

згори, тоді немає протиріччя між тим, що відбувається, і переживанням процесу. Філософія Уайтхеда могла б бути моделлю практики Ференца в інтерактивному взаємному психоаналізі, але гетеродоксальний психоаналіз міг би забезпечити практичне психологічне підґрунтя для теорії Уайтхеда. Краса – це дія в процесі відкриття нашого розуму від себе до нас самих, тому інтраактивні елементи стають інтерактивними речами. Ми самі, відображені в нашому Світі, є “Вічним Іншим”: Психологічне джерело естетики – це психологія Вайтхедівського “надоб’єкта”.

Ключові слова: емоційний аутизм, когнітивний аутизм, інтерактивний дефіцитний аутизм, збуджений аутизм, стереотипний аутизм

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SEARCH FOR BEAUTY AND VIVID VALUES IN THE EVERYDAY: VIRGINIA WOOLF AND PROCESS AESTHETICS

Abstract. This article explores the parallels between Virginia Woolf’s aestheticized account of reality in her fiction and Alfred North Whitehead’s process aesthetics that emphasizes the fact that any experience may be classified as aesthetic enjoyment of vivid values. While scholars often associate Woolf with the high modernist aesthetics and formalism, the writer was fascinated by the everyday and the lure of common objects that generate a strong emotional response on the part of the perceiving subject. Especially in her early short stories “The Mark on the Wall” and “Solid Objects”, the main characters manifest a childlike compulsion to explore surrounding objects and the need to penetrate “deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts”. Similarly, in his philosophical system, Whitehead wants to go beyond what we already know about the external world and explore the inner organic relations behind the appearance of a thing, or in Woolf’s words the “pattern behind the cotton wool” of the everyday. In *Science and the Modern World* Whitehead argues that the problem of the modern civilization is the lack of art, experience, and value in the mundane and that it is the artist who should cultivate “the habits of aesthetic apprehension.” Woolf likewise rejects the dichotomy between art in its narrow sense and its broad sense, conceived as the aesthetic enjoyment of reality, and claims in her famous essay “Modern Fiction” that the subject of modern art can be anything and that fiction should translate artistically the impressions of “an ordinary mind on an ordinary day”.

Keywords: Woolf, Whitehead, process aesthetics, ordinary experience, art

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Introduction. Virginia Woolf is notoriously known as a “high modernist” author who revolutionized the genre of the novel and short fiction in the first three decades of the 20th century. She is also recognized for her feminist ideas and criticism of social injustice. However, she is usually less associated with philosophical reasoning and purely metaphysical enquiries in some of her most celebrated works. Fortunately, this debt has been partly repaid by scholars who connect her either with the philosophy of her contemporaries – Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore – or poststructuralist philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf’s father, who was a philosopher himself, encouraged his daughter’s passion for reading, including the works of great philosophers. While studying at Cambridge University, Woolf’s brother Thoby Stephen joined the ‘Cambridge Apostles,’ the famous intellectual society, and became friends with Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore who created the philosophical core of the iconic Bloomsbury Group. As we know from her diaries and autobiographical works, Virginia Woolf enjoyed the intellectual meetings of the group and participated in their discussions on topics such as art, aesthetics, ethics and, most importantly, philosophy. Although Woolf claimed that she preferred attending a concert or a play to Russell’s public lectures, it has been demonstrated in multiple scholarly monographs that she must have been very well acquainted with his thought (Ann Banfield, 2000). In her review of Lawrence Pearsall Jacks’s works entitled “Philosophy in Fiction”, Woolf reveals her interest in the inclusion of philosophical enquiry in literature and she admits that Jacks articulates “a different method of approach and a different direction” and becomes “something besides a novelist,” which is something Woolf wishes other novelists “shared with him” (Woolf, 1987, p. 209). Therefore, it is not surprising that Woolf’s family background and her own interest in philosophy penetrate her fiction, which becomes “philosophically literary” (Benjamin Hagen, 2018, p. 139). In her early short stories “The Mark on the Wall” and “Solid Objects” Woolf focuses on our perception of material objects whose seeming solidity and internal design fascinates the author: “I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts” (Woolf, 1989, p. 85). Furthermore, these stories demonstrate her interest in everyday objects which are usually considered only a part of the setting and not something the characters can appreciate aesthetically. In her well-known novel *To the Lighthouse*, inanimate objects represent a significant element, which is also manifested in Mr Ramsay’s philosophical enquiry into “the subject and the object and the nature of reality” (Woolf, 2000, p. 28). Similarly, in her most experimental novel *The Waves*, one of the characters doubts “the fixity of tables”, touches a table and asks: “Are you hard?” (Woolf, 2000, p. 162).

