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*Virginia Woolf and the Work of the Literary Sketch: Scenes and Characters, Politics
and Printing in Monday or Tuesday (1921)*

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Abstract

This thesis foregrounds Virginia Woolf's 1921 volume of short fiction, *Monday or Tuesday*, examining its aesthetic qualities and formal strategies through the lens of the literary sketch. 'Sketch' is a term that has been invoked in criticism of *Monday or Tuesday* since its publication, but the provenance of the sketch as a literary genre and its centrality to Woolf's aesthetic practices have not yet been fully examined in Woolf studies. The idea of the sketch is most often raised in analysis of her unfinished memoir, 'A Sketch of the Past', and as a descriptor for the general plotlessness of her short fiction; yet, the historical specificity and formal strategies of the sketch as an established literary genre have largely been elided in such discussions. Attending to the frequency and precision of Woolf's own use of the term 'sketch', and particularly to her declared intention to 'keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work' (*D* II 312), this thesis elucidates the sketch as a key mode of writing for Woolf. It argues that she achieved her desired combination of the sketch and the finished work most fully in the first Hogarth edition of *Monday or Tuesday*.

A set of texts more usually encountered in anthologies or integrated with Woolf's other short fiction, *Monday or Tuesday* has itself occupied a relatively marginal place in the critical construction of Woolf's oeuvre. Although there has been a recent surge of work on the short fiction, *Monday or Tuesday* has yet to be foregrounded as the sole object of a monograph, or to appear as a scholarly edition. This thesis reads *Monday or Tuesday* in its entirety, in the specificity of its original publication by Woolf's Hogarth Press, and considers what is at stake in reading this work as a collection of literary sketches. The analysis performed is grounded in the material qualities of the first UK edition, where the woodcuts by Vanessa Bell and the uncorrected mistakes made in the hand-printing of the book contribute to the effects of the sketch as it appears in print. In these aspects, the thesis builds on the substantial body of scholarship on the Hogarth Press and Bloomsbury aesthetics to discuss *Monday or Tuesday* as a printed sketchbook. It shows how the sketch manifests in *Monday or Tuesday*'s material appearance, where it combines the 'evanescent' and 'engraved' qualities later formulated alongside 'the life of Monday or Tuesday' in Woolf's manifesto for 'Modern Fiction' (1925).

Utilising Woolf's own terminology throughout, the thesis explores the simultaneous ephemerality and permanence of the sketch, as something which can project into a future moment of writing, and whose significance can be realised belatedly; as something which works explicitly with the surface impression but which also layers moments of making. The thesis begins by drawing on recent scholarship to outline a

history of the sketch as a literary genre which was popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America, and identifies examples of this tradition with which Woolf was familiar. Woolf's deployment of the term 'sketch' is discussed in detail, from her early journals and juvenilia to her memoir, and the thesis proceeds to study the ways in which the sketch is at work in *Monday or Tuesday*. It examines the book's contents under some conventional categories of the sketch: the scene, the character, and the political sketch. The central chapter of the thesis discusses the poetics and narrative strategies of scene-making and character-sketching, and Chapter Four highlights the feminist political inflections of Woolf's use of the sketch. These readings show how the literary sketch is not defined simply by its fragmentary, ekphrastic or unfinished qualities, but also utilises narrative strategies of suggestion, deferral and interruption. The thesis reaches for finish in the final chapter by examining the material qualities of the book, including an examination of key variants between the first British and first American editions.

While it makes serious strategic claims for the sketch as one possible genre through which to approach *Monday or Tuesday*, the thesis does not claim to definitively categorise these texts as sketches once and for all. Rather, in the attempt to treat these texts in broad-stroke but incisive detail, it acknowledges the procedures of the sketch itself – its representative provisionality, its potential to function as a detailed study, and its creation of a basis for re-working. It takes the idea of the sketch as a critical apparatus by which to perform the experimental reading that *Monday or Tuesday*'s own narrative strategies invite. The thesis ultimately seeks to foreground the work of both *Monday or Tuesday* and the literary sketch in Woolf's modernist aesthetics, and to prepare the ground for future study of their significance for modernism more generally.

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*For Papa
'in jig time'*

Abbreviations

All citations of *Monday or Tuesday* are to the first UK edition unless otherwise stated in a footnote. Full bibliographic details for these abbreviations are given in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis.

<i>AROO</i>	<i>A Room of One's Own</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Carlyle's House and Other Sketches</i>
<i>CSF</i>	<i>The Complete Shorter Fiction</i>
<i>D I–V</i>	<i>The Diary of Virginia Woolf</i>
<i>E I–VI</i>	<i>The Essays of Virginia Woolf</i>
<i>HH</i>	<i>A Haunted House and Other Short Stories</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Jacob's Room</i>
<i>L I–VI</i>	<i>The Letters of Virginia Woolf</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>The London Scene</i>
<i>MB</i>	<i>Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>Monday or Tuesday</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>Night and Day</i>
<i>O</i>	<i>Orlando: A Biography</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals 1897–1909</i>
<i>TG</i>	<i>Three Guineas</i>
<i>TL</i>	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>
<i>W</i>	<i>The Waves</i>

Introduction

To Ethel Smyth
Thursday 16th Oct., 1930

[...] Monday or (or is it 'and'? – see how seldom I look at my own works) Tuesday. If one put comparatives for all your superlatives, you're a very good critic – that is, have singled out the phrase I liked (the pigeon) and the stories I liked; and lighted with your aeroplane eye upon the generally acclaimed successes – that is Mark on the Wall and Kew. You are perfectly right about Green and blue and the heron one: that's mainly why I won't reprint. They are mere tangles of words; balls of string that the kitten or Pan has played with. One of these days I will write out some phrases of my writer's life; and expound what I now merely say in short – After being ill and suffering every form and variety of nightmare and extravagant intensity of perception – for I used to make up poems, stories, profound and to me inspired phrases all day long as I lay in bed, and thus sketched, I think, all that I now, by the light of reason, try to put into prose (I thought of the Lighthouse then, and Kew and others, not in substance but in idea) – after all this, when I came to, I was so tremendously afraid of my own insanity that I wrote *Night and Day* mainly to prove to my own satisfaction that I could keep entirely off that dangerous ground. I wrote it, lying in bed, allowed to write only for one half hour a day. And I made myself copy from plaster casts, partly to tranquilise, partly to learn anatomy. Bad as the book is, it composed my mind, and I think taught me certain elements of composition which I should not have had the patience to learn had I been in full flush of health always. These little pieces in *Monday or (and) Tuesday* were written by way of diversion, they were the treats I allowed myself when I had done my exercise in the conventional style. I shall never forget the day I wrote *The Mark on the Wall* – all in a flash, as if flying after being kept stone breaking for months. *The Unwritten Novel* was the great discovery, however. That – again in one second – showed me how I could embody all my deposit of experience in a shape that fitted it – not that I have reached that end, but anyhow I saw, branching out of the tunnel I made, when I discovered that method of approach, *Jacobs Room*, *Mrs Dalloway* etc. – How I trembled with excitement, and wrote I suppose another page of that interminable *Night and Day* (which some say is my best book). All this I will tell you one day – here I suppress my natural inclination to say, if dear Ethel you have the least wish to hear any more on a subject that can't be of the least interest to you. And, I add, *Green and Blue* and the heron were the wild outbursts of freedom, inarticulate, ridiculous, unprintable mere outcries. (*L IV* 230–231)

In this letter written in 1930, Virginia Woolf sketches for Ethel Smyth an outline of what she will 'tell [her] one day'; she sketches in brief what she will, 'One of these days [...] expound' in full: the story of her 1921 collection of short fiction, *Monday or Tuesday*. The letter suggests the importance of the collection to her development as a writer and a publisher, and though she never did more fully narrativise this evocative outline, Woolf's mode of writing about it here is consistent with the elusive, fragmentary and preliminary insights of the book itself. *Monday or Tuesday* was the only collection of Woolf's short

fictional texts crafted and published in her lifetime by her own press.¹ Sharing its name with one of the pieces it contains and a phrase that recurs throughout her writing, *Monday or Tuesday* uses no subtitle defining its genre but contains eight of Woolf's most widely discussed short texts: 'A Haunted House', 'A Society', 'Monday or Tuesday', 'An Unwritten Novel', 'The String Quartet', 'Blue & Green', 'Kew Gardens', and 'The Mark on the Wall'. The last two of these had been previously published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, as some of its first issues.² 'An Unwritten Novel' had been published in the *Dial* in 1920, and all the others were previously unpublished. 'A Society' and 'Blue & Green' were never republished until their inclusion in Susan Dick's *Complete Shorter Fiction* in 1985 (revised in 1989).³ The letter that Woolf wrote to Smyth nine years after *Monday or Tuesday*'s first appearance is retrospectively illuminative not only of the creative process for this collection – its use of (at the time) previously published and new material, as well as raising the possibility, or not, of reprinting (then or in the future) – but also draws attention to its aesthetic 'wildness' and generic ambiguity. In her letter, Woolf categorises some of these texts as 'stories', but also takes care to add a phrase describing others – specifically 'Blue & Green' and 'Monday or Tuesday' – as 'inarticulate, ridiculous, unprintable mere outcries'.

Critics at the time of its publication were immediately confronted with the difficulty of defining the genre of *Monday or Tuesday*, a situation which continues in our contemporary scholarship. As well as its sense of being fragmentary and unfinished, the formal diversity of the collection makes it difficult to categorise. Some of the texts are only two pages long and present fragments of lyrical description; some are more essayistic, some more poetic or dramatic; most deny narrative progression. They are simultaneously impressionistic and very tightly formally designed. In her letter to Smyth, Woolf places emphasis on the composition process by which, in a state of intense mental irritation and heightened sensory awareness, she 'sketched [...] all that [she] now, by the light of reason, [tries] to put into prose'. She thereby suggests that the agitated spontaneity of the initial

¹ The only other collections of her own texts that Woolf put together were *The Common Reader I & II* (1925; 1932), which are more recognisably volumes of literary-critical essays. In 1917, as the inaugural publication of the Hogarth Press, Virginia and Leonard Woolf also created a book of one short piece each entitled *Two Stories*: Virginia's contribution was 'The Mark on the Wall' (which also appeared as a single book in 1919 before its inclusion in *Monday or Tuesday*) and Leonard's was 'Three Jews'.

² 'The Mark on the Wall' appeared in *Two Stories* (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1917) and as a single volume, *The Mark on the Wall* (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1919). *Kew Gardens* was published as a single volume, in two editions in May and June 1919, and was later reissued in a special edition in 1927, revised after its inclusion in *Monday or Tuesday*. See B. J. Kirkpatrick and Stuart N. Clarke, *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

³ See Kirkpatrick and Clarke, *A Bibliography* (1997).

sketch is to be counterpointed by the final object of measured prose. The as-yet-inadequate label of ‘stories’ for the collection, its state of being not-yet prose and aligned with the initiatory ‘idea’ rather than the ‘substance’ of work to come, is noted in multiple reviews including Desmond MacCarthy’s (under the pseudonym ‘Affable Hawk’), in the *New Statesman* on 9 April 1921:

[A] collection of sketches, rhapsodies and meditations – there is no general name for them – by Virginia Woolf labelled *Monday or Tuesday* (4s. 6d.) They are accompanied, rather than illustrated, by wood-cuts of a rough, blottesque, pleasantly vigorous kind by Vanessa Bell.⁴

As MacCarthy suggests, the texts in this book partake of visual art, music and philosophy – ‘sketches, rhapsodies and meditations’. An unsigned review in the *Dial* (New York) in February 1922, and Raymond Mortimer, in his 1929 review of the work of Woolf and Lytton Strachey, also both refer to this book as a collection of sketches.⁵ Mortimer diminishes *Monday or Tuesday* as ‘only sketches’, in contrast to *Jacob’s Room* (1922) as Woolf’s ‘first full-size canvas’.⁶ T. S. Eliot, in his ‘London Letter’ in the *Dial* (1921) discusses ‘the recent book of sketches by Mrs Woolf, *Monday or Tuesday*’, alighting on its qualities of suggestiveness and ephemerality.⁷ Reviewing the first American edition two years after its publication, in 1923, Rebecca West focused on the influence of visual art in the collection, and although she categorised its genre as ‘short stories’ (alongside the three other collections reviewed: Katharine Fullerton Gerould’s *Valiant Dust* [1922], Aldous Huxley’s *Mortal Coils* [1922] and D.H. Lawrence’s *England, My England* [1922]), she also suggests its mode of fragmentary sketching, and its ‘writing of what has been, or might be painted’.⁸ West writes:

Here is Mrs Woolf, with her curious confusion of literary and pictorial impulses. She has wit; she has the lyric spirit; and also she delights in writing of what has been, or might be painted. In this book of short stories, “Monday or Tuesday” – vastly inferior to “The Voyage Out” or “Jacob’s Room” – she shows all these qualities. Wit inspired “The Mark on the Wall”, the lyric spirit “The Haunted House” [*sic*], an

⁴ Desmond MacCarthy, *The New Statesman* (9 Apr. 1921): 18; reprinted in Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin (eds), *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1975), pp. 89-91.

⁵ ‘Unsigned review’ in Majumdar and McLaurin (eds), *The Critical Heritage*, pp. 89-92. Raymond Mortimer, from ‘Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey’, *Bookman* (New York), (February 1929): 625-29, reprinted in *Critical Heritage*, pp. 238-43. See also Rebecca West’s review of *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘Among the Books’, *Yale Review* 12 (Jan. 1923): 844-50.

⁶ Mortimer, ‘Virginia Woolf’, p. 240.

⁷ T.S. Eliot, ‘London Letter’, *Dial* 71 (1921): 213-17; 215. Available at *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, <<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015031076543>> [accessed 14 May 2017].

⁸ Rebecca West, ‘Among the New Books’, *Yale Review* 12 (January 1923): 844-50; 849-50.

exquisite fragment. But the odd desire to put on paper what is more natural to canvas and to feel that anything properly pictorial is a sanctioned subject for literature, brings on her the horror of “A Society”, hateful re-creation of some lewd eighteenth-century print of blowzy womanhood.⁹

Though the collection does display the ‘desire’ for the visual that West suggests, her inability to account for ‘A Society’ – which is arguably as witty as ‘The Mark on the Wall’ – in terms other than as a failed or ugly attempt at the ‘pictorial’ scene shows what is at stake in considering *Monday or Tuesday* primarily as an attempt to approximate visual art. The rhetorical and poetic modes that West identifies – ‘wit’ and ‘lyric’ – are just as prominent in the collection. In grappling with their formal and generic indeterminacy, and in tracing Woolf’s own discourse around what she later called these ‘inarticulate, ridiculous, unprintable mere outcries’, I have found that the quality of the sketch suggested by these critics is a resonant term for Woolf herself, and that while the rubric of the sketch might suggest a focus on visual art, examination of its specifically literary provenance and its narrative strategies can help to reconcile the ‘confusion of literary and pictorial impulses’ that West identifies in Woolf’s work.

The visual and written sketch are tropes that recur in Woolf’s work: for example, there are scenes of both visual and linguistic sketching in *The Voyage Out* (1915), *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), *The Years* (1937) and *Three Guineas* (1938). In *Night and Day* (1919), Elizabeth Datchet, ‘kept a fine flock of yellow chickens, sketched a little’, pointing to its function as a desirable feminine accomplishment (*ND* 158);¹⁰ in *Jacob’s Room* (1922), the reader is encouraged by the elliptical narrative to ‘fill in the sketch as you like’ (*JR* 90); in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), ‘it was a mere sketch’ that Peter Walsh, ‘after all these years, could make of Clarissa’ (*MD* 85); in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) there is ‘that kind old lady who sketched, Mrs. Beckwith’ (*TL* 173); and in *The Waves* (1931), Bernard plans his ‘letter to the girl with whom he is passionately in love’ to look like ‘a brilliant sketch which, she must think, was written without a pause, without an erasure’ (*W* 57-8). This last example, discussed in more detail in Chapter Five of this thesis, begins to move more closely to an understanding of how the sketch functions in language specifically.

In a literary context, ‘sketch’ is a term often used more metaphorically or descriptively than technically – many of the studies of Woolf’s short fiction discussed later

⁹ Ibid. West identifies a similarly sketchy quality in her suggestion that *Jacob’s Room* be read ‘not as a novel but as a portfolio’: ‘A portfolio is indeed an appropriate image, for not only are Mrs Woolf’s contributions to her age loose leaves, but they are also connected closely with the pictorial arts’ (‘Review of *Jacob’s Room*’ in Majumdar and McLaurin [eds], *The Critical Heritage*, pp. 100-102; p. 101).

¹⁰ On the sketch as a feminine accomplishment, see Richard C. Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), pp. 75-144.

in this Introduction use the term interchangeably with ‘short story’, or use it only to point to the influences of visual art on Woolf’s short texts. Yet, the literary sketch has its own history, and utilises poetic and narrative strategies which go beyond ekphrastic attempts to translate the visual into words. MacCarthy’s use of the term ‘sketch’ in his review may be metaphorical, drawing on its provenance in visual art and juxtaposing it with metaphors citing musicality and philosophical discourse; on the other hand, it would be possible for him to use all three of these terms – ‘sketches, rhapsodies and meditations’ – as technical generic categorisations. The literary sketch exists historically as a generic label, as a conventional category and paratextual feature indicating a market and readership: as we will see, it was a highly popular genre in this sense throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Contributing to its generic presence, the sketch can also be described in terms of identifiable formal features inherent to any text whose brevity and lack of polish suggest that it is unfinished, composed spontaneously, or indicative of something yet to come. In both generic and formal features, there is some overlap with the sketch as a mode of utterance in texts which deploy these conventions and structures to produce an effect that might be described as ‘sketchy’, or affecting ‘sketchiness’.

This thesis explores the specific effects of the literary sketch as a form and a mode of writing at work in *Monday or Tuesday*. Foregrounding both *Monday or Tuesday* and the literary sketch as critical points of entry to Woolf’s modernist aesthetics, the thesis will perform a close-reading of *Monday or Tuesday* in its entirety, experimenting with the possibility of labelling this work, generically, as a collection of literary sketches. As a quality identified by its contemporaneous critics and by Woolf in her discourse reflecting on the collection in her letter to Smyth, it is possible now to draw on recent scholarship of the sketch as a genre in order to contextualise how it works in *Monday or Tuesday* – for example, in its narrative strategies of suggestion, deferral and interruption, and in the physical appearance of the hand-printed book. Any precision in such discussion of the sketch can, at the same time, only be provisional: while it makes serious strategic claims for the sketch as one possible genre through which to approach *Monday or Tuesday*, this thesis does not claim to definitively categorise these texts as sketches once and for all. Rather, it acknowledges the procedures of the sketch itself – its representative provisionality, its potential to function as a detailed study, and its creation of a basis for re-working – in the attempt to treat these texts in broad-stroke but incisive detail. In doing so, I am encouraged by these texts’ own narrative strategies and the quality of the book’s printed appearance. As a material and literary object, it invites an active, recursive and experimental reading process. Its texts elude finish and finality, yet they are also highly

crafted, saturated impressions. Revisiting the whole collection almost a decade after its initial publication, it is possible for Woolf to write to Smyth about ‘The Mark on the Wall’ and ‘Kew Gardens’ as ‘generally acclaimed successes’. At the same time, even these two stories are described in a way which suggests, paradoxically, both spontaneity and a recursive process of re-working.¹¹ This is a collection of texts with which Woolf herself is never finished, to which she returns and which she replays throughout her writing life.

As this thesis will discuss, Woolf was intimately familiar with the sketch in both a visual and a literary context, demonstrated by the variety of scenes of sketching in her longer works and in her private notebooks, letters and diaries. Simultaneously as she incorporates into her texts the methods, processes and characteristics of the sketch (particularly its brevity and sense of being unfinished), Woolf is demonstrably concerned with the sketch as an aesthetic object in itself. She was, as Alex Zwerdling points out, ‘surrounded by painters and did not use the word “sketch” idly’.¹² She was also an avid reader from a young age, brought up in a literary family. As discussed in Chapter One, she was distantly related to William Makepeace Thackeray, who is one of the most important figures for the Victorian literary sketch, and her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, had published his own *Sketches from Cambridge* in 1865. The catalogue of Woolf’s own library (some of which is inherited from Stephen) includes thirty-four books of literary sketches including historical, biographical and political sketches.¹³ While she never theorised it explicitly as a genre or a form, and while she never attached it to any of her published books, ‘sketch’ is a term that Woolf used very frequently in a literary sense.

Perhaps the most significant of her uses of the term is in the unfinished, fragmentary memoir written between 1939 and 1940, ‘A Sketch of the Past’, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Three; but it also features in much of the early diary and notebook material. The label of ‘sketch’ has been attached by scholars and editors to their posthumous publication

¹¹ For its inclusion in *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ was revised from the single volume published in 1919; and ‘Kew Gardens’ was revised after *Monday or Tuesday* to be published as a special edition in 1927. See Kirkpatrick and Clarke, *A Bibliography*, pp. 13-18. It is from the 1927 revised version that Susan Dick reprints ‘Kew Gardens’ in *The Complete Shorter Fiction* (New York: Harcourt, 1985; rev. 1989). This is an exception to the other texts from *Monday or Tuesday*, which she reprints from the first American edition of that book. Sandra Kemp’s *Selected Short Stories* (London: Penguin, 1993) and David Bradshaw’s *The Mark on the Wall and Other Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) both reprint from the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday*.

¹² Alex Zwerdling, “Mastering the Memoir: Woolf and the Family Legacy” in *Modernism/Modernity* 10.1 (2003): 165-88; 181.

¹³ These books, some of which are discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, form Appendix A, extracted from Julia King and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic (eds), *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalogue* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 2003). Available at: <<http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/onlinebooks/woolflibrary/woolflibraryonline.htm>> [accessed 3 April 2017].

of some of these texts, including most notably David Bradshaw's publication of her 1909 journal under the title *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches* (2003). These contexts will form the focus of Chapter Two, in which I trace Woolf's use of the term 'sketch' – but as a preliminary outline here, it is helpful to note that Woolf makes references to her 'Spanish Sketch' in her 1905 journal (*PA* 268); and writes a 'rough sketch [...] at any rate done from life' of her Greek tutor, 'Miss Case' (1903) (*PA* 181-184); she refers to her 1903 journal specifically as a sketchbook (*PA* 186-187) and gives titles to all the sketches it contains, numbering the pages and including a list of contents. The sketch, both written and drawn, is also present in juvenilia such as the Stephen children's *Hyde Park Gate News* (edited by Gill Lowe and published with the subtitle *The Stephen Family Newspaper* [London: Hesperus, 2005]), and its successor, the *Charleston Bulletin Supplements*, produced by the Bell children in collaboration with their aunt Virginia Woolf (edited by Claudia Olk [London: The British Library 2013]). These early and reprised writing exercises resonate with two broad senses of the sketch as Woolf used the term: as a spontaneous outline, and as a focused training in technique. The sketch can render both narrative realism and lyrical or abstract poetic modes; it can be the architectural plan for a work still to be realised; it can record a scene or a character; or it can provide a place to test out and hone techniques for creating such objects. It strips back description to what is essential, and yet description can be its entire function; it has the capacity to be incredibly detailed and incisive, or to be cursory and generalising.

The sketch also activates a complex temporality, which speaks to consistent concerns throughout Woolf's work, in that it is uniquely able to combine the ephemerality of the moment with the simultaneous functions of recording the past and planning the future. In her diary while writing *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925, Woolf wonders whether 'one could keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work. That is my endeavour' (*D* II 312). This pondered and stated attempt is one of the most forceful affirmations of the importance attached to the sketch in Woolf's literary discourse and practice. The desire to combine the undefined, suggestive 'quality of the sketch' with 'the finished and composed work' invokes aesthetic concepts with complex rhetorical histories which deserve careful unpacking. Addressed through this thesis as a whole, and directly in Chapter Two, they provide the hook on which my argument hangs: I suggest that Woolf had perhaps already, at the point of writing this diary entry, achieved the conjunction of these contradictory qualities in *Monday or Tuesday*. By arguing from this rhetorically suggestive position, I hope to illustrate the idea that the 'quality of the sketch' is something that waits to be activated retrospectively. It informs my decision to focus on *Monday or Tuesday* rather

than on unpublished work, on drafts or manuscripts in my analysis of the sketch in Woolf's work. This volume demonstrates most fully how the sketch manifests in a 'finished and composed work'; how it functions as a genre, attached to an object which entered into circulation early on in Woolf's career as an author and a publisher. As a painstakingly crafted material and literary object, this book holds the sketch as a quality waiting to be activated or brought into relief, and demonstrates the truly embedded nature of the sketch in Woolf's 'finished and composed' work.

After outlining in Chapter One the literary history of the sketch and drawing attention to some volumes of sketches contained in Woolf's library, in Chapter Two I discuss in more detail the places that Woolf uses the term 'sketch'. This research establishes some of the qualities of the sketch as she understands and practices them in her writing, such as in her early journals. What then follows in Chapters Three and Four is a close-reading of *Monday or Tuesday* via the aesthetics of the sketch, focusing respectively on its scenes and characters, and on the political resonances of Woolf's use of the sketch as a form and a mode of writing. Chapter Five draws the thesis to a conclusion by considering the sketch in relation to the material crafting of the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday*. The next section of this introduction will outline in more detail the critical field into which this analysis of the sketch in Woolf's work enters.

i. *Monday or Tuesday* and the Sketch in Woolf Studies

In recent decades, Woolf's short fiction, essays, diaries, letters and unpublished work have begun to pull focus from the novels, which were the traditional objects of Woolf studies and of the establishment of her oeuvre.¹⁴ As an effect of managing a vast body of work under the category of 'the short fiction', in the current critical field, the texts from *Monday or Tuesday* are more often extracted from the collection than the book is analysed holistically. Simultaneously, the term 'sketch' has been utilised in discussion of these texts without sustained examination of how the sketch functions as an established literary genre, as a form and as a mode of writing. While the studies of the short fiction which I will outline in this section do important work in raising the generic ambiguity or hybridity of Woolf's short fiction and in pointing to the term 'sketch' as an appropriate descriptor for many of its qualities, they do not explore the sketch as a specific genre and a material product with a distinct literary history, nor as a type of writing and a trope that recurs in

¹⁴ Anna Snaith, 'Introduction' to *Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 11. Key studies in these areas are cited throughout this thesis.

Woolf's work more broadly. In her 1985 doctoral thesis, however, Leena-Kreet Kore laid the groundwork for such attention to the sketch in Woolf's aesthetics. Although Kore's thesis, entitled "'The Nameless Spirit': The Sketches of Virginia Woolf", was never published as a monograph, it identifies the distinction between the short story and the sketch in relation to Woolf's short fiction.¹⁵ By focusing on their subversion of plot and their self-consciousness, Kore also makes one of the earliest claims for the aesthetic value of Woolf's published sketches apart from their critically perceived status as preparation for the novels.

Kore argues for the sketch as 'an independent aesthetic form requiring its own methods of critical and historical analysis'.¹⁶ She makes a case for the sketch, within the 'tradition' of Symbolism and Aestheticism,¹⁷ as emphatically 'not a subsidiary of the short story'.¹⁸ Preceding Nena Škrbić's analysis discussed below, Kore identifies 'fleeting impressions and transient moments' as key subjects of the sketch.¹⁹ In her first chapter, she mounts 'A Defence of Virginia Woolf's Sketches', and claims the sketch as 'the most successful vehicle for the "modern" vision, the belief that consciousness of perception becomes the inescapable self-conscious condition of all art'.²⁰ While she thus defines and traces aesthetic qualities and narrative modes specific to the sketch, when it comes to the question of genre, Kore nevertheless ultimately reinscribes the sketch as a type of short story. Although she argues for the sketch's independence, she often uses 'short story' interchangeably with 'sketch', eliding altogether its provenance in visual art and in the essay (the 'attempt'), and frames the sketch, in its plotlessness, as one of 'two distinct kinds of short stories' which she claims Woolf wrote (the other being 'a conventional plot of action like "The Legacy" or "The Duchess and the Jeweller"').²¹ With recently emergent

¹⁵ Leena-Kreet Kore, "'The Nameless Spirit': The Sketches of Virginia Woolf" (Doctoral Thesis: University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges, 1985). Kore's research in relation to Woolf has shifted focus to historiography and 'Englishness', most recently in an article entitled, 'A question is asked which is never answered: Virginia Woolf, Englishness and Anti-Semitism', *Woolf Studies Annual* 19 (2013): 27-57.

¹⁶ Kore, "'The Nameless Spirit'", p. 2.

¹⁷ Tracing its influence on Woolf through Roger Fry and Walter Pater, Kore defines Symbolism as an 'art that was created or written on the extreme edge of aesthetic self-consciousness', which 'tended towards the kind of elliptical expression and brief, fragmented form that is generally associated with the condition of a sketch' (ibid, p. 55). She defines the Aesthetic, 'not in the restricted sense of lilies and Oscar Wilde, but rather in its Greek sense of *aisthanomai*, the word for vision, or perception' (ibid, p. 73).

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 82.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 74.

²¹ Ibid, p. 42. Aside from the parenthetical mention of 'The Legacy' and 'The Duchess and the Jeweller', Kore does not lay out which of Woolf's short texts she considers to be stories and which are sketches. Kore includes a chapter discussing the nuances of the distinction between the short story and the sketch, usefully surveying various sources contemporaneous with Woolf's work, but without really clarifying her own position ("Mystery and Vagueness": Some Considerations of the Sketch in Relation to the Short Story', pp. 82-125).

studies of the sketch's historical popularity as a literary genre, alongside concurrent developments in Woolf studies including the publication of 'A Sketch of the Past', it is now possible to trace a broader and more specific tradition of the literary sketch and to firmly establish its significance as a genre and a mode of writing with which Woolf was familiar. Following her contemporaneous criticism and the prevalence of the term 'sketch' in Woolf's own writing, this thesis throws into relief the aesthetics of the sketch in the context of its literary provenance, and considers what difference this lens can make to the place of *Monday or Tuesday* as a book in Woolf's oeuvre. By tracing Woolf's own use of the term as broadly as possible, it will suggest the sketch as a phenomenon which is present in *Monday or Tuesday* beyond its 'plotlessness'. In this book, the sense of the unfinished, ephemeral outline is combined with its sense of being an incisive study of a given object, carefully crafted yet appearing spontaneous and provisional.

A discursive presence already suggested in Woolf's letter to Smyth, major studies of Woolf's short fiction such as Nena Škrbić's *Wild Outbursts of Freedom* (2004) and Christine Reynier's *Virginia Woolf's Ethics of the Short Story* (2009) have identified the sketch-like qualities of spontaneity and fragmentation attached to her short fiction. While Škrbić reads these as markers of Woolf's liberated experimental freedom after founding the Hogarth Press, Reynier sees them as symptomatic of the way in which Woolf's short texts ask the reader to enter into a conversational mode of active reading. She argues that the open-endedness and generic hybridity of these texts encourage the reader to participate in their creation, or to help complete the story.²² Reynier's study proceeds from an understanding of a readerly involvement in the making of form, and thus posits an ethical dimension to these texts. She argues for a politicised and ethical act of 'resistance against monologism and totality' built-in to the form of Woolf's short stories.²³ Though Reynier does not define it as such, this is a key aspect of the sketch as a text in process, relying on the reader or viewer to complete the picture as well as suggesting that the author has left some work undone. Genre is itself one of the basic terms of agreement between reader and writer which defines expectations and the parameters of the conversation. If we orientate by different generic co-ordinates, shifting the focus from short story to sketch, the possibilities contained in that interaction are altered too. By performing such a re-orientation (perhaps only for a moment, and without claiming finality or revelation of 'the

²² Christine Reynier, *Virginia Woolf's Ethics of the Short Story* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 17.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 17.

truth' about these texts), this thesis seeks to explore the effects and implications of this specific alteration.

Both Reynier and Škrbić repeatedly invoke the sketch as a synonym for 'short story'.²⁴ Škrbić identifies in the form of Woolf's short fiction a consistent concern with the moment and the fragment, and focuses on 'how the truncated short story frame works in conjunction with a language of visual economy taken from imagist poetry and post-impressionism to produce a fragmentary reading experience'.²⁵ At one point, she notes John Johnstone's terminology for *Monday or Tuesday* in his study of *The Bloomsbury Group* (1954), his 'calling them "sketches" (327)',²⁶ and alights on the connotations in this terminology of 'economy', 'inconclusiveness' and 'exercises in characterization [...] privileged over plot elements'.²⁷ She concludes, however, that 'Woolf leaves *stories* in our laps rather than resolving them as more traditional story writers do' (my emphasis).²⁸ Reynier, on the other hand, starts from the premise that the formal variety of Woolf's short texts 'seem to preclude' any possibility of defining 'the Woolfian short story as a specific literary genre'.²⁹ Examining the 'generic hybridity' of Woolf's short stories, Reynier invokes the sketch and credits Jean Guiguet's seminal work *Virginia Woolf et son oeuvre* (1962), translated into English in 1965, with the first use of the term 'sketch' to describe Woolf's 'short stories'.³⁰ While she also re-routes to the category of the short story, Reynier points out that in the original French Guiguet uses the terms "esquisses", "impressionist pochades" (which, as we will see in Chapter One of this thesis, are French terms indicating specific stages of the sketch in visual art), and "contes".³¹

Attempting to account for Woolf's short fiction as a body of work, Guiguet uses as his main organising principle the 'experimental character' of these texts in relation to the composition of Woolf's novels, but he also seeks to foreground their 'autonomous

²⁴ The synonymous use of 'sketch' and 'short story' is also in evidence in other key studies of Woolf's short fiction, including Kathryn N. Benzel and Ruth Hoberman (eds), *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Avrom Fleishman, 'Forms of the Woolfian Short Story' in Ralph Freedman (ed.), *Virginia Woolf: Revaluation and Continuity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 44-70; and Heather Levy, *The Servants of Desire in Virginia Woolf's Shorter Fiction* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

²⁵ Nena Škrbić, *Reading Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. xx.

²⁶ Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. 33. See also John Johnstone, *The Bloomsbury Group: A Study of E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf and Their Circle* (New York: Noonday, 1954).

²⁷ Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, pp. 34.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Reynier, *Virginia Woolf's Ethics*, p.1. See also Reynier, 'The Short Story According to Woolf', *Journal of the Short Story in English* 41 (Autumn 2003). Available at: <<https://jsse.revues.org/112>> [accessed 14 May 2017].

³⁰ Reynier, *Virginia Woolf's Ethics*, p. 9. Guiguet's use of 'pochades' is translated by Jean Stewart as 'studies', and refers to 'Blue & Green', 'A Haunted House', 'Monday or Tuesday' and 'The String Quartet' (Guiguet, *VW and Her Works*, p. 331).

³¹ Reynier, *Virginia Woolf's Ethics*, p. 151, n. 27.

character’ – that is, their importance as works in and of themselves.³² Almost fifty years later, Reynier builds on this sense of experiment and autonomy by attending to the ways in which our encounters with and definitions of these texts are altered by states and circumstances of publication, and by editorial and scholarly intervention. Under the rubric of the conversation, Reynier conceptualises the generic categorisation of Woolf’s short texts (or at least the impulse to note their generic instability) as an act of constructive interpretation which these texts particularly invite. That invitation is, however, mediated through editorial decisions: Reynier notes that ‘each edition of Woolf’s short stories necessarily has a different impact on the reader through the selection criteria that have been adopted’.³³ Furthermore, since there has now been work published that Woolf herself did not finally revise, there is a notion of ‘work in progress’ that Reynier fears may be lost in the concept of the ‘complete’ edition.³⁴ While the published editions can be used by readers and critics to manage and narrate Woolf’s short texts as a body of work, the material existence of these (and all) texts is, as Reynier points out, shaped by the circumstances of the archive as well as by changing technologies of reading and modes of reception in differing cultural and economic contexts. The concept of ‘Woolf’s oeuvre’, therefore, can never be final, because it is effected through the activity of readers, editors and scholarship. In order to discuss *Monday or Tuesday* as a collection of literary sketches, therefore, it is necessary to engage with some of the editions in which readers usually come into contact with its texts.

As noted above, there has been, to date, no scholarly edition of *Monday or Tuesday*. At the time of writing, readers are most likely to encounter its texts in Susan Dick’s 1989 edition of *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, in which they are extracted from the collection and situated according to the chronology of composition. This organising principle means that the final sketches in *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ and ‘Kew Gardens’, appear first in the section ‘1917-1921’. By choosing these dates as a category, cutting off at the year of its publication – in apparent agreement with Guiguet’s category of the ‘impressionist sketches’ composed ‘in a period of experiment and exploration, after which Virginia Woolf wrote no more atmospheric sketches of this sort’³⁵ – Dick foregrounds the texts of *Monday or Tuesday* as a key point in Woolf’s career of writing short fiction. The individual texts are not, however, arranged as they appear in

³² Guiguet, *VW and Her Works*, p. 331.

³³ Reynier, *Virginia Woolf’s Ethics*, p. 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 6.

³⁵ Jean Guiguet, ‘Stories and Sketches’ in *Virginia Woolf and Her Works*, trans. Jean Stewart (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), pp. 329-43; p. 342.

that book: ‘The Mark on the Wall’ and ‘Kew Gardens’ are separated from the others by the gulf of 1920, which gives us ‘The Evening Party’, ‘Solid Objects’, and ‘Sympathy’. The reading experience of *The Complete Shorter Fiction* has the effect of positioning its texts, contextually, more as finished stories than as sketches, as well as conceptually suggesting their relativity to the ‘longer fiction’ and to any ‘incomplete shorter fiction’ not included in the volume. Even examples of pre-1917, previously unpublished texts in Dick’s volume are categorised as ‘Early Stories’, setting up the expectation that those which follow, including the texts from *Monday or Tuesday*, are to be considered as perhaps more developed ‘Later Stories’. If these are ‘finished and complete works’ in this context, there is a contrast with the way that Woolf describes them in her letter to Smyth, where she suggests that they partake of the qualities of the sketch discussed by the critics outlined above.

Most of the editorial categorisations of *Monday or Tuesday*’s texts in editions of the short fiction follow the terminology of Leonard Woolf’s *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (1944), the first posthumous edition in which they appeared. This is usually the copy-text for new editions, and includes six of the eight texts published in *Monday or Tuesday*, plus another twelve published there for the first time. From *Monday or Tuesday*, Leonard left out ‘A Society’ and ‘Blue & Green’ since the author, making plans to publish a new collection, ‘had decided not to include the first and [Leonard was] practically certain that she would not have included the second’ (*HH* 7-8). The genre-defining authority of this collection of *stories* is taken for granted, not only because of Leonard Woolf’s personal and professional closeness to the author, but since Virginia Woolf herself did not give any generic subheading for these texts: *A Haunted House* was therefore the first volume to do so. In his preface, Leonard recalls Virginia Woolf’s practice of writing stories:

It was her custom, whenever an idea for one occurred to her, to sketch it out in a very rough form and then to put it away in a drawer. Later, if an editor asked her for a short story, and she felt in the mood to write one (which was not frequent), she would take a sketch out of the drawer and rewrite it, sometimes a great many times. (*HH* 7)

Leonard Woolf thus writes about Woolf’s use of the sketch only insofar as it manifested as ‘sketches for short stories’ (*HH* 7), positioning it as part of a process rather than as a quality or a generic category in its own right. He subordinates the sketch to the story, but the configuration that he raises between states of inspiration, writing, and commissioning is an intriguing one. The recording of the ‘idea’, the hiding away for a length of time, the

saving for later, and the sense of being close at hand when needed or dependent on whom positions these sketches as anterior to the real work of crafting a story. They can be compared to the way in which, as Woolf writes to Smyth, her sketching while she was ill helped her to create works such as *To the Lighthouse* and ‘Kew Gardens’ ‘not in substance but in idea’ (L IV 230-31). Yet, if such private and intimate records of ideas are one function of the sketch, the question remains as to how they might continue to be present in the ‘finished and composed work’, in quality as well as in the sense of having been a stage in the creative process.

Reflecting the centrality of *The Complete Shorter Fiction* and other collected editions as the main sites where readers encounter these texts, although it contains some of Woolf’s most prolifically discussed short fictions, the only full-length study dedicated to *Monday or Tuesday* specifically as a book is Alice Staveley’s unpublished doctoral thesis, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”: Virginia Woolf’s *Monday or Tuesday* Years’ (University of Oxford, 2000). Staveley addresses the critical neglect of *Monday or Tuesday*, as well as the assumption that ‘these short fictions so clearly laid the path toward *Jacob’s Room*, that any further narratological analysis of the transition is somehow redundant’.³⁶ Turning the focus on the years preceding *Jacob’s Room*, Staveley attends to the book as an early production of Woolf’s Hogarth Press, contending that its significance in that ‘historical “moment”’ is a feminist one, in which Woolf ‘has access to the resources to “pick up” and to re-formulate (or re-distribute as the compositor might have it) the pieces of her own [texts]’.³⁷ As her title suggests, however, Staveley utilises *Monday or Tuesday* primarily as an emblem of this period of crafting, experimentation and material freedom. The present thesis builds on Staveley’s historical materialist recovery of this book as a key moment in Woolf’s oeuvre, foregrounding *Monday or Tuesday* as my case study through which to examine the procedures of the sketch; simultaneously, I am invoking the procedures of the sketch itself in order to perform a detail-study of the formal and generic qualities manifested in *Monday or Tuesday* as a literary work.

My attention to the sketch as a ‘historically perceived genre’, outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, follows Tzvetan Todorov’s ‘empirical approach’ and explores the

³⁶ Alice Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”: Virginia Woolf’s *Monday or Tuesday* Years’ (Doctoral Thesis: University of Oxford, 2000), p. 6.

³⁷ Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, p. 168. See also Adrian Hunter, whose materialist reading of the short stories casts them as dependent upon the possibility of Woolf’s actively producing them herself at the Hogarth Press (‘The “Custom” of Fiction: Virginia Woolf, the Hogarth Press, and the Modernist Short Story’, *English* 56 [2007]: 147-69). Hunter’s essay contributes to the vast body of work on the economics and materiality of modernism, which Staveley addresses in detail in her thesis.

sketch's own 'codification of discursive properties'.³⁸ Todorov's approach to genre is to look at specific 'historically perceived' categories, rather than to theorise about genre in the abstract. He concedes that 'historical genres are theoretical genres', but since 'the converse is not necessarily true', he sees a general theory of genre as subsumed by a 'general theory of discourse (or of general poetics)'.³⁹ Ultimately, then, genre becomes a question of a text's material conditions of production and reception at various points in its history, including the time when it was published, and my time as a reader encountering it now, historicising it and discussing its genre now. Given the popularity of the sketch as a published generic category in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and given the relative disappearance of the sketch as a generic subtitle perceived after the early 1900s, what difference does it make to read *Monday or Tuesday* as a collection of sketches, again, now? I suggest that it might be possible, in a field which has established the generic hybridity of Woolf's short fiction in general, to reactivate this affinity with the sketch. Building on the scholarship outlined above, I return to the Hogarth Press edition of *Monday or Tuesday* in order to activate its texts as sketches, since it may not be possible to do so in the context of a collected scholarly edition – especially in one which aims to produce an effect of being 'complete'.

The first scholarly edition to be produced since Dick's *Complete Shorter Fiction* is currently in progress, edited by Bryony Randall and Laura Marcus as part of the Cambridge Edition of *The Works of Virginia Woolf*. This volume has a slightly different scholarly attitude regarding editorial procedures, and will not have the word 'Complete' in its title.⁴⁰ With regard to the question of interpreting and producing a scholarly edition of Woolf's works, the General Editors of the Cambridge Edition, Jane Goldman, Susan Sellers and Bryony Randall, write in their preface that:

Woolf responds to the question, 'How should one read a book?' [...] as a person of immense, virtuosic skill and experience in both activities. She understands the reader to be the 'fellow-worker and accomplice' (E5 573) of the writer. [...] This Cambridge edition of Woolf's writings consequently aims to provide readers and

³⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* [1978], trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 17; p. 18.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 17, n. 9.

⁴⁰ With thanks to Bryony Randall for her generosity in providing me with this information ahead of the book's publication. Also currently in print are various collections which are not 'complete' editions, and do not necessarily contain every sketch from *Monday or Tuesday*: the two other scholarly editions are Sandra Kemp's *Selected Short Stories* (1993) and David Bradshaw's *The Mark on the Wall and Other Short Fiction* (2001).

scholars, Woolf's fellow-workers and accomplices, with an extensively researched, fully explicated and collated text.⁴¹

Following the scholarly ethos outlined here, in more abstract terms this thesis is concerned with the question of the text, with reading practices, oeuvre-making and canonisation raised by the idea of 'completeness'. These questions are bound up with the idea of the book not only as a literary object but also as a material one, specifically in the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday* as a type of printed sketchbook. This book has an aesthetic and material value that is partly a result of its messy inking and of the interactions between Woolf's words and Vanessa Bell's woodcuts: Woolf wrote to Violet Dickinson in October 1921 that *Monday or Tuesday* was 'an odious object, which leaves black stains wherever it touches' (L II 445). This is a book which, even in its physical presence, undermines completion and containment; its auratic features do not, and cannot, appear in any of the subsequent reprints of the texts or in complete editions. They 'stain' this copy, saturated with ink which transfers onto the hands of the reader. While this is perhaps an attractive poetic and semi-mystical conceptualisation of the idea of 'the book itself' (a concept used by Woolf, as I discuss in Chapter Five), Walter Benjamin's writing about the 'aura' of the work of art is also concerned with the circulation of the object in real cultural and economic terms.⁴² My focus on the specificity of the first Hogarth Press edition of *Monday or Tuesday* raises related questions of the literary market and cultural value, labelled as it is with the name of a now canonical modernist author. This edition also bears witness to significant changes a few months later in the first American edition, which I discuss in Chapter Five.

Edward L. Bishop has addressed the marketing of Woolf's books through their artwork and the conversion of cultural capital into real capital. With reference to Pierre Bourdieu, he identifies the Hogarth Press as a 'literary press, devoted not to fine printing as some small presses were, but to fine *literature* that could not find an outlet elsewhere [...] not devoted to sales'; this, he argues, conversely made it more monetarily valuable.⁴³ Apparently not concerned with 'fine printing', the printing itself becomes a unique marketable feature. In the context of *Monday or Tuesday*, the printing displays the quality

⁴¹ Jane Goldman, Susan Sellers and Bryony Randall, 'General Editors' Preface' to *The Works of Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. xi-xx.

⁴² See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 211-45.

⁴³ Edward L. Bishop, 'From Typography to *Time*: Producing Virginia Woolf', in Beth Rigel Daugherty (ed.), *Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Pace University Press, 1996), p. 53. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

of the sketch in its non-standard, shabby appearance and its suggestion of hand crafting by the author. These sketch-like features which I elaborate in Chapter Five are not only permissible in the coterie production of the book as a unique art object, but actually contribute, retrospectively, to its status as a valuable document of the early days of the Hogarth Press and the career of Virginia Woolf. As Staveley points out, Woolf's 'first edition books in particular, have their own iconographic value'.⁴⁴ *Monday or Tuesday* is one of the most important issues of the Press in this regard, as well as in terms of Woolf's career and legacy as a now-canonical modernist writer. According to Tony Bradshaw, 'Leonard Woolf regarded [*Monday or Tuesday*] as technically the worst issue from his [*sic*] publishing house, but enthusiasts of the Hogarth Press today regard this book [...] as one of the most charming, if idiosyncratic, issues from the Press'.⁴⁵ Acknowledging, therefore, that the cultural situation of this work has necessarily altered over time, my use of the sketch as a generic label for *Monday or Tuesday* is also supposed to reflect the provisionality and recursive re-writing of the history of this book as a textual object.

In his study, *The Ideology of Genre* (1994), Thomas O. Beebee argues that 'most works not only can but *must* be analysed in more than one generic way'.⁴⁶ Drawing on Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history and historiography as constructive and constellatory, Beebee points out that the critical act of defining a text's genre is an act infused with and bound by ideology, and is historically circumscribed. Therefore, '[n]o genre classification should be expected to stand the test of time'.⁴⁷ The sketch as a generic presence puts *Monday or Tuesday* in touch with other genres such as the essay, political pamphlets, drama and poetry, as well as with the artist's drawing; yet, such generic arrangements will always be provisional and unfinished. We may be able to identify them only with hindsight, or we may have to project them – in the sense of holding them to the light and sending out an image of them, as well as of forecasting and making a 'project' of them – in order to see how they have the potential to function under certain circumstances. I am, therefore, consciously not attempting to claim the sketch as *the* definitive genre of *Monday or Tuesday*: on the contrary, I am posing it as a suggestive term which has

⁴⁴ Staveley, 'Reconfiguring "Kew Gardens"', p. 43. Staveley's reading of the limited edition reissue of *Kew Gardens* (1927) positions it 'as a consolidation of all Woolf's prior successes, [which] was also being seen, in both England and America, as a definitive sign of her collectability: her value, that is, as a purchasable modern commodity' (p. 257).

⁴⁵ Tony Bradshaw, 'Virginia Woolf and Book Design', in Maggie Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 280-97; p. 286.

⁴⁶ Thomas O. Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 265.

⁴⁷ Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre*, p. 253.

historical precedent as a (now relatively marginalised) genre, and one which has, before now, been applied to this book.

ii. Texts and Works

In my discussion of *Monday or Tuesday* as a book produced at a moment of emergent success for Woolf as a writer and a publisher, I am drawing on theories of genre and textuality which restore to them the idea of process emphasised by Woolf in her letter to Smyth.⁴⁸ At the same time, acknowledging their position as ‘finished and composed works’, in order to address the generic complexity of these texts through the sketch, I am also theorising them more generally as Text and Work in a Barthesian sense. Roland Barthes theorises the Text as ‘*an activity of production*’ and the Work as ‘the imaginary tail of the Text’.⁴⁹ At the conjunction of thinking of *Monday or Tuesday* as a sketchbook and as Text, its dynamic, collaborative, and temporally stratified reading experience is put into play. Barthes opposes the understanding of reading a work as ‘consumption’ to that of a hermeneutics of ‘playing with’ the Text:

‘Playing’ must be understood here in all its polysemy: the text itself *plays* [...] and the reader plays twice over, playing the Text as one plays a game, looking for a practice which re-produces it, but, in order that that practice not be reduced to a passive inner *mimesis* (the Text is precisely that which resists such a reduction), also playing the Text in the musical sense of the term.⁵⁰

Woolf might be onto a theory of *Monday or Tuesday* as a generative Text when she writes to Smyth – remembering also that Smyth was a musical composer – that ‘Green and blue and the heron one ... are mere tangles of words; balls of string that the kitten or Pan [Ethel’s dog] has *played* with’ (L IV 231; my emphasis). With its potential to be unravelled and reconfigured even as a tangled mess, Barthes’s comparison of the Text to a musical score is aptly positioned for the kind of reading practice that *Monday or Tuesday* demands, including in its status as a ‘finished and composed work’. As Adriana Varga points out, Woolf, while writing *Monday or Tuesday* in ‘a period of searching, experimentation, and fervent creativity [...] even compared herself to “an improviser with his hands rambling over the piano” (D3 37-38)’.⁵¹ Combining this idea of textual composition and process

⁴⁸ As well as Todorov and Beebee, see also Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982).

⁴⁹ Roland Barthes, ‘From Work to Text’, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 157 (italics in original).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 162.

⁵¹ Adriana Varga, ‘Introduction’ to *Virginia Woolf and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p. 9.

with the quality of the finished work as a material book, it is also useful to draw on Jerome McGann's study of modernist poetry, *Black Riders* (1993), in which he uses musical metaphors in a similar way to Barthes.⁵² McGann is concerned with the composition of the text as form and material entity, writing that:

The "composition" of poetry is not completed – indeed, it has scarcely begun – when the writer scripts words on a page; and even at this initial moment of the imagination's work the scene is a social one. What kind of instrument is the writer using, what kind of paper? And in what social or institutional context is the writing being carried out? It is merely ignorance to think that such questions are peripheral to the work. They are central questions, and entangled with every textual network of meaning.⁵³

In McGann's formulation, drawing attention to 'the scene' of writing as well as to the musical connotations of 'composition' and 'instrument' as does Barthes, the work and text are inextricable: all works enter into a field of fluctuating interactions between readers and the market, and readers are influenced in their production of Text by all that goes into the 'material' in front of them.⁵⁴ In McGann's examination of modernist poetry as it appears in print, he notes that: "Composition" is an activity of musicians, and the printed page may equally be produced as a kind of musical score or set of directions for the audition of verse and voice.⁵⁵

Woolf's crafting of books at the Hogarth Press demonstrates the concern with the poetics of print and of the page that McGann describes, and effects in prose the same modernist experiments with the density of the word that McGann attributes to poetic form. While McGann's study does not mention Woolf, nor the Hogarth Press, it does beg the question of how the spatiality and texture of the page makes a difference to poetic prose in works like Woolf's *Monday or Tuesday*. The musical scoring of a 'composition' may produce a finished work, but it also creates the architecture for the work yet to be realised

⁵² In her doctoral thesis cited earlier in this chapter, Staveley draws on McGann's work to support her return to the material book ('Reconfiguring "Kew Gardens"', pp. 17, 27).

⁵³ McGann, *Black Riders*, p. 112.

⁵⁴ See also George Bornstein (ed.), *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Bornstein links McGann's analysis of 'bibliographic codes' with D. F. McKenzie's *Sociology of Texts* (1986) (p. 7), and reads the material book in terms of Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'aura' (p. 6). Bornstein also combines these with 'the concept of utterance from speech-act theory' (p. 7), and thereby aims to historicise the meanings produced by material text (p. 8). More recently, on the materiality of the book, see John Lurz, *The Death of the Book: Modernist Novels and the Time of Reading* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016). For a current and invaluable survey of this field, see Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey (eds), *Modernism's Print Cultures* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

⁵⁵ Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 83. McGann's title *Black Riders* 'is an allusion to Stephen Crane's first published book, *Black Riders and other lines* (1895)' (*Black Riders*, p. 91). Crane's significance as a sketch-writer is noted in Chapter One of this thesis.

in the same way that the sketch does: it scores lines as permanent marks that the musician-reader refers to again and again to bring the work, fleetingly, into being.⁵⁶ Woolf's comment in her letter to Smyth that these texts were 'unprintable' is of wry significance in this regard: as we shall see in Chapter Five, the book was printed with difficulty by Leonard Woolf and F. T. McDermott offsite at the Prompt Press in Richmond. The debacle of the printing process caused the book to be scored with many possible directions for us to follow. Furthermore, as a set of instructions, the sketchbook not only functions as a site of attempts and technical practising, but creates a collection of exercises that can be reworked and reused later on. Woolf's recursive returns to *Monday or Tuesday* see her playing some of its notes again in later works including, as we will see, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). Barthes also uses the metaphor of the musical score to introduce the inherently collaborative nature of the Text, and the kind of active reading practice that it requires in order to exist and to function as Text:

We know that today post-serial music has radically altered the role of the 'interpreter', who is called on to be in some sort the co-author of the score, completing it rather than giving it 'expression'. The Text is very much a score of this new kind: it asks of the reader a practical collaboration.⁵⁷

In reading as playing (with) the Text, the reader is asked to participate in finishing the production; to act as a reader, writer and editor simultaneously, but only for one specific, fleeting reading moment, and only in collaboration with other readers, writers and editors. This is particularly evident in the case of the sketch, as something unfinished, as a fragment, or as pointing towards something yet to come, and which may yet exist positively and finally in those provisional states alone.

With the production of the Cambridge edition of *The Works of Virginia Woolf* in process, thinking the sketch through the use of the terms 'Text' and 'Work' has a particularly timely scholarly and cultural significance in relation to Woolf as a canonical figure. Barthes's use of these terms might draw attention to the fact that 'Woolf's Oeuvre' is a concept constructed by critics, editors and readers in (relation to) particular social and cultural contexts, and that it cannot statically contain her texts. As well as many inter-medial adaptations and re-interpretations of Woolf's works for theatre, dance, visual art, and music, alongside literary re-writings such as Kabe Wilson's cut-up of *A Room of One's*

⁵⁶ On the area of 'sketch studies' in music, and its debates around the ideas of finish and composition, see Friedemann Sallis, *Music Sketches* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015).

⁵⁷ Barthes, 'From Work to Text', p. 163.

