a moment in which he and Clarissa can both be vulnerable, letting go of performances to share genuine feelings.

Still, Peter being in a situation in which he receives sympathy does not help his ego, thus worsening the original problem of him feeling inferior. Although she may not intend to make anyone feel inferior, Clarissa often makes people from her past, such as Sally and Peter, feel like she is too good for them now that she is a Dalloway, as seen in this interaction with Peter Walsh at the Dalloway residence. Peter is returning to London after about thirty years and the first person he came to see was Clarissa. At the end of the novel, when he is at Clarissa's party, it is clearly seen how his response to feeling uncomfortable and of lower social standing is to criticize, "Lord, lord, the snobbery of the English! thought Peter Walsh, standing in the corner. How they loved dressing up in gold lace and doing homage!" (172) He does not know anyone at Clarissa's party well enough to feel comfortable, so he becomes defensive by speaking negatively of those around him to make himself feel better.

In his article, "'I' On The Run: Crisis of Identity in Mrs. Dalloway," Ban Wang writes:

> Despite a deep communion among these characters, especially between Peter and Clarissa, who 'lived in each other,' no identity can be established. Once the unconscious flow is let loose, it not only overflows the symbolic but also runs over its own moment of revelation and meaning toward a state of ego-loss. Identity, character, and personality are dissolved. One can become everybody or nobody. The self is always on the run, on the run toward nonself (Wang 187)

Wang focuses on how the characters of Peter and Clarissa are deeply connected with one another. Peter and Clarissa were friends in their youth and shared a romantic relationship. By emphasizing the phrase, 'lived in each other,' Wang insinuates that they shared a sexual relationship as well. This would make a lot of sense considering that their once very intimate connection has led to a fusion between the two despite years of separation. This would also explain the magnetism between the two that drove Peter to Clarissa's

home to see her on the day of her party. This explains why Peter broke down crying when he was talking to Clarissa, the intimacy between the two allowed Peter the space to cry, illustrating Wang's point about the depreciation of ego in their relationship. Wang believes that the relationship between these two characters caused their identities to morph into one. However, there are very few places in the novel where they appear to share an identity, there are still clear distinctions between them. With their separation over a span of several years, Peter and Clarissa grew apart, each moving on to lead separate lives. While the scenes in which the interact do show a level of comfort between them that is deeper than that of any other pairing, this does not mean that their identities have become one and the same. Nevertheless, Wang's point about ever changing identities do come into play in the relationship between Peter and Clarissa. Being around each other stirs up old memories and emotions, bringing their past back into their present consciousnesses. In considering their shared history, they return to visions of their past identities.

The next time that Peter Walsh's knife is mentioned after his conversation with Clarissa is when he starts pursuing the woman near the park while leaving the Dalloway residence:

> "Straightening himself and stealthily fingering his pocket-knife he started after her to follow this woman, this excitement, which seemed even with its back turned to shed on him a light which connected them, which singled him out, as if the random uproar of the traffic had whispered through hollowed hands his name, not Peter, but his private name which he called himself in his own thoughts. 'You, 'she said, only 'you, 'saying it with her white gloves and her shoulders," (52-53)

During the entire scene, the knife remains in Peter's pocket, it remains out of view of the woman. However, he plays with it in the same way that he plays with the idea of being

with this young woman. He fantasizes about the potential interactions they would have, if they were to meet. The idea of the knife being hidden in his pocket also symbolizes the hiddenness of this desire and his intentions. Peter is clearly excited by this new prospect, despite professing his love for Daisy moments earlier. The knife betrays his insecurity. He knows that nothing will happen between him and this girl, yet he remains hopeful in his imagination. He does not actually speak with her, all the interactions between the two of them play out in his head but are never brought into fruition. Woolf describes a light that connects them, an image representing this optimism that Peter has regarding the woman, but also acts as a spotlight. It highlights her, in his pursuit, but Woolf also describes this light as singling him out. It is important to note that this section is told from Peter Walsh's perspective and this spotlight shows how Peter values himself above everyone else, focusing on what he wants, the woman. He imagines that she is focusing on him too, idolizing him in the way he does himself, and in the way that he would like all people to. In this scene, the knife represents his desire for intimacy. He pictures the woman talking to him intimately, using a name other than Peter that he calls himself, a name so intimate that he does not even share it in this narration. Still, even in his fantasies of intimacy with this woman, he desires a masculine sense of control.

While he was walking alone that night, Peter Walsh reacts to and comments on the environment that he is walking through, reflecting on how London has changed in his absence. In her article, "Difference and Continuity: The Voices of Dalloway," Johanna X.K. Garvey writes;

> The actual physical elements, the spatial features of both Bourton (remembered) and London (encountered), do play a role, though not so great a one as do the linguistic devices such as metaphor….The fountain….becomes equated with Clarissa's rejection of Peter: '…they stood with the fountain between them, the

> spout (it was broken) dribbling water incessantly. How sights fix themselves upon the mind!' (*MD* 96). The fountain – potentially symbolic of a life-source, vitality, refreshment, fruition-malfunctions, just as the intimacy between the two characters runs aground. Just as Clarissa refused a marriage plot that would have stifled her, absorbing her into a husband's identity, the narrative subverts conventional images and demonstrates their impotence." (Garvey 64)

Peter is distracted from the current moment and pulled into the past by the imagery around him as he remembers the moment in which he and Clarissa broke up. Being back in the area where their courtship took place reminds him of those days and causes him to reflect on all of the changes that took place. The image of the fountain will always be associated with the end of his relationship with Clarissa, bringing the past back to the forefront of his consciousness. Garvey emphasizes the symbolism of the fountain, separating the image from Peter's perspective of it. In doing so, Garvey turns the attention to Clarissa and what her break up with Peter meant for her future, she was escaping a relationship that would have kept her from having the autonomy that she does during the events of the novel. It is also notable that Woolf mentions that the fountain is broken, a detail that impresses itself in Peter's memory. This relates to Garvey's point about the alterations Woolf makes to conventional images, such as the fountain. The broken spout shows a fault with the fountain, this symbol of life and vitality, causing it to not work properly. This mirrors the ways in which Clarissa and Peter's relationship may have appeared to be great, especially from Peter's perspective, but did not function in the ways that a relationship should.

While many critics agree that Peter and Clarissa were not compatible, Jean M. Wyatt argues in her paper, "Mrs. Dalloway: Literary Allusion as Structural Metaphor," "In giving up Peter, Clarissa renounced the passionate intimacy he would have demanded. The imagery of her childhood memory reflects her choice: she leaves the heat

of the sun for the chill of the tower, the fruits of summer for the birds' nests, not full of new life but decaying, the community of nature for somber solitude." (Wyatt 445-446) While, yes, Peter and Clarissa share an intimate relationship, the fact that intimacy would be something would have been "demanded" of Clarissa had she stayed with Peter shows the problem with this pairing. Similarly, the images she uses to show the difference between Clarissa's life when she was young and the present day in the novel all reflect nature. It is common knowledge that nature is cyclical, just because she feels that she is in a period of decay now does not mean that this is a permanent state of being that was caused by her marrying Richard. Many believe that autumn, when the leaves are dying and falling off of the trees, is the most beautiful season, even though it also reflects a time of cold and decay. However, Wyatt's point about Clarissa now living in solitude does show how her current relationship is a bit isolating. Even though she has more freedom with Richard, she craves intimacy with him. The question that Wyatt encourages, given these two ideas, is which is better for Clarissa, intimacy or freedom? Marriage asks this of Clarissa and she chose to have autonomy.

The knife continues to act as Peter's tool for changing reality as well as a symbol of his emotions while maintaining a masculine sense of control. This can be seen when he is reflecting on the events of the day:

> Every one if they were honest would say the same; one doesn't want people after fifty; one doesn't want to go on telling women they are pretty; that's what most men of fifty would say, Peter Walsh thought, if they were honest. But then these astonishing accesses of emotion – bursting into tears this morning, what was all that about? What could Clarissa have thought of him? thought him a fool presumably, not for the first time. It was jealousy that was at the bottom of it – jealousy which survives every other passion of mankind, Peter Walsh thought, holding his pocket-knife at arm's length. (79-80)

Peter explicitly states that he is feeling jealousy in this scene. This feeling is illustrated in how he holds his knife away from him, considering reality and what could have gone differently. This distance between himself and the knife also shows how he feels powerless to change his situation. By acknowledging his feelings of jealousy, he accepts that someone has what he cannot. The question introduced here, though, is who is he jealous of? He may be jealous of Richard Dalloway because he married Clarissa, as he is seen expressing negative emotions about losing her when the past is brought up and reacts poorly to Richard coming up in any conversation. However, he could also be jealous of Clarissa. Clarissa has been elevated in the social hierarchy by marrying Richard and becoming a Dalloway. Peter is very aware of her social standing, referring to her lifestyle frequently in his criticism of her and she is now of higher social standing than him, despite their growing up of a similar social class. To add to this, Clarissa is accustomed to her current lifestyle as a wife, mother, and hostess, all roles that Peter criticizes in a particularly harsh manner. His insecurity may also lie in a combination of the two. Perhaps he is jealous that Richard won Clarissa's heart and she chose him over Peter, but Richard was also better equipped to provide her with the support she desired. It is mentioned frequently that Clarissa wanted to be taken care of and had an appreciation for the ambience and aesthetics of an upper-class lifestyle. It is possible that being confronted with his inability to give the woman he has continuously pined for the life that she wanted troubles him and worsens his previous insecurities. It is notable here that Peter is holding his knife at arm's length, separating himself from his feelings as much as he can while still holding onto them. He is clearly still upset about his release of emotion at Clarissa's that morning and is disappointed in himself for showing that vulnerability.

This memory, paired with his jealousy of Clarissa and Richard's relationship makes him want to separate himself from these feelings as much as possible so that he does not break down again.

Peter and Clarissa's relationship failed for many reasons, despite both considering throughout the novel how their lives would be different if they had ended up together. In her article, "Difference and Continuity: The Voices of Dalloway," Johanna X.K. Garvey writes, "Peter stands firmly on the side of patriarchal existence, egotistical, moderately irresponsible, and because of this attitude, both attractive and unacceptable to Clarissa" (Garvey 68) Peter Walsh acts in a way that would always leave Clarissa trying to satisfy him, he would never be truly happy because so much of his character is trying to change things as they are. There is no point in the novel where Peter seems to be satisfied, even with the woman he idolizes. Garvey highlights the paradox in the relationship between Peter and Clarissa, that she will never satisfy him but his criticism of her will always leave her with the desire to try. Peter lives his life as a bachelor, despite having one wife and pursuing a second, because he is always aspiring for change. He seeks out new romantic partners, such as the woman he follows, despite claiming to be in love with Daisy. He reacts to anything that damages his ego with criticism. When Clarissa sees Peter act in these ways, she is charmed because of the endearing ways in which it reminds her of how he was when they were younger. However, she does have moments where she disproves of him acting the way he does at their age. Peter's standing that Garvey describes does not reflect how he feels, all of the emotions he experiences, because that is not part of the hyper-masculine identity. While Peter does exhibit all of the traits described, he does have moments of vulnerability that open yet another paradox

in his character. Peter Walsh performs this patriarchal existence to maintain a masculine image in the society of *Mrs. Dalloway*.

When Clarissa tried to picture Daisy, the woman Peter Walsh wants to marry in India, Clarissa also uses a knife, although hers is purely metaphorical:

> She flattered him, she fooled him, thought Clarissa; shaping the woman, the wife of the Major in the Indian Army, with three strokes of a knife. What a waste! What a folly! All his life long Peter had been fooled like that; first getting sent down to Oxford; next marrying the girl on the boat going out to India; now the wife of a Major in the Indian Army – thank heaven she had refused to marry him! Still, he was in love; her old friend, her dear Peter, he was in love. (46)

This is the only time in the novel that Clarissa is referred to as using a knife and it is notable that it is in relation to Peter. She is trying to look at things from his perspective and change her way of thinking to carve out this woman in her imagination with a metaphorical knife. Clarissa takes on Peter's signature motif to get closer to him and try to understand what would make him fall in love with a girl. In a similar way to how Peter Walsh uses his actual knife as a physical representation of his emotions and his desire to carve out a new reality in his imagination, Clarissa uses an imagined knife to shape the way Daisy may look and how her love story with Peter may have unfolded in reality.