Analysis of recent research and publications. Apart from this enquiry into the nature of material reality, Woolf’s philosophy is also very closely related to aesthetics and her ideas about the nature of art, particularly the art of fiction. In her essay “Modern Fiction” she urges writers to transcribe the flow of everyday experience, “an incessant shower of innumerable atoms” that springs from the external and affects our minds. Furthermore, she admits that “everything is the proper stuff of fiction” and “no perception comes amiss” in writing (Woolf, 2009). This entails that for Woolf, an accomplished work of art captures our emotion induced by our perception of ordinary reality which may be regarded as “aesthetic.” Aestheticized view of reality is also a subject of Woolf’s

late oeuvre where the author turns away from the analysis of perception and external reality and explores intersubjectivity and collective mode of being/becoming. In her autobiographical essay “A Sketch of the Past,” she likens the interconnection of people and community to a work of art composed of interrelated elements: “[...] we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art” (Woolf, 1985, p. 72). Similarly, In *Between the Acts* she devises a community that is described as a “discordant harmony”, which hints at the idea that for Woolf beautiful harmony is not achieved by the sameness of its parts but by the introduction of contrasts that are harmonized.

Alfred North Whitehead, Woolf’s contemporary and Bertrand Russell’s teacher and collaborator, is well known for his process-oriented thought and for propagating a speculative cosmology in his opus magnum *Process and Reality*. Although there is no clear evidence that Woolf ever read Whitehead’s works or discussed philosophical ideas with him, it is known that she met the Whiteheads at the 1912 ball celebrating the closure of the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, and probably also in Ottoline Morell’s house, where Russell and Whitehead were frequent visitors. Taken this into consideration, it is even more surprising that the writer and the philosopher examine very similar questions in their oeuvres. However, the parallels between their ideas may spring from the “zeitgeist” and their personal urge to react to the most pertinent questions of their time — materialistic outlook of the then science, neglect of the intrinsic value of the environment, and the false conception of reality consisting of separate, unrelated individuals or pieces of inert matter.

Like Woolf, Whitehead explores the process of perception in his philosophical works, examines the relation between subject and object and introduces his own concept of nature. Interestingly, his early work *The Concept of Nature*, which outlines a theory of materiality based on interrelated events, was published in 1920 – the same year as Woolf’s short story “Solid Objects,” where the writer questions the traditional concept of a thing and assigns agency to lifeless and inert material. Whitehead fully develops his ontology in *Process and Reality* where he argues that an actual occasion, defined as “a drop of experience” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 18) and not as a material particle, represents the building block of reality. This reveals that experience has a special status in his philosophical system and that each actual occasion can experience, or in Whitehead’s terms “prehend”, and react to its environment. Moreover, Whitehead emphasizes that any experience may be aesthetic because beauty is realized in each actual occasion (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 255), which demonstrates that ontology and aesthetics are very closely related in his philosophy and that aesthetics and aesthetic experience are, perhaps, even superior to Whitehead’s ontological categories (Dadejick et al., 2021). Similarly to Woolf, the philosopher conceives of reality as a work of art based on harmonic interaction of its parts since “the teleology of the Universe is directed towards the production of Beauty” (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 265). In *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead laments that the appreciation of the intrinsic aesthetic nature of reality was weakened by the modern scientific progress and its inclination to materialism. He suggests that this decline of aesthetic experience of the everyday may be remedied by art which should cultivate our ability of “aesthetic apprehension” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 199). Therefore, it is not surprising that

Whitehead often takes inspiration in art and discusses it in his philosophical works. In his opinion, both art and philosophy disclose hidden aspects of reality and penetrate beyond the phenomenological (Dadejik et al., 2021). Whitehead claims that art imposes “a pattern on experience, and our aesthetic enjoyment is recognition of the pattern” (Whitehead and Price, 2001, p. 225), which, interestingly, reminds us of Woolf for whom the word “pattern”, in respect to the seizure of reality in fiction, also represents an important issue.

