EXPERIMENTAL MODERNISM: THE SUBVERSION OF ROMANCE FORMULAS AND THE DISMANTLING OF REALIST REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *NIGHT AND DAY*

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ABSTRACT

Virginia Woolf's second novel, Night and Day (1919), has generally been conceived as a typical example of the traditional English novel, which is characterized by the realistic rendering of common life and ordinary people. Some aspects of the book such as chronological order, omniscient narrator, and the traditional plot of love and marriage undoubtedly point to the realist tradition that the novel resides in. However, it is misleading to evaluate the text simply as a realist work because the narrative strategies Woolf employs throughout the book subvert the earlier literary conventions and signal the commencement of modernist literature that has changed the form and content of the English novel in the following decades. Throughout this work, Woolf questions both social and literary conventions by subverting romance formulas and describing psychologically-perceived London. While the subverted romance structure exposes the established views on gender and marriage, the portrayal of London through the consciousness of the characters prevents the novel from being a wholly realist work. The aim of this paper is to analyze how Woolf challenges traditional form and subject matter, and hence lays the ground for her later modernist works.

Keywords: *Virginia Woolf, Night and Day, realism, modernism, romance, city, feminism*

MODERNIZME GEÇİŞ: VIRGINIA WOOLF'UN *NIGHT AND DAY* ROMANINDA ROMANS GELENEĞİNİN VE REALİZMIN YIKIMI

ÖZ

Virginia Woolf'un ikinci romanı Night and Day (1919), edebiyat eleştirmenleri tarafından genellikle realist İngiliz romanın tipik bir örneği olarak kabul edilir. Kitapta aşk ve evlilik gibi olağan temaların işlenmesi, olay örgüsünün her şeyi bilen anlatıcı (omniscient) tarafından kronolojik sırayla aktarılması gibi hususlar romanın gerçekçi yazın geleneğiyle olan ilişkisine işaret eder. Ancak Woolf her ne kadar yerleşik anlatı tekniklerinden faydalansa da metnin biçim ve içeriğinde yaptığı değişiklikler aracılığıyla geleneksel İngiliz romanını sarsarak modernist edebiyatın gelişimine katkıda bulunmuştur. Night and Day, geleneksel olmaktan çok mevcut gelenekleri sorgulayan bir eserdir. Woolf bir taraftan romans türüne ait özellikleri yeniden yorumlayarak cinsiyet rollerine ilişkin modern bir bakış açısı sunmuş diğer taraftan da

kitabın adeta ana kahramanlarından biri olan Londra'yı karakterlerin bilinç süzgecinden geçirip anlatarak realizmden uzaklaşmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Night and Day'de biçim ve içerik açısından yapılan değişikliklere odaklanarak Woolf'un modernist edebiyata katkısını araştırmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Virginia Woolf, Night and Day, realizm, modernizm, romans, şehir, feminizm*

In "Modern Fiction," Virginia Woolf criticizes the "materialism" of Edwardian novelists as they are concerned with the depiction of external reality rather than the characters' states of mind. According to Woolf, a writer's task is not to draw an accurate picture of life but to represent life formed by the "myriad impressions" the mind receives (*Common Reader* 150). Although Woolf attacks realist narrative techniques in her various essays, her second novel *Night and Day* (1919) has been criticized for its conventional methods of narration. E.M. Forster, for example, notes that "Even the style has been normalised, and though the machinery is modern, the resultant form is as traditional as *Emma*" (173). In a review to *Athenaeum*, Katherine Mansfield also evaluates the book as a work "in the tradition of the English novel" (82). Indeed, *Night and Day* shares some of the characteristics of realist novels with its omniscient narrator and chronological plot of love and marriage. However, throughout this work, Woolf questions both social and literary conventions by subverting romance formulas and describing psychologically-perceived London. While the subverted romance structure exposes the established views on gender and marriage, the portrayal of London through the consciousness of the characters prevents the novel from being a wholly "materialist" work. In this respect, *Night and Day* may be considered one of Woolf's experimental works challenging traditional form and subject matter, and hence laying the ground for her later modernist works.

Night and Day narrates the complicated and partly comic adventures of five young people –Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, Cassandra Otway, Ralph Denham, and William Rodney– in hopes of finding true marriage partners in Edwardian London. The novel as a whole is based on romance formulas, which Northrop Frye discusses largely in both *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (1957) and *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (1976). Frye views romance as a narrative mode rather than a genre giving shape to most of Greek and medieval works as well as to the realist novels of later periods beginning with the eighteenth century. In his analysis of this literary mode, he focuses mainly on four aspects: love, quest, two contrasting worlds having different characteristics, and the happy ending. Love is defined as "the central element" affecting the plot and characterization (*Secular* 24). Quest for an ideal order and/or partner is another determining aspect of romance. Questing characters, Frye says, encounter two different worlds: "the idyllic world" associated with "happiness, security, and peace" and "the demonic or night world" that involves "separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the

threat of the pain" (53). At the end of the novel, the night world is defeated with the elimination of all obstacles, and thus a happy ending is provided.

