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**Literature as Cinematography:
Writing Movement in
the Modernist Novel**

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Introduction

Literature and Cinema

Since the first decades of the 20th century, when films commercially and aesthetically solidified their status as expressions of a new “seventh art”,¹ cinema and literature have established a mutual history of fascination, influence, confrontation and collaboration. If photography constituted the technological innovation of the 19th century that tempted and “corrupted”² the other traditional arts, obviously literature included,³ in the early years of the new century literary works and authors became progressively involved in the production of cinematic creations. This involvement, actually, was already performed in some of the first examples of cinematic productions such as Georges Méliès’ adaptations for the screen of the Brothers Grimm’s story *Cinderella* and of Shakespeare’s *King John*. The relation between cinema and literature, however, increasingly evolved in the 20th century along with the technological development of the cinematic medium.⁵ The fascination and collaboration between cinema and literature was not obviously univocal as the screenwriting careers of literary authors such as William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Nathanael West or Bertolt Brecht seem to suggest.⁶ The direct involvement of either writers or literary texts with cinematic expression was not limited merely to the productive component of film-making, i.e. in screenwriting or as a basis for the narrative of the film; indeed, also the creative phase, in the early decades of cinema’s

¹ The term “seventh art” was coined by the Italian theorist Ricciotto Canudo in the essay “Reflections on the Seventh Art” (1923), since cinema was considered the synthetic expressions of the other six ancient arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, dance, music, and poetry. See p. 292-293.

² “If photography is allowed to supplement art in some of its functions, it will soon have supplanted or corrupted it altogether” (Baudelaire 232).

³ Probably Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) is one of the most recognised literary examples of this fascination.

⁴ In 1906 Charles Tait directed the first feature-length film in cinema history *The Story of the Kelly Gang* based on the play *The Kelly Gang* by Arnold Denham, while in 1913 Enrico Guazzoni’s *Quo Vadis?* became the first feature-length film adaptation of a novel, and in 1914 Cecil B. DeMille directed the first Hollywood feature-length film *The Squaw Man*, that was also based on a literary text, the play of the same name by Edwin Milton Royle.

⁵ The evolution of montage technique, the mobilization of the camera and the advent of sound in the first two decades of 20th century inevitably affected and changed the creation and production of films.

⁶ Regarding the Hollywood careers of American writers see Richard Fine’s *Hollywood and the Profession of Authorship 1928-1940*; for an account of Brecht’s brief experience as screenwriter see John Russell Taylor’s *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Emigres*.

emergence, both of literature and cinema was increasingly affected by their mutual influence. In this respect, probably Erich von Stroheim's 426 minute long film, *Greed* (1924),⁷ represents a well-known example for the importance and centrality of literature in the aesthetic research of the cinematic form, since Stroheim's film was an extreme and hyper-meticulous attempt to actually shoot almost literally, quite a paradox, Frank Norris's novel *McTeague*.⁸ Simultaneously, the emergence of cinematic form and techniques inherently transformed the aesthetics of literature; works of authors such as William Faulkner, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf or James Joyce,⁹ to name just a few, were deeply affected by the new cinematic experience and aesthetic possibilities that emerged in the early years of 20th century.¹⁰

The direct and mutual absorption of aesthetic techniques or the involvement of both writers and literary texts into the creation and production of films is but a superficial and partial feature of the relationship between the literary and cinematic realms of art, however, these contingent episodes could introduce a more intimate characteristic of the possible connections between literature and cinema. In this sense, as the two artistic realms had productively and aesthetically started a continuous and fruitful exchange, simultaneously also the philosophical and theoretical debate developed a critical discourse that tended to use the affinities, contiguities or divergences between the forms and contents of literature and cinema in order to produce different perspectives regarding those artistic domains. The various critical approaches that characterized the academic debate during the 20th century can be framed as two main currents wherein the singular perspective does not share either a methodological or a common theoretical ground, but rather they tend to share the same theoretical aims regarding the use of the dynamic between cinematic and literary elements.

Each categorization, hence, though porous and elastic, will be based more on the functional use of

⁷ The length indicated refers to the original cut version, since the film was originally released in 1924 as a 140 minutes version and later restored to its original length of 239 minutes.

⁸ For a detailed comparison of Norris' novel and Stroheim's film see Joel W. Finler's *Stroheim*; while for a broader introduction to Stroheim's film see the collection of essays: *Greed: A Film by Erich von Stroheim* edited by Finler.

⁹ In the RAI television programme *Una sera, un libro*, the Italian actor and artist Carmelo Bene defined James Joyce's *Ulysses* as "l'esempio più fulgido di cinema [the most shining example of cinema]" (my translation).

¹⁰ Regarding the absorption of cinematic technique in literary production see Edward Murray's *The Cinematic Imagination* and Keith Cohen's *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange*.

this dynamic, rather than on the causes or effects that characterize every single theory. The first group is composed of film theories that use techniques, contents and forms typical of the literary expression in order to develop a more comprehensive and complete definition of the peculiar characteristics and specificities of the cinematic art: cinema *through* literature. This vast *ensemble* unites heterogeneous examples; for instance the famous Russian film-maker Sergei Eisenstein's well known essay "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today", published in 1944, in which he claims that the "characters of Dickens are rounded with means as plastic and slightly exaggerated as are the screens of today" (145), and consequently affirms how the uniqueness of Soviet montage deeply influenced by American film-maker D.W. Griffith drew its particular specificity as a cinematic technique through the absorption of "the art of viewing" (146) which, according to Eisenstein, is a fundamental definition of literature. Eisenstein, hence, proposes a sort of ontology, a definition of the singularity of cinema *through* its contiguities and adherence in respect to the characteristics of literature. Moreover, in his 1934 essay "Film Language", Eisenstein had already attempted to suggest a textual interpretation of the cinematic image whereby montage constitutes the linguistic system of cinema. In 1948, French critic Alexander Astruc, in his essay "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde", enthusiastically greeted the beginning of a new era of cinema whereby "cinema [was] quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all other arts have been before it, and in particular painting and novel" (182). Becoming a "means of expression" meant becoming a language, i.e. "a form in which and by which an artist can express his thoughts" (182). In this sense, Astruc proposed a new age of cinema characterised by the emergence of the "camera-stylo" (camera-pen) through which the new "auteur"/film-maker could write innovative paths of the cinematic art. Paradoxically, according to Astruc, cinema was finally freeing itself and affirming its independence from its confinement to the subordinate realm of entertainment by constituting its ontological specificity through its relation to literary elements. Analogously, the French film semiotician Christian Metz, among many others,¹¹ suggested a linguistic approach in his *Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema*

¹¹ "In the 1960s and 1970s, Roland Barthes, Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, and others extended [Astruc's

and in *Language and Cinema*. As Gilles Deleuze notes, he assumed a structure of cinema whereby “cinema was constituted as such by becoming narrative, by presenting a story, and by rejecting its other possible directions” (C2 25). Obviously, these are just a few examples of the numerous perspectives that are ascribable to this first category, but I believe that they clearly show both the heterogeneity and the coherence of the group of theories that compose the ensemble.

If the first group shared a functional dynamic whereby the cinematic art was constituted *through* literary analogies, conversely, the second group will be formed by theories that define the cinematic nature of literary phenomena: the cinema *of* literature. As the first group was mainly characterised by film theorists who, in order to define the specificity of the cinematic art, performed a hermeneutic dynamic whereby cinema was mediated through literature for becoming a more independent and autonomous art form; the second ensemble is, conversely, composed by literary theorists who switch in the hermeneutic process the positions of the two elements, i.e. literature becoming literature by the mediation of cinema. In this sense, this category is not second merely for a matter of inevitable enumeration but also for its chronological secondariness in respect to the first category. In fact, as the essays of Eisenstein and Astruc seem to suggest, the theories of cinematic art, being historically younger than the centuries-old literary realm. need to establish the connection with the institutionalized artistic authority of literature in order to consolidate the autonomy of cinema. The second ensemble, hence, inevitably needed to wait for the maturation of the theoretical discourse on and the actual production of cinematic objects in order to enter into a fruitful relation with literary theorizations. From George Bluestone’s seminal 1957 work *Novels into Film*, the wide field of theories of adaptation has been enlarged and populated by numerous examples that speculate on the intertextuality between film and literature.¹² Whether the examples of adaptation

analogies between cinema and literature] to academic criticism, advancing film as *écriture*, labelling films ‘texts’” (Elliott 6, original emphasis).

¹² As Linda Hutcheon notes in the preface of her *A Theory of Adaptation*, adaptation emerged as an intertextual theory on literature and film, but nowadays it cannot be reduced and limited merely to these two realms: “We postmoderns have clearly inherited this same habit [the Victorian habit of adapting just about everything], but we have even more raw materials at our disposal – not only film, radio, and the various electronic media, of course, but also theme parks, historical enactments and virtual reality experiments” (xiii).

theories are focused on the technical possibilities that the cinematic medium offered to interpret the specific literary devices as François Jost's *L'Œil-caméra. Entre Film et Roman*¹³ or on the intertextual relationship between the actual adaptation of a specific novel or literary artefact into a parallel cinematic object, as in Robert Stam's *Literature Through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation*,¹⁴ the process of these theories evolved around the possibility to open new perspectives in the literary debate *through* the recognition of its contiguity or divergence in respect to the cinematic environment. In this sense, while in the first group the literature *of* cinema meant to identify an ontological autonomy of the latter by the concepts and elements of the literary realm, the second group performs an epistemological operation whereby disciplines, such as narratology or deconstruction, that already populated the field of literary theory, illustrate their own specificity through the engagement with the cinematic objects. Through this perspective, the first group uses the relationship between literature and cinema as Being, and the second as Knowing.

Through the specific analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Jean Rhys's *Quartet*, John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita* I intend to propose for my thesis another methodological trajectory that, without denying or undermining these modalities, can investigate the ground shared by literature and cinema in the 20th century focusing more on the causes of the emergence of this ground rather than on its functional use for ontology or epistemology. And, consequently, in the four chapters of this thesis we will attempt to identify the specific literary mechanisms that perform and actualise the emergence of the communal ground between cinema and literature. Such a third possibility has been suggested by John Mullarkey in his brilliant *Refractions of Reality: Philosophy and the Moving Image*, where he analyses the various

¹³ Also in the essay "The Look: From film to Novel" Jost proposes a narratological comparison between the role of the camera in the cinema and the looking relation in the novel, a comparison that, according to Jost, can foster the dissolution in critical theory of the hierarchical relationship in favour of the former between literature and cinema. A similar democratic function of the adaptation theory is detected also by Linda Hutcheon who notes that the intertextuality of adaptation theory contests the aesthetic and theoretical role of supremacy that the "original" occupies in respect to subordinate, derivative and merely functional position of adaptation: "to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative" (xv).

¹⁴ In this volume, first part of a three-book series devoted to literature and film, Stam highlights key moments in the history of the novel from *Don Quixote* to Nabokov's *Lolita* through the various filmic adaptations that in the last century have re-presented the novels.

theoretical perspectives that, during the last century, have attempted to draw connections between cinema and philosophy. This perspective, profoundly inspired by French philosopher François Laruelle's "new practice of philosophy" (3) called "non-philosophy",¹⁵ proposes a critique of previous philosophical attempts to conceptually dominate and control the specificity of the cinematic art since, as Mullarkey notes, "[f]ilm doesn't reflect (illustrate, illuminate or represent) our philosophy – it refracts it, it distorts it with its own thinking. The resistance of film to singular philosophies is a kind of thinking, or metathinking, all its own, precisely because it does not allow us to begin with a definition of thought and philosophy" (11). Therefore, any attempt to capture cinema in a stable ontological definition or to use it as an exemplary tool to explain philosophical thinking is destined to be illusory. The philosophical instinct to offer an ontology of film or to use it as an epistemological object reflecting the image of philosophy itself are two modalities of approaching cinema that Mullarkey names respectively: philosophy *of* cinema and philosophy *through* cinema.¹⁶ Although the critical section of Mullarkey's text is very interesting and enlightens different aspects of various recent philosophical schools, I believe that its most stimulating aspect resides in the affirmative propositions of the non-philosophical practice.¹⁷ Indeed, sometimes

¹⁵ The practice of non-philosophy proposed by the French philosopher François Laruelle in his *Principles of Non-Philosophy* presupposes the introduction of a new thought "which, without being subsumed again into philosophy, is no stranger to it; of a new relationship to this thought and of a new practice of philosophy" (3). In this sense, the non-philosophical thought aims to assume philosophy as a *material*, an *occasional cause* contesting the hegemonic nature of the philosophical metaphysics and ontico onto-logic. According to Laruelle's project then, non-philosophy is a new practice that abandons the terrain "of Being and of the Other for a terrain of the One or of radical immanence that has shown us the Real itself" (3). Indeed, Laruelle argues that the philosophical conceptualization of terms such as "Being", "Other" but also Deleuze's "Plane of Immanence" or Spinoza's monism imply an inherent metaphysical thinking that presupposes, through a transcendental operation, the inherent domination of one philosophical system over any other. Proceeding by transcendental thinking, philosophy paradoxically reiterates a "death of philosophy" since every philosophical system, according to Laruelle, aims to substitute itself as the overarching synthesis that annihilate the alternative possibilities. In this sense the prefix "non" of the term "non-philosophy" does not imply a negation of philosophy, since that would reiterate the philosophical practice, but rather this prefix "merely suspends its claims over the Real and makes a new usage of philosophy with a view to constituting an order of thought more rigorous and more real than philosophy itself" (4).

¹⁶ In the group of philosophies *through* cinema Mullarkey includes David Bordwell's cognitivist theory and Slavoj Žižek's Marxist-Lacanianist theory. On the other hand, the second group of philosophers *of* cinema is composed by Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou and Stanley Cavell.

¹⁷ Indeed, if on the one hand non-philosophical practice clearly expresses its meta-philosophical critique, on the other hand it seems to find more difficulties to propose itself also as an affirmative thinking. It is not by chance that the most frequent critiques evolve around this apparent negativity or reflexivity of non-philosophy; in this sense probably the most famous critique had been expressed by Jacques Derrida who, in a debate with Laruelle as reported by John Mullarkey in *Post-Continental Philosophy*, affirmed that non-philosophy is like a "kind of violent shuffling of the cards in a game whose rules are known to you [Laruelle] alone" (149). However, Laruelle insists that the practice of thinking of non-philosophy will (or must) seem mysterious to philosophy, or how philosophy will

concealed also in the critical section of the text, the affirmative and alternative possibility proposed by Mullarkey presupposes a philosophy *as* cinema where “film offers us its own philosophy” (13). However, as Mullarkey notes, this alternative should not be seen as a proof of a new theory but more as a suggestion of looking at films as “an immanent set of processes” that perform their specificity autonomously, i.e. without having the necessity for the conceptual support of philosophy. For, by refracting the philosophical attempt to think cinema both as Being and Knowing, cinema enacts a tangible agency on philosophy itself contributing to opening up new possibilities for thinking. Philosophy *as* cinema, hence, performs a particular way of thinking whereby the two realms do not touch and invade each other’s specificity and autonomy but rather they refract and disturb, in a positive sense, their own magnetic fields since they share the same ground, which both Laruelle and Mullarkey call the Real.¹⁸ Additionally, it is important to note how this process of sharing does not presuppose a hierarchical or private possession of this ground that remains free from any form of domination by the various forms of human thinking. Therefore, according to Mullarkey, in order to practice philosophy *as* film we need to presuppose two assumptions whereof the first is that “[e]verybody knows *something*, but nobody knows *everything*” (14, original emphasis). Indeed, this first assumption allows the non-philosophical process of “unknowing” to begin that frees cinema from philosophy.

Obviously, in the two categorizations proposed for the theoretical interpretations of the relationship between cinema and literature, I have borrowed and transported Mullarkey’s critique of

consider non-philosophy naive, even to the point of irritation.

¹⁸ According to Laruelle the Real or the One is the immanent totality that presupposes the emergence and the coexistence of different philosophies without being altered by those theories. In this sense the Real is not a primordial or transcendental cause but rather an immanent and indifferent autonomous reality. Non-philosophy is a new practice that abandons the terrain “of Being then that of the Other for a terrain of the One or of radical immanence that has shown us the Real itself” (3). Consequently, the prefix “non” of the term “non-philosophy” does not imply a negation of philosophy, since that would reiterate the philosophical practice, but rather this prefix “merely suspends its claims over the Real and makes a new usage of philosophy with a view to constituting an order of thought more rigorous and more real than philosophy itself” (4). Laruelle’s non-philosophical discoveries, hence, attempt to contest the auto-positional nature of philosophical thinking in order to equate the fundamental knowings of philosophy with all other forms of regional knowings such as art, ethics, politics etc. that are normally dominated or at least incorporated by the philosophical metaphysical system. “Non-philosophy [...] works by positing the equivalence (as regards the Real) of all philosophical positions. The autonomy of the Real leaves all philosophies relative. So there can be no hierarchy between a ‘fundamental thinking’, say, and ‘regional ontologies’ (biology, physics, and so forth)” (*Post-Continental* 138).

the philosophical theories on cinema into a literary context. In a similar way, I argue that the affirmative practice of thinking philosophy alongside or *as* cinema, could be fruitfully applied also as a literary practice: literature *as* cinematography. In this sense this practice does not aim to substitute or discard the other theories but, on the contrary, posits the possibility of the coexistence of these theories assuming that they all share refractive reality. However, if this assumption corresponds to Mullarkey's critical section of the non-philosophical practice, in which way is it possible productively and affirmatively enact literature *as* cinema? In order to answer this question I need to illustrate Mullarkey's second assumption that allowed him to introduce his propositions: "reality [...] is mutable. [T]here is never anything *absolutely* static, for there is always some kind of movement even where we can see none, being too slow (or too quick) for us to notice it. Movement, in other words, is always complex" (xvii). On the one hand, Mullarkey's second assumption clearly reveals his Bergsonian background, on the other it allows philosophy to stop thinking about what cinema is or what we can know through cinema, but rather what cinema does. In this sense, it is quite indisputable that cinema moves independently from any content or technique used in a particular film; by assuming cinema as an enactment of movement, i.e. of reality, it is possible as philosophy to think about movement as a communal ground shared with cinema without defining or using the cinematic independence. Analogously, by adopting also Mullarkey's second assumption, it is possible to introduce the conception of a literature *as* cinema by affirming their communal relationship in respect to movement as a reality in motion from which both literature and cinema emerge and differentiate as specific art forms. Hence, this perspective will not be focused on the techniques, contents or divergences that characterise the peculiar specificity of literature and cinema. Rather, affirming the respective autonomy of these two artistic domains and positing literature *as* cinema will make possible an analysis of this relation on the basis of literary and cinematic communal ground, movement, as a portion both of reality and of aesthetic expression; i.e. investigating the *élan cinématique*¹⁹ of Woolf's, Rhys's, Dos Passos's and Pasolini's texts of the 20th

¹⁹ The term is a cinematic translation of Bergson's sociobiological concept of *élan vital*: "The *actual* movement of

century we will simultaneously analyse kinetic concepts that was emerging along with the development of cinema.

Novel as Cinematography

Literature *as* cinema is a category that presupposes a relation that is not directly inscribed in the specific techniques or on the contents that characterise the literary realm as being influenced by those of cinema or vice versa; this proposition concerns rather the indirect combination of the realm of cinema with that of literature. In this sense it does not presume a hybridization of the field but the study of the communal ground of reality that allowed the emergence of their aesthetic singularity and simultaneously their reciprocal fascination, influence and collaboration. Investigating the examples of Woolf, Rhys, Dos Passos and Pasolin, in the following chapters, I will evidently focus on a specific trajectory that involves the novelistic form of the 20th century where the artistic implications and modifications of this communal ground of movement, both as reality and aesthetic component, come to expression in various coherent yet heterogeneous modalities. However, a legitimate question could now be asked: why will the literary trajectory of movement be specifically condensed and limited to the novelistic form, rather than to poetry or plays? Besides the practical and functional necessity of narrowing the corpus of texts, this question can find two coexisting answers. The first derives from empirical evidence: the novelistic form, at least until the early aftermath of World War II, was the privileged literary form for cinematic adaptations. For instance, Hortense Powdermarker reported, on the basis of a survey by *Variety* magazine, that in 1947 slightly less than the 40 per cent of cinematic productions were adapted from novels; while between 1935 and 1945 Lester Asheim affirmed that almost 20 per cent of films were adapted from novelistic texts.²⁰ By these quantitative analyses, then, we should consider the reasons why novels

filmic convergence is asymptotic, an ‘indefinite’ progress that we will later call the ‘*élan cinématique*’. Movies have an *élan* rather than an essence – a divergent form of movement that participates in (rather than ‘captures’) processual reality in myriad ways; indeed, it can only so participate when it is myriad. The convergence of cinema is virtual as it tends towards a single point, and actual as it diverges away from one” (xv).

²⁰ This data are reported by George Bluestone in the essay “The Limits Of The Novel And The Limits Of The Film”.

supplied the narrative bases for films and why they were the most selected form rather than plays, poems or even original screenplays. Obviously, the mere presentation of the quantitative and commercial attraction of cinema in respect to the novelistic form cannot represent an autonomous justification for considering the novel as a privileged literary form in respect to the cinematic expression; however, the data can suggest an attraction between the two aesthetic forms and simultaneously it can, vice versa, support and empirically validate theoretical interpretations of this mutual dynamic.

If the first answer to the question on the selection of novelistic examples instead of other literary genres was based on a quantitative phenomenon, the second response relies on a qualitative base whereby the novelistic form and cinematic art share a similar indefinability and hybridization of their specific constitutional structures. As Mullarkey's critique shows, several theories have, vainly, attempted to capture the ontological nature of cinema that avoided these possibilities also for its constitutional ambiguity since its power to capture reality is based "on both its synthetic function in art as well as its ever-enlarging incorporation of more and more of our sensory powers across its historical development, from the silents to the talkies, black-and-white to colour, normal to panoramic vision, two-dimensions to three-dimensions, low-definition to high-definition" (xiv). Hence, the synthetic composition of cinema wherein different aspects, expressions and technologies of every other art form (literature, poetry, theatre, music, painting, photography, sculptural form, and even dance) converge, prevents any attempt to confine the cinematic art into stable boundaries. In this sense, we can say about cinema that it is a synthetic art form mainly based on images. Analogously, perhaps also because of their relative youth in respect to other artistic forms,²¹ the novelistic form shares this hybrid and ambiguous heterogeneity of its structure that characterised it in respect to other literary forms such as poetry or plays. Indeed, as the synthetic composition of cinema is the sole aspect wherein divergent theories can converge, also the various and different theories on the novel seem to share a similar difficulty to enclose the indefinability of this form.

²¹ A language "still young" (3) as Mikhail Bakhtin calls the novel.

One of the very first and most well-known theorists of the novel is Mikhail Bakhtin who, in his essay “Epic and Novel”, illustrating the “novelization” of other literary genres and the simultaneous emergence of the novel as the divergent successor of the epic genre,²² admitted the “peculiar difficulties” (3) that distinguish the investigation on this specific form in respect to the others. For the uniqueness of the novel was due, according to Bakhtin, to the fact that it is a genre “that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted” (3); furthermore, by parodying the canonized fixity of the other genres, the novel “exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them” (5). A similar interpretation of the inherent incompleteness and of the encompassing process of becoming of the novel form had been already proposed by the Hungarian theorist György Lukács in his *Theory of the Novel* (1920).²³ In this text, Lukács argued that the peculiarity, the “virile maturity”, of the novel resided in the fact that while the other art forms confirmed the inherent “dissonance” of existence by creating a harmony through their finished forms, on the other hand, in the novel form this dissonance of life became the form itself “[t]hat is why, from the artistic viewpoint, the novel is the most hazardous genre, and why it has been described as only half an art by many who equate *having a problematic* with *being problematic*” (72, original emphasis). Although it is focused mainly on the “individualist and innovating reorientation” (13) that resonates in the novel from the philosophical systems of Descartes, Locke or Spinoza, even Ian Watt’s seminal text *The Rise of the Novel*, published in 1957, includes “the

²² Both the “novelization” of other genres and the successor role of the novel in respect to epic are related, according to Bakhtin to the inherent novelistic “heteroglossia”, internal diversity (class, sexuality and so on) within the same national language, and the simultaneous reflection in the genre of the novel of the polyglossia of the “new world” (12).

²³ This text was later criticized by Lukács himself for its inherent methodological weakness and naiveté: “I am thinking, for example, of the fascination exercised by Dilthey’s *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Leipzig 1905), a book which seemed in many respects to open up new ground. This new ground appeared to us then as an intellectual world of large-scale syntheses in both the theoretical and the historical fields. We failed to see that the new method had in fact scarcely succeeded in surmounting positivism, or that its syntheses were without objective foundation. (At that time it escaped the notice of the younger ones among us that men of talent were arriving at their genuinely sound conclusions in spite of the method rather than by means of it.) It became the fashion to form general synthetic concepts on the basis of only a few characteristics—in most cases only intuitively grasped—of a school, a period, etc., then to proceed by deduction from these generalisations to the analysis of individual phenomena, and in that way to arrive at what we claimed to be a comprehensive overall view. This was the method of *The Theory of the Novel*” (13).

poverty of the novel's formal conventions" (13) as a complicit yet minor element of the novelistic specificity.

More recent studies on the novel as a form or genre seem to have incorporated the evaluation of the heterogeneity and inherent incompleteness of the novel shared by these theoretical "grand narratives", as Michael McKeon defines them. Indeed, when we consider two impressive anthologies such as McKeon's *Theory of the Novel* and Franco Moretti's *The Novel*, they offer two different perspectives that still share a liminal continuity in their approaches. For, if the former proposes a historical organization of the contributions based on their common "efforts to theorize the novel with [...] the historical consciousness of its significance (whether conceived in positive or negative terms) as a modern phenomenon" (xv), the latter divided his anthology into various sections in order to grasp the ambiguity of the novel not directly by its historical consciousness, but rather by a multi-perspectival approach: "Two perspectives on the novel, then; and two volumes. *History, Geography, and Culture* is mostly a look from the outside; *Forms and Themes*, from the inside" (Moretti ix). Despite these quite different premises, both McKeon and Moretti seem to agree on the impossibility of stabilizing the novel genre into a definitive form. McKeon, indeed, affirms that "[i]n the paradoxical 'novel tradition', each stage in the novel's development purports to evince a radical novelty that simultaneously affirms and denies the coherence of the genre as a whole" (xvi); on the other hand Moretti notes that thanks to its inherent plurality and endless flexibility "the novel becomes the first truly planetary form: a phoenix always ready to take flight in a new direction, and to find the right language for the next generation of readers" (Moretti ix). Hence, as this brief overview shows, whether the theoretical attempts aim as "grand narratives" to define the technical, formal or content limits of the novel or to anthologically encompass the various natures of this literary genre, without sharing the same philosophical, historical, economic or cultural propositions, they express a communal feeling that paradoxically affirms the elusive and ever-changing heterogeneity that characterise the amorphous novelistic domain. In this respect probably

Michael Schmidt is right affirming in his *The Novel: A Biography* how “newness and renewal are included in the word *novel*, which derives from the Latin *novus*, ‘new’” (11 original emphasis), an etymological sense of continuous diversity and plurality.²⁴

Consequently, the choice of narrowing a possible literature *as* cinema by selecting the novel among the other literary forms is based on these two principles: the empirical and quantitative affinity and the qualitative characteristics that share the same indefinability along with a sort of inclusive process in respect to other genres and other art forms. Simultaneously, privileging the novel instead of poetry or plays in the identification of a trajectory parallel to that of cinema does not presume to affirm an exclusivity of this relationship in respect to other possible alternatives; on the contrary, it presupposes to show a possible pattern and method through which other trajectories that would be equally legitimate and congruous can appear. In this sense, presenting the novel *as* cinema would be just an exemplary attempt to re-think, from the specific literary perspective, the relationship between these two art forms, without trying to think the cinematic expressions, techniques or contents through novelistic elements or considering them as manifestation of novelistic characteristics. I will attempt, hence, to offer an alternative approach whereby the theoretical thinking will be limited to novelistic examples of Woolf, Rhys, Dos Passos and Pasolini without directly distorting cinematic specificity in order to implant it in the literary domain. In this sense the readings that I propose in the following chapters will be strictly focused on specifically literary techniques and possibilities. And, simultaneously, grounding my perspective on the primacy of movement as a reality and aesthetic object specifically in the novelistic genre, I assume to illustrate the possibility of an indirect connection between the two realms of cinema and literature that preserves their own autonomy and reality.

