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A SEARCH FOR INTERPERSONAL RELATEDNESS AND SELF-DEFINITION

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ABSTRACT

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In her first novel, The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf captures the complexity of human relationships and the difficulty of establishing meaningful connections with people. Her main character, Rachel Vinrace, struggles with these issues as she embarks on a discovery of self. Rachel's journey begins with a disrupted childhood, moves through her battle to regain a sense of belonging, and ends with her eventual withdrawal from the human struggle, thereby recreating herself and transcending the limitations of society and relationships. Rachel's actions throughout the novel mirror an oscillation between the fundamental concerns of personality development. Her behavior reflects the typical ego defense mechanisms employed by people preoccupied by interpersonal relatedness followed by an exaggerated emphasis on self-definition.

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Introduction

Since the publication of Virginia Woolf's first novel, The Voyage Out, many critics have written about Rachel Vinrace, the main character of the novel. Susan Gorsky, along with several others, has categorized The Voyage Out as a type of Bildungsroman that follows the development of the central character. She argues that the series of events in the novel result in the heroine's "two symbolic voyages: one, the maturation of a young woman out of childhood , and the other the movement out of life to death at the novel's end"(Gorsky 57). Gorsky identifies the main themes of the novel as communication, friendship and love. Similarly, Michael Rosenthal focuses his analysis of The Voyage Out on Rachel's growth into selfhood. He traces Rachel's progress towards a "viable maturity" and exposes the "developing impulses" present in Rachel.

Other critics contend that Virginia Woolf's first novel was an exercise in psychological analysis and the subtleties of personality. David Daiches arranges his critique of The Voyage Out around its "fitful gleams of insight into the subtler realms of human consciousness"

(Daiches 13). Allen McLaurin also classifies The Voyage Out as a "psychological voyage" with a major theme of the novel being the "portrayal of the non-rational part of mental activity seen especially in dreams, or in the mind fevered by emotion or disease"(McLaurin 30). Dorothy Brewster centers her analysis of The Voyage Out on "the voyaging out of Rachel's adventuring personality"(Brewster 87). Frederick McDowell even claims that in "The Voyage Out there is a greater emphasis upon the psychic aspects of the heroine's development than on her social environment" (McDowell 76). In a similar manner, Avrom Fleishman classifies this novel as a "growth of consciousness" in which the "main journey is a mental one"(Fleishman 3). In her analysis of The Voyage Out, Stella McNichol states that "Virginia Woolf explores Rachel's feelings, traces the development of her mind, and above all charts the fluctuations of her awakening consciousness"(McNichol 1). She further claims that Woolf traces Rachel's "psychological development through the events which shape the course of her life and in which relationships develop, and these events are balanced by instances of solitary reflection and introspection"(McNichol 2).

Although most of the existing criticism identifies The Voyage Out as a psychological probing into the character of Rachel, critics have yet to delve into the psychoanalytical specifics apparent throughout the novel. In my thesis, I propose that Virginia Woolf had a keen sense of the psychological dynamics of personality demonstrated by her ability to realistically describe Rachel's internal and external struggles unique to her particular circumstances and experiences. In many respects, Woolf anticipated the discoveries of psychoanalysis and current personality theorists with her creation of Rachel and the unveiling of Rachel's thoughts, actions and words during her journey towards developing a sense of self in the novel. My contention is that Woolf's characterization of Rachel coincides remarkably with the tenets of Freud and current personality configurations.

Numerous critics have claimed that Woolf's keen insight into the dynamics of personality stem from her own personal experiences. In fact, much of the material in the novel contains elements from the author's own life. In her Introduction to the novel, Jane Wheare has outlined the similarities and details from Woolf's own life that appear throughout the novel. However, my intention in this thesis is not to

reiterate all these parallels between Woolf's own experiences and those present in the novel. I will only mention those of particular importance to my argument that relate to the psychological dynamics of Woolf's main character, Rachel Vinrace.

The central focus of my argument is an analysis of The Voyage Out in terms of Woolf sending Rachel on a search for interpersonal relatedness and self-definition. In order to fully comprehend the crux of my thesis, I must introduce and define the key terms central to my argument, namely interpersonal relatedness and self-definition. Sidney Blatt, a personality theorist and professor at Yale University, has written extensively about these two personality configurations. He explains that in normal development there is a balance maintained between: "(1) the development of the capacity to establish increasingly mature and satisfying interpersonal relationships and (2) the development of a consolidated, realistic, essentially positive, increasingly differentiated and integrated self-definition and identity"(Blatt 299). Blatt claims that "biological predisposition and disruptive environmental events, however, can disturb this integrated developmental process in complex ways and lead to an exaggerated emphasis on one mode at the expense of the

other"(Blatt 309). He further elaborates that "a distortion of one developmental line to the neglect of the other occurs as a compensatory response to developmental disruptions" (Blatt 309). I propose that Woolf presents these distortions in the character of Rachel. She provides the developmental disruption of Rachel by relating her childhood experience as one lacking affection due to the death of her mother and the abandonment by her father. These circumstances cause Rachel to have an exaggerated need for interpersonal relatedness, which manifests itself in the preoccupation with a desire for connectedness, intimacy and attachment. Woolf allows Rachel to progress from an infantile character that was overly concerned with relatedness at the expense of the self, and then to focus on her other developmental need of self-definition, which manifests itself in an exaggerated emphasis on autonomy, uniqueness and self-interest.

Woolf reveals Rachel's inability to maintain a balance between these two developmental lines when she exposes Rachel's excessively dominating needs for interpersonal relatedness and self-definition at different points throughout the novel. These complex dynamics are reinforced by the presence of ego mechanisms of defense specific to each

developmental line. Remarkably, Woolf depicts Rachel's behavior in a manner that directly relates to the particular mechanisms associated with the two different personality configurations. When Woolf writes of Rachel's attempts to connect with others, she has Rachel relying upon mechanisms of defense that are particular to the personality type that emphasizes interpersonal relatedness. Moreover, when she decides to have Rachel emphasize self-definition and identity, Woolf has Rachel display psychological defenses that are integral to that character style. Blatt defines psychological defenses as "cognitive-affective processes through which individuals avoid recognizing and acknowledging conflict and through which they attempt to deal with conflictual aspects within themselves and in reality"(Blatt 300).

My intention in this thesis is to illuminate Virginia Woolf's unique writing style that enabled her to create a complex character that realistically portrays the psychological dynamics that exist in human beings. With the character of Rachel, Woolf has captured the essence of the detrimental effects of a pernicious upbringing as well as random experiences which can unleash certain distortions of personality in

adulthood. Woolf's creation of Rachel stands as a testament to her astute awareness of human nature and the psyche.

Chapter One: Interpersonal Relatedness

In her first novel, The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf captures the complexity of human relationships and the difficulty of establishing meaningful connections with people. Her main character, Rachel Vinrace, battles with these issues as she embarks on a discovery of self. Woolf traces the difficulties Rachel encounters as she desperately attempts to control her anxiety, find satisfying object-relationships, and attain a true sense of self as well as freedom from a world that inherently traps and isolates her. Rachel's journey begins with a disrupted childhood, moves through her attempt to regain a sense of belonging, and ends with her eventual withdrawal from the human struggle, thereby recreating herself and transcending the limitations of society and relationships. An analysis of her behavior reveals Rachel's personality development vacillating between interpersonal relatedness and self-definition, and the imbalance of Rachel's personality development expresses itself through the various ego defense mechanisms she employs throughout the novel.

On her journey of self-discovery, Rachel experiences difficulty establishing satisfying interpersonal relationships. Her personal history and childhood impede her development of self. At age eleven, Rachel is left in the care of her two spinster aunts when her mother dies. The loss of her mother hinders her ability to connect easily with other people. Significantly, Woolf's own mother died when she was thirteen and her death impacted Woolf deeply, and this novel "is animated by her effort to explore her own experience and through it to work to some more general illumination of the perplexities of her sex"(Rose 50). Since Rachel was deprived of her mother's love and nurturing, she did not receive the maternal validation of self crucial to developing healthy relationships in the future. Abandoned by her father, combined with the absence of her mother, Rachel yearns for unconditional love normally provided by a child's parents. She seeks acceptance and intensely desires interpersonal relatedness. However, Rachel fails to find the acceptance she so gravely needs in order to feel fulfilled.

In his article, "Interpersonal Relatedness and Self- Definition: Two Personality Configurations and Their Implications for Psychopathology and Psychotherapy," Sidney Blatt addresses the issue

of personality development. He explains that "as a consequence of major disruption of the normal developmental processes of relatedness and self-definition, some individuals, most often women, become excessively preoccupied with relatedness at the expense of development of the sense of self"(Blatt 310). He elaborates on this condition by stating that "if this disruption of the dialectic developmental process occurs later in the life cycle, a more organized kind of hysterical disorder can develop in which the person is concerned not only with being held, cared for, and loved but also with being able to express as well as receive love"(Blatt 310). Rachel's developmental disruption centers around the loss of her mother and being separated from her father. Thus, when Woolf introduces the reader to Rachel she has already reached the age of twenty-four, but the emotional scars of childhood become apparent through her increasingly noticeable personality disorders. For the majority of the novel, Rachel displays the characteristic attributes which Blatt assigns to the personality organization of interpersonal relatedness. However, when her attempts to connect with other people on an intimate level fail, she resorts to the opposite extreme and fixates on self-definition. Ultimately, both personality configurations leave her deeply disappointed causing her

withdrawal from the human struggle, and resulting in her subsequent death.