As far as literature is concerned, Whitehead argues that it is the writing of a given time that reveals “the concrete outlook of humanity” and “the inward thoughts of a generation” (Whitehead, 1967b, pp. 75-76). He demonstrates this on the example of Romantic poets who not only embodied his idea of artists transmitting their experience of the immediate world (Whitehead, 1958, p. 12) but also rebelled against the mechanistic conception of nature that was dominant in their time. They emphasized the need to perceive nature as a living organism, a system of “entwined prehensive unities” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 84), which is a source of wonder and mystery. Therefore, for Whitehead the poet penetrates beneath the appearance of things, foregrounds their aesthetic aspects, and reconstructs “the aesthetic value” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 199) of our physical environment.

Although the parallels between Woolf’s and Whitehead’s thought are numerous and range from ontology, epistemology, education, environmentalism and pacifism to ethics, this article aims to examine the similarities between their emphasis on experience as the basis of their literary and philosophical systems, and aesthetic experience of the everyday, which represents not only an essential subject of art but also a foundation of philosophy that does not indulge in abstractions but remains as close to the concrete reality as possible. This is the subject of the following section of this article, while the subsequent section discusses Woolf as the example of Whitehead’s longed-for author who translates their experience of the immediate environment into fiction. This is examined mainly in Woolf’s short stories “The Mark on the Wall” and “Solid Objects”, where the main characters search for “vivid values” which lie beneath the surface of the material world.

(Aesthetic) Experience in Whitehead’s Philosophy and Woolf’s Writing

Although Whitehead points out in his book *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* that “the word experience is one of the most deceitful in philosophy” (Whitehead, 1958, p. 16), his whole philosophical system circulates around this notion. In *Science and the Modern World*, he argues that while all experience might seem “dim and fragmentary”, it is valuable as it “sounds the utmost depths of reality”. At that time the physical world was thought to be created out of “senseless, valueless, purposeless” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 17) matter, which provoked the philosopher to devise an ontological system that would also include experience and mental aspects of being. In *Process and Reality* Whitehead elevates experience to the status of the building block of reality and replaces atoms with his concept of actual entities defined as “drops of experience, complex and interdependent” (Whitehead, 1978, p.18). Moreover, each actual occasion is not only composed of experience, but it is also capable of elementary experience of its immediate environment. Whitehead calls this capacity “prehension”, defining it as an actual entity’s emotional reaction to other aspects of reality that are integrated into its identity during the process of

conrescence, or in other words becoming. Whitehead claims that an actual entity is a “subject of the feeling” because it has “concern for the object” (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 176). This means that prehension may be approximated to perception – the process where a subject experiences an object and reacts to it. However, any object integrated into an actual entity is also a prehending subject, which entails that for Whitehead the subject and the object represent “relative terms” (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 176) as the two are mutually prehending entities. Therefore, each constituent of reality is a subject capable of some proto-mental experience of its environment, which affiliates the philosopher with panpsychism – the belief that everything has some proto-psychic properties (Nagel, 2008, p. 181). This also suggests that Whitehead’s concept of prehension is very broad and includes also non-living entities to which conscious experience, or “what-is-it-likeness” (Nagel, 1974) to be that entity, has never been attributed. Human consciousness thus represents only a developed form of this perception, “a crown of experience” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 267) which “flickers” upon the whole flow of complex experience and illuminates only a part of reality.

