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'Walled-in': The Psychology of the English Garden in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Rachel Cusk's *The Country Life*

« Walled-in » : la Psychologie du jardin anglais dans Mrs Dalloway *de Virginia Woolf et* The Country Life *de Rachel Cusk*

Nicolas Pierre Boileau and Rebecca Welshman

1 When Woolf visited Shakespeare's birthplace in 1934 she sensed his presence in the gardens, writing that 'He is serenely absent-present; both at once; radiating round one; yes; in the flowers, in the old hall, in the garden, but never to be pinned down' (Woolf 1982, 219-20). As scholars have widely shown, Shakespeare was a significant influence on Woolf.[1] In Shakespeare's plays, gardens have long been seen as offering a space away from the watchful eyes of others, where social rules and restrictions can temporarily be forgotten.[2] Shakespeare's psychologically complex characters often work through their emotions in natural settings—a device that many other authors have employed, including Woolf—and these settings can inform us about the characters themselves. As noted by Jeanne Shearer, for example, plant symbolism in *Mrs Dalloway* 'lends deeper meaning to certain passages, emphasizes the themes of the book, and allows Woolf a subtle means of revealing the nature of [her] characters' (Shearer 26), and as Shelley Saguaro argues, in Woolf's work, gardens 'are imbued with contingency and transition, rather than represented as simple paradigms of paradise or retreat' (Onans 59).

2 The idea of a lost Eden or Paradise preoccupied some of the great Victorian writers with whom Woolf was associated through her father Leslie Stephen. Thomas Hardy, for example, ousted his fallen heroine Tess of the D'Urbervilles from the green gardens of Talbothays Dairy. Unable to escape the recurring implications of her past, Tess devises her own escape from her former life, yet finds no respite in a society that does not welcome the fugitive. For Tess 'home' is the prehistoric monument Stonehenge—a

circular enclave that is exempt from the condemning laws of the society in which she lives (Welshman). Hardy's philosophy was informed in part by John Milton's epic poem 'Paradise Lost', which Woolf's read and made notes on in a 1918 diary entry. Woolf describes the poem's 'sublime aloofness and impersonality of the emotion', and while she admires the 'wonderful, beautiful and masterly descriptions of angel's bodies, battles, flights, dwelling places,' the poem cannot help her with the task of 'judging life' or with understanding 'one's own joys and sorrows'. Although she wrote that the quality of the poetry's veneer exceeded Shakespeare's, she lamented its lack of psychological complexity, and she noted no echo of 'Lady Macbeth's terror or Hamlet's cry' (Woolf 1981, 193). Woolf's analysis of the poem may be derived from her characterisation of Milton as 'the first of the masculinists' (Woolf 1981, 193), and her decision to reread the poem from this perspective.

3 For Woolf the richest human emotions were contained in moments–often surprising, vivid, and compelling. In 'Sketch of the Past' (1939), Woolf contrasts moments of being and moments of non-being:

> I was looking at the flower bed by the front door [at St Ives]; 'That is the whole', I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be very useful to me later. (MB 84)

4 Often regarded as a paradigm of Woolf's conception of the union between the human and the non-human (Kostowska), this example is taken from her childhood experience at St Ives.[3] The idea that self-realisation occurs suddenly, in moments, is developed in *Mrs Dalloway*, and the garden and park spaces facilitate this process. Unlike the rambling Eden of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, the gardens in *Mrs Dalloway* are intricately designed, cultivated and domestic. Moving on from Renaissance and Victorian depictions of paradise, Woolf experiments with the idea of a fragmented paradise that can be pieced together in sudden moments of realisation. She thus subverts the traditional tropes of the literary garden in order to experiment with the texture of the Modernist moment.