Clearly, Rachel's childhood was not a typical one. Having no brothers or sisters and few friends of her own age, Rachel was not equipped for the social aspects of life nor for her personal character development. Through unfortunate circumstances Rachel is withdrawn from normal socialization during her formative years. Thus, as a young adult Rachel displays an exaggerated emphasis on interpersonal relatedness. This compensatory response to the trauma of her childhood causes Rachel to have an emotionally regressed development of ego. She approaches life from a narcissistic perspective. Freud described narcissism "as a particularly self-reflexive dimension of experiencing and pursuing desire"(Alcorn 3). With regard to Rachel and the people she meets, Woolf writes that "she would come to love them when she found that they were like herself"(282). Rather than embracing the inherent individuality of people, Rachel is rashly seeking her own image in others. Her inability to develop fulfilling emotional bonds with others, find mentors, or encounter others like herself, leaves Rachel continually disappointed and frustrated.

Lacking the affection of her mother, Rachel looked to her aunts for examples of healthy and fulfilling object-relationships. Instead of providing Rachel with the self-esteem, confidence, and love that she needed, the aunts tended to dismiss her feelings as foolish. As Rachel pondered over their relationship, she began to think that "the whole system in which they lived had appeared before her eyes quite unfamiliar and inexplicable, and themselves as chairs or umbrellas dropped about here and there without any reason"(28). Woolf makes the absence of interpersonal relatedness apparent in these lines. Rachel regards her aunts not as people with emotions, but as inanimate objects or symbols. She cannot relate to them on an intimate level. When Rachel tentatively questions her aunts about their fondness for one another, they become uncomfortable because they are not inclined to express feelings for one another. Rachel's development of self suffers from this void with her relatives and caregivers. Her aunts had left her completely ignorant of intimate relationships. Thus, the death of Rachel's mother and the inability of the aunts and Rachel's father to provide a warm, loving, and open environment created a weakness in Rachel's ability to discover a

positive sense of self. As she encounters new people, she fixates on relatedness, searching for fulfilling object-relationships with others.

When Rachel becomes excessively preoccupied with relatedness, she employs the ego defense mechanisms typical of an individual with this personality configuration. The avoidance defenses predominantly used include denial, repression, and displacement (Blatt 312). After her unsuccessful attempt to connect with her aunts, Rachel immediately adopts the defensive style of denial. She tries to convince herself that attaining a closeness to others did not matter to her. With this idea, Rachel's denial consists of an avoidance of awareness of the painful reality that she desperately wants and needs to connect with those around her. Rachel states her conclusion as the following: "Let these odd men and women - her aunts, the Hunts, Ridley, Helen, Mr. Pepper, and the rest - be symbols, - featureless but dignified, symbols of age, of youth, of motherhood, of learning, and beautiful often as people upon the stage are beautiful"(29). With these lines, Woolf demonstrates Rachel's denial of their humanity in the sense that she perceives them as actors to be observed rather than real people with whom to connect and create meaningful relationships. Furthermore, in this same scene Rachel relies

on the other avoidant defense measure of displacement. As Mardi J. Horowitz explains in his article, "A Classification Theory of Defense," in displacement "the avoided ideas and feelings are transferred to some other person, situation, or object"(Horowitz 80). In Rachel's case, she displaces her feelings of relatedness to her piano. With regard to sharing and expressing feelings, she states that "To feel anything strongly was to create an abyss between oneself and others who feel strongly perhaps but differently. It was far better to play the piano and forget all the rest" (29). She displaces the need to connect with other people onto her music, and she claims the following: "It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt, but that was what music was for"(29). Woolf exposes Rachel's difficulty in forming relationships by having her resort to these ego defense mechanisms. When Rachel's sexuality heightens with the kiss from Mr. Dalloway she again reveals the importance of her piano playing as a means for the defense mechanism of sublimation. Her music embodies a refuge for Rachel by completely absorbing her with seemingly immense satisfaction. Through her music she acquires a sense of connection in her ability to make and shape the

notes. In this respect, music plays a vital role in the novel as Rachel struggles to form meaningful relationships and exchanges with people.

Throughout the novel, Woolf expresses Rachel's sense of loneliness. Her failure to find similarities with those people that surround her greatly upsets Rachel. Being unable to fulfill her need for interpersonal relatedness, she relies on her mechanisms of defense, namely piano playing, to soothe her pain. Woolf depicts her avoidant measures by stating the following: "Instead of joining them as they began to pace the deck, Rachel was indignant with the prosperous matrons, who made her feel outside their world and motherless, and turning back, she left them abruptly. She slammed the door of her room, and pulled out her music"(52). However, one of the people that Rachel actually feels comfortable and at ease with is Mrs. Dalloway. Woolf explains that "it seemed that Mrs. Dalloway was able to understand without words"(52). Here, Woolf reveals Rachel's regressive merger fantasy. "Regression consists of turning back the maturational clock and returning to earlier modes of dealing with the world"(Horowitz 82). Rachel longs for the maternal connection where she was understood and loved before she was able to communicate with words. She desires this

fundamental interpersonal relatedness with her mother that she fantasizes about rediscovering in Mrs. Dalloway. As an expressive individual, Mrs. Dalloway epitomizes an ideal maternal figure for Rachel. Experiencing relatedness with Mrs. Dalloway allows Rachel to expose her feelings of loneliness. When she openly acknowledges to Mrs. Dalloway that she is lonely and unsure of what she wants, Mrs. Dalloway doesn't hesitate to provide the answer. In fact, Mrs. Dalloway reaches out to Rachel like a mother, with physical affection. She places her arm around Rachel and squeezes her hand. She cries with happiness as she explains to Rachel that what Rachel wants and needs is a man who understands her the way her husband does. Rachel, being very impressionable and moved by Mrs. Dalloway's confident demeanor, idealizes Mrs. Dalloway's revelation and puts to memory her statement that "what one wants in a person one lives with is that they should keep one at one's best"(52).

Besides Mrs. Dalloway, Rachel seeks to connect with Mr. Dalloway as well. Woolf explains that Rachel "liked Richard Dalloway, and warmed as he warmed. He seemed to mean what he said"(56). She does not categorize Mr. Dalloway as some kind of symbol, rather Rachel desires relatedness with him. She believes that his "kindness was

genuine, and she determined to take the chance he gave her, although to talk to a man of such worth and authority made her heart beat"(57). Rachel perseveres despite setbacks in their conversation because "Vanity, irritation, and a thrusting desire to be understood, urged her to make another attempt"(58). Her character style of emphasizing interpersonal relatedness directly relates to her need to be understood. Moreover, it focuses primarily on libidinal attachments which explains Rachel's concerns about being loved, intimate, and close. In their conversation, Mr. Dalloway mentions the word "love." Woolf conveys the significance of this emotion to Rachel when she writes, "it was a word that seemed to unveil the skies for Rachel"(59).

Rachel desperately desires the intimacy and closeness that was absent in her youth. However, her basic need for interpersonal relatedness becomes tainted when Mr. Dalloway kisses Rachel. That night Rachel dreamt:

> that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and became a vault; she found herself trapped in it, bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails. His face was pitted and like the face of an animal. The wall behind him oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down. Still

> and cold as death she lay, not daring to move, until she broke the agony by tossing herself across the bed... (68)

Rachel's visions represent an anxiety dream. She wakes up feeling pursued and filled with horror. The content of the dream contains fearful elements and the uneasy feelings remain after Rachel awakes. Her dream can be related to sexual apprehension sparked by Mr. Dalloway's kiss. His sexual advance toward Rachel led to the release of libidinous emotions that her unconscious deems necessary to repress. In addition, the abuse of power and authority by Mr. Dalloway when he kisses Rachel causes her much anguish, leaving her with heightened sexual anxiety. Mr. Dalloway's kiss has a disturbingly incestuous quality due to his age and her childlike admiration of him. He represents a paternal figure to her, and she sought a closeness with him that she lacked from her father. Since Mr. Dalloway crosses the line of a father figure by passionately kissing Rachel on the lips, she experiences an extreme reaction that manifests itself in the form of a nightmare.

Phyllis Rose notes the similarities between Rachel's introduction to sexuality and Virginia Woolf's experience with crass sexual advances made upon her by her half brother, George Duckworth. Rose states that

George's fondling and groping could have been "the cause or merely the confirmation of Woolf's aversion to sex"(Rose 54). She outlines the parallelism between George and Mr. Dalloway as the following:

> Both erotic pursuers inhabit the same social milieu. Both are inappropriate lovers, Dalloway because he is married, George because he is her brother. Both represent power, Dalloway political power(he has been in Parliament), George the sheer power of money. The picture she is trying to create in the Dalloway episode in her polite, chaste fashion is of male lust so strong it expresses itself despite all restraints. (Rose 54)

Mr. Dalloway displaces responsibility for his boorish overture by blaming Rachel for tempting him. Rachel, like Virginia Woolf, experiences first hand the sensation of powerlessness in the presence of an insensitively assertive man. Woolf succeeds in portraying Rachel as a woman abruptly made aware of the possibility of violation and exposes Rachel's fear and anxiety regarding sex in her depiction of Rachel's dream.

