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喀什米爾披肩的縐摺：
吳爾芙《燈塔行》中的帝國現代性與非人稱美學

The Fold of Kashmir Shawl:
Imperial Modernity and Impersonal Aesthetics
in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*

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本論文係謝志謙君（R02122013）在國立臺灣大學外國語文學系完成之碩士學位論文，於民國 104 年 7 月 30 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明

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李紀舍

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Before it took shape as an organized thesis, my study on Woolf began as early as in my first encounter with *Mrs. Dalloway*, the first book that showed me what literature could be as an undergraduate. So saying goodbye to something that I had been devoted to for such a long time is hard. But at this moment of bitter and sweet nothing matters more than saying "thank you" to those who helped me complete this thesis in a number of ways on this long journey. To them I dedicate nothing but this piece of acknowledgement with my deepest appreciation.

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"What is the meaning of life?"—a simple question that took Woolf's lifetime to pursue in her writing. If there is no "great revelation," as she puts in *To the Lighthouse*, but "little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark," then for me, it is in the encounters with these people that lies the meaning of life.

論文摘要

就現代主義「內在轉向」的批評典範而言，吳爾芙通常被視為探討意識流動與心理深度的代表作家，對此本論文提出異議，援引近期重心從語言轉向物質的「新物質主義」論述，透過閱讀吳爾芙現代主義的代表著作《燈塔行》，試圖重新思考何謂吳爾芙筆下的「生命」。本文聚焦於小說中拉姆齊夫人的喀什米爾披肩，過往對此物件的詮釋通常只停留在修辭的層次，本文透過以物為中心的批評角度，強調披肩本身不可化約的物質能動性，試問此種詮釋策略如何有別於傳統「隱喻式」的閱讀。

相較於後結構理論的語言轉向或文化轉向，新物質主義關注的是物質本身的能動性，而法國當代哲學家德勒茲強調物質流變的在己差異哲學正是此新興論述的啟發之一。第一章首先勾勒目前學界對吳爾芙的詮釋，並爬梳新物質主義論述的發展現況。為了開展小說中披肩本身的物質性與織品想像，本章節將闡述德勒茲哲學中的核心操作概念「巴洛克縐摺」，作為本文「開摺」、「合摺」、「重摺」的主要架構，並帶入另外兩組對照概念：形式與形勢、克分子與分子，分別提出開摺與合摺喀什米爾披肩的閱讀方法。

第一種「克分子形式」的閱讀將在第二章以「開摺歷史」的方式進行，依循以物為中心的「轉喻式」批評，本文將小說中的披肩視為一個歷史物件，並在真正進入小說的意義結構之前，追溯喀什米爾披肩之製作、流通與消費的帝國主義物質史。以此歷史檔案重新審視小說中的披肩，本文質疑任何拒絕承認此帝國主義歷史的形式主義閱讀，並發現喀什米爾披肩在東方主義與帝國現代性的論述之間形成一個悖論，體現現代主義美學中不得不面對的內在矛盾。

第二種「分子形勢」的閱讀在第三章中從開摺歷史轉而「合摺時間」，以便處理此悖論帶來的問題。在此披肩既不是隱喻或是轉喻，而是根本地從修辭的意義邏輯中逃逸，成為在差異微分關係中合摺非人稱時間的「物質縐摺」。作為非人稱回憶的「事件」，披肩的物質縐摺透過坎姆的流變孩童，表現童年的「情動力」。本文以此將美學重新理解為感受學，並主張莉莉最後畫作的基進性，不在於對布盧姆茨伯里美學理論的呼應，也不在其反再現式的帝國主義批判，而是如同吳爾芙的小說書寫，在於一種以情動體的差異微分，取代主客體差異區分的「非人稱美學—感受學」。

將披肩的物質縐摺重摺回生命之共的織品當中，本文強調非人稱美學的特異性，並以吳爾芙對於文學本身的信念作結。如同吳爾芙所言：「文學不是任何人的私有地，

而是所有人的共享之地」。如果吳爾芙的非人稱書寫體現了一種美學的政治，那麼此美學政治不在他方，就在吳爾芙所謂的「生命」本身。

關鍵字：縐摺、喀什米爾披肩、帝國現代性、非人稱美學、新物質主義、德勒茲、吳爾芙、《燈塔行》

Abstract

Within the paradigm of modernist "inward turn," Virginia Woolf has often been regarded as a writer of consciousness and psychological depths par excellence. The overarching aim of this thesis is to contest this common understanding of Woolf and to reconsider Woolf's famous plea to "look within life." Following a renewed critical interest in issues of materiality evidenced by recent discourses called "new materialisms," this thesis zeroes in on Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in Virginia Woolf's high modernist novel *To the Lighthouse* to engage with the irreducible vibrant materiality in her writing. While Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl has been recognized as an essential trope in the novel, I ask how a thing-centered reading that attends to its materiality can expand and complicate a traditional metaphorical interpretation of the shawl.

As a counteraction against the linguistic turn or the cultural turn in poststructuralist theory, new materialisms draw attention to the agential forces of the matter itself. One of the major inspirations of this material turn is Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of difference-in-itself that foregrounds the continuous modulation of material forces. To illuminate the materiality of the shawl and its textile imagination, after delineating the development of Woolf studies and new materialisms, Chapter One draws on Deleuze's operative concept of the Baroque fold as an organizing refrain of folding, unfolding, and refolding throughout this thesis. Bringing the Deleuzian fold into play with other two conceptual pairs of form and force, molar and molecular, I formulate two different kinds of approaches to the flowing materiality of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl.

Chapter Two performs what I call a molar-form reading that aims to unfold the history of Kashmir shawl. Building upon a thing-centered literary criticism that foregrounds the instability of metonymy and the concrete materiality of novelistic objects, this chapter takes the shawl literally as a historical object and attempts to unfold its imperialist history of production, circulation and consumption. In this way I argue that any formalist reading that disavows this imperialist history is questionable. Delving into the historical archive before returning to the textual figuration of the novel, I further suggest that a paradox of Kashmir shawl can be located between the discourses of Orientalism and the British imperial modernity, entailing an inner conflict at the heart of modernist aesthetics.

To deal with this paradox of Kashmir shawl, Chapter Three as a molecular-force reading does not take this novelistic shawl as a metaphor, nor a metonymy, but a "matter-fold" that implicates the forces of impersonal durée in a differential relation. Taking the shawl as a matter-fold, this chapter suggests how it becomes an "event" of impersonal Memory and reveals the affect of childhood in Cam's "becoming-child." By reconsidering the questions of aesthetics in terms of affectivity and sensate perception, I argue that the radicality of Lily's vision at the end does not lie in its correspondence to the Bloomsbury aesthetics, nor in its anti-representational critique of imperialism, but in an "aesthetics of impersonality" that replaces the molar distinction between subject and object with a molecular differentiation between "bodies of affectivity," as in Woolf's impersonal art of fiction.

By refolding the matter-fold of cashmere shawl into the fabric of common life, this thesis affirms the singularity of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics and evokes her conviction in

literature as conclusion. As Woolf asserts, “Literature is no one’s private ground; literature is common ground.” If Woolf’s writing embodies a “politics of aesthetics,” then it does not lie elsewhere but in this fabric of the essential thing that Woolf calls “life.”

Keywords: fold, Kashmir shawl, imperial modernity, impersonal aesthetics, new materialisms, Gilles Deleuze, Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

List of Abbreviations

References to the works by Woolf are given in the text using the following abbreviations.

AROO	*A Room of Own's Own.* Ed. Morag Shiach. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
D	*The Diary of Virginia Woolf.* 5 vols.: *D1*, *D2*, *D3*, *D4*, *D5*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNellie. New York: Harcourt, 1977-84.
E	*The Essays of Virginia Woolf.* 6 vols.: *E1*, *E2*, *E3*, *E4*, *E5*, *E6*. Ed. Andrew McNeillie (vols. 1-4) and Stuart N. Clarke (vols. 5-6). London: Hogarth, 1986-2011.
L	*The Letters of Virgina Woolf.* 6 Vols.: *L1*, *L2*, *L3*, *L4*, *L5*, *L6*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. 6 vols. NY: Harcourt, 1975-80.
M	*The Moment and Other Essays.* Ed. Leonard Woolf. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1948.
MOB	*Moments of Being.* Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1985.
O	*Orlando.* Ed. Rachel Bowlby. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
TTL	*To the Lighthouse*. Ed. David Bradshaw. New York: Oxford UP, 2006.
TW	*The Waves*. Ed. David Bradshaw. New York: Oxford UP, 2015.

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Chapter One

Matter on the Move: Molar Form and Molecular Force

"On or about December 1910, human character changed," Virginia Woolf famously declares and identifies this somewhat arbitrary date in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," one of the seminal manifestoes of modern novel in English literary history.[1] Originally a response to Arnold Bennett's criticism of Woolf's newly published novel *Jacob's Room*, this piece, along with her 1925 essay "Modern Fiction," has often been taken as a milestone of modernist psychological turn, marking a radical break with nineteenth-century realism. In these two essays Woolf questions the nature of reality and character in fiction first by distinguishing two camps of writers, the Edwardian "materialist" novelists—H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, and John Galsworthy—and her more "spiritual" Georgian contemporaries, including E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, Lytton Strachey, James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. Woolf designates those Edwardian novelists as "materialist," precisely because, despite their established achievements, they are only concerned with the body rather than the spirit, with the house property rather than the people living inside, in other words, with the external details rather than the true nature of life. Rejecting this convention of writing and codes of manners—the "powerful and unscrupulous tyranny" of plot and characterization (*E4* 160)—Woolf describes the common task of her Georgian contemporaries as a relentless attempt to capture Mrs. Brown with her "unlimited capacity and infinite variety" (*E3* 436), the "essential thing" as Woolf calls it in "Modern Fiction." Hence begins Woolf's renowned appeal for this "essential thing," the life itself—"Looking within and life, it seems, is very far

1. First appeared in the New York Evening Post in 1923, this essay was originally a response to Arnold Bennett's criticism of Woolf's newly published novel *Jacob's Room*. The text generally referred to today was first published in *Criterion* in 1924 under the title "Character in Fiction," which evolved from a paper Woolf read to the Cambridge Heretics Society and was reissued as a pamphlet *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* by the Hogarth Press in the same year. For a detailed publishing history of this essay, see Samuel Hynes, "The Whole Contention between Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1972).

from being 'like this'"—and her remarkable formulation: "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (*E4* 160).

Woolf's firm belief in Mrs. Brown, the life itself and her proposal to "record the atoms as they fall upon the mind" (*E4* 161) contribute to what Erich Kahler describes as the "inward turn" of narrative, a shift away from an exhaustive description of external realities to an extensive probe into psychological depths. As popularized by Woolf's request to "look within" and subsequent critical appraisals in the mid-twentieth century, the so-called modernist inward turn, along with its outside-inside pattern, has become one of the defining characteristics of literary modernism as a literary-historical given and a critical truism.[2] One of the earliest observations of psychological turn can be further traced back to Georg Lukács's evaluation of the superficial "description" of individual consciousness in naturalism and the proportional "narration" of social life in nineteenth-century classical realism.[3] In fact, what is behind such an overarching understanding of modernism as a psychological turn is the common presumption of cognition as mental representation. In a Cartesian framework that assumes a dichotomy between mind and body, the process of cognition is comprehended as merely an activity of mind and consciousness in a sandwich model of internal-external polarity. But as recent studies on the cognitive process have revised, cognition is actually firmly anchored and imbricated with our enactment in local environments, and thus our perceiving and acting are inseparable. In terms of literary studies, drawing on the postcognitivist theory of enactivism and accounts of extended mind, David Herman argues that, instead of an inward turn, modernist narratives foreground a dynamic interplay between agents and their environments, and present the cognitive process as a distributional flow of

2. Robert Humphrey's *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (1954) and Leon Edel's *The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950* (1955) can be arguably the representative studies of those earliest critical appraisals that contribute to this persisting motif. See also Malcom Bradbury and James McFarlane, *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (1978), for registering a modernist radical break with realism.
3. See Georg Lukács, "Narrate or Describe?" in *Writer and Critic and Other Essays* (1971 [1936]).

mind interwoven with worldly circumstances. As Herman's telling analysis of *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests, although Woolf's essays endorse this truism of modernism as a turn from the reality outside to the consciousness inside, her characters do not follow this Cartesian geography of mind but act as agents navigating a living world where cognition and perception are interwoven with the possibilities of actions and interactions with the surroundings.

Prior to Herman's project of "re-minding modernism," several critics recently have attempted to reconsider the narrative of modernist break with the past and its relationship with the nineteenth-century realism.[4] Generally speaking, instead of a cursory dismissal of outmoded realism, these critics tend to be more reserved and aim to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the fundamental change of human character that Woolf remarks. In a similar vein, Woolf scholars have contributed to a wealth of comprehensive revaluations of Woolf's engagement with the social and political issues of her day. One of the pioneering studies in this direction is Alex Zwerdling's 1986 book, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, in which he significantly shifts the critical attention from Woolf's vision of psychological depth to her profound interest in the external reality and the contemporary social environments. Following this critical re-evaluation, a number of important revisionary studies thus fundamentally reshaped the vistas of Woolf criticism.[5] In dialogue with those significant contributions, Pam Morris in her recent study on Woolf and realism qualifies the neat opposition Woolf posits between materialists and spiritualist.[6] By drawing attention to Woolf's wariness of solipsistic

4. See, for instance, Peter Brooks, *Realist Vision* (2005); Jesse Matz, *The Modern Novel: A Short Introduction* (2006); Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (2007); Matthew Beaumont, ed., *Adventures in Realism* (2007); Lisi Schoenbach, *Pragmatic Modernism* (2011). In a recent essay Melanie Conroy suggests that those recent critics of modernism, including Matz, Lewis, and Schoenbach, similarly regard the realist novel as "laying the ground for modernism, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome" (2014).

5. See, for instance, Susan Squier, *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (1985), Janis M. Paul, *The Victorian Heritage of Virginia Woolf: The External World in her Novels* (1987), Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (2000); Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (2003), Michael Whitworth, *Virginia Woolf* (2005), and David Bradshaw's studies on Woolf in general. A recent book, *Virginia Woolf and December 1910: Studies in Rhetoric and Context* (2014), edited by Makiko Minow-Pinkney, is a project to historicize Woolf's famous declaration of 1910.

6. For the relationship between Woolf and realism, see also Susan Dick, "Literary Realism in *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*" (2000) and Rachel Bowlby, "Untold Stories in Mrs Dalloway" (2011).

subjective interiority and of the totalization of metaphoric abstraction, Morris argues that Woolf's writing actually adheres to a realist materialism that is predicated upon the existence of an objective reality with which mind can interact and have solid but fallible knowledge. Drawing on Roman Jakobson's model of metaphor and metonymy and Jacque Derrida's critique of metaphor, Morris demonstrates that instead of an escape to ideal abstraction, Woolf's novelistic world is firmly grounded in an objective reality and structured by a metonymic continuity, as evidenced by Woolf's preference for free indirect discourse over interior monologue or stream of consciousness. In this sense, despite Woolf's passionate plea to look within life, she never stays within the subjective interiority or loses sight of the concrete material world. In Woolf's metonymic realism there exists a continuity between outwardness and inwardness.

Building upon these revisionary works of re-historicizing and re-politicizing Woolf, this thesis similarly aims to draw attention to Woolf's keen observation of the real world so as to call into question the outside-inside pattern as a literary-historical given. But while the significance of these landmark studies primarily lies in their re-contextualization of Woolf, in this thesis, instead of looking directly into Woolf's relationship with her time, I would like to approach Woolf's attentiveness to the material world by focusing on one particular object in her novel, Mrs. Ramsay's green cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse*, a mnemonic object of her presence that functions as a core literary trope in the novel. In other words, I am not so much interested in the relationship between her writing and its historical contexts (e.g., how *To the Lighthouse* criticizes the ideology of the Victorian domestic politics) as in the material object itself (in this case, Mrs. Ramsay's shawl). To delve into the material significance of the shawl itself, I would like to draw on thing-centered critical discourses and ask: what can we learn by looking directly at the object first, rather than immediately taking it as a literary trope? What is the material significance of her shawl if we bring into play the "object culture"

of cashmere shawl itself? What is the "material unconscious" of cashmere shawl that is subliminally present in the novel?

In *The Material Unconscious* Bill Brown develops a thing-centered literary criticism that aims to recover the concrete material cultures explicitly or implicitly embedded within the margins of literary texts. With the term "material unconscious," he means those disparate, fragmented or contradictory images of material objects lying hidden in the repository of literary texts.[7] Drawing attention to the "history that lingers within neglected images, institutions, and objects" (5), Brown retrieves these material objects and images as "historical texts" rather than "historical contexts" and asks how this alternative micro-historical narrative of idiosyncratic details can complicate those master narratives of culture logic (e.g., consumer culture, capitalist modernity, US imperialism). In other words, instead of taking any material detail in literary texts merely as something that can explain or solve the contradiction of the larger historical contexts (i.e., New Historicism), Brown takes them literally as an index that registers a physical or material connection with social reality, asking how material culture impresses itself on literary imagination and how inanimate objects essentially constitute human beings and vice versa.[8] Following Brown's call for a more thing-centered inquiry, Elaine Freedgood draws attention to the unpredictability of metonymy and further develops a "strong metonymic reading" that traces the ideas in things that have

7. Despite the associations with psychoanalysis or Fredric Jameson's "political unconscious," the term "material unconscious" is more of an "archival/archaeologist" approach to literature that can help us understand "the unconscious as material history and history as the unconscious, as the necessarily repressed that can be rendered visible in sites of contradiction or incomplete elision" (*The Material Unconscious* 5)

8. In "The Secret Life of Things" Brown deploys an axiomatic distinction between "object" and "thing" to distinguish the difference between his thing-centered inquiry from the interdisciplinary "material culture studies" represented by Arjun Appadurai's significant collection *The Social Life of Things*, a distinction that lies at the center of his "thing theory." According to Brown, if the "material culture studies" concerns primarily either the object's use value, exchange value or sign value—"follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their form, their uses, and their trajectories" (Appadurai 5)—their analysis never produces the "thingness" of things but only objects. Instead, for Brown the "thingness" of things depends on "a fetishistic overvaluation or misappropriation," or what he calls its "misuse value." As he elaborates in "Thing Theory," we confront the thingness of things only when an object stops working for us, when the usual subject-object relationship is interrupted. As an "object," a window serves as a transparent opening for us to look through, but when it gets dirty or broken, it asserts itself as a "thing" with its palpable qualities of filthiness and glassiness. As Brown affirms, "[t]hings lie beyond the grid of intelligibility the way mere things lie outside the grid of mussel exhibition, outside the order of objects" ("Thing Theory" 5).

somehow been neglected by critics and common reader alike. Building upon this line of thing-centered thinking elaborated by Brown and Freedgood, in my next chapter I would take Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl literally as a material object, an index, rather than a literary trope, and try to trace its material history of production, consumption, and circulation, before returning to the textual figuration of the novel. By doing so, I hope my thing-centered reading of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl can bring to light the interpenetration of the corporeal imagination of Kashmir shawl and the literary imagination of the shawl in *To the Lighthouse*.

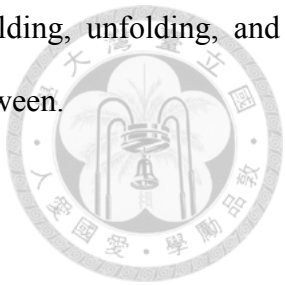
Indeed, as Woolf has recognized, the material base is indispensible for the production of literature. In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf famously compares imaginative work to "a spider's web" that is "lightly" attached to the corners of life. For Woolf imaginative work is not some fictitious fantasies produced from our brains nor some pebbles dropped to the ground. As Woolf asserts, "these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in" (*AROO* 53). However, if Woolf always keeps the material things and the real world in sight, how should we make of her criticism of those materialists who pay meticulous attention to the body, to the house property, to those material details more than anyone else? If Woolf is fully aware of the danger of abstraction and totalization in the metaphoric use of language, as Morris keenly observes, can we take for granted the presence of material objects in Woolf's writing? How do we approach the materiality that remains irreducible in her writing, like the stroke of the Lighthouse that rends asunder the rock and loosens the fold of the shawl in the section "Time Passes" in *To the Lighthouse*? If Woolf does not merely look at the world but look at it from a certain perspective, is it possible that those material things that matter in Woolf's writing are actually vaster than "money and a room of one's own," as Derek Ryan suggests?[9] Hence another

9. Derek Ryan, the editor's introduction to *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 85 (2014).

question that I would like to ask in this thesis: how Woolf's writing re-figures the historical fold of the shawl and turns it into a flowing material interwoven with other material flows in the novel?