Overall, Woolf uses Peter Walsh and the ways in which he uses his knife to create a commentary on how men express emotion. By utilizing a tangible symbol for Peter's feelings, Woolf illustrates how his manipulation of the knife reveals more about how he is feeling than what he says. This interaction with the physical world to express internalized emotion further shows the way that performing masculinity suppresses emotional expression, but not the emotions themselves. In reflecting the way that men express emotion using objects, Woolf draws a connection between Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway that goes deeper than how they both love Clarissa.

Richard Dalloway's Roses

Clarissa Dalloway has a complex relationship with her husband, Richard. While she seems very happy with her life with him, there are moments in the novel when the two are disconnected from one another. Even though they have been married for about thirty years and have a child together, they struggle to communicate the love they have for each other. Richard has trouble communicating his love for Clarissa, which could be misconstrued as him taking her for granted. Richard hears of Peter Walsh's return from India at Lady Bruton's luncheon and is reminded of his jealousy of Peter's past with Clarissa, sparking in him a desire to get her a gift on the way home to show his love. He decides to get her some roses and "he would tell Clarissa that he loved her, in so many words." (116) When he arrives home, he gives her the flowers, but still cannot bring himself to tell her that he loves her, but the gesture is sufficient in communicating this message to Clarissa and she greatly appreciates it. This physical symbol of Richard's affection is how he is able to express the emotions he holds for Clarissa and serves as a love language for the two of them. While neither says that they love the other, the importance of the roses to them speaks volumes.

Richard initially does not see the point in getting a gift for one's wife because the last time he got Clarissa a piece of jewelry it went unworn and unappreciated. Richard is still hurt by this, as seen when Woolf writes:

> For the worthlessness of this life did strike Richard pretty forcibly – buying necklaces for Evelyn…. All of which seemed to Richard Dalloway awfully odd. For he never gave Clarissa presents, except a bracelet two or three years ago, which had not been a success. She never wore it. It pained him to remember that she never wore it. (114)

It is notable how Richard mentions a gift that he had given Clarissa years prior to this, a bracelet, and how he is still hurt by her not wearing it. However, Clarissa never mentions the bracelet over the course of the novel, so it is not something that she has continually thought about in the way Richard has, it is possible that she forgot about it completely. Richard is so upset by this that he thinks of any gift as worthless. He values a gift's success by the recipient's gratitude and use of the gift instead of valuing the message that an act of giving sends. He looks at giving gifts as an ineffective way of expressing emotions because of what he sees as a failure with the bracelet. This one incident has caused him to hold onto all his emotions instead of expressing them because he thinks that they will still go unheard and unappreciated and he does not want to put himself in that vulnerable position again. To Richard, the bracelet was about so much more than the gift itself, he viewed it as a vehicle for showing his love. Woolf continues:

> And as a single spider's thread after wavering here and there attaches itself to the point of a leaf, so Richard's mind, recovering from its lethargy, set now on his wife, Clarissa, whom Peter Walsh had loved so passionately; and Richard had had a sudden vision of her there at luncheon; of himself and Clarissa; of their life together; and he drew the tray of old jewels towards him, and taking up first this brooch then that ring. 'How much is that? 'he asked, built doubted his own taste. He wanted to open the drawing-room door and come in holding out something; a present for Clarissa. Only what? (114)

Woolf describes Richard's connection with Clarissa as a spider's thread connecting to a leaf, illustrating how Clarissa was always on his mind but just came to the forefront of his consciousness. In this moment, Richard decides that being vulnerable and trying to express his love for Clarissa again is worth it. He is also trying to prove to her that she made the right choice when she chose him over Peter. Richard experiences some insecurity over Clarissa's previous relationship despite decades of time passing. It took

the conversation at Lady Bruton's luncheon to remind Richard that he needs to continuously make an effort to show affection in his relationship with Clarissa and show her that he values her.

Richard ultimately decides against getting her jewelry, instead considering other options on his walk home. Woolf writes:

> Richard turned at the corner of Conduit Street eager, yes, very eager, to travel that spider's thread of attachment between himself and Clarissa he would go straight to her, in Westminster. But he wanted to come in holding something. Flowers? Yes, flowers, since he did not trust his taste in gold; any number of flowers, roses, orchids, to celebrate what was, reckoning things as you will, an event; this feeling about her when they spoke of Peter Walsh at luncheon (115)

Woolf returns to the imagery of the spider's thread when Richard refers to the attachment between him and Clarissa. Now, rather than being representative of his mind, the spider's thread seems to be used to connect Richard and Clarissa as he returns home to her. One way of reading this may be romantic, that even from across London he feels connected to her and the link between them remains unbroken regardless of distance or circumstance. Another interpretation reflects this as a weak attachment and focuses on the fragility of a spider's thread, perhaps implying that they are at or near a breaking point. Spider webs can easily be destroyed by external force. However, to a spider, the thread is very strong especially when built up into a web, being able to support the weight of the spider and used to ensnare interlopers that the spider can then use for food. For a spider, thread is an essential part of sustaining life which reflects the way that Richard feels about his relationship with Clarissa, even though he does not express it in words. He is travelling along this spider's thread back home to his life with Clarissa. He wants to strengthen this bond by bringing her something, deciding on flowers as a symbol of his desire to strengthen this relationship with Clarissa, building this spider's thread of attachment into

a web. On a darker note, he may also be looking to ensnare Clarissa within this web, keeping her with him and therefore away from Peter Walsh. This is evidenced when following his stream of consciousness from the spider's thread to the flowers, and lastly to Peter Walsh. A spider's thread is meant to be built on, ultimately into a web that can then be used to trap anything that flies into it. Richard would like to continue to keep Peter Walsh out of his relationship with Clarissa but acknowledges that their never speaking about her past with him has been another thing that he has held onto for years. Woolf continues, "they never spoke of it; not for years had they spoken of it; which, he thought, grasping his red and white roses together (a vast bunch in tissue paper), is the greatest mistake in the world. The time comes when it can't be said; one's too shy to say it." (115) Richard addresses the lack of communication between himself and Clarissa regarding Peter Walsh, showing that he still thinks that it is something they should have discussed, but now it is too difficult to bring up. He feels that because they never spoke about the situation in the past that they cannot now, and he regrets that they never did. This is yet another thing that has been left unsaid between Richard and Clarissa that is now weighing on his mind, but with that may be something that she does not even think of, given that she never brings it up. In her mind, they do not need to talk about the past because she is not insecure in their relationship, at least not in the same way that Richard is.

In his article, "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System," Alex Zwerdling also considers Richard's struggle to express his emotions to his wife:

> Certainly the governing class in the novel demonstrates these qualities. It worships Proportion, by which it really means atrophy of the heart, repression of instinct and emotion. A. D. Moody has pointed to the impulse in the class "to turn away from the disturbing depths of feeling, and towards a conventional

> pleasantness or sentimentality or frivolousness" (Virginia Woolf, p. 21). Richard Dalloway, for example, finds it impossible to tell his wife that he loves her or even, for that matter, to use the word "I": 'The time comes when it can't be said; one's too shy to say it. ... Here he was walking across London to say to Clarissa in so many words that he loved her. Which one never does say, he thought. Partly one's lazy; partly one's shy' (p. 127). (Zwerdling 72)

Zwerdling connects Dr. Bradshaw's idea of Proportion to Richard's repression of emotions, implying that Proportion is a standard for the upper-class. Woolf usually discusses Proportion in the novel in terms of Septimus, citing a lack of Proportion as the reason for his mental illness. In this way, she also shows the consequences for not adhering to the upper-class ideal of Proportion. Zwerdling's connection between Proportion and purposeful internalization of emotion adds a new layer to the novel's commentary on class, masculinity, emotion, and mental illness, tying them all together under Dr. Bradshaw's term for mental health. It is notable, however, that the consequences of internalizing emotion are also seen in the novel, showing that the idea of having Proportion is not a viable answer to having good mental health.

Further, as a member of the upper-class, Richard is no stranger to criticizing those of the lower-classes. At the party, Richard shows an immediate dislike for Bradshaw, despite subscribing to his ideas about Proportion. In "Chapter 6: The Professional and the Poet: A Dark Lantern and Mrs. Dalloway" of her book, *Woolf's Ambiguities: Tonal Modernism, Narrative Strategy, Feminist Precursors,* Molly Hite writes:

> "Richard's dislike of Bradshaw is even more immediate, unmistakable, and visceral: he 'didn't like his taste, didn't like his smell' (179). The metaphoric invocation of taste and smell is an upper-class mannerism. It suggests a contact with the offending body that is not mediated by judgement. Particles of Bradshaw on the tongue and in the nostrils produce immediate revulsion, The metaphors of direct sensory experience suggests a wholly other kind of person, by nature inimical to Richard Dalloway and the aristocratic Tories with whom he generally associates. Not our kind, not a gentleman: 'didn't like his taste, didn't like his smell" asserts a fundamental division between the upper and upper-middle

> "educated" classes and the upwardly mobile professional middle class, educated only in their specializations – or, as members of the Dalloway circle might have said among themselves, in their trades." (Hite 149)

Hite comments directly on the way Richard Dalloway views those of a lower class, he has always been wealthy and surrounded by others who are well-off, and therefore can sense when someone does not belong in his social circle. He is repulsed by Bradshaw, yet the most notable part of Hite's analysis is the mobility of Bradshaw's social class as opposed to Richard's more stagnant status. Hite continues, "His pruning and regularizing affect the eccentric, the extraordinary, and the vulnerable. Thus, even someone as protected by class and contacts as Mr. Richard Dalloway recognizes the danger he presents, especially to 'the poets and thinkers' (Dalloway 180)." (Hite 150) Even though Richard does not like the man because of his social status, he is clearly threatened by his level of education. Bradshaw is a member of the professional class, meaning that he went to school and proved that he had the knowledge and skill-set to be a doctor. This title then allowed him to become wealthy, affording him access to upper-class events such as Clarissa's party. This "new money" is threatening to Richard and the upper class. In this way, Woolf draws the line between those who inherited their wealth and those who worked for it, as Bradshaw did in becoming a doctor. Being educated allowed Bradshaw social mobility, while also making his skills and abilities a desirable commodity for many. Richard, in comparison, was born into money and did not need to work in the same way. For Richard, Bradshaw and people like him are threatening to his social class, making Richard insecure about the future of his social position. Bradshaw endured trials in his education and was tested, eventually proving that he could work hard enough to reach the upper class. However, Richard has never been tested, his wealth is a part of his

identity. This is very similar to the insecurity that Richard feels when Peter Walsh is mentioned, he has so much to lose that he is fearful of these lower-class men. However, it is odd to see Richard Dalloway in a position of insecurity due to his identity as an upper-class man. Throughout the novel, the only other time he performs feelings of insecurity is in his relationship with Clarissa. He is jealous of Peter Walsh's history with her as well as the strength of their relationship, seeing as they never discuss either openly. This is also notable considering Bradshaw's ideas about Proportion which Richard actively participates in when he internalizes these feelings.