Rachel's fear could be substituted for sexual excitement, and indeed her dream encompasses numerous meanings. By dreaming of a disfigured man of small stature, Rachel may be revealing her aggressive feelings towards men as bestial and lusting. His nonsensical gibbering

reinforces the notion of man's inability to communicate on a meaningful level with Rachel. She perceives men as barbarians and suffers from anxiety due to the sense of isolation. She finds herself trapped and alone, suggesting her nature as a victim with a loss of freedom stemming from the sexual desires of men for her and her libidinal excitement that she must restrain. Rachel considers herself trapped by male sexual desire, and her life dictated by male appetite.

In his essay, "About Dreams with Unpleasant Content," Franz Alexander examines the influence of the superego, ego, and id on dream content. He claims that "it is easy to show that behind the manifest unpleasant content there is hidden a repressed wish...which reality and our inhibitions hinder in their realization" (Alexander 50-51). In Rachel's dream, this repressed wish can be interpreted as a desire to diminish the power and control of men. One of the reader's first introductions to Willoughby, Rachel's father, depicts him as "big and burly, and has a great booming voice, and a fist and a will of his own"(17). Moreover, Woolf relates that Helen "suspected him of nameless atrocities with regard to his daughter"(17). Whether these "atrocities" are physical and/or sexual abuse is left unclear.

Nevertheless, by choosing the word "atrocities," Woolf creates a picture of Willoughby as an exceedingly cruel man with abominable traits. Naturally, there is a similarity between Rachel's father and Mr. Dalloway stemming from the closeness in age and authority, as well as their roles as father figures. One could argue that Rachel suffers from penis envy and/or an unconscious desire to castrate men. Thus, she wishes to take away their power and superiority over her as a female by diminishing and demeaning the physical stature of the man in her dream.

In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, Sigmund Freud describes the nature of penis envy as "an envy culminating in the wish, which is so important in its consequences, to be boys themselves" (Freud 61). Obviously, Rachel realizes that it is an impossibility for her to become a male, and therefore she vents her frustration in her dream. The man in her dream is the complete opposite of the significant men in her life. He is not tall and strong, but little and deformed. His voice is not loud and booming, but reduced to mere gibberish. Her dream discloses the anger and fear residing within her over the issues of male dominance and sexuality. Prior to this dream, Woolf exposes Rachel's keen awareness of her inferior position as a woman in society. In her

conversation with Mr. Dalloway, he talks of the age in which they live as full of "opportunities and possibilities, the mass of things to be done and enjoyed"(66). He then asks her about herself and she resignedly replies, "You see, I'm a woman"(66). With this response, Woolf implies Rachel's full awareness of her limitations in this Victorian society after being subjected to the standard, patronizing woman's education. As a female, her education revolved around being useful to her father as a future hostess or to benefit the needs of a future husband. Carolyn Heilburn explains the Victorian assumption of gender with the following: "according to the conventional view, masculine equals forceful, competent, competitive, controlling, vigorous, unsentimental, and occasionally violent; feminine equals tender, genteel, intuitive, rather than rational, passive, unaggressive, readily given to submission"(Wheare 38). The latent content of her dream divulges her resentment towards these limited roles assigned to her sex in this patriarchal world.

Franz Alexander elaborates on the dynamics of unpleasant dreams and claims that "the superego has not only a distorting function in dreams but is also able to create dreams as are the repressed tendencies of the id"(Alexander 51). Thus, an analysis of the dream reveals the

existing tensions between the superego and the id. In other words, the dream unveils the "dammed-up tendencies of conscience as well as of a dammed-up libido"(Alexander 51). Anna Freud in The Ego and The Mechanisms of Defense defines the superego as the following:

> It is the mischief-maker which prevents the ego's coming to a friendly understanding with the instincts. It sets up an ideal standard, according to which sexuality is prohibited and aggression pronounced to be antisocial. It demands a degree of sexual renunciation and restriction of aggression which is incompatible with psychic health. (Freud 55)

The formation of her superego's strictness directly corresponds to Rachel's exposure to an excessively restrictive Victorian society and her cold rather than loving aunts and father. According to Anna Freud, by the process of identification, the superego makes the example of the caregivers and society its own. Therefore, if the caregivers do not display real human weaknesses and a tolerant attitude toward the instincts, they run the risk of raising an individual plagued with anxiety, and torn by inner conflicts (Freud 56). Certainly, Victorian society did not condone kissing married men. Moreover, sexuality was severely restricted in this repressive society. In his essay "The Transformations of Puberty," Sigmund Freud elucidates the differentiation between men and

women with regards to sexuality. He states that the "development of the inhibitions of sexuality (shame, disgust, pity, etc.) takes place in little girls earlier and in the face of less resistance than in boys; the tendency to sexual repression seems in general to be greater"(Freud 85).

After her kiss from Mr. Dalloway, an inexperienced and immature Rachel finds herself being punished by her superego in the form of a nightmare. Her punishment consists in the unpleasant content of the dream which leaves her feeling "cold as death" and in a state of anxiety when she awakens. Her anxiety is so intense that she dreads the outside world. She locks her door and believes that "A voice moaned for her; eyes desired her. All night long barbarian men harassed the ship; they came scuffling down the passages, and stopped to snuffle at her door. She could not sleep again"(68). This anxiety directly relates to her awakened sexual desires. Rachel's libidinal impulses and passionate emotions have been aroused by the kiss from Mr. Dalloway. Her id instincts have come in direct combat with her superego or conscience. In this sense, the dream, along with being a wish fulfillment of exercising her latent hostility towards men by diminishing them in the dream, functions as an outlet to release the tension between the two opposing

parts of the psychic apparatus. Furthermore, Alexander contends that the dream serves to alleviate the sense of guilt that the dreamer suffers from by putting the dreamer in a painful situation. He writes that " while the tension of repressed wishes can be relieved through hallucinatory pleasurable satisfactions, the demands of the conscience can only be fulfilled by punishment, by suffering or by sacrifice" (Alexander 52). The idea is that Rachel's scary and disturbing dream functions to help eliminate her sense of guilt about the sexual encounter with Mr. Dalloway. Her superego demands that she suffer for her actions, and the dream is the easiest possible way to ensure that she does. Obviously, Rachel does not commit this action on her own accord. However, like the majority of people who have been violated, Woolf realizes one cannot help feeling somehow responsible or guilty for the occurrence whether consciously or unconsciously. This is especially true for Rachel since Mr. Dalloway tries to shift the blame on her by claiming Rachel tempted him. Thus, Rachel is better able to face Mr. and Mrs. Dalloway having undergone the painful experience of the preceding night, which served to ease her conscience.

After the departure of the Dalloways, Helen Ambrose decides to take on the care of Rachel. Helen befriends Rachel and they discuss the kiss from Mr. Dalloway. When Rachel recalls the kiss, she does so in ambivalent terms. Anna Freud outlines ambivalence and sexual anxiety in the following terms:

> Long ago the analytic study of the neuroses suggested that there is in human nature a disposition to repudiate certain instincts, in particular the sexual instincts, indiscriminately and independently of individual experience. This disposition appears to be a phylogenetic inheritance, a kind of deposit accumulated from acts of repression practiced by many generations and merely continued, not initiated, by individuals. To describe this dual attitude of mankind toward the sexual life - constitutional aversion coupled with passionate desire - Bleuler coined the term *ambivalence.* (157)

Rachel's response to Mr. Dalloway's kiss falls under this category of ambivalence. When expressing her feelings to Helen, Rachel reveals her mutually conflicting emotions regarding the kiss. She states frankly that Mr. Dalloway kissed her and that she doesn't know why. This statement seemed to be made without emotion as if she were disconnected from the event. However, immediately following this declaration, she blushes. She tells Helen that she was a "good deal excited" by the kiss, but that she "didn't mind till afterwards" when she "saw the figure of the bloated

little man again" and "became terrified"(71). Her natural sexual instincts allow her to enjoy the passionate encounter with Mr. Dalloway, but only momentarily until her conscience takes over. The "bloated little man" represents the punishment and sexual repression that the superego demands, as well as an expression of her aggressive desire to exert her power over men by diminishing their physical stature in the dream. Society has ingrained in women, especially, this tendency towards sexual inhibition and anxiety. Rachel reveals her ambivalence again when she exclaims that all "men are brutes! I hate men!"(72). She immediately follows this remark with a completely contradictory one about Mr. Dalloway. Rachel states "I liked him, and I liked being kissed"(73). Clearly, Rachel's ambivalence leaves her confused and remains problematic for her. She must decide whether she will allow her sexual impulses to be expressed or rejected. This question evolves into whether Woolf will have Rachel choose liberty or restraint, either revolting against authority or submitting to its power.