5 The book begins with Clarissa's recollection of the garden at Bourton. Her deliberations about buying flowers, the doors being removed from their hinges, and the freshness of the morning recall to her the French windows at the country house, and brief morning conversations with Peter Walsh who once commented upon her 'musings among the vegetables' and the preference of 'men to cauliflowers'. Clarissa's memories of Bourton as a place of awakening, and the overlapping of both present and past experiences in these spaces enable Woolf to challenge the idea of a clear demarcation between the dynamic modern cityscape and the unchanging rural landscape. For Clarissa's memories of Peter Walsh are fluid, and are triggered both by her contemporary experience of the city and her past experience of the country: 'When millions of things had utterly vanished', including his eyes, his pocket-knife, and his moods, it was 'a few sayings like this about cabbages' that remained with her. (MD 1)

6 The British Library manuscript of *Mrs Dalloway*, known as 'The Hours', describes the rose and kitchen garden at Bourton, in which Peter Walsh recalls walking with his friend Sally when he was younger. The process of recollection brings Peter's feelings into focus with sudden clarity:

> There was a garden where they used to walk, a walled in place, with paths; cabbages, & rose trees, just wide enough for two half kitchen garden, with rose

> bushes & giant cauliflowers—he could remember Sally stopping to <tearing off a flower> snuffing up the roses. (Woolf and Wussow 91)

7 The final published version reads: *'There was a garden where they used to walk, a walled-in place*, with rose-bushes and giant cauliflowers—he could remember Sally tearing off a rose, stopping to exclaim at the beauty of the cabbage leaves in the moonlight' (MD 64). In the final version Woolf changes 'flower' to 'rose', and the manuscript addition of the tearing of the rose becomes the focal act of the moment. Sally's act of tearing the rose can be read as an allusion to Eve plucking the apple in the Garden of Eden. The man is passive, while the woman is actively defining their experience by 'tearing' a rose and 'stopping'. Woolf omits the reference to a path that can accommodate the man and woman 'just wide enough for two', suggesting that the garden is more the territory of the woman and thus supporting the idea of feminine symbolism.

8 The theme of a lonely heroine seeking respite from turbulent emotional circumstances, is central to Rachel Cusk's *The Country Life*—a rustic satire published in 1997. Stella Benson's mysterious past is gradually revealed through the course of a summer spent in a new job in rural Sussex as a carer for the disabled son of a wealthy family. In Cusk's novel, the garden symbolises an idealised country life that Stella yearns for, because she seeks comfort after a failed marriage. Stella's mobility—as a lonely woman on the run from her past–is set in contrast to her ward Martin, who is contained to a wheelchair. Their shared experience in the garden brings them closer together and forces Stella to recognise her own role in the events of her life. Echoing Woolf's description of the garden in *Mrs Dalloway*, Cusk's garden also has rose bushes and paths. The setting reflects the psychological state of the character who is prone to conceptualising how her new life offers a fresh perspective on her lost sense of being: 'the machinations of the adult world had progressed beyond my own, while I had been busy cultivating *the solipsistic cabbage patch* of my own thoughts' (TCL 165). In *Mrs Dalloway*, readers might tend to remember the impressions of London rather than the fleeting garden scenes, despite the presence of cabbages in the snippets of conversation Clarissa recalls in the very first page. In *The Country Life*, the countryside offers a setting for the psychological study of how the character adjusts to her new life and her relations with the family she is to live with during that summer. Despite the title of the novel, the country life itself remains a nebulous horizon of expectation, which Stella strives to comprehend. The narrator first needs to confront her prejudices as well as work out how she fits into the complex domestic situation in which she finds herself. Interestingly, the first pages of the novel postpone the moment of Stella's awakening by stretching time. The first day in her new home spans a few chapters and this structure enables Cusk to further defer the experience of the countryside.

9 Stella's first experience of the Maddens' country house involves becoming lost, with the associated impressions of emptiness and disproportion (TCL 134). She seems to see only the details of each corridor without being able to picture the house as a whole: 'After several twists and turns, and by a manoeuvre about which I was not entirely clear, we entered a large and sunny room which I took to be the kitchen' (TCL 23). This 'madhouse'—to quote Pamela, the owner of the house—is the perfect setting for a gothic novel to unfold, where the young heroine becomes lost and her sense of anxiety grows. Almost every turn gives her access to a reality of which she was previously unaware:

> We rounded a bend in the path and there, suddenly upon us, was a vision. It was an old white cottage, built on a single storey, with a thick thatched roof which slanted

> so low over the front that it resembled a long fringe with two eyes and a nose—the windows and door—beneath it. (TCL 29)