Own, entitled *Of One Woman or So* (2014),⁵⁸ Digital Humanities is making this ever more evident: the digital archive *Woolf Online* makes the manuscript material for *To the Lighthouse* more immediately accessible than it was previously,⁵⁹ as does the ‘Major Authors’ CD-ROM resource which functions as a hypertext with the inclusion of Mark Hussey’s *Virginia Woolf A-Z*.⁶⁰ While they participate in canonisation (especially for the purposes of teaching), editorial and scholarly publishing projects such as the Cambridge edition have themselves also been important in deconstructing any monolithic understanding of Woolf’s works. The framework of the sketch can help to elucidate the play of textuality as integral to Woolf’s aesthetics, and at the same time to claim for the sketch the position of a work in its own right in *Monday or Tuesday*.⁶¹

iii. Sketches of Woolf

As I will discuss in Chapter One, the lineage of the sketch extends particularly through the essay (‘the attempt’), but also develops a fictional mode that makes it highly compatible with the critically perceived oscillation in Woolf’s short texts between the poetic, fictional and essayistic modes. As a genre which also has historical resonances with poetry, not only in Romanticism but, as Alistair Fowler has shown, in the classical *silva* – ‘a collection of encomiastic odes, epigrams, and other short verse kinds [...] “bits of raw material”’⁶² – the sketch has a formal place in Woolf’s poetic prose. The sketch is present in most of the genres used by Woolf including her novels, short fiction, essays, diaries, letters and memoirs. It presents a way of destabilising the boundaries between these categories as well as of innovating within them. In her letter to Smyth, Woolf places the sketch on ‘dangerous ground’, where, in 1919, it had to be stabilised by an ‘exercise in the conventional style’, the novel *Night and Day*.⁶³ In the exchange of mental states and ways and stages of

⁵⁸ Kabe Wilson, *Of One Woman or So*. Available at: <<http://www.dreadlockhoax.co.uk/of-one-woman-or-so>> [accessed 02 February 2017]. See also Cryptic Theatre’s stage adaptation of *Orlando*, adapted by Darryl Pinkney and directed by Cathie Boyd, <<http://www.cryptic.org.uk/portfolio/orlando/>> [accessed 02 February 2017]; Wayne McGregor’s ballet, *Woolf Works*, with music by Max Richter (2015), <<http://waynemcgregor.com/productions/woolf-works>> [accessed 02 February 2017].

⁵⁹ Pamela L. Caughie, Nick Hayward, Mark Hussey, Peter Shillingsburg, and George K. Thiruvathukal, (eds), *Woolf Online*, <<http://www.woolfonline.com>> [accessed 02 February 2017].

⁶⁰ Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf A-Z: A comprehensive reference for students, teachers, and common readers to her life, work, and critical reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); ‘Major Authors on CD-ROM: Virginia Woolf’, <http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_res.authors.htm> [accessed 02 February 2017]. See also Mark Hussey, ‘How Should One Read a Screen?’ in Pamela L. Caughie (ed.), *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 249-66.

⁶¹ For a theorised discussion of critical editing, of the socially and historically situated nature of editing, and of editing as an ‘interpretive process’, see Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁶² Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 135.

⁶³ *Monday or Tuesday* and *Night and Day* parallel each other compositionally (being written at the same time) and also in their titles’ dyadic structures, linking two designations of how we conventionally structure

composition that she describes, *Monday or Tuesday* acts as a ‘diversion’, not only in the sense of a distraction, but of a departure from the usual route laid out by generic or formal constraints. The short texts of *Monday or Tuesday* are – in composition and style – emotional, angry and defiant ‘outbursts’ which defy such constraints; they are ‘wild’ ‘outcries’ at the same time as they are depreciated in this letter by the words ‘mere’ and ‘ridiculous’. Woolf’s disparagement of seriousness or value (including her forgetting whether it was called *Monday or Tuesday* or *Monday and Tuesday*, in contrast to her knowing for certain that the novel was entitled *Night and Day*) is, as we will see, consistent with the rhetoric of sketch-writers throughout the history of the genre. Yet its sense of being an ‘inarticulate’ outcry is exactly why *Monday or Tuesday* is a serious and important response to ‘conventional style’, authorising a return to that ‘dangerous ground’ of ‘nightmare and extravagant intensity of perception’. These texts are able to give voice to that state, to court that danger by their very brevity and intensity: in small drips, there is something to be distilled from that unstable state, and formal benefits to the diversion. The advantage of the sketch is that it does not attempt to sustain or fully explore those nightmarish experiences; but, in its capacity for, and definition as, an ‘extravagant intensity of perception’, it sanctions a necessary relief from the constraints of ‘sanity’ and provides a fertile ground for inspiration. Just as she had earlier been ‘tremblingly afraid of [her] own insanity’, Woolf ‘trembled with excitement’ when she made discoveries of method and form in sketching the texts that compose *Monday or Tuesday*.

Ultimately, I see *Monday or Tuesday* as the earliest example of Woolf publishing, in a supposedly ‘finished and composed work’, the sketch as a thing in itself. Looking back on *Monday or Tuesday* almost a decade later, Woolf sees it in terms of story, sketch, and prose – as part of a composition process, but also as a finished object which was one of her first productions at the Hogarth Press, and her only self-curated or composed collection of short fiction. From our vantage point now, accounting for Woolf’s canonical modernist status, the memory of *Monday or Tuesday* might be one which positions it as an artefact – the ‘original’ site of publication for some of Woolf’s most famous ‘finished and composed’ short fictions – but which nevertheless has an affinity towards the unfinished and inconclusive characteristics of the sketch. To discuss these texts again as sketches now is not simply a historicising move returning to the original reception of the collection. To read this book again specifically as sketches now involves an engagement with the

time by oppositional ‘and/or’ compatible conjunctions. Gérard Genette writes that ‘[t]here are titular styles peculiar to certain authors’, and includes the title as a paratextual feature of the book (*Paratexts*, trans. Jane E. Lewin [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], p. 90).

procedures of editing and the canonisation of Woolf and her texts, and with the narrative which constructs her 'oeuvre' as a manageable object of study. To talk about the journey these texts have taken from being discussed as sketches to short stories and potentially back again requires sounding the literary-historical resonances of the sketch as a genre, as well as close-reading and taking license to play with the formal qualities of *Monday or Tuesday* and its composition.

Chapter One

Outlining the Literary Sketch

In the first volume of *The Common Reader* (1925), Virginia Woolf discusses diverse literary moments and styles, but does not claim to present a historical survey. In ‘Modern Fiction’, she addresses a subject that is only just emergent, when it cannot be seen clearly for what it is or will be, and suggests that only with hindsight do we have any chance of perceiving its significance or defining its qualities. In the process of doing so, Woolf cautions against narratives of teleological progress:

In making any survey, even the freest and loosest, of modern fiction, it is difficult not to take it for granted that the modern practice of the art is somehow an improvement upon the old. With their simple tools and primitive materials, it might be said, Fielding did well and Jane Austen even better, but compare their opportunities with ours! [...] It is doubtful whether in the course of the centuries, though we have learnt much about making machines, we have learnt anything about making literature. We do not come to write better; all that we can be said to do is to keep moving, now a little in this direction, now in that, but with a circular tendency should the whole course of the track be viewed from a sufficiently lofty pinnacle. It need scarcely be said that we make no claim to stand, even momentarily, upon that vantage ground. [...] It is for the historian of literature to decide; for him to say if we are now beginning or ending or standing in the middle of a great period of prose fiction, for down in the plain little is visible. (*E* IV 157-58)

Deconstructing the relationship between ‘simple tools’, ‘primitive materials’ and the sophistication of the object they create, Woolf here suggests that the means of ‘making literature’ – which can incorporate the material process of printing and binding books, as well as metaphorical literary tools – are always relative to the historical contexts of production, and that more complex tools will not necessarily make ‘better’ products. She points out that, while the historian has more of a ‘vantage ground’ than the practitioner from which to ‘survey’ the object, he needs to be on a ‘sufficiently lofty pinnacle’ to be able to identify a pattern in the objects available; and even then, it will not be a linear arrangement. The field is circular and therefore it will be impossible to see which runner is ahead of another; to attempt to do so we would also need to demarcate a start- and finish-line for a process that is constantly in motion. Furthermore, if the historian has the authority ‘to say’, then the practitioner is an outsider to the version of literary history being iterated for her. She is therefore the only one poised to write an alternative history, from

‘down in the plain’ where ‘little is visible’.¹ The conjunctions between simplicity and sophistication, between seeing and making, recording and constructing, as well as the relativity of beginning and completing, are fundamental to the sketch. They are also repeatedly invoked in Woolf’s writing to describe both the compositional methods and finished forms of literary works.

Since I am not in the position of the practitioner, I am conscious not to attempt to inscribe a history of the literary sketch as it relates to a history of Woolf’s texts. Rather, I am aware of this thesis as a process of constructing a narrative about certain texts at this specific moment in time: my field of vision may necessarily simplify the outline, at the same time as hindsight might make it possible to see patterns that were not obvious when they were being drawn. While Richard Sha insists that the sketch itself does not develop over time – arguing by analogy with its form as the description of a moment that ‘the sketch refuses to commit to a version of history as progress or evolution’² – the sketch also builds into its momentariness the sense of being unfinished and of something yet to come: that is, it suggests that there will be a development of its ‘primitive’ ideas. It is possible to trace certain lines of development of the sketch, and a general trend of declining popularity as an applied generic category after the nineteenth century; paradoxically, however, in the studies outlined below, the sketch is seen to be a form co-emergent with modernity.

Despite its relative absence as a declared genre on the cover of books – jettisoned, perhaps, as a characteristically Victorian form – sketchiness is nevertheless a prominent quality not only in Woolf’s modernism, but which has an affinity with modernist aesthetics more broadly. As a form that is inherently concerned with the momentary and fragmentary insight, as well as in its fundamental expression of speed and temporal layers, the aspect of the sketch which makes it able to look both backwards (recording a scene or characteristic impression) and forwards (as a plan for something yet to come) aligns it with the impulses of modernism towards simultaneously retracing the past, capturing the fleeting present moment, and ‘making it new’. For example, its characteristic narrative voice – a supposed mere observer who in fact manifests in highly contrived narrative frameworks – as well as its finely wrought yet suggestive simplicity, mark the sketch in the twentieth century as a key form of literary Impressionism.

¹ On Woolf’s feminist historiography, see Angeliki Spiropoulou, *Virginia Woolf, Modernity and History: Constellations with Walter Benjamin* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

² Sha, ‘A Genre against Genre’: The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism’, *Genre* 28 (1995): 145-70; 149.

In order to talk about the sketch now from ‘a sufficiently lofty pinnacle’, without losing sight of what is invisible ‘down in the plain’, this chapter draws on recent studies of the sketch and outlines some contexts that it is possible to identify in order to historicise Woolf’s use of the sketch. These contexts, at the same time as outlining the history of the sketch as a genre, also raise suggestions for how it might function in the specifically modernist context of Woolf’s work, setting the terms for my discussion of the ways in which the sketch appears in the early twentieth century, at the time of the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday*. This chapter attempts to determine what the aesthetic and rhetorical features of the sketch are, or what they have been at certain points, and what has been said about them in literary criticism so far. But, not least since studies of the literary sketch itself are only just emergent, this cannot be a comprehensive study of Woolf’s use of the sketch, nor can it catalogue this in relation to the myriad ways that it has been used before – my focus on *Monday or Tuesday* provides a constraint in that regard. Beginning with the provenance of the sketch in visual art, the chapter proceeds to discuss work on the literary sketch in Romantic and Victorian aesthetic and ideological contexts, leading to its appropriateness as a form for modernity. The chapter ends with some suggestive literary-historical examples of the genre with which Woolf was familiar, paying particular attention to the influence of Romantic literature, of Jane Austen and W. M. Thackeray, and of Woolf’s father, Leslie Stephen. This outline of the critical and literary history of the sketch highlights some of its most salient features as it was deployed throughout the late-eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, and as it has been recovered in recent literary criticism. These contexts provide the backdrop for reading *Monday or Tuesday* as a sketchbook and for contextualising Woolf’s understanding of the term in the next chapter.

1.1 The Visual Sketch

To speak of the sketch in a literary sense is to use a metaphor of which the vehicle is visual art. The preparatory outline for a finished painting informs the entire history of the written sketch, and the visual sketch has its own nuances, variations, and controversies surrounding its aesthetic value, which bleed into the history of the literary sketch. Therefore, while the literary sketch has its own history, which will be the focus of this chapter and this thesis, it is important to first give some background to the visual sketch. As an aesthetic object or document of the artist’s process, the sketch has long been the site of tension between private and public spheres of artistic production and display, and of debates around concepts of genius and originality which have focused on ‘finish’ and truth in the work of art. As Alison Byerly points out:

prior to the nineteenth century [the role of the artist's sketch] was largely utilitarian: an artist's sketchbook was a kind of technical manual, filled with exercises and reproductions of famous paintings that the artist would accumulate for "personal reference". It might include detail studies of specific poses and accessories for later incorporation into finished works, or merely "record instantaneous thoughts and observations" the artist wished to preserve.³

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a transition of the sketch into the public arena as an aesthetic object worthy of display, and as a valuable artefact testifying to the artist's skill and/or genius. The cultural debates about the unfinished quality of the sketch in relation to genius and labour are, as Richard Sha and Wendelin Guentner have shown, central to shifting notions of aesthetic value, imagination, and artistic merit from the Romantics onwards.⁴ Discussing the British post-1768 context (after the establishment of the Royal Academy), Sha situates two opposing poles of the debate as occupied by Sir Joshua Reynolds on the one hand and William Gilpin on the other. Gilpin was a popular and key figure in the discourse of visual art in this period, and championed the sketch as an aesthetic object by invoking Romantic ideas of imagination, genius and inspiration; his theorisation of the picturesque 'enshrined the sketch as its central art form'.⁵ Sha writes that:

Whereas Reynolds insisted upon the primacy of labour and finish to a work of art, Gilpin argued quite the contrary; for him, suggestiveness and immediacy more than compensated for the sketch's lack of finish [... he] argued for a reversal of aesthetic standards[;] that the sketch's very lack of finish made it alone capable of embodying truth.⁶

Reynolds thought that the unfinished nature of the sketch suggested a lack of ability or discipline, and that learning to paint via the sketch was merely 'mechanical and "servile" copying'.⁷ His denigration of the sketch in these terms was motivated, as Sha points out, by

³ Alison Byerly, 'Effortless Art: The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century Painting and Literature', *Criticism* 41 (1999): 349-64; 350-51 (citing Mark M. Johnson, *Idea to Image: Preparatory Studies from the Renaissance to Impressionism* [Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980]).

⁴ As well as Sha's book on *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), Verónica Uribe's essay, 'The Sketch and the Imagination in the Travel Notebooks of Romantic Painters', also gives a concise outline of the history of the visual sketch in both French and British Romantic contexts, beginning with the writings of Roger de Piles, and touching on the importance of the sketch in the discourse of Edmund Burke, Denis Diderot, Sir Joshua Reynolds, William Gilpin, and Eugène Delacroix (in Mark Lussier and Bruce Matsunaga [eds], *Engaging Romanticism: Romanticism as Praxis* [Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008], pp. 178-195). Wendelin Guentner's and Robin Purves's work is more rigorous on these contexts, and both are cited throughout this chapter.

⁵ Sha, 'A Genre against Genre', p. 156. See also Amanpal Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel: The Development of Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), pp. 9-10; 12-13; 37-8.

⁶ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 23.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 48.

the tactical assertion of the Academy's values against the amateur.⁸ The debate about the sketch turned not only on questions of mastering finish (and the ability *to* finish), but of interpretation (Reynolds thought the suggestiveness of the sketch risked 'misinterpretation'),⁹ truth (Gilpin countered Reynolds's fears by asserting that the sketch alone could represent the true essence of something without ornamentation),¹⁰ labour (Reynolds disparaged the value of the sketch because less work went into it),¹¹ and class (the cheap availability of the sketch and its popular, amateur accessibility threatened the Royal Academy's elitism).¹² Each of these ideas is bound up with complex rhetorical and ideological mediations – for example, Guentner highlights the fact that, while he extolled the virtues of immediacy, Gilpin was not against correcting the initial sketch. He also advocated the 'adorned sketch' and, in his conception of the picturesque, 'composition' was a central idea.¹³

Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky defines the sketch through its connotations of 'an unfinished production, the working-out of an idea rather than the idea itself',¹⁴ suggesting that while the sketch appears to be immediate, it often also draws attention to its own existence as a process or as a mediation. Its supposed embodiment of truth, as a trace of the artist's 'genius', can go two ways: it both tries to look natural, and draws attention to the labour of creation. In this regard, it can also be an excuse, as Rubin-Dorsky points out, for 'slipshod' or haphazard work.¹⁵ The popularity and aesthetic value of the sketch in the late eighteenth century was justified as an appreciation of the unfinished, as an apparent indicator of immediacy and, thereby, of truth – 'truth' understood as both the essence of the object and as the honest display or imprint of the process of composition. The appearance of the unfinished, therefore, became a deliberate effect to strive for. The posture involved in reclaiming and elevating its 'slipshod' qualities is entwined with the sketch's twin functions of mimesis and expression. Byerly writes that '[t]he sketch was credited not only with expressive freedom but also with unmediated accuracy of representation'.¹⁶ The emphasis on the artist's genius that the sketch supposedly gives access to cannot be overstated in this regard. It is key to the utilisation of the sketch in ways which pretend to

⁸ Ibid. p. 51.

⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 56.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 46-8.

¹² Ibid. p. 46.

¹³ Wendelin Guentner, 'British Aesthetic Discourse, 1780-1830: The Sketch, the *Non Finito*, and the Imagination', *Art Journal* 52.2 (1993): 40-47; 44-6.

¹⁴ Rubin-Dorsky, 'Washington Irving and the Genesis of the Fictional Sketch', *Early American Literature* 21.3 (Winter 1986/1987): 226-47; 230.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Byerly, 'Effortless Art', p. 351.

negligibility, but which in fact become a set of conventions that gained considerable commercial success in this period. As Guentner points out, ‘apparently hasty sketches were sometimes carefully executed in a studio’, adding that:

When we discover evidence that the naive and spontaneous process of creation characteristic to the sketch was not only being imitated but was also being artificially reproduced, we are witnessing the establishment of a new convention, one that valued the capacity of the *non finito* to engage the beholder’s imagination.¹⁷

At the same time as creating an impression – including in the senses of an imprint and an imitation – of spontaneous inspired genius, part of the point of leaving a work unfinished is to leave space for the viewer’s imagination to complete it. This is an index of the commercial popularity of the sketch, its marketability and economic motivations which resulted in the artificial production of the spontaneously unfinished artwork: Byerly points to the commercial utility of the sketch’s provisionality, noting that ‘Turner, always a canny businessman, drew sketches that functioned as prospectuses for his patrons’.¹⁸ Along with such practical advantages, the elevation of the aesthetics of the sketch not only made it highly marketable, but enabled the paradoxically amateur institutionalisation of ‘the fine art of sketching’: Rubin-Dorsky cites the London Sketching Society established in 1799 as ‘an organization that considered drawing and sketching not simply as diversion but rather as a serious pastime in which both the intellectual and emotional faculties were engaged’.¹⁹ The appeal of the sketch in this period is also, as this suggests, related to the concept of the Romantic imagination. Prompted by response to an external stimulus and creating the work in interaction with it, imagination is distinct from but related to Romantic genius as inherent in the poet, activated by a quasi-divine inspiration rather than by empirical reality. Both aspects are important to the sketch as a mode of either mimetic reflection or of illumination and expression.²⁰

Drawing on the Romantic concept of the imagination, and tracing it through to Charles Baudelaire, Robin Purves has also identified the sketch in the nineteenth century as ‘a *leitmotiv* receiving one of its final and most forceful recurrences in Baudelaire’s mature

¹⁷ Guentner, ‘British Aesthetic Discourse’, p. 46.

¹⁸ Byerly, ‘Effortless Art’, p. 351.

¹⁹ Rubin-Dorsky, ‘Washington Irving’, p. 232; citing Graham Reynolds, *A Concise History of Watercolors* (New York: Abrams, 1971). Kate Flint notes that in *The Years* Milly Pargiter joins such a club ‘since “painting at the Slade meant painting from the nude”’ (‘Virginia Woolf and Victorian Aesthetics’ in Maggie Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion*, p. 28).

²⁰ As M. H. Abrams discusses in his important study, these tropes are key metaphors in discourses of poetic creation: see *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971). For a discussion of the debate around Romantic and Positivist aesthetic theories in relation to the ‘modern sketch’, see also Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit’”, p. 126-8.

aesthetic theory'.²¹ Purves traces Baudelaire's use of the 'oxymoronic' term *l'ébauche parfaite*, the perfect sketch, positing a progression of Baudelaire's understanding of a form characterised by 'inertia' to 'what is the most contemporary' in the work of Manet.²² Baudelaire's late conception of the sketch crystallises the seemingly contradictory alignment of aesthetic perfection with the unfinished. Moreover, in this later configuration, the sketch's suggestiveness and its deferral of completion sustain a state of endless desire and potential, which calls on the viewer/reader actively to participate in the aesthetic experience, and displays the interaction of the fleeting and the eternal at the heart of Baudelaire's concept of the art of modernity.²³ Before moving on to discuss the modernist contexts for the literary sketch, it is helpful here to note the ways in which the controversy over the aesthetic value of the unfinished trace or imprint embodied in the sketch filtered into the British art scene from a French context. Guentner points out that the eighteenth-century debate in France was more widespread and embedded in the aesthetic discourse of the time than it was in Britain.²⁴ There are multiple words for 'sketch' in French which provide nuances to the ideas of finish, expression, imitation and skill. Purves defines *l'ébauche* as 'the thinly painted preliminary stage of a "yet-to-be-finished" work', and subtly distinguishes it from *l'esquisse* ('a sketch in ink and/or water-colour traditionally made in preparation for a finished work in oils').²⁵ Alongside these terms, Sha cites four other French variations of the English 'sketch':

[P]ochade, croquis, esquisse, étude, académie and ébauche, all correspond to the English "sketch". The distinctions are based upon the sketch's degree of finish and its medium. The *croquis* is the drawn composition sketch that generally precedes the *esquisse*, the painter's first painted thought. A *pochade* is a freely painted, extremely rough sketch. The *étude* is generally a painted study of either a detail or a landscape delineated *en plein air*. And the *académie* is a painted or drawn study of the nude from life. Finally, the *ébauche* is painted or drawn on the final canvas and then covered up by the finished painting.²⁶

²¹ Robin Purves, 'The Operation of the Sketch in the Art Criticism of Charles Baudelaire, and Arthur Rimbaud and the Future of Poetry' (Doctoral Thesis; University of Glasgow, 1999), p. 3.

²² *Ibid.* p. 96.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Guentner, 'British Aesthetic Discourse', p. 40.

²⁵ Purves, 'The Operation of the Sketch', p. 5. On the French debates about the sketch, see also Uribe, 'The Sketch and the Imagination' (2008).

²⁶ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp. 38-9. For a historical survey of the terminology associated with the sketch in nineteenth-century France, see Wendelin Guentner, 'The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century French Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias and Treatises', *Contemporary French Civilization* 23.1 (1999): 95-110. See also Sonya Stephens' edited collection, *Esquisses/ébauches: Projects and Pre-Texts in Nineteenth-Century French Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), from which Guentner's essay on 'speed' and the sketch is discussed below.

The degrees of finish that these words indicate are extremely useful not only in nuancing the English debate about the aesthetic value of the sketch, but also in approaching Woolf's use of the sketch in relation to 'the finished and composed work', discussed in the next chapter. The tension between 'finish' as vital to the demonstration of skill or as mere decoration is central to Woolf's use of the term 'sketch': in the next chapter, we will see her consider the sketch as *croquis* in her 'attempt to sketch a draft', as a kind of note-taking, or collecting 'copy' that Woolf conceives of as an essential stage in her composition process; and the *esquisse* as 'the painter's first painted thought' is present in the spontaneity that she attaches to *Monday or Tuesday* in her letter to Ethel Smyth cited at the beginning of this thesis. Woolf also invokes the sketch in the sense of *pochade* in her letters and diaries, where she conceives of sketching in opposition to proper writing and emphasises roughness. The *étude* appears in places where Woolf's attention to detail might be seen as a highly crafted 'study' of a scene or character, but where there is nevertheless a sense of vagueness and incompleteness – for example, in 'An Unwritten Novel'. As a stage in the process of creating a work, the sketch as *ébauche* is most relevant to Woolf's stated 'endeavour' in her composition of *Mrs Dalloway* to 'keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work' (*D* II 312). *L'ébauche* can remain underneath the paint as a structural guide, though it does not continue to describe the process after a certain point. When the sketching phase is completed, the artist begins a new process with colour: what is important here is that Woolf wants to foreground their co-existence on the same canvas. As discussed in the next chapter, Woolf's letters to Vanessa Bell often invoke these aspects of the visual sketch, asking Bell to send her what would correspond to offhand *pochades* from her holidays, and in her early journals she is certainly aware of the training function of the painter's *étude* and *académie*.²⁷ As we will see, in their correspondence Woolf is also suggestive in her references to the sketch as a mediating term which can speak simultaneously to her own and Bell's respective literary and visual arts.

While this thesis therefore acknowledges the importance of the vehicle of visual art, I am keen to establish the ways in which Woolf's contact with the sketch happens in a specifically literary context. The sketch has accumulated a literary history and attributes which are important to an understanding of Woolf's use of short forms in ways other than as analogues for the visual. As Sha points out, '[t]he written sketch is sometimes ekphrastic insofar as it attempts the verbal representation of a visual object, but it is by no means limited to this function'.²⁸ Though it may be true that 'the verbal sketch reflects upon

²⁷ On Woolf's awareness of the *académie*, see note 19, above.

²⁸ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 209, n. 3.

whether or not language can or should do the work of images',²⁹ such techniques of visual analogy – metaphor or ekphrasis – are literary, poetic and rhetorical ones. Given that Woolf herself made distinctions between the idea of form in art and in literature,³⁰ it is more immediately relevant to discussion of her work to think about how and why the literary sketch deploys the language of visual art to describe something literary. The nuances of finish, expression, genius, artifice, mimesis, imagination and amateur appeal outlined above all inform Woolf's use of the sketch as a literary genre, and they influence the rhetorical effect of invoking the sketch specifically as a medium of words.

1.2 Literary Sketchbooks

Alison Byerly reads the relationship between the literary and visual sketch as mutually parasitic, claiming that the literary sketch 'exploit[s]' the relationship with visual art for its 'cultural status' and vice versa: she claims that the literary sketch asks to be '[judged...] according to its success in reproducing another form of art'.³¹ This is the kind of reasoning I want to avoid by treating the literary sketch as a thing in itself. While the literary sketch might be associated with the ekphrastic technique and other visual art analogies, it also works with other literary effects involving other senses and intellectual processes: for example, the rhythms of detailed or simple description, the rhetorical force of satire, the dramatic mode of scene-making, and the fictional framing of narrative voice which all require specifically literary analysis. The sketch can function in a fictional or poetic mode, as well as in biographical, historiographic or political ones, all of which inform its operations as a literary genre. In *America's Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Literary Genre* (1998), Kristie Hamilton writes that:

By the late nineteenth century, the sketch would take its place on the margins of the canon of literary genres, where it has remained, as a nearly invisible, informal form, taken for granted and available for private, everyday use or conceived as work preliminary to formal composition.³²

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, alongside Hamilton's book there were several studies published which aimed to retrieve the specific cultural effects of the sketch as a literary genre. In an American context, this work builds on existing scholarly material

²⁹ Sha, 'A Genre Against Genre', pp. 159-60.

³⁰ See my discussion of Woolf's essay on Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* in Chapter Five of the present thesis.

³¹ Byerly, 'Effortless Art', p. 349.

³² Kristie Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Literary Genre* (Athens, GA: Ohio University Press, 1998), p. 149.

which had, from the 1970s, been acknowledging the importance of the sketch to writers such as Washington Irving, Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Stephen Crane.³³ At the same time, Guentner's work between the 1990s and early 2000s covered extensive ground in detailed analysis of European (including British) sketches of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;³⁴ and Sha's study cited above, published in the same year as Hamilton's, is one of the first and only book-length discussions of the sketch in a specifically British context. Amanpal Garcha's and Martina Lauster's studies of the nineteenth-century European sketches have both appeared in the last ten years, and have focused respectively on the sketch as it relates to the novel and to journalism.³⁵ Much of this criticism draws on, at the same time as it helps to establish, the sketch as part of a Romantic British literary tradition, and gives prominence to the generic hybridity of the sketch as it develops from Romantic travel writing.

The sketch, as noted, incorporates a variety of modes ranging across lyric, drama and narrative. Hamilton cites Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20) as an originator of the fictional sketch, in which mode, she argues, Irving 'assigned to brief pieces of literary prose a generic label which subsumed various antecedents, the *essai*, the Theophrastan character, the eighteenth-century periodical essay, the *bagatelle*'.³⁶ Irving's *Sketch Book* functions partly as an account of England for

³³ Early studies include: Thomas H. Pauly, 'The Literary Sketch in Nineteenth Century America', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 17. 2 (1975): 489-503; Richard Harter Fogle, 'Hawthorne's Sketches and the English Romantics' in Louis J. Budd, Edwin H. Cady and Carl L. Anderson (eds), *Toward a New American Literary History: Essays in Honor of Arlin Turner* (Durham: Duke UP, 1980), pp. 129-39; Gregory Robert Wegner, *The Sketch Book of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Theory and Practice of Literary Sketching in the Nineteenth Century* (Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1987); Wegner, 'Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" and the Structure of the Literary Sketch', *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 17 (1987): 56-66. See also Kristie Hamilton, 'Toward a Cultural Theory of the Antebellum Literary Sketch', *Genre* 23 (1990): 297-323 and Hamilton, 'Hawthorne, Modernity, and the Literary Sketch' in Richard H. Nillington (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 99-120.

³⁴ Wendelin Guentner's publications on the sketch include: 'British Aesthetic Discourse'; 'The Sketch as Literary Metaphor: The British Romantic Travel Narrative', *European Romantic Review* 7.2 (1997): 125-133; 'The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century French Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias and Treatises', *Contemporary French Civilization* 23.1 (1999): 95-110; 'The "Démon de la vitesse": Technology, Subjectivity and the Sketch' in Sonya Stephens (ed.), *Esquisses/ébauches: Projects and Pre-Texts in Nineteenth-Century French Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 23-30; *Esquisses littéraires: Rhétorique du spontané et récit de voyage au XIXe siècle* (St Genouph: Librairie A.G. Nizet, 1997). Guentner is currently completing a book entitled *The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century Cultural Discourse in France*.

³⁵ Amanpal Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel: The Development of Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009); Martina Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830-50* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). See also Carol Bernstein, 'Nineteenth-Century Urban Sketches: Thresholds of Fiction', *Prose Studies* 3.3 (1980): 217-40, and, Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, 'The Sketch of Manners and Alienation in the Poetics of Flaubert and Dostoevsky', *Linguistics and Literature* 8.1 (2010): 63-78.

³⁶ Hamilton, 'Toward a Cultural Theory', p. 298. See also Rubin-Dorsky, who also credits Irving with 'the beginning of a new genre in American literature' ('Washington Irving', p. 227): 'With the publication of *The Sketch Book* in 1819-1820, Washington Irving transformed the popular travel sketch into a form uniquely his own, the fictional sketch [...] Moreover, since the travel sketch relied heavily on recognizable detail, Irving

American readers, told through the persona of Geoffrey Crayon, but it was also popular in England, where it was published in 1820. Relating it to the tradition of travel writing, Garcha points out that Irving's volume 'immediately attracted admiration both in English literary circles (with Lord Byron reportedly declaring, "I know it by heart") and among the reading public'.³⁷ In her analysis of some of Woolf's unpublished juvenilia and its '[concentration] on pure atmosphere', Nena Škrbić suggests a 'precedent in travel literature such as the *Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20) by Washington Irving'.³⁸ I have been unable to find evidence that Woolf read *The Sketch Book*, though she did review Carl van Doren's edition of the *Tales of Washington Irving* in 1919 (*E* III 28-30).³⁹ In this review, she suggests that 'his stories are really essays' (*E* III 28), and writes:

The episode of the stout gentleman is a first-rate specimen of the English essay; his tales are rich in passages of excellent humour and literary charm; but they compel us to repeat what everyone else has said already, that he never wrote a story in his life. (*E* III 30)

This opposition of the story and the essay in Woolf's review, highlighting their aesthetic and historical distinction, reflects the fact that the essay and the sketch are intertwined in terms of both generic operations and literary histories. This is borne out in Hamilton's invocation of the *essai*, with its resonances of a sketch-like 'attempt' shaped most famously by Montaigne. As Judith Allen has shown, the hybridity of Montaigne's *essai* is a key context for Woolf's creation of generically ambiguous texts: as 'a mode of writing that intersects with other marginalised forms such as diaries, letters, memoirs and autobiography [... Montaigne's essayistic mode] did not require transformation. Already "other", hybrid, provisional and resistant to definition [...] it is forever seeking freedom'.⁴⁰ Allen's word choice here is resonant with the refrain 'for ever desiring truth' in the title sketch of *Monday or Tuesday* (*MT* 36-7); in this collection, the form of the sketch as an inheritor of the *essai* figures the kinds of 'wild outbursts of freedom' that Allen associates with Montaigne. Affirming that in 'its earliest use to describe a verbal form, "sketch" was

realised that if he appropriated the form he could capitalize on his considerable artistic talent and his sharp appreciation for the visual element in prose' (p. 226).

³⁷ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 7.

³⁸ Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. 90. Škrbić applies this analysis to 'The Manchester Zoo', 'The Penny Steamer', 'Sunday up the River', and 'Down the River to Greenwich', all published between 1906-08. She also describes them as '[r]ather like the travel sketches of Henry James' (p. 91).

³⁹ See also Virginia Woolf, 'American Fiction' (*E4* 269-80); Andrew McNeillie, 'Virginia Woolf's America', *Dublin Review* 5 (Winter 2001-2): 42-45; Thaine Stearns, 'Woolf and America' in Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (eds), *Virginia Woolf in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), pp. 398-409.

⁴⁰ Judith Allen, *Virginia Woolf and the Politics of Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010), p. 2.

equivalent to the essay’,⁴¹ Sha outlines the immense variety of forms that the sketch could take: ‘even a single work can include such kinds as the essay, the journal entry, the sermon, the anecdote, satire, the letter, the loco-descriptive poem, the ode and the sonnet’.⁴² In other words, as Hamilton notes, ‘the limited definition of the sketch as a verbal rendering of visualised scenes and characters had become generalised to refer to short works of many kinds ranging between the fictional and the essayistic’.⁴³ Furthermore, John Fagg proposes that the essayistic influence in the sketch creates an ‘underlying and unresolved tension between fictional and non-fictional status’.⁴⁴ He traces the popularity of the American sketch in the nineteenth century to the influence of English journalistic essayists such as Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, and argues that this tension results in ‘the partially dramatized authorial voice characteristic of the literary sketch’.⁴⁵

The focus on the generic hybridity of the sketch in American literary criticism is consistent with the fact these critics do not primarily rely on the analogy with visual art for their assessments of its features. More concerned with literary discourse, Gregory R. Wegner, for example, distinguishes Hawthorne’s sketches from his tales,⁴⁶ and Fagg, in his analysis of the sketches of Stephen Crane, advocates for attention to ‘the generic repertoire of the literary sketch’:⁴⁷ he cautions against ‘the potential for misreading [...] when [it is] ignored’.⁴⁸

1.3 ‘The Evanescent and Engraved’: From the Romantic to the Modernist Sketch

In her essay, ‘The Sketch as Literary Metaphor: The British Romantic Travel Narrative’ (1997), Guentner discusses the ‘liberating quality’ of the sketch’s appearance of being unfinished, as well as its ‘constellation of values’ which included ‘spontaneity of

⁴¹ Sha, ‘A Genre Against Genre’, p. 145. Sha cites the first use of the term ‘sketch’ in the title of a book as ‘Launcelot Temple’s 1758 *Sketches or Essays on Various Subjects* [...] according to the British Library Catalogues’ (p. 145). David Seed, however, gives John Armstrong’s *Sketches: or Essays on Various Subjects* as the first, published in the same year as Temple’s (‘The Art of Literary Tourism: An Approach to Washington Irving’s “Sketch Book”’, *Ariel: A Review of International Literature* 14.2 [1983]: 67-82. Cited by Hamilton, ‘Antebellum Literary Sketch’, p. 305). I have been unable to determine which was first.

⁴² Sha, ‘A Genre Against Genre’, p. 145.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ John Fagg, ‘Stephen Crane and the Literary Sketch: Genre and History in “Sailing Day Scenes” and “Coney Island’s Failing Days”’, *American Literary Realism* 38.1 (Fall 2005): 1-17; 3-4.

⁴⁵ Ibid. On Addison and Steele, see also Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 32-4.

⁴⁶ Gregory R. Wegner, ‘Hawthorne’s “Ethan Brand”’, p. 58. See also Fagg, ‘Stephen Crane and the Literary Sketch’: ‘The variety of modes and voices produced by Hawthorne’s practice is, for Moore, a defining element of the form that may be extended to a more general definition of the sketch. Situating the sketch as a merging of the boundaries between the essay and the tale, Moore claims that “the imaginative faculties of the artist are always at play with the jottings of the recorder”’ (pp. 3-4). Citing Thomas Moore, *A Thick and Darksome Veil: The Rhetoric of Hawthorne’s Sketches, Prefaces and Essays* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), p. 30.

⁴⁷ Fagg, ‘Stephen Crane’, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

expression, naïveté, imagination, individualism, sincerity and truth’ as ‘resonant with the Romantic world view.’⁴⁹ Guentner’s extensive work on the sketch in both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century contexts in Britain and in France shows how it was a key form for revolutions in the concept of aesthetic value from Romanticism onwards. Its prominence as a form of travel writing, describing a scene as something to write home about, is one of the ways in which it establishes a Romantic ethos in the distinctive, hybrid narrative voice described above. It is through the traditions of travel writing, furthermore, that the sketch becomes a form integral to modernity. Guentner suggests that it is possible to read the peregrinating aspect of the sketch within the paradigms of Futurist or Vorticist representations of speed. In her essay, ‘The “Démon de la Vitesse”: Technology, Subjectivity and the Sketch’, she traces accelerations of life specifically in vehicular travel in nineteenth-century France and their representation in the form of the sketch, beginning with the ‘visually disorienting experience of early train travel’.⁵⁰ Comparable to Woolf’s characterisation of modern life in ‘The Mark on the Wall’ as like ‘being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour – landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one’s hair!’ (*MT* 81), similar ideas of the speed of modern living are foundational to Hamilton’s *America’s Sketchbook* and to Garcha’s identification of ‘Avant-garde Plotlessness’ in his final chapter on Victorian novelistic sketches.⁵¹ Hamilton points out that ‘the publication of Washington Irving’s *The Sketch Book* preced[ed] the first proposal for an American railroad by only seven years’, and that ‘the “habit of reading while travelling” which emerged with train travel made the sketch an especially amenable staple in railway culture’.⁵² The centrality of railway travel to the development of the sketch as a literary form is intriguingly apt for Woolf’s character sketch, ‘An Unwritten Novel’, discussed in Chapter Three: there, the premise of the sketch depends upon an encounter between ‘Minnie Marsh’ and her potential novelist in a railway carriage.

The form of the sketch as it relates to the novel in the title of Woolf’s text (‘An Unwritten Novel’) is also a key to the way in which the sketch’s narrative mode develops from the Romantic travel essay to have a place in a more sustained fiction. Amanpal Garcha deals with the idea of speed raised by the sketch specifically in its relation to

⁴⁹ Guentner, ‘The Sketch as Literary Metaphor’, p. 125.

⁵⁰ Guentner, ‘The “Démon de la Vitesse”’, pp. 23-30.

⁵¹ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 220. Hamilton draws on some of the same sources as Guentner, notably Wolfgang Schivelbusch writing about “Panoramic Travel”, in which “[t]his vision no longer experienced evanescence: evanescence had become the new reality” (*America’s Sketchbook*, p. 135). See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 64. See my discussion of Woolf’s ‘evanescent’ and ‘engraved’ terminology from ‘Modern Fiction’ (1925) in relation to the sketch in Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 135, 136.

Victorian novelistic form. He sees in the sketch an ability to capture and reflect the fleeting, rapid quality of life in a period of modernisation (around the end of the Industrial Revolution, focusing on the 1830s), and, at the same time, to offer a moment of stasis in the action by presenting static, plotless description. He argues that such sketches, when incorporated into the lengthy novels of W. M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and Elizabeth Gaskell, replay and incorporate these writers' earlier experiments with the sketch as a genre in itself. He claims that their sketches thereby played an intrinsic as opposed to merely preparatory role in the development of the Victorian novel. Taking a deductive approach to genre, Garcha writes that Thackeray, Dickens and Gaskell 'decided to call their short compositions "sketches", thereby presenting their work as incomplete, fragmented, and hurried, like modern time itself'.⁵³

For Garcha, the existing formal qualities of the sketch ambivalently provided a nostalgic escape from the changing pace of life during industrialisation and capitalist expansion, at the same time as it partly answered an economic and marketing need: he argues that people did not have the leisure-time to read long novels, and cites Franco Moretti's *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (1997) to highlight the fact that 'fictional sketches grew in popularity – and novels declined – through the 1820s and 1830s'.⁵⁴ Apparently simultaneously, readers 'began to find plot less appealing and fragmentation and stasis more so [...] they desired *fictional* descriptions and essayistic accounts of people and places'.⁵⁵ The form of the sketch works in a dual way in this regard, reproducing or reflecting the speed of modernity at the same time as it provides an illusion of permanency and escape, 'a sense of atemporal stability' that incorporates the conventions of the essayistic travel sketch into the fictional frameworks of the novel.⁵⁶ Likewise, Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover identifies a type of sketch in the novels of Flaubert and Dostoevsky, including not only character portraits of 'types', but 'inserted landscape scenes, which [...] transcend the linear story-telling because they invoke a moment in time which becomes coeval with space'.⁵⁷ Vladiv-Glover argues that '[i]t is through the fusion of the temporal and the spatial that Flaubert's text manages to capture "the present moment" and that "essential quality of being present" invoked by Baudelaire'.⁵⁸

⁵³ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10. For his analysis of the interactions between the marketplace and the nostalgia emblematised in the rural life of *Our Village*, Garcha enlists Raymond Williams's key study, *The Country and the City* [1973] (p. 11).

⁵⁵ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 10 (italics in original).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁵⁷ Vladiv-Glover, 'The Sketch of Manners', p. 72.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Also addressing the modernity of the sketch as it develops from travel writing, its immediacy and recording of the present moment, Martina Lauster highlights the fact that, alongside the language of painting and Romantic inspiration through landscape, the sketch's utilisation of visual perception and observation in a documentary way allows its productions to function as sociological documents and as 'cognitive tools'.⁵⁹ These are particularly rich contexts for the European modernism of the sketch. Entwined as they are with emergent-archetypal modernist figures such as the urban *flâneur*, Lauster posits 'that the modernity [Walter] Benjamin so tirelessly sought to trace in his work on the Parisian nineteenth century [...] is still lying partly buried in the journalistic sketches of the period'.⁶⁰ While this presents an intriguing entrance for the modernist sketch, Esther Leslie points out that Lauster's use of Benjamin's work is 'the source of so much error' in her study.⁶¹ Criticising the unquestioned primacy of bourgeois experience, Leslie summarises Lauster's position *contra* Benjamin: 'where Lauster perceives in these slight formats illumination (of and for middle-class sensibility), [Benjamin] instead saw various types of compromise and deception'.⁶² Here the ideological importance of the sketch's manoeuvres – in terms of its supposedly natural presentation of unmediated, non-rhetorical truth-impressions – begins to emerge with a more sinister aspect. With their supposed documentary or evidential truth-value, sketches can simplify, caricature, or leave out the oppressions and violence of the social structures by which such typologies are made possible. Approaching volumes of journalistic sketches such as Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* (1776-88) as primarily sociological, taxonomic and 'cognitive tools in a culture that was increasingly organised by media',⁶³ Lauster draws on particular types of vision – the gaze of the *flâneur*, the projections of the magic lantern, the Daguerreotype,⁶⁴ the Devil-as-

⁵⁹ Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶¹ Esther Leslie, 'Reviewed Work', *Modern Language Review* 104.2 (2009): 536-38; 536.

⁶² Leslie, 'Reviewed Work', p. 538. Hamilton also invokes Benjamin in order to talk about the sketch as a modernist genre in an American context, claiming that '[t]he "physiologies" "described [...] by Benjamin performed operations strikingly similar to those of literary sketches in the United States' (*America's Sketchbook*, p. 141).

⁶³ Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Vladiv-Glover writes that 'types' presented in French and Russian physiological sketches were all 'accompanied by daguerreotype illustrations [...] The proto-photograph, still between a sketch and a mechanically reproduced image, as the medium to best capture the reality of the present moment, points to the future of Realism in the new medium of the photographic image (invented around the 1860s), followed by the evolution of the moving image (in 1880s in France and elsewhere)' ('The Sketch of Manners', p. 68). On the importance of Daguerre's diorama to the mobile perspective of the sketch following the tradition of travel writing, see Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook*, pp. 137-38: 'the literary sketch plays an intermediary ideological and historical role within the cultural processes that were already replacing the centred, idealised observer of a stable, objectively known world with a decentred (transient), observing subject of flitting images and fleeting moments' (p. 138).

dandy⁶⁵ – and groups them under sociological and physiological interests of the period. Lauster grants relatively little attention to the class, gender and racial politics at play in these contexts, for example, apparently unproblematically claiming that ‘[s]ketches share with the magic lantern their involvement in the Enlightenment Project in making the mundane triumph over the mysterious, and in drawing attention to the fact that the real mysteries are everyday-people such as the female spectator herself’.⁶⁶ Lauster identifies the typifying impulse of the sketch without considering who these ‘everyday-people’ include and exclude, or who this female spectator is, what is the position of the narrative voice in these sketches; and she elides the power dynamics of Enlightenment ideology utilised by the sketch in its documentary role.

Alongside technological and urban contexts for the creation of observational figures, Lauster situates the nineteenth-century sketch in the historical context of physiology becoming a branch of medicine, at around the same time as popular interest in anatomical dissection and taxonomic collecting peaked. Lauster parallels these with the ethos of ‘moral’ purpose found in panoramic collections of city sketches: ‘moral’, that is, in the sense of being interested in social ‘mores/*moeurs*’, but which also lends itself to ideas of deviation and correction, and which invokes a certain privileged personhood that is able to be an agent of such a gaze. By immobilising and taking a cross-section of the entwined and constantly fluctuating components of modern life – ‘types’ of people and places, events – the sketch’s ideological significance lies in its claim to the disinterested presentation of truthful and unmediated records or images of everyday life. This actively turns people, places and situations into things that can be made to stand still; that can be summed up in an image and understood, thereby neutralising the unexpected, the unexplained and the potentially disrupting or disturbing forces of otherness and difference. Hamilton writes:

In the typology of the nation produced by literary sketches, places became *scenes*, people were transformed into *characters*, and events and actions, large and small, laudable and pernicious, preventable and unforeseeable, were abstracted as *incidents*. Differences in regional and territorial cultures, ethnic histories, class positions,

⁶⁵ Lauster notes that in many periodical sketches, the Devil is often a character playing the role of the dandified tour-guide, granting the ability to see through walls and viewing the city from above in what Lauster calls an ‘Asmodean perspective’. Based on Alain René Le Sage’s *Le Diable boiteux* (1707), Lauster writes: ‘After 1830, Le Sage’s devil became omnipresent in a dazzling array of city sketches. “Asmodeus is everywhere; Asmodeus is no longer somebody in particular, but he is everybody”, remarked Jules Janin in “Asmodée”, his essay introducing the *Livre des Cent-et-un*’ (Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 132). See also Garcha on Thackeray’s use of the devil in relation to the ‘printer’s devil’, hack journalism and the commodification of the sketch (‘Chapter Three – Capitalist Excess, Gentlemanly Atavism: Thackeray’s Devils in his Early Sketches’, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 60-83).

⁶⁶ Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 170. See also Kristie Hamilton, *America’s Sketchbook: ‘Lydia Maria Child explicitly draws an analogy between the operation of a mechanical, visual apparatus – the magic lantern – and the ordinary mode of perception of a strolling New York observer’* (p. 138).

occupational identifications, and so on, were thus made comprehensible, even consumable, and, what is more to the point, ordinary.⁶⁷

Through these aspects of the sketch's claim to unmediated documentary truth, Hamilton's study addresses its conservatism. The generic conventions of the sketch created a coherent and stable sense of identity not only at the level of the nation, but relied on participation and acceptance by the individual as a private rather than a public form.⁶⁸ Part of the reason why the sketch can function as an ideological tool in this way is that it acts not only as a kind of wish-fulfilment (in that, Hamilton argues, it performed a recognisable self-image that granted stability at a time of uncertainty and negotiation of national identity after the Civil War), but because it also actively participated in the creation of new modes of behaviour, daily routine and ways of knowing – that is, it became a constitutive element of the *episteme* of antebellum America:

Physical and mental “rest” was parcelled out in brief moments with the reading of a sketch or a handful of sketches. [...] By constructing brevity of parts as a literary norm, writers foreshortened the time it took not only to relax but also to know.⁶⁹

The commercial circuit of the sketch as an ideological form, particularly regarding the idea of nation, are insidious ‘pretexts for modernity’, as one of Hamilton's chapter titles puts it: ‘The “unpretending” sketch is constructed as an almost transparent vehicle through which the accurate character of the “common people”, the distinctive population in the myth of American democracy, may be communicated’.⁷⁰ The sketch, then, at the same time as enlisting a fictional mode, clearly retains its formal claim to documentary truth or evidence. With its shift in focus from rural to urban scenes, the American nineteenth-century sketch is, Fagg argues, ‘no longer marked by the sauntering gaze of the sketch writer but by the urgency of urban reform journalism’.⁷¹ Becoming more explicitly political, one of the most important facets of this journalistic mode of the sketch is the ‘obtrusive authorial presence’ of first person narration.⁷² Fagg focuses particularly on the narrator who ‘asserts his status as an outsider and so grants himself the authority of

⁶⁷ Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook*, p. 143. See also Garcha on Thackeray, whose ‘character sketches work to represent everyday people and quotidian life on the most general level, abstracting the lives and images of the people at large to that it can deliver these images back to its consumers in the form of clichéd, and therefore immediately recognizable, self-portraits’ (*From Sketch to Novel*, p. 64).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 133.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 134. On the concept of the *episteme*, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [1966] (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 144.

⁷¹ Fagg, ‘Stephen Crane’, p. 2.

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 5.

detachment sanctioned by the logic of the literary sketch'.⁷³ In considering how sketches work in a specifically literary, or even just linguistic medium, and in claiming a place for it as a literary genre, it is essential to pay attention not only to its traditions, but also to its rhetorical and narrative procedures in specific cases such as Fagg suggests. What is at stake when the sketch can be used to compose a catalogue of simplified, exaggerated characteristics and create, as Hamilton puts it, a 'typology of the nation'?⁷⁴ It is here that there may be some redemption for the sketch as it has been appropriated – specifically because of this common cultural understanding, and because of its capacities for a distinctively hybrid essayistic-fictional narrative voice – in order to agitate the mind of the reader into critical and direct action, rather than to anaesthetise and comfort it. Used as a radical form for advocating social change, political sketches can use to their advantage the possibility of presenting a shock along with 'the sketch's implicit assurance that such enormities [of injustice] are not the exceptions to the rule – they happen every day'.⁷⁵ As we will see, its features might also be put to work in such a way as to subvert such claims to instantaneously-accessible truth.

With reference to *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, these nuances in the politics and ideology of form are important contexts for my discussion of Woolf's use of the sketch, and particularly for my reading of 'A Society', 'Monday or Tuesday' and 'Kew Gardens' as political sketches in Chapter Four. The generic conventions by which the sketch proceeds into and reflects modernity can be used for radically different ends, and Woolf's sketches participate in a strong tradition of political content and critique in a satiric mode. Furthermore, in terms of modernist aesthetics, the sketch's seemingly natural representative simplicity – which works through broad, exaggerated strokes – as well as its enduring permanence as an immobilisation of scenes or characters, points to a key feature of the sketch as an aesthetic that enacts an (oxymoronic) ephemeral imprint.

Though her analysis sites the journalistic sketch firmly as an extension of the visual, and though she pays very little attention to its rhetorical or poetic aspects, Lauster ultimately finds in her examples of the nineteenth-century sketch a 'Grammar of Modernity'. Crucial to this sketch-language is the concern with ideas of appearance and essence. Lauster points out that 'sketches can depict the dynamic interplay between surface

⁷³ Ibid. p. 10.

⁷⁴ Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook*, p. 143. See also Richard Sha, 'The Power of the English Nineteenth-Century Visual and Verbal Sketch: Appropriation, Discipline, Mastery', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 24.1 (2002): 73-100.

⁷⁵ Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook*, pp. 148-49.

and depth; in fact they thrive on shifts between signifiers and the signified'.⁷⁶ Invoking its staging of scenes and characters in language, Lauster acknowledges the provenance of the sketch as a dramatic mode:

Stierle has shown that the roots of Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* lie in Diderot's concept of 'drame' (a genre between comedy and tragedy), according to which moral depths are disclosed at certain points where the play stands still in a quasi-painterly 'tableau' capturing the emotional high-point of a scene and making characters step out of their individual selves to reveal insights into the human condition.⁷⁷

Though Lauster again elides the aesthetic and linguistic (literary) aspect of this casting of 'types' in favour of reading them as sociological documents, such theatricality, in particular its scene-making and caricature, is of great significance to Woolf's literary use of the sketch. The impressionism of the sketch, in its fictional modes and frames that highlight the performativity of literary voices, align here with key components of literary Impressionism as performed and theorised by Ford Madox Ford (at the time, Hueffer) in 'On Impressionism' (1914). Echoing the self-deprecating language of the sketch, with emphatically broad strokes of self-aware framing, Ford writes:

I am not claiming any great importance for my work; I daresay it is all right. At any rate, I am a perfectly self-conscious writer; I know exactly how I get my effects, as far as those effects go. Then, if I am in truth an Impressionist, it must follow that a conscientious and exact account of how I myself work will be an account, from the inside, of how Impressionism is reached, produced, or gets its effects. [...] This is called egotism; but, to tell the truth, I do not see how Impressionism can be anything else. [...] it recognises, frankly, that all art must be the expression of an ego, and that if Impressionism is to do anything, it must, as the phrase is, go the whole hog [...] (The Impressionist must always exaggerate) [...] I am not in the least joking – and God forbid that I should be thought irreverent because I write like this. The point that I really wish to make is, once again, that – that the Impressionist gives you, as a rule, the fruits of his own observations and the fruits of his own observations alone [...] in writing this article I am doing no more than showing you the broken tools and bits of oily rag which form my brains, since once again I must disclaim writing with any authority on Impressionism.⁷⁸

Ford highlights the writing process using metaphors of mechanics and pointing to the 'tools' of writing in a self-deprecating manner – the 'bits of oily rag' themselves suggesting scraps repurposed to clean up the mess, printed black with the excess of attempts to make the machine run, but also metonymised as the machine itself. Not only in

⁷⁶ Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 94.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 161 (italics in original). Citing Karlheinz Stierle, 'Baudelaire and the Tradition of the *Tableaux de Paris*', *New Literary History* 11 (1979-80): 345-61.

⁷⁸ Ford Madox Hueffer, 'On Impressionism', *Poetry and Drama* (June 1914), pp. 167-71.

his figurative language, but in his excessive rhetorical framing, he draws attention to the interactions of expressivity and observation, and the idea of creating an imprint of the writer's mind or 'ego'. His exaggerated display of his own writing process performatively defines 'Impressionism' in terms analogous to, and in a style essential to, the literary sketch.