As Rachel continues to search for interpersonal relatedness, she begins to cling to Helen as a mentor. Helen encourages Rachel to develop her true sense of self which inspires Rachel. She is deeply

moved when Helen advises her to "go ahead and be a person on your own account"(75). Woolf writes that the "vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel's mind, and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living"(75). However, Rachel remains tentative about her quest for self-definition which Woolf makes apparent by having her stammer "I can be m-m-myself in spite of you, in spite of the Dalloways, and Mr. Pepper, and Father and my Aunts, in spite of these?"(75). Her questioning of this concept of selfhood reveals Rachel's delayed personality development. Helen serves to enhance Rachel's progress towards a balanced and healthy personality that consists of both interpersonal relatedness and self-definition. After three months under her guidance and agenda, Helen notices significant differences in Rachel. These changes involve the following:

> She saw her less shy, and less serious, which was all to the good, and the violent leaps and the interminable mazes which had led to that result were usually not even guessed at by her. Talk was the medicine she trusted to, talk about everything, talk that was free, unguarded, and as candid as a habit of talking with men made natural in her own case. Nor did she encourage those habits of unselfishness and amiability founded upon insincerity which are put at so high a value in mixed households of men and women. She desired that Rachel should think, and for this reason offered

> books and discouraged too entire a dependence upon Bach and Beethoven and Wagner. (113)

This passage displays the substantial developments Rachel has achieved on her journey of selfhood. She has visibly become more extroverted and open to others, and engages in fulfilling conversations with people. Her opportunity and ability to connect with others through words has allowed her to experience relatedness with others.

Phyllis Rose argues that this conversion "in Rachel recalls the change that took place in Woolf's life when she and her sister and brothers moved to Bloomsbury and broke with the stifling life of their relatives, when she stopped making tea talk at her father's table and began holding court with Vanessa instead"(Rose 57). In other words, Vanessa, Virginia's older sister, may have functioned as the model for the character of Helen. Vanessa, like Helen, was able to carry on conversations with men candidly and with great ease. Through this new environment and with the help of an older mentor, Woolf marks Rachel's growth in personality.

Previously Rachel had been denied the opportunity to speak freely and without constraint because her aunts and father did not afford

her this freedom. Their inclination tended towards reticence, and her father informed Helen that they had gone "year after year without talking about these things" and believed it was "better so"(76). Never having talked about emotions and feelings that really mattered to Rachel with her father or anyone else left Rachel with an emptiness inside her. Her need for relatedness finally begins to be satisfied under the direction and care of Helen, as well as a chance to explore her desire for self-definition. Under Helen's guidance, Rachel avoids the typical self-effacing rearing that creates submissive women. Instead of letting her become another victim to traditional Victorian gender stereotyping, Woolf has Helen purposely neglect to stress those "habits" that stifle one's growth. Michael Rosenthal interprets Helen's presence in the novel and her commitment to Rachel's growth as being "clearly fueled by Woolf's own resentments against the sexist assumptions of an educational system which attempted for so long to keep women in a state of happy blankness"(Rosenthal 51). By highlighting Rachel's education and personal predicament, Woolf allows her concerns regarding the rights of women and the essence of relationships to surface.

Anna Freud's ideas regarding instinctual anxiety and attachment apply to the relationship between Helen and Rachel. Freud argues that "sometimes the attachment is to an older person, whom he takes as his leader and who is clearly a substitute for the abandoned parent object (Freud 167). Certainly, Helen is older than Rachel and greatly influences Rachel by directing her education and personal agenda. Helen acts as a substitute maternal figure for Rachel, and this object-relationship signifies Rachel's desire for interpersonal relatedness in this stage of the novel. However, Rachel cannot completely identify with Helen either. She exclaims, "Thank God, Helen, I'm not like you! I sometimes think you don't think or feel or care or do anything but exist"(248). Rachel's immature outburst reveals her limited ability to understand, empathize, and relate with others. By idealizing her relationships and experiences, Rachel is often confused and disappointed. Rachel says "Oh, it's only what's the matter with everyone! No one feels-- no one does anything but hurt. I tell you, Helen, the world's bad. It's an agony, living, wanting--"(249). Lacking the interpersonal relatedness that she desperately desires, Rachel is overwhelmed by the loneliness of human

life. She yearns to be understood and find that ideal object-relationship with someone that she believes will lead to her happiness.

As Rachel encounters various characters and searches for someone to connect with spiritually, sexually, or emotionally, she is invariably frustrated. For instance, the day Rachel goes to the hotel to attend chapel, she encounters three females who epitomize the typical lives of middle-class women in this society. First, Rachel enters Evelyn's room and proceeds to listen to Evelyn's love troubles. Evelyn represents the type of woman who spends most of her energy on dressing and deciding whom to marry. Rachel becomes disillusioned with the conversation and looks for an escape. As she leaves the room, Rachel goes to a nearby window for refuge. Next, Miss Allan invites Rachel into her room and Rachel follows because "It seemed possible that each new person might remove the mystery which burdened her"(239). In fact, this mystery centers around Rachel's inability to find someone that she connects with on a meaningful and satisfying level. Rachel seeks a sense of belonging and understanding which transcends the limited companionship these women can offer, thus she continues searching. As opposed to Evelyn, Miss Allan's life as a female is one of spinsterhood. Miss Allan

represents women who invest their energy into academic study and typically become teachers. Rachel finds Miss Allan odd and is unable to break "the reticence which had snowed her under for years"(242). Again, Rachel can not relate to this type of female and soon departs. Immediately, she encounters Old Mrs. Paley who is impeding her passage through the hallway. Mrs. Paley represents conventional Victorian women who marry and willingly accept a submissive role. Rachel considers her to be unbearable and she again realizes that she must escape. Woolf depicts Rachel's crisis with the following lines:

> She walked quickly and blindly in the opposite direction, and found herself at the end of a *cul de sac*.... She lifted her head sharply, exclaiming aloud, 'It's intolerable!' Looking out the window with eyes that would have seen nothing even had they not been dazed by tears, she indulged herself at last in violent abuse of the entire day....Evelyn; then Miss Allan; then old Mrs. Paley blocking up the passage. All day long she had been tantalised and put off. She had now reached one of those eminences, the result of some crisis, from which the world is finally displayed in its true proportions. She disliked the look of it immensely -- churches, politicians, misfits, and huge impostures -- men like Mr. Dalloway, men like Mr. Bax, Evelyn and her chatter, Mrs. Paley blocking up the passage. Meanwhile the steady beat of her own pulse represented the hot current of heat of feeling that ran down beneath; beating, struggling, fretting. For the time, her own body was the source of all the life in the world, which tried to burst forth here -- there-- and was repressed...Thus tormented, she would twist her hands together, for all things were wrong, all people stupid. Vaguely seeing that there were people down in the garden

> beneath she represented them as aimless masses of matter, floating hither and thither, without aim except to impede her. (244)

Clearly, Rachel does not identify her emerging sense of self with any of these women or other acquaintances, and this creates a further state of frustration, anxiety, and entrapment within her. As Susan Gorsky notes, Woolf's ulterior motive in this scene is also to provide "mildly satiric studies of the perpetual flirt, the middle-aged woman, or the spinster woman who had devoted her life to literature as a profession (not a love)"(Gorsky 56). Woolf's concerns regarding the stifling conditions of a bourgeois woman's life become apparent through Rachel's reactions to her limiting social conditions that conspire to determine her identity and personality. Michael Rosenthal comments on Rachel's situation by claiming that no one "is more in need of some kind of emancipation at the start than Rachel" because she is "a victim of the most limited and trivializing sexist education available to women at the end of the nineteenth century"(Rosenthal 50). Certainly, among Woolf's agendas in writing The Voyage Out is her need to expose the social limitations and political conditions that grossly restrict the possibilities for a woman's life during this period.

Striking similarities exist between the above description of Rachel's experience and her nightmare after the kiss from Mr. Dalloway, whom she mentions in the above passage. In fact, in reference to her situation Rachel murmurs to herself "It's a dream" (245). During both of these instances, Rachel has the sensation of being confined. In her nightmare she is trapped, and in the hallway she repeats that old Mrs. Paley was "blocking up the passage." Her nightmare consists of a tunnel and vault, and in this case she finds herself caged in the narrow space of a hallway. Interestingly, Rachel stresses that it is Mrs. Paley who prevents her from escaping. Mrs. Paley corresponds to the nature of the little deformed man in the nightmare. In the nightmare, Rachel reacts against the domineering and controlling men that Mrs. Paley willingly submits to in her life. Rachel can not tolerate the idea of submission that she sees embodied in Mrs. Paley.