10 Pamela often mentions that Stella's approach to life in the country is characterized by an unwarranted anxiety, a view of it that is out of sync with its reality: 'my personal landscape of fears' is how Stella describes her feeling when she imagines that the cottage might be haunted (TCL 77), but of the landscape, very little is said. Stella is the Maddens' servant, but she cannot fulfil the role because she remains enslaved by the personal events of her past, which the narrative represses. She may be seeking to inhabit the physical space of the countryside and the psychological room it can afford, but it remains inaccessible to her until she confronts her personal fears and failures. In this respect, Cusk does not only offer a sardonic revision of the gothic, but also plays with the elastic time of the rural environment. Furthermore, Stella's chaotic experience of the country life does not resemble the middle-class lifestyle that is often imagined to be uneventful and comfortable; an idealised way of life that is epitomised by the English magazine 'Country Life',[4] founded in 1897, on the cusp of the Modernist movement: 'If adventure is what you want [...] then you must find things very quiet here. In fact, it is usually for its lack of adventure that people come to the country' (TCL 120). In Cusk's novel, the slowness of the passage of time, reinforced by Stella's lack of control of her time and sleep, helps distort the vision she has of her new reality, and estranges her from the feeling of unity she seeks.

11 Cusk's experiments in time and place take us back to *Mrs Dalloway*, for which Woolf chose the working title 'The Hours'. Woolf's novel stresses the passage of time as a way of exploring the tension between the official, 'monumental' time and the subjective experience of it (Ricœur). Although the sound of Big Ben seems to indicate the inexorable passage of time, Clarissa's and other characters' experiences of time result in the extension of the day to the length of a full novel, and the passing of hours is layered with multiple experiences, past and present, in which the memories of the scenes in the garden at Burton or of the parks in London offer respite. The impression that the passing of time is slowed down is also due to the fact that Clarissa's only activity that day is the organisation of a party, because she has not been invited anywhere for lunch, and Peter spends the day wandering the streets of London where he now feels an outsider.

12 Cusk also uses the passing of time as an instrument to convey the psychological difficulty of a character that seeks unity in the midst of an experience of fragmentation. The condensing of Stella's story into a single summer gives greater urgency to the subjective experience. As noted by Bloom, 'to speak of measuring one's time by days or months, rather than years, has urgency, and this urgency increases when the fiction of duration embraces only hours, as *Mrs Dalloway* does' (Bloom 2). Cusk stresses the lack of activity inherent in Stella's new lifestyle, which although it gives her time to think and daydream, and indeed seems to expand the daytime hours, offers no structural stability. The beginning of the novel reworks these themes with a sense of ironic aloofness that helps to set the transcendent experience of the garden in sharp contrast and revive the imagery of the flower as a symbol of self. Stella does not fit into the country life, yet endeavours to force herself to fit: 'the acquisition of aptitude for the country life required some degree of physical toughness. My skin would have to adapt, as my spirit was striving to do' (TCL 148). Stella's belief that she can acquire 'aptitude for the country life' indicates a disjuncture between how she perceives herself and her actual condition. Seemingly unaware that 'aptitude' is something natural or innate, that she cannot acquire, Stella is

blinkered to the reasons why the experience of the country life that she expects or desires is denied to her. The countryside itself thus recedes into the background as the complexity of her psychological state unfolds.

13 Cusk further depicts Stella's disorientation and inarticulacy by denying her the very linguistic tools that would enable her to make sense of her situation: 'My unfamiliarity with the countryside and its attendant vocabulary meant that it was some time before I understood "public rights of way" to mean footpaths' (TCL 146). As a result, the countryside only signals to her in signs that she does not know how to interpret—as the smoke words of the plane in Regent's Park are signalling to Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway* (MD 18). In contrast to the chaos of Stella's former urban life, the ostensible emptiness of the surroundings slowly draws forth emotions that have been trapped within: 'I didn't recognize my surroundings; partly because they were unfamiliar to me, and partly because the darkness of the countryside is far blacker than that of town' (TCL 51). This results in her feeling 'terrified' and having nightmares: 'I was lodged so deeply inside myself that my consciousness was in that moment a simple junction of the sense, like that of an animal. I thought at first that I had gone blind, and then that I was dead and in my own grave' (TCL 51). Stella needs to find a new language in order to participate in the country life, and this will also help her to negotiate the complex territory of self-disintegration.