Whitehead elaborates on the importance of experience as the basis of our reality while interrelating his ontological concept with aesthetics. In *Adventures of Ideas*, he emphasizes the aesthetic rather than the experiential nature of an actual occasion. While discussing beauty, he argues that it is exemplified in each actual occasion (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 252) as it harmonizes contrasting data. Consequently, it may be claimed that each constituent of reality is intrinsically beautiful, which implies that perception of this entity is likewise aesthetic. Therefore, Whitehead’s concept of aesthetic experience is much broader than the mere experience of a work of art and it is an inseparable part of his “ontological and ontically creative principle” (Dadejick et al., 2021, p. 66) which might be reductively called ontoaesthetics. In *Science and the Modern World* Whitehead elaborates on the fact that any occasion of experience is potentially beautiful, because it includes variously arranged elements, and he claims that the experience of a complex configuration of an actual occasion also entails the experience of vivid values springing from the ontological relationality: “Everything has some value for itself, for others, and for the whole” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 111). Therefore, while perceiving the world around us, we are experiencing these vivid values, or intensities, and their combinations.

Analogously to the broad sense of aesthetic experience in Whitehead’s philosophy, the term “art” also acquires much broader meaning than traditionally attributed to it there. In *Modes of Thought* the philosopher talks about the general sense of “art” and he defines it as “any selection by which the concrete facts are so arranged as to elicit attention to particular values which are realisable by them” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 200). Then he adds that “the habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values”, which can be applied not only to Art in its narrow sense but also art of experiencing the reality around us. Whitehead gives an example of a factory that represents an organism depending on values of its parts whilst the most valuable part of this experience is “apprehending” the “organism in its completeness” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 200). As a result, Art in the narrow sense, which also combines several factors into a unified whole, for example a Post-Impressionist painting where lines and colours are “combined in a particular way” to create “forms or relations of forms” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 200), is just an exemplification of the processes and organic wholes that can be

found in nature: “The work of Art is a fragment of nature with the mark on it of a finite creative effort, so that it stands alone, an individual thing detailed from the vague infinity of its background” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 270). To conclude, this demonstrates that aesthetic experience is the core of Whitehead’s philosophical system and that the philosopher does not draw a distinct line between the art of experiencing the surrounding environment and a work of art. There is continuity between the two conceptions of art as the one enhances the other, particularly Art is meant to heighten our sensitivity to the aesthetic values in nature around us. The second part of this section suggests that Woolf also foregrounds experience in her writing, bridges the gap between our perception of reality and perception of works of art and aims to draw her readers’ attention to the aesthetic aspects of everyday experience.

Woolf’s father Leslie Stephen was also aware of the importance of experience that was often entirely left out from the debates on the nature of reality. In his essay “What is Materialism?” he emphasizes that our feelings and emotions are “as real as the stone” (Stephen, 1903, p. 132) and “if living being arose from inanimate matter” (Stephen, 1903, p. 145), this substance must have other than purely physical or material properties. Woolf elaborates on her father’s anti-materialist thought in her fiction where she often discards the solidity of things, the “fixity of tables” (Woolf, 2000, p. 162), and argues that the material and mental aspects of reality are equally important. This is aptly demonstrated in her attempt to reconcile the contrast between “the granite and the rainbow” (Woolf, 2009a, p. 95) in her essay “The New Biography” or in ‘On Being Ill’ where she claims that the body and the mind must complement each other like “the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea” (Woolf, 2009b, p. 101). In her essay “Modern Fiction” Woolf introduces her ideas about the newly-emerging writing style and criticizes the Edwardians, writers such as John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells, for being too materialist and for neglecting the interior life and subjective experience of their fictional characters. She argues that “they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body” (Woolf, 2009c, p. 7) and that they write about “unimportant things” which are in no way connected with the characters described and hence do not excite any emotional response on the part of the reader.