According to Frye, the stories told in romances have a revolutionary quality since the happy resolution of the events suggests the possibility of defeating the undesirable order. By the elimination of all the barriers preventing the transformation of individuals and society, these stories nourish the hope that a world as in dreams can be created:

> But if romance so often appears as a kind of naive social snobbery, what becomes of the revolutionary quality in it [...], the proletarian element rejected by every cultural establishment? We found the focus of this revolutionary quality near the end of a romantic story, usually at the recognition scene. It appears in the polarizing between two worlds, one desirable and the other hateful, the triumphant upward movement of the living hero rising from the dead dragon, the point that expresses the reader's identity with a power of life strong enough to smash through any kind of barrier and danger. (*Secular* 163)

As the above quotation suggests, the revolutionary aspect of these romantic stories involves the merging of loving couples, who finally find happiness in marriage.

Even though Frye defines romance as a revolutionary narrative form since it points to the ways to change the world for the better, this transformation is often presented to have occurred as a consequence of the deeds of the male hero. Women, on the other hand, are usually depicted as subsidiary figures helping men in the establishment of an ideal world. Frye considers romance similar to both dreams and rituals. He states that "translated into dream terms, the quest-romance is the search of the libido or a desiring self for a fulfillment" (*Anatomy* 193). Dana A. Heller calls attention to the fact that women described in many romances are "always subordinate to the masculine libido," and they merely "serve to symbolize various aspects of the masculine drive." They appear as subsidiary characters strengthening the images of men instead of female heroes questing and asserting their own identities (4).

This passive existence of women is underlined by Dana A. Heller in *The Feminization of Quest-Romance* (1990) –a critical text analyzing the examples of quest-romance challenging the masculine myth entrapping women in domestic sphere. Heller emphasizes that the representation of independent women questioning and questing in literature is necessary for the defiance of the negative images of them produced in male-dominated society. In many literary works, she says, the "active and self-determining hero" has a wider social environment permitting him an active participation in life. Women, on the other hand, encounter an "enclosed space" to transcend: "a house, a garden, an institution, an introspective mind" (10). Even if these obstacles are overcome, the quest generally ends with "illnesses, suicides, and mental deterioration"

(10). Furthermore, marriage has always been presented as a solution for women to realize their aims and aspirations. However, based on the article "Psyche, or Wholeness" by Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Heller views marriage one of the main factors stopping the quest of the female protagonist and signaling once more the passivity of women as their desires are thought to be unrealizable without marriage (11).

Throughout *Night and Day*, Frye's idea of marriage as a revolutionary power is put into question. On the whole, the novel draws on romance conventions as it tells the story of questing lovers and describes in depth two contrasting worlds characterizing most romances: the night world of dreams and the day world of realities[1]. Woolf, however, subverts the structure of romance by making use of certain strategies. The unification of love and quest is one of these methods Woolf employs in the novel. In her critical study *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985), Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes: "*Night and Day* takes up two heroes from two misallied couples, the primal stuff of the comic love plot, yet asserts that they can only affirm mutual passion because of quest. Thus love and quest are joined at narrative resolution, rather than being separated as in the nineteenth-century paradigm" (54). In this way, marriage is not presented as an end in itself. Rather, it is regarded as a mutual partnership of desiring lovers, who come together for the realization of their aspirations in life. Besides the union of love and quest, the comic elements and the ironic tone also serve to parody and trivialize orthodox views on gender and marriage. Moreover, the portrayal of Mary Datchet as an unmarried but self-sufficient character underlines that it is possible for a woman to attain her goals without getting married.

Being a novel published right after the First World War and during the heyday of the suffrage movement, *Night and Day* is basically about questing individuals who are trying to find their ways in London. This quest becomes apparent especially in the dreams of Katharine Hilbery and Ralph Denham, who decide to get married after Katharine secretly breaks off her engagement with relatively traditional man, William Rodney. The dreams of this aspiring couple are used by Woolf metaphorically to refer to the process "in which the rational, separative logic of reality –what she sometimes calls the facts of existence– can be dissolved by the emotional, unifying illumination of an extraordinary insight –the vision" (Cumings 339). Through Ralph and Katharine's dream worlds, Woolf questions whether it is possible to reconcile "an intense private individuality, whose basic instinct is self-realization through moments of vision ('night'), with the outside world, that large part of life defined by social roles and imposed duties ('day')" (Stape xviii).

[1] The original title of *Night and Day* in Woolf's manuscript was "Dreams and Realities."

