

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Space Matters: Power Dynamics and Self-Perception in E.M. Forster's *A Room With A View* (1908) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)

verfasst von | submitted by

Cédric Kockelmann BCE LL.M.

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien | Vienna, 2024

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt |
Degree programme code as it appears on the
student record sheet:

UA 066 844

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree pro-
gramme as it appears on the student record
sheet:

Masterstudium Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sylvia Mieszkowski MA

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1: Navigating Boundaries: Power Dynamics in Public and Private Realms.....	10
Public Space and Potential Experience.....	11
Domesticity and the Illusion of Safety.....	17
Agency and Shifting Boundaries	23
Chapter 2: Performance in Space: Heteronormative Relationships.....	31
Mediated Experience and Conventional Performance.....	32
Self-Delusion, Multiple Spaces and Spatial Appreciation	38
Quest for Agency and Spatial Aspects of Time	44
Chapter 3: Selected Silence and Spatial Self-Realisation.....	51
Rebellious Silence.....	52
Inwards Gaze and Interiority	59
Potential, Possibility, and Connection	65
Conclusion	72
Bibliography	76
Appendix.....	81
Abstract in German	81
Abstract in English.....	81

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sylvia Mieszkowski for accepting my project and for the valuable feedback. I'm thoroughly thankful for the honest guidance throughout these past months. I'd also like to thank my mother and sister who have been supporting me from afar throughout this master's programme, always ready to sort out my thoughts whenever needed. Finally, I thank my roommate for keeping me both sane and entertained. Vienna would not have been the same without you.

Introduction

Space is more than a phenomenal setting. Knowing one's place affords the possibility of perspective, as it shapes the manner in which one sees one's position in relation to others. In his introduction to *Spatiality*, Robert Tally contends that "[t]he map is one of the most powerful and effective means humans have to make sense of their place in the world [...]" (2). Tally thus introduces the significance of recognising one's location as a fundamental aspect in comprehending the self and engaging with personal experiences. Rather than presupposing space as a neutral setting, it is an active agent that influences self-perception, and enables an understanding of identity that is relative and continuously produced through social context and interaction. In his study on identity formation, Kevin Hetherington exposes the apparent impossibility to define the concept: "Identity is about both similarity and difference. It is about how subjects see themselves in representation, and about how they construct differences within that representation and between it and the representation of others" (15). According to Hetherington, then, identity is defined through its relatedness to its own image in regard to the circumstances around it. It follows that the formation of identity is closely related to the space in which it develops. Hetherington insists that "[i]dentity formation as a process of identification is a spatially situated process" (17). Since the 1980s, increased attention within geography as well as sociology and cultural and literary studies has been afforded to the exploration of space as a crucial agent in the construction of identities, and of society as a consolidation of all identities. The "spatial turn" (12), as coined by the acclaimed geographer Edward W. Soja, has been defined by scholars such as Barney Warf and Santa Arias as a renewed understanding of spatiality in which "space is every bit as important as time in the unfolding of human affairs, a view in which geography is not relegated to an afterthought of social relations, but is intimately involved in their construction. [...] *where* things happen is critical in knowing *how* and *why* they happen" (1). In that sense, the understanding of space has transitioned from a passive medium toward an active agent, capable of influencing life as it unfolds within. The idea of the omnipresence of space stands at the forefront of this literary studies thesis, which will examine the representation of space and its repercussions on the protagonists in two modernist novels.

The objects of analysis selected for this project are E.M Forster's *A Room With A View* (1908) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), two of the most renowned modernist novels by two of the most acclaimed writers of their time. While these novels have been analysed in unison before (Heine 1973, Elert 1979), no thorough emphasis has been placed on

linking space and power dynamics in the context of character development. Both authors were members of the “Bloomsbury group,” an influential literary group in the first half of the 20th century, enabling a comparison between the novels that promises certain ideological similarities. The group has been defined by the literary historian Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum as a “collectivity of friends and relations who knew and loved each other for over two generations” (3). Rather than following a specific credo used to reunite intellectuals, Bloomsbury members such as Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster can thus be linked in their perception of life in general, which is emulated in their novels. Their shared values are noticeable specifically in their portrayal of sexuality, introducing new ideas of gender dynamics opposed to the rigid dichotomy that classified women and men, as well as in their reinterpretation of space, which they recognised as an influential factor in shaping expectations and perceptions of female and male roles. Derek Ryan and Stephen Ross have argued that “[...] sex became an inextricable part of the group’s biography and bibliography. In both their lives and their works, Bloomsbury’s flexible and creative forms of domesticity and experiments with new models of intimacy have been celebrated as breaking from the strictures of the Victorian family and values and heralding their modernism” (Intro.). This thesis particularly agrees with the flexibility that characterises the Bloomsbury group, which, I argue, especially manifests itself through the female protagonists’ fluid drifting between several facets of their identities.

This project will display the plethora of instances in which characters in the chosen novels are affected by the spaces they inhabit. A particular focus will be laid on the portrayal and self-conception of the female protagonists, Lucy Honeychurch, and Clarissa Dalloway. In both novels, the intricate dynamics between individuals and their surroundings are emphasised, and the ways in which spaces and places influence thoughts, actions, and interactions with others are highlighted. In all of its convoluted and puzzling multiplicity, switching between different characters’ consciousness, Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* is a novel about identity: Throughout the novel, Clarissa Dalloway reflects on her own life, her position in society and the repercussions of societal boundaries on her choices, such as marrying out of a desire for safety rather than affection. Likewise, identity is a major theme in E.M. Forster’s *A Room With A View*, as it chronicles the spiritual awakening of Lucy Honeychurch, whose stereotypically restrictive moral values are disturbed during a voyage to Florence. Both novels exhibit evident testimony to the impasse of identity development in restrictive societal circumstances.

The dominant focus on the protagonists in this thesis follows the argumentation made by Toril Moi, Rita Felski, and Amanda Anderson as proposed in the introduction of their shared volume: “Concern with character is a defining aspect of reader or viewer engagement with

many forms of fiction. It is one of the means by which fiction makes claims upon us” (1). This lens explains the importance ascribed to Lucy and Clarissa in this thesis, as it reframes character analysis as a gateway to understanding broader societal dynamics as they materialise in individual experiences. The character analysis itself will be broadly guided by Rita Felski’s understanding of literary characters as “real fictional beings” (85). While, of course, they are not real persons, their connection to reality cannot be disputed, and their influence on reality is palpable: “We translate between fiction and life without blinking” (83). Felski thus blurs the lines between fiction and reality through her assessment of fictional characters and enables to extend my thesis statement beyond the realm of the novels, without reducing the characters to manifestations of the power dynamics that affect them.

This thesis, then, will interrogate and compare and contrast the ways in which the display of spaces reflects and connects them to power dynamics in E.M. Forster’s *A Room With A View* (1907) and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Specifically, the portrayal of the two female protagonists’ personal experiences will be analysed in light of the possibility of identity development in societies that seek to restrict women’s (self-)perception. I will argue that, within the two analysed novels, spaces and places are shown to reproduce and establish hierarchical power relations and cultural values, as proposed by Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci respectively, shaping the subjects that inhabit them. Within these operative spaces, the heroines’ awareness and negotiation of space becomes imperative in enabling introspection and self-development.

In this project, I do not attempt to produce a comprehensive study about the relevance of spatiality studies within modernist literature. Rather the thesis seeks to identify the portrayal of power dynamics through spatial elements in the two novels, as well as offer a reading of the circumstantial contestation and self-assertion in two prominent modernist novels to exemplify the potential significance of spatial awareness in identity formation. For that purpose, the chosen secondary sources that will inform this analysis do not amount to a comprehensive survey of spatiality studies but provide relevant theoretical frameworks that underpin the argumentation about the primary works. In the following section, the theoretical background and central concepts that inform this project will be introduced.

The French philosopher and historian of epistemology, Michel Foucault, was pivotal to the growing interest of spatial studies, since he identified a shift away from the preoccupation with temporality towards an increased pursuit of understanding the significance of spatiality: “We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own

skein” (22). Foucault, who, throughout his life was preoccupied with the concept of power, also argued that rather than being abstract, power tangibly manifests itself in space through disciplinary mechanisms and everyday practices. In his distinguished publication *Discipline and Punish*, he introduced the idea of the “automatic functioning of power” (201), achieved through the establishment of structures that generate a sense of constant supervision. He opposed this type of power he called “Discipline” (215), to a governmental system that maintained power through “punishment-as-spectacle” (9). In that sense, spatial arrangements are internalised over time, leading members of society to comply with the power dynamics in certain spaces, even in the absence of controlling institutions.

Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony” aligns with Foucault’s spatial understanding of space and specifically the consensual nature of power maintenance. Thomas R. Bates defines the Italian socialist politician’s concept as “political leadership based on the consent by the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the worldview of the ruling class” (352). In contrast to other Marxist thinkers of the time, Gramsci was not solely interested in the economic aspect of the concept but aimed attention at the role of intellectuals in the diffusion of cultural values. Through his distinction between “civil society” and “political society” within the Marxist superstructure (Bates 353), he displayed the value assigned to the top-down propagation of cultural values in **maintaining power**. This idea proves valuable for the purpose of this thesis in envisioning the interplay between power, culture, and space. These theoretical insights by Foucault and Gramsci regarding power, society and space reverberate in the evolving discourse about the representation of space in modernist literature.

Traditionally, scholars have argued in favour of a pronounced affiliation and engagement of modernist literature with time rather than space (Schleifer 2000, 10; Tally 2013, 34). More recently, however, scholars have disputed such claims and have instead appealed towards a re-reading of modernist authors as precursors of the spatial theorists of the latter half of the 20th century. For instance, Andrea Rummel claims that modernist writers such as Thomson, Eliot, and Woolf “almost pre-enact postmodern spatial theories [...], British modernist literature on the metropolis is more than just an active participant in the social construction of the spatial, it also seems to metatextually debate this function” (58). Rummel’s assertion illuminates the profound engagement with space exhibited by modernist writers, who reflected the ways in which spaces are created and understood within society, rather than merely depicting spatiality in their texts. This thesis, then, aligns with the perspective of critics who advocate for a re-evaluation of modernist literary works in relation to spatiality to further

complicate the discussion about the presence of spatial influence, specifically in the context of gender dynamics, which the following section will introduce.

It is in this context that Doreen Massey's insights on the intricate connections between space, place, and gender, highlighting their mutual construction and influence, become particularly relevant. Akin to Judith Butler, one of the most well-known contemporary gender studies scholars, the late acclaimed geographer and scientist Massey outlined how Western society created, and advocated for a dichotomous perspective of space, characterised by the delineation of places that are either claimed by men or bestowed upon women: "this joint control of spatiality and identity has been in the West related to the culturally specific distinction between public and private. The attempt to confine women to the domestic sphere was both a specifically spatial control and, through that, a social control on identity" (179). By constraining the spaces accessible to women, patriarchal authorities sought to restrict social interaction in public, and thus impeded individual growth and self-awareness: By limiting the connections available to women, opportunities to feel validated in their experience were severely narrowed, stifling their self-perception, and restricting their understanding of the world around them, thus perpetuating their subjugation within society.

Women's spatial oppression throughout history is intricately linked to the issue of silence. A substantial body of feminist work has highlighted the importance of a woman's voice in challenging patriarchal power dynamics, in spite of mankind's attempt to silence her. It is crucial to acknowledge that silencing extends beyond gender boundaries, affecting various marginalised groups globally, but, for the purpose of this thesis, the analysis of silencing will be primarily focused on its impact for the female protagonists. Feminists like Hélène Cixous advocated for women's vocal defiance against oppressive patriarchal structures. In her seminal essay "The Laugh of Medusa" (1976), she connects spatial assertion and women's voices: "[...] by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, [...] women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence" (881). Cixous underscores the profound impact that reclaiming one's voice can have on spatial presence and attention. Adrienne Rich similarly emphasised the spatial dimension of the ongoing struggle for women to emerge from the "footnotes" and "sidelines" (254), which will be a central aspect in Chapter 3. Thus, it is evident that for these renowned 20th century feminists, the struggle to be heard was of utmost importance in creating a space for themselves.

While oppressive silence unquestionably impedes representation, more recently, research about silence in the context of power relations has shifted towards a more nuanced

understanding of silence in the context of empowerment. Jane L. Parpart, for instance has argued that “[s]ilence can also provide a private space to deal with trauma, to regain self-esteem and to build a sense of empowerment [...]” (20). In that sense, it is crucial to differentiate between silence that is dictated by hegemonic power structures, and silence that is wilfully employed. This distinction lays the groundwork for the following introduction of the connection between silence and interiority in modernist literature and will inform my analysis of the representation of gender dynamics and the quest towards self-awareness in the novels to be examined.

The concern with interiority and silence in Western modernist literature at the beginning of the 20th century is evident. In her substantial study on silence in modernist literature, Annika Lindskog highlights that the early 20th century is generally associated with a general diminution of silence, due to the rise of industrial developments (11). Due to the increasing dominance of the external soundscape, it appears sensible to argue that, as Lindskog does, “the busy sounds of the modern age also prompted a need for calm and stillness” (11). Through the exterior influence of outside noise, the inner life becomes an increasingly significant theme for modernist novelists, not solely as a silent refuge, but also as a focal point allowing and demanding to be excavated and portrayed in extensive fashion. This new awareness about the possibility of representing interiority through silence also cultivated a new modernist understanding about the meanings of silence itself. Rather than adhering to the dominant notion of silence as the dichotomous opposite of discourse, of communicating meaning, modernist literature employs silence to emphasise that while many underlying issues remain repressed, they are nonetheless present and significant. Lindskog thus contends that “the modernist novel is not silent about that of which it cannot speak, but chooses silence as its way of speaking” (23). The idea that silence is more than the absence of communication and of meaning is closely related to the historical silencing of women in the context of gendered spaces and pertains to the previously introduced concept of an unstable identity.

This thesis, then, will primarily draw on Foucault’s insights on power relations and disciplinary practices and Gramsci’s ideas on “cultural hegemony” to analyse the role of authority in the selected novels. Alongside, Massey’s feminist perspective on space and silence will be taken into consideration to reveal the convoluted depiction of gendered experiences, to enhance my analysis of the two novels in regard to the interconnection between space, society, and gender dynamics. This theoretical background informs this thesis’s structure, which will serve as a guiding framework for my argumentation.

I have divided my thesis into three chapters. In the first part, I will analyse the power dynamics of social conventions in specific spaces in both novels and the limitations they impose on Clarissa Dalloway and Lucy Honeychurch. More specifically, I will explore how the persistent Victorian, dichotomous understanding of public and private spaces functions as a confining structure, requesting a premeditated set of behaviours that seeks to impede authentic experience and self-knowledge. Finally, the chapter will be guided by a distinct focus on the protagonists' attempts at subverting the spatial system to create a new comprehension of space which allows for plurality of identity. The second chapter will interrogate the potential of self-recognition and of the awareness of their own roles within the context of their heteronormative romantic relationships. In aiming attention at the relationship dynamics in both novels, I will contrast the Victorian concept of a stable identity to the understanding of space as gendered, contested, and plural as posited by Doreen Massey, and Judith Butler's theory about gender performativity in the context of the complexity of identity. Finally, this chapter will argue in favour of the female protagonists' pursuit of shielding themselves from being limited in their personal development through a reconfiguration of space. The last part of this project delves into the communicative aspects of Clarissa's and Lucy's relationships, specifically the heroines' use of silence which stands in direct opposition to the traditional understanding of silencing as an oppressing tool. Instances of silence are interpreted as acts of defiance which hold the potential to subvert power dynamics and establish a necessary space to allow the expansion of their self-perception and self-assertion. Through a synthesis of the findings of these three chapters, I will conclude this thesis by firstly arguing that the female protagonists in the two novels are profoundly restricted in their possibilities of self-realisation, both spatially and psychologically. Secondly, and most importantly, I will contend that both women, in spite of their surroundings, are able to subvert the functions of silence and thus achieve access to their interiority and true identity. Their awareness of artificial constructs of dichotomous opposites allows them to discard traditional ideas about the world and themselves and finally underscores the value of continuous critical thought in an everlasting pursuit of self-discovery.

Chapter 1: Navigating Boundaries: Power Dynamics in Public and Private Realms

This chapter will investigate how E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf depict the interrelation between societal norms and spaces in *A Room of One's Own* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. The primary focus will be on the two female protagonists Lucy Honeychurch and Clarissa Dalloway, who are continually affected by their surroundings, and extensively limited in their freedom as the spaces they occupy reproduce and perpetuate gender hierarchies. The analysis will predominantly be guided by the spatial theory proposed by Doreen Massey, a major influence in the modern understanding of space's interconnectedness with social phenomena, including its intersection with gender dynamics and the limitation of opportunities for women specifically. Massey's theory of space as a social and fluctuating concept is particularly useful for this chapter, since, as she claims, "social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification" (3). Massey hereby both introduces society as a network of intertwined actors and space as inherently destined to develop.

In their introduction to a major collection of essays about the representation of women within gendered spaces, Teresa Gómez Reus and Aránzazu Usandizaga state that "spatial confinement is one of the more obvious ways in which the life and destiny of women have been circumscribed: the socially imposed role in the private as opposed to the public sphere, in the home rather than in the street, inside rather than in the world outside" (19). The omnipresence of spatial influence on women in the early 20th century, and the focus on the normative domestic space for women will inform the analysis in this chapter. Several papers have pointed out that the rigid distinction between the public and private space is a simplistic categorisation of space and that the disregard of the presence of women in the public sphere epitomises and strengthens hegemonic gender hierarchies (Bryden and Floyd 1999, Scott and Keates 2004). Nonetheless, Reus and Usandizaga caution their readers not to fall "into the opposite error of underestimating the significance which the restrictions of movement has had in the lives of women throughout history" (23). Instead, they advocate for both the idea that the domestic sphere was the space in which women were expected to circulate from a societal standpoint, and that many women, in spite of that, found ways to elude these regulations.

This idea will guide the argumentation about both protagonists in this chapter, which will direct attention to Clarissa's and Lucy's awareness of the confining structures, and their desire and actions to overpower them. Within this understanding of fluctuating spatial

awareness, it is indispensable to acknowledge the protagonists' social, cultural, and financial situation in their respective temporary contexts, as well as their age difference which evidently alters their attitude towards and understanding of the regulating circumstances around them. While Lucy comes from a middle-class background with limited financial means, navigating the nuances of Edwardian England under persistent supervision, Clarissa is a matured and married upper-middle class woman, who epitomises the refined social circles of post-World War I London. Moreover, the significantly longer timespan chronicled in *A Room* enables a greater potential for psychological growth for the heroine, while *Mrs. Dalloway* portrays a single day in Clarissa's life, producing a momentary and fleeting account of her existence. At the beginning of *A Room*, Lucy is profoundly dependent upon the societal structures and prevalent opinions, most notably regarding her cousin's authority and her Baedeker guide, which she employs in almost dogmatic fashion. Only progressively does she begin to reflect for herself, becoming aware of the societal constraints, and finally distancing herself from the pre-conceived assessments of the world around her. Contrarily, *Mrs. Dalloway* displays Clarissa as mindful of the conditions that have shaped her decisions, most notably her resolution to marry her wealthy husband, as a means to provide security and comfort rather than accommodating an emotional connection with another man. Taking these differences into consideration, this chapter will delve into the portrayal of the Victorian dichotomy between public and domestic spaces, specifically analysing the effects of societal formalities within the spheres and questioning the validity of the preconceived notions of danger and protection respectively. Thereafter, I will analyse Lucy's and Clarissa's active ventures to subvert the socially constructed distinction between the highly stylised and pre-meditated private and public territories in an effort to cultivate an identity that unifies an authentic identity.

Public Space and Potential Experience

The public sphere in the two novels is displayed as limiting women's presentation of individual identity. As the two heroines navigate their respective public spaces, such as the park in London in *Mrs. Dalloway* and the Piazza Signoria in *A Room*, their continual self-awareness and alertness about the respectability of their behaviour according to the societal conventions reveal the impact of the public as a space on their self-conception. Although Lucy and Clarissa repeatedly demonstrate an inherent antagonism toward the social norms that dictate public life, its overarching power governs their behaviour almost uninterruptedly. It becomes increasingly evident that these public spaces do not accommodate for individuality and instead expect rigid

adherence to the protocol. At the same time, however, in line with many modernist oeuvres, *A Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* explore the presence of women in the public sphere as a subversive act in its own right. In the context of spatial presence, Morag Shiach has pointed towards the increased critical interest in the “figure of the flâneur as an icon of modernity, and as the hero of a particular narrative of cultural resistance” in the late 20th century (253). As mentioned in the Introduction, such studies about female presence in the public sphere as an almost political act have been contested by scholars who stress the risk of oversimplifying the gendering of the public and private sphere as masculine and feminine, respectively. Nonetheless, the impact of the perception of the public sphere as a space that could potentially facilitate a distinct experience in comparison to the familiarity of the domestic sphere shapes the heroines’ self-perception in both novels.