For Richard, the roses represent something that he feels but has not communicated. They are a symbol of his desire to communicate things that have been left unsaid between him and his wife, such as his love for her and a confrontation of the uncomfortable past between the Dalloways and Peter Walsh:

> "he would tell Clarissa that he loved her, in so many words. He had, once upon a time, been jealous of Peter Walsh; jealous of him and Clarissa. But she had often said to him that she had been right not to marry Peter Walsh; which, knowing Clarissa, was obviously true; she wanted support. Not that she was weak; but she wanted support." (116-117)

While thinking about expressing his love to his wife, he consistently gets caught up in her former attraction to Peter Walsh. He reassures himself by thinking back to Clarissa denouncing her past relationship. He also mentions Clarissa's desire for support, something that Richard knows that he is better equipped to provide her with, being an upper-class man and politician. He acknowledges his good fortune, "It was a great age in which to have lived. Indeed, his own life was a miracle; let him make no mistake about it; here he was, in the prime of life, walking to his house in Westminster to tell Clarissa that he loved her. Happiness is this, he thought." (117) However, Clarissa also mentions a

desire for other kinds of support. She has health issues that Richard has supported her through and Richard supports her in her throwing of parties.

As he is walking home, he repeats his mantra, that he will tell Clarissa that he loves her. However, when he arrives at home, "He was holding out flowers – roses, red and white roses. (But he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words). But how lovely, she said, taking his flowers . She understood; she understood without his speaking; his Clarissa" (118). When the time actually came to talk to her and tell her how he feels, he lost his nerve and was unable to tell Clarissa that he loves her. However, in receiving the flowers, she gets the message and he knows that she understood what he was trying to communicate to her with them. "He has not said 'I love you'; but he held her hand. Happiness is this, is this, he thought." (119) With that, Richard is satisfied that he has communicated his love, although he still has not said it to her, he has now attempted two methods of communicating his affection and feels that he has succeeded on that front. However, the flowers also seem to hold another meaning, that Richard would like to tell her that he loves her, that he does hold her in such a high regard, but also his desire to talk about the past. He regrets not clearing the air previously, possibly leaving this impenetrable wall between them that leaves so much left unsaid. Now that Peter Walsh is back from India and at the forefront of his mind once more, he is seeking reassurance from Clarissa. She does seem to pick up on the love not being the only thing he wishes to say but is struggling to communicate, as seen when Woolf writes:

> it was a very odd thing how much Clarissa minded about her parties, he thought. But Richard had no notion of the look of a room. However – what was he going to say? If she worried about these parties he would not let her give them. Did she wish she had married Peter? But he must go. He must be off, he said, getting up. But he stood for a moment as if he were about to say something; and she wondered what? Why? There were the roses. (119)

In this part, Richard also reveals that the parties are not his idea nor an expectation that he has for Clarissa. They are Clarissa's hobby, and Richard does not have anything to do with them, completely dismantling Peter Walsh's notion that she acts as a hostess for Richard and his wealthy friends as a part of her marriage. While Richard certainly benefits from Clarissa's parties at her home and his upper-class peers make up a large part of the guest list for these events, even Richard does not seem to understand her parties or why they seem to trouble her. Alternatively, one may read this as him seeing the parties as below him and choosing to not understand because he views the parties as her role. However, he does take some control over the parties when he says he would not allow them if they upset her as greatly as they appeared to in this scene, implying that he would suffer no real loss if they were to not throw a party as well as that he puts her mental wellbeing first, even when she does not, showing that he cares more for her. However, this could also be read as Richard belittling the parties. While he is supportive of Clarissa throwing them so long as they make her happy, he also views them as something he allows to happen. In this way, he is exercising control over Clarissa, deciding what she can and cannot do, making decisions for her, as if she is incapable of taking care of herself. It is notable that immediately after he comments on Clarissa's parties and his control over them that he thinks of her relationship with Peter Walsh, demonstrating his insecurity in their relationship yet again. This insecurity may be why he feels that he needs to display a masculine sense of control regarding Clarissa and her parties. With this he leaves, leaving Clarissa wondering what he would have said next and looking to the roses. In this scene, the roses serve as a visual reminder of Richard's love for her.

This is not the only time Clarissa makes note of the roses in her commentary. When Clarissa is throwing the party that evening and feels like things are not going well, she finds comfort in the them:

> The lustre had gone out of her. Yet it was extraordinary to see her again, older, happier, less lovely. They kissed each other, first this cheek then that, by the drawing-room door, and Clarissa turned, with Sally's hand in hers, and saw her rooms full, heard the roar of voices, saw the candlesticks, the blowing curtains, and the roses which Richard had given her. (171)

At the party, Clarissa encounters her old friend, Sally Seton, who then makes her notice all of the wonderful things at her party, including the roses from Richard, showing Clarissa's deep appreciation for them. What is notable, though, is that she does not mention any other flowers at the party, including those that she went out shopping for at the opening of the novel, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." (3) This line sets the tone for the rest of the novel, establishing Mrs. Dalloway as someone who wants to take charge and exercise her autonomy. Clarissa Dalloway will take control and plan the party herself, she did not want or need anyone doing the errands for her, including buying the flowers. What stands out here is how Richard's flowers are the only ones Clarissa mentions being at the party that evening. While she went out to get flowers for her party for herself, the ones that she notices and expresses joy in are the roses that were given to her by Richard. Similarly, *Mrs. Dalloway* features flowers as a symbol in Clarissa Dalloway's past, present, and future. In her past, Clarissa and Sally share a kiss in the garden, showing the passion between them. Flowers are often a sexual symbol, representing virginity or the female genitals, and in the garden scene they represent the purity of Clarissa and Sally's feelings for each other and their young love. The roses Richard presents Clarissa with return to this symbol of flowers representing love, and

they show the future of Richard and Clarissa's relationship. They have been married for several years, but the gift of these flowers and the love that they express shows the continuation of their relationship, and how it continues even after the day of the party. Lastly, flowers appear in the present as the décor for her party. Buying the flowers in the opening of the novel illustrates Clarissa's autonomy and the pride she takes in her party-planning.

It is clear that Clarissa feels that some of her autonomy has been lost in getting married, "this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway." (11) Being a married woman, she has taken on his name. While married women typically keep their first name socially, they are still referred to as "Mrs." followed by their husband's first and last name. In this way, she is Mrs. Dalloway or Mrs. Richard Dalloway, and no longer Clarissa. While this may seem insignificant, especially given that she has been married for several years and has had plenty of time to get used to her married name, it still comes to the front of her consciousness as she is running errands for her party. This shows that this distinction makes a difference to her and that she mourns having her own name. Even though in being married she loses a piece of her identity, becoming Mrs. Richard Dalloway, but does not attribute this to Richard. Clarissa considers, "for in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him." (7-8) In making this distinction, Woolf criticizes marriage from a societal perspective. She values the freedom that being married to Richard affords her, given that they each allow the other their own space to do as they please. Losing her name would

have happened regardless of who she had married, but in marrying Richard she has gained other kinds of autonomy.

She clearly values Richard and their relationship, not only because he allows her freedom, but he is a source of joy for her:

> not for a moment did she believe in God; but all the more, she thought, taking up the pad, must one repay in daily life to servants, yes, to dogs and canaries, above all to Richard her husband, who was the foundation of it – of gay sounds, of the green lights, of the cook even whistling, for Mrs. Walker was Irish and whistled all day long – one must pay back from this secret deposit of exquisite moments, she thought." (29)

One of these exquisite moments that Woolf includes in the novel is Richard giving her the roses and sharing his love with her. She deeply appreciates them and refers to them repeatedly throughout the party and into the conclusion of the novel. However, the gift of the roses and their subsequent use as the flowers for the party could have easily been misconstrued as him encroaching on her hobby and limiting her autonomy, doing something for her that she expressed a desire to do on her own. On the contrary, she enjoys this, and perhaps it holds more meaning for her because he contributed to something that she cares so deeply about, her party, and the flowers were an effective tool to communicate affection to her because of this role that they could play at the event. He is supporting her hobby and connecting with her through the presentation of the roses. She then looks to them as a reminder of Richard's love and support, brightening the evening for her.

Clarissa's party being the way to get to her heart links back to before the party, when Woolf writes:

> It was a feeling, some unpleasant feeling, earlier in the day perhaps; something that Peter had said, combined with some depression of her own, in her bedroom, taking off her hat; and what Richard had said had added to it, but what had he

> said? There were his roses. Her parties! That was it! Her parties! Both of them criticised her very unfairly, laughed at her very unjustly, for her parties. That was it! That was it! Well how was she going to defend herself? Now that she knew what it was, she felt perfectly happy. They thought, or Peter at any rate thought, that she enjoyed imposing herself; liked to have famous people about her; great names; was simply a snob in short. Well, Peter might think so. Richard merely thought it foolish of her to like excitement when she knew it was bad for her heart. It was childish, he thought. And both were quite wrong. What she liked was simply life," (121)

When Clarissa could not place what had hurt her feelings so much earlier in the day, she thinks of the kindness of Richard gifting her the roses and connects them to her party immediately, invoking even more deep emotions within her. To Richard, he intended the roses to be a symbol of his love and affection as well as things left unsaid, but to Clarissa they are also a reminder of her party that evening, even though both Peter and Richard had criticized her parties, the thing that she cares so much about an represents, to her, her own self-expression.

CHAPTER 2: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MALES IN THE WAVES

Virginia Woolf's 1931 novel, *The Waves*, follows the lives of six characters as they grow up. Woolf compares the interconnectedness of Bernard, Neville, Louis, Susan, Rhoda, and Jinny to waves in the ocean: "Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually." (7) Regardless of where they go and any physical separation they endure, the characters remain deeply connected with one another, repeating similar patterns just like ocean waves. As the novel progresses, they all discover their identities. Woolf depicts this through language that illustrates how the characters experiment and struggle with who they are, including in terms of their gender identity and sexuality. While each character has individual traits that distinguish them from one another, there are times in which one will mimic another, taking on a motif or way of speaking that is characteristic of another of the six. This illustrates the fluidity of identity within the novel and how all of the characters are interconnected. Depending on the situation, they will each perform different aspects of their identity or perform borrowed aspects of another character's identity. In doing so, Woolf illustrates the fluidity of identity, as well as the performative aspects of identity.

This is seen with the boys, Bernard, Neville, and Louis, when Woolf explores masculinity through these characters, having them interact with, imitate, critique, and observe one another. Bernard looks at the world from the perspective of a writer or, at times, his own future biographer. He considers how everything is a story and how he could use language to tell the stories of his friends and their lives. Louis struggles with

feelings of insecurity because he is not English like the other characters and his father is a banker from Brisbane instead of having a more affluent career. This insecurity causes him to separate himself from the group on occasion, a separation that leads to him considering whether the distance comes from a place of superiority or inferiority. He aspires to be great and believes himself to be more capable than the others, yet other times he views himself as being lesser than them because of his accent and where he is from. Neville is described as being delicate, and because of that he cannot participate in physical activity with the others. This separates him from the group as children but does not present an issue for him until it separates him from Percival. Percival is the silent seventh main character in *The Waves* who is idolized by all. He is the leader of the boys' school and all of the others look up to him. He is one of the most popular students and very athletic. Neville is in love with Percival and admires him from afar, Bernard at times rivals Percival for leadership, and Louis refers to Percival's friend group as the "boasting boys," yet desperately wants to be one of them.

The importance of Woolf's choice of structure for *The Waves* is supported by Leila Baradaran Jamili whose research observes how the identities of the characters connect to one another and how they all rely on this connection to feel fulfilled. The topic of characterization as the center of this novel is continued by Qiuxia Li who looks into how Percival is described as being a lighthouse, drawing all of the other characters back together, always centering around him. Percival's alpha male status plays a key role in his ability to do so. Liisa Saarilooma supports the assertion that Bernard is both a character and the author of *The Waves.* Bernard is the leader of the group in many ways and insists in telling his friends' stories. Gabrielle McIntire expands on this, setting Bernard as the

storyteller and showing how his perspective is essential to the novel. The phrases he is always saving in the pursuit of telling a story are examined by Francoise Carter who shows that this is Bernard's way of preparing himself for any situation. The relationship between Neville and Percival is discussed by Jean E. Kennard when she explores their relationship and how Woolf writes about Neville's romantic feelings for Percival.