In his analysis of romance structure, Frye makes a distinction between the person who is dreaming and the image of that person in dreams. He writes: "If I dream about myself, I have two identities, myself as a dreamer and myself as a character in my dream. The dreamer is, so to speak, a god in relation to his dreamed self: he created him but remains in the background watching" (*Secular* 107). Katharine Hilbery, the daughter of an upper-class family living in Chelsea, has such a divided personality as Katharine in real life differs from Katharine in her world of dreams. Katharine in actual life is an unhappy woman without a profession, and she is not content with her existing position as a dutiful daughter. The opening scene of the novel, which echoes Jane Austen's social comedies, calls attention to how routine life of daylight precludes women like Katharine from using their faculties fully:

> It was a SUNDAY evening in October, and in common with many other young ladies of her class, Katharine Hilbery was pouring out tea. Perhaps a fifth part of her mind was thus occupied, and the remaining parts leapt over the little barrier of day which interposed between Monday morning and this rather subdued moment, and played with the things one does voluntarily and normally in the daylight. But although she was silent, she was evidently mistress of a situation which was familiar enough to her, and inclined to let it take its way for the six hundredth time, perhaps, without bringing into play any of her unoccupied faculties. (5)

Katharine's roles as a single woman living with parents make her life uninteresting and unfruitful. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hilbery demand her to "put in charge of household affairs" and respect their Victorian roots and traditions: "Ordering meals, directing servants, paying bills, and so contriving that every clock ticked more or less accurately in time, and a number of vases were always full of fresh flowers was supposed to be a natural endowment of hers" (36). Apart from household duties, Katharine is expected to help her mother write the biography of Richard Alardyce –an eminent Victorian poet and the dead father of Mrs. Hilbery. Throughout the novel, the Victorian past surrounds Katharine. The room spared for exhibiting the belongings of Alardyce together with other heirlooms of their lineage turns into a shrine to which the guests accompanied by Katharine pay a frequent visit. The conventions and rituals determining the nature of the Hilbery House put barriers before Katharine. She finds herself stuck in the past and tries to find the ways to repudiate it in order to be able to concentrate on the present:

> Sometimes Katharine brooded, half crushed, among her papers; sometimes she felt that it was necessary for her very existence that she should free herself from the past; at others, that the past had completely displaced the present, which, when one resumed life after a morning among the dead, proved to be of an utterly thin and inferior composition. (35)

Katharine's secret preoccupation with mathematics and astronomy together with the dream world she creates become a means to defy the existing life associated with constraints. In *Night and Day*, "mathematics (and the stars, which Katharine sees as being akin to math in their impersonality) functions as a key signifier of Katharine's other self, her dream world" (Priest 69). Even though Mrs. Hilbery wishes her daughter to have a poetic mind, Katharine prefers studying "the exactitude, the star-like impersonality, of figures to the confusion, agitation, and vagueness of the finest prose" (37). Although she has to keep her studies in secret because of "the unwomanly nature of the science," mathematics gives her uncertain and vague life a direction that is free of imposed roles exerted upon her (37). In other words, Katharine tries to shape her own identity by "opposing the tradition of her family," which prioritizes literature (38)[2].

Apart from mathematics and astronomy, the fantasy world of Katharine also functions as a signifier of her quest for the attainment of a better life that is free of thwarting barriers. In her dream world, Katharine emerges as an active agent rather than a passive individual. There, "she took part in a series of scenes such as the taming of wild ponies upon the American prairies, or the conduct of a vast ship in a hurricane round a black promontory of rock, or in others more peaceful, but marked by her complete emancipation from her present surroundings" (37). All these "unwomanly" scenes remove Katharine from the borders of the Hilbery House and transform her into a venturing hero. In the scene in which Katharine ponders on accepting William Rodney's marriage proposal with the hope of studying science, Woolf underlines how this dream world means liberation and happiness for Katharine:

> Here she sighed, and, putting the thought of marriage away, fell into a dream state, in which she became another person, and the whole world seemed changed. Being a frequent visitor to that world, she could find her way there unhesitatingly. If she had tried to analyse her impressions, she would have said that there dwelt the realities of the appearances which figure in our world; so direct, powerful, and unimpeded were her sensations there, compared with those called forth in actual life. There dwelt the things one might have felt, had there been cause; the perfect happiness of which here we taste the fragment; the beauty seen here in flying glimpses only [...]. It was a place where feelings were liberated from the constraint which the real world puts upon them; and the process of

[2] According to Susan J. Leonardi, the reason for Katharine's dislike for literature as well as her mother's inability to finish the biography is the male language that does not allow the expression of female feelings and consciousness. For further information, see Leonardi's article "Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf's Search for the New Language in *Night and Day*."