Rachel's nightmare indicates the repressed wishes of her id. Freud's concept of the id revolves around the notion that the id is the source of psychic energies, namely the drives of sex and aggression. Thus, her dream has sexual and aggressive overtones that are also present in the above passage. Woolf chooses the word "repressed" when

describing Rachel's body as the source of life in this world. Rachel's sexual and aggressive impulses are being excessively repressed by those around her and society at large. She finds herself unable to experience any pleasure. This idea of pleasure relates to Freud's concept of the pleasure principle which claims humans are driven by a need for pleasure that coincides with the fulfillment of our aggressive and sexual instincts. Thus, our id exists to direct us toward pleasure. However, in society we are not able to satisfy our id indiscriminately because we must acknowledge the reality principle. Our reality in this world necessitates the postponement of immediate gratification and the importance of subduing the id. Hence, the appearance of the ego which is aware of the external reality and attempts to regulate the energies of the id.

In Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, Sigmund Freud explains that the ego proceeds with careful calculation when confronted by the id's desires because the ego fears that the superego "should be angry with it or punish it or cease to love it"(70). Desiring to appease the exceptionally severe and unkind superego, the ego obeys by producing a degradation of the energies or libido. However, Woolf has created a rebellious character in Rachel, who in many respects is a projection of

Woolf herself, and she will not permit her fictional character to blindly follow the expectations of society that have been internalized by Rachel's superego. Rachel's ego suffers from intensely negative feelings of entrapment when in actuality her body desires to "burst forth" and be free. Therefore, Rachel's ego has not sufficiently repressed her id, and this causes Rachel's unhappiness and apparent conflicting emotions.

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Sigmund Freud outlines the nature of unpleasure. He contends the following:

> Most of the unpleasure that we experience is *perceptual* unpleasure. It may be perception of pressure by unsatisfied instincts; or it may be external perception which is either distressing in itself or which excites unpleasurable expectations in the mental apparatus--that is, which is recognized by it as a 'danger'. (7)

Rachel's unpleasure coincides with her perception of the people around her as a "danger" to her identity and selfhood. Moreover, Rachel perceives the pressure of her unsatisfied instincts. Her desire to lash out at those around her and her impulse to express herself through her psychic energies must be quelled in submission to the reality principle. Among her tormentors, Rachel includes Mr. Bax who is a man of the clergy. He also impedes her because he epitomizes patriarchal law that

can be traced back to a society which perpetuates and instills strict moral codes in its citizens in direct conjunction with restrictive religious institutions. Thus, Rachel's instinctual desires directly conflict with her surrounding reality, yet she is still motivated towards interpersonal relatedness. Her only reprieve from this torment occurs when her thoughts turn to Terence Hewet. Woolf writes that "the shape of Terence roused her from her melancholy lethargy" and the town now seemed covered by a "haze of feverish red mist"(245). These thoughts of Terence also conjure up images of sexuality and passion with the terms "feverish" and "red."

In her search for identity and satisfying libidinal attachments, Rachel begins to fall in love with Terence. According to Stella McNichol, "Hewet is in many ways the ideal man, the ideal lover. He is intelligent and he is visionary. He is both involved in life and able to detach himself in order to understand it. His mind is both creative and analytic. He is the androgynous male"(McNichol 9). Evelyn actually tells Rachel "there's something of a woman in him"(234). This feminine quality surfaces in his seeming capacity to empathize with the predicament of women. When Hirst offends Rachel with his chauvinistic

remarks and inquires of Rachel "Have you got a mind, or are you like the rest of your sex?"(141), Rachel responds to his insolence "with tears of rage" and "felt herself surrounded, like a child at a party, by faces of strangers all hostile to her, with hooded noses and sneering, indifferent eyes"(141). Woolf then has Rachel's mind retreat into a fantasy about being in the mountains away from the strife of men and women. Phyllis Rose remarks that Rachel retreats "into herself and her imagination as Woolf did in her private nook in the precincts of her father's house, and she fantasizes about having absolute power in a sexless world"(Rose 63). Terence rescues Rachel from her anger and detachment by sincerely expressing interest and concern about the exchange between her and Hirst, even though Rachel finds it almost impossible to "explain why Hirst's assumption of the superiority of his nature and experience had seemed to her not only galling but terrible-- as if a gate had clanged in her face"(142).

Terence succeeds in reassuring her that the faults lie in Hirst's deficient personality and they find themselves laughing together about the whole incident. In his theory about laughter, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes contends that laughter is "nothing else but sudden glory

arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly"(Boston 29). Through laughter, Terence and Rachel experience a sense of unity and superiority in surpassing Hirst's enfeebling bias against women. Moreover, they utilize humor in order to protect Rachel's ego from injury. Horowitz defines humor as an ego mechanism of defense in the following terms: "One may deal with emotional conflicts, or internal or external stress, by using humor and emphasizing the amusing or ironic aspects of the conflict or stress" (Horowitz 80). Woolf depicts Rachel and Terence laughing and sharing humor throughout their courtship, and by partaking in this mechanism of defense they establish a stronger attachment to each other.

From this initial episode, Rachel senses a relatedness to Terence. She feels more at ease with Terence than with any other man. Rachel openly claims to Terence that she is not afraid of him. He retorts "Oh, I'm different"(197). He attributes his sensitivity and progressivesness to his aspiring career as a novelist. Rachel describes Terence's conversations as "instinctively adopting the feminine point of view"(197). Moreover, Terence surpasses Rachel's expectations by being able to

converse meaningfully beyond gender issues. Woolf writes that "Far more than upon the nature of sex they dwelt upon the nature of poetry, but it was true that talk which had no boundaries deepened and enlarged the strangely small bright view of a girl"(283). Throughout the novel, Woolf hints at Rachel's arrrested development. For example, Woolf's striking description of Rachel as a "girl," even though she is twenty-four years old, suggests Rachel's vulnerability and immaturity. Louise DeSalvo claims that Woolf conveys that "Rachel has been rendered unfit for life"(DeSalvo 167). DeSalvo elaborates by stating that Rachel has been "infantalized and brought up in a way that would not result in her having a healthy self-confidence" (DeSalvo 167). Thus, Rachel must continually grapple with issues that impede her personality development.

According to Sidney Blatt, those women whose personalities emphasize interpersonal relatedness "describe their ideal boyfriend as high on needs for intimacy rather than on needs for masculinity and achievement"(319). Terence's character traits coincide with those most commonly desired by women who have a preoccupation with relatedness. As a writer, Terence directly opposes the masculine stature of men who commit their lives to physical labor or those who bask in their power to

control society through public service. His career as a novelist attests to his sensitivity and intuitiveness rather than his prowess or superiority. He makes genuine attempts at intimacy by inquiring about Rachel's past and present feelings. Rachel realizes "with a great sense of comfort how easily she could talk to Hewet"(196). She assumes that he understands the dilemma of being a woman and the trust between them increases.

Around Terence, Rachel displays her strength to speak freely without being self-conscious about her gender. She feels so secure with Terence that she is able to allude to her sexual anxieties. Rachel recounts to him the "terrors and agonies" that she experienced while growing up with her aunts. She recalls the prostitutes that she witnessed kissing men on the streets and in her conversation with him, Rachel "came in the great space of life into which no one had ever penetrated"(202). Her sexuality begins to permeate through her and she desires to be kissed by Terence. Previously, all of her sexual energy had been inhibited. In Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, Sigmund Freud states:

> Some inhibitions obviously represent a relinquishment of a function because its exercise would produce anxiety. Many women are openly afraid of the sexual function. We class this anxiety under hysteria, just as we do the defensive symptom of disgust which, arising originally as a deferred reaction to the

> experiencing of a passive sexual act, appears later whenever the *idea* of such an act is presented. (4-5)

Earlier in the novel, rather than transforming her accumulated excitation of her libido directly into anxiety, Woolf had Rachel employ the ego defense mechanism of sublimation. In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, Sigmund Freud defines the process of sublimation as "the diversion of sexual instinctual forces from sexual aims and their direction to new ones"(44). Rachel had redirected her libido by playing the piano. She reveals to Terence that when she lived with her aunts she would "play the piano for hours and hours"(198). She diverted her sexual impulses or id "energies" to the more socially accepted "higher" aim of mastering music. Woolf explains that "All the energies that might have gone into languages, science, or literature, that might have made her friends, or shown her the world, poured straight into music"(26). Michael Rosenthal also analyzes Rachel's piano playing and claims that she was "grateful for the sensuous absorption provided by her music"(Rosenthal 51). Although Rachel had felt nothing passionately except her music, she now begins to relinquish her original disgust for sexuality, revealed in the grotesque images of her nightmare and her own

remembrances of the "terrors and agonies," and lets instinctual desires surface for Terence in her wish to be kissed by him.