Therefore, thinking the novel as cinematography is not intended as the affirmation of the

²⁴ The whole Schmidt’s text is conceived as a biography of the novel that reflects the non-linear development of this genre: “This book proposes a canon that expands and is never stable or closed, its very instability precluding the idea of ‘evolution’ that bedevils conventional canonical commentary. Development is not invariably progressive, assimilative, or linear and the novel form is not singular, even in its earliest stages. Its manifestations alter in relation to language, histories, and geography” (2).

identity between novels and films, but it presupposes a primary and etymological connection whereby in the 20th century both cinema and literature are cinematographies, literally the γραφία (*writing*) of κίνημα (*movement*). Assuming that they are writings of movements, mainly via images for the cinema and via words for the novel, allows the possibility of analysing their respective specificities as divergent yet coherent potential expressions of movement itself. For this reason, the qualitative and quantitative analogies between cinema and the novel can conceal a more intimate contiguity that allows us to consider them as independent specificities and simultaneously to individuate their communal *élan cinématique*. As Mullarkey's term, referred to cinematic art, clearly reminds us of the dynamic of creative evolution by Henri Bergson, in a parallel way my thesis will be also supported by Bergsonian concepts on movement, time or space, integrated with Gilles Deleuze's concepts on cinema. The combination of Mullarkey's critique and Deleuze's concepts could be perceived as misleading, since Deleuze was included and criticized by Mullarkey as being a prominent member of the philosophers of cinema, i.e. attempting to ontologically limit the specificity of cinema by philosophical thinking. However, as Deleuze specifically explains at the end of *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, and more extensively in *What is Philosophy?*, his theorisation of concepts such as "movement-image" and "time-image" or the idea of a "psychomechanic" of cinema, which I will investigate and explain in the following chapters, are not about cinema as a specific artistic domain: "A theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices[...] The theory of cinema does not bear on the cinema, but on the concepts of the cinema, which are no less practical, effective or existent than cinema itself" (C2 280). Hence, Deleuze's practice is not a philosophical attempt to ontologically possess cinema, but it is a philosophical refraction of dynamics on movement, space and time that the cinematic medium enhances in a particular way. In this sense, I assume that, even in their diversity, Mullarkey's critical methodology and Deleuze's concepts can coexist and can foster the alternative investigation on the

novel as cinematography, on modern literature as a specific genre for the enactment of movement as real and aesthetic. Indeed, if, according to Mullarkey, films moving us are a privileged form of the Real because “movement is what is Real” (xv), by analysing the reality of movement in novelistic examples we could investigate the liminal contiguity and ambiguity between literature and films.

Spatiality and Mobility of the Modern City

Identifying movement as the modern real ground, on which the novel bases its cinematography, does not suffice to select an actual and possible critical trajectory. For movement as a concept presupposes more a virtuality, using Bergsonian terminology, that supports the vast field of “high modernist”²⁵ literature. Consequently, in order to actualize this virtual and real movement in a specific trajectory within the vast domain of high modernist literature, it is necessary to entangle the conceptual notion of mobility with the social and historical *milieu* where movement became an actual aesthetic possibility for the novel. Through this perspective, as the emergence in the first decades of 20th century of cinematic art manifests the intrusion of movement virtuality in the forms and techniques of modernist art, in a similar way the actuality of movement of modern characters and artists privileges the city over other possible *milieux*. For this simultaneous dynamic I believe that, in order to study the alternative of the novel *as* cinematography, we should select a trajectory within novelistic examples of the high modernist period that combine the virtual, conceptual yet real movement of cinema with the actual, aesthetic and concrete movement in the city. The American philosopher Fredric Jameson from who I borrowed the definition of “high modernism” for the first half of the 20th century, in his *Postmodernism, or, The Logic of Late Capitalism* bases the idea of a social, artistic and historical break between modernism and postmodernism on the

²⁵ High modernism, according to Jameson, is the last section of the modern era which aesthetically expresses the “the passage from market to monopoly capital, or what Lenin called the “stage of imperialism”; and they may be conveyed by way of a growing contradiction between lived experience and structure, or between a phenomenological description of the life of an individual and a more properly structural model of the conditions of existence of that experience” (410). It can be historically located in a indefinite period between the end of 19th century and the beginning of the Vietnam War.

different production, perception and imagination of spatiality between these two periods that inherently reflects the transformation of capitalism in late capitalism. Indeed, the modern city and architecture, according to Jameson, reflected the modernist attitude towards time and history, where “some residual zones of ‘nature’ or ‘being’ of the old, the older, the archaic, still subsist” (ix). Modernity, and especially high modernity, expresses the contradiction of the “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous”, namely the coexistence within the modern everyday life and spatiality of historic referents and spaces that caused an analogous dynamic in modernist art where the drive for innovation and originality paradoxically was combined to residual “grand narratives” of the 19th century. On the other, Jameson defines the postmodern era as the period that “begins to make its appearance wherever the modernization process no longer has archaic features and obstacles to overcome and has triumphantly implanted its own autonomous logic” (366). As the title of the book indicates, Jameson focuses his theory mainly on the analysis of artistic, social, and political characteristics of the postmodern era that differentiates it from a mere prosecution of modern decay. However, I assume that, although only indirectly referring to modernity and modernism, Jameson’s theoretical attempt can reversely enlighten also the historical and artistic specificity of high modernism. As the profile and forms of an object can be defined also by an indirect light that is focused on something else, instead of constructing modernity through modernity itself, it is possible, I believe, to inversely describe it through its postmodernist counterpart. The historical coherence yet heterogeneity of high modernist novels as cinematographies can be narrowed and specified by highlighting a trajectory that condenses examples where the spatial peculiarity of modern urbanity actualizes the virtual reality of movement, where the experience of movement is materialised in the aesthetic object as a communal and structural component of the modernist novelistic form in respect to 19th century narratives and postmodern texts.

The emergence of urbanity, in terms of architectural spatiality and more generally as sociality, at the end of the 19th century as the dominant *milieu* where artists can experience and

express the modern everyday life, became simultaneously a central theoretical issue. From Charles Baudelaire's well-known essay *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne* of 1863, a vast tradition of critics and theorists began to analyse various perspectives through which to interpret the urban modern experience. From the economic-psychological²⁶ seminal text "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903) by Georg Simmel, passing to the miscellaneous and unfinished *Arcade Project*²⁷ by Walter Benjamin, to the post-World War II theories as Henry Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the theoretical study of the effects and interactions between modern urbanity and different aspects of human everyday life, such as economics, art, sociality and psychology have been deeply developed and investigated.

The increasing centrality of urbanity as a modern peculiar experience and its relation to human culture and nature can be well represented by the emergence of the Situationist movement in the late 1950's as a reaction to the functionalist and capitalist organisation of modern cities. Indeed, this artistic, social and critical movement formed by a collective of artists and thinkers, prominently represented by Guy Debord, Asger Jorn and Michèle Bernstein, seemed to combine and merge the variety of approaches and perspectives regarding the modern everyday urban experience, from

²⁶ "[t]he deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society" (11). Simmel ascribes the responsibility for this non-emotional reaction to the economic system through which urban life is organised; concepts like *punctuality*, *exactness* and *calculability* are conducive to the exclusion of irrational, instinctive traits that coloured other human life forms. Thus, the convulsive and innumerable modifications to which the individual is subjected in the metropolis tend to cause indifference, a *blasé* attitude, that "would be an unnatural immersion into a chaos" (15); Simmel detects an increase of movement and interactions caused by the spatial and numeral enlargement offered by modern cities in respect to villages; the substantial and individual freedom reflects itself on the others, since in metropolis "a person does not end with the limits of his physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially" (17). On the other hand, the economic system seems to impose on the individual a further differentiation or specialization as a worker or a consumer: paradoxically, striving for the most individual forms tends to relate to quantitative differences rather than qualitative peculiarities - instead of difference, city individuals seek being different.

²⁷ In the translator's preface of the English edition of Benjamin's text, Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin note that "[w]hat is distinctive about *The Arcades Project*-in Benjamin's mind, it always dwelt apart-is the working of quotations into the framework of montage, so much so that they eventually far outnumber the commentaries. If we now were to regard this ostensible patchwork as, de facto, a deterrillinate literary form, one that has effectively constructed itself (that is, fragmented itself), like the *Journaux intimes* of Baudelaire, then surely there would be significant repercussions for the direction and tempo of its reading, to say the least" (XI, original emphasis).

consciousness to sociality, from architecture to maps, from art to theory and social actions.²⁸ Deeply inspired by Fourier's socialist utopia and by the French Surrealists, the Situationist International (SI) introduced concepts such as "unitary urbanism"²⁹ and "psycho geography",³⁰ "mode[s] of experimental behaviour" (*On the passage* 198) as the "dérive"³¹ and innovative cartographies of the architectural urbanism as Debord's maps of Paris *Naked City* and Constant Nieuwenhuys' *New Babylon* project. Despite its practical and historical failure, this combination of theory and practices, art and everyday life, constituted probably the most radical attempt to accentuate the centrality of urbanity, mobility in human consciousness and sociality and its consequent relation to the political and economic structure.

If the SI can be considered as the apex of the high modernist experience of urbanity and simultaneously as a transitional movement towards the post-modern era, as Jameson affirms, retrospectively, it can be fruitful to analyse from a literary perspective the variety of artistic and experiential sediments of urbanity during the high modernist period. Literary critique and theory, as the examples of Baudelaire and Benjamin may suggest, has synchronically and historically investigated the relationship between the various literary forms and objects and the urban environment. Especially regarding the novelistic genre, several texts have attempted to frame the various possibilities through which urban high modernity has been represented in its corresponding literature, performing phenomenologist, deconstructive or psychological comparative readings of it. For instance, Desmond Harding's *Writing the City, Urban Visions and Literary Modernism* (2003)

²⁸ The publication in 1967 of Debord's famous text *The Society of Spectacle* along with Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* proposed the situationist as the main "producers of inspirational slogans, graffiti, posters and comic strips"(125) for May '68 riots in Paris. Moreover, the Situationists actively participated to the protests alongside the students and workers as it is well documented and explained by Simon Ford in the chapter "The Beginning of an Era 1966-1968" of his *The Situationist International*, where Ford analysed the influence and the events that characterised the emergence of Situationism as a fundamental reference for the revolts.

²⁹ "It aims to form a unitary human milieu in which separations such as work/leisure or public/private will be finally dissolved" ("Theses on Traffic" 56-59). "First of all, unitary urbanism is not a doctrine of urbanism but a critique of urbanism" (*On the passage* 143).

³⁰ "[It] was regarded as a sort of therapy. A fetishization of those parts of the city that could still rescue drifters from the clutches of functionalism, exciting the senses and the body" (Sadler 80).

³¹ "In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" ("Theory of the Dérive" 22).

interprets the representation of the city specifically depicted by James Joyce and John Dos Passos as a textual code that symbolizes the cultural, social, economical and political changes forced by urban modernism. On the other hand, Robert Alter's *Imagined Cities* (2010) investigates the relation from the perspective of the creative minds of the artist, namely Flaubert, Dickens, Bely, Woolf, Joyce and Kafka, considering the city as constructed by their sensations and experiences, architecture becomes a projection of human emotions; a similar point of view is assumed also by the collection *Writing the City* (1994) edited by Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley. These few examples suggest two alternative visions of the relation between literature and urbanity; the former considering the city as a socio-political environment, a Culture that shapes the singular and creative experience of it, the latter considering the city as a background where human Nature expresses itself.³²

This thesis will not attempt to delegitimize these approaches, instead, by proposing literature *as* cinematography, it assumes a combination of perspectives and critical theories whereby the novelistic expression of movement, its *élan cinématique*, is analysed by a two-fold yet merged dynamic where the virtuality of movement in its cinematic concepts is actualised by the novelistic depiction, during high modernism, of movement in the urban milieu. Consequently, in this sense, Bergson's and Deleuze's cinematic theories can be combined with Jameson's historical categorization of urban spatiality in order to identify a trajectory within modernist novels that condense both cinema and the city as peculiar aspects of novel genre itself. The trajectory that I have selected intends to identify exemplary positions in the historical itinerary of this literary form in the 20th century. The criterion of selection, hence, does not consider the examples chosen as the exclusive herald of literature as cinematography, rather they merely assume contingent yet coherent positions in respect to the vast domain of 20th century high modernist literature.

In *Matière et Mémoire* Bergson critiques, through the critique of the famous Zeno's arrow

³² The use of the capitol letters for the terms "Nature" and "Culture" is referred to Bruno Latour's critique of Modernity in *We Have Never Been Modern* where Latour identifies at the basis of modern illusions the creation of the two ontological and dichotomous zones of Culture and Nature, that "The Great Divide", through the process of "purification". See Latour pp. 10-12

paradox, the philosophical and scientific attempt to recompose the continuity of movement, the *trajet* of movement, merely by associating the singular and static positions that constituted the discontinuous points of the trajectory of movement, its representation. Analogously, my thesis will not aim to recompose a continuity within literary high modernist history by connecting static and privileged positions, i.e. singular novels, in respect to others. Inversely, the thesis will attempt to analyse a possible *trajet* by investigating different positions that condensed heterogeneous yet coherent resonances of cinema and urbanity. Hence, the four examples selected to do not compose an exclusive line, but rather they intend to express an exemplary contingency that aims to include other literary forms and objects that, for reasons of time, space and vastness could not be included in my analysis. Specifically, this non-linear and a-systematic ensemble of texts will be developed by proposing a *trajet* of novelistic form as cinematography that will be composed by two main sections. In the first section I will analyse the cinematic concepts through different urban experiences of pre-World War II novels by Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys and John Dos Passos, exemplifying the apex of the high modernist cinematography of spatiality. Hence, we will pass from Woolf's London and its dynamic articulation of multi-perspectival experiences in *Mrs. Dalloway* to Rhys's Parisian hallucinatory wanderings of the young and reckless Marya Zelli, the protagonist of *Quartet*, detecting traces of the *élan cinématique* of literature in order to arrive at the complexity and virtuality of New York's streets and movements in Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*.

The second section will be centred on the specificity of the Italian novelistic transition from the pre- to the post-World War II cinematography as expressed by Rome's peripheral and disrupted urbanity in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita*. Indeed, Roman urbanity can testify to the transitoriness of high-modernism by the radical change of its space and mobility from its pre-war integrity to the devastated landscape of the aftermath of the conflict. Consequently, by highlighting these two heterogeneous yet continuous paths, I assume that the virtuality and actuality of the cinematographic component of the novelistic genre can add an alternative critical possibility for the

analysis of the specificity of the high modernist period in respect to what preceded and what followed.

Chapter 1: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and the Dynamic Intervals

In the first chapter of the *trajet* of the cinematography in high modernist novels, we will focus our attention on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and on the particular elements that compose Woolf's prose in the narration of the thoughts, events and actions of the numerous characters of the novel. We will devote our analysis to the complex coordination of the urban dynamism that during the 6th of June, the day when the novel is set, involves and conjoins the singular London experiences of the various characters, such as Miss Kilman, Peter Walsh, Septimus and Rezia Warren Smith or Clarissa Dalloway. Specifically, we will investigate the combination and articulation of the urban spaces and times of the singular characters that mingle throughout Woolf's novel, attempting to accentuate different modalities whereby the categories of time and space are expressed in the high modernist example of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Before analysing the specific mechanisms that articulate the composition of Woolf's complex mosaic of characters and events, temporalities and spatialities, I intend to clarify the relation between the philosophical categories of time and space and the modernist novelistic form.

Frederic Jameson in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, proposed an autonomous post-modern thinking not intended as a mere modernist decline or prolongation. In order to support his theory, Jameson identifies a crucial spatial turn in post-modern art adequate to the parallel new logic of late capitalism. What differentiates postmodernism from modernism, according to Jameson, can be ascribed to the inversion of time and space as fundamental characteristics of these periods and economies: "I think it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism" (16). Jameson affirms how modernism performs a paradoxical experience of coexistence of archaic residuals and modern innovations, "the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous", where distinct

moments of human history synchronically live together. This peculiar overlapping of distinct temporalities within a synchronic reality allows Jameson to “define *modernism* as the experience and the result of *incomplete* modernization, and to suggest that the postmodern begins to make its appearance wherever the modernization process no longer has archaic features and obstacles to overcome and has triumphantly implanted its own autonomous logic (for which, of course, at that point the word *modernization* becomes a misnomer, since everything is already ‘modern’)” (366, original emphasis). Therefore, the incomplete nature of modernism fosters, according to Jameson, the constitution of an artistic reflection and a philosophical paradigm that evolves around the notion of temporality and memory, “the very thrill of the ‘modern’” (366).

If categories of time dominated high modernism while categories of space dominate our postmodern condition, how should we approach the category of space in high modernism or that of time in postmodernism? Are these categories subjected to the respective domination of time and space or should they be considered as autonomous? In my reading of Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* I propose an investigation of high modernist spatiality in relation to what Jameson calls the modernist temporal thrill. Indeed, if categories of time characterised high modernity, reflexively they must have influenced the modern categories of space. In this sense, assuming movement as the possible *trait-d’union* between categories of time and space, my reading constitutes an attempt to analyse the autonomous yet relational specificity of *Mrs. Dalloway* as an introductory element of the *trajet* of the novel as cinematography.

When Jameson stresses the centrality of temporality in high modernism, the philosophy of time of Henri Bergson represents one of its most prominent examples. Throughout Bergson’s oeuvre, the notion of time and its consequence on reality occupies a central position. Indeed, as the postmodern spatial turn seems to enact a reaction to modernist temporality, in a similar way Bergson’s philosophy emerged as a criticism of the philosophical and scientific logic that was dominating the debate whereby time was subjected to space, temporality was spatialized and

considered as a homogeneous medium. If the logic of pre-high modernism was, according to Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, "the logic of solids", then the logic of high modernism should have been that of the liberation of time from the categories of space. The homogeneity of space and time as divisible, immobile dimensions of reality enacted a double work of solidification and of division "which we effect on the moving continuity of the real in order to obtain there a fulcrum for our action, in order to fix within it starting points for our operation, in short, to introduce into it real changes" (*Matter* 280). In this sense, the inherent mutability and instability of reality cannot be reduced either to homogeneous space or spatialised time; in order to attempt to theorise movement and reality itself, Bergson assumed that we have to consider movement as prior to space and spatialised time. Bergson's philosophy, hence, does not demonise space as the dominant concept that trapped time, but rather the immobility and homogeneity of the exclusion of movement from modern thinking that condemned both space and time to fixed categorizations.³³ According to Bergson neither time nor space are prioritized, on the contrary, both time and space present themselves in reality as a mixed composite whereby the former presents differences of kind and the latter differences of degree.³⁴

Bergson, consequently, detects a common philosophical misunderstanding that confuses these two typologies of differences and considers the temporal qualitative experience through the quantitative reality of space. However, these two typologies must not be interpreted as incommunicable and pure domains since they are merely abstractions of the hybridism of reality itself as mutable and mobile: "Bergson is aware that things are mixed together in reality; in fact, experience itself offers us nothing but composites" (*Bergsonism* 22). Therefore, movement is the only reality acceptable that avoids the abstract yet useful categories of time and space that mutually emerged in a dynamic and heterogeneous composition; "thus, though movement travels across

³³ "According to the first thesis, movement is distinct from the space covered. The space covered is the past, movement is the present, the act of covering. The space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided. This already presupposes a more complex idea: the spaces covered all belong to a single, identical, homogeneous space, while the movements are heterogeneous, irreducible among themselves" (*CI* 1).

³⁴ See Deleuze's *Bergsonism* p. 34

space, movement itself is not the space it passes over and cannot be completely reduced to it” (*Bergson and Philosophy* 27). Hence, although Bergson’s philosophy is undoubtedly focused on the conceptualization of time as an independent dimension, reflexively it allows the possibility of shaping an abstraction of space as a dynamic dimension characterised by specific yet communal traits with that of time itself. Through this perspective, we can now approach Woolf’s “most celebrated London novel” (Squier 91), *Mrs. Dalloway*, and see how the *trajet* of the high modernist novel as cinematography condenses the dynamic mix of temporality and spatiality in the urban environment.

Mrs. Dalloway’s Forms

Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* has inspired multiple readings, analysing sexual, gender, temporal, spatial or political elements of the novel. In some of these readings Clarissa Dalloway and her mundanity, symbolised by her deference to her politically powerful husband Richard and her eagerness for organizing her glamorous party that concludes the novel, are presented as complaisant effects of patriarchal domination,³⁵ while her independent daughter Elizabeth and her professional aspirations constitute a resistant opposition. In some others, Clarissa, being equated to the outcast and World War I veteran Septimus Warren Smith or expressing a homosexual attraction towards her friend Sally, is seen as a sort of resistance figure to the male dominated social environment.³⁶

³⁵ This is the case in Shannon Forbes’ “Equating Performance with Identity: The Failure of Clarissa Dalloway’s Victorian ‘Self’ in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*” where Forbes proposes Clarissa as a complaisant victim of English patriarchal society: “What I would like to address are the consequences of Clarissa’s decision to define her life in terms of her performance as Mrs. Richard Dalloway, the perfect hostess. Clarissa performs the role to the extent that it consumes her. Clarissa tries to equate the performance of this role 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 fulfillment, and ironically, virtually no self at all” (39). In the same vein Susan M. Squier in *Virginia Woolf and London* affirms that “Clarissa thinks of herself as merely background and does not attempt to project herself into the world” (99).

³⁶ For instance Nathalia Wright in “*Mrs. Dalloway: a study in composition*” affirms: “The most overwhelming internal evidence of this relationship [between Clarissa and Septimus] occurs when Clarissa, postulating three reasons for ending her own life, hits in the middle upon the very one which had driven Septimus to fling himself down upon the railings: the in-tolerable pressure exerted upon the soul by passionless men” (352). In “Life After Death: The Allegorical progress of *Mrs. Dalloway*”, Caroline Webb notes that “Woolf thus invites her connective readers to apprehend the complementary relation developing throughout the novel between Clarissa and Septimus, each absorbed in memories of the past and thoughts of death, each finally trying to give something, the one “[flinging] it away” and the other throwing a party” (280).

Analogously, the depiction of London in Woolf's novel reflects these multiperspectival interpretations, oscillating between being cast as the symbolic performance of patriarchal abuse,³⁷ as the spatial container of Bergsonian *durée*,³⁸ or of psychic emotional non-Bergsonian temporalities.³⁹ Despite their heterogeneous and sometimes oppositional perspectives, the various interpretations of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* share a general tendency to focus their attention on particular positions, to use a Bergsonian term, on particular aspects such as gender, sexuality, politics or the analysis of particular characters, dialogues, environments or aesthetic devices that are reflexively assumed to characterise the novel as a whole. My reading on the other hand, will be an attempt to focus on the narrative intervals *between* these various positions; not to claim a primacy of these intervals in respect to the positions, but rather to perform that retrospective movement that allows to reconstruct at least the illusion of continuity and unity. Hence, firstly I will present the formal characteristics of *Mrs. Dalloway* that allowed Woolf to compose a continuous virtuality of movement and secondly I will investigate how London's urbanity functions as an actual heterogeneous ground for the writing of movement in *Mrs. Dalloway*'s intervals.

A brief analysis of the formal devices that characterise Woolf's prose in *Mrs. Dalloway* will now introduce the problematic of the writing of movement. The mosaic of kaleidoscopic consciousnesses and characters that compose Woolf's novel had to be supported by a consequent complex technical apparatus that followed the inherent multiplicity of the narrative content. By the time she was conceiving her next novel, *To the Lighthouse* in 1925, the year when *Mrs. Dalloway* was published, Woolf was imagining to restructure the formal components of the traditional novel in order to propose something innovative and hybrid: "I have an idea that I will invent a new name

³⁷ See Susan M. Squier's text.

³⁸ As in Jörg Hasler's "Virginia Woolf and the Chimes of Big Ben" where Hasler identifies in the novel two typologies of time: internal, the one of memory, consciousness and daydreaming, and external, the one of mechanic clocks, omnibuses and institutions: "In *Mrs. Dalloway* the main characters are almost uninterruptedly living in the *durée bergsonienne*, receptively, passively yielding to memories-even in the midst of London's traffic- memories and associations prompted, as in Proust, by all kinds of sense-stimuli" (148).

³⁹ As in Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*: "The monumental time that both Septimus and Clarissa confront has nothing to do with Bergson's spatialized time. It exists, so to speak, in its own right and is not the result of a confusion between space and duration" (190).

for my books to supplant ‘novel’. A new – by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?” (*Diary* 33). The capacity of prose to incorporate different techniques and to structure a coherent unity out of this multiplicity, “to deal with the common and the complex” (*E4* 436), allowed Woolf to enlarge the traditional limit of the novel in order to embrace some attributes of lyrical narrative: taking “the mould of that queer conglomeration of incongruous things – the modern life” (*E4* 436). Inspired by her literary and personal friendship with T. S. Eliot and by the publication of his *The Waste Land*, Woolf proposed a novelistic form that, merging the techniques of drama, poetry and prose, could harness: “the power of music, the stimulus of sight [...] the emotions bred in us by the crowds, [...], the delight of movement, the intoxication of wine. Every moment is the centre and meeting-place of an extraordinary number of perceptions which have not yet been expressed” (*E4* 439). In this sense, the novelistic openness presupposed its capacity to provide a hybridization of the form that allowed to capture the frenzy of modernity with its crowds, sensations and movements. This intoxication of her prose that had grown during the conception of *To the Lighthouse* finds its origin in the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway*, when Woolf wrote in her diary “[i]t is poetry that I want now – long poems” (*D2* 310). And a few months later she wrote: “I believe its getting the rhythm in writing that matters. Could I get my tomorrow mornings rhythm right – take the skip of my sentence at the right moment – I should reel it off” (*D2* 322).

But if this appetite for poetry and its techniques is testified on a biographical and critical level by Woolf’s diary and essays of the period, how had it been refracted in the prose of *Mrs. Dalloway*? Through which technical peculiarities is the continuity of the movement of modern life and the kaleidoscopic contiguity of private consciousnesses supported by the formal structure of the novel? In order to compose a plausible answer we have isolated four devices: the use of the stream of consciousness, the use of parentheticals, the use of dialogical free indirect discourse and the use of dynamic intervals. Obviously these techniques must not be intended as completely autonomous and pure components but as useful abstractions that can dissect the complex heterogeneity of

Woolf's narrative. Therefore, while the first three devices, as we will shortly see, have been already investigated and highlighted, the dynamic intervals of *Mrs. Dalloway* have not yet been considered as a structural contribution for the inherent fluidity of the novel.