In *A Room*, Lucy’s tumultuous journey through public places may be divided into two separate types of experience, both of which extensively shape her understanding of the reproduction of societal conventions. In the beginning, she is customarily guided by her chaperone and cousin Charlotte Bartlett, who represents an intimate and protective milieu that is reflective of the guardianship that Lucy is accustomed to at Windy Corner in England. Charlotte epitomises the persistent traditional Victorian value system, and expects herself and those around her to conform to the set of beliefs and values instilled in her upbringing, which as Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has argued, postulated that “[m]en were identified with reason, women with emotion; men were associated with action, women with passivity; and, finally, men exercised domination, while women experienced submission” (8-9). The dichotomy between men and women that is thus produced, emerges as one of the most important convictions guiding Charlotte, shaping the perception of herself and of women and men around her and shedding light on the intricate influence of gender roles in the context of societal conventions. As the embodiment of restraint during their visit of Italy, Charlotte is liable for Lucy’s protection and ministers her appropriate behaviour in the public sphere. Throughout the entirety of the novel, Charlotte pursues and believes in her own role of “passivity” and “submission” (ibid.), and in the inferential behaviour women are to adopt in certain spaces.

Akin to Charlotte, the Bertolini pension is an emblematic allusion of English customs, an admonition to reiterate the authority of societal norms. At the same time, it is a manifestation of the universality and inevitability of restrictions outside the physical borders of Britain, and physically mirrors Lucy’s initial confidence in and dependence on the framework which circumscribes her life. She is profoundly reliant upon the opinion of other people, a characteristic which reveals itself through her consistent approval of other characters’

utterances. In many ways, the protagonist's reality is informed by other people as she appropriates their perspectives as guides to evaluate her own experience. Ayça Vurmay, who outlines the spatial relations in Forster's novels in her novel, traces Lucy's dependence of other people to a general feature of modernism, which is closely related to the dichotomy of the self and the other: "The modern self, then, gains a thorough self-consciousness through the gaze of the other. [...] The self desires to compensate for the lack in itself and to achieve a unified consciousness through experiencing and distinguishing itself from the other" (181). While I would like to argue that the idea of self-conception being solely confined to external observation and comparison is simplistic and does not seem to do justice to the complexity of human existence, the relevance of the "other" for Modernism is evident and, not least, supported by Lucy's behaviour. The study and evaluation of others provides reference points for Lucy that allow for a more complete self-perception, which always exists in relation to the characters around her. Yet, at the same time, it limits her individual mental growth, as she is excessively reliant on the reference points around her.

Within the context of the public sphere in a foreign land, the only familiar – and thus fathomable – reference point is her cousin. While Lucy is excited to be in Florence, displaying her disappointment at the fact that the pension is visually reminiscent of London, and knows Mr. Beebe, a clergyman who is staying at the pension at the same time as herself and her cousin, all other guests are strangers to her. The presence of her chaperone gives her a sense of security which she initially appreciates, and which is illuminated by the fact that she lets herself be silenced despite her eagerness to engage with the Emersons during their first encounter in the pension's restaurant. However, Lucy eventually exits the pension, and with it, the societal restrictions it reproduces by administrating specific conversational conventions. Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic that sustains Lucy's identity is her alertness to the potentiality of space which defines her from the beginning, in spite of her willingness to comply to the norms. Lucy's very first conjecture of the pension is suggestive of both her initial awareness of an ideological veil which appears to hide true experience, and of her impending devotion to dismantle it in order to experience reality for herself: "It might be London [...] Charlotte, don't you feel, too, that we might be in London? I can hardly believe that all kinds of other things are just outside. I suppose it is one's being so tired" (3-4). Lucy's attempt at waking in her cousin the same impression of familiarity, as well as her effort to understand why she would have trouble reminding herself of the world outside, foreshadow the internal juxtaposition that later is described by Lucy, Mr. Emerson, and the narrator as a "muddle" (215). Moreover, her struggle to reconcile her preconceived expectations of a foreign city with the Italian pension

that physically appears to be British introduces the theme of the perception of foreign cultures prominent in the novel. The apparent dissonance between belief and reality that dominate the narrative is introduced and emphasised through the heroine's spatial circumstances from the start, establishing initial evidence of space as a construct which is shaped by cultural beliefs rather than physical aspects. The significance of Lucy's remaining belief in the world "outside," despite the pension's best attempts to suppress its existence and tuck it away, must not be understated. In connection to her desire to have a physical room with a view ("I wanted so to see the Arno [...] Oh, it is a shame!" (4)), Lucy ostensibly exhibits an aspiration to appreciate what has been hidden from her through societal regulations and gender norms. She thereby displays an indicative divergence to her cousin, who, in the loyal fulfilment of her role as an ignorant and submissive woman, entirely disregards Lucy's remark on the reality outside, rejecting the idea, it seems, of the possibility of anything exceeding the reality of what she has known throughout her life.

Although Lucy displays an inclination to presume that the public sphere will provide a different access to experience from the start, she nevertheless initially embraces the impersonal and predictive knowledge that her Baedeker guide provides. Indeed, as soon as it is seized by Miss Lavish, a British guest at the pension who thoroughly believes in her own unconventionality, the heroine is disoriented, and feels "depressed and humiliated" (22). Most importantly, her immediate response to the situation is to yearn for mediated experience: "She walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date. There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful" (ibid.). Rather than acknowledging her subjective impressions, she mourns the lack of navigation within the church which she believes should elicit certain emotions within her. The disbelief in her own ability to recognise beauty and assessment of the church despite herself ("Of course, it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn! And how very cold!" (ibid.)) reveal spatial significance as a social construct, which is produced through and reproduces the meaning that society attributes to it. Represented by the Baedeker, the public sphere thus emerges as a premeditated realm which influences people's conception of places and effectively prevents authentic experience.

I argue that it is within the church that Lucy's psychological growth, wakened by the introduction to the Emersons, begins, specifically when, abandoned by her Baedeker, she commences to observe her surroundings by herself, noticing the tourists and thus mentally separating herself from their pursuit of surface-level experience. Likewise, her decision to

accompany the Emersons in the church, and thus essentially replacing her Baedeker with them, in spite of her initial determination to take “refuge in her dignity” catalyses her progress toward authenticity (24). It should be noted that Mr. Emerson’s influence on Lucy’s perception of the church, and of experience itself later on, embodies a type of mediation of the public sphere in itself, one, however, which affords and encourages emotionality and authenticity, both of which were considered improper reactions in and toward the public sphere. Lucy’s apologies to George after fainting at the sight of a murder on the Piazza Signoria highlight the societal expectations to remain composed and repressed in public, even in the most stirring of situations. Finally, it becomes clear that Lucy’s separation from her Baedeker and her cousin, the primary intermediaries to the public sphere enable a more sophisticated access to her understanding of her own position within certain spaces, guiding her toward a more nuanced perception of the restrictive effects of social conventions on her existence.

Lucy’s development in *A Room* is especially striking in comparison to Clarissa Dalloway’s almost renouncing, yet dutiful attitude towards her obligations and roles of certain rooms. If Woolf’s novel is set in a later, post-war Britain, the similarities concerning upheld expectations towards, and internalised values of the female protagonists are strikingly persistent. However, their behaviour within the public sphere reveals differences in the perpetuation of traditional values and conduct in the aftermath of an increased awareness of its extensive repercussions on their identity development and experience. Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa is depicted as a woman absorbed by her desire to maintain her social position and respectability within society. Her self-reflective propensity, and preoccupation with her public image is apparent from the outset. Walking through the streets of London, in her enterprise to buy flowers for a gathering that is to take place in her house on the same day, she ruminates over her past and present. In fact, she portrays her decisions as rooted in disregard and pretence, in partially disparaging fashion: “How much she wanted it – that people should look pleased as she came in, Clarissa thought, [...] annoyed, because it was silly to have other reasons for doing things. [...] half the time she things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew [...]” (40). Clarissa’s desire to be appreciated, to be approved of by the general public coalesces with her self-conception. Her awareness of the fact that her ambitions are unreasonable, this thesis argues, proves, however, that the heroine knows that personal experience, in theory, is more valuable than the feeling of belonging. This sense of division between personal and public has also been detected by Vereen Bell, who has argued that the “novel could be named *Mrs. Dalloway* not because Clarissa offers a traditional heroine’s alternative social vision but because she epitomizes the best and the

worst of the one that prevails” (96). She interprets the protagonist as one of the figures to emblemise the novel’s “social critique [...] woven in rather than painted on” (95). Bell thus crucially emphasises the interconnection between the protagonist and the societal circumstances, which emanate as highly influential both in her actions and her self-perception.

In the context of the public sphere, her walk in the park and the prime minister’s presence at her party emerge as preeminent instances of the heroine’s delusion and internal disharmony. Her walk through London in the morning of her gathering reveals the extent to which her identity is shaped by the strenuous devotion to the upper-middle class conventions. She epitomises the need to belong, to prove to herself that she is complying with her duty and deserves to remain a respected member of society. At the same time, she displays a conspicuous delusion about the value of societal belonging as an identity-shaping factor, observing, yet choosing to neglect the insincerity and artifice that defines her specific class. In that context, Alex Zwerdling refers “to something inflexible, unresponsive, or evasive in their nature” and contends that the upper-middle class cultivates generic elusion to prevent the confrontation with the events of the First World War (71). Indeed, Clarissa’s intensive association with the movement of the public sphere exhibits an ironical misconception about her own role, and that of her class more generally: “[...] and she, too, loving it as she did with an absurd and faithful passion, being part of it, [...] she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party. But how strange, on entering the Park, the silence” (36). It is certainly absurd that Clarissa would use the metaphor of bringing light and enabling vision to refer to her party, which symbolises the very opposite of awareness and seeks instead to camouflage reality through its predictable uniformity. The immediate perception of the silence in the park further ridicules Clarissa’s benightedness and points to the conspicuousness of her misconception, presenting the public sphere as a space filled with falsehoods and misrepresentations which serve the persistence of pretence.

Clarissa’s party mirrors the emptiness of the public and reveals its purpose to deceive and conceal reality, rather than elucidating it. Zwerdling aptly argues that “[t]he party at the end of the novel, for all its brilliance, is a kind of wake. It reveals the form of power without its substance” (71). The critic’s metaphor of the public as essentially lifeless beneath its surface crucially reminds the reader of the fact that the ultimately empty public sphere is merely concealed by its shining façade. Her reaction to the prime minister’s visit to her party, as the epitome of English public life and social standing emphasises the duality that defines the hostess. In a brief moment of contemplation, as she’s accompanying him through her guests

and toward the exit, she notes that her dedication to her impression upon other people is subsiding:

[...] she had felt that intoxication of the moment, that dilatation of the nerves of the heart itself till it seemed to quiver, steeped, upright; - yes, but after all it was what other people felt, that; for, though she loved it and felt it tingle and sting, still these semblances, these triumphs (dear old Peter, for example, thinking her so brilliant), had a hollowness; at arm's length they were, not in the heart; and it might be that she was growing old, but they satisfied her no longer as they used [...]. (161)

Indeed, the distance she perceives toward the sensation that had fulfilled her in earlier years is a paramount testimony to her momentary awareness of her experience in and of the public sphere as artificial. Although she persists in the fabrication of her public persona, administrating herself being seen with one of London's most prominent personages in her own house, she observes that she is no longer able to deceive herself. Most strikingly, Clarissa's realisation about the "hollowness" (161), that constitutes her public persona does not materialise as a new conclusion. Instead, it is merely its effect on the heroine which has changed, substantiating the idea that Clarissa's perception of her own role in the public sphere had never been entirely obscured by societal conventions and rules, but always was the result of a self-imposed ignorance. In that sense, it would be unreasonable to argue that Mrs. Dalloway is the product of rigid social regulations, as she actively chooses to evade the strident reality about the constructedness of her existence. She thus exposes a striking difference to Lucy in her actions upon the realisation of the constraints that society imposes on them. While Lucy pursues authenticity after the revelation that her Baedeker, as well as her entire entourage conceal reality by imposing societal conventions and traditions upon her, Clarissa abides by the artificiality of her social accomplishments.

Domesticity and the Illusion of Safety

The display of the private sphere in Forster's and Woolf's novels reveals valuable insights into the complexity of domestic life, specifically its deviation from the Victorian ideal of the home as a place of sanctity and privacy that is exposed through the female protagonists' experience. Christine Crouse-Dick has noted that the Victorian stereotypes of female duties and privileges in the private sphere prevailed after the turn of the century: "While the beginning of the twentieth century signalled the birth of modernism, the power of nineteenth-century motifs, including the 'Angel in the House' narrative, persisted" (444). This motif gained prominence after the publication of a poem by Coventry Patmore in 1954 of the same title, written in the

pursuit of glorifying the poet's first wife. The concept that flourished in the aftermath of the poem outlined the women's role in the household to be "guardians of the home," to provide a sheltered place for their husbands who were responsible for providing financial security of the household in the public sphere (ibid.). At the same time, women were assuaged by the socially constructed claim that "true femininity was distinguished by a need for protection from a man's world" (445). This argument, then, rested on women's privilege to be protected by a providing husband to legitimise the spatial limitation of women's freedom. The model of the private sphere as a refuge for women, however, was not mirrored by reality: Even within the confines of the home, women were subdued by societal norms and spatially informed requirements. In his article about Victorian homes as both spaces of protection and privatised turmoil, Mike Hepworth promotes that "[s]tandards had to be maintained both within and without its confines and the ideal Victorian home is therefore more accurately defined as a kind of battleground: a place of constant struggle to maintain privacy, security and respectability in a dangerous world" (19). If Hepworth appears to be too generic in his account of private space, ignoring the possibility of serenity in spite of external pressures, the private sphere as an oftentimes contested space nevertheless proves to be a promising territory to introduce the ambiguity of social grievances, an area which is prominently exhibited in *A Room With A View* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which the meanings of private spaces are questioned and reframed. In conjunction with Massey's understanding of space as inherently dynamic and intricately linked to the hierarchical organisation of societies, the starting point for the following analytical exploration is the reinterpretation of private space as a space of potential: Scholars like Victoria Rosner have asserted that the Bloomsbury group had intent interest in the presentation of the private sphere, which they saw as "a site for rebellion against middle-class conventions such as monogamy, heterosexuality, sexism, and social propriety" (128). This reassessment of the private sphere as more than the mere location in which the prevalent power hierarchy is executed, enables an analysis of the potential of it to be detached from the restricting norms and values of the period. Clarissa Dalloway and Lucy Honeychurch are decidedly aware of the social roles that they are to conform to as women in the first half of the 20th century. Moreover, they adhere to the guidelines that are laid out for them to a certain degree, displaying the extent to which they have internalised the restrictive values and norms that narrow their freedom and hinder identity development. As this chapter delves into the protagonists' experiences within the private sphere, it becomes evident that the private sphere fails to live up to its promises of female control in the specific space advertised as theirs.

As has been noted before, at the start of the novel, Lucy is dependent on her cousin as a representative of societal guidelines and expected behaviour in public. Simultaneously, Charlotte Bartlett operates as the specimen of conduct in the private sphere, emulating the regulations that are to be upheld. She epitomises the thorough submissiveness to the customs of the confined woman and substantiates the fact that the private space does not intrinsically afford either physical or psychological freedom to women. It is evident that the pension, which is reminiscent of London through both its décor and most of its English guests, operates as a substitute for domesticity, in which the illusion of safety as well as surveillance is upheld. The initial description of the pension's restaurant with its "two rows of English people," and "the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate" (3) as the sole wall decorations makes it abundantly clear that the pension does not only attempt to provide a sense of familiarity to its English guests, but that it excludes any allusion to its true location. In that light, it is crucial to notice the pension's ambivalent role; while it is in itself a public space, in which public conversations take place, it provides evidence alluding to the security of the private realm, modifying and, to an extent, dissolving the perception of the dichotomy of public and private space. However, the pension not only functions as an aggregation of public and private features but is bestowed an active function in its attempt to hinder authentic experience. In other words, I argue that it conceals the truth and thus functions as a symbol of the social contracts, customs and expectations which regulate and shape Lucy's perception of life. The pension's venture to preserve its façade is disturbed by the presence of the Emersons, who dismantle the constructedness of experience guided by arbitrary rules through their non-traditional ideals. Within the pension, they do not only interfere within the restaurant, a public place, but engage with the only truly private places, namely the rooms that Lucy and Charlotte eventually occupy, too.

Significantly, the Emersons' influence is not limited to Italy, but continues to perturb Lucy in England both metaphorically and physically as their non-conformist way of life echoes within her mind upon her return from Italy and is invigorated through their eventual proximity on Summer Street. Indeed, Lucy's return to Windy Corner, a place that is decidedly marked by conventional structures, supervised by Mrs. Honeychurch, who, like Charlotte, embodies traditional gender roles, proper behaviour, and the preservation of social status, institutes a compelling internal discourse which emblematises the disparity between indoctrinated values and authentic experience. Interior elements such as the drawing-room curtains which have been pulled together manifestly contribute to the authoritative agency of the house by literally limiting viewpoints and shaping perspectives in ways that conform to the Victorian

understanding of a rigidly structured society. The linear structure of the novel forces Lucy to question the life she has known and the validity of security that she felt before her voyage to Italy. The second part of the novel thus not only marks her return to her proper private sphere, but the beginning of a revaluation of its force and the ways in which she has been influenced to perceive and understand the circumstances that determine her position.

The shift in Lucy's agency points toward genuine cognitive development, rooted in an internal conflict based on an increased awareness about the reproduced societal expectations through the spatial circumstances in the private realm that is Windy Corner. Some scholars, such as Richard Martin, have argued that Lucy is predominantly occupied with childishly undermining her persisting affection for George Emerson, reducing the novel to a "love story with a happy end" (75). However, her palpable awareness about social expectations and cultural power dynamics is perhaps most notable in Lucy's shifting appreciation of her cousin, whom she starts to distrust after she tells Mrs. Lavish about Lucy and Georges' kiss, and whom she meets again at Windy Corner. As previously noted, in the early stage of the novel, Lucy duly follows Charlotte's practices in society, and considers her a reliant guard: "Charlotte, dear Charlotte, kiss me. Kiss me again. Only you can understand me. You warned me to be careful. And I – I thought I was developing" (78). Strikingly, Lucy's understanding of psychological development within this passage strongly diverges from her ultimate disapproval of obstructive societal regulations. Her judgment of her own behaviour in the aftermath of her own kiss reaffirms the internalisation of values that commend the continuation of existence within the realm of preconceived limitations. She views her own notion of her progress as erroneous and, once again, returns to the society's circumspections, personified by her cousin. After her return from Italy to England and the private sphere, however, she becomes increasingly aware and irritated by Charlotte's desperate attempt to adhere to societal rules, defining her cousin as a "kind, anxious thing" (155). She finally realises that her cousin will not protect her in resolving the hidden truth about the kiss when Charlotte declares that "[i]t is the kind of thing that only a gentleman can settle" (175), anew parading her internalised understanding of a woman as subordinate. Lucy's recognition of Charlotte's helplessness and her intention to take matters into her own hand ("No one will help me. I will speak to him myself" (ibd.)) in the very place in which female passivity is prescribed most readily, demonstrates that it is Lucy's psychological development rather than the love story itself which is paramount. Simultaneously, her vigour to act reveals the structural powerlessness that lies in the spatial reproduction of female passivity and illusion in the private sphere, and its inability to protect her from potential disgrace which emanates from the public sphere.

In contrast to Lucy's comparably swift acceptance of the private sphere's failure to guard her, and her awareness of its restrictive particularity that has entirely beset her cousin, Clarissa Dalloway's relationship with the private realm is more ambiguous and displays an elevated sense of self-deception in a futile attempt to preserve serenity. While Lucy's awareness of her own negotiated social position and the impact of the space around her develops intensely throughout the span of the novel, Clarissa's introspection is at once a momentary record and the result of her life experience. Her relationship with her house mirrors the paradoxical modernist understanding of domestic space. While she cultivates a frequent presence of socialite guests, essentially transforming her private sphere into one that is dominated by the societal norms that regulate the public sphere, she nevertheless perceives it as space which ought to protect her from the potential danger that the public domain comprises. In that sense, her house is comparable to the Bertolini pension in *A Room*, as the regulatory boundaries appear to become indistinct. However, her home fails to meet these demands and instead spatially reproduces the restrictive gender regulations, which hierarchise society in the pursuit of preserving the male authoritative status. In that context, the intrusion of a supposedly secure space becomes symbolical in its portrayal of the illusion of security and freedom. When Clarissa receives Lady Bruton's invitation to Mr. Dalloway, it causes a sense of rejection and illustrates the impact of social life even within the supposedly guarding walls of the private sphere. Reading the telephone message disrupts Clarissa's feelings of serenity and gratitude and reveals the considerable impact of this intrusion in her domestic world, as feelings of insignificance and ephemerality begin to dominate her mind:

[...] she feared time itself, and read on Lady Bruton's face, as if it had been a dial cut in impassive stone, the dwindling of life; how year by year her share was sliced; how little the margin that remained was capable any longer of stretching, of absorbing, as in the youthful years, the colours, salts, tones of existence, so that she filled the room she entered [...]. (54)

The magnitude of Clarissa's disdain emphasises the perceived lack of control that is highlighted through the letter. Similarly to the Emerson's arrival at Summer Street which disrupts Lucy's attempt to restore her former state of ignorance, the relevance of the message as a trigger for a larger meditation about her own position must not be understated. While the passage predominantly focuses on temporal transience, it also suggests an ambiguous connection between Clarissa's self-perception and her impression of Lady Bruton, which ties together with the oppressive and concealing aspect of the domestic sphere. Although she feels her own life subsiding, representative of societal norms impeding the private sphere, her perception of another woman, who, for all intents and purposes, appears to seek to sustain a stoic demeanour

in public in much the same way as herself, does not involve feelings of shared experience. This thesis argues that the heroine, in her inability to penetrate the façade maintained by Lady Bruton's appearance, despite her own ruminations about the incompatibility of her identity and social expectations, reflects the struggle to balance and reconcile personal authenticity with social conformity. This struggle is specifically strengthened by the barrier presented by the domestic sphere, which hinders the bridging of the gap of a respectable public image and identity, ultimately impeding personal unity.