14 On one of her tours of the property, Stella is shown an enclosed space 'through which [she] could make out some form of horticultural splendour within' (TCL 108). The sun makes Stella 'lose sense of [her]self quite dramatically' (TCL 108). The performative effect of nature is reinforced by her iterative discussion of rain and sunshine, which she presents as conducive to revealing the problematic question of 'the boundaries of the self' (TCL 109). As she considers this in the 'Elizabethan Rose Garden'—a space cultivated by the chaotic Maddens and a symbol of their attempt to maintain a veneer of domestic harmony and respectability—'the lovely enclave'[5] elicits the inner conflict that has been present since the beginning of the novel but which has remained as yet unvoiced:

> The garden was quite idyllic; indeed, my amorphous mental state may well have been responsible for the force of my reaction to it. It was rectangular in shape, and consisted in several long rows and wedges of rose bushes with a maze of well-kept gravel paths between, all perfectly symmetrical; a geometrical theme which gave the garden a look of arcane symbolism. . . . The roses, being in full bloom, were a grand, faded pink and many of them were very large. I reached out to touch one beside me, whose head hung engorged from its stem. To my embarrassment, it disintegrated instantly beneath my fingers in a gentle explosion of velvet petals, falling in a sort of confetti about my feet. I could not help but think, looking at the naked stem, that I had murdered the lovely flower. (TCL 109)

15 For Stella, the act of picking the rose from this garden that is neatly contained and organised is one of disintegration and fragmentation. The rose she picks is already in a state of decay, so that even if her 'touch' is less violent than Sally's 'tearing' in Woolf's narrative, the act has similar significance. Stella's touching of the rose literally sullies the beautiful garden whose harmony was fragile. The picking of the rose leads Stella to daydream about the Elizabethan 'ancestry' of the space in which she stands, in what is one of the first episodes of Stella engaging with the country life that she talks so much about. The rose garden becomes a *topos* of fiction, as well-trodden as an old footpath in the countryside, and the episode reads like a metatextual, (Neo-)modernist epiphanic moment that fleetingly enables the character to grasp an essential aspect of her

discomfort. Seated by the sundial, under the direct influence of the sun, which 'melts the boundaries of self' (TCL 109), Stella finds that she is able to access 'the outmost, unpatrolled reaches of thought where lately [she] had forbidden [her]self to wander' (TCL 110). Her 'vision' of a continental city, in which 'her weightless body' drifts 'like a fluttering leaf', produces an experience of revelation and happiness, and connects the garden with the ostensibly mismatched city once again:

> I experienced the magical, elusive flash of certain happiness: something I had not felt for some time and which, arising as it did from a rapid modulation of feat to safety, provided the substance for my first, indelible identification of Franchise Farm as home. (TCL 111)

16 Unlike the fallen Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Stella finds that country society welcomes her as a refugee from her former life. The Rose garden acts as a peaceful place for her to temporarily 'wander' from the present moment, but it also facilitates a greater sense of connection with her past that has been lost for a long time.

17 However, the ending of the episode returns Stella to her feelings of inadequacy: a recurring cycle that suggests epiphanic moments are just small steps in a longer journey of self-realisation: experiences that do not necessarily endure beyond the 'walled-in' confines of the garden or even beyond the few brief moments in which they are realised. The scene replays the whole logic of the relation between English, gender, class, and heritage—and brings us back to *Mrs Dalloway* in a more sardonic fashion. In the latter novel, the garden is part of a memory that surfaces in moments when Peter and Clarissa are trying to reconnect after years of separation, just as the cabbages in the first pages function as a way to remember past relations and conversations. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the overwhelming presence of the Great War leads to the mapping of London as a place that carries the associations of a past that are regained in monuments, fragments of conversations, and invitations to lunches. Clarissa's *flânerie*, which has recently become a vast area of critical investigation, has focused on such interpretations of the novel, and revealed the ambiguous mixture of anxiety and momentum created by the Modernist cityscape (Bowlby, Elkin). In *The Country life*, Cusk's vision is less historically conscious, her narrative less anxious, so that the episode seems to delve into the tradition of the rose in order to rediscover the narrative potential of its symbolism.