The Structure of *The Waves* and How It Works

The Waves follows the lives of six characters from childhood through adulthood, showing how their identities ebb and flow between codependence and independence. The story focuses on the driving forces that keep these people so close over such a long period of time, and the answer is Percival. Percival is the sun around which the other characters orbit. He is at the center and the others all idolize and adore him. He is a powerful force that seems to influence anything he has contact with, including the six main characters in the story. It is important to mention that Percival does not have a speaking role in the novel, which is a reflection of the power: he need not speak to be immortalized. The others tell his story for him, documenting his every move. As the novel progresses, Percival is at the center more and more, binding the six. Even when they have all drifted apart as individuals in adulthood, they are all called back to attend his farewell dinner before he leaves for India. He is the glue that has bound the six eternally. Even after his death, they are all connected in mourning and by the memories they hold of Percival. Could their idealization of him be a result of their regrets from when he was alive?

In their article, "The Absent Presence: A Study of Percival in *The Waves"* Qiuxia Li describes this relationship between Percival and the novel, "Most people think *The Waves* is pessimistic, but in fact, we can find a lighthouse in the novel: Percival." (77)

Percival is at the center of the novel, and Li's lighthouse analogy shows how he guides all of the other characters back home. This is especially true for his goodbye dinner, where the characters are all compelled to get together in order to see him off. Lighthouses are also known for being mysterious places, usually lighthouse keepers are considered to be lonely people with lots of secrets, adding a new layer to this comparison that may reveal even more about Percival's true identity. Li continues:

> Learning his death, Neville felt the light of the world was extinguished. Rhoda saw all the negative sides in the world. But Bernard, the voice of the writer felt he was still somewhere. Percival died, but he remained a lighthouse in his friends' mind. His death changed his image into an eternal beauty. The life is cruel, but Percival's absent presence encourages the six characters to face life bravely. In the chaos of the world, the image of Percival expresses the writer's desire for harmony, order and love. Though in this world there are indifference, misunderstanding and hostility, there should be the light of ideal. (77-78)

While all the characters felt the magnitude of Percival's death, they each reacted uniquely. As for Bernard, the storyteller of the group, he continued to see Percival's influence on the world even after his death, recording it through his stories. Li mentions that Percival's light is not extinguished and is "the light of ideal." This is an interesting phrase to use, leading to the question: was Percival always the light of ideal, or did this status only come after his death? While the events of the novel occur well before his death, the actual telling of the story must occur later, with early events being recounted years later. In that respect, they are changed by the passage of time affecting memory as well as a change of perspective that comes with the characters aging and maturing. It is very possible that the six narrators had very different impressions of Percival than those recorded in the novel, but after his death they could only think of him as the light of ideal. As for Bernard, Li highlights how the writer appreciated Percival because he gave Bernard a sense of order, explaining why Bernard viewed him as an ideal center to his

story. While Percival only makes it to the midpoint of the novel, his effect on the six characters live on with them for many years and Bernard documents this lasting impact throughout the rest of the novel. Similarly, Li cites Percival and his death as an inspiration to the others to live life bravely, a consensus that is not common in *The Waves.* Typically, the characters react uniquely. However, in this scenario, Li focuses on how they are all the same.

One place where all of the boys are together in a homogenous group is at their school mass, which also contains the first image of Percival. Up until this point, it is unclear whether he is present or not. Neville goes out of his way to look at and describe him, bringing him into the group's collective consciousness:

> 'Now I will lean sideways as if to scratch my thigh. So I shall see Percival. There he sits, upright among the smaller fry. He breathes through his straight nose rather heavily. His blue, and oddly inexpressive eyes, are fixed with pagan indifference upon the pillar opposite. He would make an admirable churchwarden. He should have a birch and beat little boys for misdemeanours. He is allied with the Latin phrases on the memorial brasses. He sees nothing; he hears nothing. He is remote from us all in a pagan universe. But look – he flicks his hand to the back of his neck. For such gestures one falls hopelessly in love for a lifetime. Dalton, Jones, Edgar, and Bateman flick their hands to the back of their necks likewise. But they do not succeed. '(36)

In this short description. Neville establishes a lot about Percival's character. First, that he is idolized by the other boys, especially Neville. Part of what Neville makes note of is Percival's indifference toward what is going on around him and the lack of emotion in his eyes. Neville is notoriously pessimistic for most of the book, so it is no surprise that he looks up to Percival's lack of enthusiasm. The other boys try to mimic Percival's actions and be like him, showing that Neville is not the only one who idolizes the ambivalent Percival. However, we do not know for sure that Percival is disinterested in everything around him, he never speaks in the novel. He could very well be acting performatively to

gain the respect of the other boys. Regardless, the feeling that he is unreachable is what draws everyone into him more. He does not betray his thoughts as the six characters who do speak do; he does not share his insecurities.

From this point on, Percival is included in the monologues of each of the six narrators. The next character to describe Percival is Louis, who describes him in a significantly less flattering way:

> Look now, how everybody follows Percival. He is heavy. He walks clumsily down the field, through the long grass, to where the great elm trees stand. His magnificence is that of some medieval commander. A wake of light seems to lie on the grass behind him. Look at us trooping after him, his faithful servants, to be shot like sheep, for he will certainly attempt some forlorn enterprise and die in battle. My heart turns rough; it abrades my skin like a file with two edges; one, that I adore his magnificence; the other I despise his slovenly accents – I who am so much his superior – and am jealous. (37)

Louis starts off by looking down on everyone for following Percival, implying that he is not one of them. He is critical of how Percival walks, looking for any negative thing that he can say to try to take Percival down. It is notable that Louis predicts Percival's death here, even though that does not occur until towards the end of the novel. He also returns to the idea of accents, although in this instance it could be read as the details of Percival, basically saying that Percival is great in theory and that is what they all admire, but at closer view he is not as wonderful as he appears. Still, Louis feels superior to Percival despite his jealousy, an interesting paradox. Louis is jealous of Percival's notoriety and following, not of his actual character, the opposite of how Neville feels about him.

After they have all finished school, they all begin separate lives, although they still reference one another in their individual monologues. The first time that they are referenced as getting back together with everyone is when Percival will be going off to India:

> I think of people to whom I could say things: Louis, Neville, Susan, Jinny and Rhoda. With them I am many-sided. They retrieve me from darkness. We shall meet tonight, thank Heaven. Thank Heaven, I need not be alone. We shall dine together. We shall say good-bye to Percival, who goes to India. The hour is still distant, but I feel already those harbingers, those outriders, figures of one's friends in absence. I see Louis, stone-carved, sculpturesque; Neville, scissor-cutting, exact; Susan with eyes like lumps of crystal; Jinny dancing like a flame, febrile, hot, over dry earth; and Rhoda the nymph of the fountain always wet. These are fantastic pictures--these are figments, these visions of friends in absence, grotesque, dropsical, vanishing at the first touch of the toe of a real boot. (116-117)

Bernard is excited to be back with them, he is excited to no longer be alone. He mentions that he can share things with Louis, Neville, Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda, presumably things he does not share with others. Percival is notably absent from this list, once again showing how he is part of the group but also a separate entity and in this case, one that Bernard does not trust in the same way he does the others. Rather than looking forward to seeing Percival, Bernard sees him more as the reason that the rest of them are all able to get together. In his excitement for seeing them again, he describes his friends the way he pictures each of them, Louis as a cold, unmoving figure, Neville as precise and calculating, Susan's clear, shining eyes, Jinny's heat, and Rhoda's emotional connection to water, her relation to its liquidity of identity. While some of these take more creative license than others, they each describe the primary features of each of the characters from Bernard's perspective that are also seen in each of their respective monologues.

Still, Bernard credits Percival with being the reason that they have all gathered together and for that he is very grateful.

> 'But here and now we are together,' said Bernard. 'We have come together, at a particular time, to this particular spot. We are drawn into this communion by some deep, some common emotion. Shall we call it, conveniently, "love"? Shall we say "love of Percival" because Percival is going to India?' No, that is too small, too particular a name….There is a red carnation in that vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red,

> puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves--a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution. (126-127)

Not only is this a goodbye dinner for Percival that they are all attending as mutual friends, but Bernard considers them all coming as an act of love for Percival. Not only does Percival have the power to influence people to want to follow him, but he also has won the affections of all six of the main characters. Bernard then turns his attention to the red carnation on the table, a single flower with seven sides. This is clearly a representation of the seven friends at the table. It began as a single flower while they waited for Percival to arrive, representing how each of the characters was there, then became less solitary when Percival came, once again making them seven sides of one being. It has long been argued whether the characters in the Waves are individuals or if they are different parts of a single consciousness. The symbolism of this flower works with either theory, showing that identities are mutable. The characters in *The Waves* ebb and flow between separation and unity. The different contributions of each eye also show how the various perspectives come together, just as the narrative of this novel is pieced together as a collective of their experiences.

Bernard looks at this flower in a special way, as noted by Leila Baradaran Jamili in her article, "Traumatized Construction of Male and Female Identities in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves"* where she writes:

> Obviously, Bernard suffers from being alone and a feeling of non-identity. On the other hand, he feels joyful and happy by being with his friends. Because he feels a sense of identity with them. Bernard can forget his sadness and loneliness when he is with them. Thus, he thanks God for being with them to 'dine together.' (Jamili 70)

This is an interesting perspective, given that Bernard is often looked at as the author of the novel and storyteller of the group who is somewhat removed from the others. Jamil's

thoughts on Bernard being a lonely character who misses the others seems to look at his loneliness as not being self-inflicted, but a result of the separation growing up has given him from the others. Taking this a bit further, it is notable that Bernard is being separated from the other characters whose stories he tells, thus limiting his storytelling. At times, storytelling seems to be his only real identity, the other characters seem to identify him primarily by his stories and he does not seem to mind that that is his primary trait. Still, it is quite sad to think that this character is defined by his stories, yet sadder still that he identifies himself by them as well. Even though he is being reunited with old friends, he is also being reunited with his source material for storytelling. Jamili's perspective assigns more emotion to Bernard than the novel explicitly states, but this depth of character highlights his separation from, yet simultaneous reliance on, the group.

As per usual, the dinner goes on with narration from Bernard, Louis, Neville, Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda, with no input from Percival. Eventually, the affair comes to an end:

> 'Now the agony begins; now the horror has seized me with its fangs,' said Neville. 'Now the cab comes; now Percival goes. What can we do to keep him? How bridge the distance between us? How fan the fire so that it blazes for ever? How signal to all time to come that we, who stand in the street, in the lamplight, loved Percival? Now Percival is gone.' (147)

While Neville started off the evening as very enthusiastic about seeing Percival again, now that the time has come for him to go, Neville is even more upset than the last time he and Percival parted. He tries to find a way to stop Percival from leaving, as if he did not realize that this was a farewell dinner for him. Neville also echoes Bernard's sentiment about all of them loving Percival. It is notable that Neville, however, uses "loved," as in they had previously loved Percival, given that past tense. Is this a note on object

permanence in this group – Percival is now out of sight, out of mind, his influence now removed? Or could this be a clever piece of foreshadowing from Woolf hinting at Percival's death?

The news of Percival's death is revealed in the opening lines of the next section:

> 'He is dead,' said Neville. 'He fell. His horse tripped. He was thrown. The sails of the world have swung round and caught me on the head. All is over. The lights of the world have gone out. There stands the tree which I cannot pass. 'Oh, to crumple this telegram in my fingers--to let the light of the world flood back--to say this has not happened! But why turn one's head hither and thither? This is the truth. This is the fact. His horse stumbled; he was thrown. The flashing trees and white rails went up in a shower. There was a surge; a drumming in his ears. Then the blow; the world crashed; he breathed heavily. He died where he fell. (151)

Neville learned the news from a telegram and is in shock that Percival is dead. He repeats the series of events to himself. Percival died when he was thrown from his horse, not in battle or some other traditional hero's death. Without Percival, Neville once again feels a shift in the entire world. He feels what he imagined Percival felt in his final moments, attempting to connect to him. Neville attempts to undo this by crumpling up the telegram, although that is obviously futile, that is merely the means by which he heard the news, not the cause of this tragedy. However, another theme of *The Waves* has been the power of words and storytelling, showing that Neville is trying to change the outcome by changing the physical words on the page.