Conversely, Woolf highlights the importance of one’s experience of everyday reality and she is fascinated by the numberless impulses that one’s mind collects: “Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms [...]” (Woolf, 2009c, p. 9). The fact that Woolf compares experience with material particles, atoms, indicates that she also considers it to be the foundations of reality. Later in the essay, Woolf suggests that an author should focus on the internal life and experience of characters, transcribe the workings of their mind and omit the material excess that tells us nothing about our experience and perception: “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight scores upon the consciousness” (Woolf, 2009c, p. 9). This quotations demonstrates that Woolf describes consciousness in analogous way to Whitehead who defines it as “nothing else than the succession of [my] occasions of experience, extending from birth to the

present moment” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 163). Furthermore, Woolf’s hint at the incoherent and contrasting pattern of separate experiences, which our consciousness as well as writers in their fiction need to synthesize into one whole, is strikingly similar to Whitehead’s definition of aesthetic experience as the experience of “contrasts under identity” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 280). Like Whitehead, who suggests that consciousness “flickers” from a much broader complex of experience, in “Modern Fiction” Woolf also compares conscious experience with “flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its message through the brain” (Woolf, 2009c, p. 10).

Concerning his thoughts on consciousness, Whitehead adds that each occasion of experience that constitutes our present experience is connected to the experienced world conceived “as another relatum” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 163), which may be approximated to Woolf’s idea that the impressions of the external world are engraved into our mind and therefore inseparably interconnected. Interestingly, Woolf explores the relation between a conscious subject and the object in most of her fiction, for example in *To the Lighthouse* where Mr Ramsay studies the question of “the subject and the object and the nature of reality” (Woolf, 2000, p. 28) and Mrs Ramsay and Lily have the ability to renounce their subject position, merge with their physical environment and become the object they observe (Woolf, 2000, p. 70). The following section of this article will focus on these aspects in Woolf’s short stories “The Mark on the Wall” and “Solid Objects”.

The aforementioned quotations from Woolf’s essay “Modern Fiction” entail that the transmission of emotions and transcription of the everyday experience into fiction is of crucial importance for the author and that the external world represents an important source of her artistic inspiration. In her autobiographical essay “A Sketch of the Past” Woolf describes her intensive moments of experience, moments of being, as well as her shock receiving capacity, which often renders ordinary experience extraordinary. Woolf mentions three important moments of rapture from her childhood, one related to her brother beating her, the second one associated with passing a tree on which a family friend hanged himself and the third one is connected to a perception of a flower. While the two first moments resulted in the feelings of despair and powerlessness, the last one, on the contrary, evoked the emotion of satisfaction. While observing the flower, Woolf experienced a moment of wholeness and discovery. She was astounded by the idea that the flower is inseparable from the soil, by the beauty of this complex organism and its relations with the environment: “I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; “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” (Woolf, 1985, p. 71). Several lines below, Woolf writes that this aesthetic and revelatory moment is something she wants to cherish and return to repeatedly: “I felt that I had put away in my mind something that I should go back [to], to turn over and explore” (Woolf, 1985, p. 71). Therefore, this moment of observation and epiphany about the aesthetic and relational nature of the world around us represents Woolf’s own variation of Whitehead’s aesthetic experience of vivid values hidden in the ordinary. Moreover, her experience of a flower is strikingly similar to John Dewey’s example of continuity between the experience of art and

non-artistic aspects of reality (Dadejick et al., 2021, p. 77). While arguing that works of art arise from ordinary experience, Dewey points out that flowers may be “enjoyed without knowing about the interactions of soil, air, moisture, and seeds of which they are the result”, but if we want to “understand” them, we need to take into account the relations and interaction between these elements (Dewey, 1958, p. 12). Dewey adds that aesthetic understanding and enjoyment springs directly from these relations that make “an ordinary experience complete” (Dewey, 1958, p. 12), which is analogous to Woolf’s own discovery and appreciation of internal interactions between the flower, the ground and the air. Later in “A Sketch of the Past” Woolf claims that her pleasure of writing originates from her search for “what belongs to what” and that she “welcomes” these experiential shocks coming from “the cotton wool of daily life” (Woolf, 1985, p. 72).