From the coinage of the term "stream of consciousness" by May Sinclair while reviewing Dorothy Richardson's novel *Pilgrimage* in *The Egoist* in 1918, this peculiar novelistic technique has been associated with the prose of several high modernist writers, from James Joyce to William Faulkner, from Italo Svevo to John Dos Passos, and Virginia Woolf's prose is not an exception. Indeed, from Shiv K. Kumar's *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* of 1963, until the more recent David Dowling's *Mrs. Dalloway: Mapping the Stream of Consciousness* and Deborah Parson's *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf* of 2007, this technique has been considered as a structural component of Woolf's works, *Mrs. Dalloway* included. Supporting his analysis by a Bergsonian perspective, whereby "Bergsonism alone offers a plausible and integrated explanation of the enigma of *le roman fleuve*" (viii), Kundera affirms how the stream of consciousness technique expresses the literary attempt to immobilize into writing the dynamic reality of modernity. Without withdrawing the objective reality that surrounds the human mind, this specific device allows a "new realization of experience as a process of dynamic renewal" (2). In this sense, stream of consciousness evokes a sense of fluidity by its merging "employ of all kinds of linguistic devices such as frequent use of parenthesis, propositional participles, co-ordinative conjunctions, the imperfect tense, dots" (33). Expressing characters as processes "of ceaseless becoming" (1), the stream of consciousness, according to Kundera, expresses mainly a temporal dimension, whereby time as a "new mode of artistic perception in the contemporary novel" (4) refracts "no longer a mere image of space, now [it] becomes the pure essence of reality" (10). For this reason, according to Kundera, memory is the "conditioning factor in all our mental processes, constitutes the essence of the stream of consciousness novel" (25). Memory and temporality, as Jameson suggested, seem to be the hallmark of modernist novelistic

contents and techniques. In Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* the use of the stream of consciousness technique, according to Kundera, is specifically related to the expression of the continuity between the internal and singular temporalities and their constant and fluid exchange in the urban environment, "Time with her is almost a mode of perception, a filter which distils all phenomena before they are apprehended in their true significance and relationship" (68). Through this perspective the perpetual mobility of experiences and consciousnesses, the "ceaseless succession of qualitative changes" (70) in *Mrs. Dalloway*'s prose reiterates and performs the necessity of continuity and dynamism in a literary text that aims to refract the simultaneous mobile reality of modernity itself. The stream of consciousness, hence, supports the composition of a heterogeneous web of relations and perceptions that not only connects different times, *durées* or memories, but also space, perceptions and actions. Indeed, as David Dowling affirms, "[w]hat Woolf discovered in *Mrs. Dalloway* was her voice, together with her theme of human relations" (14) and in a similar vein Deborah Parsons notes how Woolf's prose performs a "technique that escapes the singular interior monologues of Joyce [']s [...] fiction to render both the separateness of individual minds but also the moments when they interconnect" (76). Consequently, stream of consciousness in Woolf's novel is not merely a formal device that expresses the necessity of depicting the incommunicable reality of the idiosyncratic Bergsonian *durée*, but also it fluidizes her attempt to assemble the succession of internal and external experiences, the solitude of singular perceptions and the collectivity of modern urbanism. Therefore, this tunnelling process between interior and exterior, time and space, singular and collective dynamizes Woolf's writing, refracting the heterogeneity and mobility of modernity itself, expressing not only the positional reality of human minds or social environments, but also their relational and interconnective moments of articulation—what we will later call the dynamic intervals.

The inclusive feature of the stream of consciousness, where different literary techniques find their cohesive articulation, involves also Woolf's frequent use of free indirect discourse (FID).

Indeed, as a narrative technique the FID - encompassing both free indirect speech (FIS) and free indirect thought (FIT) - serves a variety of functions. By definition FID blurs the distinction between direct and indirect discourse so that it can be defined as a type of narration in which a character's vocalization and a narrator's voice are blended without any reporting clause (Wales 164) and it is the displacement of the objective author's plane and subjective character's plane which are balanced (Leskiv 52). Hence, the coincidence of multiple voices in the narrative flux of the narrator's descriptions tends to offer a reading experience where the boundaries between objective representations and subjective consciousnesses are labile. According to Pasolini, FID is a meta-device that writers use in order to "parlare attraverso il parlante [speak through the speaker]" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1345), hence it presupposes the doubling of the voice of the author who, however, does not *ventriloquize* or *imitate* the jargon of the character, in contrast to the *interior monologue*, but actually speaks through this different jargon, in a situation of singular indiscernibility. For this reason, the free indirect discourse in Pasolini's conception: "È tutto sommato, una proiezione della confusione della vita in un momento mostruosamente sintetico che non ha però la forza della sintesi è sintesi come pura pluralità e contemporaneità di tecniche possibili [After all it is a projection of the confusion of life in a monstrously synthetic moment that has not, however, the power of synthesis as pure plurality and contemporaneity of possible techniques]" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1353). Therefore, as the distance between the character and the narrator and the narrator and the author tends to become confused, simultaneously this variation affects also the tenses and temporalities within the narration itself since, as Zohreh Gharaei and Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi note in "Free Indirect Discourse in Farsi Translations of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*", "progressive tenseless aspects in FID portray the present consciousness of the characters, while having some references to a distant past" (2). Similarly to the stream of consciousness technique, the FID seeks to express the singularity of perception through the structuring of a cohesive continuous flow. In the complex composition of the polyphonic world of *Mrs. Dalloway*'s voices where "direct quotations, reported

statements and third-person descriptions coexist” (277), as Debra Williams Gualandi notes, “the reader must then either make an effort to locate the specific speaker, or allow the statement to afloat in an amorphous world of unclaimed words” (277).

However, as the stream of consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway* finds its dynamism not only in the singular refraction of human private consciousness but also in their interconnective articulation, FID enacts a similar mechanism whereby “the variety of voices cannot be revealed in a vacuum. Rather, interaction, conflict and contact must take place, either in the form of relationships between different characters or the meeting of different voices in the same character’s discourse” (278). Hence, the interaction, the articulation in an insoluble dynamic continuity of voices and consciousnesses is what formally supports the heteroglossia, using the Bakhtinian term, of the novelistic hybrid⁴⁰ of Woolf’s prose. Even in the case of FID, the use of this particular technique is linked not merely to its formal facets since it conditions the content of Woolf’s novel. Indeed, the porosity of FID, along with that of the stream of consciousness, tends to dynamize to the extremes the inherent openness of the novelistic form; blurring the gaps between the internal and external, collective and psychic world,⁴¹ Woolf’s polyphonic prose performs the unpredictable swerve, the *clinamen* of atomistic voices that support the continuous and cohesive tunnellings from one character to another, from one temporal dimension to another and from one space to another.

As we have seen, both stream of consciousness and FID are mixed literary techniques that are in relation with each other and simultaneously support the hybridism of Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. Analogously, the use of parentheticals contributes to the dynamization of the novelistic writing and to the entanglement between specific techniques in the composition of the coherent and cohesive wholeness of *Mrs. Dalloway*. A parenthetical as a technical device is often assumed as an instance of disfluency, a mere digression from the main discourse (Wichmann 2001), as Yaxiao Cui notes

⁴⁰ This need for interconnection and montage is stressed also by Bakhtin who affirms that the novelistic hybrid is a “system for bringing different languages in contact with one another, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of another” (361)

⁴¹ “The inner and outer world carry on a continuing conversation; historical events become episodes in the psychic history of individuals and affect their destinies profoundly” (Zwerdling 31).

“most definitions⁴² of parentheticals stress that this construction displays syntactic independence from the host structure. In other words, a parenthetical does not play any syntactic role in the structure of the host clause” (177). In this sense parentheticals being alien interjections within the supposed homogeneity of the linear super-structure are ‘marked forms of heterogeneity’ (Morrissey 51). Despite this inherent alterity of parentheticals, the use of this literary technique implies an inclusive mechanism of incorporation in the principle line of narrative. As Cui notes, their nature and the location in Woolf’s text is quite diverse since “[i]n some cases, parentheticals are inserted in the middle of a sentence. In other cases, a parenthetical comes at the end of a sentence or after a complete sentence, marked off as parentheticals by a pair of brackets” (180). However, this diversity is supported by a communal function whereby the parentheticals correspond to points of interactions where different consciousness, tenses and spaces come in contact one with the other. As with the stream of consciousness and the FID, the parentheticals provide the technical literary tool to interweave distinct viewpoints or temporalities. What Erich Auerbach called, referring to Woolf’s prose, the “multipersonal representation of consciousness” (535–536) is, hence, performed also by this particular use of parentheticals that not only presuppose the narrative passage from one viewpoint to another, but also from an objective temporality to a personal mnemonic time, as Cui notes: “The text no longer revolves around a single source of consciousness; simultaneity and multiplicity have become the new mode. Woolf’s use of parentheticals to enact a shift in viewpoint also indicates further significance behind the linguistic form” (184). Paradoxically, when the heterogeneous alterity of parentheticals is inserted in an inherently hybrid text such as Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, this alienation is incorporated in the dynamic flow of the writing and, furthermore, it constitutes a structural component for the cohesiveness of the coherence of the novel itself. Parentheticals, hence, contribute along with the FID and the stream of consciousness not only to the

⁴² For example, Biber et al. define a parenthetical as “an interpolated structure [...] a digressive structure [...] which is inserted in the middle of another structure, and which is unintegrated in the sense that it could be omitted without affecting the rest of that structure or its meaning” (1067). Similarly, Dehé and Kavalova offer the following definition: “parentheticals are expressions that are linearly represented in a given string of utterance (a host sentence), but seem structurally independent at the same time” (1).

specific task of expressing the peculiarity of a singular consciousness or temporality, they also, in their conjoining and articulative facet, allow Woolf to refract that dynamism of modern reality that analogously distinguished Bergson's conception on movement as the articulation between different positions.

The Dynamic Intervals

After having briefly presented the three literary techniques that compose Woolf's structure, we can now introduce what we have called the dynamic intervals that are the hybrid junctures formed by the combination of the previous three formal devices. In an entry of her diary of 1923 Woolf wrote: "I should say a good deal about *The Hours*, & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment" (D2 263). Interpreting Woolf's words on the first draft of *Mrs. Dalloway* called *The Hours*, some critics have focused on the modalities through which Woolf differentiates her text from the chains of the linear narrative structure, assuming the caves as the temporal idiosyncratic shadows of the various characters and their merging one in the other. On the other hand, other critics, as Hague, argue that the tunnelling of these shared caves is translatable as "the rendering of covert connections among the characters in an appropriate form" (235), a sort of tangible link between individuals. The former perspective takes a temporal dimension of the caves, while the latter suggests almost a contiguous spatiality, both textual and of content, between different singular consciousnesses. As we saw, all three techniques discussed imply in their more general definition and in their specific application to *Mrs. Dalloway* an interconnective and articulative mechanism; is it possible, however, to pinpoint passages in Woolf's novel where this dynamism between consciousnesses, times and spaces unfolds directly?

From the first pages of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf introduces the polyphonic complexity that will

characterize the rest of the novel whereby following the very first lines of the novel through the FIT⁴³ of Clarissa Dalloway's consciousness and actions in London on the morning of the 6th of June, we witness the fragmentation and combination of Clarissa's thought into other, different voices. Indeed, by introducing us early on to Clarissa Dalloway and the World War I veteran Septimus Warren Smith, Woolf familiarizes us with the singularity and fundamental incommunicability between the different consciousnesses that will compose the heterogeneous mosaic of the novel until the kaleidoscopic and vibrant final scene of Clarissa's party.

Paradoxically, the various internal temporalities and spaces of each character are connected by the peculiar and individual solitude that characterizes them. Indeed, in the first pages of the novel, by merging the different techniques, Woolf structures a web of singular solitudes. We pass in the same urban frenetic moments from Clarissa's inevitable loneliness: "She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone" (9) and invisibility: "the oddest sense being herself invisible, unseen" (11) to Septimus' suicidal intention: "I will kill myself!" (16). However, if Septimus and Clarissa are recognizable as sort of doubles,⁴⁴ being respectively an unstable outcast from World War I and the mundane wife of an influential English politician, or "two aspects of annihilation, one more terrifying than the other: the death of the body and the death of the soul" (354) as Wright defines them, the inherent separateness and closure between singularities is shared also by characters who are not affected by the reflexive marginality of Clarissa and Septimus. Woolf's novel, therefore, becomes a sort of monument to the "indomitable egotism" (41) of modernity, using Clarissa's words; we hear Rezia Warren Smith's outcry "I am alone! I am alone!" (23), Clarissa's youth love Peter Walsh "feeling hollowed out,

⁴³ "For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming" (5).

⁴⁴ "That Septimus and Mrs. Dalloway are doubles and that in the first version, in which Septimus did not exist, Mrs. Dalloway was to kill herself, has been acknowledged by Mrs. Woolf. The most overwhelming internal evidence of this relationship occurs when Clarissa, postulating three reasons for ending her own life, hits in the middle upon the very one which had driven Septimus to fling himself down upon the railings: the in-tolerable pressure exerted upon the soul by passionless men. Her other reasons-fear and the impossibility of communication-were also problems of Septimus', who feared the world's coming to an end before his eyes and whose poems and drawings failed so desperately to pluck the truth from the universe. Thus brooding, Mrs. Dalloway felt 'somehow it was her disaster-her disgrace'; and again 'she felt somehow very like him-the young man who had killed himself'" (Wright 352).

utterly empty within” (45), but also the bitter remark by Miss Kilman ““People don’t ask me to parties’ – and she knew as she said it that it was this egotism that was her undoing” (117), and Elizabeth Dalloway, whose dreams of professional satisfaction as a doctor or a farmer make her “a pioneer, a stray, venturing, trusting” (122). In this sense, the example of Clarissa’s husband Richard Dalloway can be considered as the brightest experience of the incommunicable separateness between singularities. Indeed, although his influential and dominant social position as a member of the political English establishment, Richard finds himself unable to communicate his internal thoughts for Clarissa. After having had a vision of Clarissa and their life together, Richard repeatedly affirms to himself to declare “I love you” to his wife. Despite this firm conviction transformed in a sort of mantra by its continuous repetition (four times in less than two pages), when Richard finally reaches Clarissa “he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words” (105). Paradoxically, Richard’s inherent incapacity to pronounce these few words to his wife, his separateness is what connects him to Clarissa who wisely affirms that “a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf” (107) must be respected.

This interconnective web of solitudes, this indomitable egotism is not merely composed by the mobile interweaving of the three techniques previously presented, but it is also actualised by dynamic intervals, by the specific portions of the text where the action passes from one character to another, where the focalization of Woolf’s writing shifts its attention from the movements of a specific person without abandoning the consciousnesses of the others. From the very first lines of *Mrs. Dalloway* we witness the emergence of the various consciousnesses in the dynamic flow of modern urbanity, Clarissa’s kaleidoscopic perceptions and thoughts on the London streets and on her party to come are integral components of her spatial translation into the city:

“In people’s eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor, cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane

overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June” (6).

Life, London and the very instantaneous moment are ineluctably connected one to the other, they form a dynamic unity where Clarissa experiences a heterogeneous reality that is neither in spatial nor temporal terms that of a measurable dimension. Woolf’s kaleidoscopic mosaic is structured on the very plausibility of this articulative movement of modern urbanity that integrates singular actions into a cohesive novelistic flux.

Indeed, from the emergence of the spatio-temporal dimension of London we experience how this dynamic transition is a repeated pattern in Woolf’s writing. Throughout the novel, it is possible to detect several passages where, despite the variety of consciousnesses that are mixed in the narrative, Woolf’s focalization shifts between singular movements of particular characters in the city. For instance, after having followed Clarissa in her virtual and actual wanderings through the streets of London, we unexpectedly encounter the perceptive consciousness of Septimus through the dynamic interval between them. Indeed, after having described Clarissa’s reaction, “oh! A pistol shot in the street outside!” (14), to the explosion of a starting motor car, Woolf moves the narration from Clarissa’s actions and thoughts to Septimus Warren Smith’s consciousness by using their simultaneous coexistence among the “passers-by, who, of course stopped and stared” (14) the noisy ignition of the car:

“Yet rumours were at once in circulation from the middle of Bond Street to Oxford Street on one side, to Atkinson’s scent shop on the other, passing invisibly, inaudibly, like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills, falling indeed with something of a cloud’s sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly” (14).

This passage is the moment where Woolf shifts the narration, after the fearful jolt of Clarissa, to Septimus Warren Smith: “aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat” (15). Enacting a particular mechanism whereby the spatial contiguity of Clarissa and Septimus in the rumbling noise and circulation in the middle of Bond Street and Oxford Street,

this passage allows Woolf the continuous transition between the two characters without breaking the dynamism of the writing, her cinematography. Just a few pages later, a similar interval is present between the voices of the crowd that comment on the flight of an advertising aeroplane over the city of London and Septimus' wife Lucrezia sitting in a seat in the Broad Walk of Regent's Park: "the aeroplane rushed out of the clouds again, the sound boring into the ears of all people in the Mall, in the Green Park, in Piccadilly, in Regent Street, in Regent's Park" (21). Again, the contiguity in the heterogeneous spatial dimension of modern urbanity between the crowd and Lucrezia allows Woolf's dynamic writing to continue without breaking its fluidity into descriptive sections or chapters, but merely expressing the coexistence of different characters in the same *topos* of London.

This particular typology of transition is what we call *syntopic*⁴⁵ interval, that is an interval between singular actions, thoughts or consciousnesses based on their simultaneous spatial contiguity, a copresence in a specific place as in the case of Septimus and Clarissa in Bond Street. We identify this first typology of interval in Woolf's prose in order to differentiate it from the other parallel modality through which the dynamic intervals are presented. Indeed, if we consider this passage: "It was precisely twelve o'clock; twelve by Big Ben; whose stroke was wafted over the northern part of London; [...] twelve o'clock struck as Clarissa Dalloway laid her green dress on her bed, and the Warren Smiths walked down Harley Street" (84), it is clear how the transition from Clarissa's actions and thoughts to the Warren Smiths is based not on their syntopic existence but rather on their synchronous dimension, whereby they share a simultaneous temporality, "twelve by Big Ben". Analogously, the synchronism of the dynamic intervals can include also the passage where Richard Dalloway and his friend Hugh Whitbread "hesitated at the corner of Conduit Street" (100) while "after lunching with them, by a thin thread, which (as she dozed there) became hazy with the sound of bells, striking the hour or ringing the service, as a single spider's thread is blotted with rain-drops, and, burdened, sags down. So she [Lady Bruton] slept" (100). Again the interval, the spider web between the two friends and their lunch hostess is composed on the simultaneity, on

⁴⁵ From the Greek *syn* [together] + *topos* [place].

the synchronism of their movements through the city or on the perceptive dynamism that is performed in London. Therefore, the communal ground for the continuity in the content and in the formal structure of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* seems based on the inherent dynamism that the modern urbanity supports both in the temporal and spatial dimension. Indeed, considering the syntopic interval which allows Woolf to pass from and connect the Warren Smiths to Peter Walsh in Regent's Park: "and that is being young, Peter Walsh thought as he passed them" (64) or the synchronous interval from Clarissa to Miss Kilman while "Volubly, troublously, the late clock sounded, coming in on the wake of Big Ben [...] Beaten up, broken up by the assault of carriages, the brutality of vans, the eager advance of myriads of angular men, of flaunting women, the domes and spires of offices and hospitals" (114); we realise how the diversity and specificity of both intervals is again settled in their communal expression of the urban dynamism where and when they emerge.

In the former the transition is operated through the inherent mobility of Peter Welsh who "passed" the Warren Smiths in Regent's Park, while in the latter passage the temporal transition from Clarissa to Miss Kilman is performed while Miss Kilman is among the dynamic urban stream of "angular men" and "flaunting women". The mobile nature of the vehicles, but also the heterogeneity of architecture and the wanderings of the characters is what presupposes their interconnection both in the temporal and spatial dimension. Indeed, as Andelys Wood notes in "Walking the web in the lost London of *Mrs. Dalloway*", Woolf's novel composes a "network of spatial and temporal relationships[;] [...]" In fact, readers who attempt to follow both time and place cues will find discrepancies, even impossibilities" (19). Therefore, the very attempt to reduce *Mrs. Dalloway* to a merely temporal tunnelling between internal and external consciousnesses or as a spatial cartography of London⁴⁶ will inevitably ignore their mutual interweaving since "what Woolf does in *Mrs. Dalloway* to a greater extent than in any of her other novels is insist that readers

⁴⁶ Beside David Daiches and John Flower's "A walking tour with Mrs. Dalloway" in *Literary Landscapes of the British Isles: A Narrative Atlas*, there are several web projects that map Woolf's novel cartography of London composed by the various movements of the characters: The *Mrs. Dalloway*'s mapping project (<http://mrsdallowaymappingproject.weebly.com/>) and A *Mrs. Dalloway* Walk in London (http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_res.walk.htm)

remain aware of time and place simultaneously, so that a critical focus on one or the other is too limiting” (Wood 26). In this sense, the identification of the dynamic intervals and of their inherent mobility referred to the urban environment, kinetic verbs and other formal techniques introduce the possibility of a cinematography in Woolf’s prose that does not exclude other critical perspectives. By viewing *Mrs. Dalloway* as a continuous flux of consciousnesses where the caves of human perception and environments are interconnected without solution, the dynamic intervals become structural components of this kinetic composition whereby singularities coexist in a coherent novelistic whole.

Indeed, if considering just the spatiality or temporality of *Mrs. Dalloway* will lead us to impossibilities, on the other hand the gap between these discrepancies can condense their diversity since, as Gilles Deleuze affirms in *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*: “you can bring two instants or two positions together to infinity; but movement will always occur in the interval between the two” (1). As cinematography *as* cinema, the cinematic writing of movement, is not given by the mere juxtaposition of immobile photogrammes, but “the movement on the contrary belongs to the intermediate image as immediate given” (2); analogously the writing of movement as novel in *Mrs. Dalloway*, its continuity and fluidity belongs to the dynamic intervals that are supported by the temporal and spatial dimension of modern urbanity. Therefore, paying attention to the passages of Woolf’s novel that are in between the portions of the text where the actual thoughts, actions and consciousnesses, or the positions, using a Bergsonian term, of the various characters are described, can help explain the continuous fluidity that we experience as readers encountering the chapterless narrative mosaic of *Mrs. Dalloway*. The various mobile sections,⁴⁷ that compose Woolf’s novel and that lead the reader to the final kaleidoscopic scene of Clarissa’s party, are grounded on the articulative dynamism that allow their singular emergences. When the narration conjoins the dead body of the suicidal Septimus to the vain thoughts of Peter Walsh through the syntopicity of the

⁴⁷ “The modern scientific revolution has consisted in relating movement not to privileged instants, but to any-instant-whatever. Although movement was still recomposed, *it was no longer recomposed from formal transcendental elements (poses), but from immanent material elements (sections)*” (C1 4, original emphasis).

sound “the light high bell of the ambulance” (134), that carries Septimus’ corpse, in Walsh’s hotel room, we realise how the very possibility and continuity for Woolf’s gallows humour transition is based on the actual movement through the city and of the virtual movement through the text of the mobile sections that compose it. Analogously, when the novel passes from Clarissa’s anxiety to Peter’s thoughts after their first meeting, we read Peter’s consciousness “as he stepped down the street, speaking to himself rhythmically, in time with the flow of the sound, the direct downright sound of the Big Ben striking the half-hour” (44); again, the synchronism between the two characters is not merely possible for their temporal simultaneity, but also in the urban dynamism that characterises the interval between them, their relational articulation that does not belong to their singularities but to the gap between them.

As Deleuze notes: “Relation is not a property of objects, it is always external to its terms. [...] By movement in space, the objects of a set change their respective positions” (10). The whole of Woolf’s novel is, hence, composed by the relational junctures that suture the singular specificity and incommunicability of different spaces and times through their dynamic expression in the city of London. Perhaps Clarissa herself suggested this possibility in the first pages of the novel where, attempting to “fear no more” her solitude, she states through her free indirect thought:

“somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, she survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like mist between people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her, her life, herself” (10).

The very possibility and reality of interconnection resides in the dynamic web that urbanity allows to articulate between actual and virtual singular consciousnesses, times and spaces; and simultaneously, Woolf’s novel finds its coherence and fluidity through this cinematographic component that interweaves singular mobile sections without fractioning the narration into

incommunicable and static literary photogrammes: “Movement relates the objects between which it is established to the changing whole which it expresses, and vice versa. Through movement the whole is divided up into objects, and objects are re-united in the whole, and indeed between the two ‘the whole’ changes” (*CI* 11).

Following Deleuze’s definition, the inextricable complexity, the “changing whole”, composed by *Mrs. Dalloway*’s “objects”, that is its singular scenes and characters, must not be reconstructed only through the objects themselves, but also through the movement that relates the objects to the whole. Hence, if movement, as we have seen, is fundamentally the spaces or gaps external and between the singular objects, then in order to re-compose the changing whole of Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, we should consider, as we did, the textual intervals whereby the narration passes from one singular action, consciousness or thought to the other. In these small portions of the text it is possible to clarify the articulation and unity of the rest of the novel and, as we have seen, this articulation, despite its syntopic or synchronic typology, operates through the dynamic possibility that the spatio-temporal dimension of London gives to Woolf’s cinematography.

Chapter 2: Jean Rhys's *Quartet* and the Dynamic Oneirism

“Every time that the door of the café swung open to admit a customer she saw the crimson lights of the tobacco shop opposite and the crimson reflection on the asphalt and she began to picture the endless labyrinth of the Paris streets, glistening hardly, crowded with hurrying people” (38). A mixture of hectic excitement and fear characterizes these words of Marya Zelli, the protagonist of Jean Rhys's novel *Quartet*. The endless labyrinth of Paris, wandering crowds and a fervid imagination, are the elements which make up the peculiarities of Jean Rhys's specific writing of movement, that, as we will shortly attempt to show, unfolds an alternative yet coherent possibility in respect to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. How can a modernist novelistic cinematography be performed in a mono-perspectival text, exclusively centred on the conscience, actions and perceptions of a single character, as in Rhys's novel? And, consequently, how can this specific writing constitute an alternative yet coherent *trajet* along with a multi-perspectival text as Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*? In the next pages, we will propose an answer to these questions.