When Bernard hears the news, he observes people on the street, grounding himself, "Percival fell; was killed; is buried; and I watch people passing; holding tight to the rails of omnibuses; determined to save their lives." (152) Now that Percival is gone, the world must be handled with care. In holding onto the rail, the people are taking a safety precaution that could have potentially saved Percival, if he had held on it could

have kept him on his horse. This visual also shows the instability of the world and how others have been affected by it. This is reiterated by Bernard when he says:

> ' Oh yes, I can assure you, men in felt hats and women carrying baskets--you have lost something that would have been very valuable to you. You have lost a leader whom you would have followed; and one of you has lost happiness and children. He is dead who would have given you that. He lies on a camp-bed, bandaged, in some hot Indian hospital while coolies squatted on the floor agitate those fans--I forget how they call them. But this is important; "You are well out of it," I said, while the doves descended over the roofs and my son was born, as if it were a fact. I remember, as a boy, his curious air of detachment. (153-154)

Bernard looks at the people out on the street as others who could have been impacted by Percival's life. Even though they did not know him and did not follow him, Bernard knows that everyone that Percival met was influenced by him. For Bernard, losing Percival is a very significant event and he also projects that onto others. For those who know him, the world will never be the same, so their perspectives of the world, including those who did not experience this tragedy firsthand, will also be permanently changed. However, as implied by the other characters, Bernard views the others primarily as pieces of a story. With Percival being at the center of the novel, losing him midway through completely changes the structure of the book. Rather than all of the characters reporting on Percival's every move and how he makes them feel, *The Waves* turns into a story about grief. This is a complete change from earlier where Bernard separates himself from the emotions he is experiencing through storytelling. Similarly, Bernard is the organizer of the narrative. He tells the story and ultimately decides how it ends. With that, he centers on Percival as a creative choice, highlighting Percival's importance as the picture of masculinity. Bernard could have just as easily utilized the power of his words to eliminate Percival altogether, but rather omits any of his speaking. While this can be read as Percival not needing to speak in order to be an important character, in other ways

it shows Bernard's choice in telling his story. By eliminating any speech from Percival, he puts Percival in a position where he needs his story told for him. In turn, Bernard makes the decision to share Percival's story, even though he is under no obligation to. This leads to the question of why Bernard would focus on Percival and how these two characters both challenge and complement each other throughout the novel.

Bernard as the Author

Bernard is the storyteller of the group, making stories out of everything he and the others experience. He looks at everything as a potential story, even details that the others view as insignificant. However, Bernard also looks at the other people in his life as characters in a potential story, leading to them not trusting him completely out of fear of their secrets being publicized in one of Bernard's stories. This detachment from the other characters does not go unnoticed by Bernard and makes it difficult for him to describe intimate, private moments in the stories he tells because of his lack of experience and social collateral with the others. Bernard's experiences with storytelling and his detachment from the rest of the characters make him a reflection of Woolf as the author of the story. In many ways, he is the author of the story, gently manipulating the narrative. Similarly, the distance between him and the others mirrors that of an author and their characters, in many ways Bernard is not a part of the group, but a witness.

In her article, "The Biographical Mode in the Novels of Virginia Woolf," Liisa Saariluoma writes:

> The six speakers in the novel are lyrical abstractions rather than concrete individuals. They represent the different possibilities of being a person, which form the whole person only when they combine. (Woolf seems to have been referring to this stylized depiction of character when she says that she had not thought of her novel as having any characters in it. In meeting each other - this is according to Bernard, the 'storyteller' - they see in each other those possibilities

> of being a person, which have not been realized in each of them separately. They all admire and love Percival, who is reflected in their consciousness as a whole person, without the desire to be anything more, and whose sudden death comes to them as a devastating shock. Although the characters in the novel retain their own ways of reacting to the different events of life, their identities are still frail and unsteady, like a wave's which comes into being, rushes headlong to the shore with the other waves, and finally breaks, disintegrates, and melts away. (The comparison is Bernard's) (Saariluoma 182)

Saariluoma considers the relationship between the characters in the novel, acknowledging that they are not completely separate beings. Because they are significantly closer than is possible, she believes that they are all different aspects of a single person, only whole when brought completely together. There are various places in the novel where the characters describe feeling different when they are together rather than apart, yet at other times they seek separation from one another. One possibility is that Woolf is using these characters to illustrate how different aspects of one's identity can contradict each other, leading to difficulties within the self. Saariluoma turns to Bernard to answer this, seeing as he is the authority within the novel and responsible for the narrative being presented. From his perspective, the characters bring out these different aspects of one another's identities showing their potential. This makes a lot of sense, considering how the characters seem to mix and match different symbols and ways of speaking, trying on each other's identities and exploring their identities. Similarly, Woolf could be demonstrating interactions between people, showing how they try to mimic one another, especially in regard to trends or societal expectations. It is notable that Percival is separated from the others; Saariluoma implies that his contentment with his own person and not interacting in the same way as the others is the exact reason that they idolize him. However, this is contradicted by the symbol of the flower at Percival's farewell dinner, where the seven-sided flower becomes one, clearly including Percival as well. Even though he is different

from the others, he is still certainly part of the group. Percival's status within the group places him at the center, in the same way that the planets revolve around the sun, but the sun is not a planet. While this distinction makes Percival a focal point, it is important to remember that Bernard is the one orchestrating and telling the story. Each of the six main characters takes a turn narrating, but Bernard is the storyteller of the group, driving the story forward. This is evident from the beginning, where his narration sets the scene.

At the opening of the second section of the novel, Bernard refers to his leaving for school as a series of ceremonies, showing how he has removed himself from the situation emotionally and looks at saying goodbye as a formality. Woolf writes:

> The horrible ceremony is over, the tips, and the good-byes in the hall. Now there is this gulping ceremony with my mother, this hand-shaking ceremony with my father; now I must go on waving, I must go on waving, till we turn the corner. Now that ceremony is over. Heaven be praised all ceremonies are over. (30)

Bernard separates himself from the emotions that come with leaving home by formalizing everything that he does. By treating the parts of saying goodbye to his parents as to-do list items, he is not allowing himself to feel, only to perform exactly what is expected of him. It is no coincidence that this is an interaction with people outside of the core group of characters, with them it is impossible for him to perform, they usually see through each other easily. Bernard continues:

> Everybody seems to be doing things for this moment only; and never again. Never again. The urgency of it all is fearful. Everybody knows I am going to school, going to school for the first time. 'That boy is going to school for the first time says the housemaid, cleaning the steps. I must not cry. I must behold them indifferently. Now the awful portals of the station gape; 'the moon-faced clock regards me. 'I must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of house-maids, the stare of clocks, staring faces, indifferent faces, or I shall cry. (30)

Bernard is clearly feeling pressure to act in a certain way, to seem indifferent to the situation, yet that pressure seems to be coming from something bigger than those around him. He mentions a clock two times, both implying that the clock is watching him as opposed to the other way around. He is feeling the pressure that comes with growing up and does not feel ready for the future, even though the future is coming very quickly and cannot be stopped. Milestones like this are reminders of time passing, a theme that Woolf writes about in several of her novels, including *Mrs. Dalloway*. Peter Walsh is particularly critical of age and how people change, especially himself. He constantly compares himself and others to the way they were in their youth and struggles to cope with the difference between then and the present. While *Mrs. Dalloway* approaches time as past and present, *The Waves* features characters that are hyper-conscious of their future, as seen here with Bernard. Still, Bernard feels that he cannot express his anxiety about the passage of time and entering a new stage of life, he conceals all emotion, dissociating as much as possible.

Louis notes Bernard's outward composure when Woolf writes, '"Here is Bernard, 'said Louis. 'He is composed; he is easy. He swings his bag as he walks. I will follow Bernard because he is not afraid." (30) Bernard never says that he is afraid, only that he feels on the verge of tears. Louis may still notice these feelings in Bernard, but wants to appear unemotional on the outside too so he will follow Bernard. It is interesting, though, that Louis does not want to be like Neville, he looks at Bernard as the leader and alpha of this pack of characters. It is notable that Neville is actually the most composed of the three boys, as seen when Woolf writes:

> 'After all this hubbub, 'said Neville, 'all this scuffling and hubbub, we have arrived. This is indeed a moment – this is indeed a solemn moment. I come, like a

> lord to his halls appointed. This is our founder; our illustrious founder, standing in the courtyard with one foot raised. I salute our founder. (31)

While Bernard refers to the events leading up to leaving for school as ceremonies, Neville minimizes the journey by referring to it as hubbub. He acknowledges the weight of this moment, that he is now entering school, referring to the school as his founder. He understands the importance of this new milestone in his life and looks at this new chapter as his real beginning, easily forsaking anything that came before.

Throughout the novel, Bernard thinks about his future as a writer and how his future biographer will write about his life. The school mass also contains the first image of this when Bernard says:

> I note the fact for future reference with many others in my notebook. When I am grown up I shall carry a notebook – a fat book with many pages, methodically lettered. I shall enter my phrases. Under B shall come 'Butterfly powder. 'If, in my novel, I describe the sun on the window-sill, I shall look under B and find butterfly powder. That will be useful. The tree 'shades the window with green fingers. 'That will be useful…. 'The lake of my mind unbroken by oars, heaves placidly and soon sinks into an oily somnolence. 'That will be useful. (36-37)

While he is still in school, Bernard has already decided that he will be a writer and is preparing himself. He thinks of these phrases and decides to store them in a notebook so that he can use them later. He is intent on using the images that he sees now in a later book and stores up phrases. It is interesting the words that he chooses, beginning with "butterfly powder," a phrase he would use to describe the sun on the windowsill. While butterflies come in all colors, the sun is typically a warm shade of yellow. This comparison of something that is very prone to change to something that is relatively constant shows an interesting dichotomy. The next description, the tree, is a pretty straight forward description, personifying the tree's branches and comparing them to fingers, a slightly darker image. Last, there is the image describing Bernard's mind as an

oily lake – implying that it is thick, deep, and dark. He described his mind as an unexplorable territory, insinuating that there is something darker in Bernard's consciousness that he does not show on the surface but feels in his own mind. Conversely, this could be a comment about his mental development. At this point in the novel, he is a young man at school who is just beginning to come into who he is. As dark as this image may seem, it may just show Bernard's apprehension about learning more about the real world, as many people his age feel. He is living away at school. The progression from light to dark images could evidence his maturing and becoming more comfortable with sharing the darker parts of his thoughts.