The spatial impact of this unresolved duality is especially significant. The perception of herself as no longer capable of affecting the room she enters highlights the recognition of an interconnection between space and the individual. Most importantly, it displays how the power dynamics between her and her spatial circumstances have shifted, transferring control to space in which she has lost any remnants of her agency. The realisation of the private sphere's impact eventually elicits a consideration of her spiritual confinement as a woman, which she considers in stark contrast to the freedom of men: "she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough [...] Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination [...] an inner meaning almost expressed" (56). Through this consideration, she reveals a deep-rooted consciousness about the impact of gendered spaces and their inherent discriminatory quality of granting insight to men, while withholding it from women. Following Doreen Massey's perception of space as socially interactive and intricately connected to power distribution, Daphne Spain has pertinently articulated that "[s]patial arrangements between the sexes are socially created, and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organization of space may perpetuate status differences" (3). Clarissa's reaction to the intrusive nature of the telephone message, then, not only demonstrates the private sphere's inability to insulate women from the threats emerging from the public realm but produces a reading of the private sphere as an agent which perpetuates psychological isolation; the obstruction of true experience, infamously restricted to the male population which resides in the public sphere.

The parallels between Clarissa's physical circumstances and her internal emotional phenomena denote the extent to which the fundamentally societal components of the spaces around her disturb her identity as a unified entity. As scholars such as Alex Zwerdling have noted, *Mrs. Dalloway* presents Clarissa as a torn character, in constant conflict between the public persona she seeks to project, and the liberation of her true self (79). Even within the private sphere, advertised as a retreat for women to indulge in sentimentality, revelatory moments are rare and fleeting. In that sense, the permanence of the reproductive forces of the

places that Clarissa occupies, strengthened by the intrusion of the dangerous public sphere, culminate in a constant state of confusion, characterised by an internal dialogue which oscillates between giving in to the societal expectations and the fear of abandoning her personality. Within her present living situation, memories of innocent, authentic sensations of the past appear to her as distant distractions: “She could not even get an echo of her old emotion” (58). She is haunted by the fleeting feeling of herself as an individual, removed from any space of pertinence, a sense of irrelevance which is alleviated only by her attempt to reunite her identity with the coordination of social gatherings within her own home. Akin to the restricting rooms around her, Clarissa suppresses the emotions that the memories she dreads to forfeit elicit, in order to prevent a sincere negotiation which, she knows, would culminate in the recognisance of her own wasted potential. While both heroines’ subordination in both the public and private realms appear more or less hopeless, they find a common thread in the shared pursuit of authentic experience. The last section in this chapter analyses their quest to subvert the meanings of space in favour of authenticity and produces a reading of both novels as explorations of the potential of female agency.

Agency and Shifting Boundaries

The first subsections have illustrated the extent to which the private and public spheres are intertwined, specifically in provoking the enactment of the Victorian model woman that Lucy and Clarissa display. Within both spheres, they are decidedly limited in their physical and psychological freedom. Places such as the Bertolini pension and Mrs. Dalloway’s house reproduce existing power dynamics which hierarchise class and gender in order to uphold the inequal distribution of control, resulting in the scarce possibilities to access authentic existence. Nonetheless, both Lucy and Clarissa detect measures which allow them to subvert the Victorian understanding of spatial circumspections and thus regain authority to navigate and undermine social expectations to a certain extent. Lucy and Clarissa are able to blur the clear-cut lines between the different spheres in separate ways in an attempt to produce new spaces that accommodate for their identities in their totality.

Although the private and public spheres are not as clearly distinguishable from each other as some critics have claimed, the solicited performances emanate in the protagonists’ perceptible desire to transcend the limits that are imposed by societal norms. The novels portray the characters as seeking to merge the roles they have been taught to perform in an attempt to form personal, authentic unity. Their approaches and awareness differ massively, however,

which can be explained through the differences in age and class, resulting in distinct perceptions and understanding of their use of agency. Lucy is able to identify her desire to reach a state of an authentic self yet has not reached the state of awareness to operate according to it yet. Conversely, Clarissa makes use of her agency and intently merges the domestic and the public through her gatherings, without, however, discerning that it is herself whom she hosts them for. Forster and Woolf powerfully display the protagonists' sense of a lack of unity while at the same time demonstrating the plurality of internal conflicts. It is striking that both women are depicted to be conflicted within space: they are heavily influenced by the spatial circumstances which reflect and produce power dynamics that are linked to societal expectations and attempt to forge the spaces around them for their purposes. In that sense, the two novels reveal the interconnection between the characters and their spatial circumstances, which influence and produce each other.

In *A Room With A View*, the first encounter with the Emersons at the pension emanates as a starting point which permanently transforms Lucy's psychological development, as their ignorance of the etiquette in public attracts her attention. If, at first, Lucy is determined to adhere to the societal rules that she has been taught, and which her cousin is exhibiting in refusing the men's proposition to switch rooms, she herself acquiesces to the world which the Emersons invite her to through their intrusive idiosyncrasy. Intriguingly, the narrator displays an antipathy for these established expectations from the start, and foreshadows Lucy's forthcoming involvement with experience unguided by societal amenities and formalities: "Lucy, too, was perplexed; but she saw that they were in for what is known as 'quite a scene', and she had an odd feeling that whenever these ill-bred tourists spoke the contest widened and deepened till it dealt, not with rooms and views, but with – well, with something quite different, whose experience she had not realized before" (5). Alluding to an impending "scene" as a well-known social phenomenon which she has yet had to experience, the narrator ridicules the rigidity of social interaction as the outlined materialisation of constructed societal cues. Moreover, the quote reveals an important connection between space and larger power dynamics: It seems to suggest that, although Lucy is not quite able to name the phenomenon, she recognises that space is not a fixed concept. Instead, it is continuously produced, influenced, and broadened by social interaction. In that sense, Lucy's suspicion is reminiscent of Massey's conceptualisation of space as being continually negotiated and created. In this specific scene, space is created by the Emersons, who are decidedly alienated from the idea of space as stable. Crucially, her thoughts testify to the fact that the way in which she thinks about

space is evolving, marking a necessary development in her emergent pursuit for autonomy and self-definition.

The potentiality of Lucy's resolution to create a space for herself which exists outside the bounds of either the public or private sphere is insinuated throughout the novel. Early on, the "state of spiritual starvation" (6), that overwhelms her after the initial refusal of the Emersons' rooms represents a significant starting point for her spiritual journey. The alliteration in 's' seems to emphasise the profound emptiness in Lucy's mind as well as a longing for existential meaning. Additionally, it creates a lulling rhythm that mirrors the sedating impact of social conventions upon citizens. On that same night, Lucy's response to the eventual arrival in the sought-after room with a view in the pension is evocative of her desire for experience beyond the adamant principles of behaviour that the rooms represent: "At all events she entered her own room without any feeling of joy" (14). In fact, Lucy's attitude here appears to suggest a disregard for privacy on the one hand, and a desire to experience life outside the boundaries of the protective isolating realm on the other, highlighted by the nonnegligible fact that she leaves the door unlocked during the first night of their stay. Such an inadequacy, in connection with her "leaning out of the window before she was fully dressed" on the following day (17), symbolically criticised by Charlotte, demonstrates a disregard for the customary appreciation of privacy, and instead foreshadows Lucy's deep-seated aspiration for experience outside the boundaries of the dichotomous, regulatory division of space as private and public. Indeed, her stoic mindset regarding the room after the interaction with the Emersons encourages a reading of her which conceives her initial desire for a view as less rooted in the view itself, but as a gateway towards authentic experience, which, after this first Emerson episode, has become a tangible possibility.

Though the Emersons are thoroughly responsible for initiating her mental growth, Lucy's talent at the piano is representative of her innate potential for a greater awareness about her own role in the world. Significantly, the narrator relates her art to a physical place and thus emphasises the idea of the impact that the spatial conditions around her impose on her: "[...] Lucy, who found daily life rather chaotic, entered a more solid world when she opened the piano. She was then no longer either deferential or patronizing; no longer either a rebel or a slave" (32). Apart from the narrator, it is Mr. Beebe, a reverend who seeks to protect Lucy from any perceived danger – such as marrying below her social class – who observes that Lucy's relationship with the piano surpasses the ordinary bond and reveals a potency to experience life in its authentic allure: "If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting – both for us and for her" (34). Underlining the division between her aspirations and

the adherence to societal values out of fear of exclusion, Mr. Beebe promotes awareness about the importance of departing from the pre-conceived path, such as Lucy does when she is playing.

Her departure from the initially attended expectations is increasingly visible within the brief affiliation with Cecil Vyse, especially in the public sphere. Comparable to the “Angel in the House” motive mentioned above, which would have instructed the relationship between men and women in private, a heteronormative relationship was to follow rules in public as well. In that context, Anne Digby identifies diverging attitudes between women and men in public and private: “Male pride and female deference to a public face of dominant masculinity may have sustained an external public appearance of stereotypical roles even when the internal reality was rather different” (208). The persona that women were to adopt thus amounted to the concealment of agency in order to support the man in presenting himself as an authority. As the male counterpart to Mrs. Honeychurch and Charlotte, Cecil epitomises the Victorian snob, reliant on his social standing and, in his understanding of women as commodities rather than individuals, attempts to shelter Lucy, who seeks the opposite of protection. After their engagement, and during a dinner-party organised by Mrs. Vyse during their short stay in London, Lucy refuses Cecil’s suggestion to play Beethoven, and instead continues with Schumann, publicly disregarding her fiancé’s wish and thus undermining his authority. By declining his recommendation, she also declines his entry into her “solid world” (32) and foreshadows her eventual decision to end their relationship. In contrast to the futile relationship with Cecil, Lucy’s ultimate devotion to George Emerson, the personification of both her negligence of societal cues and pursuit of genuine experience concludes the establishment of a space that affords the sincere exploration of her own identity. Their return to the Bertolini pension, and desertion from Windy Corner charmingly symphonises Lucy’s ability of modifying the meaning of space, transforming the pension from its initial culture of performative societal patterns to a space fostering authenticity and genuine experience. The opposition between these two relationships will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 2.

In comparison to Lucy’s gradual development towards the rejection of societal expectations, spatially represented by the newly-weds’ presence in the same room in the pension, Clarissa Dalloway’s approach to altering the impact of her physical circumstances showcases the diverse strategies that the female protagonists employ toward their shared goal of regaining control within their respective spatial realms. Analogously to Lucy’s internal dispute dictating her emotional insecurity, stemming from a fear to be deprived of the privileges she has been taught to appreciate if she were to pursue her disposition for authenticity and

unfamiliarity, Clarissa flaunts vulnerability and anxiety in hindsight of her arrangements. It is remarkable how much of her reminiscences involve feelings of doubt, regret, and aversion – and the repression thereof. Clarissa’s depleting meditations expose her as a perturbed character, reinforcing the idea that inner desires and outer forces are incompatible. Apart from organising her parties, she does not believe that she has been of any service to the world around her, and even these she downplays by calling them “[a]n offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow, it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano” (123). Her lack of self-worth in-between instances of astonishment and appreciation of the world around her emphasise the perceived pressure to be of service to society and inability to truly understand the worth of her gatherings.

Besides her self-deprecation, Clarissa displays a desire to recover her sense of agency, which is clearly seen in the diverging portrayals of her home throughout the day. Her dismay after Lady Bruton’s telephone message, which functions as an unwelcome intrusion into the private sphere of her home stands in stark contrast to the way in which she experiences and describes her house when she prepares for her party. Christina Stevenson crucially posited that Woolf, alongside other Bloomsbury members, “challenged conventional notions of home, and the room became a template for ideological transformation. The boundary between private and public, the domestic and the political, was no longer assumed ‘natural’ and thus impenetrable” (112-113). In that sense, the psychological significance of Clarissa’s gatherings in her home – during which she effectively invites the public into the private – becomes evident. Her ambivalent and at times conflicting reflections about the motives throughout the day complicate the reading of a woman who, outwardly, invites guests because there is not much else for her to do. As an upper middle-class wife to a wealthy politician whose only child is essentially raised by Mrs. Kilman, Clarissa is privileged to time as a resource, of which she undeniably spends a substantial amount either tailoring and hosting social events or ruminating over her life as the result of past decisions. Her thoughts, however, reveal that the parties do not alone stem from an intention to fill the hours. Instead, they result from the self-reflection of a woman who perceives the need to reconcile realms and people, thus choosing to be an active agent. If, as suggested before, a continuous sense of lack of control interferes with the conventional understanding of the private sphere as a space of refuge, the active subversion of the private provides a new space in which Clarissa is able to reclaim jurisdiction in an environment that she cultivates to her benefit. In this way, she sabotages the socially structured division of private and public and seemingly reduces her territory to its absolute limits, spatially represented by the “little room” (168), which she occupies to regain her composure after the

announcement of Septimus's suicide. However, by identifying the relevance of the power dynamics within space, rather than the physical places themselves, Clarissa's agency and adoption of authority establish themselves instead of persisting in the space that has been allocated to her by the Victorian ideal of rigid spatial division. Assuredly, the social constraints imposed by her social gatherings preclude Clarissa from abandoning her public persona and disclosing her true identity. Arguably, she is not even aware of her own influence in shifting power dynamics and misinterprets herself, instead reproducing Victorian criteria of restraint and modesty: "[...] one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives, a refuge for the lonely to come to, perhaps; she had helped young people, who were grateful to her [...]" (60). Strikingly, Clarissa here emphasises her presence in her room, displaying an awareness of her impact on changing its meaning, pointing towards the effects her parties have upon other people, without appreciating the value of her actions. Indeed, her endeavour creates a space for a consolidation of different people, blurring the lines between social classes – even though, of course, her guests are predominantly wealthy and respectable enough. Nonetheless, Clarissa is able to affect the space in her favour, and manages to regain influence within the private sphere, even though it means sacrificing physical seclusion. Interestingly, within the image that the heroine presents of herself, she is sitting, suggesting passivity. Yet, I argue, her physical position in her imagination of herself is a testimony to the fact that, despite the societal constraints established to maintain the status quo, women like Clarissa can yield change and subvert power dynamics and catalyse social change by implementing a space that allows for more authentic social interaction. In line with Massey's understanding of interactive social space, she actively challenges conventional notions of space as rigid and instead creates an alternative space which is defined by its multiplicity and fluidity.

Her persistent desire to adhere to the Victorian ideal of respectability, to essentially remain an accepted member of society, prevents her from exhibiting her restlessness in the same way as Lucy does by publicly disregarding her fiancé's wishes. Instead, it further unnerves her self-consciousness: "Why, after all, did she do these things? Why seek pinnacles and stand drenched in fire? Might it consume her anyhow! Burn her to cinders!" (156). Although Clarissa cannot answer her question, and instead chastises herself, the fact remains that she persists in her endeavour, and thus continues refuting established meanings and the authority of space. In fact, her very capacity to reflect herself in such deliberate and extensive fashion is a testimony to the access to authenticity, in spite of the constructed sense of purpose of an early 20th century woman.

In their distinct ways, Lucy Honeychurch and Clarissa Dalloway wield unique strategies to subvert and redefine the meaning of space for their benefit. While neither character can be argued to entirely disrupt the structural gendering of space in their respective narratives and historical moments, they nonetheless achieve progress in disentangling the web of a premeditated value system, which is reliant on ignorance and is thus undermined by the awareness and agency of the two women. Lucy's transformation of unfamiliar spaces aligns with her quest for authenticity, while Clarissa's mastery lies in reshaping familiar environments, both converging in their shared pursuit of asserting control within their spatial realms. These differing yet complementary approaches underscore the resilience and agency of female protagonists in navigating and reclaiming the meaning of space to assert their autonomy and shape their destinies.

This first chapter has revealed that, in consideration of many critics' animosity to the dichotomous separation of space as strictly public or private, *A Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* reveal the interconnection of both spaces which influence the protagonists' experience in collective fashion. Indeed, the public and the private intrude on each other in manners that restrict the female characters' sense of control and blur the boundaries between each other. At the same time, the different perception of these spaces, such as the public as unfamiliar terrain in which respectable behaviour is expected, and the private as a protective area which ought to grant safety, illustrate the extent to which Clarissa and Lucy have internalised the socially constructed meaning of space. Both protagonists have been shown to be self-aware about the expectations that guide their actions and decisions to a certain extent, demonstrating that it would be inaccurate to argue that either protagonist has abdicated their individuality in favour of the function they are to fulfil in society. Instead, the thought processes that are displayed in the novels exhibit ambivalence and represent continuous internal conflicts which stem from the very recognition of the culturally and socially constructed image of the woman that they are supposed to replicate. Their perceptive struggle is firstly revealed through recurring shifts between external forces that drive Clarissa and Lucy towards social compliance. At the same time, they display an internal, instinctive venture to return to and uncover a sense of individuality. Their shared belief in authentic experience, unmediated by societal conventions and rules is separable by Lucy's predominant interest in the facets of life that have been hidden from her, while Clarissa frequently guides her attention to the elements of herself which she has had to obscure. Finally, the analysis has established that both women find ways to subvert the spaces they inhabit, even though Lucy's more uncompromising detachment from her

familiar existence appears to liberate her in a more fundamental manner than Clarissa's more restrained negotiation with the subversion of her domestic space.

Chapter 2: Performance in Space: Heteronormative Relationships

The following chapter will primarily focus on the spatial display of the novels' heroines' heteronormative relationships. In connecting Lucy's and Clarissa's recognition and perception of their own roles within both the failed and continuing romantic liaisons to the spaces in which they take place, the present section provides an analysis of their decisions and choices, which illustrate both characters' desire to challenge patriarchal ideas about conventional female performance within the specific setting of early 20th century British relationships. The perspective upheld throughout the early 20th century viewed the concept of identity as a harmonious, singular entity. Drawing on the analysis by Maude Ellmann, Ban Wang and Gerard Dollar, Shannon Forbes concludes that "Victorians celebrated the idea that the subject was stable, whole, and unified" (38), which highlights the significance that Victorians accorded to rigidity, order, and responsibility. This concept negates the possibility of individual fluidity for all genders, and for women specifically, who, in their position at the spatial periphery, were always more at risk of being scrutinised and excluded. For the purpose of this analysis, Judith Butler's theory regarding gender as a performance, rather than an innate part of identity, will be opposed to this concept of stability in order to reveal the repercussions of the construction of "an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 519). Butler posits that the public performance of certain behaviours reinforces the belief in the idea of a stable identity, arguing against the existence of an innate gender identity which incites behavioural patterns. She emphasises that these patterns, which primarily control women, are historically informed and intrinsically repressive:

[...] to be a woman is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of "woman," to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project. (522)

Butler thus emphasises that the performance of the role of a woman reiterates and reinforces power hierarchies and gender constructions, all the while accentuating its perceived necessity through the fact that "gender is a project which has cultural survival as its end [...] those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (ibd.). The social expectations, in other words, which are falsely based on the assumption of an innate gender identity, force women, men and non-binary people to consent to, and reproduce them. In her essay on space and gender in the 21st century, Theda Wrede argues that Butler's concept of gender performativity "situates gender in external space, in both individual performative acts and the physical environment" (10). In that sense, the performance of any role becomes intricately linked to the space in which

it is located. Feminist geographers such as Doreen Massey and Gillian Rose have built on these ideas to develop an understanding of space as plural and continuously shifting in order to accommodate for the complexity of identity: “space is dynamic and simultaneous, just as gendered identity is multiple and in flux” (Wrede 13). These theorists refute the dominant assumption of space as hierarchical and binary, that is, the understanding of space being divided in its centre and the periphery, akin to the parallel, dichotomous Victorian understanding of space as either private or public. Instead of this construct in which order is secured through the consolidation of power to its center, which, historically, is populated by men, analogous to the male predominance in the public space, the idea of spatial simultaneity is postulated. Building on these ideas, the present chapter will elucidate the ways in which Lucy and Clarissa recognise their own patterns of behaviour as performative acts in the vein of Judith Butler’s framework. Moreover, it will explore their attempts at occupying and reconfiguring space within the realm of romantic relationships, all the while distancing themselves from the idea of identity as an undivided, solitary concept.