Chapter Two: Self-Definition

By gaining her trust and drawing Rachel out of her shell, Terence allows her to shift her focus more intensively from interpersonal relatedness to self-definition. Even though Rachel has the security of love in the form of a marriage proposal from Terence, the preoccupation with her own personality remains. Their declaration of love for one another enables her to move beyond the endless searches for love that had previously dominated her life. Prior to their open acknowledgment of love, Rachel had been preoccupied with finding satisfying object-relationships with the people around her. Rachel's propensity for identification and relatedness deeply afflicted her. She portrays her situation to Helen when she states "One goes from one to another, and it's all the same. One never gets what one wants out of any of them"(249). What Rachel wants out of people is honesty, affection, and love. Without the expression of real emotions, Rachel can not connect and relate to others on an intimate level. Through her endeavors to find fulfilling object-relationships, Rachel explores a variety of interests. In reference to Rachel, Helen remarks, "She changes her view of life about

every other day"(149). Anna Freud elucidates the fickleness of young people in The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense. She writes:

> The changeableness of young people is a commonplace...But their capacity for change goes even further. Their philosophy on life, their religion and politics alter, as they exchange one model for another, and, however often they change, they are always just as firmly and passionately convinced of the rightness of the views which they have so eagerly adopted. (168)

Therefore, it is not tremendously unusual that Rachel would proclaim herself to be a Christian and then later denounce the religion. Woolf depicts how Rachel "had it suddenly revealed to her what Helen meant and St. John meant when they proclaimed their hatred of Christianity. With the violence that now marked her feelings, she rejected all that she had implicitly believed"(216). Rather than adhering to the traits and prevailing beliefs of others as her own in an attempt to connect and establish interpersonal relatedness, Rachel begins to dwell more on self-definition.

The engagement to Terence marks a significant change for Rachel. Although Rachel feels more secure in her belief that she has established a meaningful relationship with Terence, she begins to resent his latent desire to control her. Rachel will not permit Terence to dominate her life.

She still hungers for her individuality and independence which of necessity includes her music and her private time. Nancy Bazin argues that this is integral to "her right to experience a mystical sense of oneness"(Bazin 49). Unfortunately, Terence will not permit Rachel to attain personal growth and express herself completely. At first, he insults her music comparing it to "an unfortunate dog going round on its hind legs in the rain" (276). Next, Terence delegates the feminine duty of correspondence to Rachel. Most strikingly, Terence becomes noticeably resentful when Rachel withdraws into her own mind and thoughts. Woolf specifies how Terence looks at Rachel with discontent because "She seemed to be able to cut herself adrift from him, and to pass away to unknown places where she had no need of him. The thought roused his jealousy"(285). Terence reproaches Rachel for forgetting about him, leaving him as a secondary concern. He proceeds to tell Rachel that she is "like a bird half asleep in its nest"(273). Following this dialogue, Woolf describes how a "bird startled in its sleep creaked, flew on to the next tree, and was silent again"(273). This significant comparison of Rachel to a bird underscores her need (as yet unrealized and not fully

conscious because she is still half asleep) to fly away from Terence and society's cage; in flight toward her own free self.

As Terence struggles for control of Rachel, she fights to hold on to her freedom and continue her search for a true self. The prospect of marriage has now become a threat to her autonomy. Woolf demonstrates this in the following passage: "He caught her in his arms as she passed him, and they fought for mastery, imagining a rock, and the sea heaving beneath them. At last she was thrown to the floor, where she lay gasping, and crying for mercy. 'I'm a mermaid! I can swim,' she cried, 'so the game's up.'"(281-282). Rachel will not lose her power or independent self, which confounds Terence. He complains to Rachel that "There's something I can't get hold of in you. You don't want me as I want you - you're always wanting something else" (285). What Terence fails to grasp is Rachel's innate need for freedom to develop her true self.

Rachel, now concerned with self-definition, focuses on the issues of identity, autonomy, and self-worth. Sidney Blatt summarizes the predominant themes in exaggerated personality developments of self-definition as the following: "... self-protection, self-assertion, self-expansion, and an urge to master the environment and make it one's own.

The basic issues are separation and mastery"(Blatt 300). All of these points are evident in the episode in which Rachel struggles with Terence for what Woolf terms "mastery." Rachel asserts herself by engaging in this strife with Terence rather than avoiding or immediately surrendering to him. Her method of self-protection involves her fantasy of being a mermaid. By declaring herself a mermaid she protects herself from the disagreeable realization of the differences between the sexes. Using the defense mechanism of dissociation, she avoids admitting defeat and acknowledging the painful reality of her situation. Horowitz defines dissociation in the following terms: "In dissociation, one deals with emotional conflicts, or internal or external stress, by a temporary alteration in the integrative functions of consciousness or identity" (Horowitz 80). As a mermaid, Rachel temporarily alters her identity through imaginative role playing to generate a liberating distraction from her psychological pain. Instead of submitting to reality, she refuses to accept his dominance as a male or his power over her. Rachel's declaration that she is a mermaid implies her refusal to surrender her sexuality to Terence. Mermaids are devoid of genital sexuality, thus as a mermaid, Rachel believes she can escape from Terence and sexuality.

Furthermore, as T. E. Apter explains, this ability of Rachel's to swim frees "Rachel from her lover's grip and will also free her from life"(Apter 8). This form of a sea creature enables her to become a master of her environment, an environment that she eventually makes her own in her final death dream of being left at the bottom of the sea.

Throughout the novel, Woolf alludes to the sense of freedom Rachel associates with the natural environment, especially the wind and sea. When relating to Terence the isolation she feels as a woman, Rachel comments on these elements of nature and remarks "I love the freedom of it -- it's like being the wind or sea"(203). Later, she informs Terence about the blue sky and blue sea, "It's like a curtain -- all the things one wants are on the other side of that. I want to know what's going on behind it"(285). With these comments, Rachel stresses her free-moving tendency toward self-sufficiency. She expresses her strivings for separation when she thinks to herself "that she wanted many more things than the love of one human being - the sea, the sky"(285). Woolf's comparisons of Rachel to a bird and a mermaid highlight Rachel's tendency toward uniqueness and self-definition. Blatt explains that "uniqueness and self-definition serve as a counterforce to experience

of a loss of individuality that can occur in surrender and communion"(Blatt 301). Rachel's resistance to the impending marriage intensifies as she apprehends the dangers it poses to her quest for self-definition.

Susan's engagement sheds light upon Rachel's apprehension towards marriage in terms of personal identity by functioning as a foil to Rachel's engagement. As Susan happily recounts all of her duties as daughter and soon to be wife, Rachel listens with abhorrence. Susan contentedly admits "I never have a moment to myself"(247). Her tales of self-sacrifice and her self-effacing inclinations cause Rachel to take "a violent dislike to Susan, ignoring all that was kindly, modest, and even pathetic about her"(247). With these words, Woolf makes it evident that Rachel's personality disposition completely opposes Susan's convictions regarding the role of women. Fundamental to Rachel's sense of self is her autonomy. Helen is keenly aware that even under her own guardianship, Rachel "seems vague, but she's a will of her own"(190). Significantly, after her engagement, Rachel becomes more empowered and determined to proceed toward individuation. For this reason, Terence expresses his frustration at her propensity toward isolation and

self-reflection. Her alienating inclinations cause strife in their relationship because Terence is confounded by her advancing self-definition. With respect to their marital relationship, Rachel acknowledges that "It will be a fight"(266). She informs Terence that she believes that they will be victorious in this "fight" because she argues that "Where I want to fight, you have compassion"(266). Her confidence in his sympathy for her sufferings as a woman striving for independence constitutes her love for him. However, her faith in him starts to weaken and their relationship begins to deteriorate as he attempts to deny her freedom of self-definition.

By openly criticizing her piano playing, Terence inflicts deep wounds to Rachel's sense of individuality. It is important to note how Woolf's use of piano playing evolves in accordance to Rachel's developing personality. At the outset of the novel, piano playing represents the sublimation of Rachel's libidinal energies that cannot find an outlet in a sexual relationship, as well as a retreat from her dismal life. As Woolf focuses on Rachel's desire for interpersonal relatedness, piano playing begins to function as a means of connecting with others. Avrom Fleishman argues that Rachel's musical achievement at the dance in

which Rachel successfully plays the piano for the enjoyment of others "bears witness to Rachel's heightened powers of communicating something of her vision"(Fleishman 11). When Woolf concentrates on Rachel's desire for self-definition, her music offers her what Frederick McDowell terms "a sense of inner completion" (McDowell 83). Naturally then at this stage in the novel, Rachel equates her playing of the piano with her ability to express herself freely and completely. Earlier in their discussion of the women's suffrage movement, Terence directly questions Rachel about the impact of the vote on her life. He inquires "Do you really think that the vote will do you any good?"(196). Rachel responds "Not to me, But I play the piano..."(196). Her music epitomizes her sense of liberty and when Terence tries to curtail her piano playing he infringes on her autonomous achievement. Playing the piano at this point in the novel symbolizes her innate capacities and expression of self-interests. Thus, their happiness is inevitably short-lived due to his assaults on her resourcefulness and self-reliance.

No longer preoccupied with relatedness, Rachel withdraws further from Terence. When he tries to engage her in conversation regarding the nature of women she consumes herself with playing the piano. Woolf

writes that Rachel "neglected this opportunity of revealing the secrets of her sex. She had indeed advanced so far in the pursuit of wisdom that she allowed these secrets to rest undisturbed; it seemed to be reserved for a later generation to discuss them philosophically"(275). As she isolates herself more from Terence, Rachel focuses on differentiation and self-definition rather than affection and intimacy. She confesses to Terence "I never fell in love, if falling in love is what people say it is, and it's the world that tells the lies and I tell the truth"(277). Here, she asserts her separateness from society and her refusal to merge or join with other people and their collective notions of intimacy.