18 Stella's inability to adapt to the country life is duplicated at the level of personal experience when she misunderstands the meaning of the name Elizabethan Rose Garden. In this place, which enables her to '[enjoy] privileged seclusion in a world as orderly beyond these walls as within them' (TCL 109), 'Elizabethan' stands only for the name of the rose, rather than an old-fashioned style of garden. Instead of taking us back to the Shakespearean trope of the garden, the novel twists the intertextual reference into a piece of comedy. This symbolic flaw (signifier and signified are disjointed) causes the subject to waver because she is literally lost for words. On one level the rose is a real flower, and on another it is a deconstructed metaphor of selfhood.[6] The episode of the Elizabethan Rose Garden shows this in a very literal fashion because the real experience of epiphany, which was for Stella a 'moment of being', a moment in which she seemed to connect with who she is, to be fully conscious of her self, is brutally interrupted by the severance of the signifier when Martin asks a question that exposes her illiterate reading of the garden. Martin's intervention about why Stella is daydreaming causes the significance of the countryside experience to recede once more:

> 'I was thinking,' I improvised, 'of how amazing it is that this garden has been here since Elizabethan times. One imagines history to be inorganic, and yet here it is,

> written into the landscape.'
> I was rather proud of this insight, but Martin seemed to find something funny in it [...]
> Martin, meanwhile, having prolonged his hilarity beyond all reasonable limits, finally gave me his reply:
> 'The garden is not *Elizabethan*, you idiot! It's a breed of rose, the Elizabethan rose. [...] There you are. [...] That's why things are better off in our hands. We know how these things ought to be done.'
> 'Who is we?' I enquired.
> 'The upper classes." (TLC 112)

19 The picking of the rose does not only compromise the harmony of the garden, but also problematises the meanings of the English words and their heritage. Moreover, opposing the Cartesian world of the upper-classes' vision of law and order, Cusk implicitly suggests that the subjective experience can only be achieved while transgressing and trespassing. Stella is suddenly an 'idiot'; an insult which may recall the 'village idiot' who is outside of common understanding and subject to ridicule. By swiftly following Stella's destruction of the rose as a symbol of old England—and the associated old class system—with humorous dialogue, Stella skilfully reveals an underlying conflict of class and gender—by which the disabled young man feels superior to the female assistant by nature of his knowledge and possession. The rose, Elizabethan or more contemporary, also manifests in its symbolism a problematical disjuncture between what is said, what is meant and what is signified. Garden space and psychological space are thus brought into parallel focus, highlighting the transgressive power of literature to suddenly relocate the self in new territory. By reinstating the law of language, according to which 'a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose',[7] Cusk also plays with the literary references to explore the rift between the intellectual and the reflective authors, to use T.S. Eliot's distinction based on the metaphor of the rose:

> The difference is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose.[8]

20 This scene in Cusk's novel can help us re-read aspects of *Mrs Dalloway*, even if other critics have preferred to see Cusk's Woolfian echoes in *Arlington Park* (Latham). For to consider *Mrs Dalloway* as an experiment in recording the fragmentation of experience brings into focus the significance of its natural settings. Roses and other flowers appear in Woolf's novel at significant moments. The shell-shocked Septimus daydreaming in the ornamental gardens of Regent's Park recalls the loss of his friend in action. Woolf describes Septimus as 'unable to feel', and as being detached from beauty as if he were 'behind a pane of glass' (MD 97). Walled-in by the horror of his war experiences, the natural world brings his fears into focus: 'red flowers grew through his flesh; their stiff leaves rustled by his head. [...] Roses hang about him—the thick red roses which grow on my bedroom wall [...] to watch a leaf quivering in the rush of air was an exquisite joy' (MD 76), and a hallucination of his dead friend appears from within the branches of the trees. We might also turn here to the scene in *Mrs Dalloway* when Richard Dalloway crosses Green Park carrying roses to present to Clarissa. Dalloway steels himself to tell his wife that he loves her—carrying a 'vast bunch' of red and white roses 'like a weapon'—and yet, when presenting them to her 'he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in