At the end of “Modern Fiction” Woolf emphasizes that there is no proper stuff, meaning “high” stuff, of fiction and suggests that “everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit” (Woolf c, 2009c, p. 12). She develops the same thought in her essay “Poetry, Fiction and the Future”, complaining that writers often neglect the fact that “a large and important part of life consists in our emotions toward such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset” (Woolf d, 2009, p. 80). This intimates that Woolf was also reluctant to draw a distinct line between mundane experience and the experience of a work of art as both are based on strong emotional response, deeper realization, and aesthetic appreciation. Sim Lorraine argues that while Woolf pays attention to the everyday and the ordinary, she moves “beyond customary perceptions and formulations of it in order to realize its richness” (Sim & Woolf, 2010, p. 13). Woolf demonstrates this on her characters, especially female characters, who are often endowed with hypersensitivity to their environment and often respond emotionally, or even ecstatically, to it.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Lily, the painter, keeps “a feeler on her surroundings”, she is aware of the minute movements of mass around her and she attempts to be “on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that’s a chair, that’s a table, and yet at the same time, It’s a miracle, it’s an ecstasy” (Woolf, 2000, p. 218). Similarly, Mrs Ramsay is described as “being past everything, through everything, out of everything” (Woolf, 2000, p. 91) and while sitting alone and contemplating the scenery, she often “loses her personality” and “attaches herself” to the things observed (Woolf, 2000, p. 70). Therefore, both Lily and Mrs Ramsay undergo “the reduction of self” (Banfield, 2000, p. 287) and enter the perception, or prehension, of their environment on more “equal terms” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 89) with the objective world. On the contrary, Mr Ramsay does not abound with this sensibility, and he seems to be alienated from the world of ordinary experience. By no means does he appreciate the beauty of the environment he finds himself in:

Indeed he seemed to her sometimes made differently from other people, born blind, deaf, and dumb, to the ordinary things, but to the extraordinary things, with an eye like an eagle’s. His understanding often astonished her. But did he notice the flowers? No. Did he notice the view? No. Did he even notice his own daughter’s beauty, or whether there was pudding on his plate or roast beef? (Woolf b, 2000, p. 77).

In contrast to Mr Ramsay, Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway* perceives his surroundings aesthetically and he recognizes the beauty of the everyday:

He strained; he pushed; he looked; he saw Regent's Park before him. Long streamers of sunlight fawned at his feet. The trees waved, brandished. We welcome, the world seemed to say; we accept; we create. Beauty, the world seemed to say. And as if to prove it (scientifically) wherever he looked at the houses, at the railings, at the antelopes stretching over the palings, beauty sprang instantly. To watch a leaf quivering in the rush of air was an exquisite joy [...]. Beauty was everywhere (Woolf, 2003, p. 52).

All these quotations illustrate Woolf's focus on the experience of the ordinary in her fiction and her aesthetic appreciation of the mundane, which suggests that even for her, the boundary between art in the narrow and broad sense is not fixed, but arbitrary. Particularly the description of Septimus's belief in the aesthetic value in all existing elements of reality is strikingly similar to Whitehead's emphasis on the fact that beauty is a quality intrinsic to all actual occasions, to all elements comprising our physical world. The following section of this article elaborates on this parallel between Woolf's fiction and Whitehead's philosophy as it examines the concept of perception, the impact of the thing observed on the perceiver and reattribution of aesthetic value to objects we no longer consider aesthetic.

Formulation of the main material. *Knowledge and Aesthetic Experience of the Everyday in Woolf's Short Fiction.* Woolf's 1917 short story "The Mark on the Wall" is known as the first published piece by the Woolfs' publishing house The Hogarth Press. The whole story describes a perception of a single mark on the wall whose identity a female observer attempts to reveal. Although the woman learns at the end of the story that the mark is a snail, an ordinary tiny animal which is usually expected to be found in the exterior, this does not undermine the importance of thinking and perceptual process the woman and the reader undergo in the story. At the very beginning, the woman gives in to the mark's lure and "automatic fancy" children usually indulge in while exploring the world around them: "How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, as ants carry a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it [...]" (Woolf, 1989, p. 83). Then, the woman ruminates about the possible origin of the mark and thus enters a perceptual event with the object observed. Woolf uses the same introductory strategy also in her 1920 short story "Solid Object", where the main character John, a promising young would-be member of the parliament, comes across an irregular lump of glass hidden in the sand which fascinates him: "The green thinned and thickened slightly as it was held against the sky or against the body. It pleased him; it puzzled him; it was so hard, so concentrated, so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore" (Woolf, 2020, p. 103). Both the mark on the wall and the lump of glass represent an anchor to which the two observers return after each train of thought, but also the source of their alienation from the present moment and their surroundings. Both characters suddenly become indifferent to what is happening around them and they attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of the new objects of their interest. As Whitehead points out in *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect*, perception consists in "an internal relationship" between a perceptible and the thing perceived where both the observer and the object induce some activity in the other. In "The Mark on the Wall" the mark urges the woman to think about