On the one hand, the two novels and their respective authors share close historical and topographical simultaneities. Indeed, while Woolf was part of London's intellectual scene, the Dominican Jean Rhys was wandering between London and Paris where she set her first novel *Quartet* that was published in 1928 just three years after Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. If the topographical and historical simultaneity constitutes the basis for a fruitful comparison, in a similar way also the afterlife,⁴⁸ using Walter Benjamin's expression, the critique apparatus that surrounds these two novels, reflects a communal experience. Just as Woolf's novel and biography prompted the emergence of a multiperspectival eclectic criticism that analyses her work from various positions, Jean Rhys's corpus of texts has also brought fourth a kaleidoscopic range of interpretations, “[s]he and they are in those readings: Caribbean, English, European; feminist and antifeminist; elite, working class, marginal; white and white Creole; outsider and insider; ageless

⁴⁸ We are referring to the term proposed by Benjamin in his well known essay “The Task of the Translator”.

and of her time” (Savory x). On the other hand, when Elaine Savory affirms that “Rhys’s journey from instinctual to professional writer seriously began in Paris in the years of High Modernism” (12), she not merely ascertains a biographical fact, but she implicitly refers to the emergence of *Quartet*, as the first novel of Rhys, in the communal literary milieu that Rhys shared with other contemporary authors, Woolf included. Under the literary and sentimental influence of the English writer Ford Madox Ford,⁴⁹ Rhys developed narrative techniques adequate to her own prose yet ascribable to the literary context that surrounded her. Consequently, Rhys transformed her original “instinctual” writing into a more structured prose where it is possible to detect the various techniques that we have encountered in *Mrs. Dalloway*, from the stream of consciousness to the FID, from the multi-vocal point of view to the interior monologue. As Patricia Moran notes in her brilliant analysis of Woolf’s and Rhys’s “aesthetics of trauma”, “the use of stream of consciousness techniques, monologues, and first-person narrators enables these writers to move away from conventional linear forms and to mimic instead the gaps, sudden shifts of perspective” (5). However, despite this historical and technical contiguity between Rhys and Woolf that has been compared through different perspectives,⁵⁰ their biographical and literary examples represent simultaneously divergent experiences of modernity, both in life and literature. Indeed, while Woolf was an integral component of London literary modernism, Rhys was leading a bohemian and nomadic existence as part of a choir and semi-professional writer throughout Europe. Rhys’s literary and biographical marginality in respect to the aesthetics of modernist movements, is reflected in her substantial literary naivety of narrative techniques and their applications. In this sense, as Thomas F. Staley notes, “Rhys’s art shares many of these characteristics and impulses of

⁴⁹ “Furthermore, she reworked what she learned from Ford, i.e. the prevailing style of European high modernism and how to be a professional writer, in the light of her writing instincts and what was important from her West Indian experience” (36).

⁵⁰ I am referring to the already mentioned text by Patricia Moran, *Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, and the Aesthetics of Trauma*, where the authors and their works are analysed through their communal experience and reflection of traumatic experiences. Analogously, the connection between Woolf and Rhys has been also analysed by Elisabeth Beranger in *Une Epoque de Transe: L’Exemple de Djuna Barnes, Jean Rhys et Virginia Woolf*, where Beranger broadly compared the authors through their feminine corporal experience in respect to the transitional nature of the historical epoch they were living in.

literary modernism, but she was unaware of or removed from many of its preoccupations” (35). Despite the questionable tone of Staley’s intervention, he touches on a crucial biographical and literary point of Rhys’s narrative production. Without the conceptual aims and technical reflections on the formal aspect of narrative prose of Woolf for instance, both as a reader⁵¹ and as a writer, Rhys’s developed a peculiar use of narrative techniques typical of high modernism that characterise her as a heterogeneous component of the *trajet* of the novelistic form of the first half of 20th century. I argue that Jean Rhys’ *Quartet* is a valuable and productive contribution to our study of the writing of movement since, despite being her first novel, “it does record the beginning of what was to become Rhys’s distinctive style” (36), a style that is part of high modernist literature. Specifically, we will attempt to investigate the peculiar combination between her distinctive technique (especially FIT) and the oneiric wanderings of fear and excitement that characterises Marya’s relationship with Paris.

The Postures of Marya Zelli

Originally entitled *Postures*, Jean Rhys’s first novel *Quartet* did not solely change its name but also its literary form before being published. Initially, Rhys was more attracted to other forms of writing, like poetry or theatrical drama, than to the novelistic one, and in the compositional phase of her creative process since “[s]he first wrote *Quartet* as a play” (Savory xiii). If the unconventional origins of Rhys’s writing brought her to different fields of narrative possibilities, evolving into a professional writer she selected the novel as the more suitable form for her style. Indeed, as Staley affirms in his article “The Emergence of a Form: Style and Consciousness in Jean Rhys’s *Quartet*”, “[t]he novel [...] creates enlarged and different demands; it is a genre more complex, more sustained, and, if it permits less refinement, it also calls for a more substantial rendering of character and a more amplified definition of experience” (203). Similarly to Woolf’s *Mrs.*

⁵¹ “she would say to Plante, during the period of working on *Smile Please*, that she had never read Balzac, Proust, Fielding, Trollope, George Eliot, James, Conrad, Joyce” (Savory 16).

Dalloway, Jean Rhys's *Quartet* identified in the novelistic form the necessary openness in order to converge the hybridization of different literary techniques, forms and contents. If *Mrs. Dalloway* condensed the kaleidoscopic, simultaneous temporalities and topographies performed by the consciousnesses of the several characters during a single day of June in London, Jean Rhys's *Quartet* follows four people over the course of a year, the "reckless, lazy, a vagabond by nature" (14) young woman Marya Zelli and her troubled relationship with her husband Stephan, with her lover Hugh Heidler and his wife Lois. Loosely based on her relationship with Ford Maddox Ford, Rhys's novel extends, in respect to Woolf's, the lapse of time where she sets the events, while simultaneously it includes a reduced number of consciousnesses, concentrating the text in a more intimate mosaic. The text, indeed, entirely coalesces in the mono-perspectival thoughts and actions of Marya throughout Paris, following the imprisonment of her husband Stephan and her consequent complex relation with her benefactors and persecutors, the Heidlers.

Which elements position Rhys's novel alongside Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, beside issues of gender, politics or literary techniques? In order to propose a plausible answer we should focus our attention on the original title of *Quartet*, "postures". When Marya "a blond girl, not very tall, slender waisted" (7) appears in the first lines of *Quartet*, she, similarly to Clarissa Dalloway, dynamically emerges as a character and a singular consciousness from the crowded streets and bars of Paris: "Marya Zelli came out of the Café Lavenue, which is a dignified and comparatively expensive establishment on the Boulevard du Montparnasse" (7). If in Woolf's case, the dynamism of the formal apparatus that sustains the novel was set from the very beginning, Rhys's *Quartet* expresses a progressive fluidization of her prose. Indeed, the third-person narrator who tells Marya's first thoughts and actions dissolves, paralleling Marya's increasing instability due to the imprisonment of Stephan, into a complex entanglement of stream of consciousness, FIT and FID, where the narrator oscillates between the third, the second and the first-person. As Mary Lou Emery notes in *Jean Rhys at "World's End"*, in *Quartet* a "new and more direct style now confuses the

narrator's voice and Marya's, posing a question of identity" (106). In this sense, identity should not be merely intended as the perpetual search for stability of the characters, but also as the formal oscillation of the narrator's voice throughout the novel: "The positioning (or posturing) of voices and bodies, taking up or inhabited by various points of view, is precisely what concerns Rhys's narrative technique in *Quartet*" (Emery 108).

The impossibility of stability both in the content and in the form of *Quartet* reflexively manifests the illusoriness of the desire itself for fixed positions. Indeed, Marya's vain and simple efforts to find a durable balance are constantly sabotaged by the dynamic reality she lives in and that she herself performs. Any attempt of classification, of freezing modern urban reality into fixed postures, is destined to fail in the face of the fragmented yet coherent dynamism that surrounds Marya as a character and Rhys as a writer. Marya "liked explaining, classifying, fitting the inhabitants (that is to say, of course the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants) into their proper places in the scheme of things" (48), passing through the Parisian streets she attempts to position her experience of reality: "And on the Boulevard St Michel beavies of young men of every nationality under the sun strolled along smiling at every woman they passed. The Latins were gay and insolent, the Northerners lustful, shamefaced and condescending, the Easterns shy, curious and contemptuous" (54). However, as the narrator's voice does not find any possibility to be fixed into a stable perspective, Marya's desire for classification and balance remains unsatisfied, "Rhys's narrative style revolts against this mania for classification and, at the same time, formalizes the pain and confusion it causes" (Emery 110). Therefore, the formalization of the confusion against the postures imposed on Marya's reality performed by Rhys's style not only presupposes the inherent fragmentation of her novelistic prose into a non-linear complex of narrative techniques and events, but also the actuality of Marya's existence that "though delightful, was haphazard. It lacked, as it were, solidity; it lacked the necessary fixed background (10). As in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the fragmentation of singular consciousnesses and events through content and form in *Quartet* must not be understood, as Elgin

Mellown does,⁵² as a destruction of the continuity of the narrative, but, inversely, it manifests the very possibility of a cohesive wholeness of the text through the specific dynamism allowed by the gaps that this fragmentation presupposes, articulating in a coherent movement any plausible and illusory fixed posture. However, if Woolf's novel developed its cinematography through the complexity of its numerous characters condensing it into specific portions of the text that we called dynamic intervals; how and where does Rhys's *Quartet* perform its writing of movement, being composed just around Marya's thoughts and actions through Paris?

The impossibility to freeze Rhys as a writer and Marya as a character in definite postures⁵³ presupposes the fragmentation of form and content that characterizes *Quartet*'s prose. Marya emerges as a character, similarly to Clarissa Dalloway, in the process of coming out from Café Lavenue. However, unlike Clarissa, Marya is not a prism that allows a refraction of the junctures between different singularities that move through Paris. On the contrary, Marya tends to incorporate other consciousnesses, monopolizing Rhys's novel; as Amy Clukey affirms, “[w]hile Clarissa Dalloway's diffuse self allows her to empathize and form attachments with passers-by during her shopping trips along Bond street [...] Marya also forms transient, meaningful attachments with strangers” (454). Following Clukey, we have to pay attention not only to the similar urban dynamism between Clarissa and Marya, but also to the singular consciousnesses to which Marya is attached by her wanderings: strangers. In Rhys's novel, the term stranger does not merely refer to the simple fact that Marya does not know the people around her, but rather that to her the urban Parisian crowd is composed by people who are foreign to her, not just personally, but, being an English expatriate, also linguistically and culturally. Walking through Paris where she constantly sees refractions of her London past, “as she walked along she was thinking: this street is very like the Tottenham Court Road” (7), Marya seeks in vain, differently from the mundane relational ability

⁵² “The abrupt shifts into the thoughts of another character – often the one against whom the heroine is reacting – destroy the continuity of the narrative and weaken its psychological verisimilitude” (Mellown 470).

⁵³ i.e. determinate narrative techniques, or narrator's voice concerning the form and conventional social behaviours or stable internal and external relationships of the characters concerning the content.

of Clarissa, to establish an emphatic attachment to people, animals,⁵⁴ or Paris itself in order to rebuild the illusionary sense of stability that she identifies thinking about her London youth years:

“It was a foggy afternoon, with a cold sharpness in the air. Outside, the street lamps were lit. ‘it might be London’, thought Marya. The boulevard Arago, like everything else, seemed unreal, fantastic, but also extraordinarily familiar, and she was trying to account for this mysterious impression of familiarity” (37).

The desire for a sympathetic existence that haunts Marya throughout the novel and that is mainly materialised in the double failing relationships with the Heidlars and her husband Stephan, is constantly subjected to the very possibility of her actual displacement, or *dérive*, using the situationist term, in the city:

“The Place Blanche, sometimes so innocently sleepy of an afternoon, was getting ready for the night’s work. People hurried along cowering beneath their umbrellas, and the pavements were there, sad little mirrors which the reflections of the lights tinted with a pull of red. [...] Marya emerged from the Métro on the Place Denfert-Rochereau, thinking: ‘In three minutes I’ll hear somebody talking English’” (23).

As this passage shows, Marya’s desire to hear her mother tongue is motivated by her very displacement through the crowded and frantic streets of Paris that, however, remain impassive to her presence, as reflective mirrors that bounce off the beams of light. In this sense Rhys’s narrative in *Quartet* does not articulate a series of fragmented experiences into a cohesive movement as Woolf did in *Mrs. Dalloway*, but rather she composes Marya’s marginality and disruption in respect to her own internal psychology and to her external relationship with people and environments. As Clukey notes, Rhys’s “impressionist” style, that merges first and third-person narrator, and the use of FID support the alternation between internal and external narration following Marya’s wanderings: “Stylistically, free indirect discourse incorporates both the mimetic, where the narrator

⁵⁴ “The street of homeless cats, she often thought. She never came into it without seeing several of them, rpowling, thin, vagabond, furtive, aloof, but strangely proud. Sympathetic creatures, after all” (52).

shows the story, and the diegetic, where the narrator tells it. This mode of narration allows for the first person interior perspective of Marya and other characters, as well as the exterior perspective of a third person narrator” (445). Consequently, while in Woolf’s prose the dynamic intervals articulated their conjoining function in the space between heterogeneous consciousnesses, in Rhys the relational cohesiveness of movement, which re-unites fragments in a novelistic whole, is composed between the internal and external pieces of Marya’s singular fragmented reality. In her walk in Paris, Marya not only experiences but actually performs the alterity that characterises her being foreign to the crowd and unable to attach herself to what surrounds her, fixing herself into a stable posture. Paradoxically, however, the unity that she seeks in stable positions is enacted by the articulation of the multiple fragments of experience and consciousness that the reader composes in the wholeness of the novel itself. In this sense, Rhys’s elliptical style “create[s] a serious hiatus in a text and give[s] the reader just enough to be able to fill in the spaces” (Savory 37). As Staley notes, “[t]he process for the reader becomes more a sense of shared discovery as the implications of the plot and narrative are embraced through a spatial, thematic, and formal ordering, thus affording an aesthetic whole and creating a far richer potential text for the reader” (53). If Rhys’s narrative possibility to create a novelistic dynamic whole is due to the fragmentation in her narrative style, is there a parallel possibility for Marya to re-unite into a coherent flux the pain and confusion of her haphazard experience?

Marya’s Dynamic Oneirism in Parisian Streets

“She spent the foggy day in endless, aimless walking, for it seemed to her that if she moved quickly enough she would escape the fear that hunted her. It was a vague shadowy fear of something cruel and stupid that had caught her and would never let her go. She had always known that it was there – hidden under the more or less pleasant surface of things [...] you could only walk very fast and try to leave it behind you” (28).

In the few lines of this particular portion of Rhys's *Quartet* we can clearly identify the narrator's voice shifting from the third-person to the second-person narration that characterizes Rhys's style. Secondly, and more interestingly, this quote can meaningfully introduce what we define as the dynamic oneirism. Indeed, by the first term "dynamic", we intend to stress the inherent mobility of Marya's thoughts and actions that are articulated through her actual *dérive*, her physical movement, whereby Marya experiences the confusion and pain of her existence. She walks aimlessly while she is haunted by something indiscernible that, however, is felt *in* movement. After Marya's emergence from Café Lavenue, the "utter mess of her existence" (91) seems to be constantly performed and realized by Marya during her dynamic experience of Paris:

"the same feeling of melancholy pleasure as she had when walking along the shadowed side of one of those narrow streets full of shabby *parfumeries*, second-hand, book-stalls, cheap hat-shops, bars frequented by gaily-painted ladies and loud-voiced men, midwives' premises... Montparnasse was full of these streets and they were inordinately long. You could walk for hours" (9).

The sombre dreamy Marya's unconscious is populated by mnemonic shadows of melancholy, yet it does not emerge during a sleepless night or in an intimate situation; on the contrary, it is experienced by the protagonist in the open-air urban endless labyrinth of the streets of Paris. Vice versa, Marya's actual dynamism throughout the city seems constantly related to what Staley calls Rhys's "sense of lost past" (40) and what Patricia Moran refers to as Rhys's "traumatic narrative", that is "a horrible nostalgia, an ache for the past seized her" (Rhys 70). "The vague shadowy fear of something cruel and stupid that had caught her and would never let her go" (Rhys 28) forms a haunting presence, a schizophrenic mixture of excitement, fear, memory and hallucination, that is ascribable to the term "oneirism", that, refracting its medical origin, corresponds to a dream-like state of abnormal consciousness in which the present reality cannot be distinguished from the mnemonic past or from the perceptual excitement due to the urban frenzy.

The identification of Marya's dynamic oneirism, whereby the simple ride on a merry-go-round "made her feel more normal, less like a grey ghost walking in a vague, shadowy world" (46), simultaneously implies a partial confirmation and critique of Deleuze's cinematic concepts. In *Cinema 2: the Time-Image*, Deleuze presents the characteristics that differentiate in his "taxonomy" of the history of cinema, the first period dominated by the movement-image and the second characterised by the time-image. While the first period "obeys laws which are based on the distribution of *centres of forces* in space" (C2 128, emphasis by Deleuze) presupposing an "indirect representation" of time dependent on movement and derived from action, on the other hand the time-image regime implies a direct representation of time itself "which commands the *false movement*" (C1 IX, emphasis by Deleuze) through the cinematographic medium. We do not intend here to discuss further Deleuze's distinction, but focusing on the implications derived from a direct representation of time we may clarify Rhys's dynamic oneirism in *Quartet*. Indeed, when Deleuze describes in C2 the emergence after World War II of the time-image as the dominant cinematographic typology of image, he identifies as one of the fundamental elements its dream-like process. Following Bergson's theories on memory and time, Deleuze affirms that the time-image, or its sub-classification, the crystal-image "irreducibility consists in the indivisible unity of an actual image and 'its' virtual image" (C2, 78). By proposing the coexistence of virtuality and actuality within the same image, Deleuze assumes that the time-image performs what, according to Bergson, both memory and dream-like processes expresses: time. Deleuze's Bergsonian concept of temporality, indeed, implies that time consists in the coexistence and perpetual merge of planes, circuits or layers of different levels of past that continuously actualize themselves in actual singular temporalities as present. In this sense through memory or dream-like processes, according to Deleuze and Bergson, we perform the very concept of time: "A zone of recollections, dreams, or thoughts corresponds to a particular aspect of the thing: each time it is a plane or a circuit, so that the thing passes through an infinite number of planes or circuits which correspond to its own

‘layers’ or its aspects” (C2 46).

Returning to Marya’s wanderings and their inherent oneirism, we can detect traces of Deleuze’s cinematic concept of time. The mixture of fear, excitement and hallucination, her sense of lost past that accompanies her *dérive* continuously distort the actual experience into the temporal virtuality of a dream-like status: “as soon as she put the light out the fear was with her again – and now it was like a long street where she walked endlessly. A redly lit street, the houses on either side tall, grey and closely shuttered, the only sound the clip-clop of horses’ hoofs behind her, out of sight” (29). Again, the urban plan composed by the intricate and convoluted network of streets, alleys and boulevards of Paris is actually crossed, walked by Marya when she perceives an oppressive hallucinatory feeling where the clip-clop of horses’ hoofs seems to follow her and houses are deformed into creepy Gothic dwellings. When the haphazard existence of Marya epiphanically manifests the haunting presentness of her past, the direct representation of time in Rhys’s prose is connected to its inherent oneirism; it seems that for Marya the only possibility to experience and, consequently, to fill the gaps of her fragmented internal and external life is offered by her oneiric condition:

“she felt for the first time a definite sensation of loss and pain, and tears came into her eyes. She walked on with the fixed idea that if she went far enough she would reach some obscure, dark cavern away from the lights and the passers-by. Surely at the end of this long and glaring row of lamps she would find it, the friendly dark where she could lie and let her heart burst” (117).

Walking and dreaming, wandering and fearing, movement and dark shadows seem to form an indissoluble binomial, and the sole condition where Marya can actually and virtually recompose the utter mess of her existence. Although Marya’s desire to rest in the comfort of the friendly dark, to stop in a stable posture will remain unsatisfied, she is able to express through her actions and thoughts and their inherent oneirism the cohesive flux and unity of her whole existence. However, if

on the one hand Deleuze's concept of time seems to be implied and expressed also by Rhys's writing, on the other hand the examples that we have presented simultaneously propose a critique and further development of Deleuze's theory. This critical attempt is condensed in the terminological juxtaposition of the term "dynamic" beside the term oneirism. If Marya's dream-like consciousness is the performance of her temporal experience, there is also a simultaneous kinetic component that accompanies her oneirism. If we analyse the composition of the passages of Rhys's *Quartet* that we have already mentioned, we realise how the direct representation of time in Marya's existence is characterised by her inherent mobility. The continuous presence of the verb "to walk", but also of analogous terms such as "to hurry" or "to move", does not merely indicate the specific action that Marya is performing during her epiphanic moments. Her dynamic activity is not a physical background that sustains the foreground of time representation, but rather it is the inextricable and equal combination of her dynamism and her oneirism that allows her to coherently represent time: "They passed the deserted entrance of the Bal Bullier and the coloured lights of the Closerie des Lilas, and crossed the street into the dimness of the Avenue de l'Observatoire, where the tops of the trees vanished, ghost-like, in the mist" (40). Again, the inherent dynamism of Marya's "passing" and "crossing" the streets of Paris, accompanied by Lois Heidler, is not a mere contingency beside the fundamental centrality of the dreamy ghost-like experience of the fearful mist since it is *in* "passing" and *in* "crossing", in the combination between the spatial mobility of these activities and of her oneirism, that the direct representation of time emerges.

As in Woolf's dynamic intervals, where the gaps between the various characters were filled by their syntopic or synchronic dynamism in London, in Rhys's text the internal intervals of Marya's reality are filled by her oneiric movement in Paris. In *Refractions of Reality*, John Mullarkey criticizes Deleuze's reading of the Bergsonian concept of time in *CI* and *C2* noting that "The fundamental time-image goes 'beyond movement', and therewith emulates post-Kantian philosophy's escape from Aristotle, when time was liberated in the direct 'time-image'. Movement

now follows from time rather than vice versa” (99). However, according to Mullarkey, by inverting the binary opposition of time and space in favour of the former, Deleuze simply makes “*measured* (spatially quantified) movement subordinate to the *measure of* (spatially quantified) time” (99, emphasis by Mullarkey), hence without overcoming the binary position of space and time criticized by Bergson but simply reversing it. Mullarkey states that “Bergson’s thesis is not about the movement–time binary in fact (which he wouldn’t recognize at all), but one concerning measure and immeasure, or quantity and quality” (99). According to Mullarkey, Deleuze, as Kant before him, internalized time freeing from the yoke of space measurement, whereas for Bergson movement and time are both qualitative changes that are independent from the rigid spatialization of measurement: “Movement *is* Time” (99, emphasis by Mullarkey). When we look at Marya’s kinetic temporality in *Quartet* through this perspective we can recognise the equivalence between her movement in the streets and her direct representation of time composed by hallucinations, memories, fear and excitement:

“As she walked back to the hotel after her meal Marya would have the strange sensation that she was walking under water. The people passing were like the wavering reflections seen in the water, the sound of water was in her ears. Or sometimes she would feel sure that her life was a dream – that all life was a dream. ‘it’s a dream’, she would think; ‘it isn’t real’ – and be strangely comforted. A dream. A dream. *‘la vie toute faite des morceaux. Sans suite comme des rêves’* Who wrote that? Gauguin. *‘Sans suite somme des rêves’*. A dream. Long shining empty streets and tall dark houses looking down at her” (Rhys 96, original emphasis).

In this long passage we can detect several elements that we have stressed in the definition of Rhys’s dynamic oneirism and the combination with her fragmented narrative style, as well as some traits of Deleuze’s concepts and Mullarkey’s critique. Firstly, Rhys’s narrative fragmentation of the linearity of the novelistic form through the use of the stream of consciousness of Marya’s along with the use

of FIT, allows the author to compose the continuity through the very segmentation of the narrator's perspectives. We pass from third-person narrator "she" of the first part of the passage, to the first-narrator internal voice of Marya's thoughts combining it with free indirect thought through the question-answer: "Who wrote that? Gauguin". As Emery notes "[t]hrough recurring suggestions of another character's interiority within hers and through the fluctuation in narrative voice that tends to merge with Marya's, we perceive the process of psychic displacement" (119). Hence, Rhys's narrative style is an integral component for the composition of the novelistic coherency as a whole of *Quartet* along, as in Woolf's case, with the actual writing of movement of the characters' actions and thoughts. Indeed, Rhys's technical apparatus is inextricably functional and parallel to Marya's dynamic oneirism where her abnormal consciousness experiences the continuity and heterogeneity of time *in* movement. Secondly, this passage seems to reiterate, once again, the process through which the internalized existence of Marya, whereby life itself becomes a dream with its consequent hallucinatory perceptions, is performed *in* urban movement in the empty streets of Paris; that is Marya's life is a dream but it is also movement. The epiphanic perception of the illusory reality of life, the very fact of the oneiric ontology of what people call reality is performed by Marya while she "walked back" encountering the foreignness and reflective surface of the hurrying urban crowd along with the shining emptiness of the streets of Paris. Unlike Woolf's London, where the gaps were dynamically filled between heterogeneous existences, Rhys's Paris still holds this dynamic opportunity to reconstruct a cohesive novelistic fluidity, both as a formal and content mechanism, yet it performs it in the singular temporal fragmentation of Marya's own existence, recomposing her temporal frames into an oneiric reality. The very possibility of time is bound to the equivalent possibility of Marya's urban *dérive* in Rhys's text. In this sense, the plausibility of interpretations of Marya's fragmented metropolitan experience, whether it is due to traumatic memories as for Moran or to Rhys's cosmopolitanism as for Clukey,⁵⁵ is contested, but by stressing Rhys's cinematography

⁵⁵ "Rather than acting as a totalizing subjectivity that threatens to swallow up her surroundings, Marya is in danger of being overwhelmed by social forces and consequently never achieves the deep interiority of metropolitan modernism. The metropolis provides the conditions of possibility for a deeply subjective modernist style, but Rhys's novel shows that cosmopolitanism needs something besides rootlessness to achieve deep self-reflexivity—it needs

we rather aim to propose, as in Woolf's case, a parallel perspective that aims to analyse the mechanism that regulates the articulation of such a kaleidoscopic and fractured narrative into the cohesive wholeness of a unitary text such as *Quartet*.

Chapter 3: The Epigraphic Cinematography of Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*

In order to conclude the first section of our study of movement in the pre-war novelistic high modernism, I will analyse the elements that compose the particular urban dynamism of John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*. There are several reasons for concluding this trajectory with Dos Passos's novel. Firstly, *Manhattan Transfer* was originally published in 1925, hence it shares the same historical contingencies wherein both Woolf's and Rhys's text emerged. Moreover, if in Woolf's text we approached the kaleidoscopic urbanity of London and with Rhys's prose we wandered the nostalgic boulevards of Paris, with *Manhattan Transfer* we analogously discover the rhythms and paces of another urbanity, perhaps the modernist urbanity *par excellence*: New York. Indeed, for historical, economic and architectural reasons, the American metropolis can be considered as the apex, and consequently, as the last point before the decline of high modernist urbanism, where Kevin Lynch's idea of the lost legibility of the cityscape⁵⁶ is concretised and Jameson's post-modern impossibility of "cognitive mapping" is ready to emerge. Presenting "the panorama, the sense, the sound, the soul, of New York" (Lewis 361) and its evolution from the end of 19th century to the 1920's, Dos Passos's novel condenses modernism from its emergence to its apex. While Woolf concentrates her narration on the punctual ephemerality of the 6th of June and Rhys extends her text to the time frame of a whole year, Dos Passos, as we will see later, seems to take to the extreme both Woolf's external brevity and coexistence and Rhys's internal dilatation and sense of lost past. By that, we do not intend to propose *Manhattan Transfer* as the symbolic herald of modernism that synthetically incorporates and reduces all other possibilities into its own existence; on the contrary, as we will fully develop later, we assume Dos Passos's continuity in respect to Woolf's and Rhys's examples more by its inherent heterogeneity, than by its contiguous

⁵⁶ "Just as this printed page, if it is legible, can be visually grasped as a related pattern of recognizable symbols, so a legible city would be one whose districts or landmarks or pathways are easily identifiable and are easily grouped into an over-all pattern" (3).

elements.