As we can see, a thing-centered reading takes any novelistic object literally as a historical object, but in order to further explore the irreducible, entangled materiality, like the fold of the shawl, the stroke of the Lighthouse, or the murmuring of the sea in *To the Lighthouse*, I would like to draw on recent critical discourses called "new materialisms" that have influenced various disciplines in humanities. As a reaction against the constructivism of postmodernist or poststructuralist theory, new materialisms call attention to the agential power of matter itself and provide an alternative approach to the issues of materiality. In what follows, I would first delineate the development of new materialisms, beginning with the non-linguistic philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and some dominant lines of thinking that have been consolidated under "new materialisms" as an umbrella term. But as I will suggest in next section, within the discourses of new materialisms there is a clash between the "object-oriented ontology" and the post-Deleuzian ontology of relationality. This conflict is resulted from a dispute over whether we can think of a reality independent of human thoughts and language. Taking issue with object-oriented theorists insistence on the inaccessible reality of objects, I will follow Deleuze and Guattari's notion of expressive materiality as the ontological difference-in-itself and then turn to Deleuze's operative concept of the Baroque fold to reveal the singularity and the flowing materiality of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse*. Remapping my two guiding questions—how material culture inscribes itself within the text and, conversely, how the literary imagination reworks the concrete materiality of our corporeal imagination—onto what I call a molar-form reading and a molecular-force one, at the end of this chapter I suggest that Woolf's "realism," if we can still use this over-burden term, does not consist in her description of the world outside,

nor in her probe into the psychological depths inside but in her folding, unfolding, and refolding of the matter-fold of life that does not lie anywhere but in-between.



New Materialisms

In her essay "Woolf and 'Theory,'" Claire Colebrook, one dominant voice from the discourses of new materialisms, succinctly summarizes the development of "theory" and its impacts on the studies of literature. According to Colebrook, one of the dominant ways of understanding the French poststructuralist theory is to regard it as a textual valorization of certain modernist style, particularly of James Joyce, in terms of the oedipal structure and the limits of language. For Colebrook this prevailing discourse of poststructuralism treats language as a mediating system through which a speaking subject is structured and emerged. In this sense literature can only work with the already existing signs within an established framework whose critical force can only be located at the liminal space of linguistic structure at best. Unsatisfied with this completely textualized world, she draws attention to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari as an alternative line of thinking that can crack open this oedipal system of signs and affirms the power of language to generate ontological differences.[10] As Colebrook emphasizes, with their constant references to Woolf, for Deleuze and Guattari literature is not about communication, interpretation or representation. Instead of the Saussurean dichotomy of signifier and signified, it is a means of intuiting impersonal forces and intensities and of capturing those infinitesimal pre-individual affects

10. Although it is useful in my case to follow Colebrook's distinction between the linguistic and the non-linguistic in poststructuralist theory to introduce the impacts of Deleuze on the rise of new materialisms, these two similar but essentially divergent trajectories (represented respectively by Derrida and Deleuze) should be understood more in terms of their different strategies for thinking similar philosophical problematics, see Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought" in Patton and Protevi, eds., (2003), in which he takes his cue from Giorgio Agamben's assessment of these two philosophical trajectories in contemporary French philosophy. For another comparison between the two, see also Pheng Cheah, "Non-Dialectical Materialism" in Coole and Frost, eds., (2010), in which Cheah suggests that both Derrida and Deleuze's thinking entail a nondialectical materialism that undoes the concept of negation fundamental in the entire tradition of Marxist philosophy. But for Cheah there are some crucial differences between the two thinkers as well.

and percepts so that readers enter a counter-actualizing process of becoming in various encounters with non-linguistic signs of literature.[11] In this way, we no longer approach the material world in literature as a mediated or represented textual reality but turn it into a "matter of expression" that gestures towards a limitless potential for transformation in a "form of expression."

Indeed, the divergence between Deleuze and other poststructuralist theorists has made Deleuze, including his co-authored works with Guattari, one of the pioneers in the recent development of the critical discourses called "new materialisms." With a renewed interest in issues of materiality, recent discourses consolidated under the rubric of "new materialism" can be considered as a counteraction to the constructivism of cultural turn or linguistic turn, initiated by the poststructuralist critical theory. Taking issue with the predominantly discursive approaches in cultural politics—i.e. the bracketing of the referent, the textualization of the world, etc.—new materialists call for a radical reconceptualization of the irreducible matter itself with an aim to invigorate the exhausted critical forces of poststructuralist theory and to question the implicit anthropocentrism in the entire Western intellectual history.[12] Shifting attention from the human world to the physicality and materiality of things, exponents of new materialisms not only challenge the fictitious autonomy of Cartesian subjectivity but also revise our common presumption of matter as dead, solid, invariable entity, as understood in the Newtonian physics. As Diana Coole and

11. For Deleuze the concept of "sign" should be understood in terms of his philosophy of sensation, intensity and differential relation. In *Proust and Sign* Deleuze refers to Plato's distinction between two kinds of sensations: those that leave the mind inactive or those that force us to think. While the former are objects of recognition, it is the latter that constitute what Deleuze calls the "*encountered* signs." It is only in the confrontation with those violent signs that the "faculties enter into a "transcendent exercise, in which each confronts and joins its own limit: the sensibility that apprehends the sign; the soul, the memory, that interprets it; the mind that is forced to conceive essence" (*Proust and Sign* 101). In his reading of Proust Deleuze develops a kind of "pedagogy of the sense" as his philosophy of education. In fact, this understanding of sign as something violent that compels us to think corresponds to Deleuze's "taxonomy" of images and signs in his two-volume studies of film, in which he follows Henri Bergson's philosophy of time and appropriates Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, instead of Saussure's semiology to develop philosophical concepts proper to cinema. See *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* (1986) and *Cinema II: The Time-Image* (1989).

12. On the troubling consequences of the bracketing of the referent in poststructuralist theory, see Rey Chow, "The Interruption of Referentiality; or Poststructuralism's Outside" (2006).

Samantha Frost suggest in their introduction to the first major collection in this fledging field, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, an overarching characteristic shared by different thematics of this critical reorientation is their "insistence on describing active processes of materialization of which embodied humans are an integral part, rather than the monotonous repetitions of dead matter from which human subjects are apart" (8). In other words, calling for recognition of the agential capacities of matter itself, the project of new materialisms is not to reverse the entrenched binarism and divest human beings of any agency. Instead, sharing an "antipathy toward oppositional ways of thinking" (8), new materialist discourses ask us to entertain new possibilities of forming creative human-nonhuman assemblages, rather than maintaining a rigid molar relationship between subject and object, organic and inorganic, nature and culture.

While proponents of new materialisms are characterized by a common effort to think beyond the poststructuralist critical theory, in fact, this burgeoning field of inquiry can hardly be conceived as a unified branch of theoretical investigation, since it draws on diverse sources and reaches into various disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, geography, anthropology, science/technology studies, biopolitics, and literary studies. The umbrella term of new materialisms can encompass, for instance, the recent philosophical discourses of "speculative realism" that challenge what Quentin Meillasoux has termed the "correlationism"—the idea that we cannot think of a reality independent of human thought and language—(Meillasoux, Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman),[13] the related "object-oriented ontology" (OOO) that rejects the privileging of human subjectivity (Harman, Ian Bogost, Levi Bryant, Timothy Morton),[14] the actor-network theory (ANT) proposed by Bruno Latour, a new wave of materialist feminism that affirms the agency of

13. For an overview of the movement of speculative realism, see the final chapter of Herman's *The Quadruple Object* (2011).
14. For the difference between those theorists categorized as OOO, see Tom Sparrow's *The End of Phenomenology: Metaphysics and the New Realism*, (2014), esp. Ch. 4 and 5.

bodies and nature (Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, Claire Colebrook, Stacy Alaimo)[15], Bill Brown's "thing theory" that is aligned with other more materialist literary studies (Elaine Freedgood, Isobel Armstrong, Cynthia Wall, Peter Schwenger),[16] and also the Deleuze-inspired interdisciplinary materialisms ranging from science studies, media studies, feminism to political theory (Isabelle Stengers, Manuel DeLanda, Brian Massumi, Braidotti, Grosz, Colebrook, Jane Bennett).[17] While those diverse critical inquiries could be taken as irreconcilable and antagonistic as possible (Harman, for instance, has argued against the post-Deleuzian relational ontologies and philosophy of immanence shared by many theorists listed here), it is also difficult to find a common position even for those theorists grouped together (the extent to which correlationism can be challenged, for instance, varies even among the original group of speculative realism; for Herman Meillassoux himself actually turns out to accept the correlationist argument).[18]

Despite some apparent differences of theoretical emphases, it can be easily found that several thinkers do have a similar stance in terms of their take on materialism and realism. But one fundamental clash can be discerned here is the divide between Herman's non-relational ontology of individual "objects" and the post-Deleuzian ontology of relationality. For Herman, following the Heideggerian insight of the interplay between the withdrawal and the manifestation of objects, an object is "anything that has a unified reality that is autonomous from its wider context and also from its own pieces" (*Quadruple Object* 116)

15. See the collection *Material Feminisms*, edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (2009). Contributions to this book include essays by Haraway, Barad, Grosz, Colebrook, etc.
16. For other recent works of literary criticism influenced by new materialisms, see Brown, "The Matter of Materialism: Literary Mediations" in *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn*, edited by Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (2010).
17. Although it is impossible to cover all the works that can be related to new materialisms as a umbrella term, Maurizia Boscagli in *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism* (2014) provides a selection of recent works in new materiality studies, see her introduction. Besides the collection by Coole and Frost, see also *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, edited by Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin (2012).
18. On this point, see Herman's "The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism" (2012). For a critical debate and conversation among the group of speculative realism, see the collection *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, edited by Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman (2011).

and even when it appears to us, its "allure" always "alludes to entities as they are, quite apart from any relations with or effects upon other entities in the world" ("The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer" 187). As such, our human relationship with the world is merely one case among others; the reality of object is inaccessible to us and what we can perceive is only its "allusion." But while Herman and other speculative realist seem to question the contact between human and the world, claiming for a non-correlationist reality independent of any human agency, Bennett, in fact, in her response to Herman's and Morton's essays published in *New Literary History,* has defended Deleuze and Guttari's relational ontology and suggested that these two seemingly incompatible perspectives of objects and relations might be merely different periodic critical attention:

> But perhaps there is no need to choose between objects or their relations. Since everyday, earthly experience routinely identifies some effects as coming from individual objects and some from larger systems (or, better put, from individuations within material configurations and from the complex assemblages in which they participate), why not aim for a theory that toggles between both kinds or magnitudes of "unit"? One would then understand "objects" to be those swirls of matter, energy, and incipience that hold themselves together long enough to vie with the strivings of other objects, including the indeterminate momentum of the throbbing whole. The project, then, would be to make both objects and relations the periodic focus of theoretical attention, even if it is impossible to articulate fully the "vague" or "vagabond" essence of any system or any things, and even if it is impossible to give equal attention to both at once. ("Systems and Things" 227)

Juxtaposing Herman's object-objected ontology with Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical notions of "assemblage" or "plane of consistency," Bennett insists that despite their emphasis

on the creative assemblages, Deleuze and Guattari actually take many specific objects as their points of departure for lines of becoming, remarking that she finds "nothing in their approach inconsistent with the object-oriented philosopher's claim that things harbor a differential between their inside and outside or an irreducible moment of (withdrawn-from-view) interiority" (227).

Bennett's endorsement of the post-Deleuzian ontology of relationality is evident in her own work *Vibrant Matters: A Political Ecology of Things*. As both a philosophical treatise and a political project, this book aims to reconsider the common idea of matter as passive, inert stuff with a guiding question: "How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies" (viii)? To think through this question, Bennett, invoking a minor lineage of philosophical thought, including Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Darwin, Deleuze, among others, proposes a "vital materialism" with an ontological redefinition of matter. Instead of an inert or passive substance with a definite outline, as conceived in the Cartesian-Newtonian conceptualization of matter, new materiality is taken by Bennett as flows of vibrant forces, fluxes of agential capacities, or what she calls "thing power," in a form of post-Spinozian vitalism. In recognition of the self-creative agency of matter, she develops Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "assemblage" and further emphasizes when the thing power is manifested, the locus of agency does not lie so much in any individual entities as in the heterogeneous assemblages composed of all the affected "bodies" together. With the notion of assemblages, Bennett replaces the traditional concept of agency with what she terms "distributed agency" to stress the fact that it is impossible to single out any individual agent without considering the network or assemblages in which it is involved.

In fact, this renewed critical attention on the creative potential of matter itself has made its entrance in Woolf studies as well. In *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory:*

Sex, Animal, Life, a book stands as a harbinger of this renewed theoretical approach to Woolf after the waning of poststructuralist and postmodernist theory, Derek Ryan draws heavily on the philosophy of Deleuze, the prominent figure in his *modus operandi*, to reopen the issues of materiality in Woolf's writing. Placing his studies within the current debate on immanence and ontology, Ryan aligns himself with a new generation of theorists of materiality, including Haraway, Grosz, Barad, Bennett, and Braidotti. As Ryan observes, with the (re)turn to historical archives in recent modernist studies, the influence of theory has diminished, based upon the assumption that a theoretical approach is anti-historicist with no proper consideration of material contexts. In response to the marginalization of theory in new modernist studies, Ryan seeks to unsettle this questionable opposition between theoretical and historical approach and argues for the relevancy of theory in the twenty-first-century modernist studies from the perspective of new materiality. However, as Ryan emphasizes from the outset, it is not to impose a new theoretical framework upon Woolf's writing; rather, what he is interested in is the creative act of doing theory itself, that is, the various ways in which Woolf's texts are themselves theorized and theorize. In his first chapter "Materials for Theory: Digging Granite and Chasing Rainbow," for instance, revisiting the perceived neat opposition between granite and rainbow that Woolf formulates in her 1927 essay "The New Biography," he traces a wide variety of material associations of these two terms throughout Woolf's writing to complicate the oversimplified understanding of this dual term as a pair of stable metaphors. His rereading of granite and rainbow draws attention to Woolf's references in her first two novels to Cleopatra's Needle, the granite obelisk on the Victoria Embankment, her meditation on rocks in Cornwall in "Sketch of the Past," the geological context of granite formation, and the mythological associations and scientific exploration of rainbows. As such, challenging the fixed dialectical pattern of granite and rainbow, Ryan links Woolf's own theorization in her writing with Deleuze's philosophical concept of creative repetition and

Braidotti's nomadic notion of transposition, affirming with profitable results the significance of this renewed theoretical approach of new materialisms.

The Baroque Fold

Following Bennett's re-affirmation of the post-Deleuzian ontology of relationality, thus, what I would like pursue here is not the absolute non-correlationist realism so much as a recognition of the agencial capacities of irreducible matter itself and of the entanglements of human-nonhuman assemblages. Taking my cue from Deleuze and Guattari's alternative take on materiality, my project shares many related concerns of new materialisms with Ryan's study. But while most of the Deleuze-inspired discussions of new materialisms draw on a post-Spinozian vitalism to recognize the distributed agency of matter and its entanglements, the textile imagination invoked by the singularity of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a piece of clothing invites another important operative concept of the fold in Deleuze's rereading of Leibniz. If Spinoza provides Deleuze a model for an ontology of immanence, then it is Leibniz that offers him a way of thinking through the problematics of individuation and expression, constituting a central part of his transcendental empiricism of difference.[19] In fact, as Daniel Smith duly notes, Deleuze's engagement with Leibniz can be traced back to his earlier major works *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *Logic of Sense* (1969), in which Deleuze works through the theological limitations of Leibniz's philosophy to determine an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field with his own conceptual vocabulary (singularity, multiplicity, virtuality, problematic, event and so on).[20] However, it's arguably that his rereading of Leibniz culminates in *Foucault* (1988 [1986]) and *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1993 [1988]), revealing a "Dionysian" Leibniz and a philosophy of folding, unfolding, and refolding that is still relevant to our contemporary era.

19. See the translator's preface in Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1990)
20. Daniel Smith, "Deleuze on Leibniz: Difference, Continuity, and the Calculus," *Essays on Deleuze* (2012).

Central to *The Fold* is the operative concept of the Baroque, understood not as an essence but an "operative function" that constitutes a world of continuity by endlessly producing folds. In contrast to the Cartesian divisible point, Deleuze argues that the smallest element of the Baroque world is the fold that unfurls to infinity and constitutes an infinite series of curvatures or inflections of the virtual world. Taking the art of "origami" as the model of this virtual world of continuity, Deleuze suggests that the "division" of the indivisible world of continuity must be understood as a sheet of paper that can be folded, unfolded, and refolded as an infinite number of folds. The Baroque fold thus distinguishes itself by moving along two infinite series of labyrinthine floors: the pleats of matter and the folds in the soul. Like the Baroque architecture, one of the primary examples in this book, the lower level is an elongated façade, composed of common rooms with several small opening receptive to exterior surroundings, while the upper level is a windowless enclosure, a closed interiority—Leibniz's "monad"—constituting an opaque depth or a dark background. Defined by a severing between the two levels, this Baroque world is organized along these two vectors, one descending towards the ground, the other thrusting towards the upper region. According to Deleuze, the definition of the Baroque lies in this distinction between two levels, but the point is that this distinction leads to a correspondence between the two levels, a "mutual expression" between the pleats of matter and the folds in the soul. "The façade-matter goes down below, while the soul-room goes up above. The infinite fold then moves between the two levels" (*The Fold* 35). In this sense, it is arguably that the whole book of *The Fold* is to conceptualize this in-between of folds—the Fold between two folds—that Deleuze utilizes to reconsider the opposition between the outside and the inside, the surface and the depth, the matter and the soul, the physical and the metaphysical.

Indeed, in Deleuze's studies on Foucault, Deleuze has revealed that the concept of the fold serves as a central trope in the late Foucault's return to the issues of subjectivity and

subjectivation in the Greeks. In the last chapter of *Foucault*, "Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)," Deleuze engages with Foucault's three-volume studies on sexuality and broadens Foucault's analytic axes of power and knowledge from the perspective of subjectivation. As Deleuze points out, the theme that has always haunted Foucault is that of "the double": "the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. . . . It is not the emanation of an 'I', but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self" (98). In other words, it is never a commanding Other that I voluntarily emanate as a double but any possible forces of the outside as the other in me that inform the process of subjectivation. Linking the theme of the double to the "invagination of a tissue in embryology, or the act of doubling in sewing: twist, fold, stop, and so on" (98), Deleuze thus suggests that for Foucault an inside is merely an operation of the outside, the movement of the folding of the outside, "as if the ship were a folding of the sea" (97). Deleuze further distinguishes four kinds of foldings of subjectivation in Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure*: the fold of body/pleasure, the fold of power, the fold of knowledge/truth, and the fold of the outside. In this way the process of subjectivation is understood as the folding of the forces of the outside without the phenomenological presumption of the intentionality of being. Thus subjectivation should not be understood in terms of a Euclidean space of phenomenology but a "topological" space where an Outside more distant that any exterior and an Inside deeper than any interior can establish a contact with each other (110). As Deleuze suggests, "[t]o think is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside. The general topology of thought, which had already begun 'in the neighborhood' of singularities, now ends up in the folding of the outside into the inside" (118, translation modified).

As Deleuze suggests, the general principle Foucault reveals is that "every form is a compound of relations between forces" (*Foucault* 124). Rereading the late Foucault from the

operative concept of folding, Deleuze readresses the issues of subjectivation in terms of the forces of the outside and rewrites our understanding of history as the relationships between different distributions of forces. In this sense the folding of forces can be linked to Deleuze's discussion of Leibnizian Mannerism in *The Fold* that informs a world of continuity in opposition to the Cartesian world of atomism. Following the philosophy of the Stoics, Deleuze first formulates a Baroque grammar in which a predicate does not express an attribute or a quality but serves as a verb that expresses a relation and an event. By turning a predicate into a verb, we can no more reduce the proposition "the tree greens" to "the tree is green" than "I think" to "I am a thinking being." Rather, the proposition "the tree greens" articulates an event, "a manner of being," that constitutes an incorporeal predicate of a subject of the proposition.[21] For Deleuze if the Stoics articulate a language of "predicates-as-events," then Leibniz's contribution to the philosophy of the event lies in his equation of the world with event and predication: "the world itself is an event and, as an incorporeal (= virtual) predicate, the world must be included in every subject as a *basis* from which each one extracts the manners that correspond to its point of view (aspects)" (*The Fold* 53). The world as event is included in a monad as a basis, while the monad expresses the world in its own manner. This "basis" that every subject or monad contains, in fact, is what Leibniz calls the minute and unconscious "microperceptions." The murmuring sound of the sea, for instance, is not the sum of each noise of the wave. Rather, a conscious perception is produced when those heterogeneous minute microperceptions enter into a differential relation that determines a singularity. In other words, it is when at least two heterogeneous waves become part of a differential relation that the perception of a third "excels" over others and allows the conscious perceptions of the sound of the sea (88). Here the relation of the inconspicuous microperceptions to the conscious perceptions does not go "from part to whole, but from the

21. The Stoic logic of the event is first developed in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* (1990)

ordinary to what is *notable* or *remarkable*" (87-88). In this regard the world is virtuality and predication itself and every subject contains a dark background of microperceptions as its basis from which a manner of being is developed according to the perspective that the subject occupies. As Deleuze suggests, with the coupling "basis-manners" as a substitute for form or essence, the Cartesian Essentialism with its principle of "clear and distinct" gives way to Leibniz's Mannerism with the principle of "obscure but distinct."