As a mode of both highly individualised expression and typifying observation which imprints lasting scenes, characters or images in general, the sketch simultaneously retains a lightness which gives the impression of being evaporated quickly. Hamilton writes that in Hawthorne's sketches, for example, 'the evanescent paradoxically endures and preserves traces of the new as it emerges, thereby enabling later access to original instances already passed'.⁷⁹ As a key figure on the threshold of modernity, Hamilton credits Hawthorne as 'not only a writer of sketches but a theorizer of the form'.⁸⁰ It is through Hawthorne's deployment of the sketch to write 'the new' and 'the ephemeral', Hamilton suggests, that he 'ascribes a specific sort of aesthetic force to sketches: in the sketch "new thought" may be perceived not rationally but sensuously, as if it bore "aroma and fragrance"'.⁸¹ Following tropes of Romanticism, Hawthorne's language around the sketch also foreshadows late nineteenth-century Decadence and Aestheticism which underlie the modernist dialectical concern with permanence and decay that Purves finds in Baudelaire's invocations of the sketch.⁸² Hamilton writes that:

Embedded within the very concept of the modern was the threat of its own obsolescence, and the new sense that rapid change was at the core of human experience underwrote broad cultural narratives of the self as constantly on the verge of its own dissolution.⁸³

The simultaneous creation and undoing of the present moment takes place in the sketch as it travels, not only across continents in railway carriages, and across genres and modes, but through different temporal states. As a record of the past or a plan for the future, with the idea of capturing or illuminating the present moment as an intermediary, the sketch brings to the surface the relationship of process and stasis. Garcha writes:

⁷⁹ Hamilton, 'Hawthorne, Modernity and the Sketch', p. 105.

⁸⁰ Kristie Hamilton, 'Hawthorne, Modernity, and the Literary Sketch', p. 104. Hamilton also cites Dana Brand's 'excellent [...] work on Hawthorne's sketches as a body of work within the context of modernity [...] with a] tight focus on the figure of the *flâneur*' (p. 117, n. 1). See Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991). See also Wegner, 'The Sketch Book' (1987); Fogle, 'Hawthorne's Sketches and the English Romantics', pp.129-39; and Moore, *A Thick and Darksome Veil* (1994).

⁸¹ Hamilton, 'Hawthorne, Modernity, and the Literary Sketch', p. 100.

⁸² Purves, 'The Operation of the Sketch'. See also Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 119-20.

⁸³ Hamilton, 'Hawthorne, Modernity, and the Literary Sketch', p. 101.

The temporality of the sketch as theorized by Gilpin helped create the written sketch's peculiar and antagonistic relationship to narrativity. Gilpin emphasizes that the sketch, owing to the quickness of its execution, is uniquely able to capture and freeze an image. It is a static form predicated on motion[.]⁸⁴

With the help of mediating rhetorical frameworks, the sketch appears to be immediate: it proclaims that it is staying as close as possible to what Woolf calls 'the flight of the mind' (*D V* 298), and is, at the same time, self-reflexive in its presentation of the journey that the mind and the hand takes in its composition of a text. As Wegner points out, 'the displacement of plot by other fictional elements (notably the ones that Aristotle terms character and spectacle) as the primary means of organizing fictional elements' in the sketch metaphorically creates a visual composition or *tableau*,⁸⁵ leading many of the critics outlined here to read the sketch as an essentially static form; but this also instigates a way of conceiving temporal movements apart from linear causality. At the same time as there is a jettisoning of plot, there is also a sense in which the very brevity and spontaneity which creates the sketch as a form is inherently connotative of speed and of process without necessarily moving towards an end-point. This central tension is manifest in the ways that the sketch displays the marks of its own constitutive movements, and in which it suggests something yet-to-come without prescribing what form that something will take. Granting primacy to capturing the moment, the sketch manifests as the dramatic presentation of a scene or the imprint of characters, as I will discuss in Chapter Three. As a keen reader from an early age who was able to mimic certain styles and tones even in her juvenilia, Woolf's understanding of the literary sketch draws from the historical popularity of the genre, with an awareness of its rhetorical flourishes and performances as well as the formal possibilities generated by its capacity to remain skilfully amateurish and unfinished.

1.4 Sketches in Woolf's Library

From the contents of her library, it can be deduced that Woolf would have known about the sketch as a 'historically perceived' generic category (per Todorov); that is, as a genre with an identifiable literary history, market and readership.⁸⁶ Before moving on to discuss in the next chapter Woolf's prolific use of the term 'sketch', here I want to outline some of the

⁸⁴ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 38.

⁸⁵ Wegner, 'Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand"', p. 58.

⁸⁶ Unless otherwise stated, all citations are to the editions included in Appendix A, from King and Miletic-Vejzovic (eds), *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf*, <<http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/onlinebooks/woolflibrary/woolflibraryonline.htm>> [accessed 3 April 2017].

most intriguing examples that appear in the library. While there is unfortunately not enough space in this thesis to perform a close intertextual reading of any of the sketchbooks in her library, the following marks a starting point for future research.

Most of the sketches contained in the Woolfs' library are canonical British Romantic texts,⁸⁷ including William Blake's *Poetical Sketches* (a facsimile of the 1783 edition), two editions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* [1817], Thomas De Quincey's *Autobiographic Sketches, 1790-1803* [1853], and Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery* [1824]. Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, as Brian Wilkie points out, 'has a unique kind of interest, as his only published book in letterpress and by far his earliest work'.⁸⁸ Wilkie writes: 'In its wild mixture of moods, its diversity of forms, and its technique (especially prosodic technique), it still strikes many as a work *sui generis*'.⁸⁹ *Poetical Sketches* invokes the generic and formal variety of the sketch, containing a combination of odes, 'songs', 'An Imitation of Spenser', and a 'Prologue *Intended for a Dramatic Piece of King Edward the Fourth*' (my italics). While paradigmatic of the literary sketchbook in general, *Poetical Sketches* may be a key point of specific reference for the aesthetics and generic hybridity of Woolf's *Monday or Tuesday*, with its formal variety, its originary singularity, and the possibility of mechanically printing a sketchbook that it demonstrates. While there is much more work to be done on the influence of Blake on Woolf more generally,⁹⁰ I want to highlight *Poetical Sketches* as a potential starting point for further explorations.

Blake's rhetorical framing of the book in a self-deprecating and apologetic manner is a key feature of the discourse of the sketch that Woolf frequently echoes. She uses Blake's 'Advertisement' printed in the opening pages to *Poetical Sketches* – which claims to be the 'production of untutored youth', with 'irregularities and defects to be found in almost every page' – to illustrate the kind of apologetic preface that contributes to rhetorical self-deprecation as a key convention of the sketch:

⁸⁷ On Woolf and Romanticism, see Daniel T. O'Hara, *Virginia Woolf and the Modern Sublime: The Invisible Tribunal* (London: Palgrave, 2015).

⁸⁸ Brian Wilkie, 'Reviewed Work: *Speak Silence: Rhetoric and Culture in Blake's "Poetical Sketches"* by Mark L. Greenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996)', *Modern Language Review* 94.2 (April 1999): 503-4; 503. See also Robert F. Gleckner's *Blake's Prelude: "Poetical Sketches"* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) (cited by Wilkie, p. 504).

⁸⁹ Wilkie, 'Reviewed Work', p. 504.

⁹⁰ Michael Black is currently working on a thesis at the University of Glasgow entitled "'Seeing and Writing": Affinities between William Blake and Virginia Woolf'. On Woolf's juvenile visual sketches copying from Blake, see Diane F. Gillespie, *The Sisters' Arts: Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), pp. 24-8.

[The sketch] relies on apologetic prefaces and errata sheets to allow errors to clamor quietly for virtuosity. The sketch flaunts its imperfections so that readers and viewers can imagine what the artist might truly have accomplished with the proper tools, time, and education, or so that the work appears more authentic.⁹¹

In his preface, Blake looks back on his sketches with a declaredly more skilled eye, but claims that they have been uncorrected.⁹² Though Woolf does not include such a preface in *Monday or Tuesday*, her comments in the letter to Smyth retrospectively attribute to it the quality of an unskilled, yet generative, sketchbook.

As another key text in Woolf's library, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* combines literary criticism and theory with philosophical and character sketches, as well as with 'digression and anecdotes' (X), 'a passionate exhortation to those who early in life feel themselves disposed to become authors' (XI), 'requests and premonitions' (XII), and 'remarks' (XXI).⁹³ His drawing attention to kinds of speech act in the contents list is apt: Woolf writes of Coleridge, in her review of *The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1917), as 'a wonderful, ridiculous, impossibly loquacious old gentleman' (E II 221).⁹⁴ In that review, she also draws attention to his infamy for leaving things unfinished:

We have, of course, to take into account the fact that he never produced any complete work of criticism. We have only imperfect reports of lectures, memories of talk, notes scribbled in the margins of pages. His views are therefore scattered and fragmentary, and it is usual to lament the ruin wrought by opium upon the vast and enduring fabric which should have been built from these broken stones. But this mania for size savours rather of megalomania. There is a great deal to be said for small books. It is arguable that the desire to be exhaustive, comprehensive, and monumental has destroyed more virtue than it has brought to birth. In literary criticism at least the wish to attain completeness is more often than not a will o' the wisp which lures one past the occasional ideas which may perhaps have truth in them towards an unreal symmetry which has none. (E II 223)

Woolf here casts Coleridge as *the* archetypal sketch-writer, at the same time as replicating the discourse of 'truth' surrounding Gilpin's defence of the sketch. The fragmentation, brevity and unfinished qualities of the sketch are invoked in order to affirm a sense of subversive freedom, undermining conventional forms and generic requirements of literary criticism, and to posit that there is more insight in the kind of scribbling that has –

⁹¹ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 5.

⁹² William Blake, *Poetical Sketches*, (ed.) Richard Herne Shepherd (London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1868), p. 2. See also Michael Phillips, 'Blake's Corrections in *Poetical Sketches*', *Blake Newsletter* IV (1970): 40-47.

⁹³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1975).

⁹⁴ Woolf also cites Coleridge in her 1917 review of J. E. Spingarn's *Creative Criticism: Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste* (Henry Holt & Co., 1917) (E II 122-4).

supposedly – no need to be completed. This is one of the instances in which Woolf most explicitly elevates the quality of the sketch above the finished and composed work.

Yet there is also, in her contact with and understanding of the sketch, a nuance that raises the possibility of the sketch being aesthetically complete. De Quincey's *Autobiographic Sketches*, as Woolf discusses in her essay 'Impassioned Prose' (*E IV* 361-9), presents visions of inspired poetic genius in prose, which greatly influenced Woolf.⁹⁵ She discusses this text as a model for unconventional memoir, biography and historiography. Woolf repeatedly refers to De Quincey's scene-making in these sketches, and in the second *Common Reader* (1932), in her essay on 'De Quincey's Autobiography', she attributes to these sketches certain qualities that nuance the ideas of the scene, finish and vision as they relate to poetic prose:

Such passages occur naturally, for they consist of visions and dreams, not of actions or dramatic scenes [...] we are not made to think of him, De Quincey, as we read. If we try to analyse our sensations we shall find that we are worked upon as if by music – the senses are stirred rather than the brain. [...] The emotion is never stated; it is suggested and brought slowly by repeated images before us until it stays, in all its complexity, complete. (*E V* 453)

Woolf identifies a kind of 'finished and composed' sketch in De Quincey's volume, relating the carefully considered poetic rhythms and resonances of his prose to a quality that is at once saturated with detail and vague in overall impression. She continues: 'his power lay in suggesting large and generalised visions; landscapes in which nothing is seen in detail; faces without features; the stillness of midnight or summer; the tumult and trepidation of flying multitudes; anguish that for ever falls and rises and casts its arms upwards in despair' (*E V* 454-5). Like Coleridge, Woolf points out that De Quincey was 'profusely and indiscriminately loquacious', but that he was also 'the most careful of artists. Nobody tunes and modulates the cadence of a sentence more carefully and more exquisitely' (*E V* 455).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ See Elsa Högberg, 'Woolf, De Quincey and the Legacy of "Impassioned Prose"' in Elsa Högberg and Amy Bromley (eds), *Sentencing Orlando: Virginia Woolf and the Morphology of the Modernist Sentence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2018), pp. 60-76. See also 'De Quincey's Autobiography' (*E IV* 452-8); 'The English Mail Coach' (*E I* 365-8).

⁹⁶ On De Quincey's affinity for the aesthetics of the sketch, via Pater, see also Kore, "'The Nameless Spirit'", p. 132. She qualifies, however, that 'De Quincey is an artist of the fragment, and not of the sketch. His diffuse essays carry within themselves the same implications as are found in the fleeting and evocative sketch, but they are long precisely where the sketch is short. De Quincey's aesthetic dilemma shows that a fragment becomes a sketch directly in proportion to how independently it stands in its individual time-sense and space-sense. In this way, what De Quincey is unable to possess with a language that spreads ever wider to accommodate the expansion of his own consciousness, the sketch can suggest elliptically, through allusion and scruple' (p. 134).

The sketch's capacity to appear spontaneous, while actually being carefully put-together, is also demonstrated in Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery*, which was one of the most commercially successful volumes of the period.⁹⁷ Mitford's sketches were first published in book form in 1824 (previously in instalments in *Lady's Magazine* from 1819),⁹⁸ and influenced not only British but emerging American experiments with the sketch: Hamilton cites them alongside Irving's *Sketch Book* as 'paradigmatic of prose portfolios in the antebellum period.'⁹⁹ The Woolfs' library contains the three volumes of Whittaker's 1835 edition.¹⁰⁰ This particular edition was a luxurious one which provides an important point of reference for the aesthetics of the sketchbook as an object and commodity. Sha points out that:

Leaving no possible reading public behind, George Whittaker, Mary Russell Mitford's publisher, commissioned an artist to design woodcuts to embellish and make more elegant her *Sketches* in 1835, after having sold out fourteen editions without them.¹⁰¹

As Garcha discusses, Mitford's collection combines the travel essay and fiction in its use of the picturesque, and the sketches present an idealised version of rural life, appealing with realism but 'a little embellish[ed]' in style as well as presentation, as Woolf's aunt Anne Thackeray Ritchie puts it in her preface to the 1893 edition.¹⁰² Woolf is alert to Mitford's rhetoric of negligibility and posturing spontaneity, noting that in her letters to Sir William Elford, Mitford 'was careful to assure him that she took no pains with her writing, and held literary letters in contempt; but the apology is a little self-conscious' (*E IV 15*). This comes from Woolf's notice in *Nation & Athenaeum*, 18 April 1925, on the publication of *The Letters of Mary Russell Mitford* (Bodley Head, 1925), in which she also notices Mitford's 'now extinct art of writing letters which can go straight to the printer without the erasion [*sic*] of a single word' (*E IV 15*). In her 1920 review of Constance Hill's *Mary Russell Mitford and Her Surroundings*, entitled 'A Good Daughter' (*E III 213-5*), Woolf also draws attention to the carefully contrived nature of Mitford's prose:

⁹⁷ See Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, pp.111; 116-9 and Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 5-14.

⁹⁸ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 5.

⁹⁹ Hamilton, 'Antebellum Literary Sketch', p. 305. Byerly traces the influence of Irving's collection on Dickens in 'Effortless Art', pp. 354-5.

¹⁰⁰ Sha tells us that 'a new volume appeared yearly from 1826-32' ('A Genre Against Genre', p. 150).

¹⁰¹ Sha, 'A Genre Against Genre', p. 153.

¹⁰² Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 9-13; Anne Thackeray Ritchie, 'Preface' to Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village* (London: Macmillan, 1893), p. xxv. Ritchie was the daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray: both father and daughter were sketch-writers. Ritchie was related to Woolf's by way of her father Leslie Stephen's first marriage to Anne's sister Harriet Marian Thackeray.

Miss Mitford was kept hard at work describing *Our Village*. To be a popular writer in the year 1850 it was necessary to write well. The women writers, in particular, wrote very well. Presumably the ordeal of appearing in print was then so severe that no lady went through it without taking pains with her deportment. Jane Austen, moreover, had set the fashion. ‘Of course, I shall copy as closely as I can Nature and Jane Austen’, wrote Miss Mitford. (*E* III 214)¹⁰³

Using Austen, alongside Nature, as ‘copy’ is a telling link to one of the most significant figures for Woolf’s interest in the sketch. Though not immediately obvious since she does not attach the label ‘sketches’ to any of her works, Austen’s influence is important for Woolf, demonstrating the ways in which the character sketch can be used as a mode within the novel.¹⁰⁴ In a diary entry describing a lunch with Violet Dickinson (Thursday 16 Feb. 1922), Woolf specifically identifies Austen’s writing as archetypal of the literary sketch, and points to her use of the sketch in characterisation:

All this, properly strung together, would make a very amusing sketch in the style of Jane Austen. But old Jane, if she had been in the mood, would have given all the other things – no I don’t think she would; for Jane was not given to general reflections; one can’t put in the shadows that appear curving round her [Violet Dickinson/Jane Austen?], and giving her a sort of beauty. She quiets down – though believing the old doctrine that talk must be incessant – and becomes humane, generous; shows that humorous sympathy which brings everything into her scope – naturally; with a touch of salt and reality; she has the range of a good novelist; bathing things in their own atmosphere too, only all so fragmentary & jerky [...] I feel her somehow to be the sketch for a woman of genius. All the fluid gifts have gone in; but not the bony ones. (*D* II 166)

Woolf here conceives of either Violet Dickinson or Austen herself – by her syntax it is unclear which – as a kind of preliminary outline for a stock character (‘a woman of genius’). In order to do so, she sketches a characterisation of Austen’s writing as itself typical of the sketch, using the adjective ‘amusing’ to describe it, and drawing on the sense of the sketch – via caricature and satire – as a comedic mode. In ‘Jane Austen Practicing’ (1922), Woolf reviewed a book of Austen’s juvenile sketches, *Love and Freindship* [*sic*] (1790). She uses terms which foreshadow her letter to Smyth about *Monday or Tuesday*:

¹⁰³ On Mitford and Austen, see Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 5-9. Garcha writes that in ‘her self-comparison to Austen and other novelistic authors [...] Mitford aims at an audience of fiction-readers. She designs her sketches chiefly for entertainment’ (*From Sketch to Novel*, p. 9). See also Woolf’s essay ‘Outlines’ in *The Common Reader I* (1925), which includes four figures, the first being ‘Miss Mitford’. The other figures are Dr Bentley, Lady Dorothy Nevill and Archbishop Thomson (*E4* 196-212). The gist of Woolf’s unfavourable review (in which she mentions *Our Village* in passing [*E4* 193]) is that, as she later puts it in ‘A Sketch of the Past’, this biography ‘leaves out the person to whom things happened’ (*MB* 79), and that, in fact, there is nothing more than an ‘outline’ of Mitford to be seen.

¹⁰⁴ Woolf, ‘Jane Austen’ [1913] (*E2* 9-16) See also Pam Morris’s recent book on *Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2017).

And taking up her pen again she wrote, it is clear, as fast as she could write, and faster than she could spell, for the incredible adventures of Laura and Sophia popped into her head as quick as lightning. She was in the enviable position of having one page to fill and a bubbling fancy capable of filling half a dozen. [...] Spirited, easy, full of fun, verging with freedom upon the sheer nonsense, there can be no doubt that *Love and Freindship* makes excellent reading. (*E* III 333)

Woolf turns the same focus through whimsy, freedom, and spontaneity on Austen's juvenilia as on her own 'wild outbursts of freedom' in *Monday or Tuesday*. She also positions *Love and Freindship* in relation to Austen's novels, reading it as a subtle outline and practice-room, in the same way as critics have approached Woolf's own early short texts. Woolf writes:

[Austen] is only humming a tune beneath her breath, trying over a few bars of the music for *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. But we know that there is no one else who can sing like that. She need not raise her voice. Every syllable comes quite distinctly through the gates of time. And whatever they may say about her genius and her cousins and *Mansfield Park*, we are content to listen all day long to Jane Austen practicing. (*E* III 334-335)

In these musical metaphors, the sketch is both a preliminary exercise and, simultaneously, evidence of the writer's unique genius – an enduring melody because fundamentally and characteristically 'Austen'.

Another key figure for Woolf's contact with the sketch is Henry James. The library collection includes his book on Hawthorne,¹⁰⁵ his *Partial Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1899), for which Woolf designed a spine label and bookplate, and his *Portraits of Places* (London: Macmillan, 1883), in which there is a visual sketch by Leslie Stephen. His other works include *English Hours*, *Italian Hours* and *Transatlantic Sketches*.¹⁰⁶ Woolf reviewed *Portraits of Places* in 1906 (*E* I 124-7), and alights, in a sentence, on what could be a succinct definition some aspects of the literary sketch: 'The spectacle of a professional amateur wandering over the world with his brain exposed like a very sensitive photographic film to the outward aspects of things has a singular charm, and no little value, in this serious age' (*E* I 125). Woolf begins with the analogy of landscape painting, and the difficult relationship between surface and depth that language must negotiate: 'Indeed, the psychology of the land becomes so increasingly complex the more you think of it that the

¹⁰⁵ Henry James, *Hawthorne: English Men of Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1879).

¹⁰⁶ See Thomas H. Pauly, 'Henry James and the Travel Sketch: The Artistry of "Italian Hours"', *Centennial Review* 19.2 (Spring 1975): 108-120. Pauly cites James, from *Transatlantic Sketches*: 'We all know how, in the retrospect of later moods the incidents of early youth "compose", visibly, each as an individual picture, with a magic for which the greatest painters have no corresponding art' (p. 120).

wonder is that any written picture should do more than cast a flimsy and ineffectual veil over the surface' (E I 124). She also gives prominence to James's gaze being that of an 'outsider', an American who sees, or projects, depths of history beneath the English landscape and who is, simultaneously, drawing a self-portrait and presenting a flattering mirror to the English: Woolf suggests that we might make 'an addition to the title of the book, and [read] "or the portrait of an American" after *Portraits of Places*, for both are there. Still, we have no reason to complain if, demanding a picture of ourselves, we see a good deal of America reflected in our own face, when that portrait is, after all, so charming and so true' (E I 127).

W. M. Thackeray's sketchbooks including the *Paris Sketch Book* (1840-1846) and *Irish Sketch Book* (1842-1843) are another set of genre-defining works with which Woolf would have come into contact. As Leslie Stephen's father-in-law from his first marriage, and grandfather to Woolf's half-sister, Laura Stephen, Thackeray's literary presence in the life of Hyde Park Gate was at least partly personal and familial. Recorded in Woolf's library collection (many of which were transferred from Stephen's)¹⁰⁷ are Thackeray's *Miscellaneous Essays, Sketches and Reviews* (London: Smith, Elder, 1885), *The Orphan of Pimlico and Other Sketches, Fragments and Drawings* (London: Smith, Elder, 1876) and *Sultan Stork, and Other Stories and Sketches by William Makepeace Thackeray (1829-1844)*, ed. by Richard Herne Shepherd (London: Redway, 1887). There is also a copy of Joseph Grego's *Thackerayana* (1875). Garcha comments on the 'remarkable diversity' of 'forms [Thackeray's sketches] take, and the topics, settings and time periods to which they refer';¹⁰⁸ and as Lauster points out, his *Punch* series 'The Snobs of England, by One of Themselves' [...] offers a perfect example of sketches reviewing middle-class civilisation "narcissistically", so to speak, with the male observer basically viewing himself'.¹⁰⁹ While there is unfortunately not enough space to do it full justice here, a reading of these sketches in parallel with Woolf's own essay for the Memoir Club, 'Am I a Snob?' (MB 62-78) holds suggestive possibilities.

¹⁰⁷ See Beth Rigel Daugherty, 'Learning Virginia Woolf: Of Leslie, Libraries, and Letters', in Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (eds), *Virginia Woolf & Communities: Selected Papers from the Eight Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 10-16; p. 10 (cited by Diane F. Gillespie, 'Introduction' to King and Miletic-Vejzovic [eds], *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf*).

¹⁰⁸ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁹ Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 316. On Thackeray's *Paris Sketchbook*, see Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel* (2009), pp. 60-109. Alison Byerly's discussion of the interactions between the visual and verbal sketches of the nineteenth century also focuses on the work of Thackeray (alongside Dickens), claiming that they 'appropriated the style and subject matter of the visual sketch in order to cast themselves in the role of the casual artist, the type of dilettantish observer, or *flâneur*, that Walter Benjamin analyses in his essay on Baudelaire' ('Effortless Art', p. 350).

In tracing Thackeray's influence, Carol Hanbery MacKay draws attention to Woolf's inclusion of a particularly sketch-oriented reference to Thackeray's *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.* (1852) (also in the library collection) in *A Room of One's Own*. The narrator wants to examine its manuscript in the Oxbridge library along with Milton's *Lycidas*. MacKay writes: 'She wondered if that style were natural to Thackeray, a question she thought might be answered by studying the revisions'.¹¹⁰ The sense of spontaneity in the sketch is an index to this curiosity about revisions and the composition process of a writer who was, by that point, famous for his *Sketchbooks*, and also points to the gendered access to the tools of writing that Woolf is concerned with. MacKay writes:

Had she examined the manuscript, she would have discovered the absence of significant revision – a fact that her father, Leslie Stephen, had known when he donated the manuscript to Trinity College but which continued to be ignored by the popular tradition that this was the most carefully reworked of Thackeray's novels. [...] if Virginia had been permitted to examine the manuscript of *Henry Esmond*, she would have seen her own aunt's handwriting, which had recorded Anne's famous father's improvisatory method of literary creation.¹¹¹

As well as the lack of revision, what is important here is the reference to Anne Thackeray Ritchie in the role of amanuensis. Ritchie was a sketch-writer in her own right, and Woolf also owned copies of her books, *The Story of Elizabeth with Other Tales and Sketches* (Household ed. Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1869) and *To Esther, and Other Sketches* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869).¹¹² Though there has been relatively little work done on the subject, Amanda Holton has traced the ambivalent importance of Ritchie in Woolf's writing life, including 'the closeness of their literary instincts, subject and style'.¹¹³ She points out that, as a model for Woolf's Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day*, Ritchie was characteristically 'a brilliant, expressive writer, unfortunately possessed of an utterly chaotic mind, an inability to make decisions, to edit, to structure, to make sense, and worst of all, to complete anything'.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Carol Hanbery MacKay, 'The Thackeray Connection: Virginia Woolf's Aunt Anny' in Jane Marcus (ed.), *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 68-96; p. 68.

¹¹¹ MacKay, 'The Thackeray Connection', p. 68.

¹¹² For an analysis of these texts, see Manuela Mourão, 'Negotiating Victorian Feminism: Anne Thackeray Ritchie's Short Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 20 (2001): 57-75.

¹¹³ Amanda Holton, 'Resistance, Regard and Rewriting: Virginia Woolf and Anne Thackeray Ritchie', *English* 57.217 (2008): 42-64; 48.

¹¹⁴ Holton, 'Resistance', pp. 44-5. Holton also cites Elizabeth French Boyd, *Bloomsbury Heritage: Their Mothers and Their Aunts* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976), pp. 76-93; Joanne P. Zuckerman, 'Anne Thackeray Ritchie as the Model for Mrs Hilbery in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*', *Virginia Woolf Quarterly* 1 (1973): 32-46; Jane de Gay, *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 44-66; and Ann Martin, 'Modernist Transformations: Virginia Woolf, Cinderella, and the Legacy of Lady Ritchie', *Woolf Studies Annual* 11 (2005): 33-52. See also Hilary

The paternal lines of influence in the traditions of sketch-writing between Thackeray and Ritchie also flow between Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf. The writing of Woolf's father provides for her a constant sourcebook to which she returns: in 'A Sketch of the Past', she writes "I always read [Stephen's] *Hours in a Library* [1895] by way of filling out my ideas" (*MB* 115).¹¹⁵ In the library, there are two volumes of Stephen's *Sketches from Cambridge* (1865), which had been presented one each to Harriet Marian Thackeray, and Anne Thackeray Ritchie. Stephen's *Sketches from Cambridge* were later reprinted with a Foreword by historian G. M. Trevelyan, who stresses that the Cambridge described by Stephen is not Cambridge as it is now, and that therefore, it is published 'as a piece of history'.¹¹⁶ He also takes care to point out, however, that this is not an objective history claiming accuracy, and highlights Stephen's use of fictional license:

It will be vain to look in this volume for autobiographical details. Indeed, Leslie Stephen has adopted some simple ostrich-like devices to hide his personality. He speaks of himself as fat, whereas we all know he looked like "Phoebus Apollo turned fasting friar"; he speaks of himself as a dilettante classic, whereas he was a hardworking tutor and a mathematician; the account of the buildings and grounds of his college is not recognizable.¹¹⁷

Such oxymoronically 'simple ostrich-like devices' are descriptive of the rhetorical and narrative conventions of the sketch in general. Stephen's sketches mix the historical with the fictional, and the voice of the author-narrator is one which falls somewhere between the real person of Leslie Stephen recounting and commenting on his past experiences, and a completely made-up figure creating a fictionalised, or caricatured, Cambridge. Woolf was later to turn some of these tricks herself in the fictional essay (or essayistic fiction) *A Room of One's Own*, where she writes of Oxbridge and Fernham from the point of view of a narrator who is notoriously slippery ('call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael, or by any name you please') (*AROO* 5), who is neither completely real nor completely made-up, and whose voice is difficult to disentangle from that of the author because of the essayistic mode.¹¹⁸

Newman, *Anne Thackeray Ritchie: Her Influence on the Work of Virginia Woolf* (London: Cecil Woolf, 2008).

¹¹⁵ See also Woolf, 'Hours in a Library' (*E2* 55-61) and 'Impressions of Sir Leslie Stephen' (*E1* 127-131), along with Katherine C. Hill, 'Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen: History and Literary Revolution', *PMLA* 96.3 (1981): 351-62.

¹¹⁶ Leslie Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge* [1865] (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1932), p. vii.

¹¹⁷ Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge*, p. ix.

¹¹⁸ These are figures from a traditional Scottish ballad, 'The Ballad of Mary Hamilton – The Four Marys', which is voiced by Mary Hamilton, a lady-in-waiting in the court of Mary Queen of Scots. See Morag Shiach, explanatory notes to *A Room of One's Own*, 1929 (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 415, n. 2; and Alice Fox,

The rhetoric of the sketch utilised by Stephen attempts to elide, but paradoxically draws attention to, its being postured from the point of view of an insider; Stephen, or his narrator, is part of an elite society from which Woolf's narrator in *Room* is excluded (and to which she does not necessarily want admittance).¹¹⁹ He therefore has to perform certain expected rhetorical moves to entice rather than alienate his readers, the first of which is to deprecate his own authoritative status:

I am not about to present any credentials of my fitness for the task. I would rather escape notice as a man must do who would reveal masonic secrets; I have no fancy for being torn to pieces by a "hideous rout" of infuriate heads of house. Were it possible, I would not even say whether I lived on the banks of the Cam, where the greasy stream stagnates under the quaint old bridges and past lovely gardens, like a worthless print set in a golden frame, or where the Isis sweeps in graceful curves past Christ Church meadows, and reflects the most beautiful of all distant views of an English town. Such concealment would be useless. The initiated would at once determine the point.¹²⁰

The reason for his apparent modesty is the same as that for his fictionalising of Cambridge: it is done in a way that is recognisable and intelligible to 'the initiated', at the same time as it passes their censorship.

The final volume that I want to draw attention to in the Woolfs' collection also has intertextual resonance with *A Room of One's Own*. Closest to Woolf in terms of chronology, there is a copy of W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (3rd ed. Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903).¹²¹ The form of *The Souls of Black Folk* has been discussed by Stanley Brodwin as: 'poetic essays which mix autobiographical and sociological matter'.¹²² The self-deprecation of the sketch described by Sha continues to be in evidence in Du Bois's 1903 volume though with different rhetorical and political significance than where it appears in Romantic poetry. Du Bois writes in his 'Forethought' (the term itself connoting something less formal and definitive than a 'Foreword'):

'Literary Allusion as Feminist Criticism in *A Room of One's Own*', *Philological Quarterly* 63.2 (Spring 1984): 145-61.

¹¹⁹ While she is arguing in *A Room of One's Own* for material comfort and access to education, Woolf is equally aware of the critical insight of the position of the outsider: there is a subtlety to her critique of the kind of elitism and patriarchal state-serving function that the initiated perform: 'I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse perhaps to be locked in' (*AROO* 31).

¹²⁰ Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge*, pp. 2-3.

¹²¹ This volume is inscribed by Norman Maclean Leys, whose book *Kenya* had been published by the Hogarth Press in 1925 and with whom Leonard Woolf had co-authored *Africa: A List of Books Dealing with African Problems* in 1932. See Appendix A.

¹²² Stanley Brodwin, 'The Veil Transcended: Form and Meaning in W. E. B. Du Bois' "The Souls of Black Folk"' in *Journal of Black Studies* 2.3 (1972): 301-21; 305.

I pray you, then, receive my *little* book in all charity, studying my words with me, forgiving *mistake and foible* for sake of the *faith and passion* that is in me, and seeking the *grain of truth* hidden there. I have sought here to sketch, *in vague, uncertain outline*, the spiritual world in which ten thousand thousand Americans live and strive.¹²³

Du Bois tells us that the form of his passion can only be figured by the ‘vague, uncertain outline’ of the sketch. Furthermore, it contains only a ‘grain of truth’, or rather, hides it, and calls upon the reader to do the work of ‘seeking’ for it. While Du Bois is deprecating about his abilities, excused by the form of the sketch, this is coupled with a sense of gravitas in the subject-matter and the idea that the hidden truth can only be figured in a form which presents itself as spontaneous and unmediated. The content that Du Bois is presenting calls for passion more than calculated or disinterested analysis, because it is dealing with real lives, or ‘Souls’. The hidden grain of truth is demonstrated in the phrase ‘ten thousand thousand Americans’: it is easy to skim over this, or to underline it as a grammatical mistake, but the truth is in the realisation that he means ten million, not ten thousand, and that by saying ‘ten thousand thousand’, he makes the reader seek this meaning while simultaneously leaving it in plain sight. The ‘grain of truth’ that Du Bois tells us is hidden in his words has potential resonances with Woolf’s ‘nugget of pure truth’ in *A Room of One’s Own*, where she says there that ‘one cannot hope to tell the truth’ about women and fiction (*AROO* 4). While she protests that she is not an authoritative voice, and that ‘lies will flow from [her] lips’ as perhaps they do from Stephen’s, she concedes that ‘there may perhaps be some truth mixed up in them’ (*AROO* 5). Echoing Du Bois, Woolf writes that: ‘it is for you to seek out this truth’ (*AROO* 5).

While this cursory selection from Woolf’s library points to further work to be done on specific examples and is merely the tip of the iceberg, it has laid out some key contexts for Woolf’s understanding of the sketch as a literary genre. Her engagements with these writers and texts provides a link between the vastly dispersed history and criticism of the literary sketch and her own use of the terminology and the form of the sketch in her writing, which the next chapter will outline in detail.

¹²³ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (1903) (London: W. W. Norton, 1999), p. 5 (my emphasis).

Chapter Two

Sketching Woolf: Virginia Woolf's Discourse of the Sketch

Virginia Woolf never extensively theorised the sketch as a literary form or a genre: that is, she never wrote an essay on the sketch, nor did she discuss its history and development as she did, for example, with the novel.¹ Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the sketch as a significant aesthetic presence in her work, and as a key term in her literary discourse. At the very least, one could make an argument based on what Alistair Fowler calls the 'unconscious nature of generic operations', whereby a genre can be present in the work without the author's intention or even knowledge;² yet Woolf's own prolific use of the term throughout her essays, diaries and letters negates the need for such rhetorical manoeuvres. She shows an oblique awareness of the sketch as a mode of writing with potential for formal and generic experiments. Although she does not explicitly engage the literary sketch as a 'historically perceived genre' (per Todorov), she invokes it frequently in her early journals, in her diaries and letters; in places where she outlines her own composition processes; and in her critical appraisals of other genres such as the novel or biography. The sketch is also an underlying presence in Woolf's critical work: architectural, not fully manifested or foregrounded, it is a structure and a trope that recurs in her thinking about other literary forms and genres. Her sense of the unfinished and amateur aspects of the sketch is coupled with an intuition of its complex technical capabilities, particularly in the layered temporalities of its ability to be a simultaneous record of the past, a plan for the future and an insight or illumination of the present moment. It is through these qualities that the importance of the sketch to Woolf's aesthetics, as something that can survive in a published work, begins to emerge.

Woolf's 'sketch' can profitably be considered alongside the numerous ways and contexts in which it has been used throughout its history, and her use of the term 'sketch' is consistent with the way it has been deployed throughout its history – as an unfinished, amateurish production, apologising for its deficiencies by claiming spontaneity, speed and haphazard execution, and professing to come as close as possible to imprinting what Woolf calls 'the flight of the mind' (*D V* 298). As discussed in Chapter One, the literary sketch is not only a metaphor reliant on visual art, but it also thereby utilises particular strategies

¹ Woolf's literary theory is infused in all her work, but on the historical and stylistic developments of novelistic form and genre, see particularly 'Phases of Fiction' (1929), 'Modern Fiction' (1925), 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (1924) and *The Common Reader, First and Second Series* (1925; 1935).

² Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 25.

around ideas of immediacy, skill and finish in the work of art. In my focus on the literary sketch as it appears in Woolf's work, I will therefore acknowledge as an important context but not seek to repeat the vast body of work on the visual arts in relation to Woolf's work.³ This chapter begins by outlining some of the ways in which the specifically literary sketch has been invoked in Woolf studies, before moving into an excavation of Woolf's own use of the sketch in literary contexts, tracing its appearances as a term used in her letters, diaries, and essays. Since the material from which one could draw this evidence is vast, some aspects of her use of the term must wait to be fully addressed in the appropriate chapters: for example, Woolf makes links between biography, memoir and the character sketch which I address in Chapter Three.

2.1 The Sketch in Woolf Studies: From Memoir to Juvenilia and the Early Journals

Coupled with Woolf's own description of *Monday or Tuesday* in her letter to Smyth, MacCarthy's reference to the sketch in his review points to a textual phenomenon which is highly significant for Woolf's aesthetics, but which has not yet been fully thought through in terms of its literary trajectory or of its specific qualities as they appear in her work.⁴ One of the contexts in which the sketch has been discussed in technical detail, however, is in analysis of Woolf's memoir, 'A Sketch of the Past'. Never published in her lifetime, and elliptically episodic in structure, this unfinished memoir is the most explicit designation of the sketch in Woolf's oeuvre, and the site of most critical interest in her use of the sketch. 'A Sketch of the Past' was written in parallel with Woolf's biography of Roger Fry between 1939 and 1940, and the text is embedded in a configuration of temporal dimensions – recording the past; planning for a future publication of her memoirs; and situating itself firmly in the present moment by commenting on its own writing process as well as that of *Roger Fry*. As the place where she lays out her idea of 'the moment of being', along with her instincts for scene-making and caricature, this memoir is key to identifying Woolf's understanding of the sketch. The specific aesthetic qualities of the memoir as a sketch feature in my discussion of scene-making and character sketching in the next chapter, where it is given prominence; here, however, it is important to establish

³ See, for example, Diane F. Gillespie, *The Sisters' Arts: Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998); Allen McLaurin, *Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973); Maggie Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010).

⁴ For MacCarthy's review, see my Introduction to this thesis, p. 3.

this text as a site of critical engagement with the sketch in Woolf's work, before returning to the beginning of her writing life and tracing the development of the sketch up to that point.

Given the provenance of the sketch as related to the essay, it is appropriate that Elena Gualtieri's *Virginia Woolf's Essays: Sketching the Past* (2000), is one study which focuses in detail on the formal and generic characteristics of the sketch through Woolf's memoir. Gualtieri notes the interest that this memoir holds as 'the only text where Woolf turns back to reflect upon the meaning of the sketch to her life and work':

For a writer who usually displays an intense awareness of the technical and formal aspects of her work, Woolf has left surprisingly few comments on the idea of the sketch as one of her most pervasive and, perhaps, also most instinctive ways of writing. [...] As in most of her other works, the memoirs of 1939-40 look at the sketch in relation to portraits and characterisations on the one hand, and to larger scenes or tableaux on the other. But whether it is involved in the representation of people or of landscapes, the sketch always remains for Woolf the distinctive way in which the past is remembered and recorded.⁵

This observation about Woolf's use of the sketch as a mode of writing in which she figures scenes and characters informs the following chapters of this thesis, but it is important to notice Gualtieri's use of the terms 'instinctive' and 'pervasive', as well as the fact that she invokes the sketch as a form of historiography. It is in the form of the sketch that Woolf reflects on her own personal history, and on literary history as a collection of scenes and characters drawn in broad strokes which remain unfinished. Furthermore, its appearance as a natural and spontaneous way of writing is a rhetorical performance which she utilises frequently. Gualtieri focuses mainly on the sketch as an analogue for the visual, but agrees that the sketch is a generically shifting form or style that recurs in Woolf's writing 'under many guises'.⁶ Her focus on the visual as a common 'end' of the sketch wherever it occurs privileges its condensation and presentation of an image, symbolised in Lily Briscoe's painting in *To the Lighthouse*, modulated into the photographic snapshot in *Three Guineas* and the 'tableaux' of *Orlando*. Her identification of the theatrical content of *Between the Acts*, however, also suggests a more literary context for the sketch.⁷ Gualtieri turns the tables and suggests that, rather than understand the sketch as an effect of Woolf's preoccupation with the visual, her 'extensive use of visual metaphors can in fact only be understood in the light of the reflections on the form of the sketch which organise her

⁵ Elena Gualtieri, *Virginia Woolf's Essays: Sketching the Past* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 95.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 94.

⁷ *Ibid.*

memoirs'.⁸ In her study *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision* (2014), Claudia Olk also devotes a chapter to the sketch and the scene as, again, categories of the visual. More precisely, however, Olk identifies the sketch as a site of interaction between vision and time, specifically in the memoir, where:

Woolf expresses her desire to tap the reservoir of the unseen and forgotten in its continuity outside the reach of the subject's consciousness, to rescue the moment of aesthetically self-conscious being from non-being and oblivion, and to momentarily preserve it in narrative images that appear in the mode of an "as if".⁹

The provisionality of vision in the literary sketch, to be reworked or interpreted later, and its highlighting of the text as a vehicle for perception are foregrounded in Olk's invocation of metaphor as hypothetical mode of utterance: 'as if' we were seeing this image, 'as if' this were the plan for a work that could be completed; 'as if' we could make this scene from the past present by performing it in writing. The presence or present-ness of the sketch depends upon its attempts to access 'the reservoir of the unseen and forgotten'. These are the means by which the sketch throws into relief or brings forth its images, and by which it exists as a simultaneously memorialising and provisional, future-oriented form. We will see in the next chapter how the relationship between surface and depth in Woolf's own conception of the scene contributes to its status as a phenomenon of memory that is both captured and projected in the form of the sketch.

What is often displaced in reading the sketch by analogy with visual art is the very fact of its being text, of its being narrated in time, and of metaphor as a rhetorical device. Olk writes:

The structure of ['A Sketch of the Past'] thus purports to follow the perception of the eye, and, step by step, develops images into narration. This sense of becoming that is inscribed into the unfolding narrative exemplifies what classical rhetoric knew as *enargeia*, the capacity of language to create images, which turn the reader or listener into a viewer.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

⁹ Claudia Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 116-47; p. 118. Olk's study explores 'vision and its potentialities as a metaphor, a process, and a formal and structural means of creating narrative reality and perceptual cognition in literature' (p. 7). See also Claudia Olk, 'The Poetics of the Sketch: Virginia Woolf's Family History in the Charleston Bulletin Supplements' in P. E. Firchow, & H. J. Real (eds) *The Perennial Satirist: Essays in Honour of Bernfried Nugel* (Münster, Germany: Lit, 2005), pp. 163-81.

¹⁰ Olk, *Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 122. See also Savina Stevanato, *Visuality and Spatiality in Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), which highlights the distinction between *enargeia* and *energeia* (p. 46-7): '*Energeia* represented a shift from subject matter to form' (p. 46). She also identifies this a feature of the sketch (*The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 2).

The provisional vision of the sketch is performative, dramatising lyrical description, through which Olk reads the sketch as a performance of subjectivity and of the Woolfian ‘moment of being’. The sketch presents itself as a moment of insight that separates off from the ‘cotton wool of daily life’ and, Olk argues, ‘creates the present as a platform from which the narrative can cast itself into the role of a preliminary stage pointing towards a future fulfilment’.¹¹ At the same time, ‘in looking back and recording memories, it seeks to reconnect the work and the subject to its origins in an anachronistic and a-temporal way’.¹² Thus, the sketch is a meta-fictional and performative instrument for recording the past, an imprint which is both permanent and unfinished: it is a projective vision of something yet to come, in which the significance or potentialities of the passing or passed moment can be retrospectively activated.

In this sense, it is perhaps unsurprising that the aesthetics of the sketch as a brief outline of characters and scenes book-end Woolf’s writing life. Coupled with its memorial function, its practical use as training exercise is present in some of the earliest examples of Woolf’s writing. Produced with Vanessa Bell and Thoby Stephen when Virginia was between the ages of ten and thirteen, Woolf’s (that is, Virginia Stephen’s) juvenile spoof-newspaper the *Hyde Park Gate News* has recently been published in an edition by Gill Lowe (2005). As a common pastime of Victorian childhood,¹³ this family news bulletin provided amusement for the Stephen children, and their parents. It includes satirical exercises in certain writing styles – for example, the love letter and advice correspondence – set out in conventional newspaper columns, as well as stories of the family who are sometimes fictionalised (Laura Stephen is ‘Her Ladyship of the Lake’). As Lowe points out, the children also write themselves in as characters (‘the juveniles’).¹⁴ The 1891 ‘Cristmas Number’ [*sic*] includes a sketchy ‘Ghost Story’ about two ‘haunted houses’ in St Ives – a doubling which possibly foreshadows that of the ghosts and narrator in ‘A Haunted House’ – and contains visual sketches which provide the cover for Lowe’s

¹¹ Olk, *Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 121. On the moment (of vision), see also Bryony Randall, *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 6-7, 157-58.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Hermione Lee, ‘Foreword’ to *Hyde Park Gate News: The Stephen Family Newspaper*, ed. by Gill Lowe (London: Hesperus, 2005), p. vii. Lee writes: ‘It is much in debt, not just to the Stephen children’s favourite magazine *Tit Bits* (with its jokes, advice and correspondence columns) but to all the reading they grew up with: *The Rose and the Ring* by Thackeray [...]; Surtees’ ‘Jorrocks’ stories, *Punch*, Edward Lear and the Alice books, the Grossmith brothers’ *Diary of a Nobody* (contemporaneous with the *Hyde Park Gate News*), *The Swiss Family Robinson*, Joel Chandler Harris’s ‘Uncle Remus’ stories, and Julia Stephen’s own stories for children’ (p. vii-viii). See also Leila Brosnan, ‘Our Special Correspondent’: Rediscovering the Juvenile Journalism’ in *Reading Virginia Woolf’s Essays: Breaking the Surface of Silence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997), pp. 1-15.

¹⁴ Gill Lowe, ‘Hyde Park Gate News’, *Literature Compass* 4.1 (2007): 243-51; 249-50.

volume: ‘a picture of the celebrated author Mr Leslie Stephen’ and a ‘Story *not* needing words’ (*HPGN* 18-19). The *News* also includes riddles, jokes, poems and serialised short stories such as ‘A Cockney’s Farming Experiences’ and its ‘sequel’, ‘The Experiences of a Pater-Familias’. The early use of the sketch as skit in *Hyde Park Gate News* provided a training in satire which continues in Woolf’s essays and fiction. It is also reproduced in Julian and Quentin Bell’s later imitation of their mother’s childhood family newspaper, *The Charleston Bulletin Supplements* (The British Library, 2013). Created with their aunt Virginia Woolf, who provided the words to Quentin’s drawings, the *Supplements* also display the sketch as both a literary and a visual form, and are the subject of Olk’s essay on ‘The Poetics of the Sketch’ (2005). There, she relates Woolf’s interest in the form to a ‘distinctly Platonic concern with light and illumination’,¹⁵ an observation which Julia Briggs has also made, reading Woolf’s short fiction as ‘a sketchbook in which she renewed her search for “the essential thing”’.¹⁶

David Bradshaw, in his preface to the *Charleston Bulletin Supplements* highlights their whimsical use of the sketch, as ““fertile & intimate” trifles that were concocted in an instant simply to amuse’,¹⁷ as well as suggesting, via the link with *Hyde Park Gate News*, ‘something more nostalgic at play in [Woolf’s] readiness to write these sketches with her nephew’.¹⁸ These ‘trifles’, then, are generically, visually and temporally inflected with the aesthetics of the sketch: spontaneous, not serious, but also generative, and Olk points out

¹⁵ Claudia Olk, ‘The Poetics of the Sketch’, p. 168. Cf. Abrams reading of Platonic aesthetic theory as mimetic rather than expressive, and therefore aligned with the mirror rather than the lamp: ‘The title of the book identifies two common and antithetic metaphors of the mind, one comparing the mind to a reflector of external objects, the other to a radiant projector which makes a contribution to the objects it perceives. The first of these was characteristic of much of the thinking from Plato to the eighteenth century; the second typifies the prevailing romantic conception of the poetic mind’ (‘Preface’ to *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. viii).

¹⁶ Julia Briggs, *Reading Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006), p.172. Much has been written on Woolf and Platonic philosophy: as well as Meisel’s *The Absent Father*, which triangulates Woolf’s Platonism through Pater, see Lorraine Sim, ‘Virginia Woolf Tracing Patterns through Plato’s Forms’, *Journal of Modern Literature* 28.2 (2005): 38-48; Brenda Lyons, *Textual Voyages: Platonic Allusions in Virginia Woolf’s Fiction* (Doctoral Thesis: University of Oxford, 1995); Brenda Lyons, ‘Virginia Woolf and Plato: The Platonic Background of Jacob’s Room’ in Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (eds) *Platonism and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 290-97. Lyons also gave a paper entitled ‘Platonic Sketches: Literary Appreciation and Revolutionary Resistance in the Shorter Fiction’ at the Thirteenth International Conference on Virginia Woolf (‘Woolf in the Real World’, 2003), but unfortunately, it is not published in the conference proceedings and I have been unable to obtain a copy.

¹⁷ David Bradshaw, ‘Preface’ to Virginia Woolf and Quentin Bell, *The Charleston Bulletin Supplements* (London: The British Library, 2013), p. ix. See also Claudia Olk, ‘The Art of “Scene Making” in the *Charleston Bulletin Supplements*’, *Literature Compass* 4.1 (2007): 252-62. Olk writes that these texts ‘interlac[e] the painter’s and the poet’s sketches in their illustrations and narrative pieces [...] the delicate, and sometimes seemingly random domestic scenes [...] resemble the short-lived intensity of Woolf’s “moments of being”’ (p. 255).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. viii.

that Woolf's collaboration with her nephew on these *Supplements* occurred 'during her most prolific years', between 1923 and 1927.¹⁹

David Bradshaw has consistently identified the sketch in Woolf's unpublished work, particularly in his edition of *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches*. Christine Reynier addresses the 'visual aspect of the sketch' raised by this volume, writing that: 'through the term "sketch", [Bradshaw] points to a different direction [in approach to Woolf's short fiction], reducing on the one hand the texts to mere sketches, incomplete forms, while enhancing their visual aspect and underlining the analogy with painting'.²⁰ Bradshaw's volume is the only publication of Woolf's writing to date that gives the subtitle 'sketches' ('A Sketch of the Past' being published in a volume entitled *Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings*), and as a collection of scenes and characters, or caricatured 'types', it includes 'Carlyle's House', 'Miss Reeves', 'Cambridge', 'Hampstead', 'A Modern Salon', 'Jews', and 'Divorce Courts'. The implications of this book for the existence of the sketch in Woolf's oeuvre are far greater than simply highlighting the analogy of visual art: it raises questions about states of publication and generic instability, testing the boundaries between diary, memoir, writing exercises, and short fiction. It combines the operations of the sketch as a historically perceived genre with the sense in which the sketch refers to private, unfinished drafts or, as Reynier notes, 'incomplete forms'. The pertinence of the sketch as a generic term for Woolf's unpublished drafts is raised by Bradshaw's volume in that they are apprentice pieces, practicing outlines of people and places, and create a reservoir of images and techniques for her to draw from later: the early journals are examples of sketchbooks which Woolf did not publish, as a counterpoint to *Monday or Tuesday* which she did.²¹ Bradshaw justifies his use of the subtitle 'and Other Sketches' by invoking Woolf's own use of the term in her earlier 1903 journal, which had, like the 1909 one Bradshaw publishes here for the first time, included titled sketches, a contents page and page numbers. The 1903 journal was never published in Woolf's lifetime, but was included in Mitchell A. Leaska's *A Passionate Apprentice* (1990). The latter is another important volume for investigating Woolf's use of the sketch and provides much of the material discussed in detail below.

¹⁹ Claudia Olk, 'Introduction' to *The Charleston Bulletin Supplements* (London: The British Library, 2013), p. 1.

²⁰ Reynier, *Virginia Woolf's Ethics*, p. 9.

²¹ Clara Jones has also recently given the titles 'The Cook Sketch' (1931) and 'The Morley Sketch' (1905) to material found in Woolf's notebooks (Morgan Library, New York; Monk's House Papers, Sussex University), published in appendix to her *Virginia Woolf: Ambivalent Activist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2016). See also Clara Jones, 'Virginia Woolf's 1931 "Cook Sketch"', *Woolf Studies Annual* 20 (2014): 1-23.

There are, following this material, multiple directions from which one could approach the generic flexibility achieved by the sketch in relation to Woolf's writing – for example, its presence in her essays, in the journalistic tradition that *Hyde Park Gate News* and *The Charleston Bulletin Supplements* pastiche, or in her many biographic character sketches. By focusing on the aesthetics of the sketch as it appears in Woolf's published work, taking *Monday or Tuesday* as a case-study, I am beginning the investigation with the sketch as it informs her experiments in fiction specifically, suggesting its importance as a general aesthetic presence for what remains her main authorial concern, her work in the novel. James Naremore has identified in Woolf's novels themselves a 'sketchlike quality' which he traces to her experiments in *Monday or Tuesday*, and which he defines in terms of the 'emblematic moment'.²² Similarly to Amanpal Garcha's analysis of the sketch in Victorian fiction outlined in the previous chapter, Naremore identifies moments of lyrical description which interrupt the plot as instances of the sketch appearing in Woolf's novelistic works. While granting prominence to the sketch's relation to the novel might appear to re-assert the dominance of the novels in Woolf studies, it is a crucial point of focus since Woolf's interest in the sketch emerges explicitly in relation to 'the finished and composed work' while writing *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925. As a form, the sketch signifies and is realised belatedly; Woolf realises it post-*Monday or Tuesday*, which, as critics at the time had already noted, achieved and expressed the qualities of this form. *Monday or Tuesday* combines the aesthetics of the sketch as it appears in the early journals – as a technical training exercise and a gathering of material to be reworked later – with a more deliberately curated and complete piece of art, for which she commissioned woodcuts from her sister and whose reception by a reading public was a source of great anxiety (*D* II 106-11).²³ In order to speak of *Monday or Tuesday* as a complete piece of work which nevertheless retains the quality of the sketch, its interactions with the novels are key: not only do they position it belatedly or retrospectively as a Woolfian sketchbook, but they throw into relief its effects of the 'unseen and forgotten' architectural qualities of the sketch.

2.2 'Suppose one can keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work?'

²² James Naremore, *The World Without a Self: Virginia Woolf and the Novel* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1973), pp. 3-4.

²³ On Woolf's 'agony' of publication, see also Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 387 (p. 168, n. 48 in Chapter Five of this thesis).