In their article, "Bernard's notebooks: Language and narrative on Virginia Woolf's *The Waves,"* Francoise Carter compares the notebooks in which Bernard collects his phrases to those of Rudyard Kipling. In both notebooks, the men record brief notes about day to day life. In Bernard's case, Carter asserts that the phrases Bernard collects are meant to prepare him for any situation, so that he can be ready and know exactly what to say. This anxious attachment to his phrases is an interesting perspective, especially considering that it shows an emotion within Bernard that he has not otherwise allowed himself to express. In this way, Bernard uses his notebooks in a similar fashion to Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh in *Mrs. Dalloway,* he separates himself from emotion by preparing himself for any situation that may trigger an emotional reaction so that he may maintain his composure and respond with precisely the "right" words. Carter reflects on Bernard's attitude towards his words when they write:

> He recognizes the profound influence of literary heritage, of history and stereotypes upon the way that we see our world, and the enormous difficulty of finding some new way of expressing unique feelings and experiences. He becomes critical of his shortcomings as a novelist, realizing that he has collected

> innumerable phrases in his notebooks but hasn't actually found the story to which the phrases refer. Of the innumerable stories he has invented, which is the true story? Since identity is fragmented, unstable and changing, how can we know the 'truth' about ourselves, let alone others? He invents stories about people, but in so doing selects from endless possibilities. (Carter 88)

Carter addresses the connection between Bernard's storytelling and the changes that the characters undergo over the course of the novel. In writing out these phrases to save for later, Bernard does not acknowledge the changes that they are all going to undergo and how these carefully chosen words may no longer apply. His desire for a finite story in which he can use these phrases shows how he stifles himself as a writer. As previously stated, he is always looking for concrete details and when he cannot find them, he invents them himself but as Carter shows, he is selecting from many possibilities for potential identities for these characters. Similarly, in highlighting a character in a particular light, he chooses what aspect of their identity is exalted while the others are hidden.

Bernard is fascinated by storytelling and frequently tells stories to the others, as seen when Neville says:

> Let Bernard begin. Let him burble on, telling us stories, while we lie recumbent. Let him describe what we have all seen so that it becomes a sequence . Bernard says there is always a story. I am a story. Louis is a story. There is the story of the boot-boy, the story of the man with one eye, the story of the woman who sells winkles. Let him burble on with his story while I lie back (37-38)

It is notable that Neville refers to Bernard as telling the stories of what they all have seen, when that is exactly what all the characters are doing in the novel, particularly because they speak aloud instead of thinking to themselves. Further, the idea of the characters themselves being stories also connects to the structure of the novel, the life stories of these characters being interconnected and told simultaneously. Even the characters who do not speak have a story and are included in the narrative. Still, Neville is disinterested

and is listening to Bernard to humor him. Neville continues, "If that blue could stay for ever; if that hole could remain for ever; if this moment could stay for ever – But Bernard goes on talking. Up they bubble – images" (38) Despite his not caring about what Bernard is talking about in his stories, Neville still values the present moment and sees that it is fleeting. Soon they will finish school and will no longer lay outside listening to Bernard's stories, it's a temporary experience.

While the boys are listening to Bernard's stories outside, Neville recounts:

> Then we all feel Percival lying heavy among us. His curious guffaw seems to sanction our laughter. But now he has rolled himself over in the long grass. He is, I think, chewing a stalk between his teeth. He feels bored; I too feel bored. Bernard at one perceives that we are bored. I detect a certain effort, an extravagance in his phrase, as if he said 'Look! 'but Percival says 'No. 'For he is always the first to detect insincerity; and is brutal in the extreme, The sentence tails off feebly. Yes, the appalling moment has come when Bernard's power fails him and there is no longer any sequence and he sags and twiddles a bit of string and falls silent, gaping as if about to burst into tears. Among the tortures and devastations in life is this then – out friends are not able to finish their stories. (38-39)

Here we see a stand-off between Percival and Bernard, both vying for superiority. Percival is triumphant, Bernard stops telling his stories. Without storytelling, he shuts down. Despite his disinterest in Bernard's story, Neville is upset that Bernard did not finish it. Another important image here is Percival chewing on the stalk. Earlier in the novel, Louis identifies himself as a stalk, and now Percival is chewing on one idly as he listens to Bernard's story. While passive, this image shows his place in the group, he could chew the weaker Louis. Even the way he is introduced, with a guffaw, draws attention to himself as he joins them, taking the attention away from Bernard. Still, Neville sympathizes with Bernard when he cannot finish his story, he seems truly torn in this opposition between the two boys that could be seen as the group's leader.

While Percival is marked by physicality, Bernard, like Neville, is more active mentally. Neville considers:

> Only Bernard could go with them, but Bernard is too late to go with them. He is always too late. He is prevented by his incorrigible moodiness from going with them. He stops, when he washes his hands to say, 'There is a fly in that web. Shall I rescue that fly; shall I let the spider eat it? 'He is shaded with innumerable perplexities, or he would go with them to play cricket, and would lie in the grass, watching the sky, and would start when the ball was hit. But they would forgive them, for he would tell them a story. (48-49)

As always, Bernard is consumed by his stories and his insistence that everyone, even the fly and the spider, have a story. It is interesting to note how Bernard considers rescuing the fly, showing how he can manipulate the stories and considers how the outcome would be. On the one hand, the fly would be free and would escape being eaten, yet, on the other, the spider would then go hungry. This image of the web is very common in Woolf's work, showing the interconnectedness of the characters. What must be considered, though, is who is the fly? Is it Bernard who is being pulled into the group of boys who are playing when he would prefer to be telling stories? Could it be Neville who is ensnared by Percival's charm and feels like he is to be consumed by his affection for him? Or perhaps Louis, who feels out of place amongst the other characters but trapped in the group of them? Or is it Percival, who has been pulled into being in this leadership role? In their own way, each character could fit into this spider and fly analogy. In this description of Bernard, Neville shows his preoccupation with his stories, which Bernard confirms when he says, "I cannot sit down to my book, like Louis, with ferocious tenacity. I must open the little trap-door and let out these linked phrases in which I run together whatever happens so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another." (49) For Bernard, telling stories is his

method of self-expression and comes naturally to him. He seems to be unable to stop himself from telling stories, in a similar fashion to how he cannot seem to help but find stories everywhere around him. He does seem to struggle though when he tells Neville the story of the doctor, he says, "stories that follow people into their private rooms are difficult. I cannot go on with this story." (51) Bernard's storytelling prevents him from interacting with others, leading to him struggling with describing private and intimate moments because the only ones he witnesses are his own. While his stories are used to entertain others, they do not allow him to get closer to them. His stories are all reflections of his own experiences and he would need to have intimate relationships and be welcomed into the private spaces of other people in order to gain the experiences from which to create a story. At the same time, the other characters seem to be aware that Bernard looks at them as potential stories which may lead to them closing themselves off to him to avoid having their vulnerable moments broadcasted in his storytelling. While Neville and Bernard are close with one another, Neville refrains from sharing everything with Bernard:

> He sees everyone with blurred edges. Hence I cannot talk to him about Percival. I cannot expose my absurd and violent passion to his sympathetic understanding. It too, would make a 'story. 'I need some one whose mind falls like a chopper on a block; to whom the pitch of absurdity is sublime, and a shoe-string adorable. To whom can I expose the urgency of my own passion? Louis is too cold, too universal. There is nobody….(51)

Bernard sees people as mutable, without fixed identities. According to Neville, he does not view them as solid beings so much as abstract figures. However, this idealization of people is exactly what Neville does when picturing the perfect person with whom he can talk about his feelings for Percival. While Neville hides his feelings from Bernard to not

become inspiration for one of his stories, he hides them from Louis because he thinks he will be too cold and not understand this emotional side.

In addition to Neville fearing that Bernard would only turn his emotions into a story that he would then share with anyone who would listen, some critics read Bernard as overbearing in his taking over the storytelling from the other characters. Gabrielle McIntire writes in "Heteroglossia, Monologism, and Fascism: Bernard Reads *The Waves":*

> The anaphoric "'I see,'" "'I hear,'" "'I see,'" "'I see,'" "'I hear,'" of the opening passage (which, quite significantly, begins with Bernard's statement) is only finally broken when Bernard stops the repetition to establish a new discursive pattern by commanding them to direct their attention elsewhere: "'Look at the spider's web on the corner of the balcony'" (9). From here, each child's contribution remains descriptive rather than imperative, until Jinny interposes her own command: "'Look at the house,' said Jinny, 'with all its windows white with blinds' " (10). Rhoda will be the next to adopt the imperative, when she exclaims, "'Look at the table-cloth, flying white along the table'" (11). Nevertheless, Bernard remains the preeminent director of the children, choosing frequently to issue commands and directives while the others are content to share through description.

McIntire asserts that the stylistic choices in *The Waves* that place Bernard as the leader of the group demonstrate how he controls them. While I agree that there are times when it appears this way, I suggest in contrast to McIntire that Bernard is not always the one calling the shots, as seen with his power struggles with Percival. As much as Bernard is the author of the story, he does not control what goes on, he simply reports it. This reflects Woolf's opinions about writing as seen in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," where she writes, "Some Brown, Smith, or Jones comes before them and says in the most seductive and charming way in the world. 'Come and catch me if you can.'… My belief [is] that men and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has thus imposed itself upon them." ("Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" 3) Woolf

looks at storytelling as describing a character that one has created after that character has revealed itself to the author. In this respect, it would make little sense for Bernard to be bossing the other characters around, he observes what is going on around him and tells the story the way he sees fit.

At the conclusion of their time at school, Bernard returns to considering the many "ceremonies" that take place when one must leave and transition to a new way of life:

> 'This is the final ceremony, 'said Bernard. 'This is the last of all our ceremonies. We are overcome by strange feelings…One wants to say something, to feel something, absolutely appropriate to the occasion. One's mind is primed; one's lips are pursed….We are deeply moved; yet irreverent; yet penitent; yet anxious to get it over; yet reluctant to part. '(59)

Whereas the ceremonies from when they were leaving for school were Bernard's way of formalizing the situation and removing himself from it emotionally, the ceremony of leaving school seems to be more about how all the emotions they are feeling present themselves. From Bernard's description of how they are all feeling, they seem ready to move on from school and onto the next step in their lives, they are merely sitting through this ceremony as a formality to conclude this chapter. It is notable that Bernard was putting on a brave face so that he would not become emotional when they were first leaving for school, yet now he is eager for the next thing now that he is done. Louis was apprehensive but followed Bernard because he appeared to be brave. The only one who did not seem at all emotional was Neville, yet when they are finishing school, it is Neville who says, "So I take my seat; and, when I have found my place in the corner of our reserved compartment, I will shade my eyes with a book to hide one tear; I will shade my eyes to observe; to peep at one face." (61) It is safe to assume that that one face is Percival's.

While Neville reads and Louis considers his future, Bernard is observing the boys in the train compartment:

> 'Louis and Neville. 'said Bernard, 'both sit silent. Both are absorbed. Both feel the presence of the other people as a separating wall. But if I find myself in company with other people, words at once make smoke rings – see how phrases at once begin to wreathe off my lips. It seems that a match is set to a fire; something burns. '(67)

In this comparison of himself to the other two boys, Bernard establishes that he is compelled to socialize. While Louis and Neville are content with solitude and separating themselves from others, Bernard must interact. The words come very naturally to him and he enjoys being in spaces with others. However, he is frustrated by those who do not feel the same way, as seen when Woolf writes,

> An elderly and apparently prosperous man, a traveller, now gets in. And I at once wish to approach him; I instinctively dislike the sense of his presence, cold, unassimilated, among us. I do not believe in separation. We are not single. Also I wish to add to my collection of valuable observations upon the true nature of human life. My book will certainly run to many volumes embracing every known variety of man and woman. I fill my mind with whatever happens to be the contents of a room or a railway carriage as one fills a fountain-pen in an inkpot. I have a steady unquenchable thirst. (67-68)

To Bernard, this man is an interloper, he has physically joined them on the train but does not socially join them. Bernard immediately senses the man's lack of interest in interacting with them, the separation between him and the boys makes Bernard uncomfortable. It is interesting, though, that Bernard uses the term, "unassimilated." This implies that Bernard expects others to become absorbed into the group completely, to conform with the already established web of connection between them. Of course, this is a lot to ask of someone who was a stranger to them just moments before, showing how Bernard idealizes the world. This idealization is also confirmed in how he views everyone as a story, he gently manipulates details to make them fit into his narratives.