Leibniz's fluid Mannerism thus promises the enclosed monad on the upper level to express the world as predication in infinite ways of actualization in the soul and realization in the body. As mentioned, *The Fold* is to conceptualize the in-between of folds to reconsider the opposition between the outside and the inside, the surface and the depth, the matter and the soul, the physical and the metaphysical. The Fold of the two levels of Baroque house is what Deleuze calls the *Zweifalt*, the "differentiator of difference," the "fold that differentiates and is differentiated" (30). It is through the Fold of the two levels that matter becomes an expressive material and thus determines or materializes "a form of expression" that expresses an infinite series of curvatures or inflections of the world. The Baroque world as "a line of inflection" is thus one of virtuality that never ceases to divide itself along these two infinite vectors of façade-matter and soul-room—actualized in the soul but realized in the matter. In this regard what really matters is not so much the essence as the "style" or the way—from Essentialism to Mannerism—in which a material is folded and tends toward the spiritual point of the soul that envelops all the materials. "Matter that reveals its texture becomes raw material, just as form that reveals its folds becomes force. In the Baroque the coupling of material-force is what replaces matter and form" (35). Hence Deleuze's rereading of Foucault's folding as the operation of the "forces of the outside" share a common emphasis on the topological space and the coupling of material-force that replaces the traditional dichotomy between matter and form. As Deleuze suggests, "[t]he law of the cupola, a

Baroque figure par excellence, is double: its base is a vast ribbon, at once continuous, mobile, and fluttering, that converges or tends toward a summit as its closed interiority" (124). If in *The Fold* the operative concept of the Baroque with its infinity of folds not only ranges across all the Baroque arts but also extends beyond its historical limits, it is because each monad or subject is a topology of infinite folds that substitutes content for raw material, form for force. Thus while the Baroque establishes a continuity of whole arts by means of the expressive materials in "the theater of matter" in the lower level (37), its unity always gestures towards the enclosure of the monad on the upper level.

Through Deleuze's rereading of the "Dionysian" Leibniz, we discover a neo-Baroque fold with a continuous expressive movement of folding, unfolding, and refolding that extends beyond its historical limits and resonates with our understanding of new materiality and distributive agencies. As Deleuze repetitively asserts, the definition of the Baroque lies in its productions of infinite folds. As such, unfolding is not contrary to folding but the continuation of folds after folds. This Baroque world of fold after fold entails a topological place of immanence in which there is no absolute split between matter and form, body and soul, surface and depth, outside and inside. There is only the ceaseless operation of folding that turns matter into expressive material and form into a form of expression in a topological distribution. Thus it is this infinite expressive movement of material-force that makes Deleuze conclude in such a provocative way at the end of *The Fold*: "We are all still Leibnizian, although accords no longer convey our world or our text. We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments, but we all remain Leibnizian because what always matters is folding, unfolding, refolding" (137).

Molar Form and Molecular Force

In light of the operative concept of the Baroque fold, we have a new approach to the flowing materiality of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in the novel. While Brown's thing-centered reading asks us to retrieve the corporeal imagination of objects in tracing their material histories, a new materialist reading with the concept of the Deleuzian fold helps us further explore the very "texture" of the shawl. As Deleuze suggests, "[m]atter that reveals its texture becomes raw material, just as form that reveals its folds becomes force. In the Baroque the coupling of material-force is what replaces matter and form" (*The Fold* 35). Thus while a study on the material culture of shawl is still limited to the Essentialist imagination of form, that is, taking the shawl literally as a historical material object, the fold of the shawl further gestures towards the Mannerist imagination of force. It is only by focusing less on the extensive materiality of the shawl than on the intensive texture of the shawl, we can discover a non-phenomenological material texture in the folding forces of the shawl.[22] "The real in matter is not only extension; it possesses an 'impenetrability, inertia, impetuosity and attachment.' It is what is called the *texture* of a body, it is specifically the sum of its inner qualities, the latitude of their variation and the relation of their limits; hence the texture of gold" (*The Fold* 47).[23]

In this way the "texture" of the fold of the shawl reminds us of the famous Spinozian question—what can a body do?—in Deleuze's rephrasing. As Deleuze suggests in his study on Spinoza, a body, of whatever kind and however small it might be, is not defined by a form of species or by its organs and functions. Rather, it is composed of, firstly, the "relations of motion and rest, of slowness and speed between particles." A body, like a musical form, is "a

22. For a further elaboration on Deleuze's distinction between extensive and intensive, see Manuel DeLanda, "Space: Extensive and Intensive, Actual and Virtual" in *Deleuze and Space* (2005).
23. In this regard it is worth comparing the new materiality and Deleuze's focus on "texture" with the affective turn in queer studies, especially Eve Sedgwick's attention to the same term "texture" in her *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003). See also the original essay Sedgwick engages with in her book, Renu Bora, "Outing Texture" (1997).

complex relation between differential velocities, between deceleration and acceleration of particles. A composition of speeds and slowness on a plane of immanence." But besides this kinetic definition, the individuality of a body also refers to its "capacity for affecting and being affected" (*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 123). No longer a Cartesian substance but a "degree of power," a body for Spinoza is defined in terms of its capacity to affect and to be affected by other bodies (27). Thus for Deleuze a plow-horse is more similar to an ox than a race-horse, since a plow-horse and an ox share similar affective capacities in the assemblage of the field. These two Spinozian propositions—one kinetic, the other dynamic—substitute the longitude and latitude of a body for the traditional taxonomy of species: "Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation" (*A Thousand Plateau* 256-57). In this way, we have two different approaches to the materiality of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl. While the cashmere shawl as a material object can be delineated in terms of its extension or the sense-data in our perception, the very "texture" of the fold of the shawl—what Deleuze calls "the *texture* of a body"—refers not so much to these material qualities as to its relationality and capacity for affecting and being affected. Thus while in my second chapter the materiality of the shawl literally refers to its qualities as a material object, my third chapter will deal with the "affective texture" of the fold of the shawl that lies at the heart of the new materiality.

Taking the operative concept of the Baroque fold with a focus on the affective texture, in my third chapter I will turn Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl from a "molar form" (as what I conceive in my second chapter) into a "molecular force," as understood by the Deleuze-inspired new materialists. The conceptual pair of molar and molecular has been widely used by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. What should be immediately pointed out is that the molar-molecular distinction for Deleuze and Guattari is never a matter of size. Rather, it designates two different modes of organization. In their discussion of micropolitics, for

instance, a "molar aggregate" refers to those well defined political bodies, such as State, government, or other political apparatus that is based upon autonomous individuals, whereas "molecular flow" covers other impersonal micro-flows of affectivity that unsettle any binary, rigid segmentarities. In this way, when we look at the world from the perspective of molecular, the traditional social classes are turned into "masses," two sexes into "a multiplicity of molecular combinations," and molar perceptions into a "world of unconscious micropercepts, unconscious affects" (213).[24] Let's take another example from our daily life and discuss it together with the concept of the fold. A banyan tree, perceived through our naked eyes, seems to be a static, well-organized "molar form" with its developed, "unfolded" or "ex-plicated" roots, trunk, leaves, and aerial roots. But at the same time we should not forget that there are a number of other "molecular forces," or what Deleuze and Guattari call "matter-movement" or "matter-energy," such as sunlight, heat, moisture, wind, insects, that are enveloped, "enfolded" or "im-plicated" in its living, its duration, its process of becoming (407). As such, bringing the pair of "molar form" and "molecular force" into play with the movement of unfolding and folding, im-plication and ex-plication, Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in my reading is not a "metaphor" so much as a "matter-fold" that can both be "unfolded" as a concrete cashmere shawl with its molar form and be "enfolded" together with other molecular forces of impersonal materialities and matter-flows in the novel.[25]

Indeed, as Deleuze himself asks, "[i]f the Baroque is defined by the fold that goes out to infinity, how can it be recognized in its most simple form"? It is in the textile imagination

24. In the discussion of consistency Deleuze and Guattari also maintain that the molar-molecular distinction is not that "between the individual and the statistical" but that between two different types of organization: "[t]he distinction is between two group movements . . . in which one group [molarization] tends toward increasingly equilibrated, homogeneous, and probable states . . . and the other group [molecularization] tends toward less probable states of concentration" (*A Thousand Plateau* 335).

25. All these pairs of terms, such as unfolding-folding, evolvement-involvement, explication-implication, and explanation-implication are used by Deleuze to designate the dual aspects of expression on the plane of immanence. As Deleuze suggests, "[t]o explicate is to evolve, to involve is to implicate. Yet the two terms are not opposites: they simply mark two aspects of expression" (*Expressionism in Philosophy* 16). See Deleuze's two-volume studies on Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1990) and *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1988).

of garments that the Baroque fold that unfurls to infinity can be first recognized: "fabric or clothing has to free its own folds from its usual subordination to the finite body it covers" (*The Fold* 121). Thus turning Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl from a metaphor to a "matter-fold," we can understand that while this shawl as an "unfolded" molar form refers to the literal object with its own material history and culture, it can also be taken as a "folded" molecular force that enfolds other forces in the becoming of the material flow in the novel. In fact, what underpins this conceptual pair of "unfolded molar form" and "folded molecular force" is the concept of "virtuality" that lies at the heart of Deleuze's ontology of difference. For Deleuze the virtual is not something does not exist in reality; rather, the virtual refers to the pure ateleological potentiality that is to be actualized into a new state of affairs. Developed from Deleuze's studies of different philosophers, the concept of the virtual can be Bergson's idea of *durée* and *élan vital*, Spinoza's doctrine of the univocity of being or Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return. In this respect, the distinction between molar form and molecular force corresponds to the two kinds of forces of difference that Deleuze theorizes in his major philosophical treatise *Difference and Repetition*—differen*c*iation with a c and differen*t*iation with a t. While differen*c*iation refers to the actualization of virtuality into distinguished species and parts, differen*t*iation consists in a virtual problematic field or a milieu of multiplicities. The former is the process of actualization that determines the visible difference in a Euclidean metric space of geometry. As opposed to the actualization of differen*c*iation, the force of differen*t*iation, the origin of true difference, refers to the "determination of the virtual content of an Idea" in a topological, non-metric space (207). One is the unfolded form, while the other is the enfolding force. Thus if there is a reason why discourses of new materialisms gain prominence in humanities, it lies in this recognition of the force of differen*t*iation in the plasticity of enmeshed materiality: an endless movement of folding, unfolding and refolding.

As Woolf puts in "The Leaning Tower," originally a paper read to the Workers' Educational Association in 1940, "[a] writer has to keep his eye upon a model that moves, that changes, upon an object that is not one object but innumerable objects" (*M* 128). In Woolf's novelistic world a material object never stands as a fixed, autonomous entity but has always already been immersed in complicated entanglements with other agential materialities, both organic and inorganic, human and nonhuman, turning the actualized differences of material forms into differential forces of ontological difference-in-itslef. Although in what immediately follows Woolf suggests that "[t]wo words alone cover all that a writer looks at—they are, human life," this should never be understood as an anthropocentric notion of human life. Instead, as we can see in "Sketch of the Past," a posthumously published memoir of Woolf, she sets forth her conviction and "philosophy" as a writer that attends to the interconnectivity of all sorts of being in the world:

> From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. (*MOB* 72)

In this famous but enigmatic passage, Woolf formulates what she calls her philosophy in her reflection of human life and artwork. Behind the "cotton wool" of our daily life there is a hidden pattern that is linked with we all human beings as the part of the whole world as a work of art. Here it seems that Woolf is concerned with the nature of art and the interconnection of all human beings. But as Woolf insists, there is no author or God that can be taken as the origin or the foundation of the world: "But there is no Shakespeare, there is no

Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself." Despite the fact that Woolf begins this passage with "a constant idea of mine," as the predicate of the collective pronoun "we" shifts from "all human beings" to "words," "music," and "thing itself," the hidden pattern is no longer confined to the commonality of human beings. Rather, read in the manner of the Baroque grammar, each predicate, instead of merely describing qualities or attributes, becomes a verb and extends the "vast mass" of the world beyond the limited realm of art, language or humankind, pointing towards a world of immanence with infinite possibilities of material interconnectivity.

For Woolf this world of immanence of fluid materiality, with its liminal interplay between the depth and the surface, the inside and the outside, human and nonhuman, is what characterizes the modern world—"an age clearly when we are not fast anchored where we are; things are moving around us; we are moving ourselves" (*E4* 429). In fact, if the material world in Woolf's writing can be taken as a force-field of vibrant matters, then, the keyword to her manifestoes of modern novel is no longer the inner life of psychological depth but the liminality of movement. In Melba Cuddy-Keane's cogent rereading of "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," she argues that this essay is not so much a manifesto as a mock manifesto or even anti-manifesto, precisely because it foregrounds an ongoing movement as a recurring motif that lies at the heart of Woolf's writing.[26] In attempt to "un-define" Mrs. Brown, Cuddy-Keane suggests that Mrs. Brown exists neither in a subjective interiority, as usually assumed by critics, nor in an objective materiality, as the materialist novelists believe, but in a space of encounter between the observing narrator and the observed character. Instead of a turn against materiality, Woolf's story of Mrs. Brown is firmly anchored to this elusive in-between space of encounter on a moving train. As Woolf suggests, what's important about realizing a character is "to steep oneself in her atmosphere" (*E3* 425). Without adhering to

26. Melba Cuddy-Keane, "Un-defining Mrs Brown: Modernism, Movement and anti-Manifestoes" in Minow-Pinkney, ed., (2014).

the conventional protocol of Edwardian materialist description, Woolf instead givers readers "[m]yriads of irrelevant and incongruous ideas" that crow into her head in her encounter with Mrs. Brown on this moving train. Varying from one case to another according to each writer's age, country and disposition, Mrs. Brown as the eternal human nature of Mrs. Brown is not an immutable essence but only exists in this elusive "atmosphere," this in-between space of encounter. In the original Mrs. Brown essay that Cuddy-Keane draws attention to, Woolf describes Mrs. Brown as "a will-o'-the-wisp, a dancing light, an illumination gliding up the wall and out of the window, lighting now in freakish malice upon the nose of an archbishop, now in sudden splendor upon the mahogany of the wardrobe" (*E3* 387). Here the fleeting flicker of Mrs. Brown calls to mind Woolf's "luminous halo" in "Modern Fiction," another modernist manifesto of modernism. But if a manifesto is said to be a dogmatist declaration of a series of principles, then Woolf's invitation to experiment the infinite possibilities of the art of fiction and her plea not to desert Mrs. Brown indeed make these essays less a manifesto than a line of flight that radically democratizes "the proper stuff of fiction."

Indeed, as Alex Zwerdling has pointed out, one of the significant innovations in Woolf's art of "descriptive economy" is to challenge the familiar distinction between objective and subjective observation. The tissue separating inner from outer becomes wholly permeable, so that the most ordinary sights and sounds can suddenly be flooded with intense emotional meaning (22). As Woolf famously pus in her diary, she wants to "saturate every atom," to "eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes." For Woolf every moment of here-and-now is "a combination of thought; sensation; the voice of the sea" (*D3* 209-10). It is only in this sense that we can understand that Woolf's plea to "look within life," to examine "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day," is never merely a turn to the inward but a gesture that is open to the whole world: "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" (emphasis added, *E4* 160). Instead of emerging from an independent mind, those innumerable, saturated atoms that are shaped into "the life of Monday or Tuesday" come from everywhere. As Woolf ponders over the question of the soul in one diary entry, midway through her composing *To the Lighthouse*, "one can't write directly about the soul." It is only the elusive space of in-betweenness that the soul contingently slips in: "As for the soul… the truth is, one can't write directly about the soul. Looked at, it vanishes; but look at the ceiling, at Grizzle [the dog], at the cheaper beasts in the Zoo which are exposed to walkers in Regent's Park, and the soul slips in. It slipped in this afternoon" (*D3* 62). Thus if the overburdened term "realism" still has any significance for Woolf's writing, perhaps the Woolfian realism lies in this perpetual dialectic between the elusiveness of life—"Why is there not a discovery in life? Something one can lay hands on and say 'This is it'?" (*D3* 62)—and her lifelong attempt to capture Mrs. Brown, the essential thing called life.

Locating this problem of the Woolfian realism of life in Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse*, the following parts of my thesis would try to enfold, unfold, and refold this "matter-fold" to discover its affective texture as an expressive material intertwined with the "impersonal" forces of life. As I argue in Chapter Three, as a folded molecular force, Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl can be taken as an event of memory that has always already entered into a differential relationship with other material flows in the impersonal time, leading to a renewed appreciation of Woolf's "aesthetics of impersonality." But on the other hand, through my thing-centered reading in Chapter Two, this shawl as an unfolded molar form is materially embedded in the imperial history of production, consumption, and circulation of Kashmir shawl. Insomuch as it is metonymically linked with the discourses of

Orientalism and British imperial modernity, it further leads to a paradox that reveals an irresolvable conflict between two sides of Woolf—the Victorian Woolf and the modernist Woolf. If, as Janis M. Paul observes, in Woolf's writing "the insistent opposition between the material world and the world of consciousness is the literary manifestation of the conflict between the Victorian and the Modern sensibilities that shaped Woolf's life" (7), then Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a matter-fold of life invites us to unpack this opposition, trace the forces of history, and discover its lines of flight, "in the name of *avowing* the force of questions that have been too readily foreclosed by more familiar fetishization: the fetishization of the subject, the image, the word" (Brown, "Thing Theory" 7).

Chapter Two

Unfolding History: Imperial Modernity of Kashmir Shawl and Its Paradox

Between the Two Woolfs

When it comes to Virginia Woolf, one immediately calls to mind the most famous photograph of young Virginia Stephen when she was twenty, taken by G. C. Beresford in 1902. With her wistful, downcast eyes, Virginia in this picture appears as a young beautiful girl that no one could have thought that she will have become one of the most representative writer of high modernism in English literary history. Often reproduced on all sorts of cultural commodities, T-shirts, mugs, posters, etc., this photograph has made the portrait of the delicate Virginia into one of the most popular cultural icon circulated in global artifacts.[1] Twenty-two years later, however, an odd and perplexing photograph of Woof appeared in "Hall of Fame" in the late May 1924 issue of British *Vogue.* By that time she had been a rising star in literary circle with her first three novels and considered as "the most brilliant novelist of the younger generation," as the nomination in the magazine reads.[2] But instead of giving a "modern" portrait of a writer with promising prospect, this photograph features Woolf in a Victorian dress with leg-of-mutton sleeves that actually belongs to her mother. Given *Vogue* as a magazine that aims to "[register] every radical shift in fashion in the 1920s—from short skirts and dropped waists to geometric futurist fabrics and shingled hair," it is curious to see that Woolf as a promising writer of a new generation is posed for the magazine in this way, as if a "modernist who is haunted by her Victorian past," as Jane Garrity observes (202). For Garrity, however, the "mystery" of this photograph can be explained away in terms of *Vogue*'s mixture of both fashion and conservatism. She suggests that this picture of Woof in Victorian dress reveals magazine's desire to incorporate its

1. See Brenda R. Silver, *Virginia Woolf Icon*, p. 18.
2. Quoted in Silver, p. 92.

celebration of women's artistic achievement into the dominant cultural view of femininity and to "[reconstitute] the modern woman as an object of sanctified domesticity." In other words, despite *Vogue*'s reference to her artistic talent, this image of "Victorian Woolf" is still encoded within the "conventions of Victorian womanhood" and even turns Woolf into a "maternal icon and object of heterosexual fantasy" (204).

While Garrity's compelling critique of the representation of Woof in *Vogue* draws attention to the relationship between modernism and mass culture, in this chapter the question I want to ask is less about the politics of representation than about the relationship between Woolf's ambivalent attachment to her Victorian inheritance and her critical evaluation of modernity. Before going any further, we should first note Woolf's antagonism against the confinement of Victorianism and her determination to liberate herself from the darkness of the Victorian culture. In "Old Bloomsbury," an account of the establishment of the Stephens at Bloomsbury written near the end of 1921 or in 1922, she describes that in comparison to the "rich red gloom of Hyde Park Gate," the "light and the air" of 46 Gordon Square come as a "revelation" to her: "Things one had never seen in the darkness there—Watts pictures, Dutch cabinets, blue china—shone out for the first time in the drawing room at Gordon Square" (184). This remark of "enlightenment" also reminds us of Woolf's comparison between the Victorian cook and the Georgian cook used to explain what she means by the change of the human character in 1910: "The Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing room, now to borrow the Daily Herald, now to ask advice about a hat" (*E3* 422). The 19th century, an age that is metaphorized as "a turbulent welter of cloud" with its darkness and dampness in *Orlando* (*O* 216), seems an obstacle that must be overcome for a "modern Woolf" to emerge from the "gloom" of Hyde Park Gate to a modern world of light and air.

Such an interplay between the darkness of Victorian culture and the light of a modern age has been most elaborated in Jane Goldman's *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, in which she points out how Woolf's "prismatic" writing reclaims the trope of light by a new feminist language of Post-Impressionist color. Situating Woolf's exploration of color within the context of suffrage movement and the Post-Impressionist Exhibition, Goldman traces how Woolf works through the tradition of chiaroscuro and its associations of patriarchal oppositions—sun/light/masculine vs. earth/darkness/feminine—to emphasize the interrelation between Woolf's aesthetics of colorism and her feminist materialist interventions. While Goldman's study aims to argue for a more modern Woolf, emphasizing the more radically progressive aspects of her feminist aesthetics, recently there have been studies that attempt to re-evaluate Woof's Victorian inheritance and emphasize her ambivalence towards the culture that she was born into. As Gillian Beer has pointed out, "[t]he Victorians are not simply represented . . . the Victorians are also in Virginia Woolf. They are internalized, inseparable, as well as held at arm's length" (93). Following this line of thinking, in his authoritative studies *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians*, in response to Goldman's feminist reading in particular, Steve Ellis seeks to reclaim Woolf's Victorian inheritance and to examine what he calls her "post-Victorianism" (2). Ellis makes it clear at the very beginning that his project is neither a naive celebration of a radical Woolf nor a reactionary interpretation of a conservative Woolf that belongs to what Quentin Bell calls "the Victorian world of Empire, Class and Privilege" (3). Undertaking a critical comparison between two seemingly incompatible sides of Woolf, he carefully teases out Woolf's ambivalent attachment to her Victorian heritage and persuasively indicates that she needs the notion of the Victorian as much as the modern to achieve a balance between the old and the new in her writing. Thus in his reconciliatory reading of *To the Lighthouse*, Ellis takes issues with Goldman's feminist interpretation of the patriarchal tradition of chiaroscuro and argues instead that "chiaroscuro

for Woolf, that is, light *coexisting* with shade, signifies the union of reason and imagination, the present and the past, man and woman, reality and romance, efficiency and beauty" (98 emphasis in the original). As Ellis insists, while the "electric light" of modernity rejects all that shadow signifies as "oppression, obscurantism and outmoded sentiment," "the 'Victorian' functions for Woolf as a necessary counterpart, and its claims are upheld" (98).