“the mystery of life” and to “sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts” (Woolf, 1989, 84-85), which may be approximated to Whitehead’s recurrent idea that philosophy and art should “go beyond what we already know about the world and to make our experiences which we are not clearly aware of present for us” (Dadejík et al., 2021, p. 15).

Later, the woman explores all the options of what the mark might be – “a nail, a rose leaf, a crack in the wood” (Woolf, 1989, p. 88) – and she rejects abstract generalisation and classifying the mark as one of “standard things”, therefore things defined objectively without considering their actual configuration, relations with their environment, the immediate interaction with the observer and the emotional and aesthetic response they generate: “The military sound of the word is enough. It recalls leading articles, cabinet ministers – a whole class of things which indeed as a child one thought the thing itself, the standard thing, the real thing, from which one could not depart save at the risk of nameless damnation” (Woolf, 1989, p. 86). The same idea reappears in *To the Lighthouse* where Woolf emphasizes, in relation to the observation of the lighthouse, that “nothing was simply one thing” (Woolf b, 2000, p. 202), which suggests that each individual experience of an object is singular and there is nothing like standardized aesthetic experience of it. This rigid approach to the knowledge of reality is embodied in the novel by Mr Ramsay, who examines the metaphysical question of the relation between the subject and the object and sees these two categories as distinct and unrelated. For him, an object is always a standard thing, an abstraction, a Plato’ ideal form, as in the case of “a white deal four-legged table” (Woolf b, 2000, p. 28), whereas Lily always perceives the two categories as interrelated and observes things in their aesthetic complexity, for example “a scrubbed kitchen table [...] one of those scrubbed board tables, grained and knotted” (Woolf b, 2000, p. 28). Woolf thus seems to be equally sceptical about generalization and a unitary abstracted characteristics of a single object as Whitehead.

In *Science and the Modern World*, he criticizes “scientific materialism” for relying on facts “abstracted from the complete circumstances in which they occur” and suggests to “pass beyond the abstraction” (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 17). He suggests that any philosophical theory should be as close to the concrete facts as possible and should not confuse abstracted data gained by scientific examination with the data collected during a particular percipient event and therefore surrender to the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 51). Whitehead’s dislike of abstraction is also an important aspect of his criticism of the “bifurcation of nature” discussed in *The Concept of Nature*. This concept consists in the distinction between “nature apprehended in awareness” – objects around us with their strictly physical properties that are examined without their complexity and relational bonds with other objects, or the observer, usually studied by physics – and “the nature which is the cause of awareness” – objects that function as triggers of our experience and that are complemented with “psychical additions” of the observer (Whitehead, 1920, p. 21). The former is thus strikingly similar to Mr Ramsay’s standardized and abstracted image of a table and the latter is a sham created by a human mind. Instead of these two natures, Whitehead claims that there is only one reality disclosed to our awareness and it “holds within it the greenness of the trees, the song of the birds” (Whitehead, 1920, p. 21) which subsequently triggers our aesthetic experience.

This may be likened to Lily's vision of a table which was not colourless and dull but complex and singular.