Terence belittles Rachel's strides toward singularity and insults her sense of self. He further distances himself from Rachel in the following tirade of criticism:

> Who wants to look at you? You're consumed with vanity! You're a monster of conceit! Surely, Helen, you ought to have taught her by this time that she's a person of no conceivable importance whatever-- not beautiful, or well dressed, or conspicuous for elegance or intellect, or deportment. A more ordinary sight that you are...(291)

With these words, Terence attacks Rachel's individuality and essentially her efforts at self-definition causing her to move away from contact with

him. He misinterprets her desire for uniqueness as vanity, and she ultimately resigns herself to the fact that "they had ceased to struggle and desire one another"(298). Frederick McDowell explains that "Rachel is increasingly conscious of her intrinsic worth and expresses in her thoughts Virginia Woolf's own high valuation of individuality" (McDowell 84). Her independence becomes of utmost importance to her now. His initial love afforded her the opportunity and strength imperative to motivating her toward self-definition. Realizing his role in her path toward autonomy, Rachel contemplates the following:

> ...she was independent of him; she was independent of everything else. Nevertheless, as St. John said, it was love that made her understand this, for she had never felt this independence, this calm, and this certainty until she fell in love with him, and perhaps this too was love. She wanted nothing else. (298)

One can define this love that Rachel ponders over as self-love. At this point in the novel others' actions or words do not affect her sense of self. Rachel required Terence's avowal of love in order to overcome her feelings of inferiority and attain a level of self-acceptance. However, Rachel's sense of security becomes morbidly bound to her sense of detachment swaying her motives for self-definition closer to a psychopathology. Woolf exposes Rachel's dangerously unhealthy

valuing of control over expression of emotion and connection with others. She writes that "For the moment she was as detached and disinterested as if she had no longer any lot in life, and she thought that she could now accept anything that came to her without being perplexed by the form in which it appeared"(297). This withdrawal and lack of a stake in life manifests itself in more profound ways when Rachel becomes ill.

According to Clare Hanson, Woolf invites "us to read Rachel's illness in terms of a rescue, a semi-divine intervention taking her from the dangers represented by Terence and sexuality"(Hanson 34). Rachel's refusal to surrender to Terence underscores her need for freedom to explore her individuality without the confinements of his love and her unconscious anxiety concerning sexuality. With her previous comparisons of Rachel to a bird and a mermaid, Woolf emphasized the notions of control, mastery, and freedom of self in the given domains of sea and sky that are integral to the process of self-definition. However, Rachel cannot achieve this unity of self on earth, since Terence, and the patriarchal society in general, are the masters and dominators of earthly existence.

When Woolf first introduces the reader to Terence, he seems to be the ideal lover for Rachel epitomizing the possibility of an androgynous man capable of restoring Rachel's confidence in her femininity. Yet, Woolf ultimately portrays Terence as a threat to Rachel's identity and integrity. Susan Gorsky explains this dilemma by claiming that Woolf does not allow them to fully achieve the ideal relationship confirming "that they are fallible (which is to say human) and that the ideal *is* an ideal"(Gorsky 54). Gorsky elaborates upon their limitations explaining that they "can never fully understand each other, because however unified they are, they are also separate individuals, one a man and one a woman, one a writer and one a musician, one educated at a university and one barely educated"(Gorsky 55). Essentially, their relationship is doomed and although the novel seems to endorse marriage and intimacy, "its emotional message, its hidden message, is the primacy of the self"(Rose 73).

Rachel's illness signals her eventual detachment from humanity through death. In her book, The Wish to Fall Ill, Karin Stephen explores the role of mental causes in the process of becoming physically ill. She contends that psychogenic reasons create illnesses that "can be explained

as being the outcome of a struggle with psychological difficulties and dangers comparable to the physiological struggles of the body with such physical difficulties and dangers as infections, poisons, or injuries, in terms of which the symptoms of organic illness can be explained" (Stephen 4). Rachel's illness commences with a severe headache and progresses into a high fever. Significantly, Woolf relies on her personal experiences to depict Rachel's illness. Both her half-sister, Stella Duckworth, and her brother, Thoby, died in their twenties from infections that manifested themselves in the form of high fevers. Having watched her family members deteriorate and die, Woolf was familiar with the process of death and "to portray Rachel's fevered delirium she had only to recreate the dislocations of her own mind in the two bouts of illness she had already suffered when she began to write The Voyage Out" (Rose 71).

Typically, high fever denotes a type of infection, which Stephen asserts may implicate a kind of psychogenic illness. Through her fevers, Rachel manifests her anger and outwardly expresses that she is burning up inside with rage. Lacking the peace and love she desires, Rachel does not feel cool or calm. Rachel's wish to fall ill revolves around her

unresolved internal and external conflicts. She at first feels confident that she has finally fulfilled her need for interpersonal relatedness with Terence and his professions of love. However, their relationship inevitably disappoints her expectations as she attempts to improve upon her definition of self. This frustration directly correlates with Stephen's main thesis "that those who develop psychogenic illness are those who could not stand disappointment" (Stephen 201). Terence's stifling and controlling manner after their engagement leaves Rachel emotionally distraught. Her reaction to his insensitive attitude consists of detaching herself and withdrawing from his love. As her withdrawal intensifies, she falls ill as a means to avoid further conflicts with those around her. Elaborating on the nature of physical symptoms, Stephen claims the following:

> "The symptoms are defences against a danger situation which they cannot tolerate, but this danger is not consciously recognised. How deeply their organism feels the reality of the danger is proved by the sacrifices they will make to escape it, but the feeling itself is truly unconscious and they are completely unaware that their illness has any purpose behind it"(Stephen 5).

Certainly, Rachel does not openly acknowledge that she desires to get sick. Yet, her insecurity and fear of invalidating the self propels her into

greater depths of illness. Her behavior and physical symptoms reveal the unconscious struggles that she must endure. These dangers to Rachel's sense of self are so deeply felt by Rachel that she makes the ultimate sacrifice of death in order to escape them.

As Rachel becomes more delusional in her illness, she exposes her retreat from reality. Remarkably, by the second day of her illness Rachel is already slipping away from reality. Woolf explains that "the world outside, when she tried to think of it, appeared distinctly further off" (311). By progressively abandoning interest in life, Rachel escapes the disappointment of her existence. Her delusions mark a withdrawal from meaningful contact in exchange for a regressive type of consciousness in which one's wishes and unconscious fears preoccupy the mind. Woolf clarifies Rachel's detached condition as being "completely cut off, and unable to communicate with the rest of the world, isolated alone with her body"(312).

Stephen clarifies the fundamental circumstances leading to psychogenic illness with the following: "What made the patient ill originally was not his love but his hostile emotions, and it is these which still stand in the way of cure. Because of them he mistrusts himself and

everyone with whom he comes in contact" (Stephen 228). Rachel's delusions and hallucinations exemplify her hostile emotions and mistrust of the people around her. Her fears and perceived dangers manifest themselves in her apprehension of her caretakers as sinister and terrifying figures. Significantly, the latent content of Rachel's delusions closely resembles her nightmare after Mr. Dalloway's kiss. One of Rachel's delusions consists of the following:

> In order to get rid of this terrible stationary sight Rachel again shut her eyes, and found herself walking through a tunnel under the Thames, where there were little deformed women sitting in archways playing cards, while the bricks of which the wall was made oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down the wall. But the little old women became Helen and Nurse McInnis after a time, standing in the window together whispering, whispering incessantly. (313)

Within this delusion, the images of the tunnel and bricks reappear. Woolf repeats the phrases "oozed with damp" and "little deformed," but in this case women are the subject of the dream. By including women in her delusion, Rachel divulges her hostility not only toward males but also females. She has built up resentment against women such as Helen and the nurse, indicating that Rachel associates them with negative qualities. Unable to sustain any interpersonal relatedness, Rachel lacks a sense of

communion with the women in her life. Staunchly refusing to accept the submissive feminine role required of her in this society, Rachel lashes out at her limiting circumstances.

Woolf reveals Rachel's aggression towards Helen in an earlier hallucination prior to her illness. During this delusion Rachel envisions a tripartite struggle among herself, Terence and Helen:

> Through the waving stems she saw a figure, large and shapeless against the sky. Helen was upon her. Rolled this way and that, now seeing only forests of green, and now the high blue heaven, she was speechless and almost without sense. At last she lay still, all the grasses shaken around her and before her by her panting. Over her loomed two great heads, the heads of a man and a woman, of Terence and Helen.
>
> Both were flushed, both laughing, and the lips were moving; they came together and kissed in the air above her. Broken fragments of speech came down to her on her ground, She thought she heard them speak of love and then of marriage. (268)

In this scene, Woolf suggests a type of competition between Rachel and Helen for Terence's love. Oedipal echoes surface in this notion of a hopeless rivalry for the love of a parental figure. Since Helen represents a substitute mother for Rachel, Terence becomes a source of sexualized hostility as they wrestle for his affection. In other words, in Rachel's fantasy the most important male and the most important female at this moment have become her father and mother over again. The aggression

and frustration she felt as a child are assimilated in this rival fantasy, which stirs up ambivalent emotions of love and hate. She feels a sense of helplessness in her situation symbolized by her being tossed and rolled without any control. Her frustration regarding love and object-relationships surfaces as she must bear witness to them kissing above her. These emotional confusions reveal her sexualized hostility that returns with renewed force during her illness.