Questioning Goldman's utter rejection of chiaroscuro, Ellis reclaims the significance of the shadow and its associations with the Victorian culture for Woolf. True, the emphasis of Ellis's revisionary reading lies in Woolf's ambivalence towards the Victorian culture that is reflected in her writing style. But while he provides a necessary revision of a "post-Victorian" Woolf to the feminist interpretation of a more radically progressive Woolf, his "reconciliatory" interpretation of the two opposite values in *To the Lighthouse* cannot take for granted another connotation of the "shade" of Victorianism—the shadow under the imperialist rule of Queen Victoria. As Ellis has recognized, the image of shades in the novel is linked with the patriarchal dominance over women, as Cam is "overcast" by the tyranny of Mr. Ramsay (*TTL* 138). But what he disavows is precisely the imperial shadow of the British rule over India that always looms in the background of the whole novel. In her milestone essay, "'Something Out of Harmony': *To the Lighthouse* and the Subject(s) of Empire," one of the earliest attempts to engage with the issues of British Empire in Woolf's writing, Janet Winston has read this novel as "an imperial allegory" and foregrounded the many tropes of imperialism and their conflicting ideologies inscribed in the novel (43). Indeed, throughout the novel we can find that Mrs. Ramsay is frequently compared to Queen Victoria, in terms of their high-handedness, philanthropic ambition, or Victorian maternity. But more than a loosely constructed comparison, the connection between Mrs. Ramsay and Queen Victoria is substantiated by a spatial contiguity between the two. On Mrs. Ramsay's trip to town with Charles Tansley in the beginning of the novel, at one moment, Tansley, seeing Mrs. Ramsay

come downstairs and stand against a portrait of Queen Victoria, is suddenly struck by her stunning beauty:

> when, suddenly, in she came, stood for a moment silent (as if she had been pretending up there, and for a moment let herself be now), stood quite motionless for a moment against a picture of Queen Victoria wearing the blue ribbon of the Garter; when all at once he realized that it was this: it was this:—she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen. (*TL* 15)

Through Tansley's eyes we can see how Mrs. Ramsay is like an embodiment of Queen Victoria in her evocation of queenly beauty. With this spatial contiguity, we can see why the novel inscribes an imperialist ethos in her domestic practices and female sympathy that implicitly support and justify the colonizing impulse of British Empire:

> Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential. (9)

As Winston demonstrates, Mrs. Ramsay, by "symbolically assuming the role of Queen Victoria," actually serves as a synecdoche to "signify the British Empire in the Victorian age" (49). As such, while Ellis takes the shadow of the horrid skull that remains as evidence to qualify Goldman's reading of "'prismatic' optimism" (Ellis 106)—"Wherever they put the light . . . there was always a shadow somewhere" (*TTL* 93)—as this chapter would illustrate in what follows, this shadow is inseparable from the material traces of imperialism inscribed in Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl, unsettling his hermeneutic tendency of unification and harmonization of the two Woolfs.

In his fundamental essay "Modernism and Imperialism," Fredric Jameson, countering the separation of politics and aesthetics of high modernism, has argued that questions of imperialism actually lie at the heart of modernist literature and constitute a formal dilemma or contradiction that modernism seeks to solve. In fact, as postcolonial studies gained strength and established itself in the academy, many related issues, such as imperialism, colonialism, nation, and race, have been frequently evoked and widely debated in "feminist-postmodern-postcolonial" Woolf criticism, revealing how integral (post/anti)coloniality is to the cultural politics of Woolf criticism (Sarker 113).[3] Building upon these critical contributions to the relationships between Woolf and imperialism, in what follows I will take up Elaine Freedgood's "strong metonymical reading" to approach the material history of Kashmir shawl, so as to expand the possible interpretation of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere in the novel and offer a more thing-centered investigation on the issues of imperialism. I would like to suggest that without taking into consideration the correlation between the Victorian culture and imperialism, it is contestable to claim any reconciliation between the masculine and the feminine, the Victorian and the modern, the past and the present.

In her study of the mid-Victorian realist novel *The Ideas in Things,* Elaine Freedgood criticizes the fetishization of novelistic things that disregard the literal and material qualities of things and calls attention to those overlooked ideas and fugitive meanings that remain unexamined in the archive of the Victorian "thing culture." The orthodox protocols for reading realist novels, according to Freedgood, ask readers to focus merely on characters and plots at the expense of taking those novelistic objects seriously. These novelistic objects in turn function merely as weak metonymic registers that confirm something we have already know about the character. In this traditional reading, as Freedgood suggests, the mahogany furniture in *Jane Eyre* merely signifies the state of Jane as the newly rich. Worse still, we

3. Sonita Sarker, "Woolf and Theories of Postcolonialism" in *Virginia Woolf in Context* (2012), pp. 110-28. On the same issue see also Helen Carr, "Virginia Woolf, Empire and Race" in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (2010), pp. 197-213.

readers have been taught to leave aside those insignificant stuff piled up in a realistic novel, since, according Roland Barthes, they only serve as markers of what he calls the "reality effect." As such, the materiality of novelistic objects themselves is abstracted into use value, because all these objects either function as registers of reality effect or serve as explanatory notes for the characters. On the other hand, if one particular object demands readers' attention, it is because of its metaphorical or symbolic relationship with other elements within the whole textual economy of the novel. Taking George Eliot's *Middlemarch* as an early example of this case, Freedgood argues that in this novel the meaning of novelistic objects have been rigorously stabilized in the overall figurative structure of the novel so that readers can easily follow the signification pattern designed by the narrator. Thus, for Freedgood, in literary criticism, with a few notable exceptions, both the exchange value and the use value of novelistic objects have been an abstraction: as exchange value, the object in a novel is imbedded in a metaphorical or symbolic relation in the service of signification; as use value, the object similarly loses its materiality and becomes a marker of the "reality effect." In both cases, novelistic things become reified as what Marx suggests by commodity fetishism and lose their concrete materiality and physicality of things.

To provide a way out of this impasse of fetishization, Freedgood takes her cue from Bill Brown's thing-centered criticism and develops what she terms a "strong metonymic reading" that takes novelistic "literally," instead of "figuratively," as a Peircean index rather than a Saussurean sign.[4] Borrowing from Brown's indexical approach, Freedgood insists on the significance of metonymy if we want to take novelistic objects seriously in a realistic novel. Rhetorically speaking, the meaning of metonymy, in contrast to that of metaphor, is regulated not by the figurative relationship between a tenor and a vehicle but by habits and conventions. Relying heavily on a frame of reference that lies outside the symbolic structure

4. See Freedgood's note 26, p. 162.

of the novel, the meaning of metonymy thus should be recuperated not in the textual economy inside a novel but the social structure outside. In other words, what Freedgood's "strong metonymic reading" does is to take novelistic objects "literally" for a moment and then trace any possible metonymic connections in the historical archive of the objects, before returning to the narrative framework of the novel itself. To substantiate her reading, Freedgood compares her method with the conceptual role of Walter Benjamin's "collector," for whom by "[bringing] together what belongs together; by keeping in mind their affinities and their succession in time, he can eventually furnish information about his objects" (2-3). True, for Benjamin the collector is at the same time the allegorist. But the point of Freegood's method is to delay her interpretive allegories until the knowledge of the collector is acquired. Thus instead of abstraction in metaphorical reading or the production of reality effect, Freedgood's "strong metonymic reading" urges us to delve into the unexplored cultural archive of material things and re-establish the hidden connections between historical knowledge and fictional references so as to restore the unheard stories of novelistic things themselves. In contrast to those critical methods of interpretation that have been familiar to readers by now, this thing-centered literal approach becomes "the nightmarish opposite of the interpretive dead end," promising "an interpretive open end of dizzying potential" (14).

Indeed, as Freedgood argues, why she chooses the mid-Victorian realist novel as her object of studies is because it serves as a rich site for readers to freely explore the metonymic connections outside the text. As her reading of *Middlemarch* demonstrates, the subsequent refinement of novel as a literary genre—from late Victorian novel to high modernist literature—entails a shift from a readerly text to a more writerly one, that is, a text that consciously assigns meanings to novelistic objects and teaches readers how to interpret the novel "correctly." As Freedgood suggests, although the modernist text is left unwritten on purpose for readers to write and interpret, we do not write them as freely as we want but have

to follow an internalized rules and grammars of meanings developed from literary novels and literary criticism. In this interpretative framework, Mrs. Ramsay's green cashmere shawl can be first taken as a marker of her traditional Victorian upper-middle class. In the nursery scene where she covers the bull's skull with her shawl to soothe her frightened daughter Cam, this shawl is also metaphorically associated with her typical Victorian maternity and her role of "the Angle in the House." Ultimately, since one's garment usually serves as a trope of memento when one's gone in literary tradition, the shawl left in the empty house after the sudden death of Mrs. Ramsay in "Time Passes," becomes an embodiment of Mrs. Ramsay and a mnemonic device for Mrs. McNab: "What people had shed and left—a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes—those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated" (106).

Freedgood makes a point when she chooses the mid-Victorian novel to examine the itineraries of things out of the cover of the text. So the question is: can we follows her "strong metonymic reading" in terms of a high modernist text, such as Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*? Is there any possibility for us to open up the interpretative dead end of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl? In this regard, Bill Brown's thing-centered reading of Woolf's experimental short story "Solid Objects" can be taken as an exemplary case in point. Instead of explaining the protagonist's enigmatic obsession with discarded objects in terms of a genealogy of modernist aesthetics, Brown brings the material culture of glass and iron into play and argues that the protagonist's fascination with material fragments not only bears witness to the political economy of the Great Britain during the wartime but also registers an ethics of inhabiting the modern world with an "alternative economy" built upon a noninstrumental passion for things" ("The Secret Life of Things" 17). By delving into the historical archive of material culture, Brown's reading of Woolf's proto-modernist story compellingly proves that the writerly texts as conventionally understood are actually not writerly enough. In this way,

if we pay attention to the "material unconscious" of object culture, there is always a line of flight from the interpretive framework and textual economy orchestrated by the text.

Hence the question I would like to address in this chapter: besides taking Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a marker of her class, a metaphor of Victorian femininity or a memento of herself, what other possible interpretations can we get, if we trace the stories of Kashmir shawl first, rather than jumping right into the symbolic framework of the novel? Taking Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl literally as a historical object, rather than a literary metaphor, in what follows I would first delineate the material history of production, consumption, and circulation of Kashmir shawl to suggest its inscription within the network of imperial practices. After tracing metonymical links of the shawl with imperialism, I would further suggest how the discourses of Oriental fantasies and anxieties about industrial modernity lead to a paradox of Kashmir shawl that reveals an irresolvable conflict between the two sides of Woolf. True, it seems that eventually a metaphorical reading is inevitable, as Freedgood herself acknowledges. But the point of her "strong metonymic reading" is that it starts with objects themselves rather than characters and plots. What is the "material unconscious" of Kashmir shawl before Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl becomes a metaphor? What can we learn if we look at the material object first rather than the literary trope?

Imperial History of Kashmir shawl

Originally referring to its geographical home, Kashmir, the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent, the word "cashmere" in 19th century England stood for the luxurious shawl woven from the fine fleece of the Tibetan goats in the central Asia. The history of the production of cashmere shawls can be dated back to the Kashmir Valley in the mid-15th century. The manufacturing process of shawls involved first the distribution of the raw materials of fleece and the spinning of the fine hair into yarn, both tasks mostly carried out by

the Kashmiri women. Then the Kashmiri men were exclusively responsible for dyeing the yarn in different colors and weaving on the handloom into different patterns. Because of its labor-intensive and time-consuming process of production, the Kashmir shawl had always been a costly commodity. As an article of clothing with exquisite qualities of softness and warmth, Kashmir shawl had become an indispensable item for upper-middle womanhood in Europe by the 19th century. Indeed, as early as in 1777, one of the earliest records of Kashmir shawl described this garment as "the most delicate woolen manufacture in the world, so much prized in the East, and now so well known in England" (485).[5] As such, from its very beginning, the manufacture of Kashmir shawls was not a folk art meant for the local consumption but circulated in trade and aimed at the expanding commercial markets of different regions of the world with its varied designs and distinct patterns.[6]

While the circulation of shawls in world trade could be traced back to the 16th century, it was since the late 18th century that the handwoven Kashmir shawls had made their way to Europe and brought new trends in fashion. Although it remains debatable whether the popularity of Kashmir shawls actually began in Britain or in France, an undeniable fact is that the European taste for exotic goods and the fashion craze for shawls cannot be dissociated from imperial conquest, colonial exploitation and trans-Atlantic trade from the outset. As Frank Ames points out in his study on the history of Kashmir shawls in France, those shawls originally served as military souvenirs and Oriental mementoes in Napoléon's return from his expedition in Egypt: "When Napoléon returned from Egypt, the generals and officers who had served under him brought back mementoes of the Orient. Among these were Kashmir shawls which they wore wrapped around their waists as belts, and which had been plundered from the Mamelukes, the soldiers of the Egyptian army" (135). Presented as gifts for

5. John Stewart and Tayshoo Lama, "An Account of the Kingdom of Thibet. In a Letter from John Stewart, Esquire, F. R. S. to Sir John Pringle, Bart. P. R. S." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 67 (1777).
6. See Chitralekha Zutshi, "'Designed for Eternity': Kashmir Shawls, Empire, and Cultures of Production and Consumption in Mid-Victorian Britain" (2009), p. 422

aristocratic ladies after their return, Kashmir shawls soon became all the rage in Paris because of the Empress Joséphine's passion for shawls, and thus her flowing style of drapery became a representative fashion trend among the upper-class Parian ladies. Likewise, as Michelle Maskiell convincingly demonstrates, across the Channel the fashion of shawls prevailing among the prosperous Englishwomen at the turn of the 19th century was inextricably linked with the British imperial rule in India and the monopoly of maritime transportation in the 18th century.[7] When the merchants and officials of the East Indian Company returned to Britain, Kashmir shawls were the indispensable gifts and souvenirs for their relatives and friends. Kashmir shawl even became a must-have for those returning men to restore their status in England. In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for instance, Lady Bertram asks her nephew William, who is beginning a naval career in India, "that I may have a shawl. I think I will have two shawls."[8]

While the luxury of genuine Kashmir shawls remained exclusive to the upper class because of its prohibitive cost, by the mid-19th century the domestic manufacture of imitative shawls had made the trend prevalent and gained widespread popularity among the middle-class women. The British imitation of Kashmir shawls in towns of textile industry, such as Edinburgh and Norwich, began as early as in the 1770s. But it was Paisley that came to dominate the local manufacture and became the primary center of shawl industry in Britain. By using new weaving mechanism and the new Jacquard loom introduced from France in the 1830s, shawl manufacturers in Paisley made a remarkable success in market. With its distinctive Paisley motifs inspired by the original design of Kashmir shawls, called *buta* or *boteh*, the name Paisley even became a synonym for British shawls. To ensure that Paisley shawls have the most fashionable style, manufacturers even sent agents to London to copy

7. See Michelle Maskiell, "Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000" (2002), p. 36
8. Quoted in Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), p. 93

the latest designs and patterns of Indian shawls as soon as they arrived in Britain.[9] Thus while a genuine Kashmir shawl could cost up to £200, it only cost £20-25 to have an excellent Paisley shawl and £3-9 to have an average one, making Paisley shawl a more accessible option for middle-class women to follow the trend.[10]

Transformed from an exclusive luxury to a product of mass-market, the Kashmir shawl became a fashionable article that served as a marker of social status of women in the everyday life of Victorian Britain. In this regard, the shawl in Woolf's novels, whether or not it is specifically described as "cashmere," is a metaphorical register of the Victorian manners and modes of a class-bound British society: Mrs. Ambrose's purple shawl in *The Voyage Out*, the cashmere shawl of Katharine's grandmother in *Night and Day*, Miss Helena Parry's white cashmere shawl in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Mrs. Ramsay's green cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse*. Indeed, these shawls in Woolf's novels all embody their owners' Victorian femininity and represent the Victorian upper-middle-class culture. But as I've argued through Freedgood's "strong metonymic reading," this kind of traditional interpretation overlooks the stories of those shawls as concrete material objects in a literal sense. They are not merely the decorations or accessories to illustrate something we already know about these characters. Tracing the intricate history of the circulation of Kashmir shawls in the 19th century, we can find that its glamor has always been coded within a larger economic-political parameter of international trade and the dominance of British Empire over the Indian subcontinent from the outset. As Chitralekha Zutshi argues in her comprehensive study on the correlation between Kashmir shawl and the British imperial politics, Kashmir shawl is not merely a fashion item among the upper-class women. More importantly, through a wealth of Victorian discourses on Kashmir shawls, along with the concrete manifestations of fabric materiality,

9. See Caroline Karpinski, "Kashmir to Paisley" (1963), p. 121
10. Zutshi, p. 424

the vast colonies of British Empire were mediated to educate the ordinary Victorians about its colonial geography and scientific knowledge about Kashmir shawls:

> The many Victorian narratives on shawls, written almost always by men and women who had never actually visited Kashmir, then, performed two interrelated didactic functions: first, they educated readers about Kashmir through Kashmiri shawls—concrete material manifestations of its beauty and exceptionality—which fulfilled the larger concern of these narratives to educate Victorian Britons about the diverse and varied geography of the British empire, and, second, they translated the specialized, scientific knowledge about Kashmiri shawl manufacture that had been transmitted to the British shawl industry by men such as Moorcroft into a more popular form, while at the same time highlighting the relationship between Kashmir, shawl production, and imperial politics. (429)

In other words, before the fashion of Kashmir shawls came to its apex during the mid-19th century, this celebrated commodity and the narratives surrounding it had always been imbricated in the global circulation and production of shawls initiated by the British imperial politics.

Mrs. Ramsay's green cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse*, then, serves not only as a typical Victorian fashion article; more importantly, it actually functions as a material nexus that is metonymically linked with other registers of imperialism that lurk in the background of the whole novel. In the scene of Mrs. Ramsay's queenly "ceremony of choosing jewels" with Jasper and Rose, for instance, we see her "opal necklace, which Uncle James had brought her from India" (67). The novel's first scene where James cuts out the "pictures from illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores," in fact, is another case in point that can be linked with the history of British imperialism in the novel. According to David Bradshaw

in his explanatory notes to the novel, the Army and Navy Store, commonly known as "Stores," was founded by military officers in 1871 as general dealers to supply the shareholders and subscribers, mainly the officials of foreign affairs and civil servants, with daily essentials at the lowest prices. Thus the "Stores" actually served as a necessary facilitator for the British Empire to proceed its imperial mission outside the British Isles. As such, this opening scene can be linked with Carmichael, a civil servant in India, who's "willing to teach the boys Perisan or Hindustanee," (12) and it is no surprise then that Mrs. Ramsay, watching James cutting out the picture of refrigerator from the catalogue, imagines him "all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public crisis" (7).

Orientalism, Cashmere Fever and Tuberculosis

Empire, as Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose point out, had become an omnipresent idea permeated in the minds of ordinary people in Britain by the mid-19th century, linking their everyday lives to "global circuits of production, distribution and exchange, to the exploitation and oppression of millions of other imperial subjects. National and local histories were imbricated in a world system fashioned by imperialism and colonialism" (21). The Great Exhibition of 1851 was definitely the culmination of this nationalist display of imperial power that visualizes and domesticates the immense colonies lying faraway to the ordinary people in England. Examining how the narratives surrounding the Exhibition "animate" the objects held in the Crystal Palace, Lara Kriegel argues that these texts of Exhibition literature, such as John Cassell's guide to the Great Exhibition, help define Britain's imperial project by portraying the India subcontinent as "a fertile land, an Oriental treasure trove of ornate manufactures" and "the colonized and feminized 'Jewel in the Crown'" (149). The genuine Kashmir shawl, one of the most glamorous and immutable Indian artifacts held in exhibition, was thus described as "designed for eternity in the unchanging past, copied from patterns

which are the heirloom of a caste, and woven by fatalists" by Harriet Martineau (553). Through the techniques of display, the Kashmir shawl is animated and domesticated by these exhibition narratives to popularize the oriental splendor of those Indian treasures and visualize the success of imperial rule to the British public at the same time.