While finishing her draft of *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925, Virginia Woolf writes a line in her diary which provides a hook for her discourse on the sketch, and to which I will repeatedly return throughout this thesis: ‘Suppose one can keep the quality of the sketch in a finished & composed work?’ (*D II* 312). In raising this question, Woolf both identifies the sketch as a stage in the composition process, and transposes it into an essential quality or a thing in itself which she actively wanted to incorporate into the finished work: ‘That is my endeavour’ (*D II* 312). This desire reflects a deepening interest in the aesthetics of the sketch around this time in her literary career. Steven Putzel points out that while ‘writing the first version of her play *Freshwater* in 1922 [...] a liberating experience, partly because she viewed it as “spirited fun” rather than as serious work’, Woolf was ‘wishing that she could write “The Hours [*Mrs Dalloway*] as freely & vigorously as I scribble *Freshwater*”’.²⁴ Her 1925 diary entry refines these terms and illuminates multiple aspects of the sketch, refracted through the idea of finishing. Woolf writes:

It is a disgrace that I write nothing, or if I write, write sloppily, using nothing but present participles. I find them very useful in my last lap of Mrs D. There I am now – at last at the party, which is to begin in the kitchen, & climb slowly upstairs. It is to be a most complicated spirited solid piece, knitting together everything & ending on three notes, at different stages of the staircase, each saying something to sum up Clarissa. Who shall say these things? Peter, Richard, & Sally Seton perhaps: but I don’t want to tie myself down to that yet. Now I do think this might be the best of my endings, & come off, perhaps. But I have still to read the first chapters, & confess to dreading the madness, rather; & being clever. However, I’m sure I’ve now got to work with my pick at the seam, if only because my metaphors come free, as they do here. Suppose one can keep the quality of the sketch in a finished & composed work? That is my endeavour. (*D II* 312)

Woolf begins here by linking sloppy writing with the present tense, an active scene-making practiced in the diary which is nevertheless helping her to finish *Mrs Dalloway*. As she plans it, she narrates in the present tense, looking at herself from a distance: ‘There I am now’. She navigates suggestions of the past and the future at the same time, elongating the past into the present and suspending the future: ‘at last at the party, which is to begin’. As suggested by her planning ‘still to read the first chapters [...] to work with my pick at the seam’, for Woolf, concluding and making a ‘solid piece’ both suspends and necessitates re-reading again from the beginning: re-working the seams to make sure they hold; going back multiple times over the lines already laid. In writing about completing this book, she

²⁴ Steven Putzel, *Virginia Woolf and the Theater* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012), p. 120. Cf. Henry James’s titles for his collections of literary sketches, *Italian Hours* and *English Hours*, noted in the previous chapter.

shifts between the slightly contradictory effects of eventually having to tie it down, and that of making it ‘come off’. This is expressed in her metaphor about her metaphors: she might need to unpick the seam to remove some of them, or she might be suggesting the need to test them to make sure they are secure. Her appraisal of her own metaphors not only suggests that they might be loose, but the ambiguity of her phrasing also raises the sense that she must test their solidity because they came spontaneously – ‘my metaphors come free, as they do here’. With this metaphor, Woolf moves from describing the laborious process of redrafting and concluding *Mrs Dalloway* to wondering about the ‘quality of the sketch’. It is unclear what the ‘quality of the sketch’ that she wants to preserve actually is; but it is also unclear what she means by ‘the finished and composed work’. Attention to the language of this diary entry suggests that the dialectic she is trying to achieve is a function of the opposition between concluding and beginning (again); between the deferral of finally summing up by remaining continually in the present; and between sloppy writing and knitting together a tight, solid piece.

The possibility of summing up is one which is thematically raised and undercut in *Mrs Dalloway* itself: though Woolf ends with the line supposedly summing up, ‘for there she was’ (*MD* 213), Peter Walsh thinks (in brackets) that ‘([...] it was a mere sketch, he often felt, that even he, after all these years, could make of Clarissa)’ (*MD* 85). The word ‘mere’ often precedes the word ‘sketch’: utilising a rhetorical strategy of self-deprecation that Sha finds in the sketch,²⁵ it appears three times in Woolf’s letter to Smyth describing the importance of *Monday or Tuesday* in her artistic development. As in that letter, this diary entry on *Mrs Dalloway* emphasises the combination of ephemerality and permanence, suggestion and statement, insignificance and signification; it raises the question of readability and the potentially violent reduction in the sketch as a means of knowing and creating character, reflected in Peter Walsh’s attempts to ‘make [a sketch] of Clarissa’. These nuances are expressed in the dual temporality that the sketch carries of finally beginning – having at last arrived at the point where one can begin ‘after all these years’ – as both a process of recovering and closing; of undoing, pulling apart and re-inscribing. These actions are performed in both Peter’s attempt to read and re-write Clarissa, and in Woolf’s ending of the novel. They are repeated later when she looks back on *Monday or Tuesday* in her letter to Smyth, where she outlines that book’s compositional importance and liberating qualities, at the same time as she affirms that she ‘won’t reprint’ those very texts that are the most vigorous ‘wild outbursts of freedom’ (*L* IV 231). While

²⁵ On Sha’s identification of the self-deprecating rhetoric of the sketch, see p. 45-6 of the present thesis. For Woolf’s letter to Smyth, see p. 1.

she leaves both the ‘quality of the sketch’ and the ‘finished and composed work’ undefined, the question that Woolf raises (whether ‘one can keep the quality of the sketch in a finished and composed work’) not only shows that she was, at that point, thinking about the aesthetics of the sketch in its own right, but that she saw in it a formally experimental potential that would be beneficial rather than detrimental to her fiction. This diary entry reveals that Woolf actively wanted to incorporate the sketch into her reforming of the novel as a genre, carrying as it does a sense of provisionality and experiment.

It has been often remarked that Woolf’s health suffered most intensely in the period around finishing her novels. Anna Snaith relates this to the private/public dichotomy that is encountered at the moment of finishing a piece for publication:

The most difficult period for Woolf in the process of making the text public seemed to be the moment at which she started revisions. As Leonard Woolf writes, “The weeks or months in which she finished a book would always be a terrific mental and nervous strain upon her and bring her to the verge of a mental breakdown”.²⁶

It is the moment between ‘starting revisions’ and ‘finishing a book’ – the point where finishing is in sight – that causes a state of anxiety. By incorporating the sketch, Woolf can deflect the aversion she has to the act of finishing; for example, in 1905 when she writes: ‘Worked at my Magic Greek article this morning, which wanted finishing, & finishing is what I hate’ (*PA* 254). Nevertheless, to simply externalise Woolf’s resistance to conclusion from its literary effects would be reductive. Judith Allen has shown how Woolf’s incorporation of the unfinished in her essayistic mode of writing (via generic hybridity and a debt to Montaigne) carries gendered political significance, and is linked to the ‘wildness’ that Woolf attaches to *Orlando* as well as to *Monday or Tuesday*, a counterpoint to the ‘composed’ work in an emotional as well as an artistic sense.²⁷ With an ethical dimension invoking ‘the reader’s role in co-creating the text’,²⁸ the wildness of the unfinished sketch suggestively leaves room for the reader’s imagination to complete it, or not. At the same time, this unfinished quality of the sketch also illustrates an aspect of Woolf’s revisiting and recycling of her own previously published material. Republishing a slightly revised version of ‘The Mark on the Wall’, and revising ‘Kew Gardens’ as it appears in *Monday or Tuesday* for a special edition in 1927, Woolf does not finish with these texts. As discussed in the following chapters of this thesis, there are specific images from *Monday or Tuesday*

²⁶ Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 43.

²⁷ Allen, *VW and the Politics of Language* (2010); Judith Allen, ‘*Orlando* and the Politics of (In)Conclusiveness’ in Högberg and Bromley (eds), *Sentencing Orlando*, pp. 274-90.

²⁸ Allen, ‘*Orlando* and the Politics of (In)Conclusiveness’, p. 278.

that she draws from later on. *Mrs Dalloway* also has echoes and projections outside of itself, with appearances of its characters in the earlier novel, *The Voyage Out*, and in the stories later collected as *Mrs Dalloway's Party: A Short Story Sequence* (ed. by Stella McNichol, 1973). Characters from preceding novels also turn up at Clarissa's party in *Mrs Dalloway*, including Mrs Hilbery from *Night and Day*, and Clara and Mrs Durrant from *Jacob's Room*. This type of proliferation, using character sketches as a set of variations on a theme, creating suggestively interlocked worlds, is one of the ways in which Woolf's texts effect a sense of being unfinished and of requiring the reader's participation in drawing such lines of connection.

As Olk has noted, Woolf wanted to retain the quality of the sketch in dialectical tension with the finished and composed work in her critical writing as well as in her novelistic work. Drawing on a diary entry in which Woolf wants to 'invent a new critical method', Olk writes that:

Woolf includes the notion of the sketch in her poetic reflections and expresses the desire to develop a new way of writing which both preserves the unfinished nature of the sketch, and also displays the precision of the complete work: 'I wish I cd invent a new critical method – something swifter & lighter & more colloquial & yet intense: more to the point & less composed; more fluid & following the flight, than my C. R. essays. The old problem: how to keep the flight of the mind, yet be exact. All the difference between the sketch & the finished work' (22 June 1940; *D V* 298).²⁹

In this later entry, the syntax is too slippery to say which are definitely qualities of the sketch and which refer to the finished work: Woolf appears to align the sketch with the swift, light and colloquial, but it is not entirely clear whether 'intense' maps onto the sketch or to the 'finished work' – she uses 'yet' presumably to distinguish it from the three preceding qualities, but on the other hand, with the use of '&', she might mean to suggest the continuation of intensity into the 'finished work' ('& yet' in the sense of 'still' or 'remaining' intense). Read alongside the earlier diary entry, we can place 'composed' with 'the finished work', and venture that being 'to the point' is something she sees in the sketch. She then, however, appears to counterpoint 'the flight of the mind' (aligned with the swiftness of the sketch) to the ability to 'be exact': in short, is being exact and to the point a quality of the sketch, or of the finished and composed work? Swiftness and precision might be combined in the simple lines of the sketch. In attempting to unpick the two threads of Woolf's terms here, it seems that it is already impossible to completely disentangle the sketch from the finished and composed work. Given that she is repeating

²⁹ Olk, *Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 117.

terms from the first diary entry almost sixteen years later, this formulation – thinking of the mode of the sketch as integral to the finished and composed work – is highly significant to her experiments with ‘new methods’ in both fiction and criticism. Invoking the sketch as a category of aesthetic vision, and arguing that Woolf’s ‘novels create a kind of vision that is proper to the text itself – a vision that reflects on the experience of seeing’,³⁰ Olk situates the supposed incompleteness of the sketch as central to Woolf’s literary experiments more generally: ‘It is above all the very sense of ostentatious incompleteness inherent in the notion of the sketch which becomes a particular strength of Virginia Woolf’s fiction’.³¹ As the word ‘ostentatious’ suggests, the question of finishing, and of what counts as ‘finished and composed’, refers not only to ending the process of writing, but also to the level of detail and polish in the presented work. In this regard, when Woolf asks whether ‘one can keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work’ (*D II 312*), she evokes – consciously or not – the Romantic debate about whether the visual sketch can be, in itself, an artwork worthy of display, or whether it is only valuable in private. As we will see, this distinction does not always hold.

2.3 Sketches in the Letters and Diaries

As well as using it to refer to her compositional process for works of fiction and criticism which were fully intended to be finished and published, Woolf also frequently utilises the ‘sketch’ as a metaphor for what she does in her private letters and diaries. This quality has been noted especially in the diary by critics including Maggie Humm, who describes the contents of Woolf’s diaries as ‘impressionistic sketches of landscape, weather, architecture, people and exhibitions’.³² Such impressions are also invoked in Woolf’s letters, describing or asking for descriptions of people or scenes, particularly when travelling. She writes to Vanessa Bell: ‘I want a sketch of Sidonia, Griselda, Leslie, Vashti [Angelica]; *a line* on an envelope would be better than nothing’ (*L II 318*; my emphasis). In much of her correspondence with Bell, Woolf asks for ‘sketches’. While she may be asking for visual sketches from her sister as a painter (for example, in 1921: ‘Do send me a sketch of the place – La Tropez’ [*L II 494*]), she also uses the metaphor of the sketch as a way to combine letter-writing with Bell’s understanding of the sketch in a painterly context. Her asking for ‘a line’ points to a shared terminology for visual and verbal details:

³⁰ *Ibid.* p.1.

³¹ *Ibid.* pp. 116-117.

³² Maggie Humm, ‘Virginia Woolf and the Arts’ in Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2010), pp. 1-16; p. 2.

that is, the sketch as a line-drawing, and the line as a sentence. When arranging to look after the Bell children in 1918, Woolf writes to her sister: ‘Perhaps you could let me have a sketch of their hours and meals – what time they go to bed, and whether they sleep in the afternoon – in fact any hint so that I mayn’t get them into bad habits’ (*L* II 304). This sketch has a utilitarian as well as a narrative function, conflating the details of the Bells’ routine with the ability of the sketch to function as an aid or manual (visually illustrated or not), or as a record: it links here with the sense in which Woolf uses it in application to her own diaristic project.³³ In her diary, Woolf sketches portraits of her family, friends and visitors, recording these alongside her composition processes for whatever she is working on simultaneously. Diane F. Gillespie writes that Woolf’s ‘diary entries [are] her equivalent of the visual artist’s sketches, [and] serve in part as exercises for fictional characterizations’.³⁴ She cites an entry that Woolf wrote just after the publication of *Monday or Tuesday* in April 1921: ‘A great deal to say, I suppose: a great many portraits to sketch; conversations to write down; & reflections to work in – had I time; which I have not’ (*D* II 114). Woolf explicitly and repeatedly invokes this idea of the diary as a hasty and incomplete record-keeping sketchbook of visitors’ portraits, most notably in an entry which (we now know) describes the beginnings of her idea for *Orlando*:

One of these days, I shall sketch here, like a grand historical picture, the outlines of all my friends [...] It might be a way of writing the memoirs of one’s own times during people’s lifetimes. It might be a most amusing book. The question is how to do it. (*D* III 156-7)

This projected caricature function of the diary, with the simile comparing it to a ‘grand’ visual artwork, adds dimension to the sketch’s overlaps with memoir and biography, and sees Woolf pondering the formal means of doing so. The accumulation of such outlines has the potential to keep on proliferating, but also to compose a piece of work which affords kaleidoscopic and perhaps comical insight. As well as serving as *aides-memoirs*, these sketches have their own aesthetic qualities. Woolf often comments on the speed and spontaneity with which she wrote in her diary, and of this technique as practice for her more public writing. This private training is also, however, a formal experiment in itself. On Easter Sunday (20 April) 1919, Woolf analyses what she is doing with these diaries:

³³ See also Woolf’s letter to Victoria Ocampo, attempting to arrange to meet in London in 1939: ‘No I am not at the moment in London; but I shall be there next week; and expect to be there, with occasional absences, til the spring when, if there’s no war, we shall drive about France. So let me know, from this vague sketch, what chance there is of meeting’ (*L* VI 309).

³⁴ Gillespie, *The Sisters’ Arts*, p. 171.

I am trying to tell whichever self it is that reads this hereafter that I can write very much better; & take no time over this; & forbid her to let the eye of man behold it. And now I may add my little compliment to the effect that it has a slapdash & vigour, & sometimes hits an unexpected bulls eye. But what is more to the point is my belief that the habit of writing thus for my own eye only is good practise. It loosens the ligaments. Never mind the misses & stumbles. Going at such a pace as I do I must make the most direct & instant shots at my object, & thus have to lay hands on words, choose them, & shoot them with no more pause than is needed to put my pen in the ink. I believe that during the past year I can trace some increase of ease in my professional writing which I attribute to my casual half hours after tea. Moreover there looms ahead of me the shadow of some kind of form which a diary might attain to. I might in the course of time learn what it is that one can make of this loose, drifting material of life; finding another use for it than the use I put it to, so much more consciously & scrupulously, in fiction. What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something loose knit, & yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace any thing, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings a mass of odds & ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, & find that the collection has sorted itself & refined itself & coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life, & yet steady, tranquil composed with the aloofness of a work of art. The main requisite, I think on re-reading my old volumes, is not to play the part of censor, but to write as the mood comes or of anything whatever; since I was curious to find out how I went for things put in haphazard, & found the significance to lie where I never saw it at the time. But looseness quickly becomes slovenly. A little effort is needed to face a character or an incident which needs to be recorded. Nor can one let the pen write without guidance; for fear of becoming slack & untidy like Vernon Lee. Her ligaments are too loose for my taste. (*D I 266*)

Woolf uses similar terms here to those she would later apply to her redrafting and finishing of *Mrs Dalloway*, wanting to reconcile the 'loose knit' elasticity of the diary form, practised in private, with the disciplined writing that she strives for in her published fiction. She sees value in the 'haphazard' and the accidental, and appreciates the way in which it retroactively changes the dominant note of this writing. It can be 'to the point', but only incidentally to its spontaneity and its training function. In trying to retain the sense of speed (closeness to 'the flight of the mind' [*D V 298*]), particularly in making outlines of characters and events, Woolf nevertheless sets herself against the artlessly 'slack & untidy'. 'Looseness' is both a quality that she wants to attain, and a reason, as noted in the *Mrs Dalloway* entry, to go back over the lines of the text and make sure they hold. She needs to balance the unrestricted free play of the writer's own hand and eye with a sense of impersonal, disinterested finish, so that if the diary is to be a serious literary form it must also be projected and 'composed with the aloofness of a work of art'. Later in the year, Woolf goes back over her lines and comments again:

I began reading the first volume of my diary; & I see that its second anniversary is now reached. I don't think the first volume makes such good reading as the last; a proof that all writing, even this unpremeditated scribbling, has its form, which one learns. Is it worth going on with? (7 October 1919; *D I* 304)

The accidental 'form' of 'even this unpremeditated scribbling', its development of a skill, is proven with hindsight and re-reading. Woolf clearly thought it was worth going on with, producing what are now collected in a further five volumes of *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* and legitimately considered a (single) work of art in its own right.³⁵ The automatic 'scribbling' of the amateur diarist is not, she finds, strictly opposed to the scrupulously considered forms of her fiction, which would become increasingly skilful and masterly: that is, Woolf is concerned with the form of the diary in its ability to retain the quality of the sketchbook, but also as a form in itself.

At the same time, while their terms overlap in places, the early journals are separated from *The Diary* in their inclusion of more generically recognisable fictional sketches, intermingling with the diaristic recording of daily events. In his introduction to *Carlyle's House*, referring to the subtitle 'and Other Sketches', Bradshaw writes that 'Woolf's 1909 journal is by no means a daily record of events and/or reflections' but 'functioned primarily as a verbal sketch-book' (*CH* xvii). The fact that this journal, as well as her 1899 and 1903 journals published in Leaska's volume, *A Passionate Apprentice*, contain titled sketches, page numbers and a contents page suggests an attempt to create a collection of 'finished and composed' sketches. These sketchbooks, like the diaries, while they are declaredly intended to have a more utilitarian function than to be aesthetic objects in themselves, also have a literary quality and a self-awareness which goes so far as to imagine a reader – even if it is just a 'later Woolf'. They set themselves up as objects which will reveal their significance belatedly and retrospectively. In doing so, they walk the line between private and public writing, and negotiate the interactions of surface and depth involved in the act of reading. In 1908, Woolf writes:

There are many ways of writing diaries such as these. I begin to distrust description, & even such humorous arrangement as makes a days [*sic*] adventure into a narrative;

³⁵ On Woolf's diaries, see Barbara Lounsbury, *Becoming Virginia Woolf: Her Early Diaries and the Diaries She Read* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014), and *Virginia Woolf's Modernist Path: Her Middle Diaries and the Diaries She Read* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2016); Joanne Campbell Tidwell, *Politics and Aesthetics: The Diary of Virginia Woolf* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008); Joanne Campbell Tidwell, "'But My Diary Has Ever Been Scornful of Stated Rules!': The Diary as Self in Virginia Woolf's Diary", *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 21. 1 (Jan. 2006): 104-21; Ian Blyth, 'Letter Writing and Diary Keeping' in Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (eds), *Virginia Woolf in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), pp. 353-61. See also Judy Simons *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women from Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

I should like to write not only with the eye, but with the mind; & discover real things beneath the show. In default of this - & I shall neither have time nor perseverance for much thought, I know, I shall try to be an honest servant, gathering such matter as may serve a more skilled hand later – or suggest finished pictures to the eye. The fact is, that in these private books, I use a kind of shorthand, & make little confessions, as though I wished to propitiate my own eye, reading later. (PA 385)

Woolf suggests that what she is doing in these journals, in the mode of the sketchbook, is a methodical, though superficial, exercise in collecting, arranging and storing images. In these ‘private books’ she claims to write with and for the eye – references to which are balanced with references to the hands. She uses ‘shorthand’ and is aware that there will be, ‘reading later’, a more developed ‘eye’, using her hands to gather material and to write in a mode ‘as if’ she wants to calm this later reader’s eyes with a superficial collection of images. These images, which are to ‘*suggest* finished pictures’, might later be worked into a narrative written ‘with the mind’ rather than with the eye: the sketch lies on the surface with the physical act of handling and piling up material; writing is suggested to be a deeper mental process. This configuration re-appears in Woolf’s description of the eye in her later essay ‘Street Haunting’ (1930), in which ‘[t]he eye is not a miner, not a diver, not a seeker after buried treasure. It floats us smoothly down a stream; resting, pausing, the brain sleeps perhaps as it looks’ (E IV 482). With these embodied analogies for stages of the composition process, Woolf points to her concern with layering and scene-making, which are discussed in relation to the sketch in the next chapter; but these distinctive stages can also help us to refine our understanding of the meanings she attaches to the term ‘sketch’ beyond the merely spontaneous and unfinished outline.

2.4 ‘to attempt to sketch a draft’: Phases of Composition

Woolf often writes about ‘sketching’ the outline for a section of a novel as something which requires less brain-power than conscientious drafting does; it is something she can do in a rough and relaxed way: sometimes a ‘sketch must serve, since I’m too jaded to write’ (D V 171); or again, ‘Since I’m too stale to work – rather headachy – I may as well write a sketch roughly of the next chapter’ (D V 172). Her qualification of the word ‘sketch’ with ‘roughly’ here suggests that she does not conceive of the sketch as in itself always necessarily or essentially ‘rough’; yet, she repeatedly counterpoints ‘sketching’ to ‘writing’, as seen also in the diary entry discussed above on finishing *Mrs Dalloway*. While working on what was to become the final novel published in her lifetime, *The Years* (1937), Woolf refers to the sketching process as a proliferation of material at odds with ‘writing’ properly:

Let me make a note that it would be much wiser not to attempt to sketch a draft of *On Being Despised*, or whatever it is to be called, until *The P[argiter]s* is done with. I was vagrant this morning & made a rash attempt, with the interesting discovery that one can't propagate at the same time as write fiction. (Sat. 13 April 1935; *D IV 300*)

In this diary entry, 'to sketch' is to perform a kind of propagation in the sense of seeding ideas; it is a primary stage in the creation of a draft. Woolf here subtly distinguishes the sketching process from the function of the draft proper, writing about the 'attempt to sketch a draft' rather than making a sketch that *is* the draft: she positions the sketch as a process rather than a product. In Woolf's terminology, the sketch and the draft are not synonymous: the sketch is not a first draft, but something prior to even that preliminary state. Nevertheless, the sketch comes after the 'note'. While on holiday in Cornwall in 1905, she uses her journal to make 'rough notes to serve as land marks' (*PA 291*): 'This, need I say it, is the kind of rash note an impetuous traveller makes; it is only made because after all, such notes are the things one thinks before one begins to reason or to know' (*PA 310*). If sketching produces a draft, then, what produces a sketch? Is it extrapolated from the note? Or is it overstretching to see distinct categories in these shades of difference? In the phrase 'to attempt to sketch a draft', Woolf suggests that the composition process is one which contains many minutely distinct phases. The 'rash attempt' that she has 'made' does not make a sketch: it remains only a 'vagrant' attempt, an unfulfilled sketch. The sketch is the mediator here between the attempt and the draft. Rather than being a superfluous or tautological insertion in this phrase ('to attempt to sketch a draft'), I suggest that it points to the sketch as something very precise in Woolf's terminology around her composition processes. It is the preliminary of a preliminary – 'to sketch a draft' – but is also a technique and a mode of creation that has to be consciously aimed at: 'to attempt to sketch'. The sketch, as distinct from the attempt and from the first draft, is a specific phase or medium through which the idea must pass before it can be formed into a conventional (provisional) shape as a draft. There is a sense therefore in which, in Woolf's terms, the sketch can and must be 'finished and composed': though it may remain by certain standards 'inarticulate, unprintable' (*L IV 231*), unequal to 'writing', it may also be finished before and in contradistinction to the draft as the work in progress. In 'How it Strikes a Contemporary' (1925), she suggests that: 'It is from note-books of the present that the masterpieces of the future are made' (*E IV 241*), and there is nothing to stop a sketch becoming a masterpiece of its genre, as Woolf's own readings of De Quincey, James and Coleridge outlined in Chapter One suggest. The masterly performance of the

sketch is a distinct possibility in terms of both process and product, demonstrated in the fact that retaining the quality of the sketch is not incompatible with close editing: in fact, it takes a great deal of skill to *appear* unfinished, and the unfinished lends itself to an indefinite practice of reworking and refinement. As with *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf had been thinking of her novel-writing process as re-writing very early on, and suggests the complex temporal situation of the sketch when, drafting *The Voyage Out* (then entitled *Melymbrosia*) in 1909, she wrote to Clive Bell: 'My intention now is to write straight on, & finish the book; & then, if that day ever comes, to catch the first imagination & go over the beginning again with broad touches, keeping much of the original draft, & trying to deepen the atmosphere' (L I 383). The 'first imagination' that Woolf invokes here is ambiguous in the same way as are the free metaphors in the diary entry discussed above: is it the quality of the 'original draft' that she will try to capture, or will she seize the first imaginative impulse that comes to her after she has 'finished' the book in order to start redrafting? The complex temporality attached to the sketch – able to be both a record of the past and a plan for the future, as well as capturing the intensity of the present moment – is deepened by its distinction from the draft in Woolf's terminology. The suggestion here that 'broad touches' characteristic of the sketch can be added in later to the 'original draft', sketching over it in order to 'deepen the atmosphere', suggests that attached to Woolf's use of the sketch are other qualities than the merely rough draft or amateur attempt. As a phase of development for a particular piece of work, there is also a phased development of the sketch in her writing more generally from the early journals to the memoir. These stages and these texts cite each other in using the sketch as both something that can project a future completion, and an unfinished record of the past.

Woolf's use and theorisation of the sketch in her early journals makes it a place in which the writer can be spontaneous, and can practice the technique and repertoire of generic standards. She also highlights the monochromatic and tentative lines of the sketch as a metaphor for simplicity of language and superficial description. In 1903, she writes:

I wish for the sake of this book that I had anything more brightly coloured & picturesque to write here; it seems to me that all my events have been of the same temperate rather cold hued description; I haven't had to use many superlatives. I have sketched faint outlines with a pencil. But the only use of this book is that it shall serve for a sketch book; as an artist fills his pages with scraps & fragments, studies of drapery – legs, arms & noses – useful to him no doubt, but of no meaning to anyone else – so I take up my pen & trace here whatever shapes I happen to have in my head. (PA 186-187)

In this slightly apologetic comment, Woolf introduces the concept of the sketch as an apprentice piece; as a tool for study, particularly of the ability to make characters and scenes. She highlights the utilitarian function of the sketchbook as a collection of ‘scraps & fragments’ which serve as a practice-ground, a ‘training for eye & hand’, as well as a kind of sourcebook collection to which she can return. While in itself it might appear aesthetically weak or ‘faint’, it provides ‘copy’. It is important to note, however, that the ‘shapes’ she sketches are not necessarily drawn from life, nor are they necessarily representational: they are already in her head. In committing their outlines to paper, she is only leaving their ‘trace’ – an idea of the sketch as a simultaneously memoiristic and impressionistic form to which she returns in *A Room of One’s Own*, discussed below.

In the 1903 journal, Woolf also points to the supposedly fundamental spontaneity and honesty of this type of interaction between hand and eye on the surface – which she acknowledges might nevertheless be unpalatable. She apologetically writes that: ‘It is an exercise – training for eye & hand – roughness, if it results from an honest desire to put down the truth with whatever materials one has to hand, is not disagreeable – though often I am afraid decidedly uncouth’ (PA 187). Her syntactically sketchy defence of ‘roughness’ is consistent with the rhetoric of the sketch as a genre, as Richard Sha points out particularly in relation to Gilpin’s defence of the sketch:

Roughness becomes the *sine qua non* of picturesque pleasure [...] The sketch, then, is an especially appropriate way of representing the picturesque because it can be completed with “a few rough strokes” [...] Even more fortuitous, accidental and “negligent strokes” of the brush are now accorded potential intentionality and can be harnessed in the service of roughness. By calling attention to the hand and to the labour – albeit not much labour – behind the bold strokes, roughness proclaims the presence of the artist even as it enhances the truth of the representation.³⁶

Though for Woolf the sketch is not necessarily or not only a product of its roughness, that roughness can nevertheless be invoked as an excuse for its failings, tied to ‘material’ conditions and supposedly upholding the idea of ‘truth’ in spontaneous and unmediated access to the shapes of the mind: Garcha points out that the sense of ‘quickness with which the artist could produce the sketch allowed for the capturing of nature’s random and “accidental” roughness, but these accidental strokes also became manifestations of the artist’s distinctive sensibility’.³⁷ The sketch can signify, in this sense, as an imprint: it is not insignificant that roughness characterises the physical printed appearance of *Monday*

³⁶ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 55.

³⁷ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, pp. 37-8.

or *Tuesday*. Whether by accident or design, the collection is linked on a material level with the aesthetics of the sketch. As discussed in my final chapter, the book itself manages to perform a sketchy immediacy through its mistakes and amateur appearance, including its lack of preface, contents page etc. With regard to such roughness, Woolf writes in and of these early journals in similar terms to those which she later applies to *Monday or Tuesday* in her letter to Ethel Smyth:

When I read this book, which I do sometimes on a hot Sunday evening in London, I am struck by the wildness of its statements – the carelessness of its descriptions – the repetition of its adjectives - & in short I pronounce it a very hasty work, but excuse myself by remembering in what circumstances it was written. After a days [*sic*] outing, or when half an hour is vacant, or as a relief from some Greek tragedy – at different times, & in different moods it is written, & I am certain that if I imposed any other conditions upon myself it would never be written at all. Did I not take it to Cornwall at Easter, & determine to note something serviceable – & did I even write my address? So once more I return to the old method; & protesting merely, that I am conscious of its faults – the protest of vanity. (PA 375-76)

The apology that Woolf makes here for the ‘wildness’ and ‘carelessness’ of this diary presumes a reader who is capable of making critical judgements on this writing. Although she claims to be writing for herself only, protesting too much, she excuses her haphazardness with reference to the ‘circumstances’ under which it was written. She draws attention to the process as well as to the effects of the sketch, and rhetorically invests not only in the value of this ‘old method’, but of such apologetic prefaces as ‘protest[s] of vanity’. The negotiation of the boundaries between private and public realms is thereby uniquely positioned in the sketch: it professes to display the most intimate and unmediated access to the writer/artist’s thoughts or visions, utilising this position to claim the talent or passion of the author/artist by (paradoxically) drawing attention to formal or physical defects in the work. Woolf does this in the early journals and in her letter to Smyth where she calls the texts from *Monday or Tuesday* ‘inarticulate, unprintable, mere outcries’. Woolf’s depreciative comments in her letter produce a retrospective ‘apologetic preface and errata sheet’ for *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘to allow errors to clamor quietly for virtuosity’, as Sha puts it.³⁸ While Woolf does not include an ‘apologetic preface’ in *Monday or Tuesday*, the retrospective comments in the letter hint at that particularly sketchy rhetoric which exploits the boundary between private and public.³⁹ The sketch uniquely straddles

³⁸ Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch*, p. 5

³⁹ Anna Snaith’s important study of the concepts of the private and public in Woolf’s writing begins by contextualising Woolf’s use of these terms themselves: “Public” and “private” are terms which recur throughout Woolf’s writing, words with which she experimented, testing out their meanings, together and alone, in numerous contexts. The conceptual dichotomy between public and private spaces, spheres,

this boundary, as rough and useful for the writer, whilst also deploying this rhetoric in a self-aware fashion which invokes a reader and which increases the value of the text as a document of the artist's process.

As Louise A. DeSalvo points out, Woolf was negotiating this boundary between private writing and public space when she pasted her 1899 journal, written during a summer holiday in Warboys (Huntingdonshire), into the pages of a leather-bound copy of Isaac Watts's *Logick: or, the Right Use of Reason*, to disguise it from the eyes of her family.⁴⁰ This journal also includes a spoof newspaper report replaying the style of *Hyde Park Gate News*, in which she writes herself as a character involved in a boating accident along with her brother Adrian Stephen and their cousin Emma Vaughan (PA 150-52). The sketchy forms of both these newspaper bulletins and the essayistic journal entries address a reading public – which is often in Woolf's case the private entity of the immediate family or coterie circle of intimate friends. The reader is written into these sketches as a framing device, as Woolf slyly acknowledges in her sketch of 'our Sugar campaign' – their hobby of moth-catching – on 13 August 1899:

An innocent reader (I suppose a reader sometimes for the sake of variety when I write; it makes me put on my dress clothes such as they are) having got this far still remains in the dark as [to] the use of such a preparation. This then, is the most scientific way of catching moths. (PA 144)

The idea of a reader is self-consciously embedded in these private exercises in style for Woolf as a writer, as Katherine Dalsimer points out, with 'a parenthetical explanation that is gently self-deprecatory'.⁴¹ This journal entry shows Woolf practicing the discourse of 'scientific' explanation at the same time as storytelling and rhetorical framing: as Leaska notes, 'it was Adeline Virginia Stephen teaching herself to write, preparing herself for the profession of letters' (PA xv). While this suggests that Woolf saw both a functional and an aesthetic value in the sketch, the rhetoric of negligibility is a consistent feature in her deployment of the term 'sketch'. In a diary entry written during her drafting of *The Moths* in 1929 (later to become *The Waves*), she writes:

Every morning I write a little sketch, to amuse myself. I am not saying, I might say, that these sketches have any relevance. I am not trying to tell a story. Yet perhaps it

languages, voices, issues and discourses was one which captured her attention, to be reworked and questioned, rather than accepted wholesale in any particular form' (*Public and Private Negotiations*, p.1).

⁴⁰ Louise A. DeSalvo, 'As "Miss Jan Says": Virginia Woolf's Early Journals' in Jane Marcus (ed.), *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 100. See also Katherine Dalsimer, *Virginia Woolf: Becoming a Writer* (Yale UP, 2001), pp. 57-78.

⁴¹ Dalsimer, *Becoming a Writer*, p. 60.

might be done in that way. A mind thinking. They might be islands of light – islands in the stream that I am trying to convey: life itself going on. (May 1929; *D* III 229)

Woolf's language here is resonant with the generic discourse of the literary sketch – it is an amusement, not serious, probably irrelevant, and not intended for public viewing. Woolf's conceptualisation of 'a story', 'a mind thinking', and 'life itself going on' are all entangled with her reflections on these sketches as possible 'islands of light', and with her practice of sketching supposedly only for amusement. Combined with her other numerous mentions of the sketch in letters, diaries and essays, it is clear that Woolf is thinking about this amusement at least half-seriously as a method of composition. As suggested in my analysis of the *Mrs Dalloway* diary entry above, Woolf's interest in the aesthetic quality of the sketch is not incompatible with her close editing, and there is a paradoxical professionalism to the sketch: at the same time as it retains an amateur status and can be practiced in a casual way by an untrained hand, it can also be conceived as an exercise in technique, as a skilful manipulation of rhetorical framing, and as a serious experiment with form and genre which Woolf consciously wanted to utilise in the texture of her novels.

2.5 Sketch and Novel

While it professes to be spontaneous and unmediated, to handle the literary sketch requires sufficient mastery of technique. Woolf wondered if she had enough skill to take her sketches from *Monday or Tuesday* and work them into a new novelistic form. She writes in 1920:

Am I sufficiently mistress of my dialogue to net it? For I figure that the approach will be entirely different this time: no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist. Then I'll find room for so much – a gaiety – an inconsequence – a light spirited stepping at my sweet will. Whether I'm sufficiently mistress of things – that's the doubt; but conceive mark on the wall, K[ew]. G[ardens]. & unwritten novel taking hands & dancing in unity. What the unity shall be I have yet to discover: the theme is a blank to me; but I see immense possibilities in the form I hit upon more or less by chance 2 weeks ago. I suppose the danger is the damned egotistical self; which ruins Joyce & Richardson to my mind: is one pliant & rich enough to provide a wall for the book from oneself without its becoming, as in Joyce & Richardson, narrowing & restricting? My hope is that I've learnt my business sufficiently now to provide all sorts of entertainments. Anyhow, there's no doubt the way lies somewhere in that direction; I must still grope & experiment but this afternoon I had a gleam of light. Indeed I think from the ease with which I'm developing the unwritten novel there must be a path for me there. (*D* II 13-4)

In this passage, in terms of the aesthetic she is laying out between *Monday or Tuesday* and her next novel, *Jacob's Room*, Woolf counterpoints imagery of illumination ('crepuscular', 'fire', 'gleam of light') with imagery of construction ('scaffolding' and 'brick'). The architectural imagery of solidity needed to 'provide a wall for the book from oneself' is to be subordinated to a 'light spirited stepping' – and the lack of punctuation here makes it unclear whether she means 'light-spirited' or 'light, spirited', and the lightness she invokes can apply to both weight and illumination. Her use of the word 'crepuscular', however, is particularly interesting: it is an image of twilight, when the sun is below the horizon but there is still enough light to illuminate the skyline; when the sky is neither light nor dark; between day and night (dusk), or between night and day (dawn). Woolf uses the term here six years before witnessing the solar eclipse of 1927, which Emily Dalgarno argues 'forced Woolf to rethink the nature of the visible',⁴² and which she described in similar terms to her idea for a new form: she writes, 'Now I must sketch out the Eclipse', and repeatedly draws attention to lights 'burning' against the image of the dawn sky, which 'was getting grey – still a fleecy mottled sky' (*D* III 142-3). Woolf may have read 'crepuscular' in Henry James's *Hawthorne* (1879), one of the books in her library by which she would also have had some encounter with the idea of the sketch.⁴³ The *OED* cites James, 'the crepuscular realm of the writer's own reveries' as one instance of its use in literature. Is Woolf using this word to hint at the dawning of a new form, or the sun setting on an old one, after *Night and Day*? This would be resonant enough, but 'crepuscular' holds another significant meaning for Woolf's theorising of the form of her new novel. Combined with the brightness of 'fire in the mist' there is a sense, in this passage, of light as it has density and is made opaque. Crepuscular rays are beams of sunlight that can be seen *as* beams because of the quality of the air and the contrastive shadows cast by clouds that they pass through.⁴⁴ Appearing through the clouds to radiate from the sun in different directions (a trick of perspective, since they are actually parallel lines),⁴⁵ such rays are sometimes referred to as 'Jacob's Ladder'. The title of Woolf's next novel, whose formal construction she is sketching here, may be portended in her imagery: directly after her description of the 'crepuscular' quality of the illumination she is to provide in this novel – its architectural beams – she writes that she will 'find *room* for so much' by removing the solid scaffolding

⁴² Emily Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), p. ix. See also Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics* (1998). Woolf later transferred this sketch in her diary to an essayistic one in 'The Sun and the Fish' (1928).

⁴³ On Woolf's contact with the sketch via James, Chapter One, pp. 50-1 of the present thesis.

⁴⁴ Craig Bohren and Mark L. Sowers, 'Simple Experiments in Atmospheric Physics', *Weatherwise* 45.2 (1992): 34-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

of the necessary framing and explanation used in *Night and Day*, and letting light itself be seen: ‘a light spirited stepping’ on the bars of Jacob’s ladder?⁴⁶

Woolf is also using the language of journey in this diary entry: the stripping back that she has performed in the three texts from *Monday or Tuesday* (‘Kew Gardens’, ‘The Mark on the Wall’, and ‘An Unwritten Novel’) has illuminated ‘a path’ – ‘the way lies somewhere in that direction’. Her ‘developing’ of ‘the unwritten novel’ is at once laying out a path, and developing in the sense of developing a photograph, the specific quality of twilight bringing things into an opacity that might suggest the flat plane of the canvas or the illusion of perspectival dimensions: a tactility of space and the atoms that make up the air, such as those that arrange crepuscular rays and which ‘compose [...] the life of Monday or Tuesday’ in ‘Modern Fiction’ (*E* IV 160). If the scaffolding that upholds the edifice of the realist novel is torn down, then *Jacob’s Room* as an unwritten novel is the result of a ‘groping experiment’ in half-darkness which nevertheless finds the space created by light as its material. *Night and Day* is the novel in which Woolf erects the scaffolding and displays the laying of the bricks. Shortly after the publication of *Monday or Tuesday*, in conversation with Maynard Keynes in May 1921, Woolf describes *Night and Day* as ‘a dull book, I know [...] but [...] you must put it all in before you can leave out’ (*D* II 121). This says something important not only about the move between *Night and Day* and *Monday or Tuesday*, in which she really did strip things back and leave things out (‘no scaffolding, scarcely a brick to be seen’ in this sense, yet in another showing us exactly these things by drawing attention to how it is put together), but it also foreshadows her later wish in 1929, while writing what was to become *The Waves* (1931), to ‘put practically everything in, yet to saturate’ (*D* III 210). This terminology alerts us to two of the ways in which Woolf uses sketch-like aesthetics: with a sense of the capacity of language to be densely opaque, but also to be ‘light & loose’. *Monday or Tuesday* combines both of these effects in style and material presentation, coming at a crucial point for Woolf as a writer and publisher between her most conventionally realist novel, *Night and Day*, and what is usually hailed as her High Modernist masterpiece, *Jacob’s Room*. When she was beginning to write *Jacob’s Room*, she drew on the things she had learned from *Monday or Tuesday*. ‘An Unwritten Novel’ in particular is fittingly very important here, since it proceeds by undoing itself; by creating and then dissolving the character

⁴⁶ There appears, in *Jacob’s Room*, a reference to crepuscular rays, in Chapter IV, while Jacob is sailing around the Scilly Isles with Timmy Durrant: ‘The Scilly Isles now appeared as if directly pointed at by a golden finger issuing from a cloud; and everybody knows how portentous that sight is, and how these broad rays, whether they light upon the Scilly Isles or upon the tombs of crusaders in cathedrals, always shake the very foundations of scepticism and lead to jokes about God’ (*JR* 45; my emphasis).

whose portrait it professes to be sketching, it actively ‘unwrites’ the novel that it has the potential to be. Woolf writes:

Suppose one thing should open out of another – as in *An Unwritten Novel* – only not for 10 pages but 200 or so – doesn’t that give the looseness & lightness I want: doesn’t that get closer & yet keep form & speed, & enclose everything? (*D II 13-14*)

This desire for unity, closeness and the ability to ‘enclose everything’ recurs when Woolf is about to start writing *The Waves* in 1928, where she talks about ‘giving the moment whole, whatever it includes’ (*D III 209*). Drawing on what she has learned from *Orlando* at this point (which she writes about in similar terms to those she uses for *Monday or Tuesday*), Woolf writes:

Now I could go on writing like that – the tug & the suck are at me to do it. People say this was so spontaneous, so natural. And I would like to keep those qualities if I could without losing the others. But those qualities were largely the result of ignoring the others. They came of writing exteriorly; & if I dig, must I not lose them? And what is my own position towards the inner & the outer? I think a kind of ease & dash are good; – yes: I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible. The idea has come to me that what I want to do now is to saturate every atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity. (*D III 209*)

Again writing in similar terms to those of the 1903 journal and of ‘Street Haunting’, of skimming the surface and the fear that spontaneity might be lost if she begins to ‘dig’, she nevertheless wants to combine these effects: that of ‘a kind of ease & dash’ with an ‘inner’ essence that can ‘saturate every atom’. The sketch can thus be both an active process, and a quality in the text which waits to be activated. These opposing effects are both part of what Perry Meisel has identified as Woolf’s debt to the aesthetics of Walter Pater:

Woolf’s notion of saturation is one which still stands as a plea for an art that will rival or seem to be a part of nature itself, and, like Pater, she will sometimes magnify the discontinuity between *asceticism* and the naturalness of art in paradoxical figures for composition.⁴⁷

One of these ‘figures’ is the sketch, by which she presents a seemingly natural ‘moment of being’ (also indebted to Pater, as Meisel points out),⁴⁸ and by which she performatively strips out and distils until we are left with something very sparse; something which can

⁴⁷ Perry Meisel, *The Absent Father: Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater* (New Haven and London, 1980), p. 77. Amanpal Garcha’s final chapter in his study of the Victorian sketch reads Pater’s work, alongside that of George Eliot, as an example of the ways in which ‘late Victorian fiction adopted aspects of plotless sketches as it produced new avant-garde, proto-modernist literary forms’ (*From Sketch to Novel*, p. 221).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8

either be opaquely saturated, or almost floating off the page. Pater characterises such effects in metaphors of chemical ‘refinement’ and ‘crystallisation’, which Meisel also traces in Woolf’s work: ‘a rather precise kind of artistic combustion or “alchemy” by which manner and matter, form and content, coalesce into the willed perfection of an ideal work of art’.⁴⁹ With regard to such aesthetic perfection, Woolf is still thinking about and re-writing the ‘quality of the sketch’ in relation to the novel as a ‘finished and composed work’, in 1929 in *A Room of One’s Own*. It is worth quoting at length a passage which draws together some of the preceding terminology, and which can deepen our understanding of Woolf’s conception of the sketch in relation to the finished and composed work, specifically in the novel. This passage also illuminates the idea of the sketch as a quality which lies dormant in the larger work:

What one means by integrity, in the case of the novelist, is the conviction that he gives one that this is the truth. Yes, one feels, I should never have thought that this could be so; I have never known people behaving like that. But you have convinced me that so it is, so it happens. One holds every phrase, every scene to the light as one reads – for Nature seems, very oddly, to have provided us with an inner light by which to judge of the novelist’s integrity or disintegrity. Or perhaps it is rather that nature, in her most irrational mood, has traced in invisible ink on the walls of the mind, a premonition which these great artists confirm; a sketch which only needs to be held to the fire of genius to become visible. When one so exposes it and sees it come to life one exclaims in rapture, But this is what I have always felt and known and desired! And one boils over with excitement, and, shutting the book even with a kind of reverence as if it were something very precious, a stand-by to return to as long as one lives, one puts it back on the shelf, I said, taking *War and Peace* and putting it back in its place. If, on the other hand, these poor sentences that one takes and tests rouse first a quick and eager response with their bright colouring and their dashing gestures but there they stop: something seems to check them in their development: or if they bring to light only a faint scribble in the corner and a blot over there, and nothing appears whole and entire, then one heaves a sigh of disappointment and says, Another failure. This novel has come to grief somewhere. (*AROO* 93-4)

Here, Woolf raises the possibility of the sketch as a mode existing or preserved within the novel. The sketch is shown to be bound up with questions of literary value and more broadly with questions of reality, realism and mimesis. The ‘inner light’ by which Woolf suggests we might judge the reality of these scenes and phrases – her semantics now slipping ambiguously onto the reality of these scenes and phrases themselves, rather than the ‘signified’ to which their representation supposedly gives access – transfers into an image of ‘the walls of the mind’ recalling the Platonic allegory of the cave.⁵⁰ It recalls also

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 57.

⁵⁰ For readings of Platonism in Woolf, see note 16 above.

the ‘crepuscular’ quality that Woolf is inspired to create after *Monday or Tuesday* and which results in the twilight figures and open spaces in *Jacob’s Room*. The ‘invisible ink’ which only becomes visible in certain lights – specifically, in a Romantic image, ‘the fire of genius’ – suggests a scene of memory, spurred to become visible on the surface. Woolf’s invocation of the scene in terms of a trace or impression is crucial to her use of the sketch, as discussed in the next chapter. As we will see, ‘scene-making’ is a configuration of memory and projection in her memoir ‘A Sketch of the Past’, in which the sketch can never be finished with; it is always ‘a stand-by to return to’, and it is always creative. In this regard, the invisible ink metaphor for the surface of the mind in *A Room of One’s Own* might be compared to the Freudian ‘Mystic Pad’ in reverse – the memory as scene was always there, lithographically sketched onto (rather than engraved into) the surface of consciousness, and becomes visible when illuminated by certain lights.⁵¹ The metaphor of illumination is one which is central to Woolf’s use of the sketch as a literary form. In her letter to Smyth, Woolf opposes the state of mind for sketching to ‘the light of reason’, and the sketch itself to ‘prose’: ‘I lay in bed, and thus *sketched*, I think, all that I now, by the light of reason, try to put into prose’ (*L IV* 231; my emphasis). The sketch is activated and developed by (retrospective) illumination. While in the sentence quoted, Woolf implicitly evokes the idea of the sketch as an imagistic medium in contrast to the linguistic one of prose – referencing its function in a painterly context as an outline that precedes and provides the foundation for the finished, filled in work – she also raises the possibility that other genres, ‘poems, stories, profound [...] inspired phrases’, can function as sketches: ‘I used to make up poems, stories, profound and to me inspired phrases all day long as I lay in bed, and *thus* sketched, I think, all that I now, by the light of reason, try to put into prose’ (*L IV* 231; my emphasis). It is in these sketched poems, stories and phrases that she began the later works ‘not in substance but in idea’.

Linked as it is in this letter to her state of mental ill-health, the sketch takes place on ‘dangerous ground’, and, in 1919, had to be offset by an ‘exercise in the conventional style’ – by the novel *Night and Day*. Yet, an aspect of the sketch is also present in the writing of *Night and Day* itself as Woolf describes it. She aligns her composition of *Night and Day* with the practice of copying, or making copy (it is unclear whether the word is used as a verb or a noun, and Woolf often uses it as the latter) ‘from plaster casts, partly to tranquilise, partly to learn anatomy’, and as an ‘exercise in the conventional style’ (*L IV*

⁵¹ Sigmund Freud (1925), ‘A Note upon the “Mystic Writing Pad”’, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Vol. XIX (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 227-34.

231). The composition of this novel uses the sketch as a practical training in technique, and the novel itself is, furthermore 'interminable': it seems never to be finished. The letter to Smyth, via the interaction of novel and short fiction, highlights two primary aspects of the sketch in Woolf's discourse, as it appears in *Monday or Tuesday* and implicitly, in another guise, in *Night and Day*. In these texts the sketch functions as both a necessary outlet for creative emotion and a space in which to work out the 'idea' as a tangible form or shape. Woolf conceives it as a medium for recording an impassioned burst of inspiration and a methodical exercise in technique, which is not incompatible with careful editing in its display of apparent spontaneity. Woolf's Paterian poetics of saturation and asceticism utilise the sketch as a form by which to experiment with language and imagery in poetic prose. In this way, *Monday or Tuesday* demonstrates the qualities of the sketch as a thing in itself and, simultaneously, as an unfinished creative or architectural procedure. In order to be generative the sketch has to be whole and coherent; it also has to be connected and relevant and do more than evoke and then drop feelings: it has to (come to) be 'finished and composed' in some way. *Monday or Tuesday*, as a complete and coherent collection that nevertheless expresses an unfinished, rough appearance, iterates Woolf's aesthetics of the sketch in a finished and composed work. The collection (including its material qualities as an object) combines lightness and ephemerality with the engraved permanence of certain unifying tropes and scored rhythms, as well as creating scenes and characters that display the marks of their own creation.

Chapter Three

Scenes and Characters from the Life of *Monday or Tuesday*

Using a musical metaphor in line with the idea of ‘composition’, Gregory R. Wegner claims that, ‘[w]hile plot forms the central component in a tale or romance, a sketch changes the key, so to speak, among the elements, so that character or spectacle becomes the tonic note in the fictional scale’.¹ As appropriate exercises for recording impressions and for practising technique, the sketching of scenes and characters in a literary sense might be thought of as an instrumental stage in the writing process, isolating and exaggerating basic elements needed for longer works of fiction. As well as the flexibility to be deployed in the service of grander rhetorical or narrative effects, sketches of scenes and characters also have aesthetic qualities in their own right, in a compositional key derived from the visual sketch in landscape painting, portraiture and caricature. Woolf utilises these forms in her literary criticism, as well as in her memoir and biography, and her works of short fiction often constitute nothing more than sketches of scenes or characters. Combining these aspects of the scene and character sketch as exercises and as aesthetic objects in their own right, this chapter examines the function of scenes and characters in the sketches of *Monday or Tuesday*, both as aspects of its preparatory status in relation to Woolf’s developments of novelistic form, and of its own aesthetic as a collection. In order to approach *Monday or Tuesday* through these typical sketch forms, it is necessary to first establish the importance of the scene and the character sketch in Woolf’s work more generally, and to analyse how they contribute to her common narrative strategies. In doing so, I will draw on material from her essays and, more heavily, from her unfinished memoir, ‘A Sketch of the Past’. There, she theorises scenes and characters as objects of historiographic and biographical writing, and the memoir is itself structured via scenes and characters. While I will separate them in the two halves of this chapter to discuss their particularities, the scene and character sketch are often intertwined: both are concerned with the interactions of surface and depth, with illumination and imprinting, projection and retro-activation as modes of creation. They are essential to the composition of a sketch – a ‘rough visual description’ – of Woolf’s childhood:

Many bright colours; many distinct sounds; some human beings, caricatures; comic; several violent moments of being; always including a circle of the scene which they cut out: and all surrounded by a vast space – that is a rough visual description of

¹ Wegner, ‘Hawthorne’s “Ethan Brand”’, p. 58.

childhood. This is how I shape it; and how I see myself as a child, roaming about, in that space of time which lasted from 1882 to 1895. (*MB* 91)

The elements listed here comprise scenes and characters as they appear in memory, focused in an exaggerated way through sensory perception. Woolf's memoir combines these elements, and also points to what their narrative does not include: the scenes which are cut out in order to manifest, or throw into relief, the ones we are presented with. The memoir also dramatises the scene of writing by including Woolf's process in framing statements, which show her composing its sections in the midst of World War II as a break from writing her biography of Roger Fry: Claudia Olk points out that "Making a sketch" temporarily relieves [Woolf] from the discursive pressures of encyclopedic completeness and fidelity to fact exerted by the genre of biography'.² Woolf's diaristic references to her writing of Fry's biography were in fact, as Georgia Johnston discusses, 'deliberately added in revision'.³ Retrospectively altering the framing of the text and its 'fidelity to fact', reworking and rewriting to make the sketching of scenes from the past seem present, Woolf creates a fragmentary memoir which points towards something whole and complete – enclosing 'that space of time' of her childhood and artistically bringing it into relief by juxtaposition with the moment of writing.

Simultaneously as they create a record or memory of something that has already passed, both scene- and character-sketching present superficial outlines of something hypothetical, whose significance is yet to be realised. As in 'A Sketch of the Past', *Monday or Tuesday* proceeds by and results in '[m]any bright colours; many distinct sounds; some human beings, caricatures; comic; several violent moments of being'. While they present the illusion of being nothing more than descriptive flashpoints, and while it would be possible to discuss them as simply incomplete impressions, each sketch in this collection performs its effects via complex narrative and rhetorical techniques. Via 'A Sketch of the Past', granting attention to the procedures of sketching scenes and characters in *Monday or Tuesday* can throw light on some of the ways in which this collection manifests the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work. In turn, taking the scene and the character as cardinal points by which to orient the sketch in Woolf's oeuvre can suggest other texts to which its qualities can be tracked, including 'A Sketch of the Past' and the posthumous collection, *The London Scene*, which is also briefly touched upon in this chapter.

² Olk, *Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 116. See also Julia Briggs, *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 338-69.

³ Georgia Johnston, 'Virginia Woolf Revising Roger Fry into the Frames of "A Sketch of the Past"', *Biography* 20.3 (Summer, 1997): 284-301; 284.

PART 1: SETTING THE SCENE

The scene is such a broad category that it can be included in almost any analysis of Woolf's writing, or of representation in general. Before examining its specific relevance to the sketch, a brief outline of the ways that the scene has been invoked in Woolf studies reveals its variety of intertwined significations in her work. In her study of Woolf's artistic conversation with Vanessa Bell, which dedicates a chapter each to still-life, landscape and portraiture in the work of both women, Diane Gillespie roots Woolf's scene-making in metaphoric language for subjectivity, 'creating landscapes of the mind and mental rooms'.⁴ On a more literal level, Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth's edited collection, *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place* (2007), has recourse to the scene as an arranging topographic principle, encompassing the dynamism and interrelations of people in spaces. Particularly highlighting the figure of the *flâneur* in Woolf's modernism, Snaith and Whitworth identify London scenes in *Night and Day* and *Mrs Dalloway*, and note 'her description [...] of Carlyle's house as a "scene of labour, effort and perpetual struggle"' in 'Great Men's Houses' (part of *The London Scene*, in which Woolf develops her 1909 sketch 'Carlyle's House').⁵ Claudia Olk includes the scene as a category of the visual, specifically coupling it with the sketch and with the interlude as 'minimalist forms in which temporality and vision are entwined'.⁶ Olk argues that these forms 'both [explore] the singularity of the moment and [provide] a synthetic view of more than one level at a time'.⁷ Such arrangement and layering of temporal scenes as a phenomenon of memory, particularly as it relates to writing, is, as I will discuss below, appropriate to Woolf's use of the sketch to stage scenes of remembrance, interpretation and creativity in memoiristic form.