Along with New York and the dilatation of the historical period that the novel encompasses, another heterogeneous yet coherent element in respect to the writing of movement is expressed by its narrative structure: the “very complex film” (Lawrence 72) composed by Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* is based on intertwining the actions, dialogues, thoughts and lives of the more than twenty characters who populate the three sections and eighteen chapters of the novel. The multiple perspectives and movements, internal and external realities in the “grand” narratives of Jimmy Herf and of Ellen/Elaine/Ellie Tatcher whom we follow throughout the text from their infancy to their adulthood⁵⁷ coexist with other, less important and only briefly mentioned characters like the couple of thieves Dutch Robinson and Francie or like Jake and Rosie Silverman. The “genuine confusion”⁵⁸ of Dos Passos’s narration of the kaleidoscopic modern urban life through the textual entanglement of the fragmented existences of the various characters is supported by a complex technical apparatus composed, as in Woolf’s and Rhys’s cases, by the use of FID, FIT and the stream of consciousness along with a peculiar use of newspaper collages, typical of the pictorial technique of the *papier collé*.⁵⁹ The intertwined complexity of content and form of *Manhattan Transfer* where the consciousness of various characters overlaps through mingled literary techniques, has generated, similarly to Woolf’s and Rhys’s examples, the parallel emergence of multiperspectival critiques that propose readings of the novel through its cinematic nature, its inherent German Expressionism,⁶⁰ its impressionist methods, its polychronotopical structure or its

⁵⁷ Some critics argue about the actual equivalence of the various characters who compose the novel, identifying in Ellen and Jimmy the main protagonists of *Manhattan Transfer*. It is the case, respectively, of Paula E. Geyh in “From Cities of Things to Cities of Signs: Urban Spaces and Urban Subjects in *Sister Carrie* and *Manhattan Transfer*” and of David L. Vanderwerken in “Manhattan Transfer: Dos Passos’ Babel Story”: “Herf’s twenty-three sections, which I have abstracted for continuity’s sake, although they are distributed throughout the novel in short chunks, are the focal points at which the meanings of the novel converge” (255-256).

⁵⁸ “[In *Manhattan Transfer*] confusion is genuine, not affected; it is life, not a pose” (Lawrence 72).

⁵⁹ “A good portion of Dos Passos’ creative process, then, involved the selective gathering of actual details from his linguistic milieu which were then set in the fictional text, sometimes whole, sometimes greatly modified. This is essentially the method developed by such artists as Picasso, Braque and Gris around 1912 in their *papier collé* works” (Carver 172, original emphasis).

⁶⁰ The reference to German Expressionism refers to A. C. Goodson’s article “*Manhattan Transfer* and the Metropolitan Subject” where the author connects the deformed painting poetics of German expressionist like Grosz: “Dos Passos renders the metropolitan scene in a mixed idiom that evidently owes something to German Expressionism, especially the mordant satirical drawings of Grosz. More than any other important American text of

spectacular presentation of time. In order to propose an explanation for the coexistence both in the novel and in its criticism of this complex vortex of perspectives, I intend to investigate, as I did in the previous chapters, the gaps between the fragmented and perhaps contradictory sketches, experiences and consciousnesses where the very dynamism and coherency of Dos Passos's complexity is performed and generated.

As Sam See affirms in his article "Fast Books Read Slow: The Shapes of Speed in *Manhattan Transfer* and *The Sun Also Rises*", with its multilinear plot, fractured character focus, neologisms, and free indirect discourse, *Manhattan Transfer* is a spatial novel *par excellence*, very much in the Joyce/Woolf tradition" (346). By stressing the novel's spatiality, referring to Maurice Blanchot's idea of literary space, See intends to stress the elliptical nature of *Manhattan Transfer* inspired by what Gerard Genette called "implicit ellipses, that is, those whose very presence is not announced in the text and which the reader can infer only from some chronological lacuna or gap in narrative continuity" (Genette 108). In this chapter, I will try to investigate the cinematographic nature of the intervals, lacunas and gaps in Dos Passos's a prose of *Manhattan Transfer* that similarly to Woolf's and Rhys's novels, should not be read, as See and others did,⁶¹ as a fragmentation and breakage of the continuity of the text, but on the contrary as the very possibility to compose a coherent movement that connects the external multiplicities of singular urban consciousness and their internal time and life. In this respect, we will stress the fullness of Dos Passos's gaps filled by movement, "glimpses of people in the vast scuffle of Manhattan Island, as they turn up again and again and again, in a confusion that has no obvious rhythm" (Lawrence 71), by firstly analysing the contiguities with Woolf and Rhys and consequently by characterising his peculiar cinematography.

the period, *Manhattan Transfer* is associated with the predominantly German reflection on the condition of the modern metropolis" (94).

⁶¹ For example, relating Dos Passos' literary composition with the cinematic techniques, Gretchen Foster assumes the inherent emptiness of the gaps emerged by the juxtaposition in *Manhattan Transfer* of the various sketches: "Dos Passos replaces all traditional narrative links with montage. He sets images, characters, and events side by side, leaving the reader to dill in the spaces" (187).

Intervals and Oneirism

What elements characterize Dos Passos's heterogeneous contribution to the writing of movement in high modernist novels? In order to suggest a possible answer to this question, we need to detect possible affinities with the respective specificities of Woolf's and Rhys's novels, that is the dynamic intervals and the dynamic oneirism. As we have stressed in the previous analyses, these dynamic elements do not constitute exclusively the writing of movement of Woolf's and Rhys's novels, but they are useful abstractions that allow an investigation of the actual conditions of the possibility of novelistic cinematography, in the same way as in Bergsonian non-system concepts represent abstract tools to investigate the entangled complexity of reality. Hence, for instance by stressing the specificity of Woolf's dynamic intervals, we do not intend to exclude the possibility of parallel elements of her cinematography, including the dynamic oneirism, but on the other hand we detect this abstraction as the most visible to explain her mechanisms of movement. In this sense, by analysing *Manhattan Transfer*'s affinities to Woolf's and Rhys's novels we perform a similar abstract operation that allows us to more easily identify punctual characteristics and episodes in Dos Passos's prose. After this explicatory introduction, we can start investigating the first kinetic element of *Manhattan Transfer*: the dynamic intervals.

John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* is composed, as we have seen, by the complex intertwining of more than twenty characters along with their consciousnesses, actions and words through the streets of New York. If on a matter of content its complexity is due to this large number of personalities that populate the novel, on the matter of form *Manhattan Transfer* is characterised by a composition of several techniques, such as the FIT, the stream of consciousness or the *papier collé*. By these premises, *Manhattan Transfer* may appear as an extreme continuation of the elements presented in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* where the populated colony of consciousnesses similarly was connected by the actual syntopic and synchronic movements through London and a

parallel stylistic complexity. Indeed, if in Woolf's novel we witness the dynamic articulation of the gaps between the consciousnesses of the characters through the possibility of their coexistence in a specific moment in time or place in space, in Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* we encounter a historical and perspectival proliferation whereby the gaps between the characters are still actualised by their simultaneous existence in a specific spatiality, that of New York. In a brief yet interesting passage of *Manhattan Transfer*, the young actress Ellen Tatcher, the only character that along with her future husband Jimmy Herf, we can follow continuously throughout the novel, affirms: "It's surprising isn't it how everybody in the world is always at the same place in the same time" (144). Ellen's surprise in respect to her epiphanic intuition brilliantly condenses one specific mechanism that composes the novel: the very possibility of being at the same place, New York, in the same time, from the end of 19th century to the 1920s, of the ensemble of characters, allow Dos Passos to compose the intricate web of actions, thoughts and sensations of *Manhattan Transfer*. As Sam See affirms, "Dos Passos' Manhattan is a conglomeration of snapshots, disparate matter fused, localities and moments joined (however incongruously) into an impressionistic sensation of life ever-accelerating and discombobulating" (348). Localities and moments, as in Woolf's dynamic intervals, offer Dos Passos the actual possibility to give coherence to the dissipation of the multiple hyper-fragmented existences that populate the novel. The juxtaposition of singular existences in the elliptical whole is, like in Woolf's case, articulated by the gaps or intervals that separate one consciousness from another, constituting simultaneously the dynamic mechanism that expresses continuity. In this sense, the montage technique, identified in Dos Passos's narrative by Gretchen Foster but also by See, must not be intended as a void structure where "the reader must read *Transfer* as a gap-laden space and insert him or herself into the text as the only 'present' consciousness that can fill those gaps" (See 352). On the contrary, as in Woolf's case, the fragmentation of the plural experiences of the diverse consciousnesses of *Manhattan Transfer* present intervals that, although apparently empty, are inherently full of movement. Just like

cinematic movement is not due to the viewer's capacity to connect the singular immobilized frame into a coherent whole, but is inherently present in the material film wherein the frames are fragmented and juxtaposed, *Manhattan Transfer's* cinematography is inherently composed by the articulation or addition⁶² of numerous existential snapshots that are intertwined by their syntopic and synchronic coexistence in New York.

Borrowing Jean-Paul Sartre's beautiful expression originally referring to Dos Passos's *1919*, the "sad abundance of these untragic lives" (61) that populates *Manhattan Transfer's* New York is articulated by a similar mechanism as Woolf's dynamic intervals. By using the adjective "similar" instead of "same" referring to Dos Passos's intervals', I intend to stress the contiguous heterogeneity of Dos Passos's mechanisms. Indeed, Woolf's continuity was based on the direct actualisation and articulation of multiple fragmented singularities by their contact in specific times and spaces. The transition between different characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* is operated by the direct contiguity and almost tangible contact on a temporal or spatial level between their consciousnesses that share the same space, as Peter and the Warren Smiths in Regent's Park, or the same time, as when the Big Ben striking the hour marks the transition between Clarissa and Miss Kilman. On the other hand, Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* performs an extreme dilatation of Woolf's intervals whereby the characters are all "at the same place in the same time" but without the direct, actual and punctual connections of specific *topos* and *chronos* that characterised Woolf's narration. Although it is possible to detect some rare passage where the interval between characters is actual and direct like in Woolf's case,⁶³ the ellipses between fragmented singularities in *Manhattan Transfer* express an indirect and more virtual connotation. For instance, when in the first section of the novel we witness the transition between Emile, a French immigrant who just arrived in the United States, and Bud Korpenning, a workman aimlessly and vainly in search for jobs in the

⁶² "For Dos Passos narrating means adding" (Sartre 63).

⁶³ "I am specifically referring to the passage where Ellen's thoughts and actions intertwine with those of Anna Cohen, the young Jewish seamstress, while in they share a syntopic interval, being simultaneously at "Madame Soubrine Robes", the former as a customer and the latter as employee. See p. 308.

metropolis, we realise that this transition is articulated by a profound distance, an enlargement of the interval between the two characters. “Emile passed the knife across the palm of his hand [...]. Bud stood on the corner of West Broadway and Franklin Street eating peanuts out of a bag” (47). Although Emile and Bud share time and place, being in New York in a parallel moment, they are not sharing the direct actuality and specificity of Big Ben’s striking or of Regent’s Park as in Woolf’s novel. The synchronic and syntopic coexistence of these characters is only virtually arguable, their singularities are not almost touching as in *Mrs. Dalloway*, but profoundly separated. In an analogous manner, when the narration passes from the newborn Ellen Tatcher to the milkman and future politician Gus McNiel, there is an abrupt transition between these two radically different existences that share the same place and time only virtually: “She turned over and lay crying with her face in the pillow. The gaslamps tremble a while down the purplecold streets and then go out under the lurid dawn. Gus McNiel, the sleep still summing in his eyes, walks beside his wagon swinging a wire basket of milkbottles [...]” (35-36). The gap between Ellen and Gus cannot be actualised in a specific time and space as in Woolf’s case where, despite their fragmentation, the various singularities established almost tangible contacts; in Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* the interval seems to tend to a virtual interconnective web where the spatio-temporal dimension, constituted by the modern urbanity of New York, does not allow the direct actualisation of the connections between characters.

Despite this de-actualization of the interconnective web, however, Dos Passos’s novel is still capable of bringing together “apparently unrelated fragments of actuality which, seen in juxtaposition, coalesce into a new unity” (Lowry 53). Indeed, the “structural principle of dissociation and recombination” (53), as Lowry calls it, that composes *Manhattan Transfer* does not deny or contradict the dynamism inherently expressed in Woolf’s prose, but it takes it to its virtual extreme by widening the gap that separates and connects the various fragments. Omitting what Sinclair Lewis calls “the tedious transitions”, that is the narrative and textual explicit descriptions or

events that connect one episode to the other, Dos Passos radicalizes the rhythm and pace of its narration, jumping continuously in actual idiosyncratic spatialities and temporalities that are contained by the spatio-temporal virtual dimension of New York. If we consider another transitional passage between Ruth Prynne, an actress friend of Ellen's and firstly in love with Jimmy, and Dutch Robertson, a former soldier and future thief, we again see the interconnection of their actualities of time and space that through the radicalization of the distance between them becomes almost virtual: "A trainload of jiggling corpses, nodding and swaying as the express roared shrilly towards Ninetysixth Street. At Ninetysixth she [Ruth] had to change for the local. Dutch Robertson sat on a bench on Brooklyn Bridge with the collar of his army overcoat turned up" (230). The abrupt shift from the singular and actual spatio-temporal dimension of Ruth to that of Dutch is operated not by their coexistence in a particular moment of time and space, but rather the articulation of their fragmented experiences is possible merely by their presumable co-presence in the virtuality of the urban *milieu* and time of New York. The singularities of Dutch and Ruth are not grazing each other as in Woolf's intervals; just like two magnetic fields that connect and deform each other maintaining their centres of power extremely distantly, they perform a dynamic continuity in Dos Passos's narration by filling with their virtual urban movements in New York the profound distance between them.

The "Manhattan Transfer" of the novel is the actual station of New York (91), but also the continuous process of movement contained in the spatio-temporal mosaic of lives of New York, like those of Dutch and Ruth. The urban nomadism that involves each character of the novel is still the narrative connective articulation that allows Dos Passos to present such a complex web of relations, thoughts and actions, but differently from Woolf's novel, the moving knots of these interconnections are not brought in actual contact and contiguity, remaining as monadic floating islands related by their communal sea: Manhattan. For instance, as in the previous examples, when we assist to the emergence of the umpteenth character, the dock owner Phineas P. Blackhead,

following Bud's wanderings, the existential hiatus between the two characters is profoundly marked, without any actual contiguity:

“The raindark houses heaved on either side, streetlamps swayed like lanterns carried in a parade, until Bud was in a back room full of nudging faces with a woman on his knees. [...] Phineas P. Blackhead pushed up the wide office window. He stood looking out over the harbor of slate and mica in the uneven roar of traffic, voice, racket of building that soared from the downtown streets bellying and curling like smoke” (74).

The continuity of the writing of movement in Dos Passos's intervals is not based on the actual temporal or spatial contact between different singularities but on their virtual belonging to the uneven roar of traffic and voices that populate the anonymous and multiple crowd that continuously moves through Manhattan.

If Woolf's kaleidoscopic mosaic of London existences illustrated the fundamental incommunicability of modern fragmentation that was, on the other hand, balanced by the actual dynamic contiguity within the city streets; in Dos Passos's novel the multi-fragmented moving singularities are no longer actually in touch with one another but are virtually incorporated in the general movement of the New York crowd. This virtuality is formally sustained, exalted and radicalized by the use of the *papier collé* technique in addition to the other formal devices shared both by Woolf's and Rhys's narrative. Indeed, by inserting and pasting newspapers or advertising fragments into the body of the text, Dos Passos takes the gaps between singular experiences to the extreme by mediating their connections through the virtual support of the media, where the social relationships cannot be actual and tangible but merely textual or visual. For instance, when the young attorney-at-law George Baldwin is connected to Gus McNiel's street accident with the milk-wagon, this connective possibility is operated through the mediation of the newspapers that report the news: “Baldwin cleared his throat and unfolded the paper...Ought to liven up the Russian bonds a bit. Veterans Visit President... ANOTHER ACCIDENT ON ELEVENTH AVENUE TRACKS.

Milkman seriously injured. Hello, that's make a neat little damage suit" (39). Analogously, the relation and continuity between Jimmy Herf and Dutch Robinson is mediated by the newspaper reporting the theft attempt where Dutch is arrested;⁶⁴ or again when James Merival, Jimmy's cousin, is connectively engaged with the failure of the company of Phineas P. Bleackhead, their entanglement is possible only by the textual virtuality of the newspaper lines.⁶⁵ Rather than lingering longer on this particular formal device of Dos Passos's narrative technique that has been thoroughly investigated by Craig Carver in "The Newspapers and the other sources of *Manhattan Transfer*", I intend to stress how the *papier collé* accentuates that shift on the virtual yet still dynamic intervals between the multiple actions, events and consciousnesses that differentiate Dos Passos's polyphonic cinematography from Woolf's prose.

Coordinating and differentiating the mosaic of existences into an interconnective urbanity that characterises Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, the radicalization of Woolf's dynamic intervals automatically resembles the virtual tendency that we have investigated in Rhys's *Quartet*. Indeed, if on the one hand the variety and number of consciousnesses presented in Dos Passos's novel is manifestly associable to the similar variety of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*; on the other hand the increased distances and ellipses between the various characters allows Dos Passos to expand the internalized and monadic experience of each character fragmented in its own peculiar world as Marya herself expressed in *Quartet*. As we have seen in the previous chapter, while in Woolf's novel the writing of movement was mainly but not exclusively mediated by the external intervals between the various singularities, in Rhys's novel, the fragmentation was inherently played around the internal oneirism of Marya performed by her movement in the spatio-temporal virtuality of Paris. Through this perspective, while the collective and external gaps in *Manhattan Transfer* are referable to Woolf, the parallel virtualization and internalization of urban dynamism is associable to Rhys's narrative. Borrowing again Jean-Paul Sartre's words, in Dos Passos's prose "there is no

⁶⁴ See p. 278

⁶⁵ See p. 299

narrative, but rather the jerky unreeling of a rough and uneven memory, which sums up a period of several years in few words only to dwell languidly over a minute fact. Like our real memories, it is a jumble of miniatures and frescos” (63). But how does this jumble of miniatures and frescos work? Following the analysis of Rhys’s dynamic oneirism of *Quartet* where the sense of lost past that haunts Marya is inextricably performed by her movements and wanderings through Paris, we can approach Dos Passos’s presentation of the virtual and fragmented existences of his characters. For reasons of space and coherence, we will focus our analysis on the character whose experience, along with Ellen Thatcher’s, occupies the majority of the chapters of the novel: Jimmy Herf. Among the numerous Manhattan transfers performed by Jimmy Herf throughout the novel, we have selected one passage that opens the “Steamroller” chapter wherein several components of Dos Passos’s form and content coalesce:

“Jimmy Herf picked his way along the edge of the road; the stones were sharp against his feet through the worn soles of his shoes. After a hundred yards he stopped over the gray suburban road, laced tight on both sides with telegraph poles and wires, over the gray paperbox houses and the gray jagged lots of monumentmakers, the sky was the color of a robin’s egg” (88).

The passage begins with his movement through the web of the city architecture and its objects. However, Jimmy’s dynamism is not a mere physical movement through the streets, but it assumes the oneiric virtuality that characterises Marya’s wanderings. Indeed, when a tune starts grinding “crazily through his head: I’m so tired of violets/ Take them all away” (88), Jimmy’s dynamism expresses the haunting presence of the past: “There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead...He walked on fast splashing through puddles full of sky, trying to shake the drowning wellboiled words out of his ears” (88). Analogously to Rhys’s case, Dos Passos’s use of technical devices, in this case the FIT, sustains the continuity within the internal fragmentation of

the character. Indeed, Jimmy's peripatetic action characterises his spatio-temporal internal virtuality where sheets of past and present coalesce simultaneously: "He walked faster. [...] There were fewer houses; on the sides of barns peeling letters spelled out LYDIA PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND, BUDWEISER, RED HEN, BARKING DOG...And muddy had had a stroke and now she was buried. He couldn't think how she used to look; she was dead that was all" (89). Again, the use of *papier collé* of the advertising slogans sustains the present dynamism evokes the dimension of the *souvenir* where Jimmy lives again the death of his mother, "muddy". In another episode in the novel, when Jimmy has become the husband of Ellen, we see a similar process where Jimmy "joggling home in the empty train through empty Brooklyn suburbs [...] sank gradually into a dreamier and dreamier reverie" (251). The reverie that evokes Jimmy and Ellen's first moments together in the American Hospital at Neuilly during World War I. The oneiric revival of the past is again performed through the urban virtuality of New York; consequently also Dos Passos's writing of movement, similarly to Rhys's, "unfolds in the present" (Sartre 62) by connecting the internal fragmentation of the spatio-temporal reality of each consciousness and its dynamic urban nomadism. Indeed, even this second oneiric episode in Jimmy Herf's wanderings starts and concludes with the continuity of his elliptical pace in the streets: "Burning slugs of thought kept dropping into place spelled out by a clanking linotype. At midnight he was walking across Fourteenth"(252). Hence, analogously to Woolf's dynamic intervals Dos Passos's ellipses between singularities enable him to coordinate the continuous tunnelling from consciousness to consciousness, from thought to thought, from action to action through their virtual coexistence in the spatio-temporal dimension of Manhattan. On the other hand, the internal fragmentation of the characters' existences and realities, the articulation of their sheets of present, past and future is composed into a coherent whole, their dynamic transfer through the urban environment and their emergence and disappearance in the "endless files of people" (254) of the crowd where "everything is a confusion of bright intersecting planes of color, faces, legs, shop windows, trolley cars,

automobiles” (260). In this sense Sartre again correctly affirms how “Dos Passos’ man is a hybrid creature, an interior-exterior being. We go on living with him and within him, with his vacillating, individual consciousness, when suddenly it wavers, weakens, and is diluted in the collective consciousness” (175). However, if Dos Passos’s narrative continuously oscillates between the interior-exterior urban dynamic dimension of the various characters, is this perpetual dilution operated only by the peculiar intervals and oneirism that we have detected or is it possible to delineate also a specific mechanism in Dos Passos’s novel? This rhetorical question inevitably suggests an affirmative answer that we will attempt to clarify in the following section.

The Cinematographic Epigraphs

Observing the symmetrical structure of *Manhattan Transfer*, the novel could suggest a sort of linearity in its composition; indeed, as Sam See affirms: “Divided into three sections of five, eight, and five chapters, respectively, the novel would seem to contain a linear narrative because of its balanced organization and chronological progression from pre- to active to post-war states” (347). However, the apparent linearity of its construction is complicated by a particular narrative choice operated by Dos Passos: inserting at the beginning of each chapter a brief epigraph that is not directly linked either to the general narration of the episodes of the characters or to the chapters’ titles themselves. The kaleidoscopic and polyphonic mosaic of consciousnesses, actions and thoughts that populates the actual narration of the novel along with the complexity of Dos Passos’s style, are, hence, combined with these epigraphic non-introductory sections that fragment even more the intricate whole of *Manhattan Transfer*, to such an extent that this “cross-reference contorts the plot’s trajectory from linearity to circularity” (See 347). The various analyses of Dos Passos’s text, rarely, with the exception of See’s article, acknowledge the role played by these particular sections in respect to the automatism of the novel itself. In this sense, we will attempt to accentuate the specificity of this mechanism and its functionality to articulate the complex cinematography of

Manhattan Transfer.

In the last section, we have stressed the continuous tunnelling between different consciousnesses, but also between the internal virtualities of each singularity that complicates Dos Passos's novel, affirming how this constant and continuous interior-exterior exchange is sustained by Dos Passos's narrative technique and by the virtuality of the interconnective web guaranteed by the spatio-temporal dimension of New York. Through this perspective, the anonymous moving multitude that composes the urban crowd enables the human yet impersonal and unidentified general "character" from which the various characters and their singularities in actions, thoughts and perceptions emerge. In this sense, the crowd can be thought of as an infinite "bucket" that contains the random networks of singularities that will actually populate Dos Passos's narrative emerging in their existential fragmentation in the form of Bud Korpenning, Jimmy Herf or Phineas P. Blackhead. The consistence of the crowd is, however, discernible in two very different ways throughout Dos Passos's novel. When we consider the passages in the various chapters where the anonymous human stream encounters the singularity of each character, the crowd, "that blur of faces", is frequently associated with its inherent mobility, confusion and homogeneity. When, stepping in the crowded marble hall of his uncle's building, Jimmy faces the flux of people through the revolving doors:

"softcheeked girls chewing gum, hatchetfaced girls with bangs, creamfaced boys of his age, young toughs with their hats on one side, sweatyfaced messengers, crisscross glances, sauntering hips, red jowls masticating cigars, sallow concave faces, flat bodies of young men and women, paunched bodies of elderly men, all elbowing, shoving shuffling, fed in two endless tapes through the revolving doors out into Broadway" (94).

As this passage clearly stresses, viewed through the singular eyes of Jimmy the crowd in its urban frenzy equally condenses in its homogeneity men, women but also objects, like cigars, or fragmented portions of the bodies. The aimless and endless mass *dérive* of the crowd, "faces, hats,

hands newspapers jiggled in the fetid roaring subway like corn in a popper” (200), is caught by the eyes and senses of the characters in the form of a nature/culture entity that dynamically occupies the urban *milieu*.

There is, however, another possibility in Dos Passos’s narration where we can, even though indirectly, recover an alternative and perhaps less canonical view of the impersonal mobility of the crowd, that is Dos Passos’s epigraphs. Indeed, as the crowd is perceived by the singularities of the characters as an homogeneous and dynamic entity, as the encompassing anonymous character that incorporates the urban multitude, I assume that Dos Passos’s constant use of the epigraphs can be considered an attempt to give words, space and thoughts to that multitude that had been inevitably excluded by the numerous stories and characters that occupy the rest of the chapters of the novel. Hence, if the characters’ experience of the crowd is an external perspective and consequently a descriptive definition of the urban multitude; on the other hand the epigraphs, in their combination of style and content, can represent an articulative device through which the tunnelling and exchange between interior-exterior of the fragmentation of consciousnesses, actions and thoughts during their Manhattan transfers can be composed in the cohesive wholeness and dynamic continuity of Dos Passos’s novel. Therefore, *Manhattan Transfer*’s epigraphs can be considered as the portion of Dos Passos’s text where the dynamism, the general pace or tempo of the entire novel is set, and which is then more widely and specifically developed in the rest of the chapters, where the singular tempos and paces of each character and of New York itself emerge.⁶⁶ Through this perspective, we can trace several analogies with another aspect of Deleuze’s conceptualisation of movement. According to Deleuze, the cinematic medium is *cinematographic* because it is able to reproduce the indissoluble continuity of movement by the equidistant rhythm of singular frames that are juxtaposed in the film. Consequently, one singular equidistant instant can not be a privileged static position that is more meaningful or useful of the ones that precede it or follow it; that is cinema can be cinematographic,

⁶⁶ “Time in the sense of tempo runs at the same hectic pace in the personal lives of the characters as in the separate life of the city as a social entity” (Gelfant 49).

can be movement because of its democratic technique and nature whereby all the instants in the film become what Deleuze calls an *any-instant-whatever*: “The any-instant-whatever is the instant which is equidistant from another. We can therefore define the cinema as the system which reproduces movement by relating it to the any-instant-whatever” (CI 6). In this sense the regular, equidistant succession of Dos Passos’s epigraphs at the beginning of every single chapter of the novel, seems to articulate a comparable pace whereby his writing produces and confronts “singular points which are immanent to movement” (CI 6). Indeed, all the eighteen epigraphs that are present in the novel, as we have briefly introduced, have neither narrative centres nor a privileged point of view, nor a coherent narration of specific events. They apparently break the pace of the already hyper-fragmented narration of consciousnesses, actions and dialogues of the various characters; however, by diverting our attention as readers towards anonymous glimpses of urban realities, they refract and condense in their brevity the dynamic rhythm in content and form that animates the rest of novel. For instance, in the second epigraph that introduces the chapter “Metropolis” we encounter an anonymous prophecy of the urbanity of New York, modern heir of the biblical Babylon and Nineveh: “Steel, glass, tile concrete will be the materials of the skyscrapers. Crammed on the narrow island the millionwindowed buildings will jut glittering, pyramid on pyramid like the white cloudhead above a thunderstorm” (10). This view of Manhattan is particularly interesting not merely for its depiction of the city architecture that mirrors descriptions of the city seen through the eyes of the characters in the chapters. It is interesting because of its very virtuality, that is, for having a point of view that is not mingled or specified into a particular singularity as in the rest of the chapters of the novel:

“Such afternoons the buses are crowded into line like elephants in a circusparade.