While the Great Exhibition and its surrounding narratives performed a work of mediation of the continent through the display of Indian treasures, the mid-Victorian literary works similarly covered the Kashmir shawls with layers of Oriental mystery. In her study on the popular imagination of Kashmir shawls manifested in the mid-19th century novels, Suzanne Daly draws attention to the magical tent that can shrink or expand whenever needed in the story of "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peri-Banou" in *Arabian Nights*. According to Daly, this magic tent echoes the Italian Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri's *Account of Tibet, 1712-1727*, in which the missionary remarked that the Hindustan and Persian shawls were so soft and delicate that "they can be folded into so small a space as almost to be hidden in a closed hand" (qtd. in Daly 20). What's interesting is that this coincidence between shawls and the magic tent is appropriated by Charlotte Brontë in her 1853 novel *Villette* to describe Lucy's love for Graham Bretton:

> I kept a place for him, too—a place of which I never took the measure, either by rule or compass: I think it was like the tent of Peri-Banou. All my life long I carried it folded in the hollow of my hand—yet, released from that hold and constriction, I know not but its innate capacity for expanse might have magnified it into a tabernacle for a host. (qtd. in Daly 22)

As Daly suggests, given the prevalence of shawls by the mid-19th century, it is probable that readers of Brontë at that time would have the shawls at hand to try the magic of the tent themselves. But since those readers failed to understand that it was a version of a fairy tale that had been circulated in Europe in the beginning of the 18th century, this scenario "gives

some indication of the sort of mythologizing impulse to which Kashmir shawls seem always to have been subject" (22). That is to say, in the mid-Victorian novel, such as Brontë's *Villette,* even the prosaic fact of the delicacy and lightness of shawls can be turned into "a fragment of Orientalist fantasy," adding some mysterious elements and Orientalist sentiment to the fashion of Kashmir shawl (17).

The extent to which Kashmir shawls were exploited in the narratives of imperialism and Orientalism in France is no less than that in England. Reading what she calls the "cashmere plot" in various cashmere narratives, Susan Hiner suggests that shawls as exotic objects were domesticated in France as a representation of "both feminine virtue *and* female seduction" that triggers a complex exchange of female fantasies between respectable women and harem girls. Once brought into fashion in France, cashmere shawl becomes a garment endowed with a power to bestow moral respectability upon anyone who wears it, implying that "the 'respectability' conferred by such a garment can be taken off and put on at will" (79). But an interesting case in point here that Hiner draws attention to is a satire entitled "Monologue du cachemire" that makes fun of the craze of cashmere in France. Published in 1820, this satire describes a young girl who almost passes out with ecstasy when receiving a cashmere shawl from her lover who is a soldier in the French colony of Algeria. According to Hiner, this satirical piece arguably encapsulates the unimaginable cult of cashmere:

> Après des années d'espoir, de désirs, de craintes, d'impatience, je le tiens, le voilà . . . je le tiens. quelle finesse de tissu! quelles couleurs! quel éclat! quels dessins! mon beau cachemire, nous ne nous quitterons plus! (qtd. in Hiner 77)
>
> [After some years of hope, desire, fear, impatience, I hold it. Here it is. I hold it. What a fine tissue, that colors, that sheen, that patterns. My beautiful cashmere. We won't leave each other anymore.] (translation added)

Here the girl's fervor of cashmere is caricatured to a great extent so as to deride its incomprehensible fashion in France. But more than simply a satire on this cultural phenomenon, as Hiner indicates, imageries of colonial militarism are repeatedly evoked when it emphasizes that this cashmere is a heroic prize from her lover's colonial conquest: it is from "quelque Circassienne dont il aurait enfoncé le sérail [some Caucasian woman whose harem he penetrated]" or from "quelque colonel turc dont il aura coupé la tête [some Turkish colonel whose head he chopped off]" (qtd. in Hiner 77). As such, it is not difficult to see why cashmere shawl in both England and France is not simply a valuable piece of female clothing but always entangled with discourses of Orientalism and colonial militarism.

Such unparalleled craze for cashmere shawls was documented in a quotation in the Convolute A of Walter Benjamin's unfinished *Arcades Project*. Here Benjamin quotes an article "Chales—Cachemires indiens et français," published in 1854 in *Paris chez moi,* that describes the "cashmere fever" that arguably pervaded every corner of France during the 19th century:

> In 1798 and 1799, the Egyptian campaign lent frightful importance to the fashion for shawls. Some generals in the expeditionary army, taking advantage of the proximity of India, sent home shawls . . . of cashmere to their wives and lady friends. . . . From then on, the disease that might be called cashmere fever took on significant proportions. It began to spread during the Consulate, grew greater under the Empire, became gigantic during the Restoration, reached colossal size under the July Monarchy, and has finally assumed Sphinx-like dimensions since the February Revolution of 1848 (*Arcades Project* 55)

Here we can notice that the craze for cashmere is termed as a "disease" of "cashmere fever," growing from a "colossal size" to "Sphinx-Like dimensions" by 1848. As Hiner ingeniously points out, two prevalent discourses are conflated in this brief chronology of cashmere fever:

"that of malady (disease, fever, spread) and that of the exotic (Egypt, India, Sphinx-Like)" (Hiner 81). What is involved here is not simply a matter of comparing fashion to disease. What is more important is that what Benjamin documents as "cashmere fever" is closely linked with the exotic origin of cashmere shawl and the Oriental imagination that it evokes. In this way we can see when the ever-expanding fashion of shawls came to its peak in the mid-19th century, the exotic appeal and Oriental fantasy surrounding cashmere was no longer some passing fashion trend but loaded with social anxieties and subject to social critiques, as evidenced by the satirical portrait in "Monologue du cachemire" discussed above.

Interestingly, this convergence between the fashion of exoticism and the metaphor of epidemic coincidently echoes the social concerns about tuberculosis in England in the second half of the 19th century. Linking the recurrent imagery of dampness in *To the Lighthouse* with Woolf's critique of the "disease" of Victorianism in *Orlando*, David Bradshaw in his introduction to the novel approaches the issues of tuberculosis that latently lurk beneath the surface of the novel. According to Bradshaw, the prevalence of TB had caused a national problem by the turn of the 20th century. The common symptoms of TB include chronic inflammation of bones and joints, so in the novel we find that the Lighthouse keeper's little boy who is threaten with a "tuberculosis hip" is not a random incident but actually a typical case at that time (8). What's more, as Bradshaw points out, the "horrid skull" nailed on the wall in the nursery suggestively evokes one form of TB called scrofula, whose name comes from the Latin word *scrofa*, meaning a breeding sow. At this point an interesting metonymical connection can be made between tuberculosis and "cashmere fever." I have mentioned the nursery scene where Mrs. Ramsay covers the boar's skull that frightens Cam with her green cashmere shawl, but along with the shadow that remains wherever Mrs. Ramsay holds the light, "the skull was still there under the shawl" (93). So, as I have suggested above, if Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl cannot be separated from its associations

of exotic fantasy and imprints of British imperialism, by taking a detour into its material history, then, we can further argue that in the contiguity between the shawl and the skull—not merely a *memento mori* but one of tuberculosis—Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl has always already been invested with social anxieties caused by the "epidemic" of cashmere fashion. As such, in this particular scene Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl is not merely the metaphor of Victorian maternity. Instead of assigning a literary meaning to each object—the covered skull serving as the omen of Mrs. Ramsay's sudden death and the shadow that remains signifying Woolf's attachment to the Victorian culture—a strong metonymical reading draws attention to the entanglement of the shawl, the skull, and the shadow and indicate that they altogether encapsulate the material history of British imperialism and social concerns of tuberculosis, revealing textual ambivalence towards the "dampness" of the Victorian age.

Imperial Modernity and the Paradox of Kashmir Shawl

If the softness and delicacy of Kashmir shawl had always been conducive to Oriental fantasies, the unparalleled epidemic of Kashmir fashion not only entails an obsession with exoticism but causes the anxieties about the British industrial modernity by the exceptionality of its very materiality. Studying how the idea of empire is mediated and deployed in a variety of narratives on Kashmir shawls, Zutshi has cogently argued that these discourses not only domesticate the remote regions of imperial geography but also express an intensive preoccupation with the origin and the raw materiality of shawls. This paramount concern with the materiality of Kashmir is evident in the terms of the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar, a treaty declaring that under the reign of Queen Victoria, the Kashmir Valley, the home of Kashmir shawls, was made over to the Dogra ruler Gulab Singh. This treaty requires Gulab Singh to acknowledge "the supremacy of the British Government" and to "present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six

female) and three pairs of Kashmir shawls." From the terms of this treaty we can find that besides the three pairs of genuine Kashmir shawls, it is the raw materiality of Kashmir fabric, the "twelve shawl goats"—six male and six female—that informs the real concerns of the British Empire. In fact, this official agreement intent on procuring the source of Kashmir fabric can be seen as part of the imperial project of the East India Company. That is to say, it not only intended to export Indian commodities but also obtain the information and knowledge on the process involved in the production of these foreign goods. From the very beginning, the Company had realized that it needed to look into the very process of manufacture to achieve an effective control over the subcontinent and generate the greatest interest for the empire. As Zutshi indicates, the Society for the Improvement of British Wool was founded in Edinburgh in 1791 with the aim to foster this nationalist mission. There had even been an attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to ship the Kashmir goats to Britain to carry out an experiment for cross-breeding as early as in the late 18th century. As such, the result of these intensive investigations of the materiality of Kashmir shawls culminates in this 1865 article entitled "Cashmere Shawls: Of What Are They Made?" that Zutshi draws attention to in her study:

> [The shawl's] invaluable material might give us a thread, so to speak, of direct communication with those remote regions of Chinese Tartary and Eastern Turkestan, of which by the way . . . ordinary readers have learned little more than was known to the Italians of the thirteenth century, after the return of Marco Polo. ("Cashmere Shawls" 70)

Here the materiality of Kashmir shawls, compared to the great journey of Marco Polo, is said to provide a "thread" of communication with those foreign regions. But as what I've elaborated, the "invaluable material" not only serves as a "thread" of communication; rather,

the pursuit of knowledge concerning the materiality of shawls, this "thread" of communication, is actually directly linked with the British imperial agenda.

In fact, as Zutshi convincingly argues, the preoccupation of the British imperial project with the very materiality of Kashmir shawls embodies the anxieties about the British industrial modernity in a global imperial context. One particularly interesting example she provides is Harriet Martineau's "Shawls" published in *Household Words* in 1852. In this article Martineau compares the genuine Indian Kashmir shawl with other imitations produced by the modern manufacture in British textile towns. Despite her acknowledgement of the supremacy of the genuine "immutable" shawl, we can see that Martineau's purpose in this article is not to praise the refinement of Kashmir shawls but to defend the domestic production of imitation shawls, such as the Paisley shawls, and to affirm the triumph of English industrial modernization. According to Martineau, the modern industrial techniques, like the Jacquard loom, deployed by the domestic manufacture of shawls, extensively improve the original labor-intensive and time-consuming weaving process of Kashmir shawl. As such, the innovation of English industrialization, represented by the imitation shawls, holds a superior position over the primitive procedure of hand-woven Indian shawls. What's more, in this article she discusses the "patriotic desire" of the Queen and other aristocratic ladies to offer their Kashmir shawls as examples for the domestic manufacturers to improve their shawl designs and patterns. Indeed, according to the terms of the Treaty of Amritsar, Queen Victoria received genuine Kashmir shawls every year, but actually she preferred the Paisley shawls to encourage domestic industry and distributed them as presents to her royal relatives.[11] Thus, while the so-called "cashmere fever" entails the admiration of the exceptional qualities of genuine Kashmir shawl, it is also this unparalleled materiality of Kashmir goats that arouses the anxieties about the Britain's nationalist pride in its

11. Janet Rizvi and Monisha Ahmed, *Pashmina: the Kashmir shawl and Beyond* (2009), p. 227.

achievement of industrial modernization. As Zutshi suggests, "the acquisition of technical knowledge from the 'Orient' and the resultant production of imitations was now accompanied by the insertion of these 'new' goods into a narrative of British imperial modernity" (435).

By the time when the bustle (a framework used to over the hips used to support the back of the skirt) was introduced during the 1870s, however, the fashion of Kashmir shawl had been dramatically diminished, no less because of the prevalence of the cheap imitation shawls among working-class women. Devalued as outdated garments, shawls, either Indian, English or French, had been abandoned with their associations with the old values, either cut into coats and dolmans or left in drawers and turned into collection for sales.[12] Situated within this context, then, the green cashmere shawl that remains in the empty shell-like house of the Ramsays after Mrs. Ramsay's death becomes something more than merely an embodiment of Woolf's Victorian past. In this context it is reasonable to suggest that the stubborn materiality of Mrs. Ramsay's "cashmere" shawl, unlike the odds and ends in Mrs. Ramsay's dressing-table drawers that remind Mrs. McNab of her, registers an implicit questioning of the nationalist pride of the British industrial modernization. In this respect, the excess of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl seems to correspond to Woolf's critical reservation of the ever-renewing modernity, as Ellis has carefully noticed, with her ambivalent attachment to the Victorian culture. Thus, while we have found that Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl is extra-textually and metonymically linked with the material history of British imperialist rule and Oriental fantasies—a microcosm of British imperialism par excllence—its persistent materiality that remains throughout the wartime in "Time Passes" at the same time constitutes a critique of imperial modernity as a source of anxieties about the progress of industrialization.

12. Ibid.

Indeed, in this respect, it can be argued that Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl paradoxically participates in the critique of British imperialism that is evident in *To the Lighthouse*. The decline of the Ramsay family in "Time Passes," for instance, the typical pre-War English middle class benefitted from the working of British Empire, can be seen as Woolf's explicit criticism of the imperial ideology that lies at the heart of the whole Victorian culture. Superseded by the new generation of their children—"there was in all their minds a mute questioning of deference and chivalry, of the Bank of England and the Indian Empire"—the novel seems to anticipate a different narrative of the future in the end (9). What's more, Lily Briscoe's abstract, colorist painting of Mrs. Ramsay and James, along with the final revelation of her "vision," can also easily fit into the anti-imperial criticism of the novel. As mentioned, Janet Winston has made a case that Mrs. Ramsay can be taken as the embodiment of Queen Victoria throughout the novel. In the beginning we can see an explicit relationship of verisimilitude between Mrs. Ramsay and the portrait of the Queen.[13] At the end of the novel, however, in the hand of Lily's non-representational art Mrs. Ramsay, who stands for the Queen, is made into an abstraction in Lily's portrait, thus questioning the legitimacy and authority of imperial rule. In this way, as Winston suggests, if imperialism is the unconscious subject matter of *To the Lighthouse*, "then the question of how to represent imperialism is a meta-textual one, implicating the novel's own allegorical mode. In place of realist portraiture, the novel offers abstraction as a method of interrogating imperialism" (65). Thus by "re-visioning" Mrs. Ramsay and James—the synecdoche of Queen Victoria and the possible civil servant of Empire—as "the triangular purple shape," Lily's abstract portrait at the end seems to suggest an alternative way of seeing for readers to re-imagine and interrogate the working of British Empire.[14]

13. In fact, Winston in her essay argues that the portrait in the novel resembles Heinrich von Angeli's 1883 portrait of the Queen.
14. On Woolf's critique of imperialism in *To the Lighthouse*, see also Jeanette McVicker, "Reading *To the Lighthouse* as a Critique of the Imperial" (2001).

However, while Kashmir shawl became an outmoded garment at the apex of mass production of imitation shawl, the genuine Indian shawl conversely participated in the revival of Oriental art and the moral discourses that condemned the modern industrial manufacture as the corruption of bad taste in the second half of the 19th century. The authentic Indian Kashmir shawl, along with other Oriental artifacts, became an embodiment of Oriental beauty, unspoiled by the mass production of industrial modernity, registering nostalgia for a more tasteful, pre-industrial antiquity. Such a longing for an untouched past and taste in Oriental art were evident in the arts and crafts movement, an English aesthetic movement of the second half of the 19th century that initiated a new appreciation of the decorative arts in Europe. Protesting against the impoverishment of taste brought about by the industrialization of modernity, this aesthetic movement looked to the Oriental "primitive" artifacts and advocated an appreciation of taste and craftsmanship in its use of medieval or romantic forms for decoration. In 1861, William Morris, one of the major proponents of arts and crafts movement, founded a firm of interior decorators and manufacturers to cultivate the spirit of craftsmanship and foster the values of handicrafts. As such, Kashmir shawls, presumbly locked up in closets during the waning of its fashion, became once again the coveted artifacts for those design purist to exhibit their good taste.[15] In fact, as Zutshi suggests, such nostalgia for pre-industrial craftsmanship evidently drew on an earlier established orientalist tradition, dedicated to protecting the native Indian tradition from any external influences of modernization.[16] When we take into account this renewed Orientalist obsession with genuine Kashmir shawls, it is not incontestable to take the material residue of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl unambiguously as an implicit critique of imperial modernity, since even at the end of its social life this cashmere shawl is still encoded within the discourses of

15. Mary Dusenberry, *Flowers, Dragons & Pine Trees: Asian Textiles in the Spencer Museum of Art* (2004), p. 55.
16. Zutshi, p. 436.

Orientalism, available for a re-inscription of Orientalist impulse. It seems, ultimately, that the novel's critique of imperial working can only remain in this ambivalent position.

Indeed, as critics have acknowledged from the perspective of postcolonial studies, it is impossible to consider Woolf or her writing as an insulated entity that can take an absolutely anti-imperial stance outside the working of British Empire. Urmila Seshagiri, for instance, reading the use of racial tropes in both *To the Lighthouse* and Roger Fry's aesthetic theory in *Vision and Deisgn*, has cogently argued that the artistic experiments of the Bloomsbury actually depend much on their use of an essentialized racial difference. According to Seshagiri, it is Woolf's Orientalist depiction of Lily—"her little Chinese eyes"—as a model of non-white racial alterity that informs her radical literary innovations and refashions a new modern femininity. In this way an essentialized rendering of race becomes a constitutive part of Woolf's aesthetic modernism, both limiting and making possible Woolf's critique of imperial structure.[17] In this respect, while it is not incorrect to take the material excess of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as Woolf's reservation of industrial modernity, the inescapable "shade" of imperialism and Orientalism cast by the cashmere shawl undoubtedly undermines Ellis's reconciliatory reading of the two Woolfs, ending up with a paradox between the two sides of Woolf. Insomuch as Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl is metonymically linked with the revival of the taste in primitive artifacts and craftsmanship, it serves simultaneously as a questioning of imperial modernity and as an Orientalist obsession. As such, we find an irresolvable paradox of Kashmir shawl that results in an inner conflict in Woolf's modernist innovations. Through tracing the extra-textual material history of Kashmir shawl, we thus come to understand that any possible resistance against imperial working in the text would be ultimately re-inscribed within this larger socio-

17. Building upon Seshagiri's criticism, James F. Wurtz further links the issues of imperialism with questions of aesthetics, arguing that Woolf's favoring of Lily's non-representational art as an aesthetic critique of imperialism in *To the Lighthouse* can only be incomplete, no less because "resistance to empire is . . . a constitutive part of the imperial structure" (98). See Wurtz, "'I have had my vision': Empire and the Aesthetic in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*" (2010).

economic structure of colonization and imperialism that permeate among any subjects of imperial power. Thus, while Woolf's aesthetic modernity has long been established as a landmark achievement, the working of imperialism and Orientalism inscribed in the material history of Kashmir shawl in turn marks the limitation of her artistic innovation as a social critique.

Chapter Three

Folding Time: Affective Texture of Memory and the Impersonal Aesthetics

In my last chapter I argue that Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl embodies a paradox, that is, an irresolvable dilemma between its questioning of British imperial modernity and its participation in the Orientalist aesthetic discourse. In this respect, my reading of cashmere shawl affirms the ambivalence of imperialism and Orientalism in Woolf's modernist aesthetics, leading to an ineluctable conflict between two sides of Woolf. As my previous chapter suggests, critics such as Jeanette McVicker, Urmila Seshagiri and James F. Wurtz have cogently argued that the engagement with the working of British imperialism and the discourse of Orientalism are constituents of Bloomsbury aesthetics and Woolf's writing. Tracing the material history of Kashmir shawl rather than analyzing the novel through the lens of postcolonial studies, my thing-centered reading comes to a similar conclusion about Woolf's embeddedness within imperial structure. Taking this understanding as a point of departure, this chapter attempts to provide an alternative approach to the notion of aesthetics and the materiality of cashmere shawl by asking: can we approach Woolf's writing outside the established framework of Bloomsbury aesthetic theory? Is there any other possibilities to understand Woolf's aesthetics in *To the Lighthouse* if we take Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl not so much as an unfolded molar form as a folded molecular force that enfolds with material forces in the novel? Can we have a different take on the materiality of cashmere shawl that foregrounds affectivity and thus reveals "the *texture* of a body" (*The Fold* 47)?

Indeed, both Seshagiri's and Wurtz's readings couple Woolf's writing with the formalist aesthetics of Bloomsbury art to argue for the irony entailed in Woolf's aesthetic resistance to British imperialism. While Seshagiri locates Woolf's essentializing propensity in her rendering of Lily's eye as Chinese, Wurtz draws attention to the problematic

idealization of Mrs. Ramsay's queenly beauty and demonstrates how the correlation between the aesthetics and the novel's anti-imperialism casts doubt on the efficacy of resistance in both Lily's non-representational painting and Woolf's modernist aesthetics. In fact, if their readings are premised on the understanding of aesthetics as the specific aesthetic theory of Bell and Fry, my thing-centered reading in the previous chapter is similarly based upon a fundamental presupposition, that is, the authenticity of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl. It is on this basis that Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a genuine Indian shawl embodies the paradox I mentioned above. But an undeniable fact is that it is indeed possible that her cashmere shawl is merely a British Paisley shawl, since nowhere in the novel we are informed that her green shawl is a genuine Indian artifact, despite the Ramsays' friends in eastern countries, as we are told by Mrs. McNab's memory. Taking into consideration Mrs. Ramsay's financial worries—"being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be"—and the prevalence of imitation shawl during the late 19th century, we have reasons to question the authenticity of her shawl. With this self-suspicion and self-deconstruction, however, what follows is by no means a return to the typical postmodernist play of signifiers that rejects any referential relations between word and things. Rather, this chapter aims to provide an alternative way to understand Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl and to open up the possibilities of teasing out the "thingness" of objects in the broadest sense: how to enfold Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a molecular force and recuperate the texture of memory?