Mediated Experience and Conventional Performance

Forster and Woolf introduce different romantic avenues for their female protagonists, compelling them to assess and contemplate their priorities concerning personal freedom, societal expectations, and financial stability. In this initial section, the primary focus will firstly be on exploring the ways in which Lucy and Clarissa perceive their lives as performances of roles. Secondly, the spatial meaning that they attribute to their relationships will be assessed in order to identify their self-awareness in relation to emotional connections, as well as their understanding about the influence of spatial circumstances on their sensibility. In Forster’s *A Room*, the heroine is confronted with the choice between two men, and, represented by them, two polarised existential routes. The first, embodied by Cecil Vyse, is bound to deteriorate from the start. It is Mrs. Honeychurch who proposes a portrait of Cecil that finely exhibits the values he represents, which ultimately lead to the couple’s separation: “he’s good, he’s clever, he’s rich, he’s well connected [...] He’s well connected—I’ll say it again if you like: he’s well connected [...] And he has beautiful manners” (90). Mrs. Honeychurch’s threefold repetition of the fact that Cecil is “well-connected” is an ingenious elucidation of the impact of conventionality on her perspective, which limits her appreciation of a relationship between people to its bare minimum – that is, the presence of social contact. It also illustrates her presumption that such contact, in conjunction with a civilised adherence to social etiquette is

sufficient to establish an emotional relationship. Strikingly, Lucy, when declaring her decision to break off the engagement, reiterates and rectifies her mother's valuation of Cecil's connectedness, displaying her increased understanding of the multiplicity of identity and connection by focusing on facets that illustrate their incompatibility. Against her mother's reasoning, Lucy's interpretation of Cecil as "the sort who can't know any one intimately," and "conventional, [...] for you may understand beautiful things, but you don't know how to use them" (183-184), exposes her mother's, as well as Cecil's deficient understanding of what connection means. Moreover, it emphasises Lucy's own desire to create connections that transcend respectability and the artificial surface created through the devotion to tradition and societal practice.

In the context of the different natures of spatial association, the conversation between Lucy and Cecil, which takes place after entering Summer Street in a carriage, is especially relevant. In spite of Lucy's characterisation of Cecil as lacking emotional depth, a feature referred to in the analysis of several critics (Lane 2007, 105; Goldman 2007, 126; Scherer Herz 2007, 141), it is the London man who initiates a conversation about associative practices specifically linked to space. I argue that rather than refuting Lucy's interpretation of his character, his impulse to open this conversation confirms his moral flaws. He demonstrates that, in theory, he is aware of emotional intelligence and interiority as a concept which transcends mere platitudes, yet his awareness does not translate to his actions or utterances. Cecil notices that Lucy guides their instances of togetherness towards domestic places, rather than nature: "[...] you feel more at home with me in a room [...] Or, at the most, in a garden, or on a road. Never in the real country like this" (112). As introduced in Chapter 1, Lucy is captivated by authentic experience, which is restricted by social conventions that conceal and manipulate reality, so as to shape her into the role she is supposed to take on as a British middle-class woman. Accordingly, the distance that Cecil postulates she is establishing between their relationship and nature – as the epitomised site of freedom and self-determination – appears meaningful and systematic rather than coincidental. Indeed, it seems that nature, and more precisely the forest that surrounds Summer Street, functions as an extension of the sensations of autonomy and authenticity which she connects with Italy: "She had known the wood between Summer Street and Windy Corner ever since she could walk alone [...] and though she had been to Italy, it had lost none of its charm" (113). Unlike the people, who upon her return from Italy, she perceives increasingly wearily, the space unaffected by laws and rules remains appealing to her, emphasising Lucy's attachment to genuineness and a reinforced ability to think critically.

After a brief reflection about Cecil's claims, Lucy herself concludes that she does indeed associate her fiancé with a room, and unconsciously positions him within the confinement from which she seeks to escape: "'Do you know that you're right? I do. I must be a poetess after all. When I think of you it's always as in a room. How funny!'" (ibd.). The surprise with which Lucy reacts to Cecil's comment, as well as her reference to the poetical quality that such an association would entail, supports her sincerity regarding the disregard for her instinctive placement of him within a "drawing-room [...] with no view" (ibd.). Her desire to experience more deeply, indicated from the beginning when she laments the lack of a view from her room at the pension (4), accentuates the antithesis that constitutes their relationship. Marrying Cecil would ultimately culminate in her own placement within the enclosure of a room with no view. Scholars like Philip Wagner have rightly pointed towards the city as imprisoning in its endorsement of conventionality ("the lifeless London environment" (280)), yet also postulate Cecil's unwillingness to experience passion (ibd.). This thesis, however, argues that the degree of his receptivity regarding Lucy's inference of his character, as she breaks off their engagement, demonstrates that he is negligent about his subjection to the influence of formalities and manners, rather than forcefully rejecting authentic feelings such as passion: "[...] I was bound up in the old vicious notions [...] I must actually thank you for what you have done – for showing me what I really am. Solemnly, I thank you for showing me a true woman" (184-185). His assessment of Lucy as a "true woman" accentuates the character's inability to discern that rather than women being 'untrue', it is his perception which is flawed, and results in his inability to see people, and women in particular, for who they are rather than what they represent for him.

Lucy ultimately displays a refusal to be led by such a man in the same way as she refuses to be held in the constraining embrace of social customs. The correlation between her unconscious conception of Cecil within a room with no view and her own enterprise to prevent herself from being ruled over by anyone is particularly noteworthy and exhibits a form of rebellion against gender hierarchy which discloses itself as a reversal of physical positions in space: She projects herself into open space, while envisaging Cecil within a confining room. In that way, Lucy exposes the relevance of spatial determination and the perversion of gendered spaces, and specifically of female connotated places as a protective space, revealing its genuine purpose to prevent the experience of life in its unmediated, authentic form: "I won't be protected. I will choose for myself what is ladylike and right. To shield me is an insult. Can't I be trusted to face the truth but I must get it second-hand through you? A woman's place!" (184). It is through her imagined spatial representation of their relationship, then, that Lucy

successfully elucidates the inherent injustice that emanates from Cecil's ignorant obedience to conventionality which delineates and constrains the roles of women to mere subjects to be governed. Lucy shares this awareness of inequality that seeks to force her into performative submission with Clarissa, whose approach towards it will be analysed in the following section.

In contrast to Lucy's rejection of her role as a subject to be protected, Clarissa Dalloway, in spite of her awareness about the performativity of the different roles she plays throughout the day, chooses to comply with them. Walking through the streets of London, she knows she is only playing the role of a citizen yet feels connected to the Londoners and the city itself. During her party, and, through her antecedent preparations throughout the day, she acts as the perfect hostess, entertaining her guests and upholding the image of herself as welcoming yet reserved. The most prominent role, however, which enables her other roles, is that of the wife to Richard Dalloway. As delineated in this thesis's first chapter, Clarissa's most defining feature revolves around her self-consciousness and reflections about her own position within society. Indeed, her insistence on consolidating the private and public sphere is emblematic in its exhibition of the heroine's desire to regain agency by shaping the environment to her benefit, that is, to enable authentic experience. Nonetheless, she is unable to withdraw from the different roles she has been assigned, and thus appears to thwart the possibility of accessing the individual behind her performance as either Londoner, hostess or Mrs. Richard Dalloway in public.

The lack of interest and affection that Clarissa displays during her ruminations about her husband and their brief interaction implies that marrying Richard Dalloway had been a rational choice. I argue that her reminiscences about her past at Bourton, as well as her present doubts about her past decisions disclose ample arguments to regard her decision against marrying Peter in spite of their unequivocal bond, in favour of the wealthy Richard as predominantly resting on financial and social reasons rather than emotional attachment. Given Mr. Dalloway's high social status as a politician, their marriage ensures Clarissa's social existence, as it establishes her respectability and credibility as a valuable member of society. At the same time, however, it negates her presence in the social space as anything other than "Mrs. Dalloway," continuously irritating and effectively diminishing her own sense of self, as she comes to experience the character beyond her role as a politician's wife only in the briefest of moments, such as when she retreats into the "little room" (168), to adjust to the news of Septimus's suicide. The diminution of herself as the price to pay for social acceptance in the patriarchal world does not elude Clarissa and is intricately connected to the spaces through

which she moves. As she is waiting to cross Bond Street, held up by a police officer regulating traffic, her existential considerations take over:

She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (40)

The feeling of invisibility in this passage illustrates Clarissa's recognition of the one-sidedness that is the relationship with her physical circumstances in extensive fashion. Although she is able to perceive and appreciate the world around her, listening to "a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats; [...] wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air" (36), she senses that she is excluded from it as the world does not appear to acknowledge her as an individual behind the anonymising and concealing "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (40). Reduced to the role of the wife, Clarissa senses an increased loss of personality, thinking of herself as a performer and becoming increasingly powerless in seeing herself through her performance. The parenthetical statement introducing the policeman's control over her and all other citizens' right to cross the street ("and now the policeman held up his hand" (*ibid.*)) further emphasises the prevalence of institutions of power that govern her life. At the same time, it embeds her within the general public's anonymity ("the rest of them" (*ibid.*)), all of whom seem to be waiting for the world to lead them into passivity and detachment.

In spite of her awareness about her increased idleness, and acceptance of patriarchal values, which undermine her individuality in favour of superficial reputation, Clarissa seeks relief in conforming to the performance that is expected from her in her role as a wife, as it appeases her worries about social rejection and chaos. In her analysis of the consequences of Clarissa's devotion to performance as a manoeuvring system with which to imitate identity, Shannon Forbes contents that the heroine:

tries to equate the performance of this role [as Mrs. Richard Dalloway] with her identity, but her attempts to use the role as a substitute for the fixed – essentially the Victorian – sense of self she covets result in emptiness, a lack of fulfilment, and ironically, virtually no self at all. (39)

While the novel clearly projects Clarissa as decidedly faithful to her role in public, I believe that the argument about the absence of a "self" within the character fails to acknowledge the passages of interiority, which reveal Clarissa's psychological depth as it is undisturbed by the roles she has taken on as a result of social pressure. In fact, it does appear that Forbes measures Clarissa against the very theory which she dismantles, namely that of the Victorian ideal of the

“stable, whole and unified” subject (38). While the protagonist assuredly does not mimic unity of character in the Victorian sense, I argue that the complexity of her internal discrepancies and debates in spite of the powerful societal conventions she accepts are sufficient proof of a true “self” and enable a more productive reading of her character as the result of continuously shifting thought processes and self-reflection.

In conjunction with Clarissa’s sense of being invisible in the city and her rational choice to marry a wealthy and respected man, the city itself appears to display signs of endorsement about her compliance to the patriarchal order. Akin to the policeman’s authority in controlling movement, Big Ben’s unquestioned jurisdiction in determining the temporal framework that governs existence institutes order that Clarissa is looking for and appeases her: “[...] Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. For Heaven only knows why one loves it so [...]" (35-36). The protagonist’s remark suggests both the extent to which she has internalised the cultural values that shape her thoughts and her inability to identify the rationale behind her appreciation of the city in spite of its role in rendering her invisible to others and herself. Yet, it is evident that it is the amenity that stems from external factors which allows for temporary serenity within a mind, which constantly pursues unity and order. Scholars such as Forbes have identified that, through Big Ben, the city of London actively reinstitutes Clarissa’s trust in her own decision to perform the endorsed role of a politician’s wife:

[...] every time Clarissa hears Big Ben she is reminded that the city validates and celebrates her decision to perform her chosen role [...] because the dominating, powerful strikes – symbolic of London’s strength and ability to provide for its inhabitants – will always protect one who abides by its male patriarchal values. (42)

Throughout the novel, the tower’s bells interrupt her doubts and requests her attention elsewhere, such as at her party. The male-gendered Big Ben, in its authoritative function, thus actively shapes Clarissa’s thoughts and repeatedly hinders reflection that would put her in a position in which she would have to question her decisions. More globally, Clarissa’s spatial circumstances approve of her past resolutions as long as she concedes to her own submission to the hegemonic patriarchal principles. Her protection within the public, then, is revealed as intricately linked to her concession of individuality, as the spatial circumstances are specifically laid out to accommodate for female submission. In that sense, Woolf exposes the production of the public space as deliberately impeding the female identity in portraying the city as a space in which acts against the patriarchy become impossible within the realm of public recognition.

Woolf and Forster present diverging representations of spatial influence in their two novels. While the two heroines' awareness about space as a guiding and representational sphere is similarly emphasised, Clarissa's position is chronicled in a much more ambiguous manner, portraying the nature of performances, roles, and anonymity as convoluted and a route to escape chaotic experience, while Lucy's rejection of her role as a wife without power underscores her anger as the result of mediated experience.

Self-Delusion, Multiple Spaces and Spatial Appreciation

This following section seeks to elucidate that, despite their diverging approaches regarding the roles they are to perform, the similarity in Lucy's and Clarissa's perception of the ideological influence that shapes their lives, as well as their conscious and diligent efforts to contravene feelings of powerlessness. It further argues that these feelings are underlined and strengthened by the prevalent narrow-minded understanding of spaces as disconnected and definite. As noted above, in Forster's novel, nature holds the power to enable mental growth for characters who are capable of accessing it in its function as physical antithesis to permeated experience. In other words, nature is depicted as possessing the potential to allow characters to see themselves through the veil of unnatural roles that societal concepts of propriety and decorum have imposed upon them. Lucy principally differs from Cecil in her ability to perceive herself beyond conventionality. This thesis argues that her ability to see herself in her authentic form is the result of a process which is initiated through her voyage to Italy as well as the confrontations with Mr. Emerson and his son George. The critic Richard Martin has claimed that "Italy is used in this novel as a charming background, a possible catalyst, but little more" (76). Although, as he further correctly argues, the impact that the Emersons have on the heroine must not be understated (*ibid.*), it would be negligent to dismiss the physical setting as mere background. In fact, its influence in creating a space in which psychological growth becomes possible is evident.

The antithesis between England and Italy proposed in *A Room* is a recurrent motif in Forster's novels. Italy is presented both as the site of great potential for intellectual development through the discovery of its landscape and cultural history and, more importantly, for psychological transformation that is enabled through the very transcendence of the traditional practice of studying a foreign culture. In that vein, Anne Ardis posits that "[...] Italy functions as an occasion for getting beyond 'the muddle' of English social convention and traditional cultural values. It is a site for identifying what it might really mean 'to live'" (71).

Ardis thus adequately introduces the idea of Italy as a place which allows true experience beyond the limitations of conventionality. Rather than maintaining the conventionality of British values in studying a foreign country, Forster forces his characters to abandon the established and internalised practices, which prevent authentic experience. In *A Room*, it is Lucy's deprivation from her Baedeker in Florence which allows her to firstly experience the city "'off the map'" (Ardis 69), in its unmediated form, and to ultimately discover herself beyond the roles she had been accredited with as a middle-class English woman in the early 20th century. The opposition between nature and society, Italy and England, then, serves to highlight Lucy's progressive self-perception as it prospers beyond the limitations of conventionality, through the discovery of unmediated space.

The constellation between Italy and England, however, is complicated by the forest around Summer Street, as it seemingly portrays Lucy's home in the English countryside as somewhat complementary to the Italian natural scenery. For that reason, a binary dissection between the depiction of the two countries in the novel risks generating an oversimplified reading of space in the novel that neglects the plurality of meanings that are attached to Summer Street. This becomes increasingly discernible as Lucy's introspective competence evolves. Therefore, this thesis proposes that the novel exposes the very adaptability and responsiveness of space which creates the possibility for change and mimics the indefiniteness that characterises Lucy. In her analysis of nature in *A Room* as both a model of ideal evolution and an intricate agent mirroring the novel's events and the characters' interiority, Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad produces a reading of the interrelationship between the characters and their natural environment which depicts nature as an overarching agent that can only temporarily be hidden by societal conventions: "Essentially, the social is part of the natural; various social issues that are foregrounded in the novel, including inequality, are, in principle, the result of humanity's careless attitude to nature" (90). Prorokova-Konrad thus convincingly establishes nature as the starting point and first layer of space, on top of which societal roles and expectations have been inaugurated to the extent of camouflaging nature. Adding on to her conception, the access to nature is linked to the access of self-knowledge and authentic experience as they are obscured by the same societal veil. Unlike Cecil, whom Konrad presents as "so affected by posturing and social conventions that he [...] cannot genuinely or directly appreciate what nature has to offer" (88), George Emerson, under the guiding figure of his father is capable of perceiving nature in its true function. In a parallel which emphasises the significance that Forster affords to the connection between space and identity, George exemplifies how a genuine appreciation of physical circumstances permits him to access and

display his own true nature. Admiring the landscape on the edge of a “terrace,” described as “[...] the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth” (73), he gives in to his emotional state and kisses Lucy, and later confesses that he is neither “ashamed” nor willing to “apologize” (both 177-178). He thus visibly opposes the Victorian standards of decorum and respectability which disapprove of the public display of individuality and emotionality. Moreover, Forster places him in a space which both stimulates and mirrors his access to nature and beauty to emphasise the significance of spatial circumstances in accessing interiority. As Lucy has not yet completely dismissed her societal upbringing, she initially meets his enterprise initially with disdain and condescension while she dismisses her own behaviour as the result of “silly thoughts” and “the nonsense of schoolgirls” (78), suggesting her ongoing compliance with customs at this point of the novel.

Lucy ultimately recognises the futility of hiding behind appearances which impede any sensibility to one’s own interiority after the last of Mr. Emerson’s persuasive monologues: “as he spoke the darkness was withdrawn, veil after veil, and she saw to the bottom of her soul” (217) after previously having “misled” herself (218). Although it might be argued that Lucy’s self-perception at her youthful age must be limited to some degree in spite of Emerson’s persuasive and powerful argumentation, the metaphor of light and dark used in this passage reveals the impact of conventionality on her identity hitherto. It is only after realising the extent to which social expectations have camouflaged her vision that Lucy begins to see the roles that she has been taught to perform. In this sense, Mr. Emerson allows Lucy to see the space in which she circulates in its regulating, gendered reality. Forster thus exposes the hardship of becoming aware beyond the boundaries of conventionality in early 20th century Britain, even for a character who ostensibly seeks to transcend them. Mr. Emerson apperceives Lucy’s masquerade from the start, noticing her imitative tendencies: “I think that you are repeating what you have heard older people say. You are pretending to be touchy; but you are not really” (24). Mr. Emerson’s emphasis on pretence, and on who Lucy really is, and isn’t, foreshadows and initiates her mental journey towards resolving this very issue. This awareness, however, only truly reaches Lucy in the final stages of the novel, when she recognises that George’s father has rightly inferred her self-delusion and starts to see through the veil of conventionality. This is a realisation that is palpable in Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* as well. The psychological development is reminiscent of Clarissa, whose past and self-awareness is at the forefront of her reflections, and which will be examined in the following section.

Even though the romantic relationships in *Mrs. Dalloway* reveal that Clarissa has chosen a decidedly different path in marrying the man who ensures financial and social

stability, the similarities in the spatial associations that the two heroines establish with different suitors and love-interests in their lives are striking. Like Lucy's Cecil, Richard is a typical city dweller, attached to London not only through his political career, but his emotional distance and uniformity as well. Although Clarissa never develops hostility towards her husband in the manner of Lucy towards Cecil, she nonetheless perpetually carries with her feelings of doubt and uncertainty as to the emotional benefits of her selection. These sensations predominantly emerge through her reminiscences about her youth at Bourton, which in turn inevitably prompt memories about Peter Walsh and Sally Seton. In this context, the symbolic value of Bourton in connection to Clarissa's youth, innocence and important decisions ought to be emphasised. As referred to in the first Chapter, Clarissa is steadily occupied with her adolescence, which she associates with protection, excitement, and a general sense of enthusiasm towards life, which she can merely imitate in the present through the self-delusional belief that she is connected to the city and its citizens in brief episodes.

Although the similarities between Richard and Cecil, as well as between George and Peter, are apparent, the associations and characteristics are not as definite in *Mrs. Dalloway* as they are in Forster's novel. The characters who are to be paired with a world unaffected by societal conventions – Peter and Sally – are characterised by Clarissa in a fashion that encompasses a more perceptive attitude towards the multiplicity of personalities: "She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that" (38). Clarissa recognises that individuals ought not be categorised and displays her awareness about the inaccuracy of the Victorian idea of identity as a unified entity. At the same time, the insertion of the temporal adverb "now" alludes to the development of her understanding of individuality and accentuates her deliberate alienation from an idea that she would have been taught at Bourton, highlighting the idea that Clarissa has never ceased to question the values in which she was brought up. Johanna Garvey has aptly directed attention at the fact that Clarissa's ability to see beyond the confining concept of identity as a fixed entity is reflected through to the novel's attribution of voices to several characters. Different versions of the characters are presented as existing simultaneously, coexisting in spite of their paradoxical contradictions: "what we are witnessing in Woolf's language is a sea of voices, waves of words to erase hierarchies and to emphasize multiplicity and transformation" (60). By means of exposing the analogy that consolidates the fluidity of water and individuality, Garvey successfully accentuates Woolf's pursuit of dismissing the authority of a single entity to dominate the narrative, entertaining the existence and validity of different perspectives existing at the same time to provide a synopsis of several, at times opposing viewpoints which complement the limited subjectivity of a single character.