Still, Bernard is compelled to get to know this man and add him to his archives for later use in a story. He continues:

> Now I feel by imperceptible signs, which I cannot yet interpret but will later, that his defiance is about to thaw. His solitude shows signs of cracking. He has passed a remark about a country house. A smoke ring issues from my lips (about crops) and circles him, bringing him into contact. The human voice has a disarming quality – (we are not single, we are one). As we exchange these few but amiable remarks, about country houses, I furbish him up and make him concrete. He is indulgent as a husband but not faithful; a small builder who employs a few men…..That fact is that I have little aptitude for reflection. I require the concrete in everything. It is so only that I lay hands upon the world. (68)

Bernard treats this interaction almost like a conquest. He is excited that he finally contacted the man and became familiar with his story. He is proud of how he uses his words to ensnare this man into conversation with him. While it is established that the man is there, perhaps Bernard is employing a bit of guesswork when considering who he is as he makes the man a whole figure. Once again, we see Bernard's skewed expectations, expecting to know everything about a person from just a brief train ride with them. Bernard emphasizes his desire to know the concrete facts about everything and does not like to reflect but reflecting and filling in unknown details are essential parts to storytelling. Another paradox of Bernard's monologue are his claims that people are all one with one another, yet he also states, "A good phrase, however, seems to me to have an independent existence. Yet I think it is likely that the best are made in solitude. They require some final refrigeration which I cannot give them dabbling always in warm soluble words. My method, nevertheless, has certain advantages over theirs." (68-69) While Bernard does not believe in solitude, he also relies on it to think over the phrases he would like to use in his stories. He wants others to be open with him, but then wants to retreat from the group to have time alone with the words, completely going against his

earlier claim that all people are one and that they are not single. Bernard also takes into consideration Neville and Louis' reaction to their new train companion:

> Neville is repelled by the grossness of Trumble. Louis, glancing, tripping with the high step of a disdainful crane, picks up words as if in sugar tongs. It is true that his eyes – wild, laughing, yet desperate – express something that we have not gauged. There is about both Neville and Louis a precision, an exactitude that I admire and shall never possess. Now I begin to be aware that action is demanded. We approach a junction; at a junction I have to change." (69)

Bernard is the only one who wants to talk to the new man in the train compartment, but he seems to see that Louis is made uneasy by him. While the man was apprehensive about talking to them at first, the description of his eyes makes him appear manic and Bernard's consideration of not gauging the meaning of this before is a bit disturbing. It is in this moment that Bernard seems to appreciate Neville and Louis' calculating approach that allows them to think before they compulsively talk. This leads Bernard to remember that he needs to change trains. While, yes, he is switching over to another train to continue his journey, this is also symbolic of his changing life, including this new appreciation he has for the way Louis and Neville approach social interactions, encouraging him to change himself.

This is not Woolf's only piece that emphasizes the stories of seemingly arbitrary train companions. In "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Virginia Woolf discusses the importance of writers telling stories centering their stories around characters, using Mrs. Brown, an elderly woman in a train car, as and example. Woolf's description of Mrs. Brown bears a striking resemblance to the one Bernard gives of the elderly gentleman:

> Mrs. Brown and I were left alone together. She sat in her corner opposite, very clean, very small, rather queer, and suffering intensely. The impression she made was overwhelming. It came pouring out like a draught, like a smell of burning. What was it composed of – that overwhelming and peculiar impression? Myriads of irrelevant an incongruous ideas crowd into one's head on such occasions; one

> sees the person, one sees Mrs. Brown, in the center of all sorts of different scenes. I thought of her in a seaside house, among queer ornaments: sea-urchins, models of ships in glass cases. Her husband's metals were on the mantel-piece. She popped in and out of the room, perching on the edges of chairs, picking meals out of saucers, indulging in long, silent stares. ("Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" 8-9)

This is the second instance in which *The Waves* puts Woolf's ideas from "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" into practice. Whereas the elderly gentleman is the intrusion when Bernard, Louis, and Neville are riding the train together, Woolf's narrator is the one joining while Mrs. Brown is talking to the man, whom Woolf refers to as Mr. Smith. When Woolf is left alone with Mrs. Brown, she feels the story coming onto her quite strongly and lets her imagination run wild as she imagines this woman's life. This is the same way Bernard reacts to the man in his train car when he formulates an entire life that this man could lead all from the first impression he gave. The most notable difference, though, is that Woolf is using Mrs. Brown as an example, this is not one of her fiction pieces. In this way, Bernard's account of the man on the train is Woolf putting these ideas into practice, six years after writing the "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" essay. This is but one example of how Woolf's entire body of works can be read as one large experiment with English literature, showing how she tests conventions in the pursuit of the deepest understanding of character. This essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," emphasizes the importance of character in storytelling, especially as Woolf describes the ways in which different generations of writers practice their craft. It is also clear here that Woolf wrote Bernard as an extension of herself, author of *The Waves* to show the involvement of the author in the story.

This explains why Neville has a very different perspective on the conversation between Bernard and the old man, he is just another characters in the story and does not look at the man as an author would:

> He talked as easily to the horse-breeder or to the plumber as to us. The plumber accepted him with devotion. 'If he had a son like that, 'he was thinking, 'he would manage to send him to Oxford. 'But what did Bernard feel for the plumber? Did he not only wish to continue the sequence of the story which he never stops telling himself? (69)

Neville appears jealous of Bernard interacting so easily with others and how well they take to him. It is notable that Neville is not sure how Bernard feels about the plumber. Still, Neville thinks that Bernard only views them as characters in his continuous story. It is true, given Bernard's monologue, that people are significant to him because of the roles they could potentially play in one of his stories. However, this does cause Neville to confront how Bernard feels about him. It is also important, though, that Neville reports what the plumber was thinking, something he could only guess at, given that he cannot read his mind. It is possible that Neville was just projecting his feelings onto the situation, showing how he feels that others favor Bernard, even when Bernard only looks at them as characters in his stories. Neville continues:

> He tells our story with extraordinary understanding, except of what we most feel. For he does not need us. He is never at our mercy….We are off; he has forgotten us already; we pass out of his view; we go on, filled with lingering sensations, half bitter, half sweet, for he is somehow to be pitied breasting the world with half-finished phrases, having lost his ticket; he is also to be loved. (70)

Here, Neville acknowledges Bernard's lack of intimacy with others and how that inhibits his ability to tell their stories. He knows them well, but not intimately enough to describe how they feel. Neville, however, does not see this as a flaw in Bernard, but rather takes it as a lack of interest, assuming that Bernard considers himself to be superior to the others

and therefore does not need to care how they feel. Similarly, Neville also assumes that Bernard has already forgotten him, the same assumption he makes about Percival now that they are no longer in school together. Neville continuously downplays his significance in the other characters 'lives and fears that he will be forgotten completely, but why? He barely interacted with Percival, admiring him from afar, so not much will change after school anyway. As for Bernard, the two have always been connected with one another and relationships like that do not disappear that easily, especially given that they have so much history together.

Neville and Percival's Relationship

In a similar fashion to how the emotions felt by the characters in *The Waves* are not explicitly stated or acted upon, Neville does not act on his feelings for Percival. While he refers to loving him several times in the novel, there is never a time where any intimate moment between the two is explicitly stated. However, it is heavily implied by Neville's monologues that they have been involved, even if just in Neville's fantasies. In the novel, the reality of one's thoughts is called into question, and Neville and Percival's relationship is a prime relationship of how this boundary is played with by Woolf. In keeping with the theme of internalization of emotion and exploring emotion that is kept internalized, the entirety of Neville's relationship with Percival is maintained in Neville's head.

Jean E. Kennard reflects on the relationship between Neville and Percival in their article, "From Foe to Friend: Virginia Woolf's Changing View of the Male Homosexual":

> …this passion is, however, more negatively than positively presented. Woolf shows Neville's sexuality to be masochistic – he loves Percival because Percival

> will treat him badly, ignore his letters, fail to meet him (216) – and also shallow…What is more, in worshipping Percival Neville allies himself with the imperialism of which the novel is highly critical. It is not just that Neville finds Percival physically attractive; he admires those very qualities that make Percival a colonial administrator. (Kennard 74)

Kennard looks at the romantic feelings Neville has for Percival as him enjoying being with someone who hurts him. While this may be true, Percival is never cruel to Neville in the novel. The examples Kennard gives of the ignored letters is false, Percival does reply, although his correspondence is not as frequent as Neville's, he opts to send postcards of his adventures rather than letters. In the same way, postcards carry fewer words than letters, illustrating Percival's limited speech apart from his lack of narration. In many ways, this paints him even further as Bernard's opposition, Bernard uses his words to hide his own emotions, whereas Percival sparingly uses words. As for the forgotten meeting, Woolf makes it clear that the romance between Neville and Percival is a figment of Neville's imagination, although at times he speaks of his love for him as if from memory rather than fantasy. However, this is indicative of how such fantasies have played out in Neville's mind enough that they are more concrete in his mind, once again playing with the idea of reality. This meeting with Percival would hold potential for romance to occur between the two in a physical setting, by not meeting it is ascertained that the romance played out entirely in Neville's head. Similarly, Kennard attributes Neville's admiration of Percival to his imperialist qualities, glossing over the idea that he may just have romantic feelings. This revolves back to the idea of relationships between males needing a particular cause to be valid. Neville's attraction to Neville begins with something as simple as the way Percival touches his neck at the school mass, it need not be anything more to spark his interest.

The Waves is not the only novel by Virginia Woolf that shows a homosexual relationship. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Woolf presents a romantic relationship between Clarissa and Sally. It is a notable distinction that Clarissa and Sally kiss, but are caught by Peter Walsh. In their being caught and stopping immediately, Woolf shows how homosexuality is policed by society, even though Clarissa and Sally's love is expressed and visible. This externalization of emotion between two female characters also highlights the way that all male relationships conceal emotions, even those that are platonic. It is also important that it is Peter Walsh who catches Sally and Clarissa kiss and that there is no reaction stated from him. He is a very conservative character, but also in love with Clarissa. This leads to the question of whether he was appalled by the display, jealous, or whether he sensed all along that there were romantic feelings between the two. This is also a question that could translate to *The Waves.* Did Percival have any sense that Neville loved him, even though it was never spoken aloud? In *The Waves,* Neville must hide his feelings for Percival and it is never revealed if Percival reciprocated them. By some readings, there are different conclusions that one may draw through close reading, yet nothing is explicit. In some ways, Woolf's hinting at something occurring between these two characters further illustrates the ways in which *The Waves* illustrates how emotion is felt – somethings cannot be put explicitly into words but the sentiment is still understood. Still, all emotions felt between any of the male characters is internalized. While readers know that Neville was in love with Percival, Neville never expressed these emotions to Percival.

Neville revisits his physical impairment when he sees Percival going to play sports with some of the other boys:

> ‘Percival has gone now, ’said Neville. ‘He is thinking of nothing but the match. He never waved his hand as the brake turned the corner by the laurel bush. He despises me for being too weak to play (yet he is always kind to my weakness). He despises me for not caring if they win or lose except that he cares. He takes my devotion; he accepts my tremulous, no doubt abject offering, mixed with contempt as it is for his mind. For he cannot read. Yet when I read Shakespeare or Catullus, lying in the long grass, he understands more than Louis. Not the words – but what are words?’(48)

He believes that because he is not physically capable of keeping up with the others that Percival does not like him. Of course, it is never confirmed whether this is true because Percival’s perspective is never given. According to Neville, he is focusing completely on the game they are about to play, whereas Neville does not care about the outcome of the game. Neville admits that Percival is more involved physically, whereas Neville tackles more intellectual pursuits. Still, Neville believes that despite Percival’s inability to understand the written word that he understands more of what Neville reads aloud than Louis does. It is clear that this understanding comes from a more emotional place, that Neville feels that Percival understands him as a person more than Louis does, thus feeling more compatible when he reads to him. In this section, Neville also takes on a similar role to Bernard when he considers the meaning of words and the impact they have. For Neville, words are vehicles for emotions, as seen by his fond recollection of Percival’s reaction to his reading. To him, words express more than their official meaning. However, while words may be a source of enjoyment and a fond memory with Percival for Neville, they are also a barrier between them:

> I shall be a clinger to the outsides of words all my life. Yet I could not live with him and suffer his stupidity. He will coarsen and snore. He will marry and there will be scenes of tenderness at breakfast. But now he is young. Not a thread, not a sheet of paper lies between him and the sun, between him and the rain, between him and the moon as he lies naked, tumbled, hot, on his bed. Now as they drive along the high road in their brake his face is mottled red and yellow. He will throw off his coat and stand with his legs apart, with his hands ready, watching

> the wicket. And he will pray, 'Lord let us win'; he will think of one thing only, that they should win." (48)

The rose colored glasses that Neville viewed Percival through appear to have come off. He acknowledges his inability to picture a future with Percival because of their different priorities. While Neville finds him endearing and admires him from afar, he admits that he and Percival are intellectually incompatible. Still, Neville pictures what Percival will be like one day, considering how much he has ahead of him. This leads to him fantasizing about Percival physically, reiterating how physicality is essential to Percival's identity, returning to Percival's focus on winning the match.