Beyond Individualized Memories

"What I thought was this: if art is based on thought, what is the transmuting process?" So is Woolf's question when she was working on *To the Lighthouse* (*D3* 102). As a memorial about her family, her childhood, and her Victorian past, *To the Lighthouse* is a novel about art

and life, past and future, memory and time. In her dairy on June 27th, 1925, Woolf wrote: "I am making up 'To the Lighthouse'—the sea is to be heard all through it" (*D3* 34). Not only the murmuring of the sea is evocative of the breaking of the waves on the granite of St. Ives, every corner of the novel is tinged with the "heavenly bliss" of Woolf's childhood memory in Talland House. Particularly, as one of the most important Victorian imagery in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl is reminiscent of Woolf's memory of her mother. In her autobiographical essay "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf calls her writing of *To the Lighthouse* as a psychoanalytic therapy:

> It is perfectly true that she obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four. Then one day walking round Tavistock Square I made up, as I sometimes make up my books, To the Lighthouse; in a great, apparently involuntary, rush. One thing burst into another. Blowing bubbles out of a pipe gives the feeling of the rapid crowd of ideas and scenes which blew out of my mind, so that my lips seemed syllabling of their own accord as I walked. What blew the bubbles? Why then? I have no notion. But I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her.
>
> I suppose that I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest. (*MOB* 81)

For Woolf writing *To the Lighthouse* is like a process of catharsis. She needs to confront the haunting of her parents and reconcile her Victorian past through writing her own childhood. Not unlike Lily, who dips into the paint of the past and tries to "smooth out something she

had been given years ago folded up" (*TTL* 162), Woolf would similarly dip into the ink of the past to unfold the shawl of the memory and transmute her childhood into art.

As Woolf puts in "A Sketch of the Past," her childhood memory of Talland House in St. Ives is "the most important of all my memories" (*MOB* 64). Woolf begins this autobiographical essay with the memory of her mother on a moving vehicle to somewhere she cannot be sure. Being on her mother's lap and close to her clothes, she can see vividly the colorful pattern of anemones and feel the texture of her mother's dress. It is not important whether they are on a train or an ominous, whether they are returning from or heading to St. Ives; what matters, instead of those specific details, lies in the concrete feelings and sensations that lead to her childhood memories of St. Ives: her memory of lying half asleep and half awake in the nursery, of hearing successive breaking of the waves, of hearing the acorn on the blind being drawn across the floor—"of feeling the pure ecstasy I can conceive" (65). As Woolf describes, those memories in St. Ives, so strong and vivid, "can still be more real than the present moment. . . . Now if this is so, is it not possible—I often wonder—that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence?" For Woolf the past is not something that is either completely forgotten or accurately remembered in her mind. Rather, like "an avenue lying behind; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions" (67), the past is distilled into an avenue or a ribbon with a myriad of sensations that give her the "pure ecstasy" of St. Ives. If Woolf in her prose repeatedly writes about her life in St. Ives, it is no less because its sensation and intensity that draws Woolf again and again to transmute this "reality" into her art: "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'" (142).

But in her attempt to describe these scenes "made of something permanent," these proofs of "reality," Woolf often feels the limitations of language and admits that it depends much on luck to succeed in this task. The intensity of the "pure ecstasy" of St. Ives makes Woolf withdraw from a chronological narration of her childhood memory but turn to a visual depiction of what she saw and felt at the moment of writing. Taking "scene making" as her way of marking the past, Woolf assumes her sister's role as a painter to depict these sensuous moments in an impressionist way: "If I were a painter I should paint these first impressions in pale yellow, silver, and green. There was the pale yellow blind; the green sea; and the silver of the passion flowers" (66). The intensity of those moments in St. Ives demands her to capture those microperceptions in a highly sensory language that directly appeals to the eye without an accurate description of details. In fact, far from a photography-like realism, Woolf's "scene making" not only gives a series of painterly scenes tinged with feelings. As Woolf describes them not so much pictures as "color-and-sound memories," her sensory moments of St. Ives not only induce the colorist depictions of the scenery but also enfold the rhythmic flows of sounds that are indistinguishable from the sights. With the "caw of rooks" falling through "an elastic, gummy air" and weaving into the breaking of the waves, the result is a sensual extravagance of "color-and-sound memories" that enfolds all the infinitesimal sensations:

> The apples were on a level with one's head. The gardens gave off a murmur of bees; the apples were red and gold; there were also pink flowers; and grey and silver leaves. The buzz, the croon, the smell, all seemed to press voluptuously against some membrane; not to burst it; but to hum round one such a complete rapture of pleasure that I stopped, smelt; looked. But again I cannot describe that rapture. It was rapture rather than ecstasy. (66)

In composing her autobiographical essay, Woolf further discovers a possible form for her memorial notes, that is, "to make them include the present—at least enough of the present to serve as platform to stand upon" (75). Central to *To the Lighthouse* is the working of memory that bridges the forgotten but permanent past and the present moment of here and now. The third part of the novel "The Lighthouse" is concerned with the question how the artist Lily, along with James and Cam, dips into the repositories of past to refashion their memories of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay so as to bring about a reconciliation between the present and the past. Despite their "compact to fight tyranny to the death," both James and Cam come to realize the hidden side of their father that has long been obscured underneath his egoistical gesture of demanding sympathy. Although James's ultimate identification with Mr. Ramsay remains open to question, through their refashioning of the past we do perceive a different picture of Mr. Ramsay, so elusive and mysterious that we cannot conclusively pinpoint his personality. Likewise, to overcome the obstacles of male dominance (Tansley's "women can't paint, can't write") and complete her painting, Lily needs to rehearse the memories of the Ramsays to reconsider that "essential" thing of their marriage (51), to get hold of the "secret sense" of Mrs. Ramsay (161), and to give Mr. Ramsay the sympathy she does not want to in the first place. As Melba Cuddy-Keane ingeniously indicates, although Lily remembers the solution to her painting before she resumes her task—"Move the tree to the middle" (122)—she must "close the gap between knowing (how to finish her picture) and feeling (sympathy for Mr. Ramsay), on the one hand, and, on the other, doing (acting for herself)" (Cuddy-Keane 2015, 65). It is through her dipping into the repositories of the past, "tunneling her way into her picture, into the past" that she comes to her vision at the end (142).

In the above-mentioned essay "Movement, Space, and Embodied Cognition in *To the Lighthouse*," Cuddy-Keane, combining the recent post-cognitivist studies on embodied

cognition with narrative analysis, provides an illuminating close reading of the embodied and enacted experience of Lily and Cam and argues that these descriptions function as an integral part to the plot rather than merely a background. With her scrupulous attention to textual details, she cogently demonstrates that it is through their bodily movements and physical interactions with the environment that Lily and Cam are able to negotiate with the past and to overcome the blocking obstacle of the past, opening up new possibilities at the end of the novel. By the same token, Patricia Waugh in her essay on Woolf's thinking of the soul draws on the notion of distributed cognition and argues that Woolf banishes the closed interiority of individual consciousness in order to recapture it as "something more closely resembling an enactivist, extended or distributed idea of mind" (23). While both essays compellingly demonstrate how characters in *To the Lighthouse* refashions their memories of the past through their sensory-motor activities in the physical world, Waugh interestingly notes that in the novel memory works through the tense of "future anteriority" and unwittingly puts that "[m]emory acts as artist and curator at once, shaping, discerning, and selecting" (38). Despite her focus on the distributed or enactivist cognition of each character, Waugh's unintentional remark here takes memory itself, rather than the individual character of remembering, as the subject of the novel, inviting an alternative approach to the issues of memory in general: If Mrs. Ramsay's shawl as a mnemonic object is still tied with an individual character as the subject of memory, is it possible to take Mrs. Ramsay's shawl not as a molar form of memories but as the impersonal Memory of virtuality itself? In what sense can we say that the shawl is an event of impersonal Memory that is enveloped and expressed by each individual character as a Leibnizian monad?[1] Can we see Woolf's memory of St. Ives or Cam's memory of the Isle of Skye not so much a "childhood memory" as "a childhood

1. See how Deleuze replaces the Cartesian Essentialism with Leibnizian Mannerism in *The Fold*, p. 52-54.

block"?[2] As Woolf puts in her diary, "This will be childhood, but it must not be my childhood" (*D3* 236). If the Ramsays' voyage to the lighthouse is less about "recovering the past" than about "revisioning future possibility," as Cuddy-Keane suggests (63), then is it possible that the memory of the past, the present of here-and-now, and the revisioning of the future have always already been folded together within the event of the shawl itself through the tense of "future anteriority"?

The Affective Texture of Impersonal Memory

Transmuting St. Ives into the Isle of Skye in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf laid out the tripartite structure of the novel in her working notes for the book. She describes the structure of the novel as "Two blocks joined by a corridor" (see the appendix). The first and the third blocks of the book will be bridged by the corridor of "Time Passes," the passing of one night that encapsulates the duration of ten-year lapse. Set in the empty, deserted house of the Ramsays, devoid of any mediation of human consciousness, "Time Passes" seems to assume an impersonal omniscient perspective that attempts to register the passage of the time itself. Apart from the occasional human presence at the beginning and the end of the section, what dominates this section is the succession of night after night, the down-pouring of the darkness and silence with certain stray, fumbling airs creeping into the house, "rubbing, snuffling, iterating and reiterating their questions—'Will you fade? Will you perish?'" (106). Without any presence of human beings, clothes left in wardrobes still "[keep] the human shape and in the emptiness [indicate] how once they were filled and animated; how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking-glass had held a face" (106). As Mr. Ramsay meditates in the first section of the novel, "the very stone one kinks with one's boot will

2. The distinction between "the childhood memory" and "a childhood block" is developed from the contrast between the point-system of memory and the line-system (or block-system) of becoming in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 291-98. What follows in this chapter is to demonstrate how the shawl is not so much a molar object of childhood memory as a molecular block or a force for becoming.

outlast Shakespeare" (32), all those human events (the abrupt death of Mrs. Ramsay, the tragedy of Prue's childbirth, the sacrifice of Andrew) are put into brackets, serving merely as meaningless markers to contrast with "the fertility, the insensibility of nature" (113). Weighed down by the fumbling airs, the empty house is left like a "shell on a sand-hill to fill with dry salt grains": "The sauce-pan had rusted and the mat decayed. Toads had nosed their way in. Idly, aimlessly, the swaying shawl swung to and fro" (112).

Borrowing from Erich Auerbach's famous question that opens his classic reading of the novel, we can ask the same question here: who is speaking in this section? Who is the narrator? Satoshi Nishimura, countering the traditional categorization of "Time Passes" as zero focalization with an omniscient narrator, argues that several passages in "Time Passes" are actually governed by "inanimate focalization," that is, "the fictive consciousness of objects personified covertly as focalizers" (32). Taking the "trifling airs" as an example of the personified focalizer, Nishimura suggests that they actually acquire a form of displaced subjectivity, blurring the distinction between narrator and focalizer and further extending the boundaries of narrative intersubjectivity. In this regard, the inanimate focalizer-narrator in "Time Passes" is similar to Auerbach's "nameless spirits" that are internal to the narrative and "capable of penetrating the depths of the human soul" (532), resulting in what he calls "the multipersonal representation of consciousness" (536). If this is the case, what particularly draws the attention of the inanimate narrator-focalizer is the unravelling of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl:

> Once only a board sprang on the landing; once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture, as after centuries of quiescence, a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley, one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro. Then again peace descended; and the shadow

wavered; light bent to its own image in adoration on the bedroom wall. . . (106)

Indeed, what is repeatedly focalized in this section is the loosening of the fold of the shawl—"another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed" (109). Compared to the crashing of the rock into the valley, here the the loosening of the shawl breaks centuries of quiescence with a roar and a rupture. Facing this baffling comparison between the rending of the rock and the unravelling of the shawl, in fact, we have two different approaches to this scenario. If, as Nishimura suggests, the personified inanimate focalizer-narrator is homodiegetic, living in the same world as other characters, then the loosening of the shawl can be taken figuratively as the counterpart of the abrupt death of Mrs. Ramsay. In this understanding, tinged with a symbolic meaning and colored by an elegiac tone, the whole section of "Time Passes" mourns not only the death of Mrs. Ramsay, but the whole Victorian age.

Indeed, this figurative way of reading is how most readers would interpret this passage. Why is it so? On the one hand, it is because the cashmere shawl serves as a synecdoche of Mrs. Ramsay in the novel. On the other, it is because of the intimacy between the narrator and the characters, successfully developed by the interpersonal narrative of the novel, that we readers are able to immediately associate the unraveling of the shawl with the death of Mrs. Ramsay. But as what I have suggested before, if this is the dominant reading of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl, is it possible to take the shawl not as a metaphor but as a "matter-fold" that can enfold other material forces here, like the rock that rends itself, the interplay of shadow and light, and even the roar, the rupture? Is there a different take on the materiality of cashmere shawl that can reveal the "texture" of impersonal Memory?

In order to develop this alternative reading that attends to the very materiality of the shawl, we have to once again turn to Woolf's description of her childhood memory of St.

Ives in "A Sketch of the Past." Writing about the "pure delight" that St. Ives gives her, in fact, Woolf does not recount her childhood memories as a subject of remembering. As we have seen, in her attempt to describe the "pure delight" of St. Ives, the intensity of those "color-and-sound memories" forces Woolf to resort to highly sensual imageries to convey the very sensation of the moment of here-and-now: "In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past; but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present" (*MOB* 98). For Woolf the past exists independently of the mind as "an avenue lying behind; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions" (67) or a cold stream: "Let me then, like a child advancing with bare feet into a cold river, descend again into that stream" (98). Not so much a thinking subject actively evoking the past as merely one impersonal vessel responding to other inhuman forces in the configuration, Woolf astonishingly brings out the very materiality of the "pure delight" of St. Ives, disclosing the affective texture of her childhood memory:

> St. Ives gave us all the same that "pure delight" which is before my eyes at this very moment. The lemon-colored leaves on the elm tree; the apples in the orchard; the murmur and rustle of the leaves makes me pause here, and think how many other than human forces are always at work on us. While I write this the light glows; an apple becomes a vivid green; I respond all through me; but how? Then a little owl [chatters] under my window. Again, I respond. Figuratively I could snapshot what I mean by some images; I am a porous vessel afloat on sensation; a sensitive plate exposed to invisible rays; and so on. (133)[3]

Shifting from the past tense to the present tense in the first sentence, this passage are imbued not only with sensory extravagances but impersonal intensity and sensation that preserve St.

3. My interpretation of this passage is deeply indebted to my advisor Professor Hsiao-hung Chang's original essay, "Snapshocking Virginia Woolf" (2010).

Ives in the pure past in a Bergsonian sense. Becoming "a porous vessel afloat on sensation" or even "a sensitive plate exposed to invisible rays," Woolf is forced to respond to the lemon-colored leaves, the apples in the orchard, the murmur and rustle and all those "other than human forces" working on her. Neither a remembering subject nor an inert object, Woolf is turned into "a porous vessel," "a sensitive plate," a body of affectivity, that is both affected by impersonal forces ("I respond all through me") and affecting them ("Figuratively I could snapshot what I mean by some images"). Bringing into play the visual and the tactile, the "pure delight" of St. Ives is differentiated into a Leibnizian inflection line of "pure light" shot through with other impersonal material forces (the leaves, the apples, the murmur and rustle, etc.). The apple, turning from an unfolded form into an impersonal enfolding force, literally enters into a differential relationship of the wave-particle of light and become "a vivid green." In this impersonal force field of St. Ives, all molar forms are distributed into differential relationships of various molecular forces, both affecting and affected with each other. As Woolf puts it elsewhere in this essay, "I am hardly aware of myself, but of the sensation. I am only the container of the feeling of ecstasy, of the feeling of rapture" (67).

Here Woolf's "snapshot" of St. Ives reminds us of Deleuze's remarkable equation between image and movement, matter and light in his reworking of Bergson in *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*: "The identity of the image and movement stems from the identity of matter and light. The image is movement, just as matter is light" (60). Drawing on Bergson's notion of "duration" (durée) as the real heterogeneous temporality, Deleuze questions our tendency to homogenize the duration-time through space (second, minute, hour, etc., as homogenous spacial measurements of time) and argues that in opposition to this fake movement in space, true movement is the movement of duration-time itself. Building upon this radical conceptualization of movement and time, Deleuze further frees consciousness from the phenomenological precept—"all consciousness is consciousness *of* something"—

and challenges Husserl's presupposition of a transcendental subjectivity. He follows Bergson in insisting that "[t]hings are luminous by themselves without anything illuminating them: all consciousness is something, it is indistinguishable from the thing, that is from the image of light" (60-61). Here "things" should not be taken as material objects perceived by a transcendental consciousness. Rather, both things and consciousness are images of light that emerge from the movement of duration-time in a zone of indistinction. In this way Deleuze thoroughly does away the dominating consciousness of transcendental subjectivity and frees image from its traditional representational regime, revolutionizing our presumption of subjectivity as the center of consciousness and of image as representative of something. Without anything hidden behind the image, there is no essential difference between movement-images and flowing-matters, since they are all entailed in the true movement of duration-time: "The material universe, the plane of immanence, is the machine assemblage of movement-images" (59).

Reading Woolf's writing of the "pure delight" of St. Ives through this ontological reconfiguration of temporality and materiality, we realize that her childhood memory of St. Ives is not an individualized memory so much as an impersonal memory of image. Instead of a personalized childhood surrounding a center of consciousness, in this material universe of the wave-particle "delight" of St. Ives, there exists no absolute thinking subject or insulated objects. As the apple becomes a flowing matter of "vivid green," Woolf becomes a body of affectivity intensively shot through with other molecular forces. It is only through this conceptualization that we are able to take *To the Lighthouse* as an unfurling fold and to appreciate its texture of affective materiality in its unique manners of folding:

> When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its

> caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again. But in the very lull of this loving caress, as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder; another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed. (108-9)

In this passage we can see that the inanimate focalizer-narrator once again zooms in on the unravelling of the shawl. At the first sight we might wonder why it is "in the very lull of this loving caress" that the rock is rent asunder and the fold of the shawl is loosened. In a traditional figurative reading, the loosening of the shawl symbolically represents another abrupt death in the novel. The stark contrast between the bliss of Prue's marriage and the tragedy of her childbirth is even intensified by the indifference of the gender caress of the Lighthouse. But in this regard we not only leave the question unsolved but also neglect the interplay of different material forces here. The stroke of the Lighthouse is not merely a ray of light but "the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight." It not only illuminates the darkness but traces the pattern of the carpet, lingers stealthily and lays itself with authority. Only when we understand how the visual image of the light is folded into a tactile image of caress can we appreciate how all the molar forms are turned into molecular forces and how the light, the rock and the fold are woven together in this material universe of affective texture.

If the sense of touch is folded into the visual imagery of light, like those "color-and-sound memories" of St. Ives, the sounds in surroundings of the house are also woven into the "swaying mantle of silence" as well:

> Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of

> the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence. (106)

Like the murmuring of the sea that has been enfolded throughout the novel, all these sounds—"the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout"—should not be taken as some divisible units that are accumulated from the surroundings of the house. Rather, like the chiaroscuro of light and darkness, silence and sound do not form an absolute contrast but enter into a differential relation of sound waves. In contrast to a binary imagination of silence and sound, it is "the swaying mantle of silence" with its textile imagery that is unfolded as a string of sounds, both inanimate and animate, human and nonhuman, in which the rhythmic, harmonic movement of the fabric of swaying silence emerges. Thus, if the stroke of the Lighthouse can be understood as a tactile material force and brought into play with other molecular forces, similarly, the materiality of the enfolded sounds can be registered in the very touch of the sound waves:

> But slumber and sleep though it might there came later in the summer ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt, which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. (109)

Here the acoustic of "ominous sounds" in the summer is not a question of being heard and thus has nothing to do with a narrator, either human or inhuman, animate or inanimate. Instead of a multipersonal representation of summer sounds, it is an impersonal force that turn the acoustic sounds into the tactile of sound waves, revealing the material energy of the sounds in the loosened shawl and the cracked tea-cups. As "the rooks cawing is part of the waves breaking" in Woolf's "color-and-sound memories" (*MOB* 66), the tactility of sound waves brings the shawl and the tea-cups into a differential relation and make all being,

animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman, literally what Jane Bennett calls a "vibrant materiality" in this immanent plane of material universe (*Vibrant Matter* viii).[4]

The Event of Cashmere Shawl and Cam's "Becoming-Child"

In "Woolf's Un/Folding(s): The Artist and the Event of the Neo-Baroque," Laci Mattison, following the Whiteheadian-Deleuzian thinking of event in *The Fold*, has attempted to interpret *To the Lighthouse* through the "event" of the neo-Baroque to reopen the question of aesthetics in Woolf's writing. Taking Mrs. Ramsay's shawl as one of her examples, Mattison distinguishes two approaches to the event of the shawl. On the one hand, the shawl as an "object" is unquestionably one occurrence of the event "in" the text. But on the other hand, besides this commonsensical understanding, the shawl as an "image" (echoing my previous discussion on movement-images and flowing-matters) is an event "of" the novel, "because it *textually* patterns the rhythm of the narrative in which it has a particular duration" (98). In other words, while in the former, the shawl is merely taken as an incident that happens in a linear progression of novelistic time, the shawl as an image becomes an "event" in a radical sense that folds, unfolds, and refolds the impersonal time with fundamentally unpredictable results (repetition with difference). Following this thinking of event, Mattison further suggests that on a larger scale the whole section "Time Passes" can be taken as a central fold of the event of the novel that envelopes both "The Window" and "The Lighthouse." Since in this short piece Mattison only hints at this direction without providing more elaborations, building upon her preliminary interpretation, I would indicate that the central fold of the novel is no less than Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl. As Deleuze repeatedly evokes Joe Bousquet's "wound" to explain the concept of event—"My wound

4. In this regard it might be interesting to compare Woolf's description of sounds and the notion of "vibrant materiality" with the recent innovative technology of "motion microscope" that can magnify and visualize any barely perceivable movements, like breaths, heartbeats, or even the sound waves bouncing off a bag of chips, turning everyday objects into microphones. See Michael Rubinstein's talk on Ted that introduces this new technology, "See Invisible Motion, Hear Silent Sounds."

existed before me, I was born to embody it" (*The Logic of Sense* 148)—I suggest that the fold of the shawl, instead of being subordinated to any particular subject of remembering, becomes an event of impersonal Memory that weaves three sections of the novel together through its implication of impersonal time and Cam's "becoming-child."