Morningside Heights to Washigton Square, Penn Station to Grant’s Tomb. Parlorsnakes and flappers joggle hugging downtown uptown, hug joggling gray square after gray square.

Until they see the new moon giggling over Weehawken and feel the dusty wind of a dead

Sunday blowing dust in their faces, dust of a tipsy twilight” (159).

The stream of consciousness of the ninth epigraph of the chapter “Fire Engine” evidences the inherent paradox of displaying the thought of any singular consciousness, but the moving eye of an entity that is drifting through New York; the flappers and parlorsnakes move as a united “they” without emerging in the singular perspectives that, conversely unfold in the proper narration of the chapters. If in the actual narration of the various chapters Dos Passos’s style and prose oscillate between the external ellipses of the intervals and the internal fragmentation of each singularity, on the other hand in the epigraphs this continuous alternation seems to be solved in the virtuality of a sort of collective God-like consciousness that is not actualised in a specific perspective but floats around and within Manhattan.

Indeed, in some epigraphs Dos Passos’s collective eye can be adrift in the Hudson bay like in the “Ferryslip”, in “Dollars” or in “Five Statutory Questions”; while in some others it is completely immersed in New York urbanity, as in “Nine Day’s Wonder”, in “Steamrollers” or in “Went To The Animals’ Fair”:

“Red light. Bell. [...] Green Light. Motors race, gears screech into first. The cars space out, flow in a long ribbon along the ghostly cement road. Between blackwindowed blocks of concrete factories, between bright slabbed colors of signboards towards the glow over the city that stands up incredibly into the night sky like the glow of a great lit tent, like the yellow tall bulk of tentshow” (171).

Whether it is contemplating New York from the water or amid the asphalt jungle, the epigraphs maintain two communal elements: the centrality of the city and its simultaneous and inextricable virtual dynamism of natures, cultures, spaces and times. Through this perspective, they play the role of initial refracting sections, narrative prisms that convey the virtuality, anonymity and dynamism of New York that will be later actualised in the chapter in the singular consciousnesses thoughts and actions of the various characters of the novel. They are “intermediate image, to which movement is

not appended or added; the movement on the contrary belongs to the intermediate image as immediate given” (*CI 2*). Simultaneously, *Manhattan Transfer*’s epigraphs condense, in their brevity, the prototypical synthesis of Dos Passos’s style that is later and more widely developed throughout the entire the novel. Following his own narrative precept⁶⁷ on the inclusive openness of the novelistic form, Dos Passos incorporates in the epigraphs narrative techniques and newspapers fragments, shop windows letters, advertising slogans or popular songs⁶⁸ typical of his peculiar *papier collé* technique that is frequently used in the rest of the novel:

“Noon sunlight spirals dimly into the chopsuey joint. Muted music spirals Hindustan. He eats fooyong, she eats chowmein. They dance with their mouths full slim blue jumper squeezed to black slick suit, peroxide curls against black slick hair. Down Fourteenth Street, Glory Glory comes the Army, striding lasses [...] Highest value, lowest price. Must vacate. WE HAVE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE. Must vacate”
(114).

The breakage, the “terrible mistake”, caused by the traumatic events of World War I in American collective experience is in this epigraph, “Longlegged Jack of the Isthmus”, but it is recognizable also in other portions of the text through the singular testimonies offered by Jimmy Herf, Dutch Robinson or James Merivale. However, in this epigraph the dynamism conveyed by the rhythmic prose of Dos Passos is not actualised into a singular point of view but remained attached to a anonymous, floating eye; even when it appears to be stabilized into specific postures, as Rhys would possibly call them, through the use of pronouns like “he”, “she” or “they”, the epigraph does not linger in the specification and definition of these presumably human figures preferring to maintain its virtual indefiniteness. However, despite its prismatic refractive nature or their narrative flotation in or around Manhattan, the epigraphs maintain and accentuate two perpetual and specific

⁶⁷ “Everything should go in [the novel] – popular songs, political aspirations and prejudices, ideals, delusions, clipping out of old newspapers” (Stoltzfus 276).

⁶⁸ For instance, in “Rejoicing City That Dwelt Carelessly”, Dos Passos incorporates in the epigraph some verses of the popular song *There’s a Long Long Trail A-Winding* composed by Stoddard King and Alonzo Elliott in 1913.

elements in their virtuality: movement and New York. The inextricable entanglement between dynamism and the city is taken to its extremes in Dos Passos's novel. As we have already encountered in Woolf's and Rhys's examples, the urban movement must not be intended merely as the actual displacement of the characters throughout the space of the city, but it always presupposes a consequent virtual movement, or cinematography, that is refracted by the textual devices and techniques of the author. In this sense, in the epigraphs Dos Passos radicalizes the cinematography, that is the virtuality of his text, by directly representing urban dynamism without actualising or mediating it through the singularity of a specific character.⁶⁹ New York, as London or Paris, is movement and so, as Mullarky affirms, it is also time: a spatio-temporal virtuality that allows Dos Passos to compose the complicated interconnective web into a coherent whole, the novel. In the collective God-like eye and consciousness of the epigraphs that flows like a stream in a perpetual omniscient urban movement, Dos Passos unfolds reality in a continuous and anonymous presentness that precedes the differentiation in singular names and idiosyncratic temporalities that characterizes the rest of the novel. Hence, the presentness of the epigraphs must not be intended as a negation of the temporal sheets of past, present and future that are deployed in the proper chapters, but on the contrary, they represent that crystallization of different sheets into a cohesive sphere where they coexist and they are not yet differentiated. As Deleuze affirms in *Cinema 2*, the different temporal sheets of the past "appear to succeed each other. But they succeed each other only from the point of view of former presents which marked the limit of each of them. They coexist, in contrast, from the point of view of the actual present which each time represents their common limit or the most contracted of them" (99). Therefore, Dos Passos's epigraphs can be considered a sort of virtual present condensation, an extreme contraction of the singular temporalities of the single characters of the rest of the novel, that are actualised in the proper chapters of *Manhattan Transfer*:

"Dusk gently smooths crisplanged streets. Dark presses tight steaming asphalt city, crushes the fretwork of windows and lettered signs and chimneys and watertanks and ventilators and

⁶⁹ This process will be later developed by Dos Passos in his *U.S.A Trilogy* by the use of the "Camera-Eye".

fire-secapes and modlings and patterns and corrugations and eyes and hands and neckties into blue chunks, into black enormous blocks” (88).

As the epigraph “Steamroller” shows, by refracting by a more profound degree the urban movement, the epigraphs consequently express an even more complicated virtuality or reality in respect to the rest of the text where the thoughts, events and actions of actual characters are narrated. There is just presentness and anonymity because the urban movement, the Manhattan transfer, is so radicalized and condensed that it can only prismatically refract the cinematography that will be later actualised by Dos Passos in the narration of each chapter.

If already through Woolf’s dynamic intervals in London or Rhys’s dynamic oneirism in Paris, we were able to detect the elements of the cinematography and the parallel urban dynamism that characterize this specific *trajet* in high modernist novelistic examples, Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* accentuates these elements and paradoxically condenses the virtuality of movement in the shortest portions of the text, the epigraphs. When, Sinclair Lewis reviewed enthusiastically *Manhattan Transfer*, despite his sole complaint regarding “Dos Passos’s trick of running words together” (71), he writes that “*Manhattan Transfer* is the moving symphony itself” (68), affirming that while Joyce’s or Proust’s novels were treatises on harmony, Dos Passos’s text was harmony itself. Effectively, as we have shown, Dos Passos’s intricate complex of forms and contents refracts into the cohesive unity of his novel the rhythms, paces and tempos of the countless Manhattan transfers that compose the spatio-temporal virtuality of New York. Analogously to the functionality of Deleuze’s *any-instant-whatever*, through the use of the epigraphs, Dos Passos articulates and condenses in a regular pace this virtuality into brief equidistant refractions of collective spaces, times and symphonies that coalesce in a perpetual presentness that precedes and introduces the consequent actualisations in the rest of the chapters. In this sense, Dos Passos’s epigraphs concentrate, as nuclear kernels, the virtuality of the urban dynamism of high modernist cinematography in an incredibly intense power that anticipates the consequent mosaic of singular

consciousnesses, thoughts and actions. Consequently, if Sam See was right to read the epigraphs not as direct introductory fragments to the events narrated in the chapters, affirming their prototypical hyper-condensed virtuality in respect to the singularized actuality developed in the various chapters that follow them, we can assume a very peculiar introductory role for the epigraphs, that of cinematographic virtualities that sustain Dos Passos's composition of internal and external fragmentations of characters, actions and events.

Chapter 4: Peripheral Contamination in the Cinematography of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita*

In his taxonomy of cinematic concepts of the 20th century, Gilles Deleuze positions the transition from the regime of the movement-image to that of time-image⁷⁰ in the aftermath of World War II, and specifically with the emergence of Italian neo-realism. Rectifying André Bazin's thesis, Deleuze affirms that the conceptual turn in the cinematic image consists in the different relation between movement and time and their consequent representation: the post-war time-image cinema "is a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent. What defines neo-realism is this build-up of purely optical situations [...], which are fundamentally distinct from the sensory-motor situations of the action-image in the old realism" (C2 2). Therefore, the inversion of cinematic images presupposes the establishment of a representation of time that is no more dependent on movement, that is indirect, but that is directly founded on time experiences like dreams or memories: "the character has become a kind of viewer. He shifts, runs and becomes animated in vain, the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action. He records rather than reacts" (C2 3). As we have already accentuated in Chapter 3 analysing Rhys's dynamic oneirism, the direct representation of time does not transform the cinematic expression into a purely temporal experience, but rather this kind of representation strengthens its dynamism since, in Bergsonian terms, time is movement. For this reason, as this passage by Deleuze demonstrates, the new type of character of the post-war time-image creates and performs his or her time experience by still actually shifting or running through a singular space; again time *and* space equally emerge *as* movement.

The mutual equivalence of time and space in the writing of movement theorised by Deleuze is manifestly affirmed by his definition of the peculiar typology of space that accompany the time-

⁷⁰ As we have already noted, the identification of these two regimes does not presuppose, according to Deleuze, their inherent purity as closed system, but they always imply a certain degree of hybridization, a perennial coexistence.

image regime: the *any-space-whatever*. According to Deleuze, the virtuality that characterises the mnemonic, dream-like and hallucinatory post-war cinematographies is constructed by the simultaneous emergence of a spatial dimension whereby “Any-space-whatever is not an abstract universal, in all times, in all places. It is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible” (CI 109). In this sense, Deleuze’s spatial concept, which articulates the temporal principle of indeterminability, of indiscernibility,⁷¹ is still a singular, actual space of displacement or *dérive* that in respect to the pre-war spatiality has lost its homogeneity in favour of a fragmented proliferation of places: “What in fact manifests the instability, the heterogeneity, the absence of link of such a space, is a richness in potentials or singularities which are, as it were, prior conditions of all actualisation, all determination” (CI 109). In the light of the double-sided nature, actual and virtual, of the peculiar any-space-whatever that characterises the writing of movement of the time-image regime, the positioning by Deleuze of this specific typology of cinematic image in the aftermath of World War II and its relation with neo-realist works finds both its historical and conceptual justification. Indeed, the constitution of the virtually *deconnected* or *emptied* (CI 120) any-space-whatever is historically actualised by the urban destruction and disruption inevitably caused by the war conflict. “[A]fter the war, a proliferation of such spaces could be seen both in film sets [*decors*] and in exteriors, under various influences. The first, independent of the cinema, was the post-war situation with its towns demolished or being reconstructed, its waste grounds, its shanty towns, and even in places where the war had not penetrated, its undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast unused places, docks, warehouses, heaps of girders and scrap iron” (CI 120).

Through Deleuze’s perspective it is not surprising, then, that Italian neo-realism precociously refracted, earlier than other cinematographies, the aesthetic potentiality that the

⁷¹ “we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which to ask” (C2 7).

peculiar spatialities of post-war urbanities seemed to presuppose. As the Italian film director Giuseppe de Santis affirms in a conversation with Antonio Vitti, the Italian neo-realist poetic emerges from an historical knot: “There is a war, there is the collapse of Fascism, there is a Resistance and the Italian people achieve democracy, without this historical knot, Neo-realism could not have been born” (147).⁷² The combination of the particular historical knot that distinguished Italy from the other countries involved in the conflict, along with the simultaneous communal European experience of post-war urban destruction, created a unique blend that allowed Neo-realism and its any-spaces-whatever to be the herald of a new phase of cinematography. However, as we have previously stressed, Deleuze’s cinematographic concepts, as we intend them, are not merely cinematic theories; they are “strictly philosophical concepts” (Maratti 2). Consequently, Deleuze’s intuition of the constitution of a new spatiality, i.e. any-space-whatever, its relation to the writing of movement and its Italian-based emergence justifies the investigation of the refraction of these concepts through the literary cinematography of Italian post-war novels. Specifically, we will devote our attention to Pier Paolo Pasolini’s novel *Ragazzi di Vita* [*The Ragazzi*] published in May 1955, which relates the “paradigm of decay” (Cerami 8) of the young boys who inhabit the peripheries of Rome in the aftermath of World War II, “from the chaos full of hopes of the first days after the liberation to the reaction of ’50-51” (Cerami 7).⁷³

The selection of Pasolini’s *Ragazzi* may seem in contradiction to the neo-realist origin that Deleuze stressed for the emergence of the any-spaces-whatever, since Pasolini as an author and consequently his works, as we will see later, are not ascribable to the neo-realist poetic, although “neorealism as a literary concept was never sharply delineated” (27) as Joseph Francese notes. However, I argue that Pasolini’s novel can be a coherent example for two reasons. Firstly, despite Pasolini’s critique of and detachment from the Italian neo-realist poetics, his biography and artistic works share the

⁷² “C’è una guerra, c’è la caduta del fascismo, c’è una Resistenza e gli italiani conquistano la democrazia, senza questo nodo storico il Neorealismo non sarebbe potuto nascere” (147).

⁷³ “dal caos pieno di speranze dei primi giorni della liberazione alla reazione del ’50-51” (7).

same historical and literary *milieu*;⁷⁴ consequently Pasolini's *Ragazzi* is inevitably involved in the same historical knot that fostered the specificity of Italian neo-realist cinematography. Secondly and more generally, Deleuze's philosophical accentuation of the post-war relation between neo-realism and any-spaces-whatever arises by the specificity of the cinematic context; therefore analysing the literary writing of movement, we have to consider the specificity of the taxonomy of literature in its fundamental independence from that of cinema. Therefore, the equation between cinematic neo-realism and any-space-whatever does not forcefully presuppose the perfect coincidence in literary neo-realism, allowing an alternative voice, such as Pasolini's *Ragazzi*, to arise as a plausible representative. Indeed, Pasolini's peculiar realist modernism⁷⁵ expressed in *Ragazzi di Vita* can represent an alternative yet coherent example where the constitutive nature of the urban post-war spatialities in respect to the writing of movement finds a clear manifestation. The fragmented tales composing Pasolini's novel, of Rome's ever-changing peripheral slums, the *borgate*,⁷⁶ along with the random and delinquent *dérives* of the young boys who inhabit them, can, as neo-realism in cinema, epitomize simultaneously the continuation of the *trajet* of the modernist writing of movement and its breaking point into different artistic potentialities.

⁷⁴ Cesare de Michelis in *Alle Origini del Neorealismo* identifies the origins of this particular poetic in the first attempts of Giuseppe Antonio Borgese with his novel *Rubè* (1921) up to Alberto Moravia's first novel *Gli Indifferenti* (1929). Similarly, Antonio Vitti in *Ripensare il neorealismo: Cinema, Letterature, Mondo* affirms that "Il termine [...] fu ripreso dalla critica letteraria per 'etichettare' il romanzo *Rubè* (1921) di Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, definizione poi estesa ai cosiddetti Realisti degli anni Trenta: C. Brenari, A. Moravia, V. Pratolini e E. Vittorini che ancora oggi vengono spesso indicati come precursori [The term had been recovered by the literary critique to 'label' the novel *Rubè* by Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, a definition later extended to the so-called Realists of the Thirties: C. Brenari, A. Moravia, V. Pratolini e E. Vittorini, who still today are indicated as the precursors]" (9, my translation).

⁷⁵ "Pasolini is not a modernist in the way that, say, Godard is, or Brecht, or Vertov. To understand the nature of Pasolini's modernism, we must first put away the notion that modernism is somehow realism's other, or that realism is the bad object that modernism rejects. Pasolini's is a modernism shot through with realism; his realism is one inflected and informed by modernism. He wants to document experience (often understood as the *métier* of realism), and so he does, but in a way that forces on us an awareness of the formal, technological means of producing this documentation (often understood as the vocation of modernism)" (Rhodes 55).

⁷⁶ "The term *borgata* does not have an exact equivalent in English. Dictionary translations usually offer something to the effect of "workingclass suburb." The term, pejoratively derived from the word *borgo*, which simply means "district" or "neighborhood," was coined as an official term by the fascists. As Italo Insolera has written, "Borgata is a subspecies of borgo: a piece of the city in the middle of the country, that is not really one or the other."⁷ *Borgate* is a loosely used term and can refer usually to either unofficial borgate⁸ or official borgate. When one thinks of unofficial borgate, images of abject, crudely made, single-story houses come to mind. These are baracche, which, lumped together, come to form unofficial borgate. Official borgate, on the other hand, are those large housing projects built under fascism. Both unofficial and official always carry with them the implicit sense of being peripheral to the center. One may occasionally hear or read the terms *borgate* and *periphery* (in Italian, *periferia*) used almost interchangeably" (Rhodes 2, original emphasis).

Pasolini's Mimetic Realism

“I consider my realism as an act of love” (*Saggi sulla letteratura II* 2729).⁷⁷ These words are contained in the brief essay “La mia Periferia” of 1958, where Pasolini describes the principle creative differences between *Ragazzi di Vita* and *Una Vita Violenta*, published in 1958, that he considered the stylistic and consequently psychological and ideological continuation of his previous novel.⁷⁸ Besides Pasolini's direct comparison of the two novels, this short essay constitutes a precious source to reconstruct Pasolini's biographical and conceptual approach in respect to the landscapes and people that animate *Ragazzi di Vita*. The “act of love” in *Ragazzi di Vita* arises in Pasolini's creativity as a complex mix of biographical affection, erotic fascination, political claiming and aesthetic research.⁷⁹ In this sense, his own experience, in 1949,⁸⁰ of Roman *borgate* in their post-war decay and of their sub-proletarian inhabitants, seemed to constitute a fundamental encounter that forced him to incorporate Rome and its reality into his works. As he affirms in an interview from 1957: “Rome in my narrative has that fundamental importance [...] as *violent trauma and violent charge of vitality*, that is an experience of a world, and so in a way an experience of the world. Rome has been the direct protagonist not only as an object of description or of analysis, but as a push, as a dynamic, as a testimonial necessity” (Muzzioli 15-16, original emphasis).⁸¹ Therefore, the Rome of the post-war period becomes for Pasolini's poetics a concrete possibility, an aesthetic possibility to create a singular universality, a specific world, eternal and

⁷⁷ “Il mio realismo lo considero un atto d'amore” (2729).

⁷⁸ “E se non c'è trasformazione stilistica non ci sarà neppure più trasformazione interna, psicologica e ideologica [If there is no stylistic transformation there will not be either an intern transformation, psychological and ideological]” (2727, my translation).

⁷⁹ In the essay he makes explicit reference to his realistic approach as a “tendency of my Eros” and as a “biographical coercion” (*Saggi sulla letteratura II* 2731).

⁸⁰ In 1949 Pasolini “si trasferisce in borgata, a Ponte Mammolo, vicino al carcere Rebibbia, in una casa molto povera [moves in borgata, at Ponte Mammolo, close to Rebibbia prison, in a very poor house]” (Muzzioli 15, my translation).

⁸¹ “Roma nella mia narrativa ha quella fondamentale importanza [...] in quanto *violenza trauma e violenza carica di vitalità*, cioè esperienza di un mondo e quindi in un certo senso del mondo. Roma è stata la protagonista diretta non solo come oggetto di descrizione o di analisi, ma proprio come spinta, come dinamica, come necessità testimoniale” (Muzzioli 15-16).

modern, an absorber of time,⁸² it refracts the world, similarly to Deleuze's singular virtuality of the any-space-whatevers.

The very fact that for Pasolini Rome is not a mere object of representation or a descriptive background, but rather a narrative drive, makes it possible for him to actually transport, as in an osmotic process, the urban singular virtuality into his literary production. It is not by chance that, using almost the same words with which he had previously referred to his experience of the city, he affirms in "La mia Periferia" that "*Ragazzi di Vita* had to be a sort of *ouverture*, touching on thousands of motifs, constituting a world, and hence, 'particular' and complete in itself, but nevertheless, of the world" (*Saggi sulla letteratura II* 2727).⁸³ Through this perspective, the very possibility, both for Rome and *Ragazzi di Vita*, to be actually "of the world", a post-war transnational virtuality, inherently resides in their particularity. Pasolini brilliantly describes this paradoxical oscillation between locality and globalism, singularity and virtuality in his 1966 article, "L'altro volto di Roma," where, describing Rome's peripheries, he notes "*Here we are*" (*Romanzi e Racconti II* 1864, my emphasis) and he starts listing several urban landscapes virtually replaceable with the specific singularity of Rome: Mexico City, Calcutta, Palermo, Sakara, Cochin, Madras, Harlem and so on. In this sense, narrating Rome, *being here*, allows Pasolini to move outside of it, in a virtual "there" where different realities can coalesce without losing their specificity. And it is, specifically, this synecdochal possibility between singularity and virtuality that Pasolini's mimetic realism attempts to explore and perform and that can distinguish it from the neorealist poetic. Indeed, according to Pasolini, Italian Neo-realism unveiled the disruptive fragmentation and decay of Roman *borgate* without making of it a transnational problematic, "neo-realism firstly discovered it; but neorealism left it as it was: that is a particularly Italian problem" (*Romanzi e Racconti II*

⁸² Pasolini affirms that: "Roma, con tutta la sua eternità, e la città più moderna del mondo: moderna perché sempre al livello del tempo, assorbitrice di tempo [Rome, with its whole eternity, is the most modern city in the world: modern because it is always at the level of time, absorber of time]" (Siciliano 183, my translation).

⁸³ "*Ragazzi di Vita* doveva essere una specie di [...] *ouverture*, accennando a mille motivi, fondando un mondo, in quanto 'particolare', in sé completo, del mondo" (727).

1865).⁸⁴ Obviously, affirming its fundamental difference from the neo-realist poetics does not automatically make of Pasolini's mimetic realism, and specifically of *Ragazzi di Vita*, something actually different; consequently, in order to turn this affirmation from a tautology into a real aesthetic independence and autonomy, we should investigate the inner peculiarity and practice of Pasolini's poetics. Hence, which are the characteristics that allow Pasolini's *borgate* to become any-spaces-whatever, to be singular yet virtual, and, consequently, which are the elements that make of *Ragazzi di Vita* a violent and vital refraction of Rome, rather than a mere descriptive representation and objectification of the urban landscape? In order to answer this question, we should start looking at *Ragazzi's* genesis and structure.

Right after his arrival in 1949 in Rome's *borgate*, Pasolini started to write brief sketches that attempted to reconstruct on paper the chaotic urbanity and life that the author experienced every day in the Roman peripheries. The ensemble of these short impressions, part of which would later be published in the collection of short stories *Alì dagli Occhi Azzuri*, constitutes the fragmented basis wherefrom *Ragazzi di Vita* emerged.⁸⁵ However, these short literary pieces do not merely condense, on a smaller scale, the themes, characters and forms that compose *Ragazzi di Vita*. Pasolini's novel does not assemble these sketches by transforming them into a unitary longer story that incorporates their various perspectives and landscapes in a single and stable composition. On the contrary, Pasolini's narrative structure seems merely to attach one fragmented piece after the other without actually attempting to merge them into a unique narration, like a mosaic composed by singular and heterogeneous tiles, to such an extent that literary scholars and critics of the period debated over whether or not Pasolini's text was, in fact, a novel. For instance, as Alain-Michel Boyer, questioned in his text *Pier-Paolo Pasolini: Qui êtes-vous?*: "The *Ragazzi*, is it a novel? The book has no plot at all, no intrigue, no protagonist who can be distinguished from the mass of his pals" (107).⁸⁶ In 1955,

⁸⁴ "Il neorealismo l'ha scoperto la prima volta; ma l'ha lasciato com'era: ossia un problema particolarmente italiano" (1865).

⁸⁵ Cfr. Muzzioli, *Come leggere 'Ragazzi di Vita' di Pier Paolo Pasolini*, p. 19.

⁸⁶ "*Les Ragazzi*, du reste, est-il un roman? Le livre ne possède point de trame, ni d'intrigue, ni de protagoniste qui puisse se distinguer de la masse de ses compagnons" (107).

Italian neorealist writer Italo Calvino proposed in his essay “Il Midollo del Leone [The Marrow of the Lion]” a narrative structure where the protagonist should have been the reflection and measure of the individual’s active participation in society, “the leonine core” of the narration. Pasolini’s *Ragazzi di Vita*, inversely, presented a narrative structure whereby the chronicle of the petty thievery, hustling, and other unglamorous crimes of Riccetto, Marcello, and a chorus of other characters, all children of the *borgate*, is dispersed into “a nearly meaningless accumulation of events that, in its seeming directionless-ness or lack of obvious moral or narrative telos” (Francese 31). In this sense, the fragmentary genesis and structure of *Ragazzi di Vita* is, apparently, a conservative literary choice that positioned Pasolini and his novel closer to modernist literature than to neo-realism,⁸⁷ paradoxically representing a potential mitigation of Pasolini’s realist aims. Effectively, Pasolini himself seemed to be worried by this literary risk to such an extent that he admitted that *Ragazzi di Vita* “lacks a frame. The new novel (*Una Vita Violenta*) is infinitely more structured” (Naldini, quoted in Francese 29). For this preoccupation, Pasolini in *Una Vita Violenta* substituted the complete figure of Tommaso with Riccetto, who in *Ragazzi di Vita* is not the protagonist but “a quite abstract leading thread” (*Saggi sulla letteratura II* 2728). Despite contemporary critiques and Pasolini’s own concern, *Ragazzi di Vita*, in my opinion, can express a peculiar coherence and cohesiveness, proposing an alternative, modernist, realism fundamentally based on the fragmentary dispersion of stories, characters and places and their relation with Roman any-space-whatever.