so many words'. The roses thus stand as a symbol of inarticulacy, of what remains unspoken and unconveyed. That Dalloway carries them as he would a sword or gun suggests that he is seeking an essential identity, or connection with Clarissa, that remains obscure and unreachable, despite his belief that he can forcefully bring his feelings into the present through 'words'. The red and white flowers may also recall the two colours of the St. George's Cross—the emblem of England—and are implicit in Woolf's rendering of old England; the England that has been fought over and won 'like a miracle'. Yet the implications of the war for identity—national and personal—are yet to be realised: like Dalloway's inarticulate sentiments, roses—like weapons—can only superficially convey the meaning or trajectory of their bearer. Thus, the roses remain where Clarissa puts them and are later referred to several times, as if they remind her of something that she can't quite remember. Dalloway's emotional investment in the flowers is not fully realised, as Septimus' emotional investment in the war is also not understood or coherently expressed. Thus, the roses can be no more than an ornamental part of the setting alongside the 'roar of voices [...] the candlesticks [...] the blowing curtains' (MD 145).

21 For Woolf and for Cusk the garden promises some progressive movement in the psyche of their characters. Although paradise has been lost or fragmented, the containment of the garden space offers potential for a meaningful connection with another person or with the character's own past. Peter Walsh's recollection of Sally tearing the rose represents a simpler, earlier time in his life when his desires and ambitions seemed more within his reach. This is further suggested when his attention is caught by a young woman wearing a 'red carnation' in London, whom he follows through the streets, imagining a different life in order to quell his anxieties about his age and the passing of time (MD 67). The lonely Stella whose relationships with men seem doomed to fail discovers that the garden almost kills her when she drunkenly falls into the swimming pool. Yet this symbolic act of a desire to return to a state of innocence marks the beginning of a new life in which she is accepted into the Madden family for who she really is and with their full knowledge of her past.

22 The cyclical process of starting anew and relocating the self—as realised in circular, enclosed outdoor spaces—is a fictional trope that has endured for centuries. The circle, as a symbol of eternity, is echoed in the 'ring' of Hardy's Stonehenge (Welshman); in the 'ring' around the flower that the young Virginia Stephen observed in Cornwall; and in the concentric circles of the interior of the rose in *The Country Life*. Woolf's and Cusk's experimental narratives explore the implications of the fragmentation of this symbol and thus invite us to conceptualise the cyclical nature of rebirth and self-discovery. Exploring how Woolf and Cusk depict the flower as an enduring symbol of self, in the context of garden spaces, brings into focus the role of time; the brief life of a flower representing the 'moments of being' in which the depths of the self might come to the surface amidst the fast-flowing pace of life. Understanding the significance of initially being 'walled-in' by one's emotions or past experiences, before working through them, is central to understanding how Woolf employs features of the natural word in *Mrs Dalloway*. It is clear that Rachel Cusk also embraces the trope of the garden as a fertile space in which to experiment with the depiction of psychological flaws, tensions and personal associations. In both novels, the utopian peace and tranquillity of the garden or park space is ultimately denied to the characters that are held back from deeper engagement with natural spaces by their own emotional insecurities and their untenable places in the

underlying conflicts between class, gender, and identity. In both texts, the symbolic act of picking the rose is a watershed moment that brings the characters' feelings into focus with sudden clarity. Cusk's female character's sense of fragmentation finds an echo in the Elizabethan garden but struggles to be fully articulated. For in the urban space of London or the stifling world of the Maddens, where uncultivated nature seems out of reach, the 'walled-in' garden spaces hold significant potential for self-realisation; a trope that the writing of Woolf and Cusk seeks to keep very much alive.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, Robert SAWYER, who argues that Woolf was 'haunted by his genius', p.1.

2. See, for example, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and in comedies such as *As You Like It*.

3. This house in Cornwall is often regarded as the source of Clarissa Dalloway's house at Burton, where Sally Seton picks a rose.