The idea of the scene in psychoanalysis is also a major strand of its deployment in Woolf studies, intertwined as it is with the literary-dramatic scene. Elizabeth Abel opens her study of *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (1989) by reading Woolf's scene-making in *To the Lighthouse*, and Patricia Moran draws on psychoanalytic theory and readings of Woolf to chart the maternal and sexual implications of the fact that scenes of writing in Woolf's fiction are often interrupted by scenes of eating.⁸ Susan Stanford

⁴ Gillespie, *The Sisters' Arts*, pp. 267-68. See also Stevanato, *Visuality and Spatiality*, pp. 27-83.

⁵ Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth (eds), *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 14-15; pp. 20, 24.

⁶ Olk, *Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 16.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 109.

⁸ Moran, 'Virginia Woolf and the Scene of Writing', *Modern Fiction Studies* 38.1 (Spring 1992): 81-100. For a Lacanian approach which also reaches back to Plato, see Dalgarno, *VW and the Visible World* (2001).

Friedman has examined scenes of reading in Woolf's fiction in relation to pedagogical practice, focusing her discussion through Rachel's education in *The Voyage Out* (1915).⁹ Emily Dalgarno – whose study of *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (2001) proceeds by reading 'scenes' in Woolf's novels, though she does not define 'the scene' itself – discusses 'important scenes of reading and writing in *The Years*' in relation to Woolf's engagement with Greek tragedy.¹⁰ The psychic and dramatic scenes with which these studies are concerned are fundamental to 'A Sketch of the Past' as a memoir, but also draw on the theatrical scene for the language of performance and (re)staging. Steven Putzel's work on Woolf and the theatre lends a related context for the dramatism of the scene, arguing that in her writing 'she created a sophisticated "dramatic" approach to narrative akin to the theatrical theory of Brecht [...] and even to the modern acting theories of Stanislavski'.¹¹ Putzel also draws attention to an unpublished manuscript for a lecture entitled 'The Dramatic in Art and Life', in which Woolf synthesises the literary and psychic scenes of creativity, distinguishing the novelistic from the theatrical scene by arguing that '[t]he novelist gains immensely "on the dramatist in complicated scenes of thought"'.¹² Considering the interactions between the drama of the psychic scene and the scene of writing alongside that of the social scene in Woolf's work, in this section I am concerned with 'the literary scene' in which these multiple meanings might converge.

3.1.1 Behind the Scenes: 'A Sketch of the Past'

In the episodic and fragmentary structure of 'A Sketch of the Past', Woolf identifies 'scene-making' as central to her reading and writing practices in general. With the potential to express itself in many genres, scene-making is a mode that, as Laura Marcus suggests, is inextricable from 'the question of the "frame" [...] the issue of how to construct a narrative rationale as well as a casing for a "scene"'.¹³ Woolf's writing is often self-aware in enfolding questions of rhetorical and narrative frameworks, and, within these, scene-making is common to multiple genres of her writing. In 'A Sketch of the Past', she reflects:

⁹ Friedman, 'Virginia Woolf's Pedagogical Scenes of Reading: The Voyage Out, The Common Reader, and Her "Common Readers"', *Modern Fiction Studies* 38.1 (Spring 1992): 101-25.

¹⁰ Dalgarno, *VW and the Visible World*, pp. 96-100.

¹¹ Putzel, *VW and the Theater*, p. 111.

¹² Ibid. p. 114; Woolf, 'The Dramatic in Life and Art', MHP Manuscripts A: Literary, A.26 (Putzel, p. 146, n. 12). Olk also points out that 'Woolf's method of scene-making' is evident in *Between the Acts*, in "the play in the play", the "scenes from English history" (*Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 135).

¹³ Laura Marcus, "'In the Circle of the Lens": Woolf's "Telescope" Story, Scene-Making and Memory', *Journal of the Short Story in English* 50 (2008). Available at: < <https://jsse.revues.org/582> > [accessed 14 May 2017].

I almost always have to find a scene; either when I am writing about a person, I must find a representative scene in their lives; or when I am writing about a book, I must find the scene in their poems or novels. (*MB* 145)

Whether it is a generative starting point or an ultimate goal, the framing of scenes is often linked to the sketch as a form which condenses plot or sequence into something ‘representative’. For example, in a theatrical ‘casing’, Woolf emphasises temporality, dimension and dynamism in contrast to, as Marcus puts it, the ‘very Victorian “arrest”’ that she associates with her great Aunt Julia Margaret Cameron’s photography.¹⁴ Marcus notes that ‘the energy and movement that characterised [Cameron’s subject,] the young Ellen Terry’ are integral to what ‘Woolf would later present [... as Terry’s] own mutable, changeable, “sketch”-like art of theatre’.¹⁵ In parallel with her performance, Woolf also aligns dramatic scene-making with the sketch in Terry’s private writings. Marcus points out that ‘Woolf drew directly on Terry’s words in her published essay on the actress, in which she played on the concept of the “sketch” as something both written and drawn:’

in her letters and memoirs, she suggested, Terry “dashed off a sketch for a portrait – here a nose, here an arm, here a foot, and there a mere scribble in the margin. The sketches done in different moods, in different angles, sometimes contradict each other. The nose cannot belong to the eyes; the arm is out of all proportion to the foot. It is difficult to assemble them. And there are blank pages too.”¹⁶

With the focus on sketches characterising the body in a disjointed, discontinuous way – which echoes the sketchy exercises practiced in Woolf’s early journals – the constructive sketch-like performance of both scene-making and portraiture that Woolf identifies here is also demonstrated in her description of her own childhood in ‘A Sketch of the Past’. In a passage which particularly emphasises movement, mutability and emptiness in a space resembling a theatre, she writes:

A great hall I could liken it to; with windows letting in strange lights; and murmurs and spaces of deep silence. But somehow into that picture must be brought, too, the sense of movement and change. Nothing remained stable long. One must get the feeling of everything approaching and then disappearing, getting large, getting small, passing at different rates of speed past the little creature; one must get the feeling that made her press on, the little creature driven on as she was by the growth of her legs and arms, driven without her being able to stop it, or to change it, driven as a plant is

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. See Woolf, ‘Ellen Terry’ (1941) *E* VI 285-92. On Woolf and Terry, see also Putzel, *VW and the Theater*, pp. 89-91.

driven up out of the earth, up until the stalk grows, the leaf grows, buds swell. That is what is indescribable, that is what makes all images too static, for no sooner has one said this was so, than it was past and altered. (*MB* 91)

This is a scene of hypothetical writing – ‘I *could* liken it to’; ‘one *must* get the feeling’. Like her sense of being pushed into the future, and the passing of time even as we attempt to capture it in writing or image, the scene of the past will always be only a sketch precisely because we cannot capture it as a complete and self-contained moment: it leaves things out, and will be a sketch for the future to revise and rewrite. In terms of framing, as Dalgarno notes, Woolf’s memoir ‘took shape at a moment of crisis among nations, when the scale and speed of what was approaching and disappearing took on a more urgent historical meaning’.¹⁷ There is a simultaneous vision and shaping at work in Woolf’s sense of what it means to sketch the spaces and scenes of the past through (and at the same time to sketch as a phenomenon itself) a particular child-like consciousness, projected from a later, but similarly threshold, moment during World War II and near the end of her life. Woolf therefore attributes agency to the mind that shapes and dramatises the scene as a phenomenon of memory pushing into the future, but also acknowledges that there are external objective factors influencing the scene which may become clearer later on, and which provide the impetus for using the sketch to illuminate a scene retrospectively. These objective factors effect scene-making as a dynamic way of sketching moments of the past, present and future.

3.1.2 The Scene and the Moment: Staging Palimpsests

What instigates the sketching of scenes and characters is, for Woolf, a shock impression inflicted by the external world; a moment of rupture and fragmentation defining the ‘moment of being’, by which we could describe the ultimate subject of the Woolfian sketch. As Meisel points out, though she attributes it to Hardy and Conrad,¹⁸ Woolf’s ‘moment of being’ follows Paterian tropes of intensity, crystallisation and ‘soldering’ things together, and is a moment which is inherently expressive of the writer’s personality: it is something which happens in language.¹⁹ Woolf writes:

I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer. I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it [...] It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness

¹⁷ Dalgarno, *VW and the Visible World*, p. 130.

¹⁸ Meisel, *The Absent Father*, pp. 47-8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 54.

means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together. (*MB* 85)

Noting here the performative scene-making of the parenthesis in the final clause, the power of fitting things together, re-joining and creating ‘a whole’ at once gives control over an impression and instigates a new scene. Moreover, restaging what Meisel identifies as a central ambivalence between artistry and nature in Pater’s art criticism, Woolf’s terms in the above quotation suggest a formal design but also inscribe shape-giving scene-making as ‘natural’. She writes of it as an instinctive and intuitive process, with scenes ‘arranged’ of their own volition. She continues:

These scenes, by the way, are not altogether a literary device – a means of summing up and making a knot out of innumerable little threads. Innumerable threads were there; still, if I stopped to disentangle, I could collect a number. But whatever the reason may be, I find that scene making is my natural way of marking the past. A scene always comes to the top; arranged; representative. (*MB* 145)

Here, Woolf puts into play mixed metaphors describing the scene as it appears in writing, positing the scene as a unifying point, a textual ‘knot’ which ties together multiple strands of the past, and as the ‘surfacing’ of a memory. Whether spontaneous apparitions or carefully ‘collected’ and imprinted; whether naturally rising to the surface or artificially woven out of ‘innumerable threads’, the scene is always for Woolf ‘representative’. In this regard, one of Woolf’s diary entries forms a significant intertext with her expression of the scene in ‘A Sketch of the Past’. Putzel writes:

Thinking about Shakespeare, after having seen a production of *Macbeth* in 1934, Woolf noted that a play “demands coming to the surface,” insisting “upon a reality wh[ich] the novel need not have, but perhaps should have”. She called this: “Contact with the surface. Coming to the top” (*D* 4 207).²⁰

Associating theatrical scene-making with a depth of ‘reality’ that may benefit or alter the idea of representation in novelistic form, there are further nuances to this diary entry that help to place Woolf’s idea of the scene in relation to the sketch as a mode of writing that is highly concerned with what appears on the surface. Woolf was at this point writing ‘The Pargiters’ – the title of which she had changed, in September 1933, to ‘Here & Now’ (*D* IV 176).²¹ Coupled with the immediacy and presence suggested by this new title, Woolf

²⁰ Putzel, *VW and the Theater*, p. 120.

²¹ ‘Suddenly in the night I thought of “Here & Now” as a title for The Pargiters. I think it better. It shows what I’m after & does not compete with the Herries Saga, the Forsyte Saga & so on’ (2 September 1933, *D* IV 176).

invokes the sketch by likening her writing process for this novel to her ‘random rapid letter writing style’ (*D IV 199*). Simultaneously, she describes her writing of it in scenes: using another water metaphor consistent with that of scenes coming to the surface, in the phrase ‘the crest of the Kitty Eleanor scene’ (*D IV 204*), where she attributes wave-like momentum to the scene as a textual moment.²² She is also, at the same time, experiencing another kind of scene-making in her private life: on Tuesday 27 March, Woolf dismisses her cook, Nelly and ‘[t]he great scene [...] is now over, & of course much less violently than I supposed’ (*D IV 206*). With the performance of scene-making repeatedly arising in these pages of the diary, the night after seeing *Macbeth*, Woolf is tired and writes that she cannot ‘make out a sketch for the last chapters of *Here & Now*’ (*D IV 207*). After considering the theatrical scene’s impetus to rise to the top, she continues by relating it to literary composition and form:

This is working out my theory of the different levels in writing, & how to combine them: for I begin to think the combination necessary. This particular relation with the surface is imposed on the dramatist of necessity: how far did it influence Sh[akespeare]? Idea that one could work out a theory of fiction &c on these lines: how many levels attempted. whether kept to or not. (*D IV 207*)

This idea of the layering of fiction, including all the drafts, sketches, attempts and notes that have contributed to the composition, helps to excavate the metaphor of the scene rising to the surface, where it becomes inscribed in the semiotic play of signifiers. It is not only opposed to ‘the depths’ in metaphors of water and the mind, but to the foundations and stratified architecture of the text (implied in the title ‘*The Pargiters*’ which, as many critics have discussed, suggests plastering, whitewashing, covering over).²³ The qualities of the sketch are displayed in the scene, which takes its place as a moment within the finished and composed work, and which has the potential to represent a palimpsest of moments or form a knot of textual momentum that has contributed to its own making.

In ‘*A Sketch of the Past*’, the textual scene is one of memoir and historiography, restaging as a spontaneous surfacing things long submerged. Returning to the metaphor of water and superimposing the shock impression with the enduring encapsulation of a

²² The metaphor of water in relation to the surfacing of the scene and of memory touches interestingly on this title: on January 16 1934, Woolf writes in her diary: ‘another full flood of *Pargiters* or *Here & Now* (odd that Goldie [Dickinson]’s letter mentions that – *The Waves* is also here & now – I had forgotten)’ (*D IV 199*). Anne Olivier Bell cites Dickinson’s letter about *The Waves*, in which he writes: ‘Such prose has never been written and it also belongs to the here & now though it dealing also with a theme that is perpetual and universal’ (*D IV 199*; n. 1).

²³ See, for example, Christine Froula, *Virginia Woolf, Bloomsbury and the Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 213.

memory, Woolf creates an image that casts the scene as an effect of the sketch: as a spontaneous originary moment for writing and as something which works by leaving an imprint that can be deciphered later. She writes of her ‘instinctive notion’:

that we are sealed vessels afloat upon what it is convenient to call reality; at some moments, without a reason, *without an effort*, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality; that is a scene – for they would not survive entire so many ruinous years unless they were made of *something permanent*; that is a *proof* of their “reality”. Is this liability of mine to scene receiving *the origin of my writing impulse?* (*MB* 145; my emphasis)

The scene happens spontaneously, instinctively, ‘without an effort’, but creates or reveals something lasting. It is also notable, in her concern with the permanence of scenes and with the ‘proof of their “reality”’, that as an experienced printer Woolf would have been intensely aware that ‘proof’ carries not only the sense of evidence, ‘of truth or validity’, but also denotes specifically ‘a trial or preliminary impression of a printed text’ (*OED*). The scene, therefore, does not merely index some kind of truth, but effects a representation which can be replicated later from this provisional ‘proof’, and which points to the layered moments of creativity and the reproducible imprint of those moments.

In ‘A Sketch of the Past’, the proofs created in scenes of childhood at St Ives are developed in juxtaposition with scenes set in London: commenting on her formative impressions, Woolf acknowledges that their significance ‘was due partly to the great many months we spent in London’ (*MB* 79). The change of scene from London to St Ives is important not only in its effect on the childhood consciousness, but in terms of the scene that it is possible to sketch. London is, like St Ives, one of the most important scenes in Woolf’s literary and personal life: as the site of the Hogarth Press, a key setting for novels including *Night and Day* and *Mrs Dalloway*, and a palimpsest of personal memories recorded in her diaries and readings for the Memoir Club,²⁴ London is a constant textual scene for Woolf. It is the subject of a set of sketches collected and posthumously published as *The London Scene* which, as Craig Morehead has shown,²⁵ has its own significance for the genre of the sketch. A brief detour through these texts leads us to the literary and social London scenes of *Monday or Tuesday*.

²⁴ The Memoir Club was a social and literary event in the calendar of the Bloomsbury Group between 1920 and 1936. While there is unfortunately not enough space in the present thesis to discuss it as a context for the sketch, it is important to note that Vanessa Bell’s posthumously published memoirs, *Sketches in Pen and Ink*, takes impetus from the activities of the Club (ed. Lia Giachero, [London: Pimlico, 1998], pp. 4-6), and Woolf’s contributions are included along with ‘A Sketch of the Past’ in Schulkind’s *Moments of Being* (for notes on the Memoir Club, see pp. 170-75).

²⁵ Craig Morehead, “‘Rambling the Streets of London’: Virginia Woolf and the London Sketch”, *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 83 (Spring 2013): 18-20.

3.1.3 From *The London Scene* to ‘Kew Gardens’

Woolf wrote ‘Six Articles on London Life’ for *Good Housekeeping* while finishing *The Waves* between February and April 1931. She described these articles in her diary – as dismissively as she did *Monday or Tuesday* – as ‘pure brilliant description’ which ‘bored [her] to death’ (*D IV 301*).²⁶ Nevertheless, she created a coherent narrative progression across London in these articles, and worked hard redrafting them. On 11 April she complains:

Oh I am so tired of correcting my own writing [...] I have however learnt I think to dash: & not to finick. I mean the writing is free enough: it’s the repulsiveness of correcting that nauseates me. And the cramming in & the cutting out. (*D IV 16*)

Having expressed this preference for the procedures of the sketch over the revising and finishing, Woolf went to France for a change of scene and returned ‘to finish off *The Waves* in a dashing masterly manner’ (3 May 1931; *D IV 24-5*). Though the correcting process is tedious, in 1931 Woolf’s speedy composition of *The London Scene* has become skilled and confident where in 1921 (as she characterised it in 1930), it had enacted ‘wild outbursts of freedom, inarticulate, ridiculous, unprintable mere outcries’ (*L IV 231*). By 1931, the speed and spontaneity that indicate the sketch can be incorporated into techniques of finishing as well as of capturing the generative impulse of the moment: this swift mode of writing has the potential to become ‘masterly’ as opposed to haphazard.

As Craig Morehead has shown in his essay on ‘Virginia Woolf and the London Sketch’ (2013), Woolf’s *London Scene* utilises the tradition of a distinct and commercially popular variety of the nineteenth-century sketch. The urban sketch in general presents, as Garcha outlines in his analysis of Dickens’s *Sketches by Boz*, ‘a tableau that accentuates temporal and spatial motion’.²⁷ Woolf’s sketches of London work, Morehead argues, ‘not only as simple guidebook’ to this city scene, ‘but also as ethnographic exploration, alternating between the past and the present, bringing into relief the many seen and unseen connections that make up daily life and the impressions of [...] London.’²⁸ Woolf’s *London Scene* traces the surface and performs, as Sonita Sarker puts it, a quasi-ethnographic ‘mock-Baedeker itinerary’;²⁹ they layer superficial images and impressions,

²⁶ Alice Wood points out that, although they were commissioned she chose the topic herself (‘Made to Measure: Virginia Woolf in *Good Housekeeping* Magazine’, *Prose Studies* 32. 2 [April 2010]: 12-24; 13).

²⁷ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 120.

²⁸ Morehead, “‘Rambling the Streets of London’”, p. 18.

²⁹ Sonita Sarker, ‘Locating a Native Englishness in Virginia Woolf’s “The London Scene”’, *National Women’s Studies Association Journal* 13.2 (Summer 2001):1-30; 6.

and stage the relationship between ephemerality and permanence, the everyday and potential moments of insight. ‘Plotless, descriptive, slight’ as Susan Squier affirms them to be,³⁰ the *London Scene* sketches demonstrates the kind of *flânerie* that characterises the city sketches of the nineteenth century examined in Martina Lauster’s study of European journals.³¹ From the wine vaults in ‘The Docks of London’ as ‘a scene of extraordinary solemnity [...] empty of all human life’ (*LS* 21), through the garish ‘character of Oxford Street’ (*LS* 27) and a return to her 1909 sketch ‘Carlyle’s House’ in ‘Great Men’s Houses’, Woolf leads to a hilltop view of London: ‘a view of perpetual fascination at all hours and in all seasons. One sees London as a whole’ (*LS* 46). This panoramic, all-encompassing scene ends with two typical figures: ‘the usual young man sits on an iron bench clasping to his arms the usual young woman’ (*LS* 47). We are then shown the people outside the ‘Abbeys and Cathedrals’, ‘too many, too minute, too like each other to have each a name, a character, a separate life of their own’ (*LS* 50). From there, we are led to ‘garden graveyards’ (*LS* 59), after which come the ‘old scenes of stir and bustle’ in the House of Commons (*LS* 62) – itself ‘a body of a certain character’ (*LS* 65). Finally, in the sketch entitled ‘Portrait of a Londoner’, we arrive at the door of Mrs Crowe – a characteristic type and emblem of the London scene, who functions in a similar manner to Mrs Brown, discussed in the next half of this chapter. As suggested in the terminology used here, the scene and the character are intertwined when it comes to the subjects and strategies of the sketch.

The typifying, ethnographically-inflected, and narratively masterful sketches of *The London Scene* utilise the conventions of the London sketch (and of city sketches generally) in a more essayistic fashion than those in *Monday or Tuesday*. In contrast, the earlier sketches perform fragmentary flashes of insight in a poetic prose which does not always have an identifiable narrative voice or progression, and are often structured via sensory impressions. In line with what Leena-Kreet Kore identifies as the Symbolist and Aesthetic

³⁰ Susan Squier, “‘The London Scene’: Gender and Class in Woolf’s London”, *Twentieth Century Literature* 29.4 (Winter 1983): 488-500; 488. See also Squier, *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); and Jeanette McVicker, “‘Six Essays on London Life’: A History of Dispersal”, 2 Parts, *Woolf Studies Annual* 9 (2003): 143-67, and 10 (2004): 141-72.

³¹ See my discussion of Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century* (2007), pp. 33-5. On the gendering of *flânerie* in Woolf’s London scenes, see Rachel Bowlby, ‘Walking, Women and Writing: Virginia Woolf as Flâneuse’, *Feminist Destinations and Further Essays on Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2010), pp. 191-220; Janet Wolff, ‘The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 2.3 (1985): 37-46; Deborah Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000); and Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016).

heritage of the sketch,³² *Monday or Tuesday* is poetically concerned with the quiddity or ‘aura’ of language, whereas *The London Scene* utilises a more descriptive narrative ‘casing’ to create an essayistic exploration of London as a subject. Morehead attributes the difference of style between the *London Scene* sketches and that of a London scene like ‘Kew Gardens’ to a level of fictionalisation, suggesting that the earlier sketch ‘could be read as a kind of fictional essay of the London sketch genre’.³³ While this identifies a slight difference in framework in a common essayistic mode, there are several issues with this categorisation: for example, the *London Scene* sketches may be said to utilise a fictional narrator’s perspective, which Morehead fails to account for. It also falls short of the fact that ‘Kew Gardens’ takes a recognisable London setting as the occasion for dramatising scenes of poetic prose rather than the kind of essayistic exploration conventional to the city sketch. Utilising aspects of the sketch as discussed in the preceding pages, ‘Kew Gardens’ is, as Alice Staveley has shown, a text which Woolf revised multiple times and which displays her experiments with form and with the impressions made by words themselves.³⁴ It is not an essay arguing a point or describing a subject within a recognisable narrative framework; there is no easily identifiable narrator, no invocation of an ‘I’, ‘you’ or ‘we’. Rather, the scenes that structure ‘Kew Gardens’, between the microcosm of the flower bed and the larger Gardens, might themselves be seen to be frames for each other, as Edward L. Bishop suggests: ‘[the characters’] appearances are neatly interspersed among four passages which describe the action in the flower bed. Yet this pattern is not insisted upon; the juxtapositions are not abrupt or pointed’.³⁵ Alternating dialogue with lyrical description, the scenes and characters of ‘Kew Gardens’ foreground a certain tone in the repetition of sounds and colours like those noted in ‘A Sketch of the Past’. While I will discuss this sketch in more detail in the next chapter, sounding the political resonances of its scenery, ‘Kew Gardens’ provides a point of contact between the essayistic and poetic sketching of the London scene, introducing some of the key ways in which Woolf’s scene-making is at work in *Monday or Tuesday*.

Crucial to the poetic and dramatic scene-making of ‘Kew Gardens’ is the use of dialogue. Shaping via colour and sound, the physical landscape of the scenes in ‘Kew Gardens’ is constructed through the arrangement of dialogue in a concrete way, in the Tower of Babel-like description of the women’s conversation: ‘The ponderous woman

³² Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit’”, p. 63.

³³ Morehead, “‘Rambling the Streets’”, p. 19, n. 3 (my emphasis).

³⁴ See Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’.

³⁵ Edward L. Bishop, ‘Pursuing “It” Through “Kew Gardens”’ in *Studies in Short Fiction* 19.3 (Summer 1982): 269-75; p. 271

looked through the pattern of falling words at the flowers standing cool, firm, and upright in the earth, with a curious expression' (*MT* 74). The women's words are arranged in a precise visual way on the page, with specific indentations:

"Nell, Bert, Lot, Cess, Phil, Pa, he says, I says, she says, I says, I says, I says –"
 "My Bert, Sis, Bill, Grandad, the old man, sugar,

Sugar, flour, kippers, greens,
 Sugar, sugar, sugar." (*MT* 74)

The first line moves from six single stressed syllables in the names to an iambic stress pattern for six beats, breaking off with a dash. With the suggestion of ballad metre split across the last two lines, swapping iambic for catalectic trochaic tetrameter followed by trochaic (or potentially pyrrhic) trimeter, the musicality of this dialogue in repetitions and sprung rhythm is a structuring principle of the scene and a potent example of Woolf's poetic prose. The scene of 'Kew Gardens' begins with the dissociated floral performance in its first lines:

From the oval shaped flower-bed there rose perhaps a hundred stalks spreading into heart shaped or tongue shaped leaves half way up and unfurling at the tip red or blue or yellow petals marked with spots of colour raised upon the surface; and from the red, blue or yellow gloom of the throat emerged a straight bar, rough with gold dust and slightly clubbed at the end. (*MT* 68)

This composition of shape and texture, invoking the human anatomy of the 'heart', 'tongue' and 'throat', is active and immediate: in the use of the words 'spreading', 'unfurling' and 'emerged', the anatomy of the flowers is brought into being as they are described.³⁶ Moreover, the shape of the leaves as 'heart' and 'tongue' emblematises the themes and structure of this sketch, and resonate throughout the collection: in 'The String Quartet', '[t]he tongue is but a clapper' (*MT* 63), and 'A Haunted House' ends with 'the light in the heart' (*MT* 9-10). All three of these sketches are concerned with the unspeakable truths of the heart vs. the ability of the tongue to make noise. The beats of the heart and the 'clapping' of the tongue also come together in a repeated rhythm throughout the collection, comprising three stressed syllables beginning with 'Safe, safe, safe' in 'A Haunted House' (*MT* 9-10) (where it also manifests the 'pulse' of the house). This beat becomes, in 'A Society', a declaration of 'War! War! War!', and then appears as a pictorial '* * *' (*MT* 31); in 'An Unwritten Novel' it refers to writing and verbalises ellipses as

³⁶ On flowers as another Paterian trope, see Meisel, *The Absent Father*, pp. 65-6.

‘dot dot dot’ (MT 50), and then in Moggridge’s patronising recital, ‘Dear, dear, dear’ (MT 52); in ‘The String Quartet’ it is the narrator’s ‘No, no, no’ (MT 60) and the inability to express the quality of the music designated by “‘How – how – how”” (MT 63), as well as the recurrent ellipses that structure the sketch. In ‘The Mark on the Wall’, which closes the collection, the beat might be said to return and fade out in ellipses. In ‘Kew Gardens’, it appears with a slight metrical variant, in the trochaic pattern of the women’s dialogue, ‘Sugar, sugar, sugar’ (MT 74).³⁷ This recurring beat is one of the unifying elements of the scenes in this collection: ‘Monday or Tuesday’ and ‘Blue & Green’ are the only two sketches in which it is not present, and they are set apart from the other sketches as interludes – appearing at exact intervals a third of the way through the book – with rhythms of their own. Such rhythmic troping is one of the ways in which *Monday or Tuesday* performs as a ‘finished and composed work’, with an intricate structure and internal coherence.

The direct dialogue or internal monologue in which the beat described above often appears is the textual point at which the staging of scenes and characters converge. Woolf’s use of interruptive dialogue in *Monday or Tuesday* not only introduces poetic technique as in ‘Kew Gardens’, but performs as part of a wider strategy in her sketch-like composition of social scenes from everyday life, rewriting them as moments of insight or intensity. In terms of the sketch, Putzel traces Woolf’s recording and dramatizing of dialogue in the sketches of her diaries and letters,³⁸ and points out that when composing the *The Years*, she plans the novel “‘to be all in speeches – no play – I have now made a sketch of what everyone is to say” (D 4 237)’.³⁹ The sketch-like role of passages of dialogue is particularly evident in the setting of the party, frequently played out in parallel with that of the city scene.⁴⁰ With regard to narrative and compositional technique, the scene-making of the party is, as Bryony Randall points out, generative of Woolf’s writing processes in general. Providing the occasion for a sketch, Woolf saw the party/social scene as “‘the raw

³⁷ Olk also identifies this rhythm in *Between the Acts* as an ‘expansion of the moment by means of threefold repetitions:’ ‘from the futility expressed by the beating of time of the dying butterfly: “beat, beat, beat” (BA, 9); “never, never, never” (BA, 10) to the central “Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent” (BA, 22) of the room, and the “chuff, chuff, chuff”, and the “tick, tick, tick” of the machine during the pageant. The triadic sequence of these repetitions create a cyclical rhythm of musical time, which is present both in the inanimate machines and in nature, when for instance the swallows dance a waltz (BA, 113)’ (*VW and the Aesthetics of Vision*, p. 147). See also Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit””, pp. 187-88.

³⁸ Putzel, *VW and the Theater*, pp. 120-26.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 128.

⁴⁰ Bryony Randall, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Idea of a Party’ in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *The Modernist Party* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2013), pp. 95-112.

material of her trade”⁴¹ and Randall suggests that, more specifically, ‘one can also detect a relationship between her “idea” [of a party] and her conceptualisation of what new forms her writing might take’.⁴² ‘The String Quartet’ is a key text in this regard, proceeding via layers and interruptions of narrative voices and dialogue, as well as poetic and musical scene-making in the setting of a party.

3.1.4 Scenes of Dialogue and Music: ‘The String Quartet’

Like ‘Kew Gardens’, ‘The String Quartet’ is structured around scenes of lyrical description and dialogue, and is intensely concerned with sound and arrangement. Beginning *in medias res*, the narrative simultaneously describes the scene of a party and retrospectively sketches the ‘threads’ that have tied together this scene in the heart of the city:

Well, here we are, and if you cast your eye over the room you will see that Tubes and trams and omnibuses, private carriages not a few, even, I venture to believe, landaus with bays in them, have been busy at it, weaving threads from one end of London to the other. (*MT* 59)

Including the reader as a participant in the scene, asking them to see in it the events that have led to its creation, ‘The String Quartet’ performs the scene as textual ‘knot’ that Woolf uses as a metaphor in ‘A Sketch of the Past’. The scene-making of ‘The String Quartet’ is reminiscent of Proustian party scenes, in which both the arrival and the performance itself are overlaid with memories and passionate associations. Such scenes in *À la recherche* are not only scenes of social gathering and musical listening, but are also stages for the characters’ internal dramas.⁴³ In ‘The String Quartet’, attempts to access forgotten memories intertwine with the rhythms of the music as the scene shifts between the party, the narrator’s consciousness, and the music itself. Although, as Adriana Varga points out, Woolf was ‘[reluctant] to draw imitative analogies between music and literature’,⁴⁴ it is possible to see the musical scenes in ‘The String Quartet’ as dramatic hallucinations and descriptions prompted by the notes being played.⁴⁵ Yet, what is more

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 96 (citing Leonard Woolf, *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919 to 1939* [San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1967], pp. 98-9).

⁴² Randall, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Idea’, p. 97.

⁴³ Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time* 6 Vols. Trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D. J. Enright (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992-1996).

⁴⁴ Adriana Varga, *Virginia Woolf and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2014), p. 9.

⁴⁵ Varga highlights the correlation between the language of the visual and the language of music in modernism: ‘debates about the performance and reception of modernist music in England were expressed through and connected to the theoretical language of visual modernism as developed and coined by Roger Fry and Clive Bell’ (*VW and Music*, p. 7). On Woolf’s resistance to narrativizing music, see also Émilie Crapoulet, ‘Beyond the Boundaries of Language: Music in Virginia Woolf’s “The String Quartet”’, *Journal of the Short Story in English* 50 (2008). Available at: <<https://jsse.revues.org/582>> [accessed 14 May 2017].

interesting in terms of the narrative operations of the sketch is Woolf's layering of moments and perspectives as scenes within the party, in which she also dramatises poetic prose.

Kate McLoughlin notes that the party 'constitutes a natural venue for heteroglossia (often in antiphony with omniscient narrative)', drawing attention to its 'theatrical quality' in modernist writing more generally.⁴⁶ The multi-vocal conversations of 'The String Quartet' happen between passages of dialogue, second person address to the reader, third person description of the party, and stream of consciousness narration (which may even be interpreted as that of the music itself). The narrative positions of this sketch are difficult to untangle and identify, interrupting each other as they do, and prefaced as they are by grammatical markers of uncertainty and provisionality. As Vanessa Manhire argues, this sketch sees Woolf 'using music as a vehicle for a new kind of narration' in contrast to her two previous novels, *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. Manhire points out that 'Woolf rejects conventional devices of narrative framing in order to create [...] effects of immediacy'.⁴⁷ As a stimulus for effects she later replicates in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, the formal intricacies of 'The String Quartet' are, in this regard, intriguing aspects by which to examine Woolf's use of the literary sketch, especially in terms of its narrative strategies for encasing scenes.

Utilising the present tense performativity of the sketch as she does in her description of the flowers in 'Kew Gardens', the central musical scene nesting within the scene of the party in 'The String Quartet' is a synaesthetic drama, interrupted by a piece of dialogue between two guests who met 'last time in Venice' (*MT* 59):

Here they come; four black figures, carrying instruments, and seat themselves facing the white squares under the downpour of light; rest the tips of their bows on the music stand; with a simultaneous movement lift them; lightly poise them, and, looking across at the player opposite, the first violin counts one, two, three –

Flourish, spring, burgeon, burst! The pear tree on the top of the mountain. Fountains jet; drops descend. But the waters of the Rhone flow swift and deep, race under the arches, and sweep the trailing water leaves, washing shadows over the silver fish, the spotted fish rushed down by the swift waters, now swept into an eddy

⁴⁶ McLoughlin, *The Modernist Party*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Vanessa Manhire, "The Worst of Music": Listening and Narrative in *Night and Day* and "The String Quartet" in Varga (ed.), *VW and Music*, pp. 134-56; p. 146. Manhire also links the musical scene, via Woolf's 'highly wrought literary diction', to the theatrical drama being staged: 'Woolf creates melodramatic scenes of courtly romance. She transposes the mannerisms of aristocratic society into formulaic literary clichés. The "lovers on the grass" speak in the stylized language of Renaissance drama, and the passage immediately following is the most conventionally legible in the story in terms of narrative style, not only outlining what happens, but paying considerable attention to the details of what everyone was wearing' (p. 153). See also Peter Jacobs, "'The Second Violin Tuning in the Ante-Room": Virginia Woolf and Music' in Diane Gillespie (ed.), *The Multiple Muses of Virginia Woolf* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 227-60.

where – it’s difficult this – conglomeration of fish all in a pool; leaping, splashing, scraping sharp fins; and such a boil of current that the yellow pebbles are churned round and round, round and round – free now, rushing downwards, or even somehow ascending in exquisite spirals into the air; curled like thin shavings from under a plane; up an [*sic*] up. ...How lovely goodness is in those who, stepping lightly, go smiling through the world! Also in old, jolly fishwives, squatted under arches, obscene old women, how deeply they laugh and shake and rollick, when they walk, from side to side, hum, hah!
[...]

The melancholy river bears us on. When the moon comes through the trailing willow boughs, I see your face, I hear your voice and the bird singing as we pass the osier bed. What are you whispering? Sorrow, sorrow. Joy, joy. Woven together like reeds in moonlight. Woven together, inextricably commingled, bound in pain and strewn in sorrow – crash!

The boat sinks. Rising, the figures ascend but now leaf thin, tapering to a dusky wraith which, fiery tipped, draws its twofold passion from my heart. For me it sings, unseals my sorrow, thaws compassion, floods with love the sunless world, nor ceasing, abates its tenderness but deftly, subtly, weaves in and out until in this pattern, this consummation, the cleft ones unify; soar, sob, sink to rest, sorrow and joy. (*MT* 61-62)

The poetic flow of this scene is punctuated by repeated rhythmic patterns, such as:

/ u / | / u / / u / | / u /
‘Flourish, spring, | burgeon, burst!’; ‘Fountains jet; | drops descend’

The call-and-response of this pattern is also evident in the oppositions towards the end of the extract, ‘Sorrow, sorrow. Joy, joy’. The aquatic imagery of this passage in general foreshadows Woolf’s words in ‘A Sketch of the Past’, when ‘the sealing cracks and in floods “reality”’ (*MB* 145), creating a scene. As a scene, this one is interrupted by dialogue (removed above) which identifies “‘That’s an early Mozart, of course – ’” (*MT* 62), as well as by a self-reflexive statement from the narrator which highlights the process of sketching such an elaborate, rhythmic passage and managing to sustain it at length: ‘ – it’s difficult this – ’. With this interjection, Woolf performs a scene of composition, both literary and musical. The passages of dialogic interruption become a structural and aesthetic necessity, breaking up the passages of lyrical description and counterpointing the poetic language with fragmented talk in the real, now cracked, post-war world – which always breaks off with a dash: “‘Still, the war made a break – ’” [*MT* 59]. This phrase foreshadows another social scene, in which the narrator of *A Room of One’s Own* thinks:

Before the war at a luncheon party like this people would have said precisely the same things but they would have sounded different, because in those days they were

accompanied by a sort of humming noise, not articulate, but musical, exciting, which changed the value of the words themselves. (*AROO* 15)⁴⁸

As in *A Room of One's Own* and in the framing of 'A Sketch of the Past', war is an oblique presence in 'The String Quartet', filtered through music and pointing to another scene that is cut out in order for this one to manifest. Furthermore, the scene that we are presented with in this early sketch is provisional and fragile, proceeding in the hypothetical 'mode of an "as if"' which Olk identifies in Woolf's use of the sketch.⁴⁹ Its action is fractured and deferred, with the word 'if' repeated eight times in the first four paragraphs by an immediately intrusive narrator, who nevertheless makes it clear from the outset that this is not going to be a scene with a clear narrative progression. The first paragraph ends with the elliptical statement: 'Yet I begin to have my doubts –' (*MT* 59), setting the rest of the narrative up as a series of uncertainties. Throughout the sketch, questions and phrases such as 'if I'm not mistaken' (*MT* 60), 'perhaps offered hesitatingly' (*MT* 59), 'Yet I begin to have my doubts', work to cultivate an atmosphere of tentative possibilities, non-committal and elision: they work in the mode of the sketch, denying finish and counterpointing statement with a rhetorical frame of hypothesis and provisionality.⁵⁰ Coupled with the repetition of the word 'and', dashes and semi-colons, the sentence-structure of the first section is one long deferred proposal, begun in the second paragraph and concluded with a question in the fourth, a page later: '– what chance is there?' (*MT* 60). This sketch, like others in the collection including the title sketch (discussed in the next chapter), makes such questions the basis of the narrative, demanding the reader's collaboration at the same time as displaying the unmistakable imprint of the consciousness that postulates and explores. These narrative strategies frame the poetic interlude of the sketch in the same way as the dialogue in 'Kew Gardens' is a counterpoint to the descriptions of the flowerbed.

Contributing to its tentativeness, as both a structural stylistic pose and a thematic concern, 'The String Quartet' is also centrally concerned with the workings of memory.

⁴⁸ On the interruption of the First World War in this sketch, 'as if it is no more than a slight inconvenience to social life' see also Manhire, "'The Worst of Music'", p. 151-52.

⁴⁹ Olk, *The Visual Aesthetics*, p. 118. See also p. 59 of the present thesis.

⁵⁰ Manhire points out that Diane Gillespie uses the 'metaphor of counterpoint [to emphasize] Woolf's creation of the fictional effects of overlapping voices, simultaneity of action, and continual movement' (p. 147). See Gillespie, *The Multiple Muses*, p. 141. In the preface to Varga's edited volume, *Virginia Woolf and Music*, Mihály Szegedy-Maszák writes that 'the contributors to this volume avoid the temptation of using musical terms without qualifications. The word "counterpoint", for instance, is rarely mentioned, since the simultaneity of voices is hardly feasible in a text that is expected to be read linearly' (p. x). I follow Gillespie in my use of the word 'counterpoint' throughout this thesis; that is, I do not assume that Woolf expected her texts to be read linearly, or that language is incapable of creating effects of simultaneity.

The narrator is aware of what she describes as sitting ‘passive on a gilt chair, only turning the earth above a buried memory, as we all do, for there are signs, if I’m not mistaken, that we’re all recalling something, furtively seeking something’ (*MT* 60). At the same time as this highlights passivity and the inevitable flow of thought, it is also an active process of ‘seeking’. While the process of ‘seeking something’ cannot be absolutely stated by the narrative or by the characters, and while it cannot be represented completely through outward ‘signs’, there are gestures nonetheless which stage a scene of reading for both the narrator and the reader. The allusion to the buried memories that we are all secretively, internally looking for and which are just scraping the surface, points towards the psychodramatic aspect of the scene later restaged in ‘A Sketch of the Past’, and which is a theme set up in the very first sketch of *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘A Haunted House’.

3.1.5 Scenes of Memory: Structure and Surface in ‘A Haunted House’

In her doctoral thesis on ‘Woolf’s *Monday or Tuesday* Years’, Alice Staveley writes that:

Willed forgetfulness, rhapsodic losses and re-memberings, aborted readings and wayward mis-readings, misplacements – even immolation – of companionable books, are all characteristic aspects of the flights of consciousness depicted in many of the short pieces Woolf wrote between 1917 and 1921.⁵¹

As the first sketch in *Monday or Tuesday*, though not the first written, ‘A Haunted House’ is in some ways a palimpsestic and misleading scene of reading and writing. Christine Reynier has approached it as a sketch for the ‘Time Passes’ section in *To the Lighthouse*,⁵² analysing the syntax, subject-positions, tenses, and punctuation to reveal the craft with which it is put together, in spite of its having been often ignored or written off as an “impressionistic sketch” devoid of all “narrative structure”.⁵³ Though in certain parts it does work by registering impressions, there is also much more happening in terms of narrative point of view, temporality and dialogue which contributes to an aesthetically complex sketch. Like ‘Kew Gardens’ and ‘The String Quartet’, ‘A Haunted House’ proceeds via scenes which are unified by repeated tropes and sentence structures, including the sketchy provisionality of rhetorical questions and the use of the conditional tense which

⁵¹ Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, p. 5.

⁵² Christine Reynier, ‘A Haunted House: Or, The Genesis of *To the Lighthouse*’, *Journal of the Short Story in English* 14 (1990): 63-78. Reynier traces connections between the two texts through specific narrative structures, vocabulary, and tropes, such as the beam of light, the wind, candles, apples and roses, and writes that ‘the rearrangements of past and present and the rhythmical devices (iterative and singulative sequences) which are characteristic of *To the Lighthouse*, had already been outlined in “A Haunted House” (p. 65).

⁵³ Reynier, “A Haunted House”, p. 63 (quoting Guiguet, *VW and Her Works*).

resonate throughout the collection. Setting the tone for a book in which everything overflows, slides and escapes, 'A Haunted House' enacts discrete and identifiable, but also blurrily merging scenes, and it is often difficult to determine the focalisation and temporality of the events.

The first paragraph comprises two sentences: 'Whatever hour you woke there was a door shutting. From room to room they went, hand in hand, lifting here, opening there, making sure – a ghostly couple' (*MT* 9). In the first two sentences, the narration moves from a second person address to the reader to a third person description of the ghosts' actions, and the fact of their being ghosts is withheld until the end of the paragraph. The entire paragraph functions like a stage direction, introducing a dialogue between the ghosts, which then moves rapidly and rhythmically and shifts from past to present tense:

"Here we left it," she said. And he added, "Oh, but here too!" "Its [*sic*] upstairs," she murmured, "And in the garden," he whispered. "Quietly," they said, "or we shall wake them." (*MT* 9)

The location of this scene is unclear, as is the physical position of the narrator who reports 'she said. And he added'. The movement from the woman's to the man's speech becomes steadily more fluid, as Woolf replaces the full stop with a comma until they finally speak as one: 'they said'. The next paragraph begins with an indirect address to the ghosts, repeating the 'you' of only a few lines earlier and shifting the implicit dialogue between the narrator and the reader onto the narrator and the ghosts: 'But it wasn't that you woke us. Oh no' (*MT* 9). This is a scene in which the sentences repeatedly begin with the conjunctions 'But' or 'And': 'But it wasn't that you woke us'; 'And then, tired of reading, one might rise...'; 'And so down again...'; 'But they had found it in the drawing room' (*MT* 9). Creating a structure based on simultaneous cumulation and negation, these sentences encourage the 'wayward mis-readings' that Staveley suggests is typical of Woolf's sketches of this period. They correspond, too, to what Leena-Kreet Kore identifies in Pater's sentences as the 'process of weaving and unweaving, of assertion and denial, that becomes the paradigmatic movement of the Aesthetic creative vision' and which finds its 'purest expression' in the form of the sketch.⁵⁴ Kore notes that this structure is present in Woolf's titles, including 'Monday or Tuesday' and *Night and Day*, and 'is felt even more strongly in the structure of her sketches'.⁵⁵ Woolf's sentences in 'A Haunted House' instigate a rhythmic to-and-fro that mirrors the movements and dialogue of the ghosts and

⁵⁴ Kore, "The Nameless Spirit", p. 156.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 181.

the narrator, who wander up and down the stairs, in and out of the house, ‘furtively seeking something’ yet also forgetful of what it is that they (the narrator) are looking for. In doing so, their movements weave a scene of storytelling that both creates and overlays the ghosts’ own gathering of memories through the house.⁵⁶

In the middle of the sketch, Woolf presents an overt scene of reading and writing. The narrator is ruminating on the things that ‘one might’ think of the ghosts doing, and in the process describes the scene of the house and its objects. It is unclear whether ‘one might’ be reading, dreaming or writing these ghostly scenes, creating rather than observing ghostly movements:

“They’re looking for it; they’re drawing the curtain”, one might say, and so read on a page or two. “Now they’ve found it”, one would be certain, stopping the pencil on the margin. And then, tired of reading, one might rise and see for oneself, the house all empty, the doors standing open, only the wood pigeons bubbling with content and the hum of the threshing machine sounding from the farm. (*MT* 9)

In this sketched-out scene of reading, which doubles as a scene of writing and of potential memories, with ‘the pencil on the margin’ and the use of conditional tenses (slightly increasing hypothetical certainty in the shift from ‘might’ to ‘would’ to mirror the content of that sentence), the ‘I’ of the narrator appears for the first time, in both direct and indirect monologue: ““What did I come in here for? What did I want to find?” My hands were empty. “Perhaps its [*sic*] upstairs then?”” (*MT* 9). The introduction of ‘one might’ begins to increase the tone of uncertainty, even though the direct speech is still declarative and actively scene-making: ““They’re looking for it; they’re drawing the curtain”” (*MT* 9). As is common to Woolf’s sentences more generally, as a function of rhythm, uncertainty is amplified by further accumulation of ‘But’, ‘If’, ‘Yet’ at the beginning of sentences in the fourth paragraph, building to a question as in ‘The String Quartet’. The narrator establishes the existence of the ‘reflected apples, reflected roses’, a simultaneous diminishing and doubling of objects consistent with the accumulation and negation of the sentence structures throughout, and follows with two conditional sentences with a pattern of ‘If’, ‘Yet’, ‘if’:

⁵⁶ On houses as scenes where domesticity, memory and writing are intertwined, see Victoria Rosner, ‘Virginia Woolf and Monk’s House’ in Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion*, pp. 181-94. In particular, Rosner draws attention to Woolf’s ‘sketch’, in her reading notebook of 1929, of ‘a study and a bath at the top of Monk’s House’, juxtaposing it with Julia Stephen’s plan for the same features at the top of Hyde Park Gate in 1886, which Woolf remembers in ‘A Sketch of the Past’ (pp. 186-87). She also relates Woolf’s designing of living space – including its contextualisation by the Omega Workshops – to freedom and to the creation of literature: ‘If books could be buildings, Woolf was their literary architect; if buildings could be texts, Woolf made herself both their author and their interpreter’ (p. 187).

But they had found it in the drawing room. *Not* that one could ever see them. The window panes reflected apples, reflected roses; all the leaves were green in the glass. *If* they moved in the drawing room, the apple only turned its yellow side. *Yet* the moment after, *if* the door was opened, spread about the floor, hung upon the walls, pendant from the ceiling – *what?* (MT 9-10; my italics)

This statement-and-negation becomes a pattern in the paragraph, in which we are no longer sure who is reading, who is writing, what is the scene and what is cut out: we never get the conclusion of the second ‘if’, with the sentence breaking off into an unexplained ‘– what?’ The scene of writing repeatedly breaks off where it is about to reveal an answer to the reader. The narrator, however, appears to reach some understanding of what the ghosts are seeking – the ‘treasure’ and ‘the light in the heart’.⁵⁷ After having been highly conscious of the reader and narrative framework in the first sentence, the narrator retreats into an interior monologue which does not concern itself with communicating information on the surface. At points, however, it emerges from this interiority to make sense (albeit cryptically) of the ghosts’ story and their relation to the current inhabitants of the house. It is at the end of this scene that we get their history:

Death was the glass; death was between us; coming to the woman first, hundreds of years ago, leaving the house, sealing all the windows; the rooms were darkened. He left it, left her, went North, went East, saw the stars turned in the Southern sky; sought the house, found it dropped beneath the Downs. (MT 10)

After this rapid journey through the distant past, sketched in an accumulation separated by commas and semi-colons with scenes rising to just under the surface of the glass, there is a general shift to the present tense bringing in a new scene and the second half of the text:

The wind roars up the avenue. Trees stoop and bend this way and that. Moonbeams splash and spill wildly in the rain. But the beam of the lamp falls straight from the window. The candle burns stiff and still. Wandering through the house, opening the windows, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy. (MT 10-11)

This sudden shift into present tense heralded by tropes of nature carries resonance with ‘Time Passes’, as Reynier has suggested. In this pivotal scene, time passes into the present and ushers in another fragmented dialogue between the ghosts:

“Here we slept,” she says. And he adds, “Kisses without number.” “Waking in the morning –” “Silver between the trees –” “Upstairs –” “In the garden –” “When

⁵⁷ As discussed in Chapter Five, a variant in the printing between the first UK and first US editions of *Monday or Tuesday* affects the interpretation of this moment of revelation at the end of the sketch.

summer came – ” “In winter snowtime – ” The doors go shutting far in the distance, gently knocking like the pulse of a heart. (*MT* 11)

Again, Woolf omits full stops or commas in the dialogue, and repeats the structure of the previous one: ‘she says. And he adds’, framing it this time in the present tense. The use of dashes fragmenting and linking the ghosts’ speech amplifies the sense of their speaking as one, as does the syntax which creates a poetic image of ‘winter snowtime’. The ‘pulse’ that has been repeated throughout the last scene is here specifically linked to the heart: combined with the shifting of subject positions and tenses throughout the sketch, its repeated rhythms again illustrate the importance of sound and dimension to Woolf’s sense of a scene as she outlines it in ‘A Sketch of the Past’. They are a clue to the shaping and carefully designed structure that gives her power over such chance impressions.

Highlighting the intricately structured theatricality and musicality of movement in these scenes, there is another intriguing way in which ‘A Haunted House’ is a key text for examining Woolf’s scene-making via the sketch. Elizabeth Steele has discussed the formal structure of ‘A Haunted House’ as reminiscent of Japanese Noh drama, and re-written it in this form.⁵⁸ As Steele points out, Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa were ‘popularizing the Noh drama in England about the time [...] Woolf was writing and polishing the stories to be published in *Monday or Tuesday*’.⁵⁹ Resonating with the idea of the buried treasure in Woolf’s sketch as ‘the light in the heart’, Pound and Fenollosa write: ‘It is a Noh saying that “The heart is the form”’.⁶⁰ What is more significant as a conjunction with the sketch, however, is the fact that the Noh’s aesthetic theory is concerned with achieving the right nuances of imitation. As Arthur Waley puts it (citing Seami, the fifteenth-century author of the *Nishikigi*, in whose love plot Steele identifies a potential source for ‘A Haunted House’):⁶¹

In imitation there should be a tinge of the “unlike”. For if imitation be pressed too far it impinges on reality and ceases to give an impression of likeness. If one aims only at the beautiful, the “flower” is sure to appear.⁶²

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Steele, “‘A Haunted House’: Virginia Woolf’s Noh Story”, *Studies in Short Fiction* 26.2 (Spring 1989): 151-61. Steele consistently refers to ‘A Haunted House’ as a ‘story’, even after adapting it.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 155.

⁶⁰ Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa, *Noh, or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1916), p. 52.

⁶¹ Steele, “‘A Haunted House’”, p. 157-59.

⁶² Arthur Waley, *The Nō Plays of Japan* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1921), p. 46. On Waley’s proximity to Woolf, see Steele, “‘A Haunted House’”, p. 157, n. 16.

Imitation and representation in the Noh are governed by the concept of *yūgen*, derived from Zen Buddhism and meaning ‘what lies beneath the surface’.⁶³ Waley writes that *yūgen* is ‘the subtle as opposed to the obvious; the hint as opposed to the statement’.⁶⁴ In these aspects, the aesthetics of the Noh are compatible not only with ‘A Haunted House’, with its memories skimming the surface, ‘beneath the glass’, and its revealing-withdrawing movements of the sentences described above, but with *Monday or Tuesday* as a whole. Creating moments of Paterian intensity, the sketches of *Monday or Tuesday* instigate the epiphany via, as Bryony Randall puts it, ‘the surface of everyday life’.⁶⁵ These sketches reconfigure that surface in poetic prose, resulting in an often uncanny re-writing of scenes from an ordinary day. Introducing a ‘tinge of the “unlike”’ via narrative strategies of deferral, doubt and provisionality, together with moments of insight and rhythmic description, flashpoints that appear unfinished, and multiple layers of temporality and perspective, this book utilises the sketch not simply as a relief-printed ethnographic exploration of scenes from the life of Monday or Tuesday, but as the initiation of aesthetic and formal experiments with temporality and perspective. The reconfiguration of the surface to suggest ‘what lies beneath’ is fundamental not only to Woolf’s conception of scenes but of the characters who move in and help create those scenes. The next section of this chapter therefore moves the discussion to the character sketch as another type of narrative device that appears in *Monday or Tuesday* – one that is similarly concerned with ideas of surface and depth, imitation and uncertainty, and with inscribing provisionally ‘representative’ typologies, tinged with the ‘unlike’, in the mode of the sketch.

PART 2: CHARACTER SKETCHES

In the scenes of her early life, ‘in the foreground’, Woolf writes, ‘there were of course people’ (*MB* 86). She finds that attempting to write these people through the lenses of memory and childhood vision figures them as caricatures: ‘[T]hese people were very like characters in Dickens. They were caricatures; they were very simple; they were immensely alive. They could be made with three strokes of the pen, if I could do it’ (*MB* 86).

Illustrated by Dickens (and she is reading *Nicholas Nickleby* at the same time as writing the memoir [*MB* 86]),⁶⁶ Woolf highlights the fact that caricature is drawn as a sketch, in

⁶³ Steele draws attention to Beatrice Lane Suzuki’s claim that ‘without understanding Buddhism it is impossible for one to fully understand the Noh’ (Steele, “A Haunted House”, p. 155).

⁶⁴ Waley, *The Nō Plays*, p. 21.

⁶⁵ Randall, *Modernism*, p. 9.