Neville's account of leaving for school focuses on Percival and his concerns about them drifting even further apart:

> There is Percival in his billy-cock hat. He will forget me. He will leave my letters lying about among guns and dogs unanswered. I shall send him poems and he will perhaps reply with a picture post-card. But it is for that that I love him. I shall propose meeting – under a clock, by some Cross; and shall wait, and he will not come. It is for that that I love him. Oblivious, almost entirely ignorant, he will pass from my life. And I shall pass, incredible as it seems, into other lives; this is only an escapade perhaps, a prelude only. (60)

Whereas before Neville speaks ill of Percival's more unpleasant traits earlier in the novel, here he seems to be reasoning with himself in that Percival's inability to reply to letters or not attending meetings are exactly why Neville is in love with him. However, Neville also mentions that he loves Percival because he would reply to poetry with a picture postcard. For Neville, his explorations are with words and poetry and he wishes to share this part of his life with Percival, whereas Percival is more interested in exploring physically and going out into the world. While they are different preferences for living their lives, Neville views a picture from the places that Percival is exploring as reciprocating interest in sharing what they are currently doing even after they leave

school. However, Neville does believe that Percival will no longer be a part of his life in the near future but is prepared to move forward himself.

Louis' jealousy of the other boys and the status that they were born into, even his good friends, Bernard and Neville:

> If I sleep now, through slovenliness, or cowardice, burying myself in the past, in the dark; or acquiesce, as Bernard acquiesces, telling stories; or boast, as Percival, Archie, John, Walter, Lathom, Larpent, Roper, Smith boast – the names are the same always, the names of the boasting boys. They are all boasting, all talking, except Neville, who slips a look occasionally over the edge of a French novel, and so will always slip into cushioned firelit rooms, with many books and one friend, while I tilt on an office chair behind a counter. Then I shall grow bitter and mock them. (66-67)

Once again, Louis envies the boasting boys, and mentions how the names never change. While this could be in reference to the same group continuously boasting, it is more than likely that this also refers to their fathers and grandfathers before them as well. They all come from a long line of successful English men, and that lineage set them up for success by putting them in a more privileged position than Louis. Even still, Louis envies how Bernard has a place in the social structure of the compartment, telling stories. Bernard will always be the storyteller of the group and for that he will always have a place. Even Neville, who is usually on the outskirts with Louis fits in with his reading even while the others are all talking amongst themselves. All of the boys besides Louis are in a place to pursue academic or travel-related interests, but Louis must begin his career. Louis says that he will one day grow bitter and mock the others, but he has already begun his jealousy here on the train. While Woolf uses Louis as a vehicle for her messages about identity and fitting in, she uses him here to highlight the differences in social class even amongst these schoolboys. Their futures are already somewhat decided for them by the position in which they were born.

Now that Bernard has gone, Neville returns to thinking to himself:

> 'Now I pretend again to read. I raise my book, till it almost covers my eyes. But I cannot read in the presence of horse-dealers and plumbers. I have no power of ingratiating myself. I do not admire that man; he does not admire me. Let me at least be honest. ….There is that in me which will consume them entirely. My laughter shall make them twist in their seats; shall drive them howling before me. No; they are immortal. They triumph. They will make it impossible for me always to read Catullus in a third-class railway carriage…. It would be better to breed horses and live in one of those red villas than to run in and out of the skulls of Sophocles and Euripides like a maggot, with a high-minded wife, one of those University women. That, however, will be my fate. I shall suffer. I am already at eighteen capable of such contempt that horse-breeders hate me. That is my triumph; I do not compromise. I am not timid; I have no accent. I do not finick about fearing what people think of 'my father a banker at Brisbane 'like Louis. ' (70-71)

Earlier, Neville was only pretending to read when Bernard thought that he was so engulfed in his book. In reality, Neville did not want to read around the men that joined them in the train car, he looks down on them. Unlike Bernard, he does not wish to pretend to care about them for any reason, he views them as preventing him from reading, while he is the one who refuses to read while they are there. Then, he seems to consider them in a similar fashion to how Louis considered the other students at school. Neville feels that he is above them and that he will conquer them, that he is superior. However, he then calls them immortal. This does not mean that each horse-breeder or plumber is incapable of dying, but rather that there will always be another horse-breeder or plumber in his presence, they will never go away. Even though they are merely riding the train with him, Neville does not wish to associate himself with them at all, he considers their continued presence to be their victory. Then again, Neville reveals that he is actually jealous of the horse-breeders, that he would rather have their job than to do what he believes he is destined to. It is very important to mention that part of the fate that Neville wishes he could avoid mentions having a wife. This is the first time Neville

mentions marrying or potentially being interested in a woman, prior to this he only expressed his love for Percival, another man. Here, Neville is acknowledging that being in a heterosexual marriage is going to be a part of his future and he seems very upset by this. It is clear that Neville is concerned about his future and even though his life is just beginning at eighteen, he is not enthused by what he thinks his life will be like. He then references Louis and how unlike they are, which is ironic considering Louis is also envious of the futures of others while resenting his own. He then considers what Percival may be doing, “There are the lovers lying shamelessly mouth to mouth on the burnt grass. Percival is now almost in Scotland; his train draws through the red moors; he sees the long line of the Border hills and the Roman wall. He reads a detective novel, yet understands everything.” (71) This is clearly a fantasy of Neville’s, as evidenced by Percival understanding everything in the mystery novel whereas before Neville mentions his inability to read. It is important to note that Neville’s stream of consciousness goes from concerns about the future and marrying a woman, to the lovers on the grass, to Percival and what he would be doing, showing how subconsciously all thoughts of love bring Neville back to thinking of Percival

The next character to express their excitement for Percival’s goodbye dinner is Neville:

> 'I have come early. I have taken my place at the table ten minutes before the time in order to taste every moment of anticipation; to see the door open and to say, "Is it Percival? No; it is not Percival." There is a morbid pleasure in saying: "No, it is not Percival." I have seen the door open and shut twenty times already; each time the suspense sharpens. This is the place to which he is coming. This is the table at which he will sit. Here, incredible as it seems, will be his actual body. This table, these chairs, this metal vase with its three red flowers are about to undergo an extraordinary transformation. (118)

Neville is eager to see Percival once again and cannot wait for the dinner to begin. He arrived early and is watching the door, hoping to see him the moment he arrives. It is odd that he finds satisfaction in it not being Percival to come to the door, perhaps it increases Neville's suspense as to when he will arrive, knowing that the moment of Percival's arrival is still to come. It is also notable that Neville refers to the room and its décor as about to undergo a transformation, implying that Percival's presence will change the room. Once again, Neville idealizes Percival. He cannot wait to once again sit in the same room as the man who has been the subject of his admiration for several years. When Neville sees Percival, he is overwhelmed by a sense of relief:

> 'Now,' said Neville, 'my tree flowers. My heart rises. All oppression is relieved. All impediment is removed. The reign of chaos is over. He has imposed order. Knives cut again.' 'Here is Percival,' said Jinny. 'He has not dressed.' 'Here is Percival,' said Bernard, 'smoothing his hair, not from vanity (he does not look in the glass), but to propitiate the god of decency. He is conventional; he is a hero. The little boys trooped after him across the playing-fields. They blew their noses as he blew his nose, but unsuccessfully, for he is Percival. Now, when he is about to leave us, to go to India, all these trifles come together. He is a hero. Oh yes, that is not to be denied, and when he takes his seat by Susan, whom he loves, the occasion is crowned. (122-123)

Neville is relieved at the sight of Percival, feeling that all is right with the world now that they have been reunited. Jinny and Bernard both announce his presence while Bernard grooms himself, showing his desire to present himself properly to Percival. Bernard admires Percival, referencing the power he held over the other boys at school. Like Neville and Louis, he mentions how the others would imitate what he would do but were never successful because Percival held a certain aura of power that no one could recreate. When Percival sits down at the table, it is revealed that he loves Susan and that now that he is present, the event is officially happening. It is odd that Percival loves Susan given that they have relatively few interactions in the novel. At the same time, Percival may

have been admiring Susan from a distance in the same way that Neville has been admiring him, but because Percival's perspective is never given, it went unsaid. On a similar note, the one to reveal this fact is Bernard, implying that Percival told him of his affection for Susan. This is also notable given that Neville does not tell Bernard his feelings out of fear that they will be made into a story. Percival does not possess this fear. Bernard is also the first to reference emotions at Percival leaving, "'And then,' said Bernard, 'the cab came to the door, and, pressing our new bowler hats tightly over our eyes to hide our unmanly tears, we drove through streets." (124) By adjusting their hats, they are performing a role and maintaining a sense of masculinity. They do not want anyone to see their tears, yet all of the characters are deeply upset by Percival's leaving, so it is natural that they would express these emotions through crying. However, even in this close-knit group, the boys try to hide displays of emotion, even from one another.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves* can be read through a feminist lens by closely examining the male characters. Woolf critiques the societal expectations that are in place for men to perform a masculine identity and illustrates how these expectations cause men to alter their behavior.

Mrs. Dalloway's female protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, tells her own story, yet Woolf also includes the perspectives of Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway who each struggle with expressing their feelings for her. In response, they both utilize objects as vehicles for their emotions, showing a desire to separate themselves from feelings, instead pushing them into the physical world. By Peter Walsh having his knife in hand and treating it like a toy, Woolf highlights his immaturity and insecurity. Both of these traits are exemplified by his actions with the knife, which Peter holds onto in the same way he holds onto his masculinity. As for Richard Dalloway, he buys his wife roses. While flowers are a feminine symbol, Richard is quick to give them to Clarissa along with the expression of how he feels, giving both away to her. Being a society novel, all of the characters perform specific roles. These roles cause the characters' actions or words to not always match up with their feelings. Having aspects of the character's pasts as well as the present day, different aspects of identity are shown in the novel, especially those that change or remain the same as people age.

By structuring *The Waves* around the central figure of Percival, showing how masculinity is idolized and idealized, Woolf draws attention to how society expects men to fit into a specific standard. Men are encouraged to hide their feelings, especially regarding their relationships with other men. If a man is not adhering to the idea of

masculinity and performing it accordingly, he is not considered a man and encouraged to hide the more feminine aspects of his identity. As the storyteller of the group and reflection of Woolf, Bernard alters the story of *The Waves.* Still, Bernard's role as the author causes him to separate himself emotionally from the other characters, as well as the events of the novels. His unfamiliarity with intimacy and emotion both from removing himself from feeling these things and from his detachment from the others proves a difficult point for him as the author, reflecting Woolf's own feelings. Neville keeps his feelings for Percival hidden from everyone, internalizing how he truly feels.

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Vita

Name	*Shannon M. Connors*
Baccalaureate Degree	*Bachelor of Arts*, *Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY* *Major: English*
Date Graduated	*May, 2020*