4. *Country Life* was founded in 1897 by Edward Hudson who was born into a wealthy middle-class family with a large house in Hyde Park. The earliest issues contained articles about outdoor leisure pursuits and advertised English country houses, thus promoting an idealised way of living. In 1897 Lord Lee of Fareham saw in the magazine's pages an 'intoxicating array of temptation in the shape of English country houses—Tudor, Jacobean, Georgian and what not—which were at the disposal of any homesick exile who could make a fortune overseas and retire to his native land.' (Hall 2017 [online])

5. *Nuttalls Dictionary* defines 'enclave' as: 'territory belonging to one country surrounded by that of another' (from the Latin *en-* and *clavis*, a key' (242)). An enclave is thus a territory within a territory which is exempt from the rules that lie beyond it. Stella's experience of the garden allows her to unlock territories within herself that she has previously been unable to access.

6. According to psychoanalytic theory (Freud, Winnicott, Lacan), the subject is split because of a dependence on language that separates him or her from the real. Based on his reading of Heidegger and Saussure, Lacan goes as far as to affirm that the subject is only a fleeting accident in an experience marked by lack of coincidence. 'This means that—contrary to Descartes—that thinking and being will never coincide, and that we are faced with a constitutive rupture between the symbolic (language) and the real.' (Sheperdson 121)

7. Gertrude Stein, 'Sacred Emily' (1913). The popular phrase is repeated in many works by Stein, with a variety of meanings. The tautological motto is often regarded as an expression of the operation of language, but Stein saw it as a way of evoking that a word conveys imagery in itself:

'I think that in that line the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years'. *Four in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947).

8. T.S. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets', 1920, last accessed at http://www.liceomeda.it/new/documenti/0809/Materiali/The%20Metaphysical%20Poets%20%28T.S.%20Eliot%29.pdf on May 15, 2018.

ABSTRACTS

Modernist writers are often considered to have moved away from ambivalent or even negative representations of the city – which Victorian writers had depicted as the antithesis to the Eden-like countryside – and shifted towards a celebration of city life. While *Mrs Dalloway* is celebrated for its city scenes, casual allusions to conversations 'among the vegetables' reveal an often overlooked subtext. For Woolf and for Cusk, the garden functions as a contained space through which to work through problematic emotions and achieve at least temporary reconciliation between the past and present. Rather than working within polarised conceptions of a paradise lost or regained, both authors experiment with the idea of a fragmented paradise that can be pieced together in sudden moments of self-realisation. The cultivated space of a domestic garden brings into focus the perception of being 'walled-in' (MD, 64) by emotional perceptions of past experiences. Self-consciousness that struggles to be articulated is realised with sudden clarity in heightened 'moments of being'. Virginia Woolf and Rachel Cusk thus experiment with the trope of the garden in order to explore the depths of the self, beyond the urban spaces that have been so central in their writings.

Alors que les Victoriens avaient présenté la campagne comme une version de l'Eden, les Modernistes ont pu sembler s'éloigner des représentations ambivalentes, voire négatives, de la ville pour parfois en venir à la célébrer. Si on loue souvent *Mrs Dalloway* pour les scènes de cette modernité, les bribes d'une « rêverie parmi les légumes ? » pointent vers une autre interprétation qui peut souvent passer inaperçue. Pour Woolf comme pour Cusk, le jardin fonctionne comme un espace clos à travers lequel les personnages construisent des émotions complexes qui aboutissent à une réconciliation du passé et du présent, bien que temporaire. Au lieu d'hésiter entre des conceptions polarisées entre le paradis perdu ou retrouvé, les deux auteurs mettent en jeu l'idée d'un paradis fragmenté qui peut être recomposé lors de moments soudains de compréhension de soi. L'espace cultivé d'un jardin domestique met au cœur du texte la perception d'être « enclos(e) » (MD, 64) dans des perceptions et des émotions passées. La conscience de soi, qui trouve difficilement à s'exprimer, en vient à se réaliser dans des moments de clarté soudaine, des « moments d'être ». Virginia Woolf et Rachel Cusk mettent donc en jeu le trope du jardin afin d'explorer les profondeurs du moi, au-delà des espaces urbains qui ont été si centraux dans leur écriture.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Woolf (Virginia) Cusk (Rachel), moi, paradis, temps, paysage psychique, symbolisme, émotions, campagne, moments d'être
Keywords: Woolf (Virginia), Cusk (Rachel), self, paradise, time, psychic landscape, symbolism, emotions, countryside, moments of being

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