In doing so, Woolf criticises the jurisdiction that inherently defines a single-voiced narrative, and instead allows for transfiguration and plurality of meaning, which, in conjunction with Clarissa's subversion of the Victorian home traditionally thought of as a space of female privacy and protection, reinforces the idea of the heroine's receptivity to the agenda of Victorian ideology.

Though the similarities between Cecil and Richard as men immersed in the Victorian ideology, advocating for values of respectability, and displaying emotional distance are palpable, the novels contrast each other through Woolf's characterisation of Peter Walsh, the male character who stands for passion rather than rationality. The multiplicity of existence is specifically distinct in Clarissa and Peter's understanding of each other. Herein is revealed the complexity of identity in much more developed fashion than is inferential in Forster's male equivalent George Emerson. Forster's depiction of Lucy and George creates a condensed representation of mutual appreciation, which is intricately intertwined with the idealism that accompanies their youth and the nascent state of their relationship. In contrast, Clarissa and Peter, who have known each other for decades, have experienced and identified facets in each other that enable them to perceive each other in a more thorough manner. Clarissa associates Peter with her past and Bourton, a procedure which is most palpable when he visits her in her drawing-room unannounced. What Clarissa perceives as joyous surprise, is Peter displaying a patriarchal, domineering disposition, which Clarissa either overlooks or consciously ignores, and which is reminiscent of Forster's Cecil Vyse, as he repeats his conviction that Clarissa will make time for him four times (62). This assertive assumption alludes to a resolute, if perhaps unconscious belief in his own priority and Clarissa's compliance in meeting him in spite of other potential obligations. In this context, it is crucial to recall that Clarissa's authority within her own home is subject to men's assent and noticeably limited to the resolution of not reading Peter's letter: "so surprised she was to see him, so glad, so shy, so utterly taken aback to have Peter Walsh come to her unexpectedly in the morning! (She had not read his letter)" (ibd.). In fact, his letter is reminiscent of the message that Lady Bruton had previously left to invite Richard to lunch, another intrusion into Clarissa's private life. It seems as though her determination not to read Peter's letter implies the desire to prevent a renewed sense of powerlessness, exposing the omnipresence and persistence of intrusion in female spaces. Her resolve, however, is quickly nullified by his visit, eliciting the question as to the possibility of female protection. At the same time, the reader is reminded of the ubiquitous nature of the patriarchal system. Via Peter, Woolf exposes the deceptive illusion of safety associated with

places specifically designated to women, highlighting the unrestricted freedom enjoyed by men to interfere with these spaces as they please.

Although Clarissa intuitively seeks to protect herself after her space has been compromised, trying to hide the dress she is mending, Clarissa is enticed by Peter to the extent of questioning her decision to decline his proposal: “he’s enchanting! perfectly enchanting! [...] and why did I make up my mind – not to marry him, she wondered, that awful summer?” (63). Crucially, her doubts emerge at the sight of Peter’s disregard for appropriate emotional distance as he questions her determination not to invite him to her party, hinting at her own awareness about the absurdity of the Victorian ideal of emotional reserve. Notwithstanding her affection towards Peter, and his proposal in Bourton, Clarissa married Richard rather than Peter, a decision that, through the latter’s visit at her house, reveals a layer of depth within the heroine’s personality that has hitherto not surfaced. Indeed, throughout the novel, Peter emerges as passionate and sensitive, yet he is also unpredictable, unstable, and unsettled, perhaps best exemplified through his shifting assessments of his own feelings towards Clarissa. However, his role in the novel is at the same time intricately linked to Clarissa’s understanding and construction of her identity. Despite Peter’s inclination to blame the customs of society for Clarissa’s concealment as “the perfect hostess” (38), he reproduces prevalent patriarchal practices, a quality that Clarissa is acutely aware of: “with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable [...]” (ibd.). His consuming, occupying affection finally leads Clarissa to choose Richard, as she refuses to be conquered. In a parallel that can hardly be disregarded, the space which she has created for herself in her home admonishes her doubts and is emphasised through her daughter Elizabeth’s entry, metaphorically retrieving her from the past, akin to the sounds of Big Ben, which remind her of the serenity she has accessed through her marriage. If Peter is able to temporarily elicit romantic reminiscences about their past at Bourton, the space she has created for herself prompts her to recognise the present.

The omnipresence of Clarissa’s recollections alludes to the same concept of a yearning for a natural state that Forster introduces in *A Room*: to both protagonists, this state is connected to a specific place, even though much more emphasis is laid upon nature in Forster’s novel. The crucial difference, however, lies in their temporal circumstances, as Clarissa can only look back at her time at Bourton and the choices that led her away from emotional innocence and towards social responsibility, whereas Lucy is depicted within the very moment of determining that the preservation of the accessibility of nature’s potential exceeds the assets that come with respectability. Nonetheless, both characters seek and manage to mold compromised spaces to their benefit, and thus emphasise the influence of the patriarchal system which imposes the

performance of social roles and the significance of spatial awareness in the pursuit of authentic experience.

Quest for Agency and Spatial Aspects of Time

This concluding section will analyse and evaluate the ways in which agency, space and the past are intricately linked in the two novels. The study of their connection provides a perspective that offers a vision of the two heroines as adept at acknowledging time and space as non-linear dimensions, resulting in an understanding of their identity as a fluid concept that transcends traditional conceptions of the time. Forster's George is representative of authenticity and nature and is closely related to the aspects that define Italy in the heroine's mind, namely freedom and unmediated space. At the same time, Lucy associates him with the present and the future. In addition to her choice to marry him, which illustrates her intention to spend her future with George, their marriage marks the end of a significant period of her life. It not only formally concludes her childhood, but, given her family's objection to it, also creates an emotional and physical distance between her past and present, which is mourned by the heroine: "[George's] own content was absolute, but hers held bitterness: the Honeychurches had not forgiven them; they were disgusted at her past hypocrisy; she had alienated Windy Corner, perhaps for ever" (222). The phrasing here is peculiar, as Lucy is staged as the active agent in the development of her family's separation, when in truth, her "bitterness" reveals that provoking her family's resentment had not been her intention. Forster seems to suggest that increased attention ought to be attributed to Lucy's role, shifting the narrative toward the prevalence of female agency in spite of social and financial constraints. Indeed, I would like to argue that her return to the pension Bertolini as a married woman, in company of her husband rather than her chaperone, exposes an authoritative aspect of her character that so far has been neglected by most scholars. Don Austin, for instance, rightly identifies the importance of the connection between past and present in his essay regarding temporal coherence in E.M Forster's novels: "Forster uses a place of habitation as a symbol of the past. [...] Recognition of these symbols, and the subsequent transfer of them to the present, is an obligation that must be assumed by the new generation" (222). I agree with the significance of the transfer of spaces of the past into the present, as well as the symbolic value of Windy Corner as the place that has come to mean Lucy's ancestry and her starting point from which she embarks toward the future. However, this thesis posits that more emphasis ought to be put on the fact that Forster chooses to end his

novel at the pension, alluding to the idea that the meaning of Windy Corner for Lucy has shifted through her own agency.

Through Lucy's previously introduced mental process, Windy Corner does indeed become a space in time that Lucy is able to control by reshaping its meaning in the present. To employ the pension as the final spatial setting is the necessary evidence thereof, as the physical distance comes to symbolise Lucy's psychological independence from a place that no longer defines her identity and which has lost its authority in shaping her self-perception. It is in that sense that Lucy is able to effectively return to the past and change its meaning, and with it, the meaning of space. By retracing her steps of the past, physically returning to the same room where she had resided in during her first visit at the pension, she transforms its original meaning as a space of deceitful authenticity into a space that symbolises genuine freedom from societal constraints. As suggested in the first chapter, the meaning initially attached to the pension involves a peculiar blend of both domestic and public regulations: It becomes a space for Lucy which both holds the potential to allow for genuine development, yet at the same time appears to misrepresent the authentic state of Italy as the physical representation of authentic freedom. Although she notices the camouflage from the beginning, it is only at the end of the novel that she becomes able to see through the veil that initially covers her and the space around her in darkness and influences its meaning as she has gained access to her own identity.

In accordance with the alteration of spatial significance, a return to Windy Corner becomes unlikely. Austin claims that "[t]he final scene of the novel establishes a connection with Windy Corner. Lucy leaves herself in a position whereby she can go home again" (228). I posit, however, that reconciliation with her family and Windy Corner is possible only in the improbable event of the questioning of a deep-rooted belief system by those characters who display little to no inclination to recognise the extent to which it shapes their perspectives. Conversely, Lucy persists in her belief in authenticity and purity of character: "If we act the truth, the people who really love us are sure to come back to us in the long run" (222). By implication, the possibility to "go home again" is reduced to a marginal percentage, as the return to the pension marks Lucy's public broadcasting of her values and reinterpretation of the past, which directly oppose the traditional customs that define Windy Corner. In that sense, Lucy distances herself from her family also in the sense of gaining a better understanding of the influence of space on societal conventions and power dynamics.

In contrast to Lucy, Cecil Vyse, who, in spite of his departure from Windy Corner, is representative of its values, is highly limited in his understanding of the spatial connection between past and present. In fact, he appears to be unable to comprehend change or

development for any other means than efficiency and social conversion. Crucially, the narrator's description of Cecil from the outset employs a jargon that refers to the past on the one hand and foreshadows Cecil's condescendence toward Lucy and her family on the other. It thus creates a peculiar dynamic between Cecil, his own self-perception and patriarchal mentality regarding the assessment of others, which alienates him from the inclination to authenticity and purity that Lucy exhibits and pursues from the start. Cecil is described as "medieval" and compared to a "Gothic statue" (92), introducing him as a character who is incapable of either perceiving change or evolving. Through the emphasis on his appearance ("a head that was tilted a little higher than the usual level of vision" (ibd.)), a physical trait which symbolises his futile attempt to perceive beyond the common scope of others, the narrator alludes to the lack of consideration for his own interiority. This, in turn, explains his erroneous self-awareness, leading him to believe in his inherent superiority regarding members of a lower social class. Most strikingly, the reference to the "fastidious saints" (92) which depicts the London aesthete as a protector of the "French cathedral," (ibd.) and thus of the past and its traditional values is followed by an intimation of the confinement that symbolises his adherence to Victorian rigidity and conventionality. The metaphor is further developed to reveal Cecil's self-control and scrutiny being personified as "a certain devil" (ibd.), which controls him, comparable to the manner in which he seeks to control the family into which he is to be married.

From the start, Cecil is depicted as being controlled by the past, an idea that is further exposed through his comparison of Lucy with historical artwork: "She was like a woman of Leonardo da Vinci's, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us [...]" (94). In spite of his apparent insight elicited by Lucy's decision to break off their engagement ("From a Leonardo she had become a living woman" (183)), his comprehension of Lucy as a commodity rather than an equal human being, displays the comprehensive internalisation of patriarchal values that regulate Cecil's worldview. In place of individuality, Cecil sees her beauty as a product to be appreciated from a distance, content with the lack of perceptivity. In that way, Cecil remains within the conceals of darkness that the past establishes on the present and that Lucy is able to transcend. Woolf thus uses the character of Cecil to expose the outdated patriarchal understanding of the intrinsic opposition between powerful masculinity and feminine impotence, all the while advocating for female enterprise to reject the archaic commodification of women hiding, obscured under the false pretext of admiration and protection. Lucy's reinterpretation of space becomes a powerful means to subvert the persistent premise of space as passive and identity as permanent and stable. The possibility of debunking prevalent ideas of space and time in the context of persistent gender roles also

occupies an important position in Clarissa's understanding of agency that this thesis will discuss in the following passage.

Lucy's intention to dismantle the dichotomous understanding of past and present as a means to challenge patriarchal gender roles in space is apparent also in Clarissa's ability to reinterpret the past to influence the present to her benefit. The end of the conversation between Clarissa and Peter, interrupted by Elizabeth, who enters the room as Peter anew ignores Victorian customs by asking Clarissa about her emotional state, marks a significant shift in the power dynamics within their relationship. It exemplifies the relevance of gendered spaces within the specific relational dynamics between Clarissa and Peter and the successful subversion of power that the female protagonist inaugurates through her change of mind regarding Peter's presence at her party. After initially withholding an invitation to her party, their conversation apparently alters her decision, as she reminds him of her party as he is leaving her house:

[...] Remember my party to-night!" she cried, having to raise her voice against the roar of the open air, and, overwhelmed by the traffic and the sound of all the clocks striking, her voice crying "Remember my party to-night!" sounded frail and thin and very far away as Peter Walsh shut the door. (68)

It has been argued that the fact that the description of Clarissa's voice as "frail and thin and very far away" alludes to a greater effort to challenge the male gendered public sphere, within which the female voice is easily ignored (Garvey 1991, 59). This interpretative strand is further supported by the idea that, while Clarissa must combat the sounds that emerge from the outside, as though to fight both for her own place in the public sphere and for her voice to be heard, Peter is seemingly anchored in the public in perfect harmony, while uttering the same words that Clarissa has had to cry out: "Remember my party, remember my party, said Peter Walsh as he stepped down the street, speaking to himself rhythmically, in time with the flow of the sound, the direct downright sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour" (ibd.). The opposition that is outlined through this interaction clearly delineates the injustice that defines gendered space in Victorian society, which supports and reinforces the control of men over women. What has not been focused on so much in current analyses is the fact that, in spite of the city's attempts to submerge it, her reminder is heard, and perhaps more crucially, it affects Peter in a way that suggests that the power dynamics between the both of them might not be as one-sided as Peter's access to her house and drawing-room indicates. Her words transcend the boundaries of a surface which seeks to suppress them within the greater ideological framework of the patriarchy. To sustain the surface, a woman's influence on a man is to be strictly limited,

therefore admitting female interference signifies admitting to hegemonic masculinity's fictitious *raison d'être*. In order to preserve male authority and the feeling of control over both his own mind and that of Clarissa, too, Peter, in his role as a proponent of the patriarchal system, has to deny his sensibility to her words. To this end, he shifts the focus towards women's susceptibility to emotional transgression, all the while exposing the fact that, against his will, his own mind returns to the past:

There was Regent's Park. Yes. As a child he had walked in Regent's Park – odd, he thought, how the thought of childhood keeps coming back to me – the result of seeing Clarissa, perhaps; for women live much more in the past than we do, he thought. They attach themselves to places; and their fathers – a woman's always proud of her father. Bourton was a nice place, a very nice place. (73)

Peter's exhibition of his faithfulness to patriarchal ideology, which offers itself through both his deliberate generalisation of women, as well as his confident predisposition of all women's receptivity of reminiscences, is in itself a manifestation of a commitment to the past and its values and traditions. Furthermore, the memory of his past is intrinsically related to the spatial setting of Bourton, an association which, although he attributes it to women rather than himself, does not elude him. I want to argue that, in spite of the plethora of retrospective moments that shape Clarissa's interiority throughout the day, it is Peter who is dominated by the past to the extent to being unable to freely exist in the present. While Clarissa undoubtedly exhibits instances of doubt and perhaps regret about past decisions, these are nonetheless counterbalanced by sensations of gratefulness and content. If these opposing conceptions of her own existence appear to be irreconcilable, they reflect Woolf's intention to display the plurality and complexity of her identity as the continuously evolving and shifting culmination of her experiences past and present. In her article about female characterisation through the recognition of the innate relationship between memory and space, Candis Bond has convincingly asserted that:

Woolf's spatialization of memory allows Clarissa to engage actively with her past self or selves (not just view it/them objectively from a distance), and [...] by doing so, she is able to "live most fully in the present." Past and present spaces (and the corresponding selves those spaces produce) are not isolated, but are in constant conversation and, therefore, reciprocal modification. (68)

The spaces, then, allow the characters and Clarissa specifically to move back in time and experience the past anew. As asserted earlier, the idea of a stable identity was prevalent, a concept that Clarissa subverts through the recognition that her identity is not inherently anchored to the present but exists outside the realm of linearity. Through this constant reinterpretation of her existence, Clarissa is able to distance herself from the idea of the past as

a space that can no longer be accessed, as is demonstrated through her decision to invite Peter to her party in spite of her initial intent. Rather than clinging on to the hurt of the past and the version of Peter that she knew at Bourton, the man who sought to consume her, she is able to see beyond the surface that is the dichotomy between past and present, and to choose to let this chapter of the past go – an ability that Peter does not carry with him.

In conjunction with the fact that Peter does not get to nudge their conversation in the direction that he would like, it is also significant that it is Clarissa who has the last word. Woolf thereby not only demonstrates that there are nuances to the relationship dynamics, but the novel promotes the idea that the heroine is able to navigate the present space – which evidently favours men – by shaping it to her benefit. Her last words steer away from the past and toward the future, created by the present version of herself as the hostess who invites and entertains guests at her house. Indeed, the novel's final passage epitomises the different mental dispositions which, in spite of their mutual appreciation, forever distances Clarissa and Peter. Shortly before departing Clarissa's party, Peter repeats his lack of understanding and vision, forestalled by a metaphorical darkness which prevents the connection between time, space, power, and authentic self-perception: "What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?" (176). Unable to discern the origins of his feelings, Peter is bound to revel in ignorance. In contrast, Clarissa ultimately displays her ability to be in the present space, having transcended the boundaries of a dichotomous existence and thus empowered through the amalgamation of the multiplicity of her identity: "For there she was" (ibid.). Ultimately, Woolf concludes *Mrs. Dalloway* in a moment of presence rather than continuing the countless ruminations of the past. This thesis argues that this fact illustrates Clarissa's understanding of her own authority in determining her own position in both time and space, beyond the determination of the past, enabling her to connect with herself on a level that is not attainable for Peter.

In conclusion, the roles that Lucy Honeychurch and Clarissa Dalloway are urged to perform in order to conform to social conventions have been shown to actively deter the heroines from exploring life without the regulative constraints of respectability and decorum. The heteronormative relationships depicted in the two novels reveal the extent to which female self-perception is sought to be prevented in pursuance of the patriarchal status quo. For that purpose, the prevailing Victorian ideological framework actively directs women to their function as passive wives, reinforcing feelings of confinement and the loss of identity. While Lucy dismisses her role as wife of Cecil Vyse, the man who epitomises internalised patriarchal conviction, particularly through his ignorance of his desire to protect and guide the women in

his life, Clarissa seeks ways to protect her agency from within the confining structure of marriage. Ultimately, the two women confirm their awareness about the risks of acquiescing to the erroneous understanding of identity as a fixed entity and actively protect their appreciation of the multiplicity of identity by opposing to the prevalent judgment inherent to British culture at the time. Indeed, upon the realisation of the significance of their own space, they create spatial associations with the male figures in their lives that allow them to distance themselves from the prospect of having to compromise their own space. Lucy thus associates Cecil with the confining limits of a drawing-room, all the while seeking the freeing particularity of nature. Clarissa creates a space for herself at home in which she is able to both preserve a certain distance to her husband, and which prevents her from losing herself in the idealised illusion of Peter's emotionality. Finally, their agency portrayed through the re-interpretation of spaces of the past substantiates their ability to visualise themselves through the obscuring idea of time and space as linear concepts. At the same time, it reveals their successful subversion of power dynamics with the male figures, who are ultimately exposed as eternally influenced by the past and unable to experience the present in its true, unmediated form.

Chapter 3: Selected Silence and Spatial Self-Realisation

This last chapter will delve into the sphere of abstract space, that is, space that the heroines of both novels under investigation in this thesis create for themselves from within. Through silence, the characters enable themselves to literally generate space for themselves, subverting the idea of silence as absence and asserting themselves in the physical world. Control of space becomes possible through the productive qualities of silence, which oppose the dichotomous understanding of power necessitating verbal expression. This chapter will demonstrate how they use silence as a strategy to prevent their interiority, as arguably the most personal space, from being invaded by the men in their lives. Instances of silence occur throughout the two novels and manifest in different ways. While silence as a communicative tool may take on distinct functions in different contexts, the specific focus of this chapter will rest on the potential power of actively selected silence by the female protagonists. Although the evasive nature of silence appears to hinder its interpretation, it is crucial to notice that silence is not merely the absence of discourse and meaning. In their thorough project about the “transformative possibilities of silence” (1), Aimee Carrillo Rowe and Sheena Malhotra question and condemn the unequivocal connotations of silence and silenced voices as signs of oppression and limitation. They accentuate that “[t]he articulation between silence and powerlessness is almost common sense within Western culture, an assumption that is reified across literary, progressive academic, and activist contexts” (1). In the context of traditional gender roles, women throughout the centuries have suffered from being denied the opportunity of voicing their needs and rights or from not being heard by societies that actively sought to ignore female voices. Returning to Foucault’s philosophy of power structures, his rejection of the binary relation between discourse and silence grants an appreciation of silence that explains the silencing of those who are oppressed:

Silence itself [...] is less the absolute limit of discourse [...] than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; [...] There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (27)

Foucault offers an understanding of silence as an oppressive tool, which guides and limits the reality of those groups whose silence is enforced. At the same time, he alludes to the plethora of different silences and the different meanings that they may invoke, which will guide this chapter’s interpretative understanding of silence in the two novels.