As we have seen, by freeing the novel from a figurative reading and relocate it on a plane of immanence, we discover the rich affective texture of all those material details lurking behind the symbolic veil of the shawl. While in a traditional figurative reading or even a narratological reading, the fold of the shawl as a mnemonic device, that is, an object of molar form, is always bound up with a remembering subject, my molecular-force reading points out that the shawl in "Time Passes" is actually differentiated into a molecular force, intersecting with the flowing matter of the rock, the wave-particle of the light and the sound waves of the mantle of silence. In this regard, we find that this scenario actually envelops Cam's childhood memory of Mrs. Ramsay's soothing lullaby in the nursery scene in "The Window." Because of its idiosyncratic style, a full quotation is necessary:

> "Well then," said Mrs. Ramsay, "we will cover it up," and they all watched her go to the chest of drawers, and open the little drawers quickly one after another, and not seeing anything that would do, she quickly took her own shawl off and wound it round the skull, round and round and round, and then she came back to Cam and laid her head almost flat on the pillow beside Cam's and said how lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; it was like a beautiful mountain such as she had seen abroad, with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes and . . . She could see the words echoing as she spoke them rhythmically in Cam's mind, and Cam was repeating after her how it was like a mountain, a bird's nest, a garden, and there were little antelopes, and her

> eyes were opening and shutting, and Mrs. Ramsay went on speaking still more monotonously, and more rhythmically and more nonsensically, how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots and antelopes and gardens, and everything lovely, she said, raising her head very slowly and speaking more and more mechanically, until she sat upright and saw that Cam was asleep. (93)

Except the pause in the middle, we can find that this whole passage is written in one sentence with a rhythmic flowing style, not unlike Mrs. Ramsay's lullaby here. Enwrapping the bull's skull with her green cashmere shawl, Mrs. Ramsay comes to lay her head besides Cam and assures her how lovely the skull with its draped shawl becomes, how it is like a bird's nest, how it is like a beautiful mountain with valleys, flowers, birds, goats and antelopes. For Cam the shawl that covers the horrid skull is now turned into a series of rustic imageries and entangled with Mrs. Ramsay's tender lullaby. Returning to this scene of maternal lulling, we notice that it is this series of rustic imageries of the shawl that is evoked in "Time Passes." But what is at stake here is not how an ingenious writer Woolf is in terms of her sustained use of figurative language. Rather, the point is to realize that Mrs. Ramsay's shawl in Cam's memory, instead of remaining an object of childlike imagination in "The Window," is folded into the impersonal force of nature in "Time Passes." Entering into a differential relationship within the force field of the empty house of the Ramsays, the shawl is refolded as an impersonal roaring in a valley: "once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture . . . a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley, one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro" (*TTL* 106). Thus the roaring of the shawl and the rending of the rock is never a random juxtaposition between the textile and the nature. Instead, what the fold of the shawl envelops is not only the horrid skull but Cam's childhood memory of Mrs. Ramsay's lulling and soothing.

Only when we articulate this folding of Cam's childhood memory (in relation to the impersonal force of nature in "Time Passes") can we liberate the shawl from its subordination to remembering subjects and understanding it as an "event" of impersonal Memory or a "childhood block." As the loosening of the fold of the shawl unfolds Cam's childhood memory, in the third section of the novel "The Lighthouse" the impersonal force of the shawl further refolds Cam in her backward gaze over the sea at the island of her childhood. In this sense, while Cam's childhood memory of her father is evoked in the beginning of their voyage, she ends up not so much with recovering the past as "becoming-child":

> She gazed at the immense expanse of the sea. The island had grown so small that it scarcely looked like a leaf any longer. It looked like the top of a rock which some big wave would cover. Yet in its frailty were all those paths, those terraces, those bedrooms—all those innumerable things. But as, just before sleep, things simplify themselves so that only one of all the myriad details has power to assert itself, so, she felt, looking drowsily at the island, all those paths and terraces and bedrooms were fading and disappearing, and nothing was left but a pale blue censer swinging rhythmically this way and that across her mind. It was a hanging garden; it was a valley, full of birds, and flowers, and antelopes . . . She was falling asleep. (166)

When Cam dabbles her fingers in the ice-cold water over one side of the boat, "a fountain of joy at the change, at the escape, at the adventure" spurts up from her hand (154). The whole voyage is an escape from the island, the family life of her childhood, and the dominating presence of her father. But as the island is getting smaller and smaller and losing all its sharpness, those innumerable things of the domestic life on the island are reduced to a "pale blue censer swinging rhythmically this way and that across her mind. It was a hanging garden; it was a valley, full of birds, and flowers, and antelopes . . ." Drawing attention to this

neglected textual detail, we find that this passage clearly repeats the natural imageries in Mrs. Ramsay's lullaby. But here Cam is not a subject consciously trying to recover her childhood memory. Nor those natural imageries attached to the shawl are mnemonic devices of Cam's childhood memory. Instead, it is this blue censer swinging rhythmically that acts as a singular line of becoming and refolds Cam in a childhood block, luring her into a becoming-child in the folding of Mrs. Ramsay's shawl.

As Woolf's childhood memory of St. Ives becomes the affective texture of "pure delight" in her writing, Cam's childhood memory is similarly refolded as a "refrain" of Mrs. Ramsay's soothing lullaby that frees her from the role of a submissive daughter under the shadow of Mr. Ramsay.[5] It is in this sense that the voyage to the Lighthouse for Cam becomes not so much an incident of reconciliation with her father as an event of becoming-child in which she is implicated in the folding of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl. As Deleuze and Guattari formulates in *What is Philosophy*, "the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensation, a pure being of sensations" (*What Is Philosophy* 167). With nothing to do with personal memory and individual perception or affection, the goal of any form of art for Deleuze and Guattari is to create a "bloc of sensation" that preserves the impersonal affect and percept in its pure duration (durée). Like Cézanne's oft-commented enigma, "Man absent from but entirely within the landscape," percept is "nonhuman landscapes of nature," while affect is "nonhuman becomings of man" (169). Thus in *To the Lighthouse*, with the breaking of the waves expressing the percept of the Isle of Skye, it is the fold of cashmere shawl that envelops the threefold structure of the novel and creates a childhood block for becoming. Implicating both the impersonal forces of nature in "Time Passes" and the soothing presence

5. As Deleuze and Guattari writes, "[t]he child's refrain, which is not music, forms a block with the becoming-child of music" (*A Thousand Plateau* 300). See also their discussion on the concept of "refrain," pp. 310-50.

of Mrs. Ramsay in "The Window," in this final part of the novel the fold of shawl creates the affect of childhood in Cam's becoming-child. Their boat in the voyage to the Lighthouse thus becomes a body of affectivity, "a porous vessel afloat on sensation," enveloped by the impersonal forces of the percept of the sea and the affect of childhood. In this regard, if the Ramsays's voyage to the Lighthouse is less about recovering the past than about revisioning the future, then, it is the folding movement of cashmere shawl as an impersonal force of becoming-child that undoes James and Cam's compact to fight against tyranny, opening up possibilities for a new relationship between James, Cam and Mr. Ramsay.

As Woolf puts in her original plan for *To the Lighthouse*, "[i]t might contain all characters boiled down; & childhood; & then this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to do by my friends, the flight of time, & the consequent break of unity in my design" (*D3* 36). Indeed, while the fold of cashmere shawl expresses the affect of childhood with characters boiled down across the while novel, this "impersonal thing" find its way into the center of the novel, "Time Passes," the section that takes up only about several pages but has been acclaimed as one of the most innovative styles in Woolf's writing with its lyrical rhythm and its sharp contrast of temporality between human culture and inhuman nature. Writing with "dashing fluency" but self-doubt—"Is it nonsense, is it brilliance?"—Woolf calls "this impersonal thing" as the "most difficult abstract piece of writing—I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless & featureless with nothing to cling to" (*D3* 76). Similar to Cézanne's enigma, in fact, the task here is no less than the attempt to express the "nonhuman landscapes of nature," to describe "the world seen without a self," as Woolf puts in *The Waves*. Thus while from a narratological perspective, either Auerbach's "nameless spirits" or Nishimura's inanimate focalizer-narrator is susceptible to a human-centered figurative reading of intersubjectivity, the narrator of "Time Passes" is arguably not so much any human or nonhuman subject (thus not a question of intersubjectivity) but the

impersonal time itself. It is only in the "passage of time" that the world can be seen without a self, that human being can be at the same time absent and present in a landscape, and that what Deleuze and Guattari call the "nonorganic life of things," (180) or the "nonhuman forces of the cosmos" (183) can be expressed in a work of art as a bloc of sensation. "But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave" (*TTL* 104). What "Time Passes" is truly about does not lie in the condensation of ten-year lapse nor in the sharp contrast between human culture and inhuman nature. Rather, not unlike the "pure delight" of St. Ives, what can break the unity of Woolf's design is no less than the concrete duration of "the pool of Time" (*TTL* 114), "durée" as the impersonal force of becoming. As Deleuze suggests, the time of event is the potential time of Aion, comparable to the real time of durée.[6] It is only in this sense that we are able to understand the event of the shawl itself through the tense of "future anteriority." No longer a mnemonic object of a molar form in a linear progression of time, the fold of the shawl has always already been freed from the actualized personal memories and differentiated into a molecular force in the impersonal force of time. The fold of the cashmere shawl as an event is at the same time the fold of impersonal Memory and impersonal time.

The Aesthetics of Impersonality

"But in the very lull of this loving caress, as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder; another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed" (*TTL* 109). As the central fold of impersonal memory and time in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl "complicates" the natural forces of "Time Passes," Cam's childhood memory in "The Window," and her becoming-child in "The Lighthouse" through the tense of

6. See Deleuze's distinction between Chronos as the linear temporality and Aion as the potential time of event in *The Logic of Sense*, p. 77. See also *A Thousand Plateau*, p. 262.

future anterior. In this way, the unravelling of the shawl is not merely a metaphor or a figurative rendering of the tragic deaths; more profoundly, it is the impersonal durée itself that enfolds the shawl into an entanglement of the molecular forces of wave-particle light. The fold of shawl becomes a "matter-fold," turning all molar beings into this confluence of material flows. In this sense, the "pool of Time," the passage of time, that Mrs. McNab and Mrs. Bast try to prevent, expresses a duality of "the fertility, the insensibility of nature": as an impersonal force of nature, it implicates all our personal memories, all the unfolded beings in time—"Nothing now withstood them; nothing said no to them. Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage" (113)—but at the same time it is in this confluence of flows that cancels out all the difference and effaces our individual identities. Thus, facing this impersonal durée of life, even Mrs. Ramsay is aware of its sinister force, and feels "this thing that she called life terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce on you if you gave it a chance," wondering why her children should grow up and lose it all (51). But if Mrs. Ramsay is irritated by her husband's inconsideration of telling the truth and shattering James's hope for voyage—"Children don't forget, children never forget" (53)—it is also in her confrontation with life that she realizes the freedom, the completeness, and the eternity in her becoming with this impersonal life:

> This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability. Not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience (she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles) but as a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she

> looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at—that light, for example. (53)

Shedding all the social obligations and the superficial attachments, in this state of limitless peace Mrs. Ramsay can take off the role of a perfect hostess, think of no one else and become herself. In her looking at the steady stroke of Lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay loses her personality and is differentiated into an impersonal "wedge of darkness," becoming the very light she looks at in her complete aloneness—"she became the thing she looked at—that light, for example." But not unlike Woolf's utter denial of God in her philosophy of the interconnectivity of all beings, this is not a state of religious communion as Mrs. Ramsay immediately corrects her own phrasing. "Who had said it? Not she; she had been trapped into saying something she did not mean" (53). Looking at the beams of light, "like her own eyes meeting her own eyes," she is becoming with the impersonal force of life, the "nonhuman forces of the cosmos," attaining a state of immanent oneness with all other inanimate things:

> It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one leant to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one; felt an irrational tenderness thus (she looked at that long steady light) as for oneself. There rose, and she looked and looked with her needles suspended, there curled up off the floor of the mind, rose from the lake of one's being, a mist, a bride to meet her lover. (53-54)

In Mrs. Ramsay's nonhuman becoming with impersonal life, we see how those inanimate things—trees, streams, flowers—are refolded into the fold of time. Like the shawl unfolded

in the very caress of the light, with Mrs. Ramsay's becoming-light, all those inanimate things become the materials expressive of the immanent life in the concrete durée, ensuring the future anterior of the impersonal memory.

Indeed, the aesthetics of impersonality has been one central issue underpinning the discussion of Woolf's literary modernism. An established given for Woolf scholars is that Woolf's modernist writing is influenced by Roger Fry's Bloomsbury art theory of Post-Impressionism. But in her magisterial work *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russel and the Epistemology of Modernism*, Ann Banfield has persuasively demonstrated that Woolf's impersonal aesthetics is profoundly affected not only the Bloomsbury aesthetic theory but also the epistemology of Cambridge philosophy. Drawing attention to the Cambridge philosophers Bertrand Russel and G. E. Moore, Banfield suggests that if Woolf's literary modernism cannot be separated from the Bloomsbury aesthetic theory, what has yet to be recognized is how the impersonal epistemology of Russel and Moore underpins Woolf's impersonal aesthetics and the art of Bloomsbury in general. Taking Woolf's "table" as a meeting ground of Cambridge philosophy and the Bloomsbury formalist aesthetics, Banfield significantly revises the epistemology of modernism, contributing to a new understanding of an impersonal reality is for Woolf and her contemporaries.[7] In this way, literature, or any other forms of art, should not be taken as a medium to express some personal feelings and emotions. Instead of this individualistic model of Romantic aesthetics, for Woolf, modern aesthetics is "an art of the unobserved" (54), "an aesthetics of the impersonal" (55), that transmutes the personal into the impersonal. As Banfield accurately observes, "[t]he universe of Virginia Woolf's novels is a monadology whose plurality of possible words includes private points of space and time unobserved, unoccupied by any subject" (1). Hence the

7. While Banfield's overall project is to reconceive Woolf's formalist aesthetics in light of Russel and Moore, in some specific points she does not hesitate to tease out the difference of Woolf's aesthetics from these philosophers. Thus according to Banfield, one key difference lies in their contrasting view of art. Russel, taking Romantic aesthetics as his model, understands art as a medium to express personal emotions, but for Woolf, it is an art of the impersonal that is in conformity with Russel's thinking rather than his romanticism.

Woolfian question for the art of modern novel: "how to describe the world seen without a self?"

Undeniably, Banfield's formulation of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics and her approach from the epistemology of Russel and Moore have much to contribute to the debates on the politics of impersonality in Woolf's writing or the aesthetic modernity of impersonality in general. While critics still try to make of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics and emphasize Woolf's attentiveness to emotions, the private, the personal, or the intersubjectivity by a comparison with the Eliotian aesthetics of impersonality—"the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but as a particular medium . . . in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways" ("Tradition and the Individual Talent" 41)—Banfield's philosophical inquiry argues instead the epistemological significance of the impersonal reality in Woolf's aesthetics. In this regard, her study actually breathes new life into the common understanding of Woolf's interplay between the personal and the impersonal.[8] But while Banfield's study mainly focuses upon the question of knowledge, impersonality in Woolf's writing further invites a radical reconsideration of the question of aesthetics in general. To fully appreciate the significance of impersonal aesthetics, let's first see how the novel questions the meaning of the beautiful:

> Yes, thought Lily, looking intently, I must have seen her look like that, but not in grey; nor so still, nor so young, nor so peaceful. The figure came readily enough. She was astonishingly beautiful, as William said. But beauty was not

8. For instance, in "Refusing to Hit Back: Virginia Woolf and the Impersonality Question," Lisa Low traces the notion of impersonality in Woolf's writing and argues that "Woolf uses impersonality to undermine historical divisions between male and female writing, connecting personal writing to both sexes, and to advocate impersonal writing—not for its authoritarian potential, as Eliot might, but because it is empathetic and democratic" (1997). Similarly, in "A Modernism of One's Own: Virginia Woolf's TLS Reviews and Eliotic Modernism," Michael Kaufmann compares Woolf's and Eliot's writings, especially their literary reviews and essays, suggesting that Woolfian literary modernism differ from Eliotic one in her larger group of expected readers, her pursuit of a literary form that relies on emotion, and her emphasis on the mind imbued with emotion (1997). For an emphasis on the dialogic quality in Woolf's usage of impersonality, see Katerina Koutsantoni on Woolf's essays (2009). See also Timothy Mackin on the interplay between the private and the public in Woolf's writing (2010) and Rochelle Rives on impersonality and modernism in general (2007).

> everything. Beauty had this penalty—it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life—froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty. But what was the look she had, Lily wondered, when she clapped her deer-stalkers's hat on her head, or ran across the grass, or scolded Kennedy, the gardener? Who could tell her? Who could help her? (145-46)

In tunneling her way into the past, into her sincere friendship with William Bankes, Lily tries to reconsider the meaning of Mrs. Ramsay's astonishing beauty. Looking through William's eyes, she realizes that no one really understands the "essential thing" of Mrs. Ramsay underneath the cover of beauty; what they have seen of her is merely the aura of her female beauty. They worship and admire her as if she is the ideal embodiment of queenly beauty. But as Lily looks through this veil of idolization, "beauty was not everything. . . it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life—froze it." Underneath the icon of her beauty lie the "little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after." Only when the traditional reverence for ideal beauty is stripped away can those micro-perceptions of flowing life be truly felt and fluid. In this regard, when we turn to the critical interrogation of the correlations between aesthetics and the working of imperialism, especially Wurtz's critique of idealization of Mrs. Ramsay's queenly beauty, we can find that what it fails to recognize is the questioning of the beautiful that lays the foundation of aesthetics as a discipline in *To the Lighthouse*. What's more, this questioning of the beautiful further invites a possibility for us to consider aesthetics beyond the formalist aesthetic theory of Bloomsbury art and to trace the original meaning of aesthetics.