⁶⁶ Garcha takes *Nicholas Nickleby* as his main text for analysing Dickens’s incorporation of the sketch into the novel, arguing that it ‘depends in its structure on the separation of its descriptive portions, along with

bold simple lines expressing an intensity of perception at the same time as reconfiguring ‘reality’. Woolf further links this aesthetic to the sketch by stressing that it is an effect of the incomplete. Those people who appear to her as caricatures in her memories of childhood are the ones whose presence in her life never continued into adulthood:

[T]he three old men and the one old woman are complete, as I was saying, because they died when I was a child. They none of them lived on to be altered as I altered – as others, like the Stillmans or the Lushingtons, lived on and were added to and filled and finally left incomplete. (*MB* 88)

The interactions of the complete and the incomplete are convoluted here, in that the continuing presence of certain characters in Woolf’s life makes them, for the purposes of sketching, incomplete: they would continue to change and never reach an end-point where the scene in which they move can break off and stand alone, representative.⁶⁷ Furthermore, acts of addition and filling in achieve something ‘finally left incomplete’. Here, Woolf inverts the usual relationship between the sketch and duration: completeness is related to the scenic brevity of the caricature, whereas the incomplete is an effect of continuously plotted life. By siting them very firmly in the scene of a childhood summer in St Ives, Woolf’s memories make these figures appear as finished sketches, contributing to the impression of the self-contained scene even while emphasising its nature as a fragment of something greater and as a broad, simplified sketch.

Woolf identifies bold outlines as key to the lasting imprint of caricature. Retrospectively writing about *Orlando* in her diary, with a contortion of grammatical tense, Woolf sees that: ‘I want (and this was serious) to give things their caricature value’ (7 Nov. 1928; *D* III 136). John Graham, who cites this in the epigraph to his essay on Woolf’s use of caricature, notes that in this mode we view people ‘with momentary detachment, and [...] may go beyond recognition to the discovery of something new about his face and character’:

For the artist who draws it the caricature may be more exploratory than critical. [...] Caricature can explore because it ignores the complexity of the total object and isolates only its relevant features, thereby allowing a sharper focus of attention than is possible in a full treatment’.⁶⁸

some of its stand-alone scenes, from its overarching, coherence-making plots’ (*From Sketch to Novel*, p. 146). This novel, Garcha suggests, demonstrates ‘Dickens’s scenic imagination’ (*Ibid*, p. 151).

⁶⁷ In terms of the characters in Dickens’s *Nicholas Nickleby*, Garcha notes that in this ‘melodrama’, they ‘remain throughout the plot exactly as they have always been’ and ‘do not alter’ (*Ibid*, p. 150).

⁶⁸ John Graham, ‘The “Caricature Value” of Parody and Fantasy in *Orlando*’ in *University of Toronto Quarterly* 30.4 (July 1961): 345-66; 345.

This definition foregrounds the instantaneous, preliminary and experimental aspect of caricature as a type of sketch, positioning it as both of the moment and as an exercise in technique: it is a way in which to test out various possibilities; it works through suggestion and impression rather than prolonged analysis, and cuts to the essential by selection, ‘simplification and exaggeration’.⁶⁹ Woolf’s writings on the concept of character, including her creation of character sketches in her diaries and letters, have recourse to allegory and satire, creating exaggerated ‘types’, as well as positioning the character sketch as a way of practicing technique without performing ‘a full treatment’, as Graham suggests. In this form, she can combine the searing, instantaneous insight with the provisionality, uncertainty and deferral of conclusion performed in her narrative strategies discussed above. In her diaries, we see the importance of character sketching to Woolf’s development as a writer, in biographic as well as fictional modes for amusement: ‘I had meant to write a sketch of George – Sir George Duckworth – as he announced himself to Nelly – & of Lytton; both unexpected visitors yesterday – for I’m not to go down to the studio til Monday & so must canter my pen amateurishly here’ (22 Feb. 1930; *D III* 292-293). Such sketches can also be an affectionate, memorialising gesture: ‘Two days ago I had my Greek lesson from Miss Case. I reflect that it may be my last, after a year & a half’s learning from her – so wish, entirely presumptuously I know, to make a rough sketch, which is at any rate done from life’ (July 30 1903; *PA* 186-7). While pointing to the sketch as a tool for easing back into writing after being ill, and rhetorically diminishing the skill needed to take a sketch ‘from life’, Woolf’s use of the character sketch as an exercise in the isolated, incomplete impression can be more serious than it would appear on the surface: like *Orlando*, she ‘began as a joke, & went on with it seriously’ (*D III* 185).

3.2.1 Lineage of the Character Sketch

Like Woolf’s idea of a scene, the character sketch is concerned not only with duration and fragmentation, but with the relationship between surface and depth. It exists within a lineage of classical rhetorical forms, as Jacques Bos has shown, from Theophrastus’s *Characters* to seventeenth-century satirical caricature.⁷⁰ As Garcha points out, it ‘became a fairly popular short form in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century’.⁷¹ The rhetorical history of the character sketch as a literary form complements and expands its context in

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Jacques Bos, ‘Individuality and Inwardness in the Literary Character Sketches of the Seventeenth Century’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 61 (1998): 142-57.

⁷¹ Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 175.

visual portraiture, where Woolf finds familial influences in Vanessa Bell and Julia Margaret Cameron.⁷² Caricature as a demonstration of rhetorical skill is displayed in her writing from a young age: as Hermione Lee notes in her preface to *Hyde Park Gate News*, we see Woolf there ‘trying out’ character sketches ‘like “the tall stout lively person with a fatal habit of talking to herself”’ (*HPGN* ix). With regard to this kind of broad-stroke typification, Eric Sandberg also contends that Woolf would ‘have been familiar with the tradition of Theophrastan [*sic*] character types’ through her father’s library collection, and performs a reading of her use of these types in *The Voyage Out*.⁷³ As a form used ‘for what may have been ethical, rhetorical or entertainment purposes’,⁷⁴ Bos traces the Ancient Greek etymology of the word ‘character’ to two distinct words: ἡθος (‘dwelling-place’), and χαράσσειν (‘to sharpen’ and ‘to inscribe onto a surface’). The idea of inscription is particularly interesting for the sketch as it enacts Woolf’s modernist aesthetics of the ‘evanescent and engraved’, discussed in Chapter Five; and H. Porter Abbot notes of Woolf’s character portraits in her diaries that she ‘engraves with the sharp instrument of her wit these vivid entries in a tradition that extends back through Addison and Steele’.⁷⁵ While this comparison suggests important contexts for the journalistic sketch,⁷⁶ for the purpose of this thesis what is of interest is the dichotomy between essence and appearance suggested by the etymology of the word ‘character’. This is important for Woolf’s writings on character in general, as well as for her use of the sketch as a mode of writing in *Monday or Tuesday*. Along with the isolation of scenes and the performative narration of a life, this dichotomy is at the heart of ‘An Unwritten Novel’, the fourth sketch in the collection which is concerned with scenes of reading and writing as they relate specifically to character. Before discussing that sketch in detail, it is useful to first outline the aspects of the character sketch as it appears in Woolf’s work more broadly, where it is seen to be important as a mode of writing biography as well as fiction.

⁷² On portraiture, see Elizabeth Hirsh, ‘Virginia Woolf and Portraiture’ in Maggie Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion*, pp. 160-77; Maggie Humm, *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: The Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Joanne Lukitsch, ‘Julia Margaret Cameron and the “Ennoblement” of Photographic Portraiture’ in Kristine Ottesen Garrigan (ed.), *Victorian Scandals: Representations of Gender and Class* (Ohio: Ohio UP, 1992). See also Mary Lyon’s edited collection entitled *Books and Portraits: Some further selections from the Literary and Biographical writings of Virginia Woolf* (London: Hogarth Press, 1977).

⁷³ Eric Sandberg, *Virginia Woolf: Experiments in Character* (New York: Cambria Press, 2014), p. 53.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 144.

⁷⁵ H. Porter Abbot, ‘Character and Modernism: Reading Woolf Writing Woolf’, *New Literary History* 24.2 (Spring, 1993): 393-405; 395.

⁷⁶ On Addison and Steele as key figures for the journalistic sketch, see Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, p. 33; and Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 149-53.

In 'The Art of Biography' (1939), Woolf invokes the idea of the simultaneously premonitory and memory-spurring qualities of the sketch in relation to writing people as characters. She highlights the sketch's capacity to look both forward and back, to create and recall at the same time, and uses these qualities as an index of successful form:

By telling us the true facts, by sifting the little from the big, and *shaping the whole so that we perceive the outline*, the biographer does more to stimulate the imagination than any poet or novelist save the very greatest. [...] He can give us the creative fact; *the fertile fact; the fact that suggests and engenders*. Of this, too, there is certain *proof*. For how often, when a biography is read and tossed aside, *some scene* remains bright, *some figure* lives on in *the depths of the mind*, and causes us, when we read a poem or a novel, to feel a start of recognition, *as if we remembered something that we had known before*. (E VI 187; my emphasis)

Again invoking transference and trial in the word 'proof', as well as the potential of the submerged scene to rise to the top, Woolf's language is suggestive in its advocacy of generative outlines rather than finished and composed works when it comes to life-writing. She refers to these outlines as things that are prior, that wait to be activated; a spur to memory, and a form in which the character outlasts the moment of writing and of reading. The character sketch, rather than 'capturing' character, enables its capricious mutability theorised by Woolf in her essays, discussed below. As well as its sense of accentuation, brevity and distillation of the essential, in the temporal qualities of activation that Woolf gives it, the outline contributes to images of 'recognition' or illumination, and crystallises the character sketch as a 'fertile' biographic mode.

In her review of Augustine Birrell's *Fredrick Locker Lampson: A Character Sketch* (1920), Woolf also writes about this mode in terms which foreshadow her feeling about the texts of *Monday or Tuesday* as 'wild outbursts of freedom' (L IV 231). Setting the feeling of freedom in the character sketch in opposition to the conventions imposed by large volumes of traditional biography, Woolf's critical tendency towards the sketch is performatively suggested by her self-aware utilisation of metaphor in this essay. She figures the established literary tradition of biography as an out-dated institution and a boring marriage in contrast to an exciting affair with a new, less composed and more intense form. She sketches the dissolution of 'the respectable union between us and British biography':

Never again shall we take to bed with us the life of Thomas Henry Huxley in two volumes; or Alfred Tennyson by his son; or Coleridge by James Dykes Campbell; or Samuel Barnett by his widow. Mr Birrell has seduced us. The metaphor is of course in the worst of taste. We make use of it only because it happens to express the sense

of illicit freedom, of unhoped-for adventure, which this witty quarto volume produces upon the mind long habituated to decorous wedlock with the portly great. (*E* III 255)

Woolf sees in the brevity of the sketch its possibilities not only for defying the lengthy traditions of Victorian biography and novels, but for wit in dealing with the contradictions of trying to write a life.⁷⁷ The brevity of the character sketch provides an opportunity to isolate moments, and acknowledges that perhaps only an outline is after all possible; that caricature is inevitable. This self-aware, subversive wittiness is a technique that Woolf practices in her own writing particularly where she invokes the idea of character in relation to tradition and to ‘portly great’ literary forms such as the novel.

3.2.2 Un-Writing the Novel: Typical Mrs Brown

In order to theorise around the stylistic development of the novel, Woolf organises her essay ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ (1923) and its redrafted version, ‘Character in Fiction’ (1924), as a series of character sketches.⁷⁸ There, she utilises the form in the Theophrastean rhetorical tradition, describing typical behaviours in order to suggest a deeper ἦθος. In both essays she invokes ‘Mr Wells, Mr Galsworthy and Mr Bennett’ to stand for types of English Edwardian writer, and in the later version, she expands these by making sketches of characteristic national literary types. Her figurative language and rhetoric in these essays is used both for the purposes of argumentation and as an exercise in style. Using the character sketch as a rhetorical form, it is important to note that in these essays Woolf is participating in a debate with Arnold Bennett about the creation of character in the novel;⁷⁹ but also that ‘Character in Fiction’ is, as Andrew McNeillie has shown, ‘substantially derived from a paper read to the Cambridge Heretics on 18 May 1924 [...] which had itself evolved from “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown” [1923]’ (*E* III 436, n. 1). Woolf is therefore not only aware of the audience of readers, but of a literal audience which had been present in the room, and these character sketches are figured as part of a layered oratory as well as literary scene that frames the essays. Woolf appeals to the present audience and to their personal experiences with character:

⁷⁷ See also ‘The Historian and the Gibbon’ (1937): ‘But it is not easy to draw even a thumbnail sketch of this strange being because the autobiography, or rather the six autobiographies, compose a portrait of such masterly completeness and authority that it defies out attempts to add to it. And yet no autobiography is ever final; there is always something for the reader to add from another angle’ (*E* VI 81-91).

⁷⁸ For the revised typescript of ‘Character in Fiction’, and notes on the revision and publication history of these two essays, see Andrew McNeillie, ‘Appendix III’ (*E* III 501-17).

⁷⁹ For details of this debate, see Jane Goldman, *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 53.

My first assertion is one that I think you will grant – that every one in this room is a judge of character. Indeed it would be impossible to live for a year without disaster unless one practiced character-reading and had some skill in the art. Our marriages, our friendships depend on it; our business largely depends on it; every day questions arise which can only be solved by its help. And now I will hazard a second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that on or about December 1910 human character changed. (*E* III 421)

While the ‘disputable’ nature of this second assertion has been taken up and has been appropriated as a maxim for modernism, the other assertions – that ‘every one in this room is a judge of character’ and that it is a ‘skill[ed] [...] art’ upon which many practical matters hang – positions character-sketching as a simultaneous process of reading and writing, and as a part of the activity of any given Monday or Tuesday. Woolf sketches for her purpose the figure of Mrs Brown – a ‘will-o’-the-wisp, a dancing light, an illumination gliding up the wall and out of the window’ who ‘changes the shape, shifts the accent, of every scene in which she plays her part’ (*E* III 387-8). Mrs Brown is an allegory of character itself, a phantom to be caught, a vessel to be filled; she is mutably characteristic. Mrs Brown has the power, not only of transformation, but of satire and caricature in her potential for ‘freakish malice’ and the agency to turn ‘the most solemn sights [...] to ridicule’ (*E* III 387). Using this figure as a subject, Woolf sketches ‘three different versions’ of a writer’s attempt to capture Mrs Brown, ‘an English, a French, and a Russian’ (*E* III 426):

The English writer would make the old lady into a ‘character’; he would bring out her oddities and mannerisms; her buttons and wrinkles; her ribbons and warts. Her personality would dominate the book. A French writer would rub out all that; he would sacrifice the individual Mrs Brown to give a more general view of human nature; to make a more abstract, proportioned, and harmonious whole. The Russian would pierce through the flesh; would reveal the soul – the soul alone, wandering out into the Waterloo Road, asking of life some tremendous question which would sound on and on in our ears after the book was finished. (*E* III 426)

The English writer is the one that Woolf explicitly links to typical “character”-sketching, but in each of their ways, her statements about the French and Russian writer also show them in the act of sketching: the French drawing broad-stroke generalisations, and the Russian aiming to express an essence by stripping away all superfluity.⁸⁰ Woolf’s

⁸⁰ The influence on Woolf of Russian fiction is a vast topic, particularly in terms of character, and it is one which deserves much closer investigation in relation to the aesthetics of the sketch, for which there is unfortunately not space in the present thesis. See Roberta Rubenstein, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Rebecca Beasley, ‘On Not Knowing Russian: The Translations of Virginia Woolf and S.S. Kotelianskii’, *Modern Language Review* 108 (2013): 1-29.

characterisation of Edwardian fiction in contradistinction to Victorian and Georgian fiction in ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ is itself, she acknowledges, a caricature created in the same way ‘as painters do when they wish to reduce the innumerable details of a crowded landscape to simplicity – step back, half shut the eyes, gesticulate a little vaguely with the fingers, and reduce Edwardian fiction to a view’ (*E III* 385). Reducing something to a metaphorical view (invoking the punning sense of ‘opinion’ as well as landscape) and creating a scene results in a generalisation which is useful for argument as well as criticism. In this essay, Woolf also makes character sketches of the novelist (*E III* 422), of her audience (421), of the reader (436), of the English public (432-3) and of James Joyce (434). The character sketch of the novelist as a general type is of particular interest here:

When all the practical business of life has been discharged, there is something about people which continues to seem to [the novelist] of overwhelming importance, in spite of the fact that it has no bearing whatever upon their happiness, comfort or income. The study of character becomes to them an absorbing pursuit; to impart character an obsession. (*E III* 422)

The compulsion of the narrator in ‘An Unwritten Novel’ to make a character of the woman on the train thus casts the narrator themselves in the role of a typical ‘novelist’. Woolf’s text is a character sketch of, by and for a novelist; it is a scene of simultaneous reading and spontaneous composition that for the narrator remains unfulfilled, and for Woolf was generative of new formal experiments in the novel.

3.2.3 The Life of ‘An Unwritten Novel’

‘An Unwritten Novel’ is concerned with novelistic form, and with the processes of reading and writing in general. In this sketch, the novel is as-yet unwritten but it is also un-written in the sense that it is deconstructed: at the same time as the sketch outlines a potential novel, it also performatively undoes it.⁸¹ It is not, therefore, simply a character sketch in the sense of being a caricature or portrait of a person, but its narrative strategies perform a characterisation by drawing attention to suggestion, gesture and process, creating ‘character’ itself as the subject of the sketch and of a fictionally projected novel. ‘An Unwritten Novel’ displays the grammatical strategies of deferral and uncertainty which are present throughout the collection, beginning in the line: ‘Life’s what you see in people’s

⁸¹ Briggs argues that ‘[t]he unwriting of the title is never entirely effected, since the most memorable part of the story is the imagined narrative of a life; its status as speculation had, in any case, been established at the outset’ (*Reading Virginia Woolf*, p. 35): ‘Despite being cancelled by its own title, as well as by emerging ‘facts’, “An Unwritten Novel” has actually been written and stands as a testament to the power of imaginative acts’ (*Reading Virginia Woolf*, p. 69). See also Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit’”, p. 181.

eyes; life's what they learn, and, having learnt it, never, though they seek to hide it, cease to be aware of – what? That life's like that, it seems' (*MT* 39). The deferral of 'life' in this sketch as a concept that appears as semblance ('it seems') is embodied in the physical strategies employed by people to hide the open secret, their knowledge of the world. These strategies figure as 'marks' to be read:

Marks of reticence are on all those faces: lips shut, eyes shaded, each one of the five doing something to hide or stultify his knowledge. One smokes, another reads; a third checks entries in a pocket book; a fourth stares at the map of the line framed opposite; and the fifth – the terrible thing about the fifth is that she does nothing at all. She looks at life. Ah, but my poor, unfortunate woman, do play the game – do, for all our sakes, conceal it! (*MT* 39)

In these summative outlines of the actors in the scene, who are all engaged in reading something, the narrator uses the masculine 'his knowledge' in contrast to that of the woman who becomes the subject of the narrator's fictional projections. Through all the marks that these people in 'An Unwritten Novel' display, their characters are sketched lithographically: some deflect 'life' and attention whereas the woman invites and absorbs it, participating by giving out the signals of someone who hands herself over as a surface on which the narrator's ink will stick.⁸² The narrator can project a psychological identification with the woman who looks back, leading to a process of embodied mimicry when (we are told) she involuntarily imitates the woman's twitch: 'She saw me. A smile of infinite irony, infinite sorrow, flitted and faded from her face. But she had communicated, shared her secret, passed her poison; she would speak no more' (*MT* 42). The 'infinite irony' in the woman's smile here suggests that she is satirically aware of the process she has set in motion. The woman on the train who 'looks at life' (*MT* 39) captures the attention of the narrator, and makes evasion impossible: she 'pierced through my shield; she gazed into my eyes as if searching any sediment of courage at the depths of them and damping it to clay' (*MT* 40). The figure is one whose gestures inspire fear and despair, at the same time as she challenges the writer to attempt to account for her.⁸³ It is unclear, and beside the point, which of these actions the woman actually makes and which are made up by the narrator, since in at least one layer of the text, this woman is, as Briggs points out,

⁸² Utilising the principle that oil and water do not mix, lithography performs a chemical reaction; it creates a surface print by juxtaposing elements that stick to the ink and elements that are repelled. 'Lithography', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, available at <<http://www.britannica.com/topic/lithography>> [accessed 8 June 2017].

⁸³ Škrbić identifies gesture as an important structuring element of 'An Unwritten Novel', reading it as an 'economic storytelling technique [...] a painterly strategy more commonly associated with the portrait artist who attempts to depict emotion accurately through easily readable gestures, poses, and facial expressions' (*Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. 42).

an allegorical figure: ‘Woolf’s first archetypal anonymous middle-aged woman in a railway carriage’ such as later became Mrs Brown.⁸⁴ She serves as a vehicle for the narrator’s voice to explore the presumptions made by the figure of the writer, the liberties taken, and the unavoidable fact of writing of themselves (involuntarily or not) into their work.

Pointing to the writing process itself in ‘An Unwritten Novel’, Woolf highlights the mechanisms of scene-making and invention in square brackets: ‘[But this we’ll skip; ornaments, curtains, trefoil china plate, yellow oblongs of cheese, white squares of biscuit – skip – oh, but wait! Half-way through luncheon one of those shivers; Bob stares at her, spoon in mouth...]’ (*MT* 43). This ‘skipping’ of decorative details, interrupted by the gestures of the characters, becomes a simultaneous spatial and temporal movement, physically through the house recalling that of the first sketch in the collection, ‘A Haunted House’. The narrator thus sets the scene in the third person, present tense and now begins an address to the character in first person outside of the brackets:

Now, Minnie, the door’s shut; Hilda heavily descends; you unstrap the straps of your basket, lay on the bed a meagre nightgown, stand side by side furred felt slippers. The looking-glass – no, you avoid the looking-glass. Some methodical disposition of hat-pins. Perhaps the shell box has something in it? You shake it; it’s the pearl stud there was last year – that’s all. (*MT* 44)

The introduction of the pronoun ‘you’ in reference to Minnie (the name given by the narrator, on the basis of the initials inscribed on the woman’s luggage) has the simultaneous effect of placing the reader in her position, at the same time as it ties Minnie’s actions to the narrator’s instruction and takes on a similarity to stage-directions communicated to an actor. This use of the present tense and the narrator’s direct address to the character contributes to the sense of this being a hypothetical situation by letting it unfold as we are watching it happen; we are witness to its construction as the narrator changes her mind and raises possibilities: ‘no, you avoid the looking-glass’, ‘Perhaps the shell box has something in it?’. She also creates a back-story, suggesting anteriority simultaneously with situating the action firmly in the present. This construction allows Woolf to suggest the autonomy of characters, even as it also highlights the narrative mechanisms that control them: ‘A moment’s blankness – then, what are you thinking?’ (*MT* 44).

⁸⁴ Briggs, *Reading Virginia Woolf*, pp. 25-41; p. 35. See also Jean Guiguet: ‘Minnie Marsh in ‘An Unwritten Novel’ is elder sister to Mrs Brown, and Virginia Woolf undoubtedly bore in mind the sketch – written in 1919-1920, when elaborating the typical figure on whom she based her theory’ (*VW and Her Works*, p. 332).

The narrator proceeds with a sketch of catastrophe: ‘Neighbours – the doctor – baby brother – the kettle – scalded – hospital – dead – or only the shock of it, the blame?’ (MT 46). This fragmentation of the plot into key words separated by dashes shows the narrator’s mind leaping from point to point, escalating the crisis, but in the end giving an alternative ending, ending with a question and highlighting the hypothetical nature of these leaps. The fact that it is written in present tense, as a scene which happened ‘twenty years ago’ again retains the immediacy of the scene unfolding as we read it, and its grammatical construction lays before us the mechanisms of writing. In a similar way, Woolf writes ‘dot dot dot’ for ellipses to refer to characteristic movements of plot in the novel, highlighting again the scene of writing and drawing attention to the typicality of such plot lines: ‘She opened the door, and, putting her umbrella in the stand – that goes without saying; so, too, the whiff of beef from the basement; dot dot dot’ (MT 50). In this sketch, thematic, grammatical and typographic elisions and interruptions position the plot as merely referential for the reading and writing of character. Character itself, however, becomes just another signifying set of marks: the narrator asks, ‘Have I read you right?’ (MT 48). With each development in the story undoing the previous work, when ‘the-woman-finally-leaves-the-train-to-be-met-by-her-son’, we are encouraged to think we know the ‘true’ story about this woman’s life. There is a temptation to extrapolate or infer the whole picture, as the narrator has just done. It is almost involuntary; the narrator ‘pass[es] her poison’ to the reader. In this sense the character sketch whose mechanisms have just been laid bare by Woolf is shown to work as a *mise-en-abyme* of signs and gestures, and crucially depends on the reader’s participation in constructing the whole image from a few parts – it relies on a scene-making impulse on the part of the reader, stimulated by the outlines of a character sketch.

As suggested by the sketches discussed so far, *Monday or Tuesday* proceeds via potential everyday scenes, yet also presents a fantasia of abstract images, sounds, and perceptions that create a highly extraordinary (and indeterminate) weekday. In this collection, Woolf draws attention to the scene of writing and of reading with impressions and caricatures of everyday scenes such as the party, the garden, and the train journey. Bringing them to the surface, Woolf uses these to create an aesthetic object of poetic prose and to present a set of possibilities: of stories which the reader might create around these scenes and characters, or which Woolf herself might develop later. Many of the sketches give the impression of being merely imagistic scenes, yet they are also dynamic and complex in temporality, perspective and narrative structure. As we will see in the next chapter, these sketches embed political critique in their images and formal strategies. One

sketch in particular – ‘A Society’ – deploys sketches of scenes and characters in a satirical mode which, in the second sketch of the collection, introduces an active critique of patriarchal, imperial and heteronormative social relations, and utilises the literary sketch as a Sapphic, feminist genre.

Chapter Four

Political Sketches: ‘for ever desiring truth’

In *A Room of One's Own*, beginning with a question about the form that her reflections on ‘Women and Fiction’ should take, Woolf invokes the sketch of a scene as one possible element in the composition.¹ She describes a hypothetical, characteristic historical overview of women writers, which would typically include Mary Russell Mitford, Elizabeth Gaskell and Jane Austen. As practitioners of the literary sketch and points of contact for Woolf’s understanding of the genre, here she includes these writers as rhetorically representative of a simplified history of women’s fiction. She makes literary figures of them and ironically accumulates utterances for a brief outline of the subject:

simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs Gaskell and one would have done. (*AROO* 3)

At the same time as invoking the sketch as a type of utterance that can be included in such an overview, Woolf utilises the form in her own satirical prose. Her outline makes use of the sketch’s incisive ability to get straight to the point; but it also suggests provisionality and the potential to proliferate. Woolf’s language in her listing of clauses (‘simply a few remarks’; ‘a few more’; ‘some witticisms if possible’; ‘a reference’; ‘and one would have done’) evokes the brevity and haste common to the sketch; but, as she says of ‘Women and Fiction’, ‘at second sight the words seemed not so simple’ (*AROO* 3). Embedded in this accumulation is the possibility of adding to it, which Woolf discovers to be a rhetorical problem as soon as she begins her attempt to make a finished and composed argument:

I should never be able to come to a conclusion. I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer to hand you after an hour’s discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever. (*AROO* 3)

This inability to ‘come to a conclusion’ undermines the sweeping overview. Furthermore, as Judith Allen has argued, much of Woolf’s work enacts a politicised displacement of the concept of ‘truth’ itself; in *A Room of One's Own* truth is not to be extracted in ‘pure’ form

¹ *A Room of One's Own* was developed from papers presented by Woolf at Newnham and Girton colleges in October 1928, entitled ‘Women and Fiction’ (see Clarke, *E* IV 35; n. 1).

and presented for display.² As we approach the very centre of the text, looking for truth in the British Museum, the narrator instead presents us with another sketch; one which again defers conclusion about the ideas of ‘women and fiction’, and which dislodges the concept of truth as constituted by epic patriarchal fictions. Woolf’s narrator scribbles a picture of Professor von X, ‘unconsciously [...] where I should [...] have been writing a conclusion’ (*AROO* 39).³ Transposing a visual character sketch into a written one, she explains:

I had been drawing a face, a figure. It was the face and the figure of Professor von X engaged in writing his monumental work entitled *The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex*. He was not in my picture a man attractive to women. He was heavily built; he had a great jowl; to balance that he had very small eyes; he was very red in the face. His expression suggested that he was labouring under some emotion that made him jab his pen on the paper as if he were killing some noxious insect as he wrote, but even when he had killed it that did not satisfy him; he must go on killing it; and even so, some cause for anger and irritation remained. [...] the professor was made to look very angry and very ugly in my sketch. (*AROO* 39-40)

This scene of character-sketching, making a ‘figure’ on the surface which signifies something deeper, is not merely a plot point at the centre of the text: in conjunction with the performative satirical outline of women and fiction, it provides a key to the thematic concerns and form of *A Room of One’s Own*. In its place as a substitution for ‘a conclusion’, this sketch demonstrates what Allen argues is a ‘politics of inconclusiveness’ in Woolf’s work;⁴ it does so specifically by interrupting and redirecting the epistemological project which expects to find truth, ready for the taking, in an institution like the British Library. The narrator sets about producing a different kind of truth via her sketch of the professor. Disguised in narrative layers, and rising to the top in scenes which are apparently ‘idle’ and unconsidered, such sketches, though they set themselves against the type of ‘monumental work’ to be found in the British Library, might nevertheless perform as a ‘way of finishing an unprofitable morning’s work [...] it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top’ (*AROO* 40).

Woolf’s concern with the concept of truth and the means by which it is to be sought or produced in *A Room of One’s Own* is also a central theme of *Monday or Tuesday*, enacted in the formal and grammatical strategies that I have discussed in the previous

² Allen, *VW and the Politics of Language* (2010). See also Allen, ‘Orlando and the Politics of (In)Conclusiveness’ (2018); and Allen, ‘The Aesthetics/Politics of the Mantelpiece’, *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 85 (2014): 28-31.

³Alice Fox suggests that Professor von X might be a caricature of Arnold Bennett, with whom Woolf was in dialogue about women and literary form (‘Literary Allusion as Feminist Criticism in *A Room of One’s Own*’, *Philological Quarterly* 63.2 [Spring 1984]: 145-61).

⁴ Judith Allen, ‘Orlando and the Politics of (In)Conclusiveness’, pp. 274-89.

chapter. As Nena Škrbić points out, ‘Rather than working their way toward a single truth, they lead “nowhere” and trust to unpredictable developments’.⁵ The deferral of answers and the narrative uncertainty identified in those sketches, paradoxically coupled with their presentation of concrete, saturated signifiers, have a political as well as aesthetic significance. The ambivalence of the sketch – as something which can be both instantaneously produced or apprehended, and as something which defers conclusion by pointing to a future work to come – is utilised in *Monday or Tuesday* to embed ciphers of political critique. In this volume, ‘truth’ is on the one hand linked, as Woolf puts it in ‘The Mark on the Wall’, to ‘leading articles, cabinet ministers’ (*MT* 84); and on the other hand, in ‘Monday or Tuesday’, it is figured as an unnameable and unreachable object, constructed only in the movements of perpetual desire, ‘for ever desiring truth’ (*MT* 36, 37). This chapter therefore extends the discussion of sketchy scenes and characters in *Monday or Tuesday* to its political content. It will examine how political critique is encoded in Woolf’s narrative strategies of deferral, digression and interruption, and in certain politically-charged symbols which punctuate the collection. Specifically, it shows how *Monday or Tuesday* figures criticisms of the intertwined powers of heteronormativity, patriarchy, and imperialism – concepts with which the construction of narratives around ‘truth’ are bound up in Woolf’s work. In ‘A Society’, which Hermione Lee suggests ‘may be thought of as a “feminist fable”’,⁶ anti-imperial critique is sketched in the broad strokes of Sapphic moments, codes and hints. Feminist anti-imperialist politics are also suggested in the imagery and narrative strategies of the title sketch, ‘Monday or Tuesday’, and in the last two sketches of the collection, ‘Kew Gardens’ and ‘The Mark on the Wall’. These four sketches share narrative strategies of deferral, digression and interruption where the concept of truth is concerned, and ‘A Society’ in particular lays the foundations for Woolf’s later polemical essays, *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938).

4.1 The Feminist Politics of the Sketch

While the political sketch itself, as an ‘historically perceived genre’ utilising satire and caricature in newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, is a topic too vast for this thesis to discuss in detail – and one which is more properly discussed in relation to Woolf’s journalism and essays – this chapter seeks to trace Woolf’s political aesthetics as they are figured in the form of the sketch. It is nevertheless possible to begin by engaging with a concrete example of political sketches held in Woolf’s own library, written by a woman

⁵ Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. xii.

⁶ Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 287.

whose influence in politics earns her a place in *Three Guineas*. One of the most intriguing examples of literary sketches in the library is *The Unpublished Diary and Political Sketches of Princess Lieven, together with Some of Her Letters* (ed. by Harold Temperley, 1925). Lieven is a fascinating figure, whose husband, Count Christopher Lieven, was the Russian ambassador to Great Britain in the early nineteenth century. Judith Lissauer Cromwell tells us that: ‘In 1825 Tsar Alexander I entrusted Dorothea [Lieven] with a crucial but secret diplomatic overture to the British government. This coup initiated her participation in a series of dramatic events that culminated in the birth of modern Greece’.⁷ In his editor’s preface to the volume in Woolf’s library, Temperley conflates the category of the political sketch with memoir and character sketches, and writes of Lieven that ‘there are few memoir-writers who have thrown light on so much in so small a space, or revealed diplomatic secrets in so vivacious a manner’.⁸ Lieven writes of the moment when Count Nesselrode, the Tsar Alexander’s foreign minister, communicated to her the mission in which she was to go to England and perform a very delicate act of diplomacy regarding the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire:

I listened with much astonishment. I remained a moment nonplussed. It seemed to me great, a little extravagant, very difficult. I felt at once disturbed, likely to regain courage, and very much amused. Here was the most cautious and discreet of Ministers compelled to entrust the most confidential, most intimate and most bold political projects to a woman. It was new and something to laugh at. However, I had to answer. I had to have advice.⁹

Here, alongside a caricature of Nesselrode, Lieven uses the incongruous humour which we find in Woolf’s outline of the history of women’s writing in *A Room of One’s Own* and in her inquiry into the concept of women’s ‘influence’ in *Three Guineas*. In the latter essay, Woolf mentions Lieven as exemplary of ‘women who have influenced politics’ (*TG* 169), and her voice is to be heard in Woolf’s narrator, who is tasked with answering the question ‘How in your opinion are we to prevent war?’ (*TG* 153). As Lisa Colletta points out, ‘Woolf scorns and ridicules the powerful for their misjudgements and pretensions’ and

⁷ Judith Lissauer Cromwell, *Dorothea Lieven: A Russian Princess in London and Paris, 1785-1857* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2007), p. 3. The influence of Lieven on Woolf’s *Orlando* is an intriguing point to be investigated further, especially given that the Tsar wrote to his foreign minister, ‘[i]t is a pity Countess Lieven wears skirts; she would have made an excellent diplomat’ (ibid. p. 93). As a Russian Princess, married to a foreign ambassador and herself influential in political intrigue, Lieven’s career might suggest various anachronistic and geographically displaced points of reference for the scenes and characters in *Orlando*.

⁸ Harold Temperley (ed.) *Dorothea Lieven, The Unpublished Diary and Political Sketches of Princess Lieven, together with some of her letters* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1925), p. 236.

⁹ Lieven, *The Unpublished Diary*, p. 97.

advocates that ““for psychological reasons”, a useful response to the tyranny of those in power is to pelt them with laughter.’¹⁰ Yet, the society in which Lieven participates is not the Society of Outsiders that Woolf promotes in *Three Guineas*. Woolf’s inclusion of Lieven in the essay places her in an ambivalent position along with ‘[t]he famous Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Palmerston, Lady Melbourne, Lady Holland, Lady Ashburton’ (*TG* 168-69). Woolf includes in these women’s sphere of aristocratic political influence an accusation of complicity in war-mongering and Empire building – as, indeed, Princess Lieven certainly was, and she was obliged to play the part seriously.¹¹ Woolf writes:

Their famous houses and the parties that met in them play so large a part in the political memoirs of the time that we can hardly deny that English politics, even perhaps English wars, would have been different had those houses and those parties never existed. (*TG* 169)

Woolf contrasts the social and political scenes of an aristocratic ‘high society’ world that these women helped to create with that of ‘the daughters of educated men’, the literary names of whom – ‘Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot’ (*TG* 169) – are absent from the political memoirs where ‘the names of great political leaders – Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Peel, Canning, Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone – are sprinkled on every page’ (*TG* 169). Also present are the ‘brothers and husbands’ of these literary women: ‘Sheridan at Devonshire House, Macaulay at Holland House, Matthew Arnold at Lansdowne House, Carlyle even at Bath House [...] and though Mrs Carlyle went, Mrs Carlyle seems on her own showing to have found herself ill at ease’ (*TG* 169). While Lieven had considerable political leverage, Woolf is critical of influential women in their alignments with these men to the exclusion of other women. Nevertheless, women’s writing is enlisted here as an alternative form of influence or productive power, similarly to Woolf’s sketch of Professor von X in *A Room of One’s Own*. Woolf ultimately comes to the ‘inevitable, though depressing, conclusion’ that in the question of influence, women must ‘have recourse [...] to letter signing, society joining and drawing of an occasional exiguous cheque’ (*TG* 171). Lieven’s production of sketches in her diaries also positions her influence as one which utilises the pen as a creative political tool: in conjunction with Woolf’s satirical outline of

¹⁰ Lisa Colletta, *Dark Humour and Social Satire in the Modern British Novel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 38. Andrew McNeillie notes that: ‘Laughter, it should be said, satirical and otherwise, plays a key and provocative role in Bloomsbury aesthetics, as satire does more generally in modernism’ (‘Bloomsbury’ in in Sue Roe and Susan Sellers [eds], *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000], p. 4).

¹¹ On Woolf’s anti-imperial politics, see Kathy Phillips, *Virginia Woolf Against Empire* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994).

the diminutive forms in which women's literary contributions can supposedly be addressed (quoted at the beginning of this chapter), the inscriptions of women's names on small, minor forms of civic contribution can illuminate a feminist politics of the sketch in which Lieven might be said to participate. As a practice of caricature, the sketch can provide insight as well as perform subversion of its subject through the broad, suggestive strokes that it draws. In doing so, it asks the reader to be in on the joke; to be, as Woolf puts it, the writer's 'fellow-worker and accomplice' (*E V* 573).¹²

Like her sketch of Professor von X in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf creates a satirical sketch of patriarchal authority in *Three Guineas*. Framing her essay as a letter replying to a gentleman (real or typical?) who had written to her asking, (sincerely or sarcastically?) 'How in your opinion are we to prevent war?' (*TG* 153), Woolf self-consciously draws attention to the hoops that must be performatively jumped before a woman can put her name to such a subject. In doing so, she invokes the self-deprecating rhetoric of the sketch:

A whole page could be filled with excuses and apologies; declarations of unfitness, incompetence, lack of knowledge, and experience: and they would be true. But even when they were said there would still remain some difficulties so fundamental that it may well prove impossible for you to understand or for us to explain. (*TG* 153)

Woolf's framing concern with communicating deep, 'fundamental' 'difficulties', appears here to be linked to the conventions and constraints of language and form: she defers making a statement with hypothetical 'excuses', 'apologies' and 'declarations'. Yet, although they are strategies of equivocation and qualification, these performative utterances prefacing the act of beginning or getting to the point 'would', the narrator is certain, 'be true'. Deferring the answer further and sketching something close to truthful in the process, Woolf's structuring of the essay within the framework of a letter, prompted by a man's question and his appeal to her femininity, rhetorically necessitates, she says, 'a sketch of the person to whom the letter is addressed' (*TG* 153-4). Woolf addresses a caricature of an ageing male bourgeois intellectual, sketching an outline which culminates in his 'education at one of the great public schools and [...] the university' (*TG* 154). This, she writes, is the point where 'the first difficulty of communication between us appears' (*TG* 154). As in *A Room of One's Own*, the question of truth is bound up, not only with that of influence, but with the educational institution and the ways in which it has historically constructed a barrier to certain types of knowledge and of writing – a subject

¹² See Goldman and Sellers, 'General Editors' Preface', pp. xi-xx, quoted on p. 16 of this thesis.

which she had taken up in 1921, in the second sketch in *Monday or Tuesday*.¹³ In ‘A Society’, Woolf laid the foundations for her feminist polemic on the subjects of war, education and women’s writing in *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*, utilising a sketchy mode which incorporates digression, interruption and deferral, and building to a key moment which is elliptically unfinished. In these strategies, there is a mirror to the ways that women’s education and writing have been directed – deferred, interrupted and diverted from the point – which Woolf reclaims and reconstitutes against the patriarchal agents of this misdirection and diminution. She utilises the narrative strategies of the sketch as a minor form in order to produce a layered scene of writing and political critique which can rise to the surface and disrupt official discourse on the subject of ‘women and fiction’.

4.2 Interruption, Digression and Sapphism in ‘A Society’

Many early critics assigned negligible aesthetic value to ‘A Society’: for example, Jean Guignet reads it as an early sketch for *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*, only to consider it ‘a failed venture into militant literature’.¹⁴ He claims that ‘[w]hen the ideas of “A Society” had been developed and satisfactorily set forth in her pamphlets, this somewhat feeble story could be put aside as a rough draft’.¹⁵ Rebecca West saw in it only a ‘hateful re-creation of some lewd eighteenth-century print of blowzy womanhood’,¹⁶ and more recently, Susan Dick also suggests that ‘A Society’ failed to ‘reflect the innovations [Woolf] was making in narrative technique’ at this time.¹⁷ Although ‘A Society’ does not proceed in the same poetic mode as the other sketches in the collection, the fact that Woolf chose to publish it beside those ‘innovations’, in a very carefully crafted collection, deserves attention. Indeed, its own narrative techniques are complex, and its genre has been in question as much as the other, shorter pieces in the collection. Edward Hungerford argues that although it was ‘included with fiction and sketches by Woolf herself, implying that she thought of it as a story’, it is possible to read this text as a conversation, and ‘thus as a disguised form of essay’.¹⁸ While conflating the sketch and the story rather than considering the sketch’s distinct operations as a genre (which, as we have seen, has

¹³ On Woolf’s critiques of academia, see Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Guignet, *VW and Her Works*, p. 341.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 342.

¹⁶ Rebecca West, ‘Among the New Books’, *Yale Review* 12 (January 1923): 844-50; 849-50.

¹⁷ Susan Dick, “‘What Fools We Were!’: Virginia Woolf’s “A Society”” in *Twentieth Century Literature* 33.1 (Spring, 1987): 51-66; 51.

¹⁸ Edward A. Hungerford, ‘Is “A Society” a Short Story?’, *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 21 (1983), p. 3.

affinities with the essay), Hungerford nevertheless identifies the mingling of the essayistic with the fictional mode in this sketch, as well as its essential collaboration with the reader, as ‘a conversation’. Following ‘A Haunted House’, ‘A Society’ retains a narrative framework that explicitly addresses and involves the reader, and that is aware of its own storytelling task, beginning: ‘This is how it all came about’ (MT 13). This sketch gets straight to the point with very little narrative suspense; yet as it progresses, it also features multiple digressions, and is thematically interested in digression and interruption as they relate to the idea of truth.¹⁹ ‘A Society’ is almost entirely constructed through the characters’ dialogue, which is set at an ironic distance from the narrator by scattered phrases such as ‘We were very young’ (MT 16) (being now presumably older and wiser). The consistent third-person past-tense narrative contrasts with the foregoing confusion of ‘A Haunted House’, but the satiric mode maintains the same distance from certainty and opens the stage for competing interpretations of its point.

In its position as a fictional-essayistic sketch, ‘A Society’ modifies the initial impressionistic, poetic tone of the collection initiated by ‘A Haunted House’, and provides a clue to the feminist critique with which the book is threaded. Its physical situation in the book mediates between the domestic, marital scene of ‘A Haunted House’ and the diurnal rhythms of the imperial city in ‘Monday or Tuesday’ (discussed below), laying out a satirical critique of these sites of desire and their common project of seeking after ‘truth’. Jane Marcus has thoroughly analysed Woolf’s criticism of patriarchal institutions and professions in ‘A Society’, reading this sketch as ‘Woolf’s attempt to penetrate the mysteries of male secret societies like the Apostles and to offer a parallel sisterhood of intellectual inquiry and social conscience’.²⁰ Marcus does not treat the sketch as fundamentally satirical, but as ‘a propagandistic and personal essay much like the papers delivered by young men at the meetings of the Cambridge University secret society’.²¹ The conventions of the personal essay are not truly in evidence, however, in the fictional setting of the sketch, with its characters named after classical literary figures including Cassandra and Helen.²² Moreover, although it is more critical of male institutions than it is of the

¹⁹ See Tracy Seeley, ‘Flights of Fancy: Spatial Digression and Storytelling in *A Room of One’s Own*’ in Snaith and Whitworth (eds), *Locating Woolf*, pp. 31-45. Seeley writes that Woolf’s digressive ‘[e]ncounters, scenes, and the projections of fiction take her off the straight path into the non-linear and multiple’ (p. 43).

²⁰ Jane Marcus, ‘Liberty, Sorority, Misogyny’ in *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 76-95; p. 91.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 78.

²² On the significance of names in ‘A Society’, see Dick, “‘What Fools We Were!’”, pp. 51-66; and Vassiliki Kolocotroni, ‘Strange Cries and Ancient Songs: Woolf’s Greek and the Politics of Intelligibility’ in Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (eds), *Virginia Woolf in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), pp. 423-38. For the generic conventions of the personal essay, including the use of first-person narrative, see Philip Lopate, *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present* (New York:

women's well-intentioned project, the society itself is nevertheless also satirised in its pursuit of truth. As Colletta notes, Woolf was highly ambivalent about such organisations, and was vehemently against propaganda in art:

In her fiction, Woolf is loath to explicitly endorse political causes or offer correctives to society's ills. Even if she is fundamentally sympathetic to a cause, women's suffrage for instance, Woolf is chary of people anxious to reform society or who feel they are possessed of a message, and she suggests there is a mental obtuseness in their inability to understand how their political ideas serve their personal, psychological needs.²³

Reading 'A Society' as a propagandistic essay can, in this sense, be detrimental to analysing its artistry and its political point. Woolf's satirical criticism of the women's society itself is obviated in her reference to Sarah Ellis's *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (1843). Ellis advocates the responsibility of women to define their own 'position in society', presenting an illusion of choice and control which is nevertheless re-rooted in the terms of the family and 'duty' to the patriarchal establishment:

What is your position in society? for, until this point is clearly settled in your own mind, it would be vain to attempt any description of the plan to be pursued. The settlement of the point, however, must depend upon yourselves. Whether you are rich, or poor, an orphan, or the child of watchful parents – one of a numerous family or comparatively alone – filling an exalted or humble position – of highly gifted mind, or otherwise – all these points must be clearly ascertained before you can properly understand the kind of duty required of you.²⁴

Ellis encourages women to proceed systematically and logically to 'clearly ascertain' their role in society. This methodology and its essential flaws are dramatised in Woolf's sketch, which continually highlights the impossibility of the 'settlement of the point': as we will see, Woolf re-casts the 'point' itself as a queer trope. There is a fundamental flaw in the women's plan to answer the questions raised by societal roles, in that it takes those roles themselves for granted and seeks to examine them with the tools created by the patriarchal structures and institutions which prescribe them. When Helen, one of the society's members who had been sent to the Royal Academy to ask questions about art, begins 'to

Anchor Books, 1995). See also Laura M^a Lojo Rodriguez, "'A New Tradition': Virginia Woolf and the Personal Essay", *Atlantis* 23.1 (Junio 2001): 75-90. Rodriguez credits Woolf with the 'invention' of the personal essay (p. 75), and does not mention 'A Society' as an example of the form.

²³ Colletta, *Dark Humour*, p. 38. See also Clara Jones, *Virginia Woolf: Ambivalent Activist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

²⁴ Sarah Ellis, *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (New York: Appleton, 1843), pp. 5-6. See Dick, *CSF*, p. 300, n. 10.

recite from a pale blue volume' lines of poetry by canonical figures including Alfred Tennyson, Robert Burns and Robert Browning,²⁵ she follows it with the exclamation:

“Daughters of England!” [...] but here we pulled her down, a vase of water getting spilt over her in the scuffle. “Thank God!” she exclaimed, shaking herself like a dog. “Now I’ll roll on the carpet and see if I can’t brush off what remains of the Union Jack.” (*MT* 19)

The voice with which Helen is possessed in this scene is not only that of poets, but of Sarah Ellis: even if women can be said to be only ventriloquizing or hypnotised by the language of the poets, this patriotic ‘gibberish’, as the narrator characterises it (*MT* 19), is difficult to ‘brush off’. As Corrine Blackmer points out, the Society uncovers ‘the systemic failures of masculine civilization, but still lacks the political and economic power to transform the world’.²⁶ The collective power that the society does have, however, is demonstrated in the act of interruption which breaks the spell and releases Helen from her role as a vessel for patriotic sentiment. The narrative discourse of ‘A Society’ disrupts and redirects the plot at various points where it threatens to reinscribe patriarchal epistemologies. One of the key ways in which the narrative does this, as Blackmer contends, is by granting the women a specifically ‘Sapphic insight’.²⁷

The women themselves seem unaware of the Sapphic significance of their project, and the narrator’s discourse reproduces a surface of heteronormative speech. This discourse is disrupted by the text’s own queer potential and its presentation of an intimate sisterhood: as Shari Benstock points out, ‘For Woolf, the Sapphic disrupts address and shifts the terms of narrative development in texts that appear to speak from the cultural position of heterosexuality’.²⁸ A clue to this displacement, the word ‘queer’ is repeated throughout ‘A Society’: it is used to describe Poll, who ‘had always been queer’ and whose father stipulated in his will that she would receive her inheritance once she had read all the books in the London Library (*MT* 13);²⁹ and crucially, in reference to the edition of Sappho

²⁵ See Dick, *CSF*, p. 300, n. 2-9.

²⁶ Corrine Blackmer, ‘Lesbian Modernism in the Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein’ in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, ed. by Eileen Barrett (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 78-94; p. 89.

²⁷ Blackmer, ‘Lesbian Modernism’, p. 89.

²⁸ Shari Benstock, ‘Expatriate Sapphic Modernism: Entering Literary History’ [1990] in Lisa Rado (ed.), *Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 97-122; p. 105. See also Laura Doan and Jane Garrity (eds), *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women and National Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

²⁹ Woolf called the London Library ‘a stale culture smoked place, which I detest’ (21 Jan. 1915; *D I* 25). It was a membership subscription institution of which Woolf’s father became president in (1892) (*D I* 16, n. 44). Jane Marcus elaborates: ‘the London Library was founded by the [Cambridge] Apostles in an age when a more radical sense of brotherhood held them together [...] Virginia Woolf taught at Morley College and supported the London Library, for public libraries were necessary to educate her “common reader”’. She

produced by Professor Hobkin, queerness influences an early satirical character sketch portraying, as Vassiliki Kolocotroni suggests, ‘a recognizable Woolfian type, caricatured and resented in equal measure for his mystificatory, gate-keeping ways, with frequent cameo appearances in Woolf’s writing’.³⁰ In both instances, the word ‘queer’ is disruptive to solemn, patriarchal literary and scholarly projects. As an influential poet who has come to us in fragments, Sappho appears as an interrupted but also interruptive force when Castalia, who has been sent to Oxbridge to ask questions, gets up to speak. Having digressed from the topic to speak about her Aunt ‘who lived at Dulwich and kept cactuses’, the other women interrupt, ‘[telling] her to keep to the point’ (MT 20):

“Well,” she resumed, “when Professor Hobkin was out I examined his life work, an edition of Sappho. Its [*sic*] a queer looking book, six or seven inches thick, not all by Sappho. Oh no. Most of it is a defence of Sappho’s chastity, which some German had denied, and I can assure you the passion with which these two gentlemen argued, the learning they displayed, the prodigious ingenuity with which they disputed the use of some implement which looked to me for all the world like a hairpin astounded me; especially when the door opened and Professor Hobkin himself appeared. A very nice, mild, old gentleman, but what could *he* know about chastity?” We misunderstood her. “No, no,” she protested, “he’s the soul of honour I’m sure [...] I was thinking rather of my Aunt’s cactuses. What could *they* know about chastity?” (MT 20-21)

Female chastity, as well as being a construction of the male professors that diverts attention from Sappho’s literary texts, is the object of the society’s vow and is satirised by Woolf as part of the patriarchal constructions reproduced by Ellis’s book. Though its place in the plot has also been read as a reference to the *Lysistrata*, in which it is weaponised for the prevention of war,³¹ chastity is also cast as an object of knowledge in ‘A Society’: it is suggestively approached via epistemological inquiry by the professor (and the ‘Aunt’s cactuses’?!), but is ontologically unknowable from that subject-position. It is perhaps even ontologically unknowable to the women themselves, but experienced as an internalised imposition. Disruptions in the language of the narrator point to the repressed sexuality in the stated intentions of the society. The narrator notes:

You can judge of our simplicity when I tell you that before parting that night we agreed that the objects of life were to produce good men and good books. Our

developed what her husband called her “London Library complex” when she expected E. M. Forster to invite her to be the token woman on its board. But this effort failed, he said. They wanted no woman, and cited as precedent Leslie Stephen’s annoyance with the previous woman, Mrs Henry Green, the novelist’ (*Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy*, p. 91).

³⁰ Kolocotroni, ‘Strange Cries and Ancient Songs’, pp. 424-25.

³¹ See Lucia P. Romero Mariscal, “‘A Society’: An Aristophanic Comedy by Virginia Woolf”, *Athens Journal of Philology* (June 2014): 99-109.

questions were to be directed to finding out how far these objects were now attained by men. We vowed solemnly that we would not bear a single child until we were satisfied. (*MT* 16)

Implicit in the wording of this vow – specifically the word ‘satisfied’ – is a criticism of the demotion of desire and pleasure to the function of reproduction, which made chastity, as Jane Garrity points out, the object of (male) epistemological scrutiny and paranoia: Garrity writes that, in ‘A Society’, ‘[b]y ridiculing the male fetishization of female chastity and virginity, as well as the male gaze’s inability to register lesbian eroticism, Woolf conveys the absurdity of imposing male sexological models on female sexuality’.³² The vow that the women make is stated as a precondition for reproduction, but unconsciously affirms women’s heterosexual pleasure as politically powerful: ‘we would not bear a single child until we were satisfied’. The convoluted simultaneity of disruption and adherence to patriarchal ways of knowing converge in the scene in which Castalia reveals her pregnancy to Cassandra:

“I’ve been at Oxbridge” she said.

“Asking questions?”

“Answering them” she replied.

“You have not broken our vow?” I said anxiously, *noticing something about her figure*.

“Oh, the vow” she said casually. “I’m going to have a baby if that’s what you mean. You can’t imagine,” she burst out, “how exciting, how beautiful, how satisfying – ”

“What is?” I asked.

“To – to – answer questions,” she replied in some confusion. (*MT* 22; my italics)

In one sense, it is answering questions that becomes a ‘figure’ here, substituted as a cryptic affirmation of sexual pleasure in which Castalia also redeploys the terms of the vow in her use of the word ‘satisfying’. At the same time as Castalia’s ‘investigations’ have yielded unexpected satisfaction, however, they have also produced a baby, which was agreed by the women as their quintessential role in society: ‘While we have borne the children, they, we supposed, have borne the books and the pictures’ (*MT* 16). While Castalia’s baby is created as the result of spontaneous pleasure rather than out of deference to duty or methodological planning – her announcement ‘interrupting Jane in the middle of a sentence’ (*MT* 23) – it is followed immediately another interruption and another

³² Jane Garrity, *Stepdaughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary* (Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 54. Garrity also notes that ‘A Society’ was ‘composed during a period when social purity groups such as the National Vigilance Association (NVA) sought to regulate female sexuality by arguing that chastity was a woman’s patriotic duty’ (*Stepdaughters*, p. 54).

declaration: that of the First World War. In Blackmer's reading of this passage's Sapphism, war and heteronormativity are shown to be intertwined:

The sudden arrival of World War I represents the literalization of the disputes over Sappho's chastity among European scholars. Masculine culture has failed to learn anything from Sappho, who linked her love for women – as friends, students, lovers, and mothers – to her critique of the Homeric epic that glorified violence and nationalistic warfare.³³

In terms of literary form, then, although Alice Fox argues that the fragmentary state of Sappho's poems mean 'women writers could hardly look to her for the development of their own style',³⁴ there is a historically serendipitous model here for the aesthetics of the sketch. The unfinished quality of being a cut-out segment of time means that the form of the sketch can cope with, and build into itself, the 'interruptions' that, as Woolf acknowledges in *A Room of One's Own*, 'there will always be' – especially to women's writing:

The book has somehow to be adapted to the body, and at a venture one would say that women's books should be shorter, more concentrated, than those of men, and framed so that they do not need long hours of steady and uninterrupted work. (*AROO* 101).