Rachel's mistrust of others increases and verges on paranoia as her illness worsens. Blatt explains paranoia in the following terms:

> The paranoid patient is preoccupied with maintaining a rigid definition of self as distinct and separate from others. Paranoid patients struggle to prove that they exist as a separate entity and that they are not merged and fused in a symbiotic relationship with another; they struggle to establish a sense of self in a primitive form. All bad is placed onto the other, all good is attributed to the self, and an isolated and embattled distance is maintained from others. (Blatt 311)

As Rachel obsesses more on self-definition she employs the ego defense mechanisms associated with paranoia. In his book, Survey of Objective Studies of Psychoanalytic Concepts, Robert Sears analyzes the roles of the defense mechanisms of projection and reaction-formation in paranoia. He explains that delusions of persecution are actually projections of the

person's "own hatred of others, a hatred produced originally by reaction-formation" (Sears 124). Woolf has Rachel resort to these ego mechanisms of defense because she suffers from unbearable anxiety producing impulses. Rachel believes that the people in her life are conspiring against her and in her delirium refers to Helen, the nurse, Terence and the doctor as her "tormentors." Essentially, by converting the love emotion into its opposite of hate, Rachel employs the defense mechanism of reaction-formation.

Rachel's reaction to her conflicting impulses toward Terence consists of converting her former love for Terence into hatred. The essence of Rachel's reaction-formation encompassed going from "I love Terence" to "I hate Terence." However, this proves insufficient for the preservation of Rachel's ego and thus, the defense mechanism of projection ensues. Now, the result is that Rachel convinces herself that "Terence hates Rachel." As Sears concludes, "This final stage of the defensive process is the full-blown paranoia"(Sears 71). Her resentment resides in his attempt to control her as well as the sexual anxiety he arouses in her. Terence's presence annoys and disturbs Rachel causing her to turn away from him "so that she lay with her back to him" (321).

This body language displays the negativity consuming Rachel. When he kisses her while she is ill, Rachel opens her eyes and sees "an old woman slicing a man's head off with a knife"(320). Woolf's disturbing and violent image is symptomatic of Rachel's sexual anxiety. Rachel's ability to express her sense of self is limited by her gender, causing aggressive impulses that emerge when her sexuality seeks discharge. Stephen explains that "psychogenic illness is always based on a repressed conflict between the sexual instinct and some other very powerful instinct such as jealousy or rage or fear"(Stephen 90). Rachel's sexual impulse conflicts directly with her fear of losing her self-control, self-worth, and self-definition.

As Rachel's illness reaches grave proportions, her desire to be alone wholly absorbs her mind. Woolf reflects that "it troubled her when people tried to disturb her loneliness; she wished to be alone. She wished for nothing else in the world"(328). Her obsession with autonomy and self-definition have reached morbid proportions. Thus, Rachel deludes herself that in order to be true to herself and independent of those that seek to impede her, she must exit this earthly world. Mitchell Leaska argues that "her death is consciously unresisted,

unconsciously sought; it is a self-willed death. For just as one escapes a life, too threatening to tolerate, through periods of unconsciousness or insanity, so too can one withdraw from life, assured of greater permanence, through death" (Leaska 38). Woolf describes Rachel's descent to death in the following passage:

> At last the faces went further away; she fell into a deep pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head. She saw nothing and heard nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head. While all her tormentors thought that she was dead, she was not dead, but curled up at the bottom of the sea. There she lay, sometimes seeing darkness, sometimes light, while every now and then some one turned her over at the bottom of the sea. (322)

Picturing herself at the bottom of the sea seems to soothe Rachel. With this depiction, Woolf demonstrates Rachel's relinquishing of the fight for life. She no longer has the will to struggle for self-definition or concern herself with interpersonal relatedness. Woolf's watery image of her at the bottom of sea suggests a rebirth from her former existence into a state reminiscent of the womb. Rachel has reverted back to the pre-birth stage and Woolf writes "she had ceased to have any will of her own"(327). This description of Rachel in the sea recalls Rachel's former reactions to the idea of being in the ocean in which she felt that "To be flung into the

sea, to be washed hither and thither, and driven about the roots of the world - the idea was incoherently delightful"(281). These lines indicate Rachel's positive associations with assuming a non-active role in the sea. Her desire to return to a state of powerlessness and inactivity illustrates Rachel's inherent death wish.

In her psychobiography of Virginia Woolf, Alma Bond expounds on Freud's theory of the Death Instinct (1923). She paraphrases Freud's conception that "the goal of all life is death" and states the following:

> As Freud conceived of it, life in a sense is a disturber of the timeless rest, which counteracts the pull to nonexistence by instinctual and ego gratification which differ at each stage of development. We stay alive because of the potentialities for pleasure that existence offers; when those possibilities dwindle. then life itself begins to flicker out. The tasks and satisfactions of growth, of psychosexual development, of successful utilization of energy at each level, blot out the pull toward nonexistence. In catastrophic conditions such as psychosis, trauma, deep mourning, and world tragedy, when most mature forms of gratification are inaccessible, the individual tends to regress to the previous stage of development where earlier forms of satisfaction are available....When that person is no longer held to the course by manifold gratifying possibilities, the innate tendency in all living matter will impel him toward the earliest condition of peace and quiescence--nonexistence. (Bond 151-152)

This principle sheds light on Rachel's condition and eventual death. In other words, Rachel's longing for safety and security in a place where

she cannot be harmed equates to the inorganic existence which preceded her conscious life. Rachel's uneasy attachments, her Eros, are directly subjected to and overpowered by her Thantos, death drive. The death instinct centers on the concept that life consists of constant conflict and humans' real desire is to return to the peaceful existence before they entered this world. When the potentialities for pleasure diminish, we no longer desire life.

Woolf traces Rachel's slide to death through her various privations, disappointments and loss of pleasures in this life. Following the loss of Rachel's mother, her estrangement from any meaningful relationships and her severe disillusionment in Terence's confining conception of marriage both lead to her subsequent demise. Unable to satisfy her need for fulfilling interpersonal relatedness leaves Rachel feeling continually unhappy and lonely throughout the novel. Furthermore, her thwarted attempts at self-definition cause Rachel to withdraw from those around her and fall ill. Her delirious mind becomes "her only reality and she wants no more-- she does not want Terence to force her to consciousness, invading her solitude"(Rose 72). Rachel's solitude constitutes her peace now, and returning back to a state of pre-

existence where she no longer has to struggle with her conflicting impulses constitutes her only salvation. Her death allows her to escape the strife and anxiety of life while still retaining her purity of self. Through death, Woolf rids Rachel of all her anxieties associated with interpersonal relatedness and self-definition.

Death allows Rachel to experience relief and affords her the opportunity to love herself by withdrawing her object libido from those around her and concentrating it upon herself. This notion of life through death constitutes a wish fulfillment in which she regressed in her libidinal life from external object love to internal narcissism. Her fantasy of being a mermaid and visualizing herself in the sea at the point of her death indicates Rachel's understanding of death as a liberating experience in which she is the sole survivor. Unable to envision any future happiness as Terence's wife, Rachel chooses death over marriage. Perhaps the impact of Mrs. Dalloway's earlier statement to Rachel concerning a husband further influenced Rachel's fate. Mrs. Dalloway had advised Rachel that the man she lives with should bring out the best in her. Clearly, in Woolf's novel, Terence does not offer this possibility and

essentially, death saves Rachel "from having to live with the inevitable conflicts and compromises which marriage entails" (Bazin 54). Phyllis Rose goes even further by contending that the novel reveals that for a woman with Rachel's temperament "the real danger is not to accept the fate that would seem to be imposed on her --that is, to submit, to be passive and masochistic in her relations with men--but to desire independence so fiercely, to fear so strongly the loss of her painfully acquired identity, that any intimacy becomes impossible" (Rose 73-74).

Conclusion

In The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf explores Rachel's inner life through her quest for understanding of self. Her inability to successfully maintain interpersonal relatedness or securely acquire self-definition results in a lonely and deeply disappointing existence for Rachel. Woolf demonstrates how Rachel succumbs to psychogenic illness and eventually dies in order to avoid a life of anxiety, fear and frustration. Her only outlet for retaining and preserving a distinctive sense of self is death. Woolf reveals Rachel's personality imbalance through the various ego mechanisms of defense that Rachel employs to protect herself as she grapples with the challenges of life and the intricacies of her gender. Woolf exposes how the limited possibilities for women under Victorian dogma, compounded by personal circumstances, forces Rachel to escape from this reality. She opts for a peace acquired only through the transcendence found in death, namely that of complete quiescence from life's inherent struggles. By liberating Rachel from contradictory impulses and strife, Woolf maintains Rachel's integrity and pure sense of

self. As Woolf poignantly writes regarding the deaths of young people, "they were saved so much; they kept so much" (340).

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