The story of aesthetics that we are most familiar with is definitely Immanuel Kant's philosophical theorization of the beautiful in his *Critique of Judgment*. But in fact, the term "aesthetics" was first coined by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his 1735 thesis *Reflections on Poetry*: "Therefore, *things known* are to be known by the superior faculty as the object of logic; *things perceived* [are to be known by the inferior faculty, as the object] of the science of perception, or *aesthetics*" (39). For Baumgarten, while logic takes things known by the superior faculty as its object, aesthetics, or the "science of perception," deals with the "things perceived," the sensate perceptions by the inferior faculty. Exceptional among the traditional philosophical preoccupation with reason and logic, Baumgarten draws attention to the most common realm of sensate perception and defines aesthetics as the "science of sensuous cognition" in his fundamental work *Aesthetica*. In this sense, as we can see from its etymology, *aisthetikos*, meaning sensitive and perceptive, or *aisthanesthai*, to perceive or to feel,[9] aesthetics, from its very beginning, is never a specific theory about art or the beautiful. Rather, it is the realm of the inferior faculty that includes all our "sensuous cognition" and sensate perception.[10] As Terry Eagleton vividly characterizes, it is "nothing less than the whole of our sensate life together—the business of affections and aversions, of how the world strikes the body on its sensory surfaces, of that which takes root in the gaze and the guts and all that arises from our most banal, biological insertion into the world" (13).[11]

Aesthetics, as understood in its original sense, is primarily concerned with those material experiences and bodily affections of our sensate life and thus has nothing to do with the definition of art or the beautiful, let alone the Bloomsbury formalist aesthetics. In this

9. From the entry "aesthetic" in *Online Etymology Dictionary*.
10. My discussion on Baumgarten here draws on the editors' introductory essay, "Aesthetics after the Speculative Turn," in the recent special issue of *Speculations*, "Aesthetics in the 21st Century," by Ridvan Askin, Paul J. Ennis, Andreas Hägler and Philipp Schweighauser (2014).
11. I was guided to Eagleton's idea by Ben Highmore's essay "Bitter after Taste: Affect, Food, and Social Aesthetics," p. 121 (2010).

regard, our reconsideration of aesthetics invites a new approach to Lily's vision at the end of the novel. True, as Cuddy-Keane observes, to complete her painting in the final part of the novel, Lily needs to tunnel her way into the past to close the gap between knowing, feeling, and doing. Thus facing Mrs. Ramsay's demand for sympathy, she reconciles with him when discovering his naive fondness of boots. To conquer Tansley's bias against female talent, she dips into the scene on the beach to evoke Mrs. Ramsay who can bring together Tansley and herself. But what lies at the heart of the process of Lily's painting is nothing less than the question of "aesthetics":

> What was the problem then? She must try to get hold of something that evaded her. It evaded her when she thought of Mrs. Ramsay; it evaded her now when she thought of her picture. Phrases came. Visions came. Beautiful pictures. Beautiful phrases. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything. (158)

Recalling the novel's questioning of the beauty of Mrs. Ramsay—"But beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty" (146)—what Lily wants to get hold of is not some beautiful pictures or beautiful phrases but the "very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything." As Lily radically questions the idea of individual, "Let it come, she thought, if it will come. For there are moments when one can neither think nor feel. And if one can neither think nor feel, she thought, where is one?" (158) Like Mrs. Ramsay's becoming with those inanimate things—"trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one" (53)—the "very jar on the nerves" is not Lily's personal feelings or emotions towards Mrs. Ramsay but the true life of Mrs. Ramsay that flows in the time as durée, the impersonal forces of life. It is Mrs. Ramsay's becoming-light, her nonhuman becoming with impersonal life. "She [Lily] was not inventing; she was only trying to smooth out something she had been given years ago folded up;

something she had seen" (162). What Lily tries to smooth out is nothing less than the fold of the cashmere shawl, the fold of impersonal memory that enfolds Cam in her becoming-child. Thus if aesthetics is about our sensate perception rather than what is art, Lily's vision in this way is not so much a realization of "significant form" but an impersonal aesthetics of the affective texture of memory.

Thus if for Lily "so much depends, she thought, upon distance" (156), this distance should not be understood in the sense of the Euclidean metric. "Distance had an extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it, she felt, they were gone for ever, they had become part of the nature of things" (154). Like the ship as a folding of the sea in Deleuze's explanation of the folding of the outside, or Woolf's "porous vessel afloat on sensation," the vessel that carries Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam, in fact, enters into a topological space of sensation where an Outside more distant that any exterior and an Inside deeper than any interior can establish a contact with each other. Here the omnipresence of the sea in Woolf's diary obtains a completely different meaning: "I am making up 'To the Lighthouse'—the sea is to be heard all through it" (*D3* 34). The sea, not merely a descriptive setting of the novel, becomes a fold of impersonal memory and enfolds Lily on the shore, the Ramsays in the boat, and even the Mrs. Ramsay that has always existed in the novel:

> "Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!" she cried, feeling the old horror come back—to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table. Mrs. Ramsay—it was part of her perfect goodness—sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat. (165)

No longer inflicted by sorrow and pain, at this moment, Lily now is able to "be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy" (164). Through the topological folding of the sea, Lily finally gives Mr. Ramsay the sympathy that she does not give in the beginning:

> "He must have reached it," said Lily Briscoe aloud, feeling suddenly completely tired out. For the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into a blue haze, and the effort of looking at it and the effort of thinking of him landing there, which both seemed to be one and the *same* effort, had stretched her body and mind to the utmost. Ah, but she was relieved. Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last. (emphasis added, 169)

The distance between the sea and the island is no longer measure in an Euclidean space but in a topological space. Rather than separating Lily on the shore and Mr. Ramsay in the boat, this topological distance unexpectedly further enfolds them in this ultimate fold of the novel, making Lily telepathically aware of his landing in her very look at the Lighthouse—"'He must have reached it,' said Lily Briscoe aloud"—and give Mrs. Ramsay "Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last."

Writing her childhood memories of the Talland House, Woolf becomes a "porous vessel," a "sensitive plate," for expressing the "pure delight" of St. Ives. Cam, in a dreamlike state, is enveloped by the natural force of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl and becoming child for opening up a new relationship with her father. Similarly, Lily at this final moment is no longer a painter as an autonomous subject but a body of affectivity in this topological space of the sea and the island, this "world seen without a self," becoming "part of the nature of things" with the Ramsays. What the novel gives us is not an artist who has a subjective artistic vision to actualize it on the blank space of the canvas. Despite the solution she has

already come up with long ago, Lily must enter into the fold of impersonal time to capture the texture of memory, the "very jar on the nerves," as Mrs. Ramsay's becoming-light with the impersonal force of life ten years ago. She must let herself "be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy" (164). Thus if we take "aesthetics" as a sphere of sensate perception, rather than a specific theory of art, the ultimate question is not about what Lily's abstract paining of the purple triangle with the line in the center represents, nor about whether its avant-garde expression is a realization of Bloomsbury formalism or an effective critique of imperialism. For Lily it does not matter how her painting would end up: "It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter?" (170) What really matters is how Lily as a body of affectivity is folded with the sea, the Ramsays and the impersonal time. More than an objective work of art, Lily's vision is a bloc of sensation that truthfully expresses the intensity of sensation and the impersonal force of life:

> She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had *my* vision. (emphasis added, 170)

As her "own" vision, Lily's purple triangle with the line in the center needs no others to understand. But if as readers we can let ourselves be enfolded with the fold of the shawl, the sea, and ultimately the novel itself, as the old Mr. Carmichael does throughout "The Lighthouse," then at the end we also become Lily in the topological space between ourselves and the text, unfolding *To the Lighthouse* as the texture of memory, the intensity of sensation, and the materiality of impersonal time. "From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that

we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art" (*MOB* 72).

Conclusion

Refolding Life: The World Seen Without a Self

> To write is also to become something other than a writer. To those who ask what literature is, Virginia Woolf responds: To whom are you speaking of writing? The writer does not speak about it, but is concerned with something else.
>
> —Gilles Deleuze, "Literature and Life"

Long before the rise of recent discourses on new materialisms, Bill Brown in his 1999 essay on Woolf's short story "Solid Objects" has proposed a "new materialism" that asks both "how material culture impresses itself on the literary imagination" and, conversely, "how literature itself works to imagine materiality" (5). Guided by the correlative questions posed by Brown's new materialism, this thesis focuses on Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in *To the Lighthouse* and adopts the operative concept of the Deleuzian fold to perform two different thing-centered readings of the novel. On the one hand, the molar-form reading in Chapter Two, taking Mrs. Ramsay's shawl as an unfolded form of material object, traces the material history of Kashmir shawl and its metonymical links with discourses of Orientalism and British imperial modernity. By unfolding the history of Kashmir shawl, we can see how the material culture of the shawl inscribes itself within Woolf's modernist text. On the other hand, in Chapter Three I turn the cashmere shawl from a formed material object into a molecular force of affectivity and suggest how it implicates the forces of impersonal durée and reveals the affective texture of impersonal Memory in a differential relation. Moving from the molar to the molecular, from form to force, I suggest that the singularity of both Lily's vision and Woolf's writing does not lie in its well-studied correspondence to the Bloomsbury aesthetic theory but in her impersonal aesthetics (*aisthanesthai*, to perceive) that saturates the fold of the shawl with affective intensities and infinitesimal microperceptions. In

this way Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl in the novel serves no longer merely as a metonymy of imperial history or a metaphor of the paradox of imperial modernity. Rather, it becomes a matter-fold that invites us to re-imagine the new flowing materiality of cashmere shawl.

Through the operative concept of the fold, this thesis both unfolds the imperial history of cashmere shawl and enfolds the affective texture of impersonal duration. In this way I attempt to qualify the traditional interpretation of shawl as merely a marker of class, a metaphor of Victorian maternity or a synecdoche of Mrs. Ramsay. Indeed, as Woolf emphatically asserts that "I meant nothing by The Lighthouse" in her reply to Roger Fry's question, any rigorously metaphorical or symbolic reading of the novel should be contested:

> I meant nothing by The Lighthouse. One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together. I saw that all sorts of feelings would accrue to this, but I refused to think them out, and trusted that people would make it the deposit for their own emotions—which they have done, one thinking it means one thing another another. I can't manage Symbolism except in this vague, generalised way. (*L3* 385)

Liberating Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl from its figurative signification, my two readings draw attention to its historicity, materiality and affectivity, emphasizing how it is located in a threshold between the real and the fictional, the inside and the outside, the unfolded form and the folding force. In this regard this thesis corrects the long established myth that takes Woolf as a writer of stream of consciousness par excellence. Instead of being a solipsist writer who only "looks within," nor a "materialist" who conforms to the tyranny of plot and transcribes every external details, Woolf is actually a keen observer of "the life of Monday or Tuesday," aiming to enfold "an incessant shower of innumerable atoms" that come from all sides (*E4* 160). Her novelistic world is thus never an enclosed entity confined to a parochial subjective consciousness, nor a naive representation of the world outside. Rather, it is an impersonal

world enmeshed in the affective texture of flowing materiality and the "crowded dance of modern life" (*E4* 405). As Bernard asks in *The Waves*, the question that Woolf pursues through her writing is always of "how to describe the world seen without a self" (*TW* 171).

In this way we must reaffirm the significance of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics and this "world seen without a self" among the debates of impersonality. As a matter of fact, impersonality, as one of the central convictions in Eliotian modernism, had once been a controversial issue in Woolf criticism. Feminists, such as Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter, and Tuzyline Jita Allan, foregrounding the political efficacy of the feminist I/eye, all denounced Woolf's suppression of feminist anger, primarily in *A Room of One's Own*, and her preference for impersonality in terms of her fictional art. In the wake of poststructuralist/postmodernist theory, however, critics have attempted to refute this identitarian dismissal and reclaimed Woolf's impersonal aesthetics by emphasizing some salient features that distinguish Woolf's aesthetics of impersonality from that of her modernist peers. Designating the above-mentioned critics as "identity feminists" (257), Lisa Low, for instance, argues that Woolf's usage of impersonality, contrary to the implications of authoritarianism and patriarchy in Eliot's doctrine of impersonality, is to "undermine historical divisions between male and female writing" and to advocate "the empathic and democratic" qualities in impersonal writing (259). Focusing on Woolf's impersonal strategy in her essay writing, Katerina Koutsantoni similarly explores a "dialogic impersonality" and an "intersubjective" quality to question the traditional views of impersonality. By insisting on the significance of impersonality to Woolf's writing, these critics have established a kind of definitive understanding of the Woolfian impersonality that fundamentally differs from the male-dominated impersonal modernism in its dialectic of im/personality.[1] In this sense the core of the Woolfian impersonality lies in Woolf's distinctive narrating voice, what James

1. See also the footnote 8, p. 84.

Naremore terms a "nameless spirit," that brings to life a "common element" and dissolves any egotistic sense of individuality, creating "the world without a self" that gives the title to Naremore's classic study (76).

While Low, Koutsantoni, and other critics have teased out the characteristics of the Woolfian impersonality—intersubjective, dialogical, democratic, empathetic, etc.—however, their revisionary accounts are at risk of a latent humanitarian or anthropocentric thinking. If Woolf's impersonal aesthetics is merely taken as a modulation between the personal and the impersonal, the individual and the collective, then the connectivity of all beings revealed at Woolf's "moments of being" is not unlike the kind of pseudo-empathy where what lies underneath is still the egotistic self. As such, my reading of Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl as a matter-fold of affectivity aims to crack open this dialectic of im/personality and to bring out the singularity of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics without the tinge of humanitarianism or anthropocentrism. By freeing the shawl from its molar form as a mnemonic "object" subordinated to a particular remembering "subject," my molecular-force reading refolds it into the material universe of impersonal durée—what Woolf calls the "life itself." In this way the singularity of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics does not lie merely in its problematization of the self, nor in its interplay between the personal and the impersonal. Rather, as Woolf's affirmation of the material interconnectivity—"we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself" (*MOB* 72)—it lies in its replacement of the molar distinction between subject/object with a molecular differentiation between "bodies of affectivity." As Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *What Is Philosophy*, the art of the novel is not to tell stories from each character's affections, perceptions and memories, nor to stage the confrontation and intersection of opinions of a multitude of characters. Like any other forms of art, the art of literature is to extract the life itself—what they call the "nonorganic life of things" (*What Is Philosophy* 180) or the "nonhuman forces of the cosmos" (183)—from the lived experience.

By creating a bloc of sensations or a compound of nonhuman affects and percepts, one escapes from its molar identity and brings out the infinite possibilities of life in different molecular becomings. It is in this sense that literature, for Deleuze, is inseparable from the becoming of life:

> To write is certainly not to impose a form (of expression) on the matter of lived experience. . . . Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived. Writing is inseparable from becoming: in writing, one becomes-woman, becomes-animal or -vegetable, becomes-molecule, to the point of becoming-imperceptible. (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 1)

Writing, in other words, is to participate in the "passage of Life" and to draw a line of molecular becomings—from becoming-woman to becoming-imperceptible—in a counter-actualizing process of becoming-other. Instead of describing the lived or imagining the livable, it is to wage a war against Man as a molar entity par excellence. By drawing a line of flight from the domination of Man, literature is always a matter of going beyond the personal or the lived experience: "literature . . . exists only when it discovers beneath apparent persons the power of an impersonal—which is not a generality but a singularity at the highest point" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 3).

In this sense what Naremore calls "the voice of everyone and no one" in Woolf's writing (75) acquires a completely different meaning. For Woolf it is not to write in the name of everyone or no one. Nor is it to write for everyone or no one. Rather, like Cam's becoming-child and Mrs. Ramsay's becoming-light, Woolf's impersonal aesthetics is to become-imperceptible and to become-everyone/everything. While everyone/everything is

still a molar concept, becoming-everyone/everything is to bring into play molecular forces to make a world of becoming. As Deleuze and Guattari's repetitive reference to Woolf—to "saturate every atom," to "eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes" (*D3* 209-10)—this moment of becoming-everyone/everything is both to eliminate one's molar identity and to open up every possibilities of molecular becomings at the dawn of the world. "We are not in the world, we become with the world" (*What Is Philosophy* 169). It is in this sense that we should differentiate the term "the world without a self" and the original phrase in *The Waves*, "the world *seen* without a self" (*TW* 171). While the former entails an absolutely objective world populated by no human beings, "the world *seen* without a self" embodied by Woolf's impersonal aesthetics is a world of becoming where any distinction between subject and object is untenable. By refolding each molar entity—Cam, Lily, Mrs. Ramsay's cashmere shawl, the vessel in the sea—into the "force of life" (*MOB* 79), Woolf's impersonal aesthetics turns it into a "body of affectivity" in this "world *seen* without a self," where there is no essential difference between various modes of being expect their capacities for being affected and affecting. As such, the democratic or empathic imagination of the Woolfian impersonality is not simply about the "molar equality of democratic subjects." Rather, if we borrow Jacque Rancière's phasing, it is the "molecular equality of micro-events, of individualities that are no longer individuals but differences in intensity" (*The Politics of Literature* 25-26).

In her revolt against the tyranny of plot, Woolf asks, "Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this' (*E4* 160). But what does life, the true life, the "life of Monday or Tuesday," look like? "Why is there not a discovery in life? Something one can lay hands on & say 'This is it'" (*D3* 62)? How do we capture those saturated atoms, that essential thing, the presence of Mrs. Brown? As Rancière's remarks on Woolf's art of modern literature, "[m]odern fiction has no proper mode of linkage. Life—true life—is expected to

provide its own proper mode of unfolding. . . . The ontology of modern fiction is monist, but its practice must be dialectical" ("The Thread of the Novel" 206). Indeed, for Woolf no subject matter, no method, no experiment is forbidden in the horizon of modern literature. What is forbidden is only falsity, pretense, and "this appalling narrative business of the realist" (*D3* 209). As she insists, "'[t]he proper stuff of fiction' does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss" (*E4* 164). Thus if Rancière in his formulation of the "politics of aesthetics" turns to Woolf, instead of other writers of social epics, then it is in this folding, unfolding, and refolding of "life"—the very sensory fabric of the common life—that lies the aesthetic rupture of Woolf's "novelistic micrology" (*The Politics of Aesthetics* 61). As Rancière elegantly puts:

> Aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination it presupposes disrupts the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. What it produces is not rhetorical persuasion about what must be done. Nor is it the framing of a collective body. It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they live in and the way in which they are "equipped" to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. ("Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community" 72)

"Literature is no one's private ground; literature is common ground," Woolf determinedly writes in her essay "The Leaning Tower," looking forward to a truly democratic post-war age in her conviction of the value of literature (*M* 125). Thus if we share the same conviction in literature with Woolf, if we believe that Woolf's impersonal aesthetics entails a new vision of the world in its democratic and empathetic imagination, then perhaps this

politics of aesthetics does not lie merely in her pacific manifesto or her polemic against fascism. Instead of evoking a politics based upon the "molar equality of democratic subjects," the singularity of the Woolfian impersonality lies in its folding, unfolding, and refolding of "the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible." As such, the "politics" of Woolf's impersonal aesthetics does not lie elsewhere but here. Only when we turn to Woolf's "novelistic micrology," when we molecularize the shawl from an unfolded form into a folding force, when we fold, unfold, and refold this matter-fold of life, can we really catch a sight of the essential thing that Woolf calls "life."

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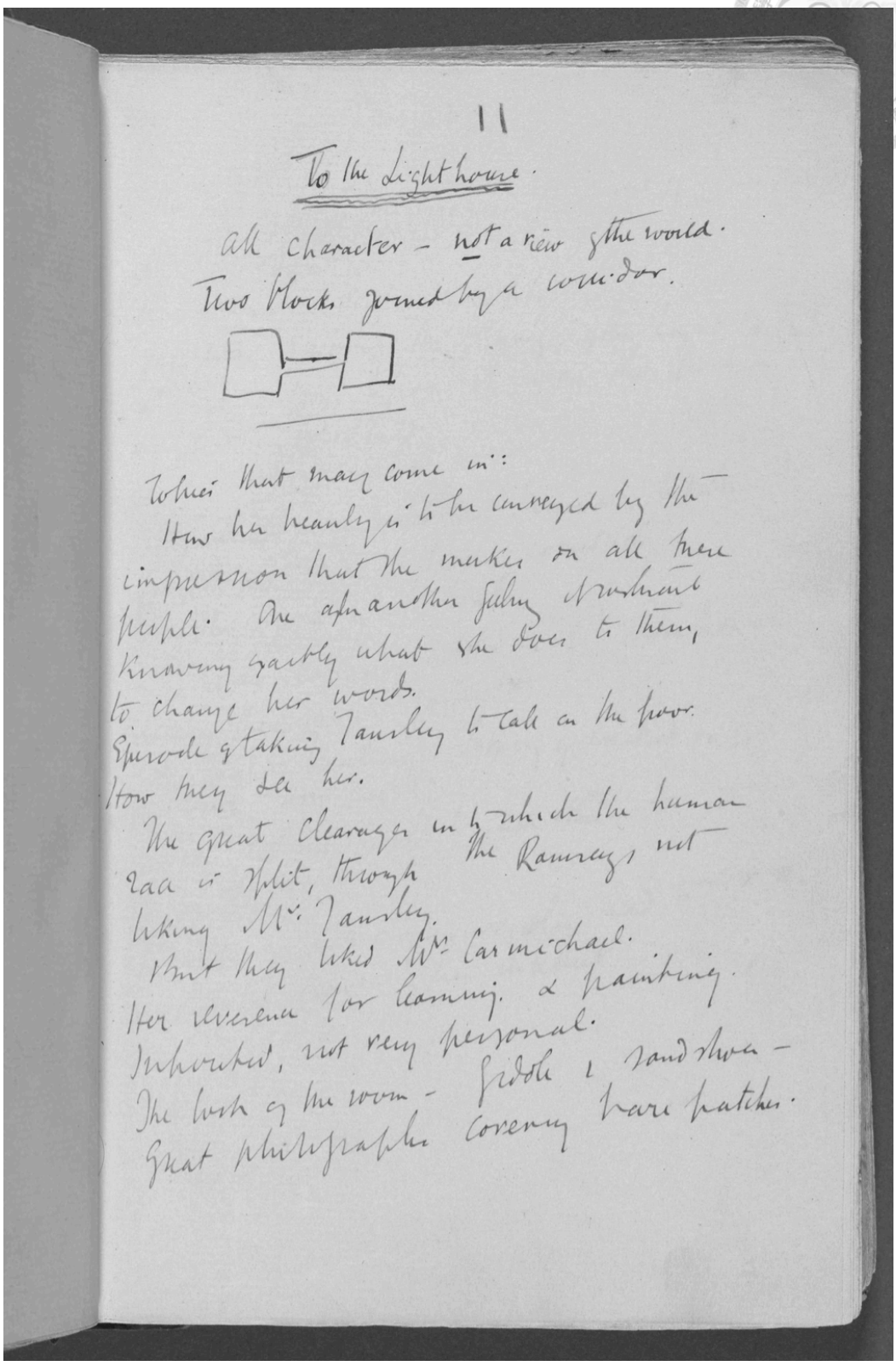
Appendix



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