Before starting to approach directly the relation between *Ragazzi*’s narrative fragmentation and Roman post-war urbanity, we should accentuate the narrative mechanism that allows Pasolini to actually make of his peculiar realism a mimetic realism: the free indirect discourse written in dialect. We should recall how in Pasolini’s style, ideology and psychology form an inextricable ensemble; so, as we will later develop, we have to keep in mind that this narrative technique plays a

⁸⁷ “In this sense, the novel’s realism—its endless reporting and relaying of the sensual and linguistic immediacy of the borgate—is consonant with that version of the modernist sensibility that relishes the accumulation of narrative fragments as such and disdains any obligation to produce a whole or a sense of totalizing meaning” (Francese 31).

more complex role wherein the more general political poetics of Pasolini's aesthetics is implied.⁸⁸ As, according to Pasolini, the term of the title "'Vita' [life] signifies 'malavita' [underworld], and simultaneously something more: a philosophy of life, a practice" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 697),⁸⁹ similarly we will see in the following paragraph how Pasolini's use of the FIT in dialect conceals a philosophy and practice that crosses the borders of a mere literary technique and that supports Pasolini's cinematography to give a coherent form to Rome's *borgate*. I intend to show how already, and perhaps especially in *Ragazzi di Vita*, Pasolini is able to propose a coherent alternative to neo-realism equally and inextricably based on the use of the dialectical FIT and on the inherent fragmentation of the novel's structure, enlarging Vincenzo Cerami's statement whereby "[*Ragazzi's*] literariness (which excludes the novel from neo-realism), is completely centred on the linguistic choice, on the use that Pasolini makes of the dialect"⁹⁰ (8).⁹⁰ In this sense, I believe that Pasolini's use of FIT in dialect assumes a mediating role between the modernist structural fragmentation and the mimetic aims of the author who, sharing the same linguistic space as the characters, "is not an authoritative mediator between text and reader and does little to give coherence to the narrative" (Francesse 35). Borrowing Pasolini's own words, the Roman dialect balances "the two components of [his] inspiration, the sensual-stylistic on one hand, and the naturalistic-documentary on the other" (*Saggi sulla letteratura II* 2733),⁹¹ composing the peculiar mixture of conservative modernist aesthetic and of mimetic realism that characterizes the uniqueness of Pasolini's fiction in general and of *Ragazzi di Vita*, in particular.⁹²

⁸⁸ See note 45.

⁸⁹ "'Vita' significa infatti 'malavita', e, insieme qualcosa di più: una filosofia della vita, una prassi" (697).

⁹⁰ "la sua letterarietà (che pone il romanzo a riparo dal neorealismo), è completamente incentrata sulla scelta linguistica, sull'uso che Pasolini fa del dialetto" (8).

⁹¹ "le due componenti della mia ispirazione, quella sensuale-stilistica, e quella, diciamo, naturalistico-documentaria" (2733).

⁹² "In Pasolini's fiction, as in his cinema, there is little sense in maintaining realism and modernism as binary terms. In fact, one of the fruitful byproducts of his work is the blurring and the problematizing of these reified critical categories" (Francesse 31).

The Free Indirect Discourse in Dialect

“The encounter with Belli was my last one: but it was certainly one of the most stupendous, also, perhaps, because it coincided with my encounter with Rome” (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 414).⁹³ This excerpt from Pasolini’s short essay written in 1952 “Roma e il Belli” refers to the 19th century Roman poet Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, who with his dialectical poems represented the main source for Pasolini’s recovery of the popular voice of the *borgate*. As the passage above may show, the linguistic discovery of the Roman dialect corresponded to an equal topographical experience of Rome as well; from his very arrival, the city and the dialect seems to form an indissoluble complex that alternatively emerges as urbanity or as a linguistic peculiarity. However, while for Belli the Roman dialect was inherently rooted in a specific portion of the urban map, such as the neighbourhoods of Trastevere or Borgo, according to Pasolini the site of a contemporary, violent and lively dialect needed to be allocated in the post-war, post-fascist of the Roman peripheral areas: “[Nowadays] Belli would have heard an infinity of new locutions in his trasteverini or borghigiani, included in those forced by the fascist sventramenti⁹⁴ to emigrate to the borgate, Primavalle, Quarticciolo, Tiburtino, Pietralata” (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 415).⁹⁵ Then, after Pasolini’s recognition of the marginal centrality of the *borgate* in his linguistic research, it is not surprising that he decided to construct the underworld of the young boys that animate *Ragazzi di Vita*, on the linguistic and topographical heterogeneity of peripheral urban sectors like Pietralata characterised by “the rows of the little pink houses of the evicted, below the hardened and infected crust of the dust, and further the big yellow buildings, tall and tight in a row, in the bare land as in winter, to such an extent the sun burned it” (*Ragazzi di Vita* 181).⁹⁶ In this sense, Pasolini’s use of Roman

⁹³ “L’incontro con il Belli ...è stato il mio ultimo: ma certamente uno fra i più stupendi, anche perché forse coincideva con l’incontro con Roma” (414).

⁹⁴ “In the 1920s Mussolini initiated an extensive process of *sventramento*—disemboweling—which entailed the demolition of housing (as well as churches and other public structures and spaces), much of it medieval in origin, so that the ruins of the Forum and other prized monuments could be “freed” from their burial in the urban fabric. The people who had lived in the areas marked for *sventramento* were sent packing to the borgate rapidissime”(Rhodes 4, original emphasis).

⁹⁵ “quando il Belli sentirebbe un’infinità di locuzioni nuove nei suoi trasteverini o borghigiani, compresi quelli costretti dagli sventramenti fascisti a emigrare nelle borgate, Primavalle, Quarticciolo, Tiburtino, Pietralata” (415).

⁹⁶ “le file delle casette rosa degli sfrattati, sotto la crosta indurita e infetta della polvere, e più in là i grossi casamenti

dialect is not merely a literary technique that allowed him to reach a higher degree of verisimilitude for his narration; on the contrary, this choice expresses a drive, an inevitable necessity to permeate and, then, to refract the vivid reality of the Roman peripheries. The linguistic possibility to transport the vividness on the written page offered to Pasolini the concrete chance to transform his aim for a mimetic realism into a concrete contact with the sub-proletarian reality of the *borgate*, otherwise unattainable for an intellectual like him, who was born and raised in a bourgeois environment. Therefore, transferring and modifying ideologically his sublime primordial love “of the Friulian peasantry [...] directly to the subproletariat of peripheral Rome” (Francesse 22),⁹⁷ Pasolini was able to reinforce both a realistic expression of the *borgate*'s actual reality and his mimetic immersion, as the author of the novel, among the chorus of voices that populate his texts.

Arising from the actual everyday urban reality of the *borgate*, the Roman dialect ‘contaminates’ the integrity of Pasolini’s language that, consequently, results in a multiform complex of registers and impressions. As Pasolini himself affirms in an interview granted to the students of Rome’s Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, “if you read a page of my books you’ll notice that contamination is the dominant stylistic factor, because I, who come from a bourgeois world [...] reader of the most refined decadent writers, etc., have attained this world of mine. Consequently, the ‘pastiche’ had necessarily to be born” (“An Epical-Religious” 42-43). A contamination that does not solely mimic or refract the specific languages spoken in the *borgate*, but that also condenses linguistically the simultaneous topographical heterogeneity of the urban post-war landscape whereon the Roman dialect is performed. As John David Rhodes notes in

gialli, alti stretti in fila, nella campagna nuda come in inverno, tanto il sole l’aveva bruciata” (181).

⁹⁷ “He began [during his war period stay in Friuli] to take an especially keen interest in the ‘mother tongue’ of the region, Friulian, a local dialect possessed of its own, ever more local subdialects. Pasolini seized on Friulian as a vehicle for his own creative purposes, but the Friulian that Pasolini began to compose in was an invention all his own” (Rhodes 18). Pasolini himself stresses a biographical continuity and a simultaneous poetical difference between his drive for the Friulan dialect and the Roman dialect: “Prima di usare la lingua dei ‘parlanti’ della periferia romana, per analoghe ragioni biografiche, avevo usato un’altra lingua senza tradizione letteraria, il friulano di Casarza [...] benché lo stile fosse malgrado le apparenze, fosse in realtà ‘sublimis’ e non ‘humilis’. [For analogous biographical reasons, before using the language of the ‘speakers’ of Roman periphery, I had used another illiterate language, the Friulan of Casarza [...] although, despite the appearances, the style was, in reality, ‘sublimis’ not ‘humilis’]” (*Il Metodo di Lavoro* 210, my translation).

Stupendous Miserable City, the marginal *borgate* exist as a site of contamination where “[t]he country catches the city’s disease; the city’s swollen body pushes itself further out into what had been farmland, or else that same body rejects and expels lower-class Romans as alien matter; immigrants to Rome invade the body of the city and cause the disruption of its functioning” (57). Analogously to the first quote, where the encounter with the poetry of Belli was part of the encounter with Rome itself, the literary contamination of Pasolini’s prose conceals the parallel fragmented composition of the urban context of the Roman any-place-whatever of the *borgate*. Furthermore, the peculiar mix of *Ragazzi di Vita*, where the “ragazzi”, the young boys of the title lead their “malavita”, their underworld life, can inherently express the characteristics of Roman dialect. In fact, the slang nature of the dialect emerges, generally, “in well determined centres of artisans or thieves” (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 696)⁹⁸ and through a peculiar creative and inventive “linguistic infantilism” (696), that causes the violence and vitality of this jargon. Hence, the chorus of young criminal voices that animates Pasolini’s novel materialize the double nature of the Roman dialect both in its delinquent genesis and in its infantile creativity. Thus, in *Ragazzi di Vita*, we can encounter a coherent application and practice of Pasolini’s use of dialect as a mimetic mechanism for the author, as a refractive component of Roman post-war marginal urbanity, and of its population:

“In the centres of the borgate, at the crossroads, like there at Tiburtino, people clumped, ran, yelled, to such an extent that it seemed to be in the shallows of Shanghai: there was a sort of confusion even in the most solitary places [...] And once past Tiburtino, there was Tor di Schiavi, Borghetto Prenestino, Acqua Bullicante, Maranella, Mandrione, Porta Furba, Quarticciolo, Quadraro...Hundreds of other centres like that of Tiburtino [...] A whole big encirclement around Rome, between Rome and the lands around it, with hundreds of thousands of human lives that teemed among their lots, the shacks or skyscrapers of the displaced people. And all that life was not just in the periphery, but inside Rome too, in the

⁹⁸ “in centri ben determinati o di artigiani o di ladri” (696).

city centre, perhaps below the Cupolone: yes, right below the Cupolone, to such an extent that you just had to put your nose out of the colonnade of Piazza San Pietro, towards Porta Cavalleggeri, and here they were in groups and gangs around the cinemas, the pizzerias, yelling, getting mad, teasing” (*Ragazzi* 194-95).⁹⁹

The passage above confirms the topographical and linguistic elements of Rome’s *borgate*. For instance, their ambiguous re-construction as a mixed territory of urbanity and nature, and as formed by the sequence of modern skyscrapers along with little houses. A re-constructive heterogeneity that affirms their specific actuality and their virtual comparability between themselves, Tiburtino, Quarticciolo, Maranella and so on, but also a comparability with an international counterpart like Shanghai. Furthermore, the violence and vitality of the boys that grouped in delinquent gangs is inextricably bound to this urban peripheral chaos. Finally, Pasolini’s literary refraction of the topographical vividness of Rome’s any-spaces-whatever is actualised by the composition of a particular prose conditioned by the use of dialect though idiomatic terms and locutions, like “ècheli lì” [here they were] or “prender d’aceto” [getting mad] and colloquial expressions. Through this topographical and dialectal combination, the *ragazzi* and, metonymically, the peripheries conquer the centre of Rome, contaminating the purity and integrity of the Vatican itself in Piazza San Pietro. As the marginality of the *borgate* permeates Rome’s centre, in this passage we can analogously appreciate how the Roman dialect crosses its own textual boundaries, i.e. dialogues or indirect discourse, contaminating the entirety of Pasolini’s prose where lyrical and authorial sections are juxtaposed to sub-proletarian jargon. Consequently, in this passage, we can clearly detect Pasolini’s peculiar combination that characterizes his mimetic realism (that we have

⁹⁹ “E nei centri delle borgate, nei bivii, come lì al Tiburtino, la gente s’ammassava, correva, strillava, che pareva d’essere nei bassifondi di Shangai: pure nei posti più solitari c’era della confusione, [...] E passato Tiburtino, ecco Tor di Schiavi, il Borghetto Prenestino, l’Acqua Bullicante, la Maranella, il Mandrione, Porta Furba, il Quarticciolo, il Quadraro...Altri centinaia di centri come quello lì al Tiburtino[...] Tutto un gran accerchiamento intorno a Roma, tra Roma e le campagne intorno intorno, con centinaia di migliaia di vite umane che brulicavano tra i loro lotti, le loro casette di sfrattati o i loro grattacieli. E tutta quella vita non c’era solo nelle borgate della periferia, ma pure dentro Roma, nel centro della città, magari sotto il Cupolone: sì, proprio sotto il Cupolone, che bastava mettere il naso fuori dal colonnato di Piazza San Pietro, verso Porta Cavalleggeri, e ècheli lì, a gridare, a prender d’aceto, a sfottere, in bande e in ghenghe intorno ai cinemetti, alle pizzerie” (194-95).

prototypically encountered in the examples of Dos Passos and Woolf): the inscription of Roman dialect within a narrative structure based on the Free Indirect Discourse.

What literary device allowed Pasolini to merge and refract the violence and vitality of the sub-proletarian jargon was, indeed, the disposition of the Roman dialect on a structured narration stylistically and ideologically shaped by the FID since as we have seen, style and ideology in Pasolini form a complex poetic entanglement. According to Pasolini, one of the main faults of neo-realism was to use the FID, merely as a technique, a literary tool that allowed the author to express his or her own subjectivity simply disguising his or her high bourgeois language as the everyday jargon of the character.¹⁰⁰ This procedure, consequently, transformed both the dialect and the character into empty shells filled by the author's voice; in other words, the neorealist FID became a sort of interior monologue of the author, who was speaking through the character, and which tended to identify the whole world with the intellectual bourgeoisie. Inversely, as Pasolini introduces it in his well known essay "Intervento sul Discorso Indiretto Libero" [Intervention on the FID] (1965), he conceived the FID not as a simple literary technique, but also, in a wider sense, as a de-subjectivizing poetics that forces the author to write it "in a language that is substantially different from his" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1359).¹⁰¹ Establishing as one of the prototypical and primordial examples of his FID Dante's Canto V of *Inferno*, Pasolini develops a conception of the FID that becomes an "ideological sign [...] that deeply touches the whole artwork" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1349),¹⁰² revealing the "sociological conscience" of the author. Consequently, the FID invests with its ideological and stylistic force the entire structure of the text, to such an extent that Pasolini affirms that "there are whole books that are entirely a FID" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1347),¹⁰³ adding, ironically, that "a very small part of Italian and European literature, is, hence, excluded

¹⁰⁰ The dialect is an "alibi, per mascherare la terribile funzionalità soggettiva del personaggio [alibi to mask the terrible subjective functionality of the character]" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1359, my translation).

¹⁰¹ "in una lingua sostanzialmente diversa da quella dello scrittore" (1359).

¹⁰² "spia di un'ideologia [...] che investe dal profondo tutta l'opera" (1349).

¹⁰³ "ci sono interi libri che sono per intero dei discorsi liberi indiretti" (1347).

from the area of free indirect discourse” (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1359).¹⁰⁴ Therefore, as Carla Benedetti notes, Pasolini’s “wide and non-technical sense” makes of the FID a “stylistic procedure which allows the writer to be penetrated by those ‘surviving’ writings, bearers of different values from those of bourgeois culture, and to assume their language (the dialect)” (30).¹⁰⁵ Pasolini’s FID, hence, constitutes a complex poetics that inherently implies the mimetic merging of the authorial prose with the dialectical jargon in order to create a contaminated writing wherein there is a cohesive continuity between the characters and the writer, between the urban centre and the peripheral marginality and between the actual singularity of Roman *borgate* and their virtual any-space-whatever.

By assuming the overflowing of the dialectical FID that impregnates the inherent structure of Pasolini’s writing, we can, finally, understand its objectifying aim and consequently the performance in Pasolini’s cinematography of Deleuze’s concept of any-space-whatever. Indeed, as we have already seen, the fundamental poetic premise, whereon the dialectical FID is based, consists in its de-subjectivizing mechanism through which the author is condensed in the socio-political reality of his sub-proletarian characters that, consequently, lose their artificial and literary characterization in order to become real and full singularities. At first glance, this presupposition can contain two contradictory statements. How can a drive for objectification result in anything but reified representations? And, consequently, how can these representations express possible singularities?¹⁰⁶ I argue that these objections, while plausible, are based on a fundamental mistake and inversion.

¹⁰⁴ “Ben poco della letteratura italiana ed europea, resta così escluso dall’area del discorso indiretto libero” (1359).

¹⁰⁵ “il procedimento stilistico che consente allo scrittore di lasciarsi penetrare da quelle scritture ‘sopravvivenenti’, portatrici di valori diversi da quelli della cultura borghese, assumendone la lingua (il dialetto)” (30).

¹⁰⁶ This critique of Pasolini’s dialectical FID is partially conceived in Alberto Bassan article “Protesta o pretesto la ‘Violenza’ di Pasolini?” [Protest or pretext the ‘violence’ of Pasolini?] of 1959, where he stresses Pasolini’s illusory presumption to disappear and participate completely in the life of his sub-proletarian *ragazzi*: “Pasolini sembra che entri dentro quell’ambiente e cerchi di comprenderlo, mimetizzandosi con esso. Ci si sente una dolorosa partecipazione.... A Pasolini pare manchi la vera comprensione e compassione e la vera umiltà con cui accostarsi al male e alla miseria [Pasolini seems to enter inside the environment and attempts to understand it, mimetizing himself in it. We feel a painful participation...Pasolini seems to lack of true comprehension and compassion and the true humility to get close to evil and to misery]” (218, my translation).

When Pasolini presumes a de-subjectifying mechanism, he refers to the monopolizing subjectivity that the author, for instance in neorealism, tends to project onto his characters and environments, deforming their own peculiarities in a sort of prosthetic emanation of his own language and culture. Through this perspective, the wide sense of the dialectical FID allows the author to inverse this possibility by making of his own writing an object that can be filled by the violence and vitality of the sub-proletarian reality, that consequently, can refract on paper its own singular nature. Hence, “in order to attempt to make an objective narration of a world objectively [...] different from that of the author” (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1348),¹⁰⁷ Pasolini objectifies his own writing that becomes a refractive prism for the languages, spaces and lives of the Roman *borgate*. If we have, then, specified this de-subjectivizing mechanism of the dialectal FID, we still have to clarify how this relation between language, urbanity and actual existences can express its own idiosyncratic peculiarity and simultaneously a virtual alterity. In this sense, I think that one of the most immediate and clear examples can be found in Pasolini’s nomenclature of the characters in *Ragazzi di Vita*. If we consider the ensemble of the characters we can, indeed, detect several commonalities in the way they are named and presented by Pasolini throughout the novel. For instance, taking Riccetto, the “quite abstract leading thread” of the novel: “Riccetto lived in the primary schools Giorgio Franceschi. Coming upwards from the street of Ponte Bianco, that on the right has a scarp with the houses of Monteverde Vecchio on top, you first see on the left the Ferrobedò, buried in its small house, and then you arrive at Donna Olimpia, also called Grattacieli” (55).¹⁰⁸ The very first thing to note is that Pasolini inscribes the character in its dialectal FID structure, by using his nickname Riccetto. Obviously, this choice can be firstly ascribable to the sociological practice typical of any informal and young environment and of the dialectal language in general. However, if we consider that throughout the novel, the “real”, official, name of Riccetto,

¹⁰⁷ “per cercare di rendere oggettiva la narrazione di un mondo oggettivamente [...] diverso da quello dell’autore” (1348).

¹⁰⁸ “Il Riccetto abitava alle scuole elementari Giorgio Franceschi. Venendo su dalla strada del Ponte Bianco, che a destra ha una scarpata con in alto le case di Monteverde Vecchio, si vede prima a sinistra, affossato nella sua villetta, il Ferrobedò, poi s’arriva a Donna Olimpia, detta pure i Grattacieli” (55).

“Mastracca Claudio”(140), is mentioned only once in the entire text, then perhaps this narrative choice can prompt further interpretations. Looking at rest of the passage, we notice that the same practice of using the nickname to refer to Riccetto, is equally applied to the urban landscape where the factory Ferro Beton is called according to its jargon pronunciation Ferrobedò and the area of Donna Olimpia is accompanied by its nickname Grattacieli. This combination and continuity between Riccetto and the urban space is strengthened also by the fact that his singularity is emerges in the urban liminal heterogeneity of the post-war *borgate* and, specifically, it is associated with his topographical collocation, the place where he lives, the primary schools Giorgio Franceschi. These peculiar elements, however, are not associable solely to Riccetto but are extendible to the chorus of singularities that compose the mass of the *ragazzi*. For instance, in another passage Pasolini presents Alduccio as follows:

“In front of the hill of Pecoraro there was a big forecourt and, close to the sign with the notice ‘End Zone-Start Zone’, just before where the great expanse of fields to the Aniene began, the old bus shelter of 309 emerged, right where the bus turned, leaving Tiburtina street, and pointing between the lots of the Borgata towards Madonna del Soccorso.

Alduccio lived, as Begalone, at IV Lot, at the end of the central road of the borgata” (186).¹⁰⁹

Analogously to the passage of Riccetto, Alduccio and Begalone, named after their nicknames, emerge as singular realities according to their topographical specific collocation in the urban intricate map of post-war Roman *borgate* and spaces, that conversely are specified by their dialectal nomenclature, like Pecoraro [Sheperd] hill. In another scene, Pasolini makes one of his *ragazzi* wisely uttering: “‘Hey’, said Capellone, ‘two from Tibburtino, one from Acqua Bullicante, two from Primavalle, a straggler, and Picchio from Valle dell’ Inferno: we could do the League of the vicious of the Roman borgate!’” (82).¹¹⁰ Again, the singularity of Picchio, Capellone and the others

¹⁰⁹ “Davanti al monte del Pecoraro c’era un gran piazzale e vicino al cartello con la scritta ‘Fine zona-Inizio zona’, poco prima di dove cominciava la gran distesa dei campi fino all’Aniene, s’alzava la vecchia pensilina del 309 che a quel punto svoltava, lasciando via Tiburtina, e puntando tra i lotti della Borgata verso la Madonna del Soccorso. Alduccio abitava, come il Begalone, al IV Lotto, in fondo alla via centrale della borgata” (186).

¹¹⁰ “‘Aòh’, fece il Capellone, ‘due de Tibburtino, uno dell’Acqua Bullicante, due de Primavalle, uno sbandato, e er

is inextricably bound to their belonging to their equally dialectal heterogeneous environment of the Roman peripheries. In this sense, as the *borgate* Primavalle, Tiburtino or Acqua Bullicante, being virtual any-space-whatevers, can be constantly interchanged between them without losing their singular nature, the *ragazzi* as Riccetto, Alduccio or Begalone are actual singularities that can equally carry as speakers and protagonists Pasolini's narration, fragmenting it into various events, actions and words without breaking its narrative rhythm.

These specific sections of Pasolini's novel are just partial and small examples among many others, but they clearly illustrate the contamination and combination between the urban space, the characters and the dialectal FID that composes the complex and fragmented prose of Pasolini. As Pasolini himself affirms: "the 'writing', beyond style and various techniques and genres, [...] denies the various procedures, shattering them in a continuous and contemporary conscience, which becomes coexistence" (*Saggi sulla letteratura I* 1360).¹¹¹ Consequently, in the following section we will attempt to extend this continuous and contemporary coexistence that characterizes Pasolini's FID in dialect to his own peculiar cinematography.

The Cinematography of Rome's Any-Space-Whatever

"Boundless places where you think / the city ends, but instead / begins again, inimical, / a thousand times over, with bridges/ and mazes, excavations and scaffolds / behind giant waves of tenements / that cover entire horizons" (*Tutte le poesie I* 925-6).¹¹² Written contemporary to the publication of *Ragazzi di Vita*, these words, part of the poem "Sesso, consolazione della miseria" [Sex, consolation of the misery], synthetically introduce Pasolini's visceral¹¹³ fascination for the decay and precariousness of the peripheral desolation of Roman post-war *borgate*. The coexistence of ruins

Picchio qqua de Valle dell'Inferno: potremo fa la Lega degli avviziati de 'e Brogate de Roma!" (82).

¹¹¹ "La 'scrittura', al di là dello stile e delle varie tecniche o generi [...] nega i vari procedimenti frantumandoli in una continua e contemporanea coscienza, che diviene compresenza" (1360).

¹¹² "luoghi sconfinati dove credi/ che la città finisca, e dove invece/ ricomincia, nemica, ricomincia/ per migliaia di volte con ponti/ e labirinti, cantieri e sterri,/ dietro mareggiate di grattacieli,/che coprono interi orizzonti" (925-6).

¹¹³ Pasolini "viscerally loved the periphery," as Piero Spila notes, because of its precariousness, of its being "on the point of disappearing, of being swallowed by the new, advancing city" (16, my translation).

and re-constructing building sites, of elements of urbanity and rurality, makes of the *borgate* a unique architecture, that can be included in what Gil Doron calls “Dead Zones”;¹¹⁴ with the only and fundamental exception that Roman *borgate* are highly populated areas: “it is an eccentric and charming entertaining combination of a ruined or a deserted city and wild nature. It is a space that opened in the dichotomy of what we perceive as city and nature” (255). Liminal areas of architectural and topographical ambiguity, the *borgate* present a potential city, in becoming, that holds the tragic remains of the war destruction along with the re-constructing skeletons of modern tenements and skyscrapers. As we have seen already in the previous passages, *Ragazzi di Vita* continuously refers the contradictory potentiality of this peculiar urban landscape where the *ragazzi* drift: “floods of garbage, not finished houses already in ruins, big muddy excavations, scarps full of dirt” (16).¹¹⁵ As Deleuze noted, referring to the any-space-whatever, Rome’s *borgate* are spaces where the pre-war hypothetical urban homogeneity and integrity is lost and where the connection between their different parts is possible in “an infinite number of ways” in a complex potential virtuality. Consequently, it is, specifically, the *borgate*’s topographical disruptive contamination that distinguishes them from the pre-war urbanities of London, Paris and New York, which we have respectively encountered in the cinematographies of Woolf, Rhys and Dos Passos. Indeed, these modernist cities express a similar singular and virtual condition that, however, was not based on their inherently topographical and architectural decay, but rather on the complex dynamism that their intricate integrity articulated. On the other hand, *Ragazzi di Vita*’s *borgate* constitute a radicalized space where pre-war modern dynamism is performed in a hyper-fragmented environment. In this sense, the post-war urbanity of Roman peripheral any-spaces-whatever carry to the extreme both the singular specificity and the virtual potentiality that characterised modernist

¹¹⁴ “During the last 50 years or so, from after the Second World War, the discourse and practice of architecture and planning has been perplexed with peculiar spaces in the built environment, which have been labelled ‘wastelands’, ‘derelict areas’, ‘No man’s land’, ‘Dead Zones’, urban ‘voids’, ‘Terrain vague’ etc. are, for example, disused harbours and train yards, abandoned barracks, closed mining sites or industrial areas, abandoned neighbourhoods, empty lots, spaces at the edge of highways and under bridges etc. In short, places that look empty, and appear as ones which do not have any use (any more)” (247).