On a structural level, Sapphism effects a queering of the text through digression.³⁵ As noted above, Castalia's report on the Professors of Oxbridge is a digression, and during her speech the narrator says that 'she broke off' twice, and 'We told her to keep to the point' (*MT* 20):

“At your wish I spent last week at Oxbridge, disguised as a charwoman. I thus had access to the rooms of several Professors and will now attempt to give you some idea – only,” she broke off, “I can't think how to do it. It's all so queer.” (*MT* 20)

'[S]he broke off' and 'she went on' with the description of Professors' rooms, and then 'she broke off' again to tell about her Aunt's cacti:

“You reached the conservatory through the drawing-room, and there, on the hot pipes, were dozens of them, ugly, squat, bristly little plants each in a separate pot. Once in a hundred years the Aloe flowered, so my Aunt said. But she died before that happened – ” We told her to keep to the point. (*MT* 20)

³³ Blackmer, 'Lesbian Modernism', p. 88.

³⁴ Fox, 'Literary Allusion', p. 153.

³⁵ See Benstock, 'Expatriate Sapphic Modernism', p. 105.

Castalia resumes her description of the Sappho edition quoted above. There seems to be no point to the digression, nor really a ‘point’ for her to keep to: ‘ – did the Oxbridge professors help to produce good people and good books? [...] “There!” she exclaimed. “It never struck me to ask. It never occurred to me that they could possibly produce anything”’ (MT 21). Without producing a conclusion, Castalia wanders from the ‘point’ of her story to sketch the scene of her aunt’s house, producing instead an association between the needles of the cacti and the concept of female chastity. The prickliness of this ‘point’ is reconfigured as a queer signifier in one of Woolf’s later stories, which is more overtly Sapphic, entitled ‘Moments of Being: “Slater’s Pins Have No Points”’ (1927). As Colleen Lamos notes, Woolf wrote to Vita Sackville-West calling this ‘my little Sapphist story, of which the Editor has not seen the point, though he’s been looking for it in the Adirondacks’ (L III 431).³⁶ The pin and its point (or lack thereof) function here as a Sapphic emblem: Lamos points out that it is a ‘nonpenetrating, nonphallic pin’, and that its point of origin may well be in ‘A Society’ where the women discuss the edition of Sappho’s poetry and the professors’ curiosity about ‘the use of some implement which looked to me for all the world like a hairpin’ (MT 20-21).³⁷

Sexuality and politics are the two things that the society does not interrogate as part of the productive ‘objects of life’ – as well as their vow of chastity (in a heterosexual paradigm, with no suggested exploration of alternatives), the women also ‘forget’ to send someone to the House of Commons. Yet the forces of both sexual pleasure and politics erupt in the text anyway, with Castalia’s pregnancy and the declaration of the First World War interrupting speeches made by the women as they report their findings. The declaration of war intruding from the street below is not only a performative deferral of closure and of ‘truth’ in the narrative, which breaks off with three asterisks across the page, but creates a point of rupture which is re-entered later, in a scene replayed in Woolf’s Sapphic satirical novel, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). In order to unpack this intertext, it

³⁶ Colleen Lamos, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Greek Lessons’ in Doan and Garrity (eds), *Sapphic Modernities*, pp. 149-64. On ‘Moments of Being’, see also Janet Winston, ‘Reading Influences: Homoeroticism and Mentoring in Katherine Mansfield’s ‘Carnation’ and Virginia Woolf’s ‘Moments of Being: “Slater’s Pins Have No Points”’ in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, ed. by Eileen Barrett (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 57-77; and Krystyna Colburn, ‘The Lesbian Intertext of Woolf’s Short Fiction’ in *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf’s Short Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 63-80. See also Meisel, *The Absent Father*, who reads the coding of Clara Pater in this sketch as a symptom of Woolf’s repression of Walter Pater’s ‘moment of vision’ (p. 25).

³⁷ Lamos, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Greek Lessons’, p. 150. Jane Garrity contends that this ‘in fact a medical tool used to check the hymen’s intactness, a reading that is substantiated by another character’s speculation that Professor Hobkin is probably not a classicist at all, but a “gynaecologist”’ (*Stepdaughters*, p. 55). See also Joan DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho: 1546-1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 308-311; p. 357, n. 6.

is necessary to quote at length the section which returns in *Orlando*, following Castalia's confession of her abandoned chastity:

"Well, tell us the truth" we bade her.

"The truth? But isn't it wonderful," she broke off – "Mr Chitter, has written a weekly article for the past thirty years upon love or hot buttered toast and has sent all his sons to Eton –"

"The truth!" we demanded.

"Oh the truth," she stammered – "the truth has nothing to do with literature," and sitting down she refused to say another word.

It all seemed to us very inconclusive.

"Ladies, we must try to sum up the results" Jane was beginning, when a hum, which had been heard for some time through the open window, drowned her voice.

"War! War! War! Declaration of War!" men were shouting in the street below.

We looked at each other in horror.

"What war?" we cried. "What war?" We remembered, too late, that we had never thought of sending anyone to the House of Commons. We had forgotten all about it. We turned to Poll, who had reached the history shelves in the London Library, and asked her to enlighten us.

"Why," we cried "do men go to war?"

"Sometimes for one reason, sometimes for another" she replied calmly. "In 1760, for example –" The shouts outside drowned her words. "Again in 1797 – in 1804 – It was the Austrians in 1866 – 1870 was the Franco-Prussian – in 1900 on the other hand –"

"But it's now 1914!" we cut her short.

"Ah, I don't know what they're going to war for now," she admitted.

* * *

(*MT* 31)

Along with interruptions upon interruptions, other features of this scene which are replicated in *Orlando* centre on declarations, the repetition of the demand for truth, the war intruding from outside, and the asterisks across the page which end the scene. In the novel, the narrator's revelation of Orlando's sex change occurs after the phrase 'Truth! Truth! Truth!', and before asterisks across the page.³⁸ In this scene, the fictional Turkish civil war is raging outside his/her window, and Orlando only escapes murder because s/he is in a sleep mistaken for death, for the second time in the text. Orlando's transformation is heralded by the exit of allegorised female figures, (Our Ladies of) Chastity, Purity and

³⁸ The number of asterisks varies in different editions of *Orlando*. There are five in all three impressions of the first UK edition (Hogarth), which is followed by the newest Oxford World's Classics edition (2015, p. 83) and by the newest Vintage Classics edition (2016, p. 96); however, the Vintage edition from which I am working (2000) has three, and earlier Penguin editions have one. Since there is no evidence that Woolf introduced any variants herself, these appear more likely to have been introduced erroneously by some publishers when standardising to their house style. I would like to thank Suzanne Raitt (co-editor, with Ian Blyth, of the forthcoming Cambridge edition of *Orlando*) for her assistance in confirming the details of the three impressions of the Hogarth edition, and for pointing out a further curiosity: that the first American editions removed the asterisks altogether when setting the pages for the novel.

Modesty.³⁹ Counterpoised to these figures are the allegorical figures of ‘Truth, Candour, and Honesty’:

the austere Gods who keep watch and ward by the inkpot of the biographer, cry No! Putting their silver trumpets to their lips they demand in one blast, Truth! And again they cry Truth! and sounding yet a third time in concert they peal forth, The Truth and nothing but the Truth!

[...]

The trumpeters, ranging themselves side by side in order, blow one terrific blast: –

“THE TRUTH!”

at which Orlando woke.

He stretched himself. He rose. He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! Truth! we have no choice left but confess – he was a woman.

* * *

(O 79-80)

Chastity, Purity and Modesty in *Orlando* work to obscure ‘truth’, which gives us a retrospective clue to Woolf’s satirising of the society and their vow in her 1921 sketch. ‘War’ in ‘A Society’ is transposed into ‘truth’ in this structure in *Orlando*, with the declaration of war in ‘A Society’ becoming the declaration of the truth of Orlando’s sex-transformation. Within this structural substitution, the idea of revelations of truth may be read as violent and dangerous: in *Orlando*, the very possibility of speaking candidly about sex and gender is on trial and always tinged with doubt, undermining the appeals for ‘truth!’, yet it is also seen to be important in material terms to explore these concepts, their manifestations and their very real consequences. While the identification of this intertext can, for the moment, only suggest the potential for a future in-depth reading along these lines, it serves here to highlight the fact that Woolf’s replaying of themes and structures from ‘A Society’ in *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* does not cast it as merely a negligible or failed sketch: in fact, its strategies specifically as a sketch to which she returned are the key to some of its most forceful political points. These points rise to the surface when we consider their scene-making in conjunction with the later texts in which they are reprised and replayed; but we can also trace the digressive and interruptive narrative strategies of ‘A Society’ as part of a coherent sketchy mode throughout *Monday or Tuesday* itself. Incongruously, as the text which was written first, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ closes the collection, but it does so with no more precision to its point and with no

³⁹ Performing a close textual analysis, Julia Briggs reads this scene (which she calls ‘The Masque of Truth’) as influenced by the Jonsonian ‘antimasque’ (*Reading Virginia Woolf*, pp. 156-7).

more finality or presentation of ‘truth’ than any of the sketches which precede it in this book.

4.3 Beside the Point: Interruption and Digression from ‘The Mark on the Wall’

‘The Mark on the Wall’, like the opening sketch of the collection, ‘A Haunted House’, begins with a tone of hypothetical uncertainty: ‘*Perhaps* it was the middle of January in the present year when I first looked up and saw the mark on the wall’ (MT 79). The narrator’s interior monologue dominates the sketch until it is interrupted by another character at the end of the sketch, who reveals the ‘truth’ about the mark: ‘All the same I don’t see why we should have a snail on our wall’ (MT 91). As in ‘A Society’, this moment of revelation comes in the context of an outburst about the war: ‘it’s no good buying newspapers. ...Nothing ever happens. Curse this war! God damn this war! ...’ (MT 91). This elliptical outburst follows the narrator’s own digressive leaps between ideas, which structure a sketch that thematically undermines methodological inquiry. Yet, at the same time, there are clues to the intricate logical progression of the sketch itself. ‘I first’ in the first sentence suggests that the narrator has looked at the mark many times since this instance. This sketch in its entirety may thereby represent only one instance of looking at the mark, but it should also be noted that the narrator looks at it multiple times within the sketch, with varying levels of certainty: ‘The mark *was* a small round mark, black upon the wall, *about* six or seven inches above the mantelpiece’ (MT 79); ‘*If* that mark was made by a nail, it can’t have been for a picture’ (MT 80); ‘*But* as for that mark, *I’m not sure* about it’ (MT 80); ‘*And yet* that mark on the wall is not a hole at all. *It may* even be caused by some round black substance, such as a small rose-leaf, left over from the summer’ (MT 82); ‘*In certain lights* that mark on the wall *seems* actually to project from the wall. Nor is it *entirely* circular. *I cannot be sure*, but *it seems* to cast a perceptible shadow’ (MT 86); ‘I must jump up and see for myself what that mark on the wall *really is*’ (MT 88); ‘Ah, the mark on the wall! *It was* a snail’ (MT 91) (all my italics). The accumulation of conjunctions, determiners and qualifiers around the mark shows the sketch move from the certainty of approximate measurements, through more overtly stated doubt, back to certainty in the past tense. On the first page the narrator presents an attempt to be precise in their setting of the scene, and says that ‘[i]n order to fix a date one must remember what one saw’ (MT 79). Her declared method of establishing certainty depends on the perception of objects, a process which this entire sketch works to undermine. The first perception of the mark focuses on its shape, colour, size, and position – ‘The mark was a small round mark, black upon the white wall, about six or seven inches above the mantelpiece’ (MT 79)

– but the mark then sparks a chain of thoughts and associations which carry the sketch along: ‘How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, and then leave it. ...’ (*MT* 79). The recurrent use of ellipses throughout the sketch begins here on the first page, effecting a transition into the narrator’s imaginative investigation of the ‘truth’ about the mark, and performatively ‘leaving’ a train of thought unfinished.

As a sketch, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ is an exercise in performing the recording of subjectivity and hypothetical, potential actions: ‘I *might* get up, *but if* I got up and looked at it, ten to one I *shouldn’t be able to* say for certain’ (*MT* 80; my italics). Just over halfway through, the narrator gets a mental twitch like that of the narrator on the train in ‘An Unwritten Novel’: ‘I must jump up and see for myself what that mark on the wall really is – a nail, a rose-leaf, a crack in the wood?’ (*MT* 88). She stops, however, to contemplate the meaning of that twitch, and why she made it. In this contemplation, there is an embedded critique of recourse to ‘Nature’:

Here is Nature once more at her old game of self-preservation. This train of thought, she perceives, is threatening mere waste of energy, even some collision with reality, [...] I understand Nature’s game – her prompting to take action as a way of ending any thought that threatens to excite or to pain. Hence, I suppose, comes our slight contempt for men of action – men, we assume, who don’t think. Still, there’s no harm in putting a full stop to one’s disagreeable thoughts by looking at a mark on the wall. (*MT* 88-9)

The mark is given a symbolic function here, uniting its figurative and physical manifestations in the shape of a ‘full stop’ or a ‘point’. The mark on the wall is both a full stop to thought and something which spurs the narrator’s mind to action; the narrator resists its prompt to physical action, but also sees the mark’s usefulness as a stimulus which works by (ar)resting the mind and giving it an external point of focus. It can calm the mind without recourse to bodily action. Within this double-edged description of the ‘self-preservation’ instinct of ‘Nature’, the derivative thought-patterns provoked by the mark are also applicable to the patrilineal model of descent enshrined by Whitaker’s Table of Precedency:

Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker; and the great thing is to know who follows whom. Whitaker knows, and let that, so Nature counsels, comfort you, instead of enraging you; and if you can’t be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall’ (*MT* 88-9)

This is a pointed suggestion, particularly in light of the ending of the sketch, in which the narrator’s companion does literally ‘shatter’ an hour of ‘peace’ by interjecting the war: the

revelation of the ‘truth’ of the mark as a creature of nature rather than a man-made object – the snail rather than the nail – comes with a ‘curse’: ‘God damn this war!’ (MT 91). The narrator’s resistance to Nature’s ‘prompting to take action’ (MT 89) is also a conscientious objection to the habituated response, which would be to get up and gain absolute knowledge, or naming power, over the mark on the wall. As Lorraine Sim points out, ‘the narrative associates factual points of view with a tendency to terminate thought and put an end to discussion’.⁴⁰ The construction of (capitalised) Nature is shown to be a discursive strategy of mastery, at odds with the natural existence of the mark which is taken by the narrator as a starting point rather than a full stop. While we cannot safely assume that the narrator is female, there is nevertheless an important feminist criticism embedded in these aspects of the sketch, turning upon the knowing or not knowing of what the mark on the wall ‘is’. Naming and taxonomising, embodied in Whitaker’s Almanac is aligned with patriarchal Enlightenment logic and rationality; the narrator’s thought process in ‘The Mark on the Wall’, however, drives the sketch to a point of slippery dissolution: ‘I can’t remember a thing. Everything’s moving, falling, slipping, vanishing. ...’ (MT 91). These also show two sides of the sketch as a genre: I suggest that Woolf’s use of it is aligned with the latter sense of uncertainty and ellipsis, rather than with the categorising and typification by which Martina Lauster defines the sketch in her study discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.

In *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf uses ‘the mark on the wall’ – or its absence – as a metaphorical marker of progress denied to women: ‘there is no mark on the wall to measure the precise height of women’ (AROO 111). While in *A Room of One’s Own* this phrase is used contextually in an argument about access to education, and about the supposed lack of creative or scientific predecessors (which is at least partly an effect of writing, in terms of documentation and re-inscription of a certain historical narrative), it does not advocate for there to *be* a ‘mark on the wall’ measuring the ‘*precise* height of women’ (my italics). Instead, it presents the possibility that the achievements of women cannot be measured in such a way, because that scale itself is corrupted or beside the point. In *A Room of One’s Own*, the repetition of the phrase ‘mark on the wall’ perhaps asks us to look to the earlier sketch as part of our efforts to decode it. In its concluding place in *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ defers the possibility of coming to a conclusion and of presenting a quantifiable, summarising ‘truth’. Emblematised in the mark itself, the deferral of conclusion and diversion from mastery instead elevates the idea

⁴⁰ Lorraine Sim, *Virginia Woolf and the Patterns of Ordinary Experience* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p. 43.

of process; of attempting and seeking, and wandering wide of the mark. When, with ‘patient attrition’ we uncover the ‘gigantic old nail, driven in two hundred years ago’, seeing that it has ‘revealed its head above the coat of paint, and is taking its first view of modern life in the sight of a white-walled fire-lit room’ (*MT* 87), we might also be aware of layered moments of writing which have been pargeted, but which are ever-present beneath the surface.⁴¹ Given this imagery and the refusal of ‘The Mark on the Wall’ to be unified and totalising, it is perhaps unsurprising that this sketch exists in multiple textual variants. The Modernist Archive Publishing Project has recently begun by publishing an interactive digital edition of ‘The Mark on the Wall’, comprising the multiple published versions of this text, from its initial appearance in *Two Stories* (1917) through to Leonard Woolf’s posthumous publication, *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (1944). The editors’ notes illuminate some of the tokens of change which exist across these versions.

Highlighting the unfinished nature of the text by refusing to choose a definitive version, this digital publication gives the reader the option to choose and change which version to read; which version is to bear ‘witness’ to the variants at any given moment. It therefore ‘does not present these texts merely as stages in the development of a final version but [proceeds] with the assumption, per James Thorpe in “The Aesthetics of Textual Criticism,” that “each version is, either potentially or actually, another work of art”’.⁴² In effect, it restores to ‘The Mark on the Wall’ its own formal quality of the sketch.

Even where there are no available textual variants, manuscripts or typescripts for the sketches in this collection (which is the case for ‘The String Quartet’, ‘Blue & Green’, ‘A Haunted House’ and ‘Monday or Tuesday’),⁴³ or without discussing in detail the variants that do exist, the idea of the sketch as something which is unfinished or which can be reworked later must nevertheless pay attention to how these texts *develop*. As well as in certain narrative strategies such as those discussed above, the political critique of these sketches is often embedded in images like the mark on the wall, which have greater significance when we take them as a starting point rather than a full stop: when we stand back from them, think around them and return to them with an approximate awareness of their potentialities as signifiers. The potency of some of these embedded images is often greater in those sketches where the point of the narrative itself is difficult to locate,

⁴¹ On ‘pargeting’, see p. 92 of the present thesis.

⁴² Emily McGinn, Amy Leggette, Matthew Hannah, and Paul Bellew, ‘Comparing Marks: A Versioning Edition of Virginia Woolf’s “The Mark on the Wall”’, *Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing* 35 (2014): <<http://scholarlyediting.org/2014/editions/intro.markonthewall.html>> [accessed 28 July 2017].

⁴³ See the notes to these sketches in Dick, *CSF*.

encouraging the reader to actively participate in constructing its meaning(s). This is most demonstrably the case with the title sketch of the collection, ‘Monday or Tuesday’.

4.4 ‘Monday or Tuesday’: ‘– truth? content with closeness?’

Woolf had decided on *Monday or Tuesday* as the title of her book before she had written the sketch of the same name. As Alice Staveley points out, Woolf ‘wrote to her sister in late October 1920, “I’m getting doubtful whether I shall have time to write the story called Monday or Tuesday—if not, I don’t know what to call the book”.’⁴⁴ While she refers to it here as a ‘story’, it is also a text in which the form of the sketch is most in evidence. It covers only two pages in the book, composed of only six paragraphs – the first and third of which break off with an extended dash. It has no identifiable narrator or narrative progression, but its images appear to be focalised through a flying heron. The concrete punctuating marks of elision – ellipses and dashes – are the main structuring principle of ‘Monday or Tuesday’ which, like the other sketches in the collection, proceeds in a manner of digressive exploration. The second, fourth and fifth paragraphs end with questions (the second and fourth being ‘truth?’, and the fifth being ‘or now, content with closeness?’ [*MT* 37]); and the second and third paragraph are both interrupted by parenthesis within parenthesis, in a pattern which has no strict grammatical logic:

‘ – (...) –’. There are rhetorical questions and interjections throughout which suggest a personal voice, for example: ‘A lake? Blot the shores of it out! A mountain? Oh, perfect – the sun gold on its slopes’ (*MT* 36), and, more prominently, the reiterated question about ‘truth’ (*MT* 36, 37). In ‘Monday or Tuesday’ the word ‘truth’ is a refrain which appears at the end of almost every paragraph preceded by a dash and followed by a question mark: ‘ – and truth?’ (*MT* 36, 37). The fact that this sketch was written last is telling in relation to the centrality of the concept of ‘truth’ in the collection: ‘Monday or Tuesday’ encompasses the main themes of the book not only as the title sketch, but it does so specifically at the point of the book’s finishing rather than its beginning. Woolf retrospectively makes it a key to the collection, rather than extrapolating the book from this sketch. With this knowledge, along with the order in which its texts appear – ending with the two which had been published first, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ and ‘Kew Gardens’ – the book does not reflect a chronological, linear development of a theme in parallel with Woolf’s writing and

⁴⁴ (*L* II 444), cited in Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, p. 6. Barbara Lounsbury contends that the title for the collection ‘derives from (and salutes) Anton Chekhov’s *Note-book*, published the same month by the Hogarth Press. “There is no Monday which will not give its place to Tuesday”, Chekhov wrote as one of sixty-seven “Themes, Thoughts, Notes, and Fragments” in the *Note-book*’ (*Virginia Woolf’s Modernist Path: Her Middle Diaries and the Diaries She Read* [Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2016], p. 61).

thinking. Nevertheless, it coheres as a collection which creates internally prescient echoes and retrospective illuminations in its arrangements and repetitions of certain images (such as the snail which crosses from ‘The Mark on the Wall’ to ‘Kew Gardens’), rhythms (the repeated three beats discussed in the previous chapter) and structures across the texts.

In ‘Monday or Tuesday’, Woolf defers ‘truth’ as both concept and signifier through grammatical fragmentation and repetitive use of dashes and brackets. The structuring of the dashes and brackets has the effect of placing the words outside the brackets in parenthesis too, particularly the words ‘for ever desiring’ in the second paragraph:

Desiring truth, awaiting it, laboriously distilling a few words, for ever desiring – (a cry starts to the left, another to the right. Wheels strike divergently. Omnibuses conglomerate in conflict) – for ever desiring – (the clock asseverates with twelve distinct strokes that it is mid-day; light sheds gold scales; children swarm) – for ever desiring truth. (MT 36)

The suspended repetition and deferral of desire here is combined with the poetic ‘distilling’ of words, slowly, in line with Woolf’s imagery of saturation as a counterpoint to the instinctive speed and spontaneity associated with the sketch.⁴⁵ Shuli Barzilai points out that this is also a scene of writing, such as we have already encountered in ‘A Haunted House’: the writer is both waiting and working for the presentation of something true: ‘The preliminary to all creative process is seeking, a condition of “desiring”, symbolically represented in “Monday or Tuesday” by the flight of the heron: it wants truth’ (206).⁴⁶

Providing a bird’s eye view, the heron which begins and ends ‘Monday or Tuesday’, first moving across a lake and then ‘the Indian seas’, is itself a figure rich with literary-political significance, particularly in terms of framing narratives. In North Indian culture, as Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Ann Grodzins Gold point out, the figure of the heron serves as a device in the narrative framework of folk tales. In *Listen to the Heron’s Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (1994), Raheja and Gold explore the significance of these traditional oral tales as they relate to stories about real lives of women. In their preface, they explain the ‘ambiguous moral significance’ of the heron:

Graceful and white, circling herons guide the lost and thirsty to refreshing pools in popular stories and epics. But in hymns or *bhajans*, largely a male performance genre, in Sanskrit texts like *The Laws of Manu* and the *Panchatantra*, and in a number of Hindi proverbs, herons symbolise predatory hypocrisy. Appearing pure while really deceitful and corrupt, they seem to meditate as they stand perfectly still

⁴⁵ For Woolf’s aesthetics of saturation, see p. 81-2 of the present thesis.

⁴⁶ Shuli Barzilai, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Pursuit of Truth: “Monday or Tuesday”, “Moments of Being” and “The Lady in the Looking Glass”’, *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 18.3 (Fall, 1988): 36.

gazing into the water of a pond, when in fact they are looking for fish to eat. In women's songs, however, a heron's speech suggests a different moral configuration. Herons act as narrators, inviting listeners to consider tales of illicit encounters, resistance to dominating power, or both. Such accounts are resonant with genuine but commonly suppressed truths.⁴⁷

I have found no evidence so far that Woolf would have been aware of this cultural symbolism, but it is nevertheless an intriguing possibility: 'Monday or Tuesday' uses the trope of the heron as a vehicle for desire, setting into motion a search for truth at the same time as undermining the possibility of arrival – its only movements are that of flight and return. The heron as storyteller and seeker after truth, as well as a guide to life-giving water in Raheja and Gold's account, is a richly suggestive correlative for the elusive subject seeking truth and narrating Woolf's text. With the resonances of its cultural significance in Indian folk tales, it is also a key to the coded imperialist imagery in this text, lending a possible feminist framework for interpreting them.

The interruption of desire by imperial signs begins in the third paragraph of 'Monday or Tuesday', in suggested dialogue within double-parenthesis: ' – (This foggy weather – Sugar? No, thank you – The commonwealth of the future) – ' (*MT* 36). The parataxis in these brackets contributes to the poetics of the text in terms of rhythm, but also creates a metonymic relation between the phrases. The offering of 'sugar', presumably for tea, links forward to the concrete poetry of the women's speech in 'Kew Gardens' (*MT* 74),⁴⁸ where, as Alice Staveley has discussed, it is a potent symbol. By paying attention to the content as well as the form of dialogue in 'Kew Gardens', Staveley shows how it 'code[s] references to the Great War – that great political conflict raging outside the garden'.⁴⁹ This enables her to read 'sugar' as a key cipher for the rationing of commodities during wartime.⁵⁰ Following Staveley's lead, the contents of the brackets in 'Monday or Tuesday' are just as encoded with political significance as they are formally interesting. For example, the phrase 'The commonwealth of the future' carries specific political implications at the period in which *Monday or Tuesday* was published. As D. W. Harkness notes, 'Commonwealth' had its first official use in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, in the wording of which 'British Commonwealth of Nations' replaced 'British Empire'.⁵¹ Woolf's use of

⁴⁷ Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Ann Grodzins Gold, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. xi.

⁴⁸ For my reading of poetry in the 'sugar' dialogue, see p. 96-7 of this thesis.

⁴⁹ Staveley, 'Conversations at Kew: Reading Woolf's Feminist Narratology', in *Trespassing Boundaries*, p. 52.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵¹ W. D. Harkness, *The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-31* (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 12. Although the treaty was signed in December 1921, after the

the phrase, ‘The commonwealth of the future’, carries over the theme of the Empire from ‘A Society’, modifying it according to contemporary discourse. It is a clue that ‘Monday or Tuesday’ is as deeply concerned with the legacies of the British Empire as is ‘A Society’, a fact which has been hitherto overlooked in discussion of its formal aspects.⁵² These resonances can be further sounded through the brackets in the second paragraph of ‘Monday or Tuesday’, which foreshadow the Bond Street scene at the beginning of Woolf’s 1925 novel, *Mrs Dalloway*:

[...] for ever desiring – (a cry starts to the left, another to the right. Wheels strike divergently. Omnibuses conglomerate in conflict) – for ever desiring – (the clock asseverates with twelve distinct strokes that it is mid-day; light sheds gold scales; children swarm) – for ever desiring truth. (*MT* 36)

The interruption and deferral created by the parentheses in this passage suggests comparison with the commotion caused by the back-firing car which interrupts Mrs Dalloway’s shopping trip, and heralds the arrival of the Prime Minister in the novel:

oh! a pistol shot in the street outside! [...] The violent explosion which made Mrs Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologise came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement precisely opposite Mulberry’s shop. Passers-by who, of course, stopped and stared, had just time to see a face of the very greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove-grey. Yet rumours were at once in circulation from the middle of Bond Street to Oxford Street on one side to Atkinson’s scent shop on the other, passing invisibly, inaudibly, like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills, falling indeed with something of a cloud’s sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly. [...] Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot [...] Every one looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. [...] The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. (*MD* 14-6)

As well as the commotion of the traffic (‘omnibuses conglomerate in conflict’), the slowing down of the action has the effect of parenthesis, creating a moment out of time in which veiling and unveiling are at work in a similar way to the aerial motions described in

publication of *Monday or Tuesday*, the South African General Jan Smuts had proposed the term ‘British Commonwealth of Nations’ in 1917 (ibid, pp. 3-5). See also Sonita Sarker, ‘Virginia Woolf in the British Commonwealth’, in Helen Wussow and Mary Ann Gillies (eds), *Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader: Selected Papers from the Twenty-Third Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2014), pp. 65-76.

⁵² See Kathryn N. Benzell, ‘Verbal Painting in “Blue & Green” and “Monday or Tuesday”’ in Benzell and Hoberman (eds), *Trespassing Boundaries*, pp. 157-74; and Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. xvi.

the scene of ‘Monday or Tuesday’. The circulating rumours in *Mrs Dalloway* are described via the image of the cloud and the veil ‘falling’ (*MD* 15); ‘Monday or Tuesday’ begins and ends with a description of the way in which ‘endlessly the sky covers and uncovers’ (*MT* 36) and ‘the sky veils her stars; then bares them’ (*MT* 37). The scene in *Mrs Dalloway* also references a moment from Woolf’s 1915 diary:

Monday 1 February, 1915:

In St James Street there was a terrific explosion; people came running out of Clubs; stopped still & gazed about them. But there was no Zeppelin or aeroplane – only, I suppose, a very large tyre burst. But it is really an instinct with me, & most people, I suppose, to turn any sudden noise, or dark object in the sky into an explosion, or a German aeroplane. (*D I* 32)

Woolf performs this metamorphosis for *Mrs Dalloway*, in which a plane does fly overhead. In ‘Monday or Tuesday’, it is the heron which moves across the sky, like and with the clouds, veiling and unveiling, ‘blotting the shores’ out of lakes. This moment in 1915, then, might come to *Mrs Dalloway* filtered through ‘Monday or Tuesday’. The ‘twelve distinct strokes’ (*MT* 36) of the clock in ‘Monday or Tuesday’ become the refrain of Big Ben throughout *Mrs Dalloway*: ‘Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air’ (*MD* 4). The diurnal rhythms of the Empire, splitting time into utilitarian units in this way, is a structuring principle that both *Mrs Dalloway* and ‘Monday or Tuesday’ invoke. By sounding the resonances between these two texts, we might infer that the indistinct, blurred location of ‘Monday or Tuesday’ is a bustling London scene, the seat of the British Empire. The phrase ‘Red is the dome’ at the end of the second paragraph might thus suggest, for example, St Paul’s Cathedral (*MT* 36). However, the paragraph’s ending with ‘– and truth?’ throws doubt on the scene not only asking ‘where is truth in all these images?’, but ‘what is the truth of this scene?’:

Red is the dome; coins hang on the trees; smoke trails from the chimneys; bark, shout, cry ‘Iron for sale’ – and truth?

Radiating to a point men’s feet and women’s feet, black or gold-encrusted – (This foggy weather – Sugar? No, thank you – The commonwealth of the future) – the firelight darting and making the room red, save for the black figures and their bright eyes, while outside a van discharges, Miss Thingummy drinks tea at her desk, and plate-glass preserves fur coats – (*MT* 37)

The phrase ‘coins hang on the trees’, juxtaposed with ‘gold-encrusted’, ‘sugar’, ‘black figures’ and ‘tea’, against a background of the colour red and ‘firelight’, metonymically suggest the violence and the plundered wealth of the plantation and the gold-mine (‘gold-

encrusted') in the British Empire's exploitations of its colonies. These geographies are also structurally positioned within or 'under' the British landscape in the fifth paragraph's introduction of Islamic religious architecture. The mention of 'minarets' in particular (*MT* 37) paints a mosque into the scene:

Fallen the book; in the flame, in the smoke, in the momentary sparks – or now voyaging, the marble square pendant, minarets beneath and the Indian seas, while space rushes blue and stars glint – truth? or now, content with closeness? (*MT* 37)

From this potential, though abstracted, bird's eye view, the minaret is an orienting point of reference. As the tower where the muezzin would issue the call to prayer, Jonathan Bloom tells us that, etymologically, the word 'minaret' has connotations of light and fire, making it another source of light or 'momentary sparks' in the sketch.⁵³ Bloom writes that:

The word entered English in the seventeenth century and, like its equivalents in other European languages, derives from the Ottoman Turkish *menāre*, a word itself derived from the Persian *minār* and *mināre* and Arabic *manār* or *manāra*, meaning either "place of fire" [*nār*] or "place of light" [*nūr*].⁵⁴

In his comprehensive survey of the scholarship on the minaret, Bloom also delivers an apt connection for readings of the minaret in Woolf's work: 'Others, noting that *manāra* also means "lighthouse" in Arabic, suggest that minarets were somehow related to lighthouses'.⁵⁵ It has been a question in the scholarship of the mosque's architecture why 'these words that refer to light and lamps become the most common words for the towers from which the call to prayer is given?'⁵⁶ Why is sound conflated with light? After surveying the literature, Bloom writes that:

Whereas intricate philological, functional, and formal arguments were once produced to explain the oddity of a language as rich as Arabic describing an architectural form in "inappropriate" terms [...] The tower had nothing to do with the call to prayer and was introduced to be a marker, exactly what its name indicated.⁵⁷

The minaret functions as a symbolic signifier in 'Monday or Tuesday' too: by its light, perhaps 'Red is the dome' is not setting us so simply in London, and the dome is not that of St. Paul's, but of a mosque. Yet we cannot say for sure that it is one of these to the

⁵³ Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Minaret* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 1

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 8

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 46.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 19.

exclusion of the other – like the mark on the wall superimposing a snail, a leaf and a nail, it can be both of these simultaneously.

Developing the content of these images by straying from the point of the text and wandering into oblique connections which present potential illuminations is an approach particularly evocative of sketchiness. Without claiming that they perform certain critiques or arguments, it is a way, nevertheless, of enhancing and drawing attention to the suggestive imagery of these texts and the cultural resonances that they might hold. It is important to note, however, that this is not a methodology which simply evades landing the argument about the political content of these sketches: rather, it presents a suggestive starting-point for further interpretive work. It is, moreover, enabled and encouraged by the narrative strategies of these texts themselves. Before moving on to discuss their more concrete marks on the page in the next chapter, the final sketch from which I want to extract these types of detail is ‘Kew Gardens’. While its sketchiness is also evident in its textual variations, as Staveley has thoroughly analysed, it uses similar strategies to the sketches discussed throughout this chapter. In the configurations by which it deploys certain images, I see the suggestion of an anti-imperial Sapphic storyline that is never fully expounded, but which nevertheless supports the broad strokes of these themes throughout the collection.

4.5 ‘Kew Gardens’: Scenes of Empire and Sapphic Subversions

Designed by Sir William Chambers ‘at the height of the 18th century craze for Chinoiserie’, the Pagoda is still one of the ‘top attractions’ at Kew Gardens.⁵⁸ It is now celebrated by Kew Gardens’ website as having ‘offered one of the earliest and finest bird’s eye views of London’.⁵⁹ Noting the commercial and imperial coding of the Gardens, Stacey Sloboda points out that the incorporation of Chinese design in garden landscapes in the eighteenth century, including the Kew Gardens Pagoda, ‘acted [...] as signs of commerce, cosmopolitanism, artifice, and novelty’.⁶⁰ As part of a ‘circuit of emblematic architecture, including three Oriental buildings – the Alhambra, the Pagoda, and the Mosque’,⁶¹ Sloboda shows how the Pagoda ‘secured Kew’s status as a site for imagining

⁵⁸ Kew Gardens, <<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/attractions/pagoda>> [accessed 24 July 2017].

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Stacey Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2014), p. 166.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 184.

itself at the centre of a vast imperial world [...] From the elevated position of the upper storeys of the Pagoda, visitors were invited to survey Britain's symbolic dominions'.⁶² As a microcosm of emblematic and symbolic images or signs, similar to those of 'Monday or Tuesday', Woolf utilises the landscape of 'Kew Gardens' to stage specifically domestic scenes in a broader, layered political context. In particular, in the scene of Trissie's date with her male companion, her memories and desire are entwined with the Orientalist fantasy of the landscape:

“Wherever *does* one have one's tea?” she asked with the oddest thrill of excitement in her voice, looking vaguely around and letting herself be drawn on down the grass path, trailing her parasol, turning her head this way and that, forgetting her tea, wishing to go down there and then down there, remembering the orchids and cranes among wild flowers, a Chinese pagoda and a crimson crested bird; but he bore her on. (*MT 77*)

While her unnamed date is working on imperial time – ‘Come along, Trissie; it's time we had our tea’ (*MT 77*) – the Chinese Pagoda in Kew Gardens which orientates and overlays Trissie's memories is a highly coded feature referencing multiple historical moments in which Chinoiserie resurfaced. The Pagoda is a marker not only, as we will see, of the gender politics at play in this scene, but, by a chain of displacements, it points to the Sapphic interruptive resistance performed by women's memories in this sketch.

Woolf situates the penultimate section of dialogue around the Pagoda, and makes ‘tea’ its subject. As David Beavers notes, at the height of the fashion for chinoiserie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

much of the interest in both Chinese export wares and chinoiserie arose from the desire to create appropriate settings for the ritual of tea drinking. The service of tea was seen as an essentially feminine activity and artefacts of Chinese inspiration or origin were associated by some commentators with gossiping women.⁶³

This information is illuminative of the dialogue of the two women discussed in Chapter Three, and of Trissie's and her companion's ritualistic date. While Trissie's desire escapes the tea-ritual, it only does so after she has participated and become passive (“‘Wherever *does* one have one's tea?’ [...] looking vaguely round and letting herself be drawn on...’ [*MT 77*]). Her desire can only escape so far, and is still problematically couched in the

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 186.

⁶³ David Beavers, “‘Mand'rin only is the man of taste’: 17th and 18th Century Chinoiserie in Britain’ in Beavers (ed.), *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain, 1650-1930* (Brighton: Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2009), pp. 13-26; p. 19.

imagery of oriental fantasy: ‘remembering the orchids and cranes among wild flowers, a Chinese pagoda and a crimson crested bird’ (*MT* 77). It is unclear when the scene that is being remembered had taken place – a few moments ago, or years ago? – but Trissie, being ‘drawn on down the grass path’, does not quite know whether she is resisting or complying with the male hand directing the present moment. Woolf’s incorporation of signifiers with the weight of Oriental fantasy behind them contributes to a complex gendered split in desires between Trissie and her young man. Chinoiserie is itself a highly feminised concept: Beevers explains that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was ‘[s]atirised and criticised, associated with female sensibility and rapacity’, but that this was offset by the fact that ‘chinoiserie allowed a welcome injection of the exotic into the classical mainstream.’⁶⁴ Beevers shows how chinoiserie as a style became popular in its difference from Classical order, and that in its asymmetry and disorder, this popularity was compounded with the derogatory criticism of frivolity associated with femininity.⁶⁵ Woolf’s use of the pagoda as the site of desire in Kew Gardens – a site which is never reached, but only recalled as a memory – links feminine desire to this Orientalist phase in the Gardens’ history, as well as to those moments of chinoiserie revival in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶⁶ In the early twentieth century, the vogue for chinoiserie was, as Sarah Cheang has discussed, a style appropriated by women to suggest sexual liberation: Cheang notes that (in an aptly Woolfian trope) the American actress/‘It girl’/*femme enfant/femme fatale* Clara Bow ‘created a Chinese room that was a symbol of her own exciting immorality’.⁶⁷ It is also a style that Kathleen Raine references in remembering Woolf’s talks at Girton in 1928: ‘In the fairy land of the Girton reception-room [...] members of the Literary Society were gathered for coffee [...] young Eton-cropped hair gleaming, Chinese shawls spread like the plumage of butterflies’.⁶⁸ Jane Marcus juxtaposes this setting with the physical and ‘symbolic’ presence of Vita Sackville-West at these talks, since *Orlando* had just been published, and notes that: ‘The walls were

⁶⁴ Beevers, *Chinese Whispers*, p. 24.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁶⁶ As Patrick Conner notes, the shifting patterns of chinoiserie’s favour were linked particularly to the monarchy. It was a style extremely popular with George IV, and, after his death, ‘closely associated in the public mind with an unpopular and extravagant monarch, and perhaps with the frivolities of the Georgian era in general’ (‘Chinese Style in 19th Century Britain’ in Beevers [ed.], *Chinese Whispers*, pp. 55-64; p. 69).

⁶⁷ Bow’s room had ‘walls decorated in red, gold and black lacquer, red and gold oriental draperies, a large red and gold sofa, Chinese carpets, cabinets and lamps, and a lacquered Buddha on a carved stand. She excluded natural light, burned incense and referred to the room as “a *loving* room, not a living room”, encouraging her public to view her Chinese room as a den of iniquity, and constructing herself as a thoroughly liberated woman.’ (Sarah Cheang, ‘What’s in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity’ in Beevers (ed.), *Chinese Whispers*, pp. 75-82; p. 76).

⁶⁸ Cited by Jane Marcus, in ‘Sapphisty’, *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy*, p. 166.

embroidered with birds and flowers in wool on ivory satin, and oriental embroidery was draped over the grand piano. So the setting was as seductive as the speech'.⁶⁹ This all makes for a problematic and complex combination of cultural appropriation and icons of female sexual liberation. It is impossible to say what kind of political critique is encoded in Woolf's use of this landscape to set her scenes of courtship and desire; whether she links the heteronormative marriage plot to imperial plunder, or whether she herself participates in an orientalist inscription of exotic escape. Either way, Sapphism once again interrupts. In the memories of Eleanor, who passes the flowerbed with her husband, Simon, the oriental imagery of 'Kew Gardens' is proleptically tinged with Sapphic overtones. This couple's thoughts return to their pre-marriage youth, holding a mirror to Trissie and her companion. While Simon's memory is of a woman he wanted to marry (named Lily, and read by Staveley as a sketch of Lily Briscoe, who eschews marriage in *To the Lighthouse* and is repeatedly described as having 'Chinese eyes'),⁷⁰ Eleanor's memory, on the other hand, is of a fairy-tale moment, set in an idyllic childhood scene of painting:

Imagine six little girls sitting before their easels twenty years ago, down by the side of a lake, painting the water-lilies, the first red water-lilies I'd ever seen. And suddenly a kiss, there on the back of my neck. And my hand shook all the afternoon so that I couldn't paint. I took out my watch and marked the hour when I would allow myself to think of the kiss for five minutes only – it was so precious – the kiss of an old grey-haired woman with a wart on her nose, the mother of all my kisses all my life. (*MT* 70)

This kiss by an unseen woman as an originating sensual memory suggestively counterpoints the heterosexual love plot that dominates Simon's memory – in which the woman and his love for her are couched in the broad, reductive strokes of synecdoche: 'the whole of her seemed to be in her shoe. And my love, my desire were in the dragonfly' (*MT* 69).⁷¹ Yet, the kiss itself in Eleanor's memory also functions as a kind of synecdoche, signifying the maternal chain of 'thinking back through our mothers' that Woolf outlines in *A Room of One's Own*; it paints a Sapphic, all-female Edenic counterpoint to the patriarchal family dynamics of the couples at Kew. Yet, the kiss also interrupts a moment

⁶⁹ Ibid. On the potential 'queerness' of the garden space, and the use of 'organic vocabulary [...] the expression of intimacy and eroticism' in Woolf's relationship with Vita Sackville-West, see Nuala Hancock, 'Virginia Woolf and Gardens' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, pp. 245-60; p. 254.

⁷⁰ Staveley writes that: 'With a twitch of her toe, Lily escapes the romance plot that is here literal and metaphoric prologue to the war plot in which conscripted soldiers require women's conscription to the ideals of marriage and family to make meaningful their fight' ('Conversations at Kew', p. 53).

⁷¹ Mathilde la Cassignère has discussed this use of synecdoche in 'Heavy Nothings in Virginia Woolf's "Kew Gardens"', *Journal of the Short Story in English* 60 (Spring, 2013): 15-30.

of creative activity, stalling it and derailing it. In order to continue with the painting, the sensation of the kiss must be marked and projected into a future moment, marked out on the clock, when Eleanor could return to it – and she returns to think of it again here, in ‘Kew Gardens’, many years later. Both Eleanor’s and Simon’s memories are fundamentally scenes of composition: the characters try to compose themselves in both senses of the word, and these moments resurface to be reinscribed as part of their walk at Kew. They are moments of initiation and recursive return, pointing to the layering of moments and meanings engraved into the surface setting of Kew Gardens.

Having traced a certain path through *Monday or Tuesday* in this way, what rises to the surface is the sense that Woolf scores the collection with symbolic, suggestive images; images which stand out in relief from narratives structured by digression, interruption and deferral of closure. *Monday or Tuesday* as a whole presents a surface of impressionistic and lyrical prose, but when examined closely reveals depths of contextual meaning, in which we can sound various political, historical and cultural resonances. All of these sketches, while introducing potential politically-inflected critiques, finally elide any attempts to establish ‘the truth’ of what each sketch, and the collection as a whole, is about. Any such interpretation is always in danger of being outmanoeuvred by the doubt that runs from the title, through the woodcuts, through what might be mistakes in printing, through the punctuation marks of elision – the dash, parentheses and ellipses – and endlessly deferring questions. Ultimately, this collection uses the mode of the sketch to engrave incisive images – to record and project these images into later writing moments, and to leave clues on the surface by which their significance can be retrospectively activated.

Chapter Five

The Sketchbook Itself: *Monday or Tuesday* (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1921)

When Woolf revised her 1919 essay ‘Modern Novels’ in 1925, she changed the title to ‘Modern Fiction’ and added the phrase ‘the life of Monday or Tuesday’.¹ The new title shifts from techniques and effects in the novel to those of fiction in general;² and her revision of the passage where this phrase appears shifts the emphasis – ‘the accent’; ‘the moment of importance’ – from ‘life itself’ to ‘the life of Monday or Tuesday’:

The mind, exposed to the ordinary course of life, receives upon its surface a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, *an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, composing in their sum what we might venture to call life itself.* (‘Modern Novels’, 1919; *E III 33*, my italics)

The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, *an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday*, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there[.] (‘Modern Fiction’, 1925; *E IV 160*, my italics)

Whether or not the memory of her 1921 collection prompted or correlated with Woolf’s use of the phrase in ‘Modern Fiction’, she places ‘Monday or Tuesday’ adjacent to terms which are descriptive of sketch-like techniques and effects: the ‘trivial’, ‘evanescent’ and ‘engraved’. ‘Record[ing] the atoms as they fall’ (*E IV 161*), Woolf’s terminology speaks to literary Impressionism defined by Ford as ‘the record of the impression of a moment [...] not the corrected chronicle’.³ As noted in Chapter One, Ford himself performs the discourse of the sketch-writer in his essay ‘On Impressionism’,⁴ and he illustrates the concept with an example of the hints made by a line-drawing: he claims that ‘Hogarth’s drawing of the watchman with the pike over his shoulder and the dog at his heels going in

¹ See Tony Davenport, ‘The Life of Monday or Tuesday’ in Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (eds), *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays* (London: Vision Press, 1983), pp. 165-66; p. 158. Davenport writes of ‘Modern Novels’ as the place where Woolf ‘first sketched’ her thoughts on modern fiction, which, in 1923, had been ‘coloured’ by Arnold Bennett’s criticisms of her *Jacob’s Room* (1922) (p. 159). For commentary on the writing process and revisions of ‘Modern Novels’, see also Alice Staveley, ‘Voicing Virginia: The *Monday or Tuesday* Years’ in Beth Rigel Daugherty and Eileen Barrett (eds), *Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts: Selected Papers from the Fifth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (New York: Pace University Press, 1996), pp. 262-67; Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’; Jane Goldman, *Modernism, 1910-1945: Image to Apocalypse* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 66-76; and Goldman, ‘Modernist Studies’ in *Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies*, ed. by Anna Snaith (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 35-59.

² See Staveley, ‘Voicing Virginia’, p. 267; and ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, pp. 10-11.

³ Ford, ‘On Impressionism’, *Poetry and Drama* 6 (June, 1914), p. 174.

⁴ For Ford, see pp. 42-3 of the present thesis.

at the door, the whole being executed in four lines [...] is the high-watermark of Impressionism'.⁵ While Woolf's sketches perform in this manner of broad strokes, suggestive detail and spontaneous imprinting of the moment, they also partake of Post-Impressionist visual artistic contexts which emphasise patterning and design: Bryony Randall points out that the revised passage from 'Modern Novels' 'is in fact evenly balanced in its emphasis on randomness – "myriad impressions", "trivial, fantastic, evanescent" [...] – and structure – "they shape themselves", "the accent falls", "the moment of importance", "the pattern"'.⁶ As advocated in 'Modern Fiction', Woolf's sketches in *Monday or Tuesday* 'trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness' (*E* IV 161). As well as engraving careful formal patterns in the sketches themselves, while also managing to appear light and ephemeral, *Monday or Tuesday* as an object is curated and set in a precise form by Woolf in collaboration with Vanessa Bell. Bolstered again by the terminology used in the early reviews, which often intertwine the effects of the 'evanescent' and 'engraved', this final chapter will discuss the aesthetics and effects of the sketch as they appear specifically in the marks imprinted upon the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday*. Alongside Woolf's idea of 'the book itself' as both an abstract concept and a material entity, this chapter will bring the thesis to its conclusion by tracing some of the key features of *Monday or Tuesday* as it was printed for the Hogarth Press. In doing so, the only sketch which I have not yet discussed, 'Blue & Green', illustrates the importance of certain variants between the printings of the first UK and first US editions of the book. 'Blue & Green' conceptually depends heavily on its setting in the first UK edition. Before contextualising 'Blue & Green' as a sketch within the aesthetic discourses surrounding the hand-printed books of the Hogarth Press, it is helpful to begin by examining the concept of *Monday or Tuesday* more generally. The titular phrase appears in multiple essays and unpublished sketches post-dating *Monday or Tuesday*, and often relates to the materiality of books and literary forms.

5.1 The Life of *Monday or Tuesday*

Although, as Tony Davenport notes, the life of *Monday or Tuesday* does not straightforwardly map onto 'the life of Monday or Tuesday' in Woolf's manifesto for

⁵ Ford, 'On Impressionism' (June, 1914), p. 170.

⁶ Randall, *Modernism*, p. 157. On the combination of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in 'Modern Fiction', see Ann Banfield, 'Time Passes: Virginia Woolf, Post-Impressionism and Cambridge Time' in *Poetics Today* 24. 3 (Fall 2003), pp. 471-516.

modern fiction four years later,⁷ the two pieces do illuminate each other. I am invoking these contexts in ‘Modern Fiction’, not only as a point of reference for Woolf’s use of the phrase ‘Monday or Tuesday’, but because the terminology used in the essay more broadly can help to focus the effects of the sketch as it plays out on the material surface of the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday*. The sketch in this book holds tension between the accidental, ‘evanescent’ impression and the ‘sharpness’ of the carefully crafted, permanently ‘engraved’ image. In the context of its production at the Hogarth Press, at a moment of emergence for the publishing house as a place of physical crafting for Woolf, the material presentation and publication history of *Monday or Tuesday* intertwine with the sketch as (printed) text. Fundamentally, it is a production which both maintains the quality of the sketch and exists as a finished and composed work, published and circulated in a coterie literary marketplace. This book also has a symbolic or conceptual currency for Woolf herself: throughout her oeuvre, she repeatedly and recursively uses the terminology of the title, the idea of ‘Monday or Tuesday’, as a way to talk about books and about literary form.

Woolf’s use of the phrase ‘Monday or Tuesday’, both in ‘Modern Fiction’ and as the title for her only self-published collection of short experimental fiction, is inflected by its illustration of ‘life’. In her 1927 review of *The Diary of a Country Parson: The Reverend James Woodforde*, entitled ‘Life Itself’, Woolf invokes these weekdays to explore the interplay between surface and depth in the diary form. Couched in the psychoanalytic scene of interpretation, she returns to the idea of reading the surface for what it suggests is buried beneath:

One could wish that the psycho-analysts would go into the question of diary keeping. For often it is the one mysterious fact in a life otherwise as clear as the sky and as candid as the dawn. Parson Woodforde is a case in point – his diary is the only mystery about him. For forty-three years he sat down almost daily to record what he did on Monday and what he had for dinner on Tuesday; but for whom he wrote or why he wrote it is impossible to say. (*E IV 441*).

Woolf suggests here that recording ‘the life of Monday or Tuesday’ as a superficial narrative reveals little about the life of the person; it composes a pattern of typical, opaque signifiers. In its contact with the form of the personal diary, recording the trivial components of a given day, this phrase becomes ever-more linked to the sketch: we have already seen how Woolf used her own diaries and journals as copy-books for recording

⁷ Davenport, ‘The Life of Monday or Tuesday’, p. 173.

sketches of characters and scenes, and for developing her literary skill.⁸ In an intriguing unpublished sketch provisionally entitled ‘Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday’, Woolf experiments with the form of the diary as a fictional mode. Including this sketch in an appendix to the *Complete Shorter Fiction* (1989), Susan Dick tells us that, on the undated manuscript held in the Monks House Papers archive at Sussex University, ‘the title “Monday, Tuesday – ” written above “THE DIARY” (typed) appears on the single covering sheet, and “Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday” at the top of the first page of the ten page typescript’ (CSF 340). Dick also points us to an entry in Woolf’s own diary, in which she had noted: ‘I shall scribble a page of what is called, I think, Diary or Calendar every morning, ... & shall one day publish them in a square grey-paper covered volume, very thin: a kind of copy book, with a calendar of the month stamped upon it (16 Nov. 1931; *D IV*, 54)’ (CSF 340). While the typescript itself is undated, this diary entry appears to place it at least a decade after the publication of *Monday or Tuesday*. Perhaps intending to return to some of the ideas sketched out in the earlier volume, this manuscript is intriguing in terms of Woolf’s consideration of the book’s physical appearance: she is thinking about ‘a square grey-paper covered volume, very thin: a kind of copy book’. This book, though she had conceived it as an object, never materialised (as far as we know), remaining only in Woolf’s own diary as a sketch of a project. The content of the manuscript further illuminates Woolf’s use the phrase ‘the life of Monday or Tuesday’ in relation to literary sketching and the materiality of the book combined in the diary.

‘Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday’ opens with the narrator telling how ‘that admirable man to whom I owe all knowledge that I have of Wren’s city churches [...] happened to remark [...] If I were you, I should make it my business to keep a diary’ (CSF 330). This leads to an attempt to answer the question: ‘Should one be able to make a pen image of every Monday Tuesday and Wednesday?’ (CSF 330). The man in the sketch sends the narrator ‘a parcel, a diary, an inscription, an injunction; and a book bound in leather, stitched and gummed; which provides a blank space for every day in the year’ (CSF 330). With the book itself as the instigation of writing, having established its material qualities, the narrator ‘hold[s] the blank page headed Friday November Thirteenth to the light of that very day’:

There seems to my eye some discrepancy between the two. There, outside is the day; as it happens, bluish, cloudy, still and fine. Here is the page; white, smooth. How am I to bring about a marriage between them? But let me try, with a pen, dipped in ink’ (CSF 330).

⁸ On Woolf’s early journals, see pp. 71-2 of the present thesis.

Woolf begins here by outlining the frame within which her narrator is about to make an attempt; the disjunction between the reality and the reproduction is apologised for, and introduces the description as only an attempt. While this sketch itself can only be deployed suggestively here, it is to be included in the new Cambridge Edition of the short fiction, and has the potential to instigate more sustained analysis alongside *Monday or Tuesday*.