The traditional perception of silence, which, according to Felski's comprehension of literary characters as closely tied to reality, prevails within the minds of the characters in both novels, is subverted by Lucy and Clarissa. Rather than producing a reading of their silences as the concession of power within patriarchal structures of discourse, I read them as acts of defiance that prevent the extraneous encroachment of their own space. Indeed, their silences complement their daring demeanour regarding the prevalent conceptions of private and public spaces, and their roles within the specific context of heteronormative relationships that the first two chapters have discussed. Moreover, this chapter aims to emphasise the reciprocity between these characters' silences and shifting perspectives in the novels that negate the dominance attributed to the male gaze. The final section will consolidate these different meanings of silence to produce a reading of the two heroines' rewarding refusal of the traditional understanding of speech. This denial allows them to attain a level of connection with themselves and others that transcends conventionality and spotlights the concept of eternal possibility within the overarching framework of spatial occupation.

Rebellious Silence

This chapter's first section delves into the analysis of silence as a means to maintain a certain distance from societal norms, to prevent the deprivation of individuality in favour of conventionality and consent. Although the two novels' heroines' understandings the value of silence differ, their instances of silence nevertheless display similar aspirations in creating and cultivating space for themselves, particularly within their impulses to reach a greater state of authentic experience. This chapter posits that, to a certain extent, the sophisticated instances of silence mirror, emphasise and, at the same time, refute the societal constraints endured by middle-class women in Britain at the beginning of the 20th century as they appear to be the sole manner to escape the patriarchal system.

In *A Room With A View*, rather than provoking a development that would conclude in sentiments of belonging within the societal boundaries, Forster provides an alternative path to gratification that is rooted in self-fulfilment and the acknowledgment of individuality. Daniel Schwarz insinuates how the distance that Lucy creates between herself, and the tradition of her time is commemorated by Forster, who navigates the plot to accommodate for his heroine's eventual content in spite of her alienation from Summer Street: "His characters do not discover a place within the community but remain outside of it. [...] The plots establish the validity of instinct, passion, and inner life" (624). Although Schwarz does not specifically scrutinise the

value of silence within this alteration of self-perception, the allusion to a place “outside” grants the opportunity to expedite the non-conformist way of living in more detail. At the same time, the spatial metaphor that Schwarz introduces, which in the case of Lucy Honeychurch becomes a literal place, as the newlyweds abandon Windy Corner in view of creating their own space, strengthens the argument about the close relationship between space and silence for that this chapter advocates.

While the physical alienation evidently exhibits Lucy’s mental development toward the acceptance of her authentic identity, the specific application of silence more subtly accentuates her psychological growth throughout the novel. These silences enable the heroine’s alienation from tradition and conventionality, as they allow her to bypass compliance in a patriarchal system of speech. It is communication, then, that is embedded in patriarchal patterns that Lucy discovers to be a powerful instrument in subverting power dynamics within a society that decidedly seeks to limit her freedom and in detaching herself from the conventionality that embraces Victorian society. In his article about the value of voice in the works of E.M. Forster, Jan Gordon prioritises the relevance of the formulation of an authentic and individual voice, which allows Lucy to deny the constraints of a civilisation that prescribes the procedure of conversation:

Her native Windy Corner is an arena where mechanized, easily-imitated patterns of social discourse strip voice of its individuating characteristics [...]. Speech exists there merely to be kept going as a game-voice conceived of as a competitive instrument rather than as a sound to be listened to. (319)

The critic astutely links Lucy’s growth to the need to become conscious about the impediment that constitutes preconceived notions of speech within her particular societal sphere. Rather than affording the opportunity to express herself, speech is limited to imitate respectable patterns, rules that, at the beginning of her journey, Lucy is more than glad to engage with. Speech, then, only pretends to afford the possibility of expression. After an early conversation with George Emerson, she displays the comfort that stems from conventional speech: “Born of silence and of unknown emotion, it passed when Mr. Emerson returned, and she could re-enter the world of rapid talk, which was alone familiar to her” (27). Significantly, here again a spatial metaphor is employed to suggest Lucy’s perception of trivial speech as a space which she is apt to navigate. The familiarity and convenience of precluding the risk to violate societal laws of respectability by exposing self-examination befits Lucy’s initial aspiration to perform her role as a member of society. Moreover, the allusion to acceleration further emphasises the

superficiality that dominates speech within her social sphere, as themes and issues are touched on and hastily replaced rather than scrutinised and understood.

However, the heroine soon finds acquiescence to be conflicting with her authentic self that is awakened in Italy and cultivated through the Emersons, and which is characterised by a sense of potential individuality and assertiveness in the pursuit of emotional honesty. In essence, her devotion to truth becomes increasingly recognisable in her altering approach to her voice. Gordon has similarly argued that “[s]ilent Lucy gradually develops a voice of her own” (320). While the scholar predominantly attends to the audible change in her voice, such as her unfamiliar exclamations (Gordon 319), the primary focus of this thesis prevails on Lucy’s reticence, that, as will be further discussed in the following, is the result of a conscious developing choice to renounce the restraining order of patriarchal speech patterns. Building on the aforementioned argument postulated by Foucault, which states that silence and speech are not binary opposites, but rather exist on a spectrum, this thesis maintains that Lucy’s instances of silence become a vital component in her voice rather than the lack thereof. In fact, it is in silence, rather than speech that Lucy finds authentic existence. If speech gives order and coherence to her existence, lulling her into a peaceful yet restraining world of superficiality, it is the negation thereof which creates meaning through the renunciation of the mediating and necessarily affecting aspect of language itself.

Following a garden-party destined to present Lucy and Cecil as a couple, Lucy’s silent ignorance illustrates the ambiguous power dynamics which follows Lucy’s outburst in the carriage that carries them to Windy Corner:

‘Do you feel that, Mrs. Honeychurch?’ Mrs. Honeychurch started and smiled. She had not been attending. Cecil, who was rather crushed on the front seat of the victoria, felt irritable, and determined not to say anything interesting again. Lucy had not attended either. Her brow was wrinkled, and she still looked furiously cross – the result, he concluded, of too much moral gymnastics. It was sad to see her thus blind to the beauties of an August wood. (106)

Expectedly, Cecil awaits to have his aforementioned views on the difference between town- and country people regarding their connection to nature confirmed by his female companions. Upon realising that neither has listened, his defensive response underlines his belief in the respect he presumes to merit. At the same time, it reveals an immature inclination to withhold his opinion, that he evidently considers valuable, as the result of perceived disrespect. Moreover, he immediately attributes Lucy’s inadvertence to mental overload. Since Cecil has not known Lucy intimately for a long time – and, arguably, never does – this assumption seems to infer his persuasion that women do not have the same mental capacity as men, reaffirming

his conviction of male superiority. The irony displayed in the carriage passage cannot be overstated. It is not a coincidence that Lucy is silent after a discussion of nature, a space that is so transparently influential in her life, and which, as discussed in Chapter 2, for all intents and purposes, she seeks to distance from Cecil. The latter's inability to discern his own blindness towards Lucy's close connection to nature, all the while suggesting his fiancée's lack of sight, enhances the situation's ludicrousness.

The fluid shifts between narrative perspectives throughout Forster's novel raise uncertainty regarding the source of certain passages. It thus remains questionable whether it is the narrator reporting Lucy's inattention or Cecil's assumption guiding the reader. As it is his perspective that is formulated in the latter part of this passage, I presume it is his voice that is presented throughout the aftermath of his lecture on nature. Rather than seeking to produce a genuine delivery of their journey, this thesis thus argues that Forster consciously imitates the lack of space that is afforded to women, in order to emphasise the prevalence of the male opinion and the lack of attention granted to the female assessment of experience. In this light, Lucy's silence becomes all the more significant. The absence of her perspective in this passage exemplifies patriarchy as the grand narrative, a term developed by Jean-François Lyotard in 1979 to describe the development of dominant narratives to legitimate a society's political, cultural, and social practices, which. In the case of Edwardian customs, it justifies female oppression by ignoring or suppressing the female voice. However, the effect of her chosen silence, regardless of whether it is the result of ignoring her fiancé's ruminations, defies the traditional notion of female passivity. Cecil's anger and frustration demonstrate the potential power of silence as a tool to subvert gender dynamics and refute the traditional understanding of women's limited influence on men. The efficacy of Lucy's silence is even further intensified through the effect it has on the spatial dynamics. Forster discloses the seating situation within the carriage, in which Cecil has assumed the front, and appears purposely to highlight Cecil's position of control, while the women are seated in the back, being guided by a man as it were. However, the women's silence after Cecil's impressions, which seek – and fail – to guide the conversation, diminishes his role as a guiding figure and considerably limits his influence on the women. In that way, Lucy – as well as her mother, who, one must assume does not have the intention to do so – react to the spatial circumstances which limit their freedom and thereby reproduce the prevalent gender dynamics, by creating a metaphorical space for themselves that is inaccessible for Cecil.

Although, as previously mentioned, in *Mrs. Dalloway* Clarissa does not sense disdain for Richard in the way that Lucy feels for Cecil in Forster's novel, there are nonetheless

similarities in the ways in which silence manifests the distance between Forster's lovers and limits their connection. Indeed, like Lucy, Clarissa seeks alienation and uses silence as a tool to provide space for herself in the presence of male characters. However much Clarissa appreciates her husband, the distance created by Richard's inability to communicate his feelings and Clarissa's tolerance thereof lead to an understanding of their relationship as being necessarily limited, which the heroine is highly aware of:

And there is a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf; and that one must respect, thought Clarissa, watching him open the door; for one would not part with it oneself, or take it, against his will, from one's husband, without losing one's independence, one's self-respect – something, after all, priceless. (283)

Clarissa frames silence between husband and wife as the non-verbal expression of a moral quality, emphasising independence as a core prerequisite to a rewarding life. Her appreciation of the gulf within her marriage thereby seemingly concurs with her decision to marry Richard as a means to assume a financially and socially favourable position. More than anything, she seeks freedom, which is afforded through her marriage to a man who resorts to gift her flowers in her drawing-room before withdrawing without articulating his appreciation for her in spite of his intentions ("For he would say it in so many words, when he came into the room" (118)). Conforming to his role as a Victorian man who abides by dignity, emotional distance, and rigidity more than anything else, he enforces silence within their marriage. Patricia Oudek Laurence remarks that "this [...] kind of silence, which Woolf refers to as a 'gulf,' is a separation between husband and wife that Clarissa Dalloway believes is necessary in marriage" (49). Although I agree with this statement to an extent, I would add that it is the specific marriage to a traditional Victorian man that Clarissa believes necessitates such a "separation," rather than marriage as such. The silence that is embodied within her marriage, and which she herself has enforced through marrying Richard, allows her to occupy a private space in which her reveries find place to develop.

Akin to the spatial significance of the carriage in which Lucy chooses to remain silent after Cecil's fabricated exposé about nature, the drawing-room which first accommodates Peter and Richard next is symbolic. The same room, that is considered her private space and that is nonetheless intruded twice without her authorisation and thus primarily functions as a representation of the limitation of freedom, entertains dialogues first between lovers and second between spouses. The juxtaposition of Clarissa's mental return to the emotionally engaging conversation with Peter and Richard's attempt to muster the courage to convey his love through the account of his daily events underscores a significant achievement for Clarissa. The fact that

Clarissa complies with Richard's emotional unavailability and the ensuing silence thus emerges as the indication of the defiance of patriarchal interference in her private space: Analogous to her superior ability to distance herself from past hurt, the silence is not only a by-product of marriage, but a specific acquisition that allows her to dwell in the past as she pleases. In this way, the gulf between husband and wife, as introduced by Laurence, is a gateway to mental freedom rather than a necessity. Her admission of silence, then, not only symbolises her appreciation of her husband's identity but her own eagerness to preserve freedom, in spite of the physical infringement of her own room. Richard displays his limited awareness about his wife by wrongly assuming that Clarissa's considerate attitude exclusively stems from her understanding about the way in which his rigidity restrains his ability to reveal himself:

He was holding out flowers – roses, red and white roses. (But he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words.) But how lovely, she said, taking his flowers. She understood; she understood without his speaking; his Clarissa. (120)

Although her gratitude, as referred to in Chapter 1, is genuine, her mental digressions throughout her husband's presence in the drawing-room suggest that her kindness does not solely result from her empathy and esteem for Richard. Instead, they reveal a certain egoistic pattern with the purpose of ruminating other romantic possibilities without compromising the circumstances she has formed for herself. She does not expect Richard to comment on the roses brought to her, but promptly acts upon the mechanical operation of his holding them out to her, refuting the implied romantic message in the process. In that way, she prevents the subversion of the silence that she requires as Richard feels reassured in his non-communicative ways. Much like with Peter, Clarissa is able to lead the conversation with her husband in the aftermath of the silence between the spouses, asking questions that lead Richard to mention Peter, which as a result, allow Clarissa to return privately to her earlier encounter with the latter: "Peter Walsh was back. [...] There she was, mending her dress..." (120). Silence then, is a tool Clarissa uses to protect her space, and shape it to her liking. While Richard is declaring his dislike for Hugh Whitbread, a friend of Clarissa's, the latter once again silently contemplates her unrealised history with Peter in the presence of the very man who prevented it: "'And it came over me 'I might have married you', ' she said, thinking of Peter sitting there in his little bow-tie; with that knife, opening it, shutting it'" (120). Curiously, the punctuation suggests that Clarissa is voicing these thoughts in the presence of Richard, who does not seem to hear or sense the need to address them in spite of their erratic nature. Indeed, she appears to drift unintentionally from her interior space toward the real world, illustrating the idea that her memory continuously blends with the present and continues to shape and influence her life. In

that sense, her preference for silence reinforces the sense of substituting the spatial distance that is not afforded to her with silent reflection, and her slip unconsciously supports her understanding of past and present, as well as private and public as reciprocally influential.

A further interesting aspect that incorporates both men is the fact that Clarissa draws intriguing connections to speech and silence with them respectively. Clarissa considers herself to be prone to superficial chatter, a feature she recognises in Peter as well, while Richard embodies efficiency and silence: “It was like him to take what doctors said literally; part of his adorable, divine simplicity, which no one had to the same extent; which made him go and do the thing while she and Peter frittered their time away bickering” (121). Clarissa’s affectionate portrayal of her husband once again strengthens her altruistic sentiment toward him, yet at the same time alienates Richard from herself and Peter. Alluding to the former’s purity and homogeneity as an almost transcendent feature, as though unattainable by the vast majority of humanity, Clarissa once again seeks to alienate him, in an attempt to carve out space for herself. Moreover, she physically locates Richard away from her, viewing him at a certain distance from where he operates in his most natural state to “do the thing” (121), and thus even insinuates that her presence hinders his own liberty. She thereby legitimises her attitude towards her efforts to create distance, a factor that is supported by the diminution of the manner in which herself and Peter essentially waste their time “bickering.” It is striking that Clarissa should feel the need to justify the manner in which she conducts herself within her marriage in light of the tangible constraints that have influenced her entire life, and that are epitomised by the manner in which the two men enter her room. Yet, it is perhaps the very feeling of having to defend herself which most ostensibly illustrates the depth and imprint of patriarchal values that continue to influence her thoughts in spite of her awareness of the injustice with which her life is embossed.

After illustrating the extent to which Lucy and Clarissa evade the dichotomy regarding discourse and silence, dismantling the prevalent understanding of the power and necessity of discourse in establishing presence, by reasserting themselves in space through silence, especially in the context of their relationships with Richard and Cecil, the following section will delve into the heroines’ interiority. Their inner lives emerge as productive points of interest that enable psychological depth and the exposure of authentic sentiment through silent reflection.

Inwards Gaze and Interiority

The heroines' rebellion against the conventionality of their times as analysed in the previous section is closely tied to their psychological revision of their own gazes. Remarkably, both authors subvert the predominant custom to present female characters as more than merely objects of the male gaze. Ultimately, Lucy and Clarissa conclude that outer circumstances may not hold the answers they are looking for in terms of self-perception and understanding. Silence allows them to turn inward and acquire the capacity to remove themselves from the immediate setting, to obtain a larger perspective that is not mediated and guided by their present, transitory emotional state. This elevated perspective becomes visible in *A Room With A View* during Lucy's and George's final conversation. At the end of Forster's novel, it seems that to Lucy, the view outside no longer provides the answers that she is looking for, emphasising the psychological turn inwards. The replicated silence that interrupts the spouses' dialogue regarding the consequences of their leaving, underscores the correlation between the distance to societal norms and the inhibition of verbal expression:

He carried her to the window, so that she, too, saw all the view. They sank upon their knees, invisible from the road, they hoped, and began to whisper one another's names. Ah! it was worth while; it was the great joy that they had expected, and countless little joys of which they had never dreamt. They were silent. (222)

The connection between their indubitable happiness and their estrangement from Lucy's world from which it stems, is illustrated through their disappearance from the outside gaze that is represented by a cabman who repeatedly shouts in their direction to arrange a ride on the following day. Though George's resolution to carry Lucy to the window might suggest passivity on the latter's side, her ensuing growing disinterest in the outside world demonstrates her realisation of the fact that authentic experience emerges from within. No longer does public society arouse her excitement, nor can it do justice to her expectations regarding genuine experience and connection. Instead, it is in private silence, in absence of external factors that their true fulfilment becomes visible. The irony that ultimately surfaces and is embodied through the cabman reveals itself in the way that the view *from* the outside rather than that *of* the outside is emphasised: Lucy's entire journey had been pervaded by her desire to obtain a view, first introduced by her wish for a room with a view during her first stay at the pension Bertolini. Yet, upon her return, the view no longer holds the promise of authentic experience and is replaced by introspection. In that sense, Lucy's silence becomes both the impetus and a symptom of her psychological growth, as it is through silence that she creates a space for herself, and within that space that silence allows for self-perception. Returning to Schwarz's

argument stating the characters' discovery of a place outside community, as cited in this chapter's first part, one might add that Lucy's specific journey conducts her through the bounds of society and culminates in its transcendence that is projected through silence.

The novel's final chapter exposes Lucy's psychological growth as it culminates in a revision of her cousin. Even though it is George who advocates for Miss Bartlett's decency, Lucy, for whom the former's actions have had much more dire repercussions, chooses to believe in the possibility of her cousin's potential: "[...] But I do believe that, far down in her heart, far below all speech and behaviour, she is glad.' 'It is impossible,' murmured Lucy, and then, remembering the experiences of her own heart, she said: 'No – it is just possible'" (224). Rather than holding on to her perspective about Miss Bartlett, which in view of her cousin's betrayal is understandable, the belief in heterogeneity within personality prevails. Strikingly, it is through the view inward, the recollection of her own mental development, that her view outwards acquires a broadened proportion. Similarly, it is worth noticing that the devotion to possibility and change is the last verbal utterance within the novel. Forster chooses to end the narrative in the spouses' silence, connected in listening to the sounds that fill the space around them:

Youth enwrapped them; the song of Phaeton announced passion requited, love attained. But they were conscious of a love more mysterious than this. The song died away; they heard the river, bearing down the snows of winter into the Mediterranean. (224-25)

The dissolution of the metaphor of Phaeton and Persephone, classical mythological characters after which the Italian carriage driver and his lover are named, bears with it a symbolic value. Used throughout the novel to, as Philip Wagner rightly identifies, "emphasize Lucy Honeychurch's and Georg Emerson's passionate awakenings" (275), the awareness of "a love more mysterious" appears to render the song, and the metaphor itself unnecessary. Significantly, their awareness does not suggest a belief in complete understanding or awareness. Rather it is the acceptance and embrace of authenticity which translates through the dying away of the song. Moreover, Phaethon's song is replaced by the sound of nature, the river expelling the remains of winter, so as to attest to the genuine righteousness of Lucy and George's dedication to natural passion.