> awakenment was always marked by resignation and a kind of stoical acceptance of facts. (124)

The divided nature of Katharine's personality that finds expression in her dreams is observable in Ralph Denham's character, too. Just like Katharine, Ralph Denham also quests for another world, where he can devote himself to the writing of "the history of English village from Saxon days to the present time" (197). He is portrayed as a responsible, hard-working and successful solicitor, who has to support financially his siblings and widowed mother living in Highgate. Ralph's responsibility toward his family is the main reason that lies behind his inability to leave everything behind for a new life in the country dedicated to literature. "The grasp of the family system" (21) prevents him from pursuing his own ideals. Under these circumstances, dreams become a dwelling place for him through which he tries to escape from the real world that does not satisfy his soul. There is again Ralph in actual life and Ralph in his dreams:

> It sometimes seemed to him that this spirit was the most valuable possession he had; he thought that by means of it he could set flowering waste tracts of the earth, cure many ills, or raise up beauty where none now existed; it was, too, a fierce and potent spirit which would devour the dusty books and parchments on the office wall with one lick of its tongue, and leave him in a minute standing in nakedness, if he gave way to it. His endeavour, for many years, had been to control the spirit, and at the age of twenty-nine he thought he could pride himself upon a life rigidly divided into hours of work and those of dreams; the two lived side by side without harming each other. (112)

Both Katharine and Ralph try to escape from the limitations of real life. However, the above passage calls attention to how male and female quest differs from each other. While Katharine craves for having an occupation through which she can have a room of her own, Ralph wants to leave his office where he has to work ten hours a day like a slave. Whereas Katharine longs for getting rid of domestic life that keeps her at home, Ralph tries to rescue himself from public life where people are reduced to money-making mechanisms. Ralph asks: "All this money-making and working ten hours a day in an office, what's it *for*?" (193). Katharine, on the other hand, says to her friend Mary Datchet, "I want to assert myself, and it's difficult, if one hasn't a profession" (49). Even though there is a disparity between the male and female quest that stems from the different roles imposed on men and women, both Katharine and Ralph try to establish a balance between the actual and fantasy world, between "the thought and action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night" (295).

Woolf suggests that it is through love that these aspiring minds can bring night and day together. In Edwardian London, the union of the couple

necessitates the marriage of the partners. Marriage in romances, however, prevents the quest of female characters. Woolf tries to solve this problem by implying that the marriage of Katharine and Ralph will allow them to pursue their own ideals. Besides, Woolf stresses that their relationship is different from that of William and Cassandra, which entails a more traditional understanding of marriage. Throughout *Night and Day*, Katharine searches for a "magnanimous hero" for whom she may feel passion (172). Besides love and passion, she is in pursuit of a union that will allow her to study math and astronomy unreservedly. At the beginning of the novel, Katherine views marriage with William as a solution for an escape from the already existing life retarding her quest. She regards marriage as "an archway through which it was necessary to pass in order to have her desires" (189). It seems to her that, just like her aunt Lady Otway, she can "give way" to her husband (186) and "pretend to like emeralds when she preferred diamonds" (189). However, her engagement with William becomes a burden for her rather than a revitalizing power because he is not the magnanimous hero but a conventional man, who tends to undermine the capabilities of women. Her engagement with Ralph, on the other hand, is the result of mutual love, and it offers the possibility of liberating togetherness "where each is free, where there's no obligation upon either side" (293).

Both William Rodney and Cassandra Otway are used by Woolf as foils to Ralph and Katharine in order to highlight the disparity between conventional and liberating ideas concerning life. Cassandra and William are also questing characters, though their views are mostly shaped by traditional values defining Victorian culture. Cassandra, the daughter of an extended family of twelve children, is a woman searching for an escape from the ordinary life she is living in their country house. Although her quest is not directly expressed, her eccentric interests and overzealous appetite for learning about almost every area of life prove that she is trying to find a way to transcend the enclosed space she is in. For example, Cassandra spends her days in her bedroom that has "the ceiling hung with mulberry-leaves, the windows blocked with cages, and the tables stacked with home-made machines for the manufacture of silk dresses" (183). Silkworms, of course, are not the only means to widen the enclosed space surrounding her: "She had worshipped architecture and music, natural history and humanity, literature and art, but always at the height of her enthusiasm, which was accompanied by a brilliant degree of accomplishment, she changed her mind and bought, surreptitiously, another grammar" (297). By dealing with many subjects extending from silkworms to literature, Cassandra tries to understand the huge world that is not open to her in the Otway House.

Similarly, William Rodney –a man coming of "the oldest family in Devonshire" (58) – has some ideals, too. He is a clerk and definitely a learned man having a good taste of music, art and literature. "No one could doubt that William was a scholar" (123), writes Woolf to underscore his intellectual

capacity. Literature for him has a supreme importance giving meaning to a meaningless life; it is "a source of divine joy" (47). His passion for words and phrases makes him look for a life in which he can channel his efforts to the writing of plays. In one of the dialogues with Ralph about life and literature, for example, he utters his wish for a life dedicated to literature: "I should be ten times as happy with my whole day to spend as I liked. [...] I could spend three hours every day reading Shakespeare" (63).