¹¹⁵ “valanghe d’immondezza, case non ancora finite e già in rovina, grandi sterri fangosi, scarpate piene di zozzeria” (16).

cities. Indeed, as we have seen, the topographical literary construction of Roman *borgate* reaches a deep degree of territorial specificity and a parallel highly potential virtual universality. On one hand, we can observe an “almost obsessive logging of street names, names of Rome’s suburban quarters, bus numbers and routes, cinemas, etc.,” (Rhodes 34), a continuous urban nomenclature that specifically roots the narration in the Roman context.¹¹⁶ On the other, the inherent re-constructive contamination of these landscapes allows Pasolini to compose a virtual space where the *dérives* of the young boys takes place in a “space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible”, borrowing Deleuze words. If, on the one hand, we have already analysed how the topographic reality of Roman *borgate* is a fundamental component of the stylistic-poetic structure that sustains Pasolini’s text, we will now determine how these “virtual conjunctions” of these spaces are also part of the articulative mechanism that coordinates the dispersed fragmentation of characters, events, times and actions that characterises Pasolini’s *Ragazzi di Vita*, and how they constitute an additional element that, intertwined with the dialectal FID, composes Pasolini’s cinematography.

“As he went down along Donna Olimpia with his grey and long trousers and his white shirt, instead of looking like a communicant or a confirmand, he looked like a lad, all decked up, going to pick up girls at the Tiber waterfronts” (15).¹¹⁷ The first lines of Pasolini’s *Ragazzi di Vita* already introduce the stylistic choice and the tone that will be adopted throughout the entire novel: the ironic yet empathic tone towards the *ragazzi*, Riccetto in this case, the use of dialect and jargon such as “acchittato” [decked up] or “pischello” [lad], and the topographical accuracy and centrality of the Roman *borgate*. However, it is possible to detect another component that will be shared also, as we will see, by the rest of the novel: movement. As Clarissa Dalloway, Marya or the numerous

¹¹⁶ “When geographic detail is offered, it is done so with an incredible degree of specificity; we are reminded repeatedly of precisely where characters are and how they get from one place to another. Geographic detail is not, in and of itself, unusual in the tradition of the novel. What strikes us in *The Ragazzi* is that Pasolini so insists on the precise coordinates of areas of Rome that were, to most readers in Italy of the 1950s, relatively or completely unknown and unheard of” (Rhodes 32).

¹¹⁷ “mentre scendeva giù per via Donna Olimpia coi calzonni lunghi grigi e la camicetta bianca, piuttosto che un comunicando o un soldato di Gesù pareva un pischello quando se ne va acchittato pei lungoteveri a rimorchiare” (15).

cast of Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, Riccetto emerges as a singular while he is actually descending one of the central roads of one of Roman *borgate*. The expression "Mentre scendeva" [as he went down] sets in motion not only the actual *dérive* of Riccetto throughout the post-war landscape, but allows Pasolini to ignite his own narration of different spaces, times, events and characters. By initiating this pedestrian and literary wandering along with Riccetto, we, as readers, are slowly and literally introduced, inserted in the re-constructing heterogeneity and virtual potentiality of Roman any-space-whatever, between urbanity and rurality, decay and modernity: "Behind Ponte Bianco there were no houses but a huge building area, at the bottom of which, around the rut of the avenue Quattro Venti, deep as a torrent, Monteverde spread, disrupted" (20).¹¹⁸ Similarly to the articulative mechanism that we have investigated in the previous three chapters, Riccetto and the rest of the singularities that increasingly scatter Pasolini's prose in various apparently unrelated narrative micro-sections, are coordinated by their simultaneous coexistences and dynamisms throughout the ruined potentiality of the Roman *borgate*. Moreover, the dialectical FID that contaminates Pasolini's prose confuses his narrative in order to compose a complex whole where it is almost impossible to discern who is observing or remembering the scene, who is the seer or the *voyant*, using Deleuze's term. As the Roman *borgate* express a double nature singular yet virtual, analogously the characters, through the combination of dialectal FID and dynamic sections, refract this ambivalence whereby they become not only specific singularities but also virtual seers who interpret and records the reality wherein they are merge.

Dispersed throughout the whole novel, we can detect in Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita* several correlative sections where the hiatus, the possible interval between two different characters, spaces, temporalities or events, is articulated by the dynamism implied by the *borgate*'s architecture and topography. This is the case, for instance, in the passage where the text passes from the episode wherein Marcello, one of the *ragazzi*, witnesses and is hurt by the collapse of the primary schools

¹¹⁸ "Dietro il Ponte Bianco non c'erano case ma tutta una immensa area da costruzione, in fondo alla quale, attorno al solco del viale dei Quattro Venti, profondo come un torrente, si stendeva calcinante Monteverde" (20).

where Riccetto lived, to the description of the contemporary actions and thoughts that occupied Riccetto who during the collapse was at the seaside: “He did all the road on foot to Cerchi, all alone as a dog, and there he waited for the 13, which was half empty, because it was still early and there was light and heat as in the middle of the afternoon, while probably it was not even 6 o’clock” (60).¹¹⁹ Without breaking the narrative rhythm, or movement, by segmenting it into two different sections through transitional descriptive portions, Pasolini can shift from Marcello’s traumatic experience and spatio-temporal singularity to Riccetto’s own reality, by the actual re-presentation of Riccetto’s pedestrian *dérive* in the streets of Rome’s periphery. Analogously, the episode where, having disturbed with his noisy binge the sleep of his elder brother, Lenzetta had been beaten up by him, is connected to the next narrative segment, where the *ragazzi*, Riccetto, Alduccio e Lenzetta, steal some scrap-iron, by the urban dynamism in the heterogeneous reality of *borgate*: “Riccetto and Alduccio came slowly, because they did all the road on foot from Pietralata, and they dragged their feet as if they belonged to someone’s else legs” (122).¹²⁰ The possible examples of the articulative mechanism, through which the dynamism performed in the *borgate* conjoins heterogeneous events, characters, spaces and times, are practically innumerable; from the episode¹²¹ of the encounter of Riccetto and Lenzetta with the “cabbage-thief” Antonio Bifoni to Riccetto’s prostitution episode¹²²

¹¹⁹ “Si fece a fette la strada fino ai Cerchi, tutto solo come un cane, e lì aspetto il tredici, ch’era mezzo vuoto, perché era ancora presto e c’era luce e caldo come in pieno pomeriggio, mentre non dovevano essere neppure le sei” (60).

¹²⁰ “Il Riccetto e Alduccio se ne venivano piano piano, perché se l’erano fatta a fette da Pietralata, e strascinavano i piedi come se non fossero i loro”(122).

¹²¹ “Erano ormai quasi all’altezza dell’Acqua Santa, a destra c’erano tutte le praterie deserte e le marane, a sinistra cominciava via dell’Arco di Travertino, che puntava dritta verso Porta Furba, e da lì al Mandrione e alla Marianella. In fondo a via dell’Arco di Travertino, c’erano qua e là due grandi ammassamenti di bicocche di cui, camminando per la strada, si godeva magnificamente la vista. Erano tante casupole rosa e bianche, con in mezzo baracche, catapecchie, carrozzoni di zingari senza ruote, magazzini tutti mescolati insieme e sparsi sopra i prati, in parte, in parte ammassati contro i muraglioni dell’Acquedotto, nel disordine più pittoresco [They were almost around Acqua Santa, on the right there were meadows and moats, on the left Arco di Travertino road began, pointing right towards Porta Furba, and from there to Mandrione and Marianella. At the bottom of Arco di Travertino road, there were here and there two big heaps of hovels, whereof, walking on the road, you could enjoy the magnificent view. They were many pink and white little houses, among which there were shacks, shanties, gypsy’s bandwagons without wheels, warehouses, a part of them was mixed up and scattered on the fields, the rest was amassed against the wall of Acquedotto]” (132-133).

¹²² “Scesero a Piazza Ottavilla, che quando il Riccetto abitava da quelle parti era ancora quasi in campagna, voltarono giù a sinistra per una strada che prima non c’era, o era soltanto un sentiero in mezzo a dei grandi prati qua e là i[...]dei ciuffi di canne alte tre metri e dei salci: ma adesso c’erano dei palazzi già costruiti e abitati e dei cantieri.[...] Andarono oltre, però il sentierino durava ancora poco perché proprio all’estremità di quei prati che ormai erano pieni di case, c’era una strada nuova, con qua e là altrettanti palazzi costruiti o in costruzione [They came down to Piazza Ottavilla, that when Riccetto lived there it was still almost countryside, they turned down on the left through a street that was not there before, or at least it was just a path between great fields on one side and [...] the tufts of

with a “froschio” [faggot] of Rome’s city centre, which illustrates the ambiguity and potential mutability of Roman *borgate*, perennially under re-construction and in between decay and modernisation.

Despite the abundance of the examples available, I argue that this articulative mechanism in Pasolini’s novel of the any-space-whatever of Roman *borgate*, can be more clearly elucidated by investigating a particular passage of *Ragazzi di Vita*:

“On the overpass of Tiburtina station, two guys were pushing a cart with some armchairs on it. It was morning, and on the bridge the old buses, that for Monte Sacro, that for Tiburtino III, that for Settecamini, and the 409 that turned right under the bridge, down through Casal Bertone and Acqua Bullicante, towards, Ponte Furba, changed gear scrapingly in the middle of the crowd, among the tricycles and the carts of the ragmen, among the bicycles of the lads and the red carts of country bumpkins who were slowly coming back from the market towards the peripheral fields. Also the flaked pavements on the sides of the bridge were full of people: columns of workers, of layabouts, of house-mothers descended from the tram at Portinaccio, right under the walls of Verano, who were trailing bags full of artichokes and pork rinds, towards the little houses in Tiburtina road, or towards some skyscraper, recently built, among the scraps and the constructing sites, among junk-dealers and wood depots, among Fiorentini or Romana Compensati big factories. Right there, on the top of the bridge, between the multitude of cars and pedestrians, the two guys were jerkily trailing the cart, not caring about the jolts that the cart was doing for the dips in the paving. They went as slow as they could, they stopped and they sat on the edges of the cart” (70).¹²³

three meters tall reeds and willows on the other side: but now there were already constructed and inhabited tenements and building sites. [...] They went on, but the path was short since at the end of those fields by now full of houses, there was a new road, with here and there finished or under construction tenements]” (208).

¹²³ “Sul cavalcavia della stazione Tiburtina, due ragazzi spingevano un carretto con sopra delle poltrone. Era mattina, e sul ponte i vecchi autobus, quello per Monte Sacro, quello per Tiburtino III, quello per Settecamini, e il 409 che voltava subito sotto il ponte, giù per Casal Bertone e l’Acqua Bullicante, verso Punte Furba, cambiavano marcia raschiando in mezzo alla folla, fra i tricicli e i carretti degli stracciaroli, le biciclette dei piscelli e i birroccioni rossi dei burini che se ne tornavano calmi calmi dai mercato verso gli orti di periferia. Anche i marciapiedi scrostati ai lati del ponte, erano pieni di gente: colonne di operai, di sfaccendati, di madri di famiglia scese dal tram al Portonaccio, proprio sotto i muraglioni del Verano e che trascinavano le borse piene di carciofoli e cotiche, verso le casupole di

This long passage is particularly significant since it condenses several characteristics that we have detected in Pasolini's prose. Firstly, we can clearly appreciate the specific contamination implied by the dialectal FID, whereby several jargon terms, as "stracciaroli" [ragmen], "birrocioni" [carts] or "carciofoli" [artichokes], pollute Pasolini's prose even in its descriptive component and not only in the dialogic sections. Moreover, Pasolini's style evidently assumes the colloquial nature that characterizes the language of his characters, as the hyper-convoluted hypotactic syntax confirms. Secondly, the passage confirms the omnipresent coexistence and entanglement between the stylistic-textual structure of the novel and the topographical heterogeneity of Roman urban context where modern roads and pavings, skyscrapers and scraps, factories and constructing sites shape the potential virtuality of the *borgate*. Finally, we can also notice the specific mechanism in which both the any-space-whatever of *borgate* and the dialectical FID are implied in order to coordinate the elliptical narration of *Ragazzi di Vita*. Indeed, this passage articulates a significant hiatus whereby we pass from the death-bed of Marcello after the collapse of the schools, where also Ricetto's mother died, to an indeterminate future when Ricetto has moved to live with his uncle and aunt. As in the previous examples, the transition between two apparently incompatible realities is not actualised in Pasolini's narrative through a descriptive transition where the author artificially conjoins the sections, but rather it is developed through the inherent dynamism that Roman *borgate* imply both on a linguistic and urban level. Among the frenetic heterogeneity of the jargon and *dérives* of workmen, house-mothers, buses and layabouts, in the middle of the *borgate*, porous containers of mass and minor movements,¹²⁴ the two guys are just an anonymous component of this chaotic complexity. As Pasolini's choice to call the *ragazzi* by their street nicknames instead of their official names already suggested, the young boys as Ricetto, Alduccio or Begalone are

via Tiburtina, o verso qualche grattacielo, costruito da poco, tra i rottami, in mezzo ai cantieri, ai depositi di ferrivecchi e di legname, alle grosse fabbriche di Fiorentini o della Romana Compensati, proprio in cima al ponte, tra la marea di macchine e di pedoni, i due ragazzi che trascinavano il carretto a strappi, senza badare agli zompi che faceva sulle buche del selciato, e andandosene più adagio che potevano, si fermarono, e si misero a sedere sui bordi del carretto" (70).

¹²⁴ "These containers of mass movement, examined from their edges, revealed myriad bleed-zones, pores of minor movement: human and animal tracks, dirt side roads, vacant lots with failing fences" (Mariani 313).

interchangeable seers/*voyants* who through their urban movement and the dialectical FID are capable to refract the peripheral reality of Roman *borgate* in a virtual universality wherein any consciousness remains singular but continuously merges into other temporalities, actions or dialogues. It is not by chance that the reader finds out the identity of the two guys only after two pages where Pasolini deliberately omits the names of the protagonists of the scene, and then finally reveals that the “son of a bitch on the armchair” (72)¹²⁵ is Riccetto. In this sense, in this passage, we can clearly grasp how the interchangeability between events, characters and languages that characterises Pasolini’s cinematography is still coordinated by the peculiar dynamism contained in the urban milieu. Therefore, apparently Pasolini’s own cinematography is a direct and quite homogeneous continuation of the pre-war writing of movements that we have encountered in the previous three chapters. However, as we have seen by analysing Pasolini’s mimetic realism and his dialectical FID, we have noticed that, merging the boundaries between the jargon of the characters and the intellectual language of the writer, Pasolini creates a heterogeneous prose where, consequently the active role of the characters and the speculative and descriptive authority of the writer are merged. Following Deleuze: “the character has become a kind of viewer. He shifts, runs and becomes animated in vain, the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action. He records rather than reacts” (C2 3). In other words, the character has lost what Pasolini called “the terrible subjective functionality”, in order to become, along with his specific language, not merely a tool for the writer, but a refractive singularity that allows Pasolini to penetrate the sub-proletarian world. As Mariani and Baron affirm, “the characters inhabit ‘any-spaces-whatever’ because they are wanderers in a universe in which meaningful connections as the precursors to action are difficult if not impossible to construct” (200).

As the passages selected for this paragraph seem to confirm, the heterogeneous and aimless accumulation of events, characters and temporalities in Pasolini’s *Ragazzi di Vita* is inextricably

¹²⁵ “quel fijo de na mignotta sulla poltrona” (72).

entangled to the very fact that the characters and events wander, move in the reality of the any-space-whatever of Roman *borgate*. Consequently, if the alterity of Pasolini's post-war narration in respect to his pre-war precursors is not identifiable *in* the mechanism that articulates and composes the cinematography through urbanity, then, inevitably Pasolini's coherent heterogeneity resides in the second term of the equation, i.e. the peculiar topographical, architectural, cultural and historical contamination of post-war urban peripheries. The writing of movement of Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita*, as in Woolf's, Rhys's and Dos Passos's novels, still composes and sutures in the cohesive wholeness and continuity of the novelistic form a hyper-fragmented narration; yet his cinematography is not more structured on the integral and frenetic modern metropolis, but on the heterogeneous "pure locus of the possible" (CI 109) of the Roman *borgate*.

Conclusion

“Art, all the arts, tend to the condition of cinema” (52).¹²⁶ With these words contained in his novel *Il Lavoro Culturale* [The Cultural Work] of 1957, the Italian journalist, writer and translator Luciano Bianciardi stressed how cinematic techniques could be already detected in Leonardo da Vinci’s *Il Trattato della Pittura* [A Treatise on Painting] as well as in Ugo Foscolo’s description of the Battle of Marathon in his poem *Dei Sepolcri* or in Dante’s *Paradiso*. Consequently, this quote seems to be aligned on the side of the usual literary and film theories, illustrated in the introduction of this thesis, which consider literature and cinema as comparable artistic domains that share a certain amount of techniques. However, if we take a more attentive look at Bianciardi’s selection of words in this brief passage, we can detect a very interesting alternative theoretical possibility. In order to establish the technical convergence of all the arts towards the cinematic form, Bianciardi does not write either “art tends to the *techniques* of cinema” or “art tends to *cinema*”, i.e. he does not create a technical or ontological primacy of cinema in respect to the rest of artistic expressions. On the contrary, he deliberately uses the expression “*condition* of cinema”. The specific selection of the word *condition* inextricably alludes to something more than the technical peculiarities of the cinematic medium; it implies the identification of a sort of impulse, a habitat wherein the cinema was already set and wherein the other arts would have been the following guests. So, what is this condition of cinema towards which all arts converge?

In his examination of philosophical film theory proposed in *Refractions of Reality*, John Mullarkey identifies an alternative possibility, a non-philosophical possibility to approach cinema without deforming it by an epistemological or ontological philosophical presupposition. By affirming how the inextricable reality of cinema is associable to that of movement, Mullarkey states that “there is no essential or ‘Ideal’ film wherein either a particular technology or aesthetic form would render it absolutely Real (‘great or true’ film art). Rather, at any one time, there is only a

¹²⁶ “L’arte, tutte le arti, tendono alla condizione del cinema” (52).

provisional selection of film examples (and film scenes) that converge on one point – what film ‘really is’ – *from a certain frame of reference*” (xv, original emphasis). This convergence is not represented, as Mullarkey notes, by an ideological construction of a definitive and conclusive identification of what cinema is. On the contrary, this point of convergence constitutes a virtuality wherefrom the actual differential of any single film refracts in its own singular terms the reality of movement: “The *actual* movement of filmic convergence is asymptotic, an ‘indefinite’ progress [...] the ‘*élan cinématique*’. Movies have an *élan* rather than an essence – a divergent form of movement that participates in (rather than ‘captures’) processual reality in myriad ways; indeed, it can only so participate when it is myriad” (XV). The *élan cinématique*, hence, according to Mullarkey, is the possibility to differentiate the reality of movement into singular actualities that characterises the heterogeneous coherence of the cinematic art. Obviously with this impulse or impetus of cinema, Mullarkey draws on the influential and analogous Bergsonian term of *élan vital* described in *Creative Evolution*. For Bergson, the *élan vital* was a philosophical abstraction that attempted to define the biological impulse¹²⁷ that allowed him to overcome the static dichotomies of evolutionary mechanism and finalism.¹²⁸ As Deleuze notes in his text *Bergsonism*, the impulse of *élan vital*, according to which animals and plants become different entities, or the species gain their specificities, “is always a case of virtuality in the process of being actualized, a simplicity in the process of differentiating, a totality in the process of dividing up. [...] It is as if Life were merged in

¹²⁷ “So we come back, by a somewhat roundabout way, to the idea we started from, that of an original impetus of life, passing from one generation of germs to the following generation of germs through the developed organisms which bridge the interval between the generations. This impetus, sustained right along the lines of evolution among which it gets divided, is the fundamental cause of variation at least of those that are regularly passed on, that accumulate and create new species” (*Creative Evolution* 97-8).

¹²⁸ “To take only one example: when I relate the phenomena of life and evolution to an *élan vital*, it is not for the stylistic flourish, nor moreover is it in order to mask our ignorance of the deep cause with an image, as when the vitalist generally invokes a ‘Vital principle’ or when Butler speaks to us of a ‘life-force’. The truth is that in this area philosophy only provides philosophers with two explanatory principles: *mechanism* and *finality* (the latter characterizing the ‘Vital principle’ of the vitalists and consequently the ‘life-force’ of Butler). Now, for reasons whose detail it is not useful to go into here, I accept neither the one nor the other of these two points of view, which correspond to concepts formed by the human mind for a completely different purpose than the explanation of life. It is somewhere *between* these two concepts that we have to place ourselves. How do we determine this place? I can only indicate it by hand since there is no intermediary concept between ‘mechanism’ and ‘finality’. The image of an *élan* is nothing other than this indication. By itself it has no value. But it will acquire value if the reader is willing to place himself with me at this point, so that we can observe from this position what can be perceived of life and also what is not perceived” (*Key Writings* 369).

the very movement of differentiation, in ramified series” (91).¹²⁹ In this sense the *élan vital* is a specific condition of Life where the movement of differentiation emerges in the process of becoming an actual reality. Consequently, being a condition of a specific moment of Life’s process of becoming is communal to each micro-movement of life, in animals and plants for instance, without, however, imposing itself as an absolute ideal that regulates every aspect of life. Rather, it is the capacity of Life to continuously differentiate itself. Indeed, as Mullarkey notes, in the term ‘*élan vital*’ “the emphasis is on the first word rather than the second” (*Bergson and Philosophy* 97), i.e. Bergson stresses how this impulse is not a definition of Life but rather a virtual condition wherein Life is refracted. Analogously, then, the *élan cinématique* that Mullarkey attempts to propose in his philosophical approach to cinema “offers us no content but only a (dynamic) form, a diagram, resisting any complete explanation” (215). Being a dynamic form, the *élan cinématique* is also the communal condition of the cinematic experience wherein the refraction of movement itself, i.e. of reality, is actualised in myriads of different actual ways.

Returning to Bianciardi’s statement, we are now able to suggest what the condition of cinema is, towards which the other arts inevitably tend, *c’est-à-dire* the *élan cinématique* that in the cinematic medium converts movement through the use of different techniques and contents. In this sense, through the examples of Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Jean Rhys’s *Quartet*, John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* and Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Ragazzi di Vita*, in this thesis, I have attempted to extend the virtuality of the *élan cinématique*, as the condition of the cinematic medium, to the literary domain. Indeed, as the *élan vital* is the biological mechanism that refracts the ever-changing being of Life in the process of its actualisation and differentiation into singular

¹²⁹ Eugene May in his article “The Reality of Matter in the Metaphysics of Bergson” confirms Deleuze’s interpretation affirming that the double-nature of the *élan vital*, as condition of matter and spirit, presumes its inherent virtuality differentiation: “it is better to say that Bergson includes *both* matter and spirit within the *élan vital*. [...] It does not precontain matter as a ‘seminal seed’, for this would be to fall into the mechanistic view that ‘all is given’. That is, it does not precontain matter *in its material existence*. Yet it does, in a very real sense, precontain matter in a virtual, unrealized state. This is brought out by Bergson when he teaches that matter comes into being as something actual or realized by passing from an ‘intensive’ to an ‘extensive’ state. [...] In other words, the *élan* precontains both consciousness and matter as interpenetrating virtualities, and it gives rise to both in the course of its actualization, in the course of giving rise to what is *other* than itself” (634, emphasis by the author).

realities such as animals, plants or species; I assume that the *élan cinématique* is the artistic mechanism that virtually refracts movement and reality in the process of being actualised by different artistic media, such as cinema and literature, but also by different techniques and contents. Consequently, the *élan cinématique* corresponds to a virtual condition or impulse that is shared both by cinema and literature from the modernist era, but that is simultaneously actualised into the independent and specific domain of these two art forms. In virtue of this double nature of the *élan*, being a virtuality in the process of actualisation, I think that the communal ground between these two artistic expressions primarily rests in the potential virtuality of this condition and consequently in the possible contiguities between the content or technical actualisations of this impulse.

As discussed in the Introduction, film theories, adaptation studies and literary critiques that have attempted to investigate the relation between literature and cinema in the last decades, seemed to be more concentrated on finding the actual contiguities of these two artistic domains rather than firstly analysing their virtual communal potential of refracting through different media the same movement, the same reality. Hence, I believe that this thesis inverts the elements of this equation, whereby the Deleuzian philosophical concepts on cinema, i.e. *movement*, as refracted by the cinematic medium, are not shared also by the novelistic form because of the technical contiguities, but rather they can be traced in the specific context of the novelistic form because this literary expression participates in the same virtual conditions, of the same *élan cinématique*, that is, however, actualised in a very specific way. For this reason, I believe that the methodological inversion proposed through my thesis can better preserve the virtual commonalities between cinema and literature as well as their differentiation into their actual singularities. As we have seen with the help of the examples proposed in the various chapters, the novelistic form in the modernist period tended to refract movement as an artistic potentiality, similarly to the cinematic medium. However, the novelistic form actualised the artistic potentialities of movement in a very specific and singular way whereby the various literary techniques and contents found their coherent coordination through

the urban dynamism performed in pre and post-war modernist cities. And it is precisely in this combination of the virtual potentiality of movement and of its literary actualisation through modern urbanism, that I identify the alternative theoretical possibility of the methodology proposed in this thesis. For, on the one hand by noting the peculiar literary mechanism that involves modern urbanity in Woolf, Rhys, Dos Passos and Pasolini, it affirms the specificity (without being exclusive) and independence of the novelistic form in respect to filmic art whereby the refraction of movement is not necessarily combined and actualised by modern urbanity. On the other hand, the communality between literature, the novel in particular, and cinema is still preserved. Not by structuring it on actual contiguities, such as techniques or contents, but rather by examining their virtual conditions and impulses, their useful abstractions of Deleuzian concepts, i.e. on their *élan* for movement as it emerged in modernist era. For this reason; I believe that this thesis represent a first step towards a broader investigation of the modernist impulse towards movement. The analysis of the novelistic cinematography opens up the possibility for the investigation of other literary cinematographies, such as poetry or drama that in the modernist period emerged with their own peculiar specificity.

In this sense, the manifest emergence of this *élan cinématique* in the modernist period and its different actualisation through cinema, literature and other arts must not be intended as a sort of Hegelian *zeitgeist* that is absolutely and inevitably confined to the modernist period. But rather, it should be intended as an impulse that in the modernist period, for historical, cultural and technological reasons, coalesces in and is refracted by a more explicit condensation of artistic expressions. As there are eras where the biological evolution/differentiation accelerates and where the *élan vital* becomes clearly perceptible, the modernist era is, hence, a sort of accelerative time where the processual being of the *élan cinématique* becomes tangible and visible and where its refractions are more intense.

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