As previously mentioned, the symbolic significance of the gaze, of the metaphorical use of the view throughout the novel, is evident. The reciprocal gaze between Lucy and the outside world is worth a further consideration, particularly in the context of self-revelation. As Nicholas Royle rightly asserts in his study on Forster's mastery of the presentation and complication of meaning and revelations: "this visual dimension cannot be (so to speak)

overlooked [...] it is a great novel of the pleasures of the look and gaze, of what it is to ‘have a view’” (35). As suggested in Chapter 2, in the context of the gradual discovery of her performative roles, the metaphor of light and darkness that underlines the revelatory aspects of her psychological development is omnipresent within the novel. In regard to the importance of silence within “this process of revelation” (Royle 35), Lucy’s progressive appreciation of concealment rather than of speech marks a significant stage. The ambiguity that emerges from her irresolute state of mind is most distinctly revealed to the reader in an instance of silence following Mrs. Honeychurch’s questioning as to why Lucy will not announce the dissolution of her engagement: “Lucy was silent. She was drifting away from her mother. [...] She disliked confidences, for they might lead to self-knowledge and to that king of terrors – Light. Ever since that last evening at Florence she had deemed it unwise to reveal her soul” (206). If the beginning of the novel displays Lucy as conversational to the point of preventing interiority, it now seems inevitable – in spite of her aversion towards it. Again, it is within silence that her self-perception is exposed to readers, even though she herself does not yet acknowledge the fact. Yet, the very act of becoming aware and formulating her disdain for an introspective gaze confirms its impact, as it negates ignorance and thus nullifies her effort to maintain it. In association with Lucy noticing the alienation from her mother, which is emblematic of the general estrangement from her home that Lucy senses after her journey to Florence, it becomes evident that the heroine’s perspective has undergone a transformation: “Lucy had hoped to return to Windy Corner when she escaped from Cecil, but she discovered that her home existed no longer” (206). Recognising that it is not space that has changed but herself, the importance of the alteration of her gaze is illustrated. Forster thus exposes the magnitude of silence in promoting the gaze inwards.

Finally, it is worth noticing that in the above-mentioned passage, Lucy does not appear to make a difference between revealing herself to her mother, and to herself. It is only in the very end that she finally distances herself from the idea of integral belonging, when she assumes that “the people who really love us are sure to come back to us in the long run” (222). Regarding this utterance, which ought not, perhaps, be over-interpreted, as it does seem to be predominantly fuelled by Lucy’s idealism and optimism, it is nonetheless remarkable in terms of its function in revealing the heroine’s broadened perspective. In fact, in conjunction with her developed interest in her interiority rather than the exterior circumstances, Lucy appears to be able to remove herself from the immediate space that surrounds her, rather than letting it affect her, as would certainly have been the case at the beginning of the novel. Finally, then, Lucy’s interiority follows a progressive structure that repeatedly shifts her gaze from the external to

the internal until the novel physically concludes in the purest form of authenticity, that is, nature, so as to display approval of her mental journey. Indeed, there are significant similarities between Lucy and Clarissa, specifically regarding the value of silence in her self-perception and the inflation of her gaze that ultimately encompasses a greater spectrum of experience, even though Woolf's heroine persists in her interest in her external circumstances in steadier fashion.

In the context of self-perception, it is useful to return to Laurence's theoretical framework about Woolf's novels, as it provides a vital structure to illuminate this subchapter's argumentation. Indeed, part of the following section lies in demonstrating that, in spite of the external circumstances, Clarissa positions herself within space, fortifying her presence through the ability of self-reflection in an increasingly unbiased manner. Laurence asserts that:

[t]alk, which is often associated with men in Woolf's novels, has traditionally been valued as 'presence mastered' (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 159); women's silence, on the other hand, is marked as 'absence.' Woolf, however, infuses this narrative space with a new psychic life, a rhetoric of silence, and the women in her novels are often present in this narrative space we are learning to read [...]. (Laurence 11-12)

Laurence's astute understanding of the occupation of space in Woolf's novels, which becomes possible through the redefinition of the relation between speech and silence, is crucial for this chapter's reasoning. The refutation of silence as a signifier of absence, or the non-occupation of a space illuminates the plurality of means to shape space in an attempt to subvert power dynamics. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, one of the ways in which Woolf displays her grasp of the diverging meanings of silence is through fluctuating perspectives.

The fact that Woolf chooses to narrate the final scene of the novel from Peter's perspective, rather than allotting the space to the heroine appears to refute any arguments made about Clarissa's success in upholding a space for herself. It does, indeed, appear tragic that the story of the heroine who has created a home that blurs the lines between private and public, and chose a husband rooted in the desire to prevent being consumed by love and society, would culminate in the reiteration of the male gaze, so as to predict its eternal continuation. However, rather than emphasising the idea that Clarissa is once again deprived of her voice, this thesis suggests that Woolf deliberately shifts the perspective to Peter in order to articulate a state of being which transcends the inefficiency of speech and that characterises Clarissa. In spite of the protagonist's previously mentioned perception of herself as talkative to the extent of wasting time, which mirrors society's persistent pressure to adhere to the laws of respectability and performance, Woolf's final image of her heroine is embedded in silence.

Indeed, the last scene in which Clarissa's interiority is elucidated and literally integrated into the narrative parades the heroine in isolation, apart from her party, and, more importantly, in silent contemplation as a result of the reception of Septimus's suicide. The impetus of Clarissa's separation from her party is crucial. It is suicide as an act of insubordination rather than the loss of human life itself which affects her: "Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone" (169). Through this thought process alone, perhaps the most significant insight about Clarissa may be deduced. Akin to Lucy, who ultimately becomes conscious about the value of removing herself from the immediate situation so as to obtain a more nuanced perception and understanding of herself, Clarissa recognises that death is the ultimate act of creating distance to the constraints that societal life imposes. More crucially, however, death, it seems, is also the physical exhibition about the frustration about the eternal unfeasibility of knowing oneself, of "reaching the centre." If her viewpoint about suicide appears questionable in that it might invoke her belief in the futility of life itself, its very gravity highlights her understanding of existence, which, in the end, culminates in a meditation and appreciation of the future rather than its negation. Existence, then, is not futile to Clarissa. Rather, it is the awareness of her own limitations in space and ability to shift her perspective, similarly to Lucy, which allows her to achieve authenticity.

In order to emphasise the essential confidence in life itself, the value of the future is personified and represented by the woman across the street. In her essay arguing in favour of *Mrs. Dalloway* as the exemplification of Woolf's disapproval of narrative continuity, Elizabeth Abel justly appeals to Clarissa's interiority as she observes the "old lady" (170), who is getting ready to go to bed across the street:

Release, anticipation, pleasure in change, regardless of its consequences – these are Clarissa's dominant emotions. [...] The gulf between Clarissa and the unknown lady discloses the female intimacy forfeited to growth, yet Clarissa's willingness to contemplate an emblem of age instead of savoring a memory of youth suggests a positive commitment to development – not to any particular course, but to the process of change itself. (120)

In Clarissa's attention devoted to an older woman rather than pursuing her memory of younger self, evoked by a contemplation of the sky, Abel recognises the culmination of the heroine's psychological development to embrace experience in all its forms. In opposition to Peter and Sally's perceived desire to reattach themselves to the past, Clarissa identifies in the woman across from her how time passes, perhaps even a glimpse of her future self, which she is able

to acknowledge without judgment. While Abel's analysis rightly emphasises Clarissa's acceptance of life in that moment of silence apart from her party to underline her growth, the critic also asserts that "[t]he silences that punctuate *Mrs. Dalloway* reflect the interruptions and enigmas of female experience and ally the novel with a recent trend in feminist aesthetics" (124). Indeed, Abel's assessment of Clarissa's silence embeds it within a conceptual framework within which "female experience" cannot be expressed through speech and must resort to silence as a result of bending to exterior factors, which interfere with a stable experience and prevent thorough self-perception. This thesis, however, contends that the heroine's silence throughout the novel, and in the aforementioned scene in particular, is emblematic in portraying the adept control of her reaction to the circumstances; being silent not because she lacks the language to express her self-understanding, but, on the contrary, to express herself through silence.

It is in an instance of silent reflection that Clarissa positions herself in the present, displaying her appreciation of time and space in a way that is unattainable by either Peter or Sally. In this light, Laurence's aforementioned investigation into the "psychic life of women often omitted from novels" (40), provides a more productive reading of Clarissa's interiority that is characterised by her presence rather than her absence: "Women are positioned in but not confined to the social realm where Showalter and Abel note their social 'absence' and where Woolf, taking up the challenge of writing, imaginatively embodies their 'presence'" (40). Clarissa's silence, then, is not the disclosure of a disconnection with the world, but the expression of the exact opposite. For that reason, too, the shift in the narrative towards Peter's perspective illustrates a renewed sense of connection that transcends conventional speech. Not needing to express herself any longer, it seems as though Clarissa consciously concedes the last words to another character, who yet is unaware of the potential power of silence. As though to mirror Clarissa's shifting gaze from the past to the future, and ultimately, the present, the latter thus emerging as the most important, the narrative perspective shifts from Clarissa's viewpoint to that of Peter, which similarly moves from the past at Bourton to the future that represents Clarissa's daughter, and culminates in Clarissa, in the present: "For there she was" (176). Removing herself from the immediate action and from the restraint of speech, Clarissa is thus united with Forster's Lucy in their ability to both access a metaphorical interior space in which their self-awareness coordinates with their freedom, embedded in silence, and actively situate themselves in physical space. The idea of transcendent connection as a result of the realisation that different meanings may be attached to their decision to voice themselves or not, will be developed in the following concluding section.

Potential, Possibility, and Connection

After the study of the heroines' desertion from conventionality and the power dynamics that dominate their respective circumstances, as well as the emphasis of the inwards gaze, this final subchapter delves into the sphere of the possibility of connection beyond speech. Indeed, it is the pursuit of genuine connection that functions as the catalyst of the heroines' psychological journeys, and which finally justifies their attempts to move beyond the shackles of society. Silence, then, is a bridge that allows Lucy and Clarissa alike to reconcile their inner most desires and experience with the outer world, not by consenting to its restrictions, but by embracing heterogeneity as a principle that inhabits existence in all of its forms. In Forster's novel, the protagonist's approach to this connectivity is particularly visible in the context of her relationship with George Emerson, while Clarissa's persistent desire to bring people together through her parties most finally illustrates her eagerness to connect.

In contrast to the way in which silence presents itself within the relationship between Cecil and Lucy, the instances of silence between the heroine and George reveal a different purpose and are significant particularly in their contrasting function as signs of the attainment of the heroine's ambitions. To illustrate the extent to which Lucy has been successful in her endeavour to alienate herself from the limiting realm of superficial speech and achieve connection, the final chapter presents itself as a suitable example. Forster revisits the concordance between silence, vision and identity that is at the forefront of Lucy's ruminations and mental growth throughout the novel:

[George] knelt on the tiled floor, and laid his face in her lap. // "George, you baby, get up." // "Why shouldn't I be a baby?" murmured George. // Unable to answer this question, she put down his sock, which she was trying to mend, and gazed out through the window. It was evening and again the spring. (220)

Lucy's silence in response to George's question raises itself questions about its meaning within the context of their conversation and, beyond that, about the purpose and potential futility of Lucy's decision to alienate herself from the comfort that presents Summer Street. There certainly is an argument to be made about her inability to respond as a reflection of a greater uncertainty that invades their own private space, which the spouses have created for themselves, especially in regard to Lucy's aforementioned prevailing "bitterness" (222). However, an interpretation that is perhaps more fruitful, and which is the postulation that this thesis proposes, allows for a reading of this instance as testimony to the development of the meanings of silence that occurs throughout the novel. Following Lucy's trajectory from familiar yet dull speech to using silence as a means to retain her agency in a space

predominantly occupied by men, the persistence of stillness underlines her mental growth, indicated by her understanding of the multiplicity of meaning that can be conferred to silence. In other words, her appreciation of silence begins at the dominant Victorian understanding of it as the binary opposition of speech, and of presence, and continuously extends to its diverging meanings such as dissent, objection and finally, an expression of tolerable ignorance. For George's behaviour, which is unlike the societal norms and expectations regarding masculinity, reveals to Lucy their accession to a space beyond patriarchal and societal rules and patterns. Within this space, Lucy's view is not impeded. Instead, she is free to see in a manner that allows her to create meaning for herself. The act of peering out the window in contemplation as to why George ought to conduct himself according to certain customs emphasises the revelatory character of Lucy's silence – an illustration of her renunciation of the traditional belief system. In that sense, silence becomes a destination, a space represented by the physical room that had once been characterised by societal limitation.

In the context of meaning-making and shifting perspectives, the connection between the spouses might be regarded from a yet undisclosed point of view. Forster further weaves Lucy's triumph in creating meaning for herself within the realm of preconceived notions of space, vision, and voice by introducing the possibility of substitution, a concept introduced by Nicholas Royle. The denial of experience and identity as definite and restrained is reproduced in the similarities that Lucy and George share, and which are most prominently mirrored by George's insistence on the fact that their new room in the pension is *his* old room, while Lucy remains confident that it is the one in which she had initially resided. Royle argues that "[s]ubstitutability — perhaps the essential subject of the novel - means that Lucy in some sense ('naturally', 'of course') takes George's place in any case, and regardless of whether she (or George) knows it or not. [...] Lucy will, in some sense, always have substituted for George, and vice versa" (42). Royle's analysis is predominantly concerned with Forster's narrator, who, according to the critic is "telepathic," and "identifies with characters, in a slippery way, but who is continually slipping in and out of their identities" (41). The scope of this thesis does not allow for an extensive expedition into the topic of heteronormativity and its resistance as displayed in Forster's novel. Nonetheless, Royle's argumentation about gender fluidity that appears to be suggested through both the narrator's partial insight into the characters' interiority as well as the similarities insinuated between Lucy and George offers an intriguing perspective into the understanding of identity, particularly in the context of Lucy's general rejection of societally constructed limitations.

While it would be inaccurate to argue that Lucy rejects gender roles entirely, as, even at the end of the novel, she appears to adopt a motherly role, displayed through the act of mending a sock for George as a symbol of her intention to take care of him, the emphasis of blending identities at the end of the novel is palpable. Indeed, one might argue that specifically within this last chapter, Lucy slips in and out of distinct roles, one after the other: from lover, to mother, to daughter, to protector to protected. In fact, this thesis proposes a reading of the final portrayal of Lucy as having reached a stage at which everything but the multiplicity of possibility can be questioned. Royle rightly asserts that “[t]he power of changing places, crossing over, substitution, slipping one thing in for another, lies at the heart of Forster’s novel” (43-44). From this perspective, a re-interpretation about the influence of language on meaning and identity is the result of a legitimate thought process. Indeed, as Lucy accommodates for the different versions of herself, all at the same time, she creates a space for herself in which authentic connection not only becomes possible but is the only possible outcome. Heterogeneity takes the place of homogeneity in the same way that she takes the place of George, in the same way that George takes the place of a “baby.” Finally, silence takes the place of speech, and it is within that silence that the different roles that she assumes and replaces become a heterogeneous unity. Beyond speech, like “the river, bearing down the snows of winter into the Mediterranean” (225), identity flows in its most authentic form and makes possible the connection of all the diverging identities within the heroine, as well as the connection between husband and wife. The idea of embracing difference in an attempt to create something new, to create meaning, also resonates in Woolf’s novel, particularly in the context of people of different classes.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa’s embrace of heterogeneity is most evidently portrayed in the act of the organisation of her parties. Sensing the need to connect and merge different groups of people, she chooses to disregard the predominant social consciousness that maintains ideals of homogeneity, similarly to the idea of single identities as singular, constant entities: “if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom?” (123). Clarissa’s downplay of her ability to connect people does not obscure that she, too, has the one quality that she genuinely appreciates in her husband, to “do the thing” (121). Even though, as mentioned in the first chapter, Clarissa is mostly unaware of the effect of bringing people together, her parties function as a catalyst for potential heterogeneous and simultaneous co-existence in a space that, in its acceptance and encouragement of unpredictability, diverges from the norm to create new communions through an unmediated combination of people of different backgrounds.

Most importantly, the way in which Clarissa oversees and manoeuvres her party is not reliant on her application of language to seek to accommodate for the diverse kinds of people. Instead, this thesis posits, it is the very alienation of speech, that grants the possibility of connection, as it transcends the rigidity and structure of language which limits the manner in which relationships are established at the beginning of the 20th century, as illustrated by the “homogeneous” world at Bourton that Bishop emphasises and opposes to her present party:

For Clarissa’s party, however, such homogeneity no longer exists [...] rather than generating anxiety over whether or not the old codes will work, the novel records a quite marvellous lessening of tension and a slow-growing communion among the guests. [...] It is the very triviality of parlour language that constitutes its virtue, for it remains clear to both parties that the denotative meaning is irrelevant, and that speech is being used as gesture. (406)

The opposition that Bishop remarks between Clarissa’s childhood and her parties inspires a recognition of the manner in which Clarissa uses her agency to create a non-homogenous space. The critic ingeniously hints at the fact that it is the very awareness about the limitation of language which enables connection. The variety that Clarissa has evidently established within her parties demonstrate the possibility of a fruitful consolidation of differences. This awareness, which unites Clarissa and her guests, results in the heroine’s increased appreciation of silence. For the shortcomings of language do not imply to her that meaning itself does not exist, it merely means it is not mediated through speech. While Bishop argues that it is “Clarissa’s social language” which enables authentic self-expression (406), I contend that it is her reticence, the turn away from structures that enables freedom, because the allowance of difference is limited within a language that does not accommodate for all different people, in much the same way as the traditional predominance of the dichotomy between private and public spaces does not provide a territory of consolidation.

Woolf further establishes Clarissa’s understanding of speech as a limiting factor by spotlighting the conversation between Peter and Sally which ensues as Clarissa leaves the scene in requirement of solemnity after the delivery of the news of Septimus’s suicide. In spite of their long-lasting companionship, their chatter resembles a deconstruction of the respective other party more than a reunion of intimate friends. They both compare each other to their past versions, reminisce about the connection they each used to have to Clarissa, and, as though to prevent a moment of silence, question each other about guests at the hostess’s party. The evidence of their alienation is most perceptible as Sally takes leave and is named “Lady Rosseter” (176), rather than “Sally,” contradicting Peter’s earlier statement that: After all these years he really could not call her ‘Lady Rosseter’” (170). Against Clarissa’s sought-after

silence and creation of a connection with the woman across her window, Sally and Peter's conversation materialises as the corruption of the passage of time and space itself, as their denunciation of silence reveals their refusal to accommodate change.

Woolf highlights their loss of a connection in order to display the value that silence can obtain, and to demonstrate that the distance to Clarissa, which they both perceive, results from their inability to appreciate silence as a means to convey meaning. Bishop has correctly argued that "[s]ilence for Woolf was not menacing; though it was the zone of absence and death, it was also the realm of plenitude, meaning, and presence" (412). The ambiguity which that silence holds is not perceived by Clarissa's childhood companions, which is why, for them, silence is very much menacing, threatening their understanding of meaning-making through language. The opposition between Clarissa and Sally in particular becomes mournful in view of their deep connection that had defined their shared experience at Bourton. The association of their relationships to a physical place is relevant, as it anew highlights the close connection of Clarissa's memories to space. Indeed, their early relationship, which had peaked in "the most exquisite moment of her whole life" (58), when Sally had kissed her, foreshadows Clarissa's appreciation of reticence:

And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it – a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling [...]. (58-59)

The similarity between the metaphor of a "wrapped up" present that Clarissa employs can be read as a prophesy of her silent appreciation as a 52-year-old woman, as her understanding of that moment does not rely on a physical response, such as looking at it, but is inherently connected to her. The suggestive quality of her metaphor is further strengthened by the fact that this most precious moment is interrupted by talk: "It was like running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!" (58-59). Akin to Lucy's reinterpretation of the adherence to gender stereotypes, implied by her silence in reaction to George's question as to why one ought not to behave like a child, the feelings that Clarissa held and holds for Sally are non-conformist and can only be met in silence. Compellingly, this insight encourages a return to the protagonist's previously mentioned use of silence as a way to assert her authority and navigate a space she appreciates, which, in spite of its relevance throughout the novel, does not constitute the main focal point at the end of the novel.

The focus in the last scene is not the importance of retaining authority, but the value of connection. Annalee Edmondson notes in her essay on *Mrs. Dalloway* as essentially a novel

about the limitation of perspectives that Woolf “refuses herself authority over her character and deliberately refuses the reader a complete knowledge of her character’s interiority [...]” (20). Edmondson crucially draws attention to the fact that, to the reader, Clarissa’s character is never revealed, there is no essential truth to be grasped, just like the characters that surround her are limited to their own interpretations and assumptions about who she is. In the end, what seems like Clarissa’s own decision to cease being the object of attention rather than trying to further assert her authentic self becomes a metaphor for the interconnectedness that lies at the heart of what she stands for. Edmondson rightly asserts that “[i]n the end, we cannot say of her that she is this, or she is that. We can say only that she is, and that we continue to desire to know her, as Peter continues to be psychologically and physiologically affected by her very presence” (31). In other words, Clarissa displays her own comprehension of the fact that it is not in her power to shape language in order to position herself in space, but that it is the act of letting go of this illusion which liberates her from the constraints of understanding her existence. Not only can neither Peter nor the reader accurately define her, but neither can she. She is nothing and everything at once. Akin to her ideal of finding authenticity within the consolidation of private and public, and past and present, her understanding of presence is not limited to her own ability to voice authority, but, in silence, becomes the result of the mingling of different perspectives, none of which she would ever be able to shape to the idea she has of herself, which is why she chooses to let go of the idea of a self all-together, all that remains being her presence.