Woolf's recurrent use of 'Monday or Tuesday' as a signifier is refined further in another unpublished sketch which is more immediately relevant to her use of the phrase 'the life of Monday or Tuesday' in 'Modern Fiction'. Included in an appendix to the fifth volume of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* is an unfinished section of 'Phases of Fiction' (1929), entitled 'Notes of a Day's Walk'. Its title formally positions it within the conventions of the sketch, recording the landscape, and using this frame for a digression into mimetic 'truth tellers' of literature (Defoe, Meredith, Maupassant).⁹ Woolf writes: 'there is one kind of life for novelists; shall we call it Monday or Tuesday, everyday life that is; another for poets; Saturday and Sunday; the life of contemplation, of dusk and stars' (*E V* 619). She repeats the phrase 'Monday or Tuesday' as shorthand for a particular kind of reality ('everyday life that is') as it relates to novelistic style and form:

Therefore all one can say of a morning spent in dipping here and there into the truth tellers is that a particular '<I>' has been made aware of a world that is very visible; very tangible; very clear to the senses of touch and taste and feeling. that it much resembles the world of Monday and Tuesday; that after a time this reality palls; that it is then broken up by action; that all realists are also story tellers; that they use plain language; that they avoid metaphors; that they shut out what is subtle, ambiguous, difficult and indefinite in human character. Before long therefore it is precisely for those qualities that we begin to crave. (*E V* 620)

In the framework of 'Phases of Fiction', the focus on the documentary recording of scenes – of the 'very visible; very tangible; very clear to the senses' reality – soon generates the desire to introduce a more expressive poetic vision, along with the need to people these scenes: to initiate a different kind of 'life' after 'the world of Monday or Tuesday' becomes too opaque and suffocating ('this reality palls').¹⁰ The dryness of note-taking as a preliminary exercise in technique and gathering material from everyday scenes instigates a

⁹ See Anne E. Fernald, 'Pleasure and Belief in "Phases of Fiction"' in Beth Carole Rosenberg and Jeanne Dubino (eds), *Virginia Woolf and the Essay* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 193-211.

¹⁰ In addition to the senses of 'enveloping a situation with an air of gloom, heaviness, or fear', 'loss of strength, vitality' and '[a] feeling of disgust arising from satiety or distaste', the *OED* has the primary sense of 'pall' as: 'A cloth, usually of black, purple, or white velvet, spread over a coffin, hearse, or tomb. Also: a shroud for a corpse'.

desire to begin sketching in a more poetic mode; to create scenes and characters and form itself.

While acknowledging that ‘she converts her own experience into symbols of the mind’s attempts to interpret and to express’, Davenport reads Woolf’s *Monday or Tuesday* as a literary autobiographical exercise in which ‘[t]he ‘life’ of *Monday or Tuesday* is the author’s own life.’¹¹ Davenport sees in these texts ‘the interplay between transient actual fact and the novelist’s alternative patterned arrangements of reality’.¹² Staveley’s reading is similarly biographical, pointing out that ‘in recording the pattern of her own writing life, *Monday or Tuesday* had proved itself invaluable’.¹³ Again noting the patterning at work in arranging recorded impressions, Staveley suggests that in her revision of ‘Modern Novels’, Woolf ‘paid retrospective homage to these stories, implicitly acknowledging their place in her struggle to define her own voice as a woman writer’.¹⁴ John Hughes also notes that these ‘stories were written at a critical early juncture, when her writing was arguably at its most fluid and emergent’.¹⁵ In the recurrence of the phrase in her writing – both published and unpublished but usually with a sense of the dimensions of the physical object of the book as well as of literary form – giving life to *Monday or Tuesday* was important not only in the development of Woolf’s literary voice prior to *Jacob’s Room* (1922), but in her simultaneous development as a physical producer of texts at the Hogarth Press. This book displays the physical marks of the creative process in both abstract and material ways; it asks us to consider its material ‘life’ as well as its literary form.

5.2 How Should One Read a Sketchbook?: The Book Itself

Contemporaneous reviews of *Monday or Tuesday*, which received it as a product of the early Hogarth Press as much as a literary text, initially picked up on the qualities of the sketch that it displayed: Desmond MacCarthy’s review in the *New Statesman* (quoted in my Introduction), and an unsigned review in the *Dial* (New York) in February 1922 both refer to *Monday or Tuesday* as a collection of sketches,¹⁶ as does Raymond Mortimer in his

¹¹ Davenport, ‘The Life of Monday or Tuesday’, p. 172.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 170.

¹³ Staveley, ‘Voicing Virginia’, p. 267.

¹⁴ Staveley relates this to Woolf’s thinking about the gender politics of the novel form specifically: ‘In the title of the 1925 revision, “Modern Fiction”, her substitution of the more generic term fiction for novels betrays her wariness of using a word which she had come to believe catered so strongly to the male voice’ (*Ibid.*).

¹⁵ John Hughes, ‘Deleuze, Bergson and Woolf’s *Monday or Tuesday*’ in *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013): 496-514; 497.

¹⁶ See Majumdar and McLaurin (eds), *The Critical Heritage*, pp. 89-92.

1929 review of the work of Woolf and Lytton Strachey.¹⁷ Mortimer diminishes *Monday or Tuesday* as ‘only sketches’ – in contrast to *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf’s ‘first full-size canvas’;¹⁸ yet, he also hails *Monday or Tuesday* as ‘the *Quatorze Juillet* of the Edwardian novel’, in which Woolf ‘emerged definitively with the liveliest imagination and most delicate style of her time’.¹⁹ The forceful ephemerality of the collection owes something to its physical properties as an object – specifically in the mistakes of the impression which were not corrected. They contribute to its effervescence and to the suggestiveness which T. S. Eliot also saw in the book. Woolf was happy to learn that he was impressed by ‘The String Quartet’ in particular:

Eliot astonished me by praising Monday & Tuesday! This really delighted me. He picked out the String Quartet, especially the end of it. “Very good” he said, & meant it, I think. The Unwritten Novel he thought not successful: Haunted House “extremely interesting”. It pleases me to think I could discuss my writing openly with him. And I was stoical; & I write without cringing (allow me these words of commendation!) (Tues 7 June 1921; *D* II, 125).

In his ‘London Letter’ in the *Dial* (1921) in which he also discusses Strachey’s *Queen Victoria* (1921), Eliot invokes the sketch in order to point to these qualities which he sees in *Monday or Tuesday*. Comparing the articulation of ‘the fantastic, the strange’ in Joyce with ‘what might crudely be called a more feminine type’ in Woolf, Eliot nevertheless upholds *Monday or Tuesday* as an example of ‘a very sophisticated type, [which] makes its art by feeling and contemplating the feeling, rather than the object which has excited it or the object into which the feeling might be made’:

Of this type of writing, the recent book of sketches by Mrs Woolf, *Monday or Tuesday*, is the most extreme example. A good deal of the secret charm of Mrs Woolf’s shorter pieces consists in the immense disparity between the object and the train of feeling which it has set in motion. Mrs Woolf gives you the minutest datum, and leads you on to explore, quite consciously, the sequence of images and feelings which float away from it. The result is something which makes Walter Pater appear an unsophisticated rationalist, and the writing is often remarkable. The book is one of the most curious and interesting examples of a process of dissociation which in that direction, it would seem, cannot be exceeded.²⁰

While Eliot identifies something imagistic in the prose of *Monday or Tuesday*, in his ‘crude’ characterisation he is also concerned with its creation of emotion or ‘feelings’

¹⁷ Raymond Mortimer, from ‘Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey’, *Bookman* (New York) (February 1929): 625-29; reprinted in Majumdar and McLaurin, *The Critical Heritage*, pp. 238-43.

¹⁸ Mortimer, ‘Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey’, p. 240.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ T.S. Eliot, ‘London Letter’, *Dial* 71 (1921), pp. 213-6; p. 215-6.

which are instigated by, but diverge from, the referential signifying object. Woolf's striving for the sense of one thing opening out of another yet enclosing the whole, whether by saturation or lightness of touch (under Paterian influence, as Meisel has discussed),²¹ is something that Eliot picks up on here. As well as setting it up as an example of the 'fantastic', Eliot's terms evoke the evanescent impressions that Woolf cites as material for modern fiction. In reading *Monday or Tuesday* for the first time, one trivial or fantastic impression expands and refracts into multiple dispersing, ephemeral 'images and feelings'. On re-reading, however, the carefully designed patterns of the book itself start to take shape, and its formal coherence rises to the surface. These dynamics of the text as activated and reconfigured by the process of reading are bound up with the idea of the material object, 'the book itself', which Woolf explores in her review of Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* entitled, 'On Re-Reading Novels' (1922). It is necessary, therefore, to take a detour through this concept before returning to *Monday or Tuesday*.

In 'On Re-Reading Novels', Woolf is in dialogue with Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*, which had been published in the same year as *Monday or Tuesday* (1921). This essay mediates between Woolf's literary-theoretical concerns in 'Modern Novels' (1919) and 'Modern Fiction' (1925). It begins like they do, with a discussion of the failures of the Edwardian novelists. Davenport contends that, 'though she disagreed with Lubbock, [Woolf] became more conscious of novelistic form after reading his book'.²² In her review, she demonstrates an understanding of 'the book itself' as a concept which can describe both physical entities and abstract concepts. She therefore takes issue with Lubbock's characterisation of 'the book itself' as synonymous with its form, and ultimately finds his study not very helpful from the point of view of a writer and a publisher engaged in crafting books, nor still from that of a reader.²³ The shifting of two effects – the evanescent and the engraved – between different moments and experiences of reading is at the heart of Woolf's own theory of form, of reading, re-reading and criticism. They play into her theorisation of how one should read a book, what a book itself is, and how the book changes through the processes of reading and re-reading. In 'How Should One Read a Book?' (1932) Woolf writes:

In the first place, I want to emphasise the note of interrogation at the end of my title. Even if I could answer the question for myself, the answer would apply only to me and not to you. The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about

²¹ Meisel, *The Absent Father*. See also pp. 81-2 of the present thesis.

²² Davenport, 'The Life of Monday or Tuesday', pp. 160-61.

²³ See Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language*, pp. 72-3.

reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. (*E V 572-73*)

Beginning with an interrogation and failing to provide a conclusion, Woolf advocates a mode of reading that is independent, headstrong and individual. Yet, she goes on, in this essay, to advise a mode of reading that is susceptible to suggestion and perceptive to the subtlest guidance, allowing oneself to be led without expecting explanation, and without stopping to question where we are going:

If you hang back, and reserve and criticise at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving you, or attempting to give you, something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel — if we consider how to read a novel first — are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickest way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words. Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you — how at the corner of the street, perhaps, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasised; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist — Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery. (*E V 573-74*)

Highly resonant with Ford's writings on Impressionism, here Woolf encourages the reader to help complete the scene. By placing faith in the writer's subtle hints and suggestions, Woolf suggests, the reader can actively make the 'something much more definite' take shape before their eyes; and it may even become a finished composition. Having cautioned against allowing one's reading to be proscribed by 'authorities, however heavily furred and gowned' (*E V 573*), Woolf leads the reader of this essay down a path which creates for the writer an 'accomplice' in the reader, one who will be a sympathetic participant in the creation of the literary work; fundamentally, she advocates that the processes of receiving and creating literature are inextricable from each other and from the provisionality and suspension of judgement (as well as the provisionality and suspension of 'wholeness' in the work itself). Steering the reader away from simple metaphors of vision, she suggests

that seeing the something ‘as formed and controlled as a building’ cannot be achieved as an instantaneous vision – no matter how sparse and simple the form – since the writer is always only making an attempt towards this, and since reading involves a temporal dimension: the idea of ‘the whole vision’ is a moving target. This dynamism of the literary object can be experienced only by attempting to create such a vision for oneself, by beginning with a ‘strong impression’, and seeing how this multiplies, fragments and how the ‘*process*’ has an effect of altering ‘the emotion itself’. Viewing the finished piece, Woolf suggests, should therefore not be the only goal of the reading process: ‘For, who reads to bring about an end, however desirable? Are there not some pursuits that we practise because they are good in themselves, and some pleasures that are final?’ (*E V* 582). The quality of the sketch which requires the reader’s participation to activate and complete it is an aesthetic choice at the heart of Woolf’s literary theory and philosophy of reading, and in undermining the idea of finishing, of reading ‘to bring about an end’, she suggests that all texts are attempts, all texts have the potential to be read as sketches: the sketch is, for Woolf, a (product of a) mode of reading as much as it is a (product of a) mode of writing.

In order to invoke the idea of ‘the book itself’, Lubbock has recourse to metaphors figuring the physical properties of books, suggesting that form ‘lies imprisoned in the volume’ (cited by Woolf, *E III* 338). Woolf argues, instead, for an understanding of form and of ‘the book itself’ as phenomena produced through emotion – an understanding influenced by the Post-Impressionist aesthetic theory of Roger Fry, Clive Bell, and Vanessa Bell.²⁴ In Clive Bell’s notion of ‘Significant Form’, aesthetic emotion is activated through visual contact with the formal arrangement of lines, patterns, and colours, and form is a pure signifier: that is, it is non-referential, self-contained and exists in and for itself.²⁵ Lubbock’s theory of form in fiction makes contact with this idea of significant form in visual art – yet, Woolf explains why it is misguided to apply this directly to fiction. She negotiates the philosophical and aesthetic questions raised by Post-Impressionism in the visual arts, calling out the misguided metaphorical application of the doctrine of significant form to the literary aesthetic object. In doing so, she highlights the question of whether that aesthetic object is material or ideal, and both appropriates and ironises Lubbock’s suggestion that ‘[t]here is something lasting that we can lay hands on’ (*E III*

²⁴ On the nuances of each of these artists’ understandings of Post-Impressionism, and their influence on Woolf, see Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics* (1998). On the creative relationship between Woolf and Fry, see also McLaurin, *The Echoes Enslaved* (1973).

²⁵ Bell used term ‘significant form’ in the exhibition catalogue for Fry’s Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition (1912), and expanded the concept in his book *Art* (1914). See Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics*.

339). Countering Lubbock by re-reading Flaubert's 'Un Coeur Simple', Woolf writes of '[a] sudden intensity of phrase, something which for good reasons or bad we feel to be emphatic, startles us into a flash of understanding. We see now why the story was written' (*E III 340*):

Therefore the 'book itself' is not form which you see, but emotion which you feel, and the more intense the writer's feeling the more exact without slip or chink its expression in words. And whenever Mr Lubbock talks of form it is as if something were interposed between us and the book as we know it. We feel the presence of an alien substance which requires to be visualised imposing itself upon emotions which we feel naturally, and name simply, and range in final order by feeling their right relations to each other. (*E III 340*)

Woolf's language here evokes 'feeling' as sensuous perception, describing a process of arranging emotions – instincts for form – as tangible entities which have certain affinities towards each other. In negotiating the terms 'craft' and 'fiction' in the title of Lubbock's book, Woolf turns, not to visual art specifically, but to a broader theory of aesthetic emotion. She is in dialogue with Fry as much as with Lubbock in this essay. Angela Hague notes that: 'In a 1924 letter she tells [Fry] that writing about [...] *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) has led her to realise that "form in fiction" means "emotion put into the right relations; and has nothing to do with form as used in painting"'.²⁶ In thinking of a specifically literary craft, Woolf makes sure 'to insist, among all this talk of methods, that both in writing and in reading it is the emotion that must come first' (*E III 340-41*). She argues that in 'working from the emotion outwards, and reading over, there is nothing to be seen; there is everything to be felt' (*E III 340*). Yet Woolf is also aware that what she is doing in this essay is only sketching a beginning, and, she says, 'a very dangerous one at that':

Emotion is our material; but what do we mean by emotion? How many different kinds of emotion are there not in one short story, of how many qualities, and composed of how many different elements? And, therefore, to get our emotion directly, and for ourselves, is only the first step. We must go on to test it and riddle it with questions. If nothing survives, well and good; if something remains, all the better. (*E III 341*)

Since there is no final definition of 'emotion', there can be none of 'the book itself' – emotions themselves have to be 'composed', and the definitions and definitiveness of their 'qualities' are thereby in question and on trial. Woolf takes issue with Lubbock's use of the

²⁶ Angela Hague, *Fiction, Intuition and Creativity: Studies in Brontë, James, Woolf and Lessing* (Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 221. See Woolf (*L III 133*).

word ‘form’ because it ‘comes from the visual arts, and for our part we wish that he could have seen his way to do without it’ (*E III 339*). She is, of course, not unknowingly using a metaphor of vision herself here. She clarifies:

We do not raise the question in order to stickle for accuracy where most words are provisional, many metaphorical, and some on trial for the first time. The question is not one of words only. It goes deeper than that, into the very process of reading itself. Here we have Mr Lubbock telling us that the book itself is equivalent to its form, and seeking with admirable subtlety and lucidity to trace out those methods by which novelists build up the final and enduring structure of their books. The very patness with which the image comes to the pen makes us suspect that it fits a little loosely. And in these circumstances it is best to shake oneself free from images and start afresh with a definite subject to work upon. (*E III 339*)

As with the ‘metaphors [that] come free’ in the diary entry on *Mrs Dalloway*,²⁷ the provisionality of language and its fundamentally figurative nature is crucial to the relationship between the sketch as a form in visual art and the way it functions as a literary form. The danger with employing the term ‘sketch’ in a literary context is exactly the one that Woolf suggests here: it is too easy, it is a metaphor that fits loosely, and we need to go back to the texts themselves for it to mean anything. We cannot, then, think of the literary sketch only in terms of its visual origins, and of its literary effects as essentially only metaphorical: to do so would be interposing something alien. But neither can we completely divorce the two. In using the word ‘form’, Woolf suggests, we are using shorthand or making a sketch of something that, in a literary context, we haven’t quite decided on a definition for yet. Instinct must therefore be followed by criticism.

As in ‘Modern Novels’ and ‘Modern Fiction’, in ‘On Re-Reading Novels’ Woolf illustrates the nuances of the critical phase with a gendered metaphor, representing ‘fiction’ and the material ‘book itself’ as a woman. She deploys this metaphor in relation to the concepts of expression, form and emotion in the book itself:

But now – at last – Mr Lubbock applies his Röntgen rays. The *voluminous* lady submits to examination. The flesh, the finery, even the smile and witchery, together with the umbrellas and brown paper parcels which she has collected on her long and toilsome journey, dissolve and disappear; the skeleton alone remains. It is surprising. It is even momentarily shocking. Our old familiar friend has vanished. But, after all, there is something satisfactory in bone – one can grasp it. In other words, by concentrating on the novelist’s method Mr Lubbock draws our attention to the solid and enduring thing to which we can hold fast when we attack a novel for the second time. Here is something to which we can turn and turn again, and with each clearer view of it our understanding of the whole becomes more definite. Here is something

²⁷ See pp. 64-6 of the present thesis.

removed (as far as may be) from the influence of our fluctuating and private emotions. The novelist's method is simply his device for expressing his emotion; but if we discover how that effect is produced we shall undoubtedly *deepen the impression*. (*E* III 341-2; my emphasis)

Using language which suggests the domination of the material object (problematized by the gendered metaphor), Woolf's essay proposes that criticism and re-reading is a process of stripping away all decoration leaving only 'the essential thing' as she terms it in 'Modern Fiction', and which, here, is 'the solid and enduring thing' – this may be to the impoverishment of the novel's capacity to dazzle and bewitch. The x-ray metaphor is one of vision which cuts through to the writer's 'method', to the structural support beneath the detail that finishes a novel. As Woolf suggests in the quotation above, there is a sense in which we are doing violence to the novel by attempting to 'grasp' the method and underlying structure, with the critical re-reading as 'attacking' – an approach which disperses (as much as it sees through) 'even the smile and witchery' that were so charming on a first reading. Such dispersion and stripping away of all that is inessential, unravelling the 'finished' object to access the proof of process is, however, also captured in Hughes's identification of 'effervescence', and in the 'images and feelings' that 'float away' from the object, for Eliot, in *Monday or Tuesday*: they instigate a process of beginning again on the part of the reader, whose emotion ('which *you* feel') comes to constitute 'the book itself'.

There are many contradictions in all the metaphors used so far, by Woolf and by myself in my attempts to unpack her language and her conception of the book itself, as well as her methods and ideas of composition and reading in relation to the sketch. These contradictions point to the fact that it may not be possible to deduce from Woolf herself, finally, how all these things fit together in her work – while she theorises her own practice, she also encourages readers to produce their own practical engagements with her work, and undermines attempts to take her words at face value or as a coherent statement. As Genette puts it, authors' insights into their own work, as 'epitext' in interviews, diaries, letters and so on, are not 'always in good faith and uncontaminated by any playacting',²⁸ especially in the case of Virginia Woolf. Genette uses Woolf's diaries and letters as an example of epitexts which, though they have the potential to give us unmediated, non-rhetorical insight into her process, 'there are abundant signs to the contrary, as when [she] declares so

²⁸ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 395. For a slightly earlier analysis of the politics around Woolf's epitexts, before the term was available in English, see John Whittier-Ferguson, *Framing Pieces: Designs of the Gloss in Joyce, Woolf, and Pound* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996).

insistently that criticisms delight her or leave her calm and collected.’²⁹ Perhaps, then, I have been reading too much into her use of terms like ‘the book itself’, or ‘the sketch’ – but she actively encourages and leaves room for us to do so. In March 1921, Woolf had been pondering: ‘Suppose my myriad changes of style is antipathetic to the material? or does my style remain fixed? To my mind it changes always. But no one notices’ (*D* II 94). Whether her style is evanescent or engraved along certain lines, she is persistently concerned with how it relates to ‘the material’.

5.3 The Materiality of the Sketch

One of the immediately remarkable things about the first UK edition of *Monday or Tuesday* is that it is badly printed. In his 1921 *TLS* review, Harold Child complains:

The Hogarth Press has done better printing than this. In the copy before us the inking is often faulty; and Mrs Bell’s delightful woodcuts (the one with the fiddles is peculiarly exciting and suggestive) have left ghosts of themselves on the pages opposite; and also they show through the paper, so that the backs are difficult to read.³⁰

Woolf’s response to this review called it ‘rather scrappy, complimentary enough, but quite unintelligent’ (*D* II 106). On the surface, it is most likely that she thought the review unintelligent in terms of its engagement with the content of the book; but perhaps she is also referring to its complaints about the printing too. The hand of production is on display in this first UK edition, containing as it does many printer’s marks made in error which were not corrected. As Child’s review suggests, the shabby quality which resulted cannot be simply explained by the amateur or inexperienced nature of the Press: it had been established for four years already, and had produced attractive volumes including its very first, *Two Stories* (1917) with woodcuts by Dora Carrington.³¹ Yet, the Press had also, afterwards, made a mess of *Kew Gardens* (1919): Vanessa Bell was notably ‘furious’ at the condition of her woodcuts in that edition, ‘which had [also] been terribly over-inked in places’.³² This edition, however, received such a favourable review, from the same Harold Child, that the Woolfs had to work quickly to produce a second edition in the same year. Staveley writes:

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Majumdar and McLaurin (eds), *The Critical Heritage*, p. 88.

³¹ See J. Howard Woolmer, *Checklist of the Hogarth Press 1917-1946* (Pennsylvania: Woolmer, 1986).

³² James Beechey, ‘Introduction’ to *The Bloomsbury Artists: Prints and Book Design*, ed. by Tony Bradshaw (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1999), p. 16.

[I]n June 1919 [...] the Hogarth Press was rushing out a second edition of “Kew Gardens”, one month after the first, in response to the interest provoked by Harold Child’s *Times* review. And it was precisely the booklet’s Omega overtones that had grabbed Child’s attention from the start; the opening line of his review noting the “odd, Fitzroy-square-looking cover”, an allusion to the address of the Omega Workshops at 33 Fitzroy Square.³³

Founded in 1913, the specificity and singularity of the crafted art-object were central tenets of Fry’s Omega Workshops. The object was supposed to retain a sense of proximity and connection to the hand of its maker, linking form to emotion and letting the artist’s process permeate the artwork itself. The emotion the object produced through its form was supposedly due to its expression of the artist’s technique (if not their virtuosity in the medium).³⁴ The Workshops closed in 1919, the same year, as Staveley points out, that the Press printed ‘Kew Gardens’.³⁵ The historical and aesthetic intertwining of the Workshops with the Hogarth Press has been thoroughly charted, and it is a connection particularly prominent in scholarship which takes Vanessa Bell’s woodcuts as a central motivation for discussing *Monday or Tuesday*.³⁶ Without wishing to reproduce this criticism, it is important to note that the immediacy of *Monday or Tuesday* to the hand of its producers, manifesting as amateur ‘faulty’ printing in Child’s terms, is consistent with the Omega Workshops method of ‘crafting’, making the process of printing visible on the finished page: as Donna Rhein notes, ‘where the Woolfs’ hand has definitely been, in the earlier books, it is very clear to see’.³⁷ With attention to this proximity to the hand of the producers, Laura Marcus also draws attention to the Hogarth Press’s recurrent inclusion of woodcuts in their books, by which ‘both word and image become part of the “graphic” nature of the text, reinforcing the understanding of writing (including the “character drawing” on which Woolf’s narrator reflects in *Jacob’s Room*) as a form of *engraving*’.³⁸ In line with Fry’s aesthetic theory, as Kathleen Chapman notes: ‘the woodcut treats the surface not as something merely to be covered over with tricks of perspective, but as an

³³ Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, pp. 225-26.

³⁴ For a comprehensive overview, see Judith Collins, *The Omega Workshops* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1984).

³⁵ Staveley, ‘Reconfiguring “Kew Gardens”’, p. 225.

³⁶ See Bradshaw, *The Bloomsbury Artists*; Jeremy Greenwood, *Omega Cuts: Woodcuts and Linocuts by Artists associated with the Omega Workshops and the Hogarth Press* (Woodbridge: The Wood Lea Press, 1998); Benjamin Harvey, ‘Lightness Visible: An Appreciation of Bloomsbury’s Books and Blocks’ in ex. cat. *A Room of Their Own: The Bloomsbury Artists in American Collections* (Ithaca, NY: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art and Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 88-119; and David H. Porter, *The Omega Workshops and the Hogarth Press: An Artful Fugue* (London: Cecil Woolf, 2008).

³⁷ Donna Rhein, *The Handprinted Books of Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985), p. 59.

³⁸ Laura Marcus, ‘Virginia Woolf as Publisher and Editor: The Hogarth Press’ in Humm (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion*, p. 267 (my italics).

element that has its own expressive potential'.³⁹ Furthermore, the woodcut is a key component in the lexicon of the literary sketchbook, as a mutual product of the sketch's ekphrastic tradition and of the emerging popular practices of print culture in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Just as the sketch is valuable as a document of the artist's process, the Woolfs' insistence on printing with their own hands is 'seen as an activity in which the embodied work of the compositor becomes part of the printing process'.⁴¹ Marcus relates this idea of embodiment to Roger Fry's aesthetic theory, in which:

[He] had expressed his strongly held belief that manual dexterity equated to artistic power, as well as the view that the nervous control of the hand, which lay at the furthest remove from 'mechanism', was alone capable of transmitting the artist's feeling to us.⁴²

While in this sense, the handwritten sketch may be more closely aligned than the printed text with Fry's aesthetic, the quality of the sketch is an idea that can further reconcile hand-printing with the auratic immediacy of the object's connection to the artist. *Monday or Tuesday* was, however, in fact printed offsite at the Prompt Press in Richmond, a commercial publisher owned and run by F. T. McDermott, who helped Leonard Woolf to produce the book. The roughness of its appearance was caused by McDermott's unconventional use of the printing tools to print Bell's woodcuts. In an often-quoted passage of his autobiography, Leonard Woolf recounts the experience of printing *Monday or Tuesday*; he notes that McDermott 'insisted upon printing the woodcuts with the letterpress,' causing havoc:

I have never seen a more desperate, ludicrous – but to me tragic – scene than McDermott printing *Monday or Tuesday*... in order to get the right 'colour' for the illustrations, he had to get four or five times more ink on his rollers than was right for the type. His type was soon clogged with ink; but even that was not the worst: he got so much ink on the blocks and his paper was so soft and spongy that little fluffy bits of paper were torn off with the ink and stuck to the blocks and then to the rollers and finally to the type. We had to stop every few minutes and clean everything, but even so the pages were an appalling sight. We machined 1000 copies, and at the end we sank down exhausted and speechless on the floor by the side of the machine, where

³⁹ See Kathleen Chapman, 'Illustration and Advertising: Wilhelm Worringer's *Die altdeutsche Buchillustration*' in *The Expressionist Turn in Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Kimberly A. Smith (Ashgate, 2014), pp. 57-99; p. 61.

⁴⁰ See Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 33-9.

⁴¹ Marcus, 'Virginia Woolf as Publisher and Editor', p. 267. See also Marcus, 'Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press', in Ian Willison, Warwick Gould and Warren Chernaik (eds), *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 124-50.

⁴² Marcus, 'Virginia Woolf as Publisher', p. 267.

we sat and silently drank beer until I was sufficiently revived to crawl battered and broken back to Hogarth House.⁴³

In this comically pathetic scene, Woolf's text gets the better of the men and the machine; it resists printing, but more specifically, it is the woodcuts that cause the trouble and come to affect the printed quality of the words. Though her letter to Smyth was written in 1930, after the printing debacle, her reference to the 'little pieces' of *Monday or Tuesday* as 'unprintable mere outcries' may suggest a wry smile in that direction (*L* IV 231). The difficulty that Leonard Woolf and McDermott had in printing *Monday or Tuesday* is evident in, and becomes part of, the final book itself. For the men, it was not exactly a joyful creation, but more like a vicarious embodiment of the author's labour pains – perhaps all the more testimony to Virginia Woolf's pleasure in the non-industrial, non-professional, 'unprintable', 'wild outbursts of freedom' that she later writes of in her letter to Smyth. The term 'little pieces', as well as resonating with the 'little fluffy bits' of paper that clogged the printing tools, suggests some resistance to generic categorization: it speaks of collectable *objets d'art*, as well as of broken fragments. *Monday or Tuesday* is literally 'unprintable', as Woolf writes to Smyth; or is only printable by sacrificing a certain standard or expectation in terms of what a book of short prose should look like. Despite the difficulties of printing, however, there does exist a printed book called *Monday or Tuesday*.

Monday or Tuesday as a whole rejects – by a combination of accident and design – the publishing conventions of standard book production, of 'finish', and of mediating features such as contents page and preface. As examples of Genette's paratexts, these features perform functions that '[enable] a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public'.⁴⁴ The fact that *Monday or Tuesday* omits some of these functional features does not make it any less mediated. Not only does it still bear the author's and illustrator's names, a title, a cover design and so on, but the performance of omitting a contents page, a preface, a copyright page and so on is, in itself, a paratextual feature which points to this book as a coterie publication and as an art object. Genette writes that '[t]he ways and means of the paratext change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition'.⁴⁵ In looking at *Monday or Tuesday* as a

⁴³ Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918* (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), pp. 239-40.

⁴⁴ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 1. See also Jennie-Rebecca Falcetta, 'Don't Judge a Cover by Its Woolf: Book Cover Image and the Marketing of Virginia Woolf's Work' in *Virginia Woolf and the Literary Marketplace* ed. by Jeanne Dubino (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.237-52.

⁴⁵ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 3.

collection of sketches so far, I have also had recourse to more ‘distanced’ paratexts – what Genette calls *epitexts*: ‘messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book [...] under cover of private communications (letters, diaries and others)’.⁴⁶ As well as such ‘private’ epitexts, I have approached *Monday or Tuesday* by way of ‘anthumous public epitexts’: reviews published in the author’s lifetime.⁴⁷ Genette writes about the ‘intimate epitext’ of the diary – written by the author, addressed to themselves, without the intention of publication, but which, once we encounter them, have an effect on the published texts. He uses Woolf’s diary as his main example, in which her comments on her novels show us that: ‘For Woolf, from *Night and Day* (1919) to *Between the Acts* (1941), each publication is an occasion of real agony’.⁴⁸ He also notes that Woolf’s diary ‘contains valuable information about her methods of working, particularly her technique of doing the final revision by retyping the whole as quickly as possible (“a good method, I believe, as thus one works with a wet brush over the whole, & joins parts separately composed & gone dry” – December 13, 1924)’.⁴⁹ Regarding this idea of speed and the hand-production of the material, having outlined the links between the diary form and Woolf’s conception of *Monday or Tuesday*, ‘the book itself’ and her philosophy of reading – *epitexts* to all her works – this chapter is moving ever more closely to the *peritext* of *Monday or Tuesday*; that is, to the features contained in and on the first UK edition which present ‘the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work’. As Genette writes, ‘[t]he ultimate destiny of the paratext is sooner or later to catch up with its text in order to *make a book*’.⁵⁰

5.4 *Monday or Tuesday* (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1921): The Texture of the Sketchbook

In October 1921, Woolf wrote to Violet Dickinson of *Monday or Tuesday* as ‘an odious object, which leaves black stains wherever it touches’ (*L* II 445). Indeed, the shabby imprecision of the print in *Monday or Tuesday* is sometimes a whole smudged page where the block has shifted. Where there has been too much or not enough ink on the block, there is juxtaposition of very dark pages and very lightly printed ones. For example, ‘Monday or Tuesday’ is considerably lighter on the page than ‘A Society’, which coincidentally resonates with the thematic and formal qualities of these sketches: ‘Monday or Tuesday’ is more ephemeral or abstract in terms of narrative than the satirical, essayistic ‘A Society’;

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

⁴⁷ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 5; ‘The Public Epitext’, pp. 344-70; ‘The Private Epitext’, pp. 371-403.

⁴⁸ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 387.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 392.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 403.

but on the other hand, the former might be said to be more dependent on its concrete manifestation on the page and on the printed words. The physical position and setting of the type on the page is important not only formally for sketches like ‘Monday or Tuesday’ and ‘Blue & Green’ (discussed below), but is, as Donna Rhein points out, a stylistic feature which carries its own use-value:

A generous use of space in the margins and between the lines is typical. The Woolfs favoured a white page rather than the black page of dark ink, close lines and closely spaced type popularized by William Morris. The Woolfs’ use of space becomes a practical advantage when the reader is faced with poor inking and gray type.⁵¹

This ‘poor inking’ is evident in marks between words throughout the book, showing up parts of the printer’s block which are not supposed to be visible – much in the way ‘the mark on the wall’, in its initial suggested guise of a nail poking through the paint, interrupts the surface and instigates a process of deciphering meaning by the narrator. These printer’s marks can take on a signifying function in the text, for example, in ‘A Society’ they pictorially punctuate the sentence: ‘not one of them would ever wish * to marry her. At last she dried her tears. For * some time we could make nothing of what she said’ (*MT* 13-4; see Fig. 2). The marks in this sentence seem to punctuate or hiccup like the girl’s sobs. On the same page, the mark in the phrase: ‘little towers of sugar upon the edge of * the tea tray’ seem to represent these ‘towers’. Similarly on page ten, the mark which appears in the phrase, ‘The wind roars * up the avenue’, has the shape of a spiralling gust (*MT* 10; see Fig. 1). Where we can see the marks on the page, we can consider whether or not they merely constitute mistakes or whether we can read them in their physical presence as signifiers. They not only tell a story about the history and making of the book, but they also insert themselves into the language that we are reading – whether in illustration or in distracting interruption. The meaning and texture that we encounter in Woolf’s words is compounded by the reading experience of this specific edition of this specific book; it is the only edition in which it is possible to speak of these texts as sketches even in terms of their printed appearance.

⁵¹ Rhein, *The Handprinted Books*, p. 12.

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions

Fig. 1 – ‘A Haunted House’, *Monday or Tuesday* (Hogarth Press, 1921), pp. 10-11

Figure has been removed due to Copyright restrictions

Fig. 2 – *Monday or Tuesday* (Hogarth Press, 1921), pp. 12-13

The intrusion or integration of the woodcuts into our reading experience is also multi-layered in its significance. They are not merely illustrative, but are crucial to the functioning of this book as an art object and a sketchbook. It might have been more neatly

printed were it not for these woodcuts, but they also affect the manner in which we might perform our reading. For example, in the first lines of ‘An Unwritten Novel’, Woolf writes: ‘Such an expression of unhappiness was enough by itself to make one’s eyes slide above the paper’s edge to the poor woman’s face’ (MT 39). On the page to our left is Bell’s woodcut of a woman displaying just such an expression, and so our gaze slides across the paper’s edge and Woolf’s words seem to both anticipate and mimic the reader’s actions. Since the paper is too thin for them, and they were over-inked, the woodcuts also reflect through the pages and transfer between them. Where the woodcuts have been over-inked, they are mutedly transferred onto the facing pages and so permeate beyond their fixed position before or after a story. They often manifest a suggestive foreshadowing of certain sketches, which is eerily appropriate where a woodcut showing two faces, a ‘ghostly couple’, shines through the final page of ‘A Haunted House’ (MT 11). In the same way that the ghosts wander through the house, the spectre of the woodcut haunts the pages of printed text as Child suggests (See Fig. 1). They function with the same projective and retroactive temporalities as do the sketches themselves, suggesting rather than attempting realistic representation of certain scenes or characters. Beyond these considerations of form and texture, however, there is also significance attached to the material printing of *Monday or Tuesday* as sketchbook related to the variations between the first UK and first US editions published within a few months of each other in 1921.

5.5 UK and US Variants

The first US edition of *Monday or Tuesday* was printed by Harcourt Brace in November 1921, seven months after the original UK Hogarth edition. There are significant differences in some of the texts between these publications which suggest either revisions by the author or (further signifying) mistakes introduced by the American publishers. Comparing the variants discussed below, it becomes clear that Leonard Woolf used the first US edition as the copy-text for *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* (1944). Since he would presumably have had more ready access to the first UK edition, this choice may suggest that he knew it to be the author’s most recently revised version. On the other hand, the shabbiness and mistakes which litter the first UK edition may have caused him to turn to the first US for a more ‘reliable’ copy. Whatever the reason, and whether or not Woolf herself made the changes, the physical differences between the first UK and first US editions are significant for reading *Monday or Tuesday* as a sketchbook. Not only is the shabbiness of the UK edition glaring when placed in contrast to the polished, standard-

looking American edition, but the Hogarth Press version is truly the sketchbook for an object that was to later become more obviously, or standardly, ‘finished and composed’.

The first obvious difference between these two editions is that the American has no woodcuts; but it also alters the physical construction of the book in other important ways. In the very first sketch, ‘A Haunted House’, there is a variant in the italicisation and capitalisation of words in the last line. The UK edition has: ‘Oh, is *this* your buried treasure? The light in the heart’ (*MT* 11); and the US edition has: ‘Oh, is this *your* buried treasure? The light in the heart’ (Harcourt Brace, 1921: 7). The implications of the change of emphasis between these two editions are significant for the interpretive possibilities of the text. There is a shift from the object ‘this’ to the pronoun ‘your’; from the demonstrative to the possessive, which strangely removes the focus from the mysterious ‘it’ that has been continually invoked and searched for as ‘the buried treasure’, just at the moment when it is about to be revealed as ‘the light in the heart’ (*MT* 11). In doing so, the revision neutralises the mystery about ‘the buried treasure’, since it implies that the search was not about finding whatever the object was, but about working out to whom it belonged. The shift to italicization of ‘your’ suggests that real mystery of the text is one of narration and embodiment, and foregrounds Woolf’s play with the ability to merge or distinguish between characters through linguistic positions. The effect of this change is also a formal one, resonating with the opening line of the story which also invokes a ‘you’, presumed to be the reader in second person discourse. It highlights the merging of characters as the main concern of the sketch by reinstating a distinction between the ghosts and the narrator, whose subjectivities have been blurred throughout the text – such as in the line, ‘the faces that search the sleepers and seek their hidden joy’ (*MT* 11), where it is unclear whose joy it is: the ghosts’ or the ‘sleepers’. ‘Is this *your* buried treasure?’ suggests that it cannot therefore be ‘mine’ and that ‘we’ are separate rather than one.

Since the UK edition was published in April 1921, and the US in November 1921, it is possible that this change of emphasis was a revision made by Woolf herself: if the US edition is indeed the most revised by the author – or even if these are corrections made by the editors to American conventions – following Leonard Woolf, the American edition is the copy text used for most modern editions. Susan Dick also reprinted from the first US edition of *Monday or Tuesday* for *The Complete Shorter Fiction* (1985; rev. 1989). In her printing of ‘A Haunted House’, however, Dick introduces another variant – an erroneous dash: ‘Oh, is this *your* – buried treasure?’ Dick’s corrections of punctuation are consistent with the 1944 edition, except where she introduces this dash. Although it is therefore most likely to be a mistake in her edition, formally this variant resonates with the dash in the

first paragraph of the text: ‘lifting here, opening there, making sure – a ghostly couple’ (MT 10).

The most striking and significant change between the first UK and US editions of *Monday or Tuesday*, however, is that to the type-setting of ‘Blue & Green’. In the UK edition, this sketch is printed as a diptych on facing pages, so that both colours are presented simultaneously (see Fig. 3). In the American edition, they are printed on a single page, back to back, so that the reader must turn the page from ‘Green’ to read ‘Blue’. When these two paragraph-long scenes are not presented simultaneously, the temporal movement from day to night which can be seen across them is emphasised. In the UK edition, the emphasis is on visual simultaneity and the temporal movement within the sketch itself is ambiguous. As the last remaining sketch, a close-reading of ‘Blue & Green’ is most appropriate in this context.

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Fig. 3 – ‘Blue & Green’, *Monday or Tuesday* (Hogarth Press, 1921), pp. 66-67

5.6 ‘Blue & Green’

‘Blue & Green’ comprises two still-life scenes, with ‘Green’ and ‘Blue’ representing a scene each. Like ‘Monday or Tuesday’, the overall sketch has no identifiable narrator, and presents dissociated images which call on the reader to do the work of filling in a narrative. The scenes themselves are layered: ‘Green’ is both a domestic still-life recognisable through the references to the mantelpiece, and an incongruous tropical fantasy landscape

filled with parakeets, ‘green needles glittering in the sun’ (palm trees?), pools hovering in mid-air ‘above the desert sand’, camels and the ocean (*MT* 66). ‘Blue’, on the facing page, overlays the mantelpiece with a beach scene, and ends with a cathedral ‘cold, incense laden, faint blue with the veils of madonnas’ (*MT* 67). This last line is an image which, as Leena-Kreet Kore also notes, Woolf later re-uses in *Orlando*, describing the young protagonist’s poetic difficulties: “‘The sky is blue,’ he said, “the grass is green.” Looking up, he saw that on the contrary, the sky is like the veils which a thousand Madonnas have let fall from their hair’ (*O* 102).⁵² The image of the madonna also comes up in *The Waves*, where, as Emily Dalgarno points out, Bernard feels ‘the paintings of the madonna have the power to relieve him’ from the strain of looking.⁵³ The recycling of these images later on is, as discussed in the previous chapter, a key way in which *Monday or Tuesday* functions as a sketchbook: Kore argues that ‘[s]uch parallels of images, whether overt or of a more circuitous route through symbolic associations, confirm the endurance of a kind of aesthetic ideology throughout Virginia Woolf’s career’.⁵⁴ In ‘Blue & Green’ particularly, given that it is a study of colour and presents itself simply as a collection of images that have rich potential for reuse, the specificity of each small detail as it appears in the first UK edition is extremely important. Even the ampersand in the title rather than the word ‘and’ contributes to the sketchiness and simultaneity of the impressions made by each half of this sketch: as a typographical symbol it is able both to link and separate the words ‘Blue’ and ‘Green’ with minimal interference in their juxtaposition as two lexical signifiers. It suggests a casual, off-hand way of writing, but this sketch is in fact very intricately structured, carefully designed and highly editorial.

Nena Škrbić writes of ‘Blue & Green’ and ‘Monday or Tuesday’ as ‘unencumbered, momentary pictures’:

Both stories work off the fact that the short story is suited to explore the dialectic between that which is evasive and that which is materially permanent, in a frame that, intentionally, denies any possibility of completion.⁵⁵

Referring to them as ‘stories’ and to the appropriateness of this form for them, Škrbić arguably identifies here features of ‘Blue & Green’ and ‘Monday or Tuesday’ which are more fittingly descriptive of the sketch. The typography and ‘setting’ of ‘Blue & Green’ in

⁵² Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit’”, p. 34.

⁵³ Dalgarno, *VW and the Visible World*, p. 137. See also Beryl Schlossman, *Objects of Desire: The Madonnas of Modernism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1999).

⁵⁴ Kore, “‘The Nameless Spirit’”, p. 35.

⁵⁵ Škrbić, *Wild Outbursts of Freedom*, p. 13.

one way engraves it into *Monday or Tuesday*, making it dependent on its situation on facing pages for its effect of simultaneity; yet in another way, it becomes evanescent in the rapidity of its movements and its effect of comprising ‘momentary’ scenes. At the same time as their presentation is in one way instantaneous, ‘Blue’ can also be said to follow ‘Green’, since there is a movement towards darkness at the end of ‘Green’ which seems to introduce ‘Blue’: ‘It’s night; the needles drip blots of blue. The green’s out’ (*MT* 66). There is a central organising tension between movement and stasis which is played out between the two colours, as well as within the description of each one individually. Green is constantly pulled by gravity: ‘The pointed fingers of glass *hang downwards*. The light *slides down* the glass, and *drops* a pool of green. All day long the ten fingers of the lustre *drop* green upon the marble’ (*MT* 66; my italics). These first three sentences are simple ones in terms of structure, followed by five more complex grammatical constructions utilising dashes and semi-colons, before the final short sentence, ‘The green’s out’ (*MT* 66). The movements of green are slow, and come to ‘pool’ or ‘settle’ in certain places, and ‘at night the stars are set there unbroken’ (*MT* 66). The fourth sentence gives a static presentation of ‘things’: ‘The feathers of parakeets – their harsh cries – sharp blades of palm trees – green too; green needles glittering in the sun’ (*MT* 66). After the metonymy of these objects linked by dashes, there is a long sequence of phrases separated by semi-colons which mainly describe subjects *doing* something:

But the hard glass *drips* on to the marble; the pools *hover* above the desert sand; the camels *lurch*; the pools *settle* on the marble; rushes *edge* them; weeds *clog* them; here and there a white blossom; the frog *flops* over; at night the stars are set there unbroken. (*MT* 66; my italics)

Each of these actions combine both movement and stasis: ‘drips’ suggests a movement so slow that at points it can appear to be still; to ‘hover’ is to move yet to remain in the same place; the ‘lurch’ suggests a rapid movement followed by an abrupt stop; to ‘clog’ there needs to be an accumulation resulting in blockage and saturation; and the words ‘settle’ and ‘set’ define a movement becoming still. There follows three sentences which are cut in half by semi-colons:

Evening comes, and the shadow sweeps the green over the mantelpiece; the ruffled surface of the ocean. No ships come; the aimless waves sway beneath the empty sky. It’s night; the needles drip blots of blue. (*MT* 66)

This construction links the description of a given scene (‘the mantelpiece’) with the metaphor that it provokes (‘the ruffled surface of the ocean’), and the instigates the

transition into 'Blue', where the tension between movement and stasis continues. In contrast to 'Green', 'Blue' is entirely composed of simple sentences which describe movement in a less fragmented and more flowing way. It begins: 'The snub-nosed monster rises to the surface and spouts through his blunt nostrils two columns of water, which, fiery-white in the centre, spray off into a fringe of blue beads' (*MT 67*). The movement of the water, '[s]lushing' and 'dowsing', and the description of the monster as he 'sinks, heavy with water' (*MT 67*) are represented in the sentence-structure, which is both flowing in comparison to 'Green', and 'heavy' in its plodding accumulation. This is also evoked in the repetition of the word 'blunt' in conjunction with 'snub-nosed' and 'obtuse': 'Thrown upon the beach, he lies, blunt, obtuse, shedding dry blue scales' (*MT 67*). The movements of 'Blue' are of rising and falling: the monster 'rises' then 'sinks', then is '[t]hrown upon the beach', like the movements of the waves (*MT 67*). 'Strokes of blue line the black tarpaulin of his hide' and 'shedding dry blue scales [... whose] metallic blue *stains* the rusty iron on the beach' (*MT 67*; my italics) evoke painterly techniques and suggest the movement of lines and infusion. The tension between the temporal linearity of the written text and the static presentation of colour (which nevertheless can evoke movement) is thus central to 'Blue & Green', and necessarily remains unresolved.

5.7 'Perverse Plasticity'

'Blue & Green', together with 'Monday or Tuesday', plays an important part in structuring the collection as a whole: both sketches are formally unique enough to appear isolatable in the collection; they are both only two pages long, and both make use of typography in particular ways which make them depend to a large extent upon their physical, printed situation within the book. One mark which they share, and which is important in terms of printing the effects of the sketch, is the dash. The metonymic progression figured through this typographical symbol in 'Blue & Green' is also important to the structure and manifestation on the page of the title sketch, 'Monday or Tuesday'. It appears in conjunction with the brackets which foreground the phrase ') – for ever desiring – (' and appear to graphically lift it from the page. As in the case of Dick's insertion of a dash into the final line of 'A Haunted House', this punctuation mark, a simple line, can signify as both an engraved mark and an evanescent elision; it performs in the same way as careless hand-writing would in a written sketch, and Woolf also often leaves it hanging as a marker of breaking off unfinished. She uses dashes in this way in her diaries, and she also invokes the sketchiness of this signifier in *The Waves*. In an instance of her use of the sketch as a trope, in Bernard's plans to write a letter 'to the girl with whom he is passionately in love'

shows Woolf's awareness of the effects of the sketch and the ability to signify it with a dash:

I have just come in; I have flung down my hat and my stick; I am writing the first thing that comes into my head without troubling to put the paper straight. It is going to be a brilliant sketch which, she must think, was written without a pause, without an erasure. Look how unformed the letters are — there is a careless blot. All must be sacrificed to speed and carelessness. I will write a quick, running, small hand, exaggerating the down stroke of the “y” and crossing the “t” thus — with a dash. The date shall be only Tuesday, the 17th, and then a question mark. But also I must give her the impression that though he — for this is not myself — is writing in such an off-hand, such a slap-dash way, there is some subtle suggestion of intimacy and respect. I must allude to talks we have had together — bring back some remembered scene. But I must seem to her (this is very important) to be passing from thing to thing with the greatest ease in the world. (*W* 57-8)

Like Ford, Bernard performs an Impressionist self-awareness and ‘exaggeration’ of the communicative abilities of the marks on the page, harnessing the ability of such marks to communicate not only words, but states of composition. Writing in the present tense and again using the terminology of scene making, here Woolf links the sketch to the physical appearance of the written letter, and the ability in handwriting to suggest ‘speed and carelessness’. The form of the dash combines a grammatical function, signifying something left out or something joined together, with a graphic one – the line suggesting the hand of the writer, figuring the breaking off of a line of thought, or a nonchalant ‘crossing the “t”’.

After reading ‘The Mark on the Wall’, Roger Fry wrote to Woolf praising her as a writer who ‘uses language as a medium of art’ and ‘makes the very texture of the word have a meaning and a quality’. Woolf responded: ‘I’m not sure that a perverse plasticity doesn’t work itself out in words for me’ (*L* II 285). The dash is one marker in which this is evident, and encourages us to look closer at the physical printed manifestation of the sketches in which it can function in such a pictorial way. The order in which ‘Blue & Green’ and ‘Monday or Tuesday’ appear in *Monday or Tuesday* also lends itself to a perversely plastic interpretation: they split the collection evenly into thirds. The whole book is ninety-one pages, with ‘Monday or Tuesday’ rounding off the first third on pages thirty-six to -seven, and ‘Blue & Green’ introducing the final third on pages sixty-six and -seven. These sketches cut lines through the book as texts which are so poetically saturated in their language and punctuation that their narrative meaning almost escapes, asking the reader to supplement. Coupling their physical situation within the book with their use of language and rhythm, it is possible to read these sketches as poetic interludes, like those by

which Woolf structures *The Waves*. The re-printing of *Monday or Tuesday* in subsequent editions which do not retain the type-setting of the first UK edition obscure these structural relations between the texts and the plasticity of form in each individual text.

Like the simple line of the dash, the sketch manages somehow to be both ephemeral and concrete at the same time; it suggests something left out, something done hastily or something yet to come. Rather than erasing the signs of process and making a seamless, finished product, *Monday or Tuesday* displays the appearance of undeveloped spontaneity; yet is also very deliberately designed and crafted. The book itself is a surface upon which the tension between the evanescent and the engraved are imprinted, and it enacts Woolf's idea to 'keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work' (*D* II 312). Combining imaginative vision with delicacy of style identified by Mortimer in his review, the formal innovations of *Monday or Tuesday* that signal the end for the Edwardian novel are part of a revolutionary moment, assembling the fragments into the outlines of a modern fiction.

Conclusion

The Life of *Monday or Tuesday*: ‘or now, content with closeness?’

The Woolfs’ life in the early days of the Hogarth Press at Richmond had a pattern: Mondays were generally their day for visiting and shopping in London, and Tuesdays were Leonard’s day for political meetings. In one instance, Virginia uses Tuesday to domestically handle Press material while Leonard is gone:

Monday, was as usual a day for London & tea at the Club. [...] Tuesday was a day when I stayed at home & folded & stapled paper. [...] L. makes Tuesday a kind of receptacle for shooting meetings into. (16 July 1918; *D I* 168)

The waste-paper basket analogy for Leonard’s political meetings is also suggested in the activities of Monday 12 November 1917, a day which particularly enacts the essence of *Monday or Tuesday* – comprising trivial errands; recovering the misplaced, forgotten detritus of social paraphernalia; a visit to Fry’s Omega workshop; an uneasy discussion of art; and an encounter with a piece of modern fiction:

Today we’ve been to London, as usually happens on a Monday. We went to the Omega, & as we were looking round us, in came Roger, which embarrassed me a little, partly because of his own pictures, & also because I don’t like talking about art in front of him [...] Then we went to Gordon Sqre to fetch my umbrella, 2 pictures, & a hair binder, all left there, & who should open the door but Clive? [...] We left, however, & I went to Mudie’s, & got The Leading Note. (*D I* 75)

The Leading Note (1917) by Rosalind Murray is a title which resonates with the suggestive and the unfinished qualities of the sketch: it refers to a musical term in which the ‘leading note’, defined by Emma Sutton, is ‘the seventh note of the scale [...] which is dissonant and has to be ‘resolved’ into the tonic’.¹ In Murray’s novel, ‘the protagonist has composed a work ending on the leading note’.² The protagonist of Murray’s novel ‘defends her defiance of ‘proper musical regulations’ and describes the ‘unfinished sound’ as ‘always asking something’, ‘calling for [...] something that doesn’t come’.³ Sutton relates this to Woolf’s use of the name ‘Septimus’ in *Mrs Dalloway*, suggesting the unresolved, inharmonious yearning of the seventh note, and points out that ‘[t]he first line of Murray’s novel – “It was the afternoon of a June day” – and its Italian characters also suggest it is a

¹ Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2013), p. 97.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

relevant intertext for *Mrs Dalloway*'.⁴ Woolf's diary entry while writing the conclusion of *Mrs Dalloway*, 'ending on three notes, at different stages of the staircase, each saying something to sum up Clarissa' (*D* II 312), is poignant in this regard, juxtaposed as it is with Woolf's desire to 'keep the quality of the sketch in the finished and composed work'.

While also reaching for a thesis that is 'finished and composed' by including this designated 'Conclusion', if the foregoing discussion had justified any mode of composition, expression or study, it would be the possibility of proceeding suggestively, while simultaneously saturating the fragment cut out of time as a scene of reading and writing. At many points, I am aware of having ended my discussion of *Monday or Tuesday* on a note of irresolution. Having set the original publication context and the object of the book itself as the dominant note on which to play a variation on its genre – the three tonic notes being scenes, characters and politics – the provisionality of the sketch has suggested a depth of possibility to be explored via this collection, as a book and as a moment in Woolf's oeuvre. Taking the sketch as a unifying trope, and establishing it as one which is important to Woolf's compositional methods as well as her mode of shaping aesthetic and political concerns, this thesis lays the architectural plan for reading *Monday or Tuesday* as a set of texts that are not-yet stories; that provide material for Woolf's later works; and that are intensely aware and performative of their own process of composition. At the same time as they display these marks in a concrete way – a way which nevertheless might also escape notice as accidental or besides the point – the evanescent images that they release are also highly crafted and heavily saturated with poetic and political resonance. The sketch requires a mode of engagement on the part of the reader or viewer that actively contributes interpretation and completion of the narrative – an imaginative projection of what this object might become, or a retrospective activation of what it has had the potential to be. Yet it also leaves open multiple avenues of approach, and arrival at a final vision is always deferred.

⁴ Ibid. p. 109, n. 34.

Appendix A: Sketches in the Library of Virginia and Leonard Woolf

Extracted and collated from Julia King and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic (eds), *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalogue* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 2003). Available at:

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