Though both Cassandra and William are in search of a life that is different from the existing one, their conventional views about marriage and gender roles do not suggest a modern union like that of Katharine and Ralph. Their engagement is used as a foil by Woolf to highlight the modernity of the relationship between Katharine and Ralph. As it has been previously mentioned, in most romances, women are subject to male libido, and they serve to magnify the image of men. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf also calls attention to the same point by using the metaphor of looking-glasses. She writes, "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (35). They are usually considered objects of men's desire rather than self-sufficient subjects (Squier "The Modern City" 70). In *Night and Day*, Cassandra functions to reflect the image of William greater than it actually is. William desires a woman to be controlled; he does not want to be that woman's "slave or her dupe" but "her master in future" (281), and he chooses Cassandra to be his looking-glasses. Unlike Katharine, Cassandra is attentive to what William says about literary works. She likes to be educated by him, tries to learn Greek, and read Macaulay's "History of England" upon his request. Moreover, she wants "to have a great many of children" since "[William] likes children" (377). The marriage of this couple, therefore, does not offer a better future, specifically for Cassandra.

The union of love and quest for the attainment of goals in life is one of Woolf's strategies to question the traditional understanding of marriage represented in many examples of quest-romance. Another method employed in *Night and Day* is the insertion of comic elements, which help to satirize and trivialize established notions of gender and marriage. It is especially through the character of William Rodney that Woolf uncovers the restrictive nature of existing life in terms of women. In Chapter Eighteen, in which Katharine wants to break off her engagement with William, she says that "without [love] our marriage would be a farce" (213). Even though they do not get married at the end of the novel, still their relationship turns into a farce mainly because of William's conventionality.

Two scenes of the novel are specifically notable for showing Woolf's attempts to turn marriage into a farce: the first is when William proposes to Katharine and the second is when he tries to convince her that their engagement should continue. William is a man who "can't help having inherited certain

traditions and trying to put them into practice" (57). While proposing to Katharine on the Embankment at night, for instance, he thinks of the probable gossips if he is "seen alone with [Katharine] on the Embankment" (58). Moreover, he tries to prevent Katharine from walking home alone since it is quite late, and he summons a taxi-cab. The image of a woman followed by a man and a taxi-cab along the Embankment creates a comic effect. In this way, Woolf undermines the romantic treatment of marriage proposals as sacred moments in a person's life. In William's point of view, women are "nothing" without marriage; single women are "half alive" and can only use half their faculties (56). For him, marriage is like a holy union. However, in Chapter Eighteen, while discussing an important issue like marriage, William cannot concentrate on this subject but thinks of Katharine's unkempt hair and the leaves on her dress:

> A man naturally alive to the conventions of society, he was strictly conventional where women were concerned, and especially if the women happened to be in any way connected with him. He noticed with distress the long strand of dark hair touching on her shoulder and two or three dead leaves attached to her dress; but to recall her mind in their present circumstances to a sense of details was impossible. She sat there, seeming unconscious of everything. He suspected that in her silence she was reproaching herself; but he wished that she would think of her hair and of the dead beech-leaves, which were of more immediate importance to him than anything else. (215)

As the above quotation makes it clear, Woolf once more plays with the idea of marriage by caricaturing William's conventional views about women.

Another strategy Woolf employs in *Night and Day* is the portrayal of Mary Datchet as a single but powerful woman, who has a job and a room of her own. Having "a power being disagreeable to one's family," she achieves to stay away from the pressure of familial duties thwarting personal development (50). Mary leaves her father, siblings and the family house in the village of Disham and starts living in a suffrage office in London after she has college education. In her essay entitled "Tradition and Revision: The Classic City Novel and Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day,*" Susan M. Squier argues that Mary Datchet is the only woman in the novel, who achieves "the female utopia" as she remains a genuinely working character in the end (126). Through the character of Mary Datchet, Woolf rewrites the tragic story of Judith Shakespeare whom she mentions in *A Room of One's Own*. While Judith Shakespeare commits suicide since London of the Renaissance period does not allow her to participate in public life, Mary Datchet of the twentieth century is provided with a voice to assert herself. Mary can talk about love as well as "the impersonal topics, such as the housing of the poor, or the taxation of land values" (72). As Anne F. Fernald puts it,

> Of all of Woolf's characters, Mary Datchet is the hostess who best inspires substantial and exciting talk of poetry and politics. Mary's success at generating talk is one of Woolf's refutation of the prejudice against women that long excluded them from coffeehouses and debating societies. In creating Mary Datchet, Woolf makes a claim for the contribution that women can make to the public sphere. (92-93)

The figure of Mary Datchet is used by Woolf to offer an alternative to marriage. Through her relationship with Ralph, Woolf underlines that marriage is meaningless without love. Besides, by depicting her as a powerful individual in London, Woolf emphasizes that women can become independent without marriage. Like the other young characters of *Night and Day*, Mary questions what love is all the time. She thinks that "love is a devastating fire which melts the whole being into one mountain torrent" (118). For her, "marriage without love doesn't seem worth while" (220). That is why she rejects Ralph's marriage proposal when she finds out that he actually loves Katharine Hilbery. Therefore, just like Katharine, Mary does not consider marriage an end in itself. She thinks that she can change the existing world for the better with Ralph because he is "the least conventional" person "like most clever men" (71). Instead of having a loveless marriage, Mary prefers dedicating her life to public matters. As Rachel Wetzsteon underlines, the character of Mary suggests that it is not necessary for a woman to get married to achieve her goals in life:

> Particularly striking is the character of Mary Datchet, whose role in *Night and Day* can be compared to that of Lily Briscoe in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, a self-doubting but driven artist who questions the supremacy of marriage and motherhood. While Katharine is fiercely independent, her self-reliance does not take the form of attending a university or obtaining a job. Mary has done both; and her selfless labors remind us, even as we follow the progress of Katharine's love, of the alternatives to marriage –whether as a novel's ending, or a woman's fate. (xxiv)

While the subversion of romance formulas helps Woolf problematize the idea of marriage preventing the quest, the representation of London based on the psychological and emotional states of the characters provides her with the means to avoid the materiality of fiction. In their efforts to bring the actual and dream world together, the characters of *Night and Day* perceive London in their minds accordingly. Thus, Woolf avoids the realistic rendering of the external world by narrating psychologically-perceived London. As Allison Tzu Yu Lin underlines in *Virginia Woolf and the European Avant-Garde: London, Painting, Film and Photography* (2009), such an impressionistic depiction of London points to a "psychological turn" in fiction writing:

> Woolf's London composes her own narrative pattern, makes a psychological turn in the writing of fiction, from James's centre of

> consciousness which passively perceives the external world, to her own expression of emotion –the characters' emotion which subjectively maps the cityscape. Woolf's mode of seeing illustrates a mode of narration. This mode of seeing reveals a process of mapping a psychological London. (109)

London stands out as an essential element of Woolf's fictional and non-fiction works. She conveys her ideas on various subjects –from the inhumanity of war to gender inequality, by describing the psychology of London. Mrs. Dalloway's wanderings in the streets of London, for example, point to the disillusionment of people who suffered from the war as well as to the social and economic suppression of women under patriarchy. Thus, in most of Woolf's works, the material city takes on psychological insights as the characters interact with the city. To expose the psychology of London, Woolf attempts to uncover the meaning beneath London's streets, buildings, theatres, shops, parks, institutions, and privately-owned houses. In *The London Scene* (1931), a collection of essays on London, Virginia Woolf especially underlines that one should have an understanding of "private houses" in London to be able to make sense of urban life. "Private houses in London are apt to be much of a muchness," writes Woolf in the essay entitled "The Portrait of a Londoner" (75). In her view, knowing what is going on in these houses is as important and necessary as knowing the streets, buildings, theatres, shops, parks and institutions of the metropolis. One of these private houses mentioned in this work belongs to Mrs. Crowe, who hosts intellectual and prominent people of the period. By focusing on Mrs. Crowe's house, it is emphasized that London is not merely "a gorgeous spectacle, a mart, a court, a hive of industry," it is rather "a place where people meet and talk, laugh, marry, and die, paint, write and act, rule and legislate" (83). Mrs. Crowe's house is presented as a microcosm giving an idea about the larger and more complex structure of London.

The houses of *Night and Day*, therefore, are not merely places where the events take place. Rather, they come to represent the characters' states of mind. All the houses in *Night and Day* –particularly the house accommodating Katharine Hilbery and the flat owned by Mary Datchet– give an idea about the psychology of the city. The two different worlds suggested through the characters of the text are further emphasized by the differences between these houses. They are like microcosms representing the larger structure of the metropolis. The Hilbery house located in Chelsea is remote from rapid and noisy life of London, the streets of which are invaded by the crowd of people, cabs, omnibuses and trains. Apart from being a secluded place that is quite away from the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, the Hilbery house is also presented like a Victorian dwelling place, where great importance is attached to family traditions. Katharine's duty in this house, as it has been noted before, is to continue these conventions by serving the tea-parties made for relatives and distinguished literary figures who pay frequent visits to their house. Due to the

tendency to embalm the memory of Richard Alardyce and preserve the cultural heritage of the Hilberys, life in the Hilbery house seems stuck in the past. Although the tick tocks of the clock and the visitors coming in and out of the house remind readers of the passing of the time, the sense of the past continually surrounds the place and the characters. At the very beginning of the novel, readers feel the nostalgia for the past in this house through Mrs. Hilbery's remarks: "After all, what is present? Half of it's the past, and the better half, too, I should say" (10). Even the works chosen by Mr. Hilbery to be read aloud in his study point to the past, as he thinks that novels of Henry Fielding are "something real" when compared to "the moderns" (90). Katharine feels the necessity "for her very existence that she should free herself from the past" (35), but the gaze of ancestors prevents Katharine from concentrating on her own life, from creating a space for herself. This point is illustrated by Katharine's views of her own attempts to write the biography of Alardyce together with her mother:

> So Mrs. Hilbery was raising round her the skies and trees of the past with every smoke of her pen and recalling the voices of the dead. Quiet as the room was, and undisturbed by the sounds of the present moment, Katharine could fancy that here was a deep pool of past time, and that she and her mother were bathed in the light of sixty years ago. What could the present give, she wondered, to compare with the rich crowd of gifts bestowed by the past? (98-99)

Because her life lacks an orientation toward the future, Katharine envies "people like Ralph and Mary" who have "all their own way, and an empty space before them" (92). Her life creates a space for her to carry out domestic errands such as "ordering meals" and "directing servants" freely, but it does not allow her to proclaim publicly that she is interested in astronomy and mathematics.