In conclusion of this chapter, it should be stressed that the aim has not been to propose an understanding of silence as inherently superior to voice. Rather, it sought to emphasise the validity of silence as a potentially subversive tool, that is used both consciously and unconsciously. It, moreover, aimed to show that the power dynamics which pervade both novels, and which are the source of many of the limitations that Lucy and Clarissa endure, can be efficiently challenged through the rejection of a language that agrees with the prevailing gender dynamics. That is not to say that silence is the language of women, or the only productive response to inequality. Rather, the purpose has been to elucidate the “many silences” (27) which Foucault accentuates. Akin to the dichotomous distinction between private and public spaces and the conception of identity as a fixed unity, as highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2, the understanding of speech and silence as unilaterally linked to presence and absence respectively reinforces patriarchal gender dynamics and restricts female assertion within space. It is also noteworthy that, akin to the argumentation in favour of multiplicity of identity, that is more prominently intertwined in the first two chapters, Lucy’s and Clarissa’s display of their

presence in space, their understanding of their roles and the process of creating meaning through silence consolidates within the overarching understanding of eternal possibility, fluidity, and diversity. The mingling of their own shifting perspectives, intertwined with other characters' necessarily limited perceptions of the heroines finally substantiates the concept of a revelatory continuum of development. Their silence, then, epitomises the idea that (self)-perception can never be comprehensive, nor is any one graspable in all of their complexity. For that reason, others' understanding of them emerges as inconsequential in the heroines' evident presence in space, just as speech does.

Conclusion

This literary studies thesis about E.M. Forster's *A Room With A View* (1908) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) sought to show that a nuanced analysis of spatial contexts reveals their influence of, and interplay with power dynamics that may otherwise go unnoticed. By emphasising the relevance of space in the context of latent power structures, this thesis has sought to underline the elusiveness of specific aspects of hierarchical systems. At the same time, it has addressed the importance of recognising the prevalence of operative spaces in shaping human beings through an in-depth analysis of Lucy Honeychurch and Clarissa Dalloway, two major female protagonists of the British modernist canon. Specifically, I offered an examination of their self-consciousness and awareness about the implications of their spatial circumstances to demonstrate the connection between spatial awareness and identity development. This thesis viewed Forster's and Woolf's characters from different angles, supported by theories related to space and power of esteemed thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Judith Butler, and Doreen Massey to substantiate the claims made about power structures, gender dynamics and the subversive potential of silence.

Through a re-examination of the binary understanding of the distribution of space in the first chapter, I found that, in spite of the fact that both novels are historically set in the aftermath of the Victorian era, notions such as the dichotomous opposition of private and public spheres remained prevalent. These actively sought to impede identity development in an attempt to maintain the prevailing power dynamics which placed women within the confines of the home. In contrast to the men in the two novels, who control both the public and private spaces and are free to navigate between the two, Lucy and Clarissa are expected to feel contented with the presumed safety afforded by the domestic sphere. This chapter also identified that, while both characters remain affected by this Victorian understanding of spatial distribution, they display an awareness about its implications, and detect the discordance between their shared pursuit of authentic experience and the acceptance of non-autonomous existence in certain spaces. Moreover, this chapter has shown that Lucy's approach to regain agency in her physical alienation from Windy Corner is more drastic than Clarissa's continuous negotiation with spatial control within the familiar circumstances of her home.

In Chapter 2, I addressed the roles that the protagonists are expected to perform within a spatial understanding of heteronormative relationships. It specifically considered their alienation from an important remnant of the Victorian era, namely the concept of a stable identity, which, akin to the binary understanding of public and private space, persisted

throughout the first half of the 20th century. The idea of identity as a fixed concept imposed psychological limitations on women in view of continuing their confinement at the periphery of society. In aiming particular attention at Lucy's and Clarissa's growing awareness about the multiplicity of identity within space, this chapter explored the ensuing inherent contradiction of conforming to roles as a productive access to authenticity that both characters become aware of. The spatial associations they create with the principal male characters disclose their agency in alienating themselves from the premediated societal demand to compromise their space to accommodate for their respective lovers. Ultimately, I argued that the rejection of the roles they are expected to perform through a re-interpretation of the value of their own space in relationships affirms their active pursuit in subverting the patriarchal status quo that is reflected and reinforced through the spaces they inhabit.

The last chapter turned to the impact of spatial control through the specific employment of silence as a discursive instrument. In an attempt to prevent the intrusion of their interiority as metaphorical space, the protagonists use silence to create distance between themselves and those male characters who are representative of the patriarchy. Within the overall understanding of restrictive societal conventions that this thesis highlights, this chapter showed that the rules for speech constituted a further limiting aspect of society, as they sought to prevent mindfulness beyond the hollowness of surface connection. The analysis culminated in an understanding of the protagonists' rejection of gender dynamics through a redefinition of the value of silence. This perspective allows for their achievement in the subversion of traditional gender roles through the adoption of silence as a means of asserting agency and resistance. Against the prevailing comprehension of silence as a sign of female passivity, this thesis advocated for the fact that their decision to engage in, or refrain from speech does not perturb their physical and existential spatial presence.

Based on the findings of this thesis, further potential research possibilities present themselves that promise exciting insights, especially in view of incorporating different theoretical strands and analytical perspectives. Potential avenues range from analysing the protagonists in unison with other minor characters in order to excavate their antithetical and avant-gardist nature through a spatiality studies lens, to the adoption of a trauma studies approach to investigate the potential influence of space on mental health within the two novels. A different approach to this topic could also have led to this project adding to the growing academic interest in non-normative desires in literature. Specifically, a more biographical reading of *A Room With A View* could have produced an understanding of Lucy's relationships as stand-ins for homosexual desire, and specifically the character of George as an object of

yearning, in light of, for instance, the playfulness and familiarity of the pond scene in which Mr. Beebe, Freddy and George take a bath together. Similarly, a potential avenue for further study of *Mrs. Dalloway* could explore the homoerotic relationship between Clarissa and Sally Seton in the context of spatial presence and acceptance, perhaps by an opposition of their initial connection at Bourton and the feasible alienation that is noticeable during Clarissa's party. A direct comparison between the nonconformist aspects in the two novels could further expand the ceaselessly growing body of critical analyses about Forster's and Woolf's novels. Finally, further study could build on the associations between space and time made that was addressed in Chapter 2, guided by Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope" or Edward Soja's concept of "Thirdspace".

The juxtaposition of the two novels has revealed the nuanced interplay between space and power, offering insights into the entanglement of several different mechanisms and authoritative instances, all of which seek ignorance and compliance in view of preserving the power dynamics. The novels naturally present inherent differences on both the structural level – one describing a single day, the other spanning over several months – as well as in terms of content, such as the protagonists' age difference and belonging to different social classes. Nonetheless, the ostensible reality of similarities regarding (self-)perception, performativity, relationships, and growth suggests a deeper resonance that transcends the spatial, temporal, and societal boundaries that exist between the two narratives. These unlikely similarities mirror the way the characters themselves transcend these limitations, and forever reiterate the value of recognising and conquering artificial restrictions.

It would, of course, be absurd to deduce any kind of universality from the experience of two fictional characters in two fictional narratives, especially in light of the authors' shared membership in the "Bloomsbury group". However, Lucy's and Clarissa's experiences, that are shared to the extent in that they are both heavily restricted by the societal contexts in which they are situated, hint at a certain continuous dynamism, which blurs the boundaries of fiction and reality. In their unceasing pursuit of authentic experience, they reflect values and inclinations that are, indeed, real. This insight leads back to Rita Felski's appreciation of the realness of literary characters, which, she contends, "are movable, teleporting into new media and milieus, times and places. They swarm among us, populating the world with their idiosyncrasies, accessories, trademarks, sidekicks, and sayings" (86). Lucy's and Clarissa's presence, then, is not limited to words on paper, nor to their specific historical, political, and social context. In many ways, their presence is eternal, continuous, and detached from spatial and temporal boundaries. Through their perception and subversive negotiation of space, which

dictates cultural and social values, their narratives become metaphors for the ever-growing need for continuous awareness of ever-changing circumstances. The deconstruction of space, then, finally surfaces as a further and fundamental step in the eternal human quest of envisaging and striving towards authentic self-hood.

Word count: 32825

Bibliography

- Abel, Elizabeth. "Narrative Structure(s) and Female Development: The Case of *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Rachel Bowlby. London: Routledge, 1992. 103-125.
- Anderson, Amanda, Toril Moi, and Rita Felski. *Character: Three Inquiries in Literary Studies*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2019.
- Ardis, Ann. "Hellenism and the lure of Italy." *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 62-76.
- Austin, Don. "The Problem of Continuity in Three Novels Of E. M. Forster." *Modern Fiction Studies* 7 (1961): 217-228.
- Bakhtin, M. M. "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- Banfield, Ann. *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*. Routledge: Boston, London, Melbourne, and Henley, 1982.
- Bell, Vereen. "Misreading 'Mrs. Dalloway'." *Sewanee Review* 114 (2006): 93-111.
- Bindemann, Steven. *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art*. Leiden, Boston: Brill-Rodopi, 2017.
- Bishop, Edward. "Writing, Speech, and Silence in *Mrs. Dalloway*." *English Studies in Canada* 12 (1986): 397-423.
- Blanchard, Margaret. "Socialization in *Mrs. Dalloway*." *College English* 34 (1972): 287-305.
- Bond, Candis. "Remapping Female Subjectivity in *Mrs. Dalloway*: Scenic Memory and Woolf's 'ByeStreet' Aesthetic." *Woolf Studies Annual* 23 (2017): 63-82.
- Bryden, Inga and Janet Floyd. *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.
- Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40 (1988): 519-531.
- Caraher, Brian Gregory. "The Correspondence of E.M. Forster and Forrest Reid: Content and Implications of a New Literary Archive." Queen's University Belfast Library (2022): 1-21.
- Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of Medusa." *Signs* 1 (1976): 875-893.
- Clair, Robin Patric. *Organizing Silence: A World of Possibilities*. Albany: State New York UP Press, 1998.
- Cosgrove, Denis. *Mappings*. London: Reaktion Books, 1999.

- Crang, Mike, and Nigel Thrift. Introduction. *Thinking Space*. By Crang and Thrift. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Crouse-Dick, Christine. "Reframing the Domestic Angel: Real Simple Magazine's Repackaging of the Victorian-Era 'Angel in the House' Narrative." *Communication Studies* 63 (2012): 441-456.
- Digby, Anne. "Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 78 (2005): 195-215.
- Dollar, Gerard. "Addiction and the 'Other Self.'" *Beyond the Pleasure Dome: Writing and Addiction from the Romantics*. Ed. Sue Vice, Matthew Campbell, and Tim Armstrong. Sheffield: Sheffield Academy, 1994. 268-74.
- Edmondson, Annalee. "Narrativizing Characters in Mrs. Dalloway." *Journal of Modern Literature* 36 (2012): 17-36.
- Elert, Kerstin. *Portraits of Women in Selected Novels by Virginia Woolf and EM Forster*. California: Umeå univ.-bibl., 1979.
- Elias, Amy. *Sublime Desire: History and Post-1960s Fiction*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 2001.
- Ellmann, Maude. *The Poetics of Impersonality*. Brighton: Harvester, 1987.
- Falcetta, Jennie-Rebecca. "Geometries of Space and Time: The Cubist London of 'Mrs. Dalloway.'" *Woolf Studies Annual* 13 (2007): 111-136.
- Forbes, Shannon. "Equating Performance with Identity: The Failure of Clarissa Dalloway's Victorian 'Self' in Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway.'" *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 38 (2005): 38-50.
- Forster, E.M. *A Room With A View*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2007.
- . *Aspects of the Novel*. Rosetta Books, 2010.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1975. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York, Vintage Books, 1995.
- . "Of Other Spaces." Transl. Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16 (1986): 22-27.
- . *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Gan, Wendy. *Women, Privacy and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century British Writing*. Springer, 2009.
- Garvey, Johanna. "Difference and Continuity: 'The Voices of Mrs. Dalloway.'" *College English* 53 (1991): 59-76.

- Glicksberg, Charles. "The Literature of Silence." *Centennial Review* 14 (1970): 116-176.
- Goldman, Jane "Forster and women." *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 120-137.
- Gordon, Jan. "The Third Cheer: 'Voice' in Forster." *Twentieth Century Literature* 31 (1985): 315-328.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Trans. and ed. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: ElecBook, 1999.
- Hamlett, Jane. "The British Domestic Interior and Social and Cultural History." *Cultural and Social History* 6 (2009): 97-107.
- Heine, Elizabeth. "The Significance of Structure in the Novels of E.M Forster and Virginia Woolf." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 16 (1973): 289-306.
- Hepworth, Mike. "Privacy, security and respectability: the ideal Victorian home." *Ideal Home? Social change and domestic life*. Ed. Tony Chapman and Jenny Hockey. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 17-29.
- Hetherington, Kevin. *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics*. London: SAGE, 1998.
- Lane, "Forsterian sexuality." *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 104-119.
- Laurence, Patricia Ondek. *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.
- Lindskog, Annika. *Silent Modernism: Soundscapes and the Unsayable in Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf*. Lund: Lund University, 2014.
- Malhotra, Sheena, and Aimee Carrillo Rowe. *Silence, Feminism, Power*. Northridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Mangrum, Benjamin. "'The Old, Old Battle of the Room': The Politics of Space in A Room With A View." *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 17 (2011): 80-92.
- Markley, A. "E. M. Forster's Reconfigured Gaze and the Creation of a Homoerotic Subjectivity." *Twentieth Century Literature* 47 (2001): 268-292.
- Martin, Richard. *The love that failed: ideal and reality in the writings of E. M. Forster*. Studies in English Literature 84. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974.
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1994.
- Parpart, Jane. "Choosing silence: Rethinking voice, agency and women's empowerment." *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*. Ed. Roisin Ryan-Flood, Rosalind Gill. London: Routledge, 2009. 15-29.

- Prorokova-Konrad, Tatiana. "'Facing the Sunshine': Nature and (Social) Environment in E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View*." *Language and Literary Studies of Warsaw* 10 (2020): 83-95.
- Reus, Teresa and Aranzazu Usandiza. *Inside Out: Women negotiating, subverting, appropriating public and private space*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" *Signs* 5 (1980): 631-660.
- Rose, Gillian. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993.
- Rosenbaum, S. P. *Victorian Bloomsbury: Volume 1: The Early Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.
- Rosner, Victoria. *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005.
- Royle, Nicholas. *E.M. Forster*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Rummer, Andrea. "People in the Crowd: British Modernism, the Metropolis and the Flâneur." *Literature in Society*. Ed. Regina Rudaitytė. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars 2012. 57-76.
- Ryan, Derek, and Stephen Ross. *The Handbook to the Bloomsbury Group*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.
- Scherer Herz, Judith. "A Room with a View." *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 138-150.
- Schleifer, Robert. *Modernism and Time: The Logic of Abundance in Literature, Science, and Culture, 1880–1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Schwarz, Daniel. "The Originality of E.M. Forster." *Modern Fiction Studies* 29 (1983): 623-641.
- Scott, Joan W., and Debra Keates. *Going Public: Feminism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Private Sphere*. Urbana and Champaign: UP Illinois 2004.
- Seeley, Tracy. "Virginia Woolf's Poetics of Space: 'The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection.'" *Woolf Studies Annual* 2 (1996): 89-116.
- Shiach, Morag. "Modernism, the City and the 'Domestic Interior.'" *Home Cultures* 2 (2005): 251-268.
- Soja, W. Edward. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 2010.
- Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces*. North Carolina: North Carolina UP, 1992.

- Squier, Susan Merrill. *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City*. Chapel Hill: UP North California, 1985.
- Stevenson, Christina. "'Here Was One Room, There Another': The Room, Authorship, and Feminine Desire in A Room of One's Own and Mrs. Dalloway." *Pacific Coast Philology* 49 (2014): 112-132.
- Sultan, Sabbar. "Silence and its discontents in literature." *Dirasat Human and Social Sciences* 34 (2007): 680-696.
- Tally, Robert. *Spatiality*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
- . *Topophrenia: Place, Narrative, and the Spatial Imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2019.
- Vurmay, Ayça. "Spatiality in E. M. Forster's A Room with a View." *IDEA: Studies in English*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2011): 179-189.
- Wagner, Philip C. Jr. "Phaethon, Persephone, and 'A Room with a View.'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 27 (1990): 275-284.
- Wang, Ban. "'I' on the Run: Crisis of Identity in Mrs. Dalloway." *Modern Fiction Studies* 38 (1992): 177-191.
- Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias. Introduction. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. By Warf and Arias. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Wolff, Janet. "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity." *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture*. Ed. Janet Wolff. Berkeley and Los Angeles: UP California, 1990. 34-50.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. In *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Stella McNichol. London: Macmillan, 1992.
- Wouters, Cas. "Etiquette Books and Emotion Management in the 20th Century: Part One: The Integration of Social Classes." *Journal of Social History* 29 (1995): 107-124.
- Wrede, Theda. Introduction. *Rocky Mountain Review* 69 (2015): 10-17.
- Wyatt-Brown, Anne. "A Buried Life: E.M Forster's Struggle with Creativity." *Journal of Modern Literature* 10 (1983): 109-124.
- Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain: Social, Cultural and Political Change*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Zwerdling, Alex. "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System." *PMLA* 92 (1977): 69-82.

Appendix

Abstract in German

Die 1980er Jahre in der westlichen Welt waren von einer geistigen Abwendung der zeitlichen Dimension der menschlichen Existenz und einer Neubewertung der Bedeutung des Raums für die Identitätsentwicklung geprägt. Diese Perspektive hat in jüngeren Jahren das Interesse an der Kultur der Moderne als Vorläufer des Raumbewusstseins geweckt. Diese Arbeit untersucht E.M. Forsters *A Room With A View* (1908) und Virginia Woolfs *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), modernistische Romane zwei der bekanntesten Autoren ihrer Zeit. Die Romane werden im Hinblick auf ihre Darstellung der komplexen Beziehungen zwischen Räumlichkeit, Machtgefüge und Identitätsentwicklung analysiert. Die Arbeit untersucht die Selbstwahrnehmung der weiblichen Protagonistinnen der Romane, Lucy Honeychurch und Clarissa Dalloway, hinsichtlich des Einflusses gesellschaftlicher Normen und kultureller Werte. Unter Bezugnahme theoretischer Konzepte wie Michel Foucaults „Disziplinargesellschaft“, Antonio Gramscis „kulturelle Hegemonie“, und Doreen Masseys Konzept der geschlechtsspezifischen Erfahrungen, untersucht und vergleicht diese Arbeit die Darstellung repressiver Raumdynamiken in beiden Romanen. Insbesondere wird das Hinterfragen der Figuren von verankerten viktorianischen Prinzipien, wie die Dichotomie zwischen öffentlichem und privatem Raum, die Identität als homogenes Konstrukt und das Schweigen als Zeichen weiblicher Passivität bewertet, sowie die Zielsetzung dadurch sozial konstruierte Barrieren, die in den Raum eingebettet sind, zu zergliedern. Es wird argumentiert, dass das räumliche Bewusstsein der Charaktere im Streben nach Selbstbestimmung, welches in beiden Romanen bedeutend ist, unerlässlich ist. Die Romane veranschaulichen, dass gesellschaftliche Zwänge die Figuren, mit dem Ziel ihre Unwissenheit und damit ihre unbewusste Zustimmung zum patriarchalischen System aufrechtzuerhalten, in ihrer räumlichen Freiheit einschränken. Die Narrative der Bewegung der Protagonistinnen durch ihre jeweiligen Räume, auf der Suche nach authentischen Erfahrungen und dem eigenen Wesen, zeugen von der Signifikanz, die eigene Position im komplexen Gewebe der Existenz zu erkennen.

Abstract in English

In the Western world, the 1980s were marked by an intellectual shift away from the temporal dimension of human existence, and a revaluation of the significance of space on identity

development, a perspective that, more recently, has renewed interest in modernist culture as forerunner of spatial awareness. This thesis examines E.M Forster's *A Room With A View* (1908) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), modernist novels of two of the most acclaimed authors of their time. The novels are analysed with regard to their display of the intricate relationships between spatiality, power dynamics and identity development. The paper explores the self-perception of the novels' female protagonists, Lucy Honeychurch and Clarissa Dalloway, as it is influenced and shaped by societal norms and cultural values. Referring to theoretical concepts such as Michel Foucault's "disciplinary power," Antonio Gramsci's "cultural hegemony," and Doreen Massey's conception of gendered experiences, this thesis investigates and compares the portrayal of repressive, spatial mechanisms in the two novels. Specifically, it evaluates the characters' questioning and challenging of subsisting Victorian concepts, such as dichotomous public and private spaces, identity as a unified entity, and silence as a sign of female passivity, in an attempt to disentangle socially constructed barriers that are embedded in space. It argues that the characters' awareness of spatial dynamics is indispensable in a quest for self-assertion that is prominent in both novels. The novels illustrate that societal constraints profoundly limit the characters in their spatial freedom, in an attempt to maintain ignorance and, thus, unconscious consent to the patriarchal system. As Lucy and Clarissa navigate their respective spaces in the pursuit of authentic experience and self-hood, their narratives emerge as testimonies to the significance of recognising one's locus in the mosaic of existence.