Katharine's life in this house affects her perception of London. Even though she becomes an active individual in the fantasy world she creates, she cannot create a space for herself in public life. While looking through the window of her room, she thinks that it is difficult to hear her own voice in "the shapeless mass of London" (92). London is like a shapeless place because her life enclosed within the walls of their house prevents her from fully discovering and defining this big metropolis. While caring for her parents, relatives and the visitors, she forgets her own self. For this reason, while standing by the window, she likens the heavy traffic of London to a thick texture silencing her own voice: "The incessant and tumultuous hum of the distant traffic seemed, as she stood there, to represent the thick texture of her life, for her life was so hemmed in with the progress of other lives that the sound of its own advance was inaudible" (92).

Katharine's wanderings in the city also give an idea about the female understanding of London. Walking stands out as "a metaphor, which reveals the psychological state, mood, and emotion of the character," it is not merely "a

symbol of quest, but also Woolf's experimental practice of expressing the character's thought" (Lin 114). The mind of London is revealed through her walks in the streets. While hurrying into Lincoln's Inn Fields thinking of Ralph, for example, Katharine contrasts the crowded street leading to his office "with the domestic streets of Chelsea" (382). As she is enclosed in domestic sphere and cannot participate in public life, she feels herself "an invisible spectator" in Kingsway, who stands "unobserved and absorbed" by the crowd (383). Similarly, the Strand and the Embankment are shaped by Katharine's thoughts:

> She looked desperately at the smooth-bowled pipes, and wondered -should she walk on by the Strand or by the Embankment? It was not a simple question, for it concerned not different streets so much as different streams of thought. If she went by the Strand she would force herself to think out the problem of the future, or some mathematical problem; if she went by the river she would certainly begin to think about things that didn't exist –the forest, the ocean beach, the leafy solitudes, the magnanimous hero. (234-35)

Both Strand and Embankment represent Katharine's confused mind stemming from her relationship with William. She decides to get married with him to have a room belonging to her, but still she wishes for uniting with a magnanimous hero. Strand and Embankment, therefore, emerge as two distinct characters reminding Katharine of this conflict. Her choice between the two, therefore, is not merely a matter of deciding which way to walk. It is rather a choice between two life forces that is likely to affect her whole life.

Another place that gives an idea about the mind of London is Mary Datchet's flat, which is "situated in a street mostly dedicated to offices off the Strand" (39). In opposition to the secluded Hilbery house that addresses the past, Mary's home is open to public life and oriented toward the future. It hosts many people who come together either merely for enjoyment or for discussing literature, art, and politics. The guests of the house are usually those who are dedicated to change and to the reform of society. Mr. Basnett, for instance, with whom Mary decides to work after she has quit her job in the suffrage office, is an educated man who is preparing a plan "for the education of labour, for the amalgamation of the middle class and the working class" (309). The behaviors, clothes and even the hair styles of the young minds frequenting the place imply that they are in defiance of the existing order and in search of a way to change the world for the better. The description of the room and the people occupying it clearly reflect this state of mind:

> The room very soon contained between twenty and thirty people, who found seats for the most part upon the floor, occupying the mattresses, and hunching themselves together into triangular shapes. They were all young and some of them seemed to make a protest by their hair and dress, and something sombre and truculent in the expression of their faces, against the more normal type, who

> would have passed unnoticed in an omnibus or an underground railway. (43)

By creating a liberating atmosphere welcoming the variety of people and ideas, Woolf contrasts the modernity of Mary's flat with the conventionality of the Hilbery House where everything is determined by established rules and Victorian principles.

In line with Mary's independent life in this house as well as her involvement in public life, London for Mary becomes a fascinating city that allows her to assert herself; it is "like a vast electric light, casting radiance upon the myriads of men and women who crowded round it" (41). She takes great pleasure from living in "the wonderful maze of London" (41). She finds this maze splendid since she is aware of her central position in London (Squier "Tradition and Revision" 125). Unlike Katharine who feels herself a spectator among the crowd, Mary imagines herself a part of the crowd:

> Out in the street she liked to think herself one of the workers who, at this hour, take their way in rapid single file along all the broad pavements of the city, with their heads slightly lowered, as if all their efforts were to follow each other as closely as might be; so that Mary used to figure herself a straight rabbit-run worn by their unswerving feet upon the pavement. But she liked to pretend that she was indistinguishable from the rest, and that when a wet day drove her to the Underground or omnibus, she gave and took her share of crowd and wet with clerks and typists and commercial men, and shared with them the serious business of winding-up the world to tick for, another four-and-twenty hours. (67)

The female vision of the city also becomes apparent through Cassandra's responses to London. Because of her limited life in Stogdon House, she is enchanted by the wide range of possibilities in London and romanticizes this big metropolis in her mind. Her life in their country house is shaped by her disillusioned father, Sir Francis, who is rewarded by a pension in return for his services in India, and her mother Maggie Otway, who pretends that she is a person having "considerable social standing and sufficient wealth" (182). Together with her brother Henry Otway, Cassandra protests life in this house that has strange and comic traditions. Lady Otway, for instance, based on her readings of "fashionable papers" talking about "the behaviour of Christmas parties in ducal houses," arranges expeditions to Lincoln for her guests by thinking that this is the most suitable way to entertain them (190). The visit to London, therefore, becomes a means for Cassandra to travel into a new world where she can experience a completely different life. Even "a journey to London by express train" turns into "a very pleasant and romantic adventure" for her (296). The people in the carriage seem important in her eyes since they are heading for London. Like a curious child, she examines the buildings and

the crowd of men and women invading the streets of London with "intense curiosity" (296).

Not only the female but also the male characters of *Night and Day* create images of London in their minds. Their vision of London coincides with their attitudes towards life and women. Susan M. Squier notes that William Rodney's country origin makes him hold conventional views about women. What he desires most from a woman is the appreciation and praise of his own abilities. In the eyes of William, Squier writes, a woman is "a paper doll" just like London is "a toy city" ("Tradition and Revision" 122). She states that "Rodney presents himself as passionately involved with Katharine, and with London, when in fact he is merely involved with the pleasant figure of himself – as lover and urban sophisticate– revealed against a backdrop of admiring women in a stage prop city" (122). Unlike William Rodney, Ralph Denham's urban background makes him believe in the autonomy of women and the city and admire them wholeheartedly. In contrast to William, Ralph does not see them merely as mirrors magnifying his own image. Squier says, "Denham's response to Katharine, as to London, is affirmative, responsive, admiring. He accepts the innate autonomy of both woman and city rather than attempting to force them to mirror him" (123).

Woolf resorts to a systematic characterization in order to express the complex nature of self-divided characters living in London. The inner confusion of the central characters, their struggles for the establishment of a harmony between the real and fantasy world, their constant movement away from and into these two separate spheres are all represented with a patterned characterization. The self-divided characters of *Night and Day* all possess within themselves some features of both night and day. While the actual life these characters are leading manifests their personalities observable in daylight, the dreams and secret desires narrated throughout the novel display their night sides. They are like black and white figures standing on a chessboard where every piece has its own counterpart. Once Woolf starts the game and moves the pawns located in front of the figures, the more about the complex nature of characters enshrouded behind the curtains is revealed. As the function of each figure in a chess game is determined by its relation to both its counterpart and other figures of opposite color, the identities of the characters are shaped through their relationships with their other sides and other individuals.

Katharine, Ralph, William, Cassandra and Mary quest for the ideals while moving on the huge chessboard, though these ideals have different implications for men and women. Woolf's London is shaped by the consciousness of the characters and their stance in life. While moving from one square to other on the chessboard, that is, from one place to other in London, the characters try to discover their own identities and realize their aims. The divided nature of characters and their efforts in trying to have a better life become clear through Katharine's thoughts. After she and William secretly break off their

engagement and mutually agree in a funny way that Cassandra is a better match for William, readers see Katharine walking and pondering in South Kensington as follows:

> Her mind, passing from Mary to Denham, from William to Cassandra, and from Denham to herself—if, as she rather doubted, Denham's state of mind was connected with herself—seemed to be the tracing out the lines of some symmetrical pattern, some arrangement of life, which invested, if not herself, at least the others, not only with interest, but with a kind of tragic beauty. She had a fantastic picture of them upholding splendid palaces upon their bent backs. They were the lantern-bearers, whose light scattered among the crowd, wove a pattern, dissolving, joining, meeting again in combination. (274)

The lanterns these characters carry refer to their dreams and desires, to their expectations from life. They are splendid as the palaces of fairy tales. At the same time, these dreams are difficult to be realized; too heavy to be carried on one's back. Their realization necessitates the defeat of conventions and the elimination of obstacles. With such an aim in mind, the characters continually interact with each other and London throughout the novel.

In "Splitting the Husks: Woolf's Modernist Language in Night and Day," Randy Malamud states that Woolf's task "until the 1930s was to undermine and dismantle the linguistic and literary structures of the past" (32). *Night and Day* is definitely one of these works in which she tries to free herself from the traditional form and subject matter. Woolf challenges conventional notions of gender roles and the idea of marriage by dismantling the narrative strategies employed in the earlier examples of romance. In addition, the description of London based on the thoughts and feelings of the characters sets the novel apart from the realist tradition. The subversion of romance structure as well as the depiction of psychologically-perceived London paves the way for her later career as a modernist writer.

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