In "The Mark on the Wall" Woolf also raises an important epistemological question – whether we gain some knowledge about the external reality while perceiving an object – since the whole story may be read as Woolf's attack on the positivist stance of the 19th and early 20th century science (Sim, p. 40). The following quotation manifests Woolf's scepticism about the knowledge of the world around us and her criticism of scholars and scientists who personify the search for metaphysical truths and absolute knowledge at the expense of the aesthetic enjoyment of our immediate experience of reality:

No, nothing is proved, nothing is known. And if I were to get up at this very moment and ascertain that the mark on the wall is really – what shall I say? – the head of a gigantic old nail, driven in two hundred years ago, which has now, owing to the patient attrition of many generations of housemaids, revealed its head above the coat of paint, and is taking its first view of modern life in the sight of a white-walled fire-lit room, what should I gain? Knowledge? Matter for further speculation? I can think sitting still as well as standing up. And what is knowledge? What are our learned men save the descendants of witches and hermits who crouched in caves and in woods brewing herbs, interrogating shrew-mice and writing down the language of the stars? And the less we honour them as our superstitions dwindle and our respect for beauty and health of mind increases (Woolf, 1989, p. 87).

Analogously, in *The Concept of Nature* Whitehead claims that nature, conceived as a complex entity, can never be entirely disclosed to sense-awareness since "unexhaustiveness is an essential character of our knowledge of nature" (Whitehead, 1920, p. 9). According to him, "the notion of mere knowledge is a high abstraction" and the only thing we can grasp and describe is our emotional response to reality as "the basis of our experience is emotional" (Whitehead a, 1967, pp. 175-176). Likewise, the woman in the short story is reluctant to get up and identify straight and clear what the mark is or get closer knowledge of it, and she lets herself plunge into the stream of emotions and associations generated by the observation of the object.

Furthermore, the aforementioned quotation from the story suggests that the more specialist knowledge we have of an object, the less likely we are to apprehend it with pleasure. Whitehead also promotes the idea that any kind of specialized knowledge isolates scholars in their own "groove" and separates them from other aspects of being: "Thus in the modern world, the celibacy of medieval learned class has been replaced by a celibacy of the intellect which is divorced from the concrete contemplation of the concrete facts" (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 197). In accordance with Woolf's emphasis on the learned men's inability to appreciate the beauty abiding in their surroundings, Whitehead manifests a similar scepticism about the aesthetic appreciation of the subject studied: "When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. There is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality" (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 199). Interestingly, the very ending of Woolf's story is devoted to this perception of the immediate environment in its actuality. The woman provides a list of concrete things and events which elicit "a satisfying sense of reality" (Woolf,

1989, p. 88) and these include, for example, the experience of touching wood, observing trees, cows in the field, or liveliness of animals inside and around a river.

While “The Mark on the Wall” introduces Woolf’s own response to theories of knowledge and perception and her criticism towards abstraction and generalization in favour of complex experience and aesthetic enjoyment of the ordinary, the 1920 short story “Solid Objects” is more concerned with the interrelatedness of the subject and the object in a percipient event and the transformative emotional effect of an object on our experience. Unlike the woman in the above-discussed story, who initially enquires about the mark’s origin, the protagonist of “Solid Objects”, who finds a lump of glass, is not driven by curiosity but by his attraction to this object. After discovering his first collected object, John immediately identifies it as a lump of glass and does not make any further enquiry into its origin, but the piece of solid matter is described in terms of its beauty as “a precious stone”, then as “a gem”, and finally as “an emerald” (Woolf, 1920, p. 103). Consequently, John becomes indifferent to his friend’s talk about politics, slips the lump down his pocket and displays it on his mantelpiece. Even there the object lures the man, regularly asks for his attention and enters his thinking process: “Looked at again and again half consciously by a mind thinking of something else, any object mixes itself so profoundly with the stuff of thought that it loses its actual form and recomposes itself a little differently in an ideal shape which haunts the brain when we least expect it” (Woolf, 1920, p. 104). This quotation suggests that Woolf attempts to overcome the division between the subject and the object in this story and highlights their interrelatedness like Whitehead, who emphasizes the relativity of these terms and their interdependence during the process of prehension: “An occasion is a subject in respect to its special activity concerning an object; and anything is an object in respect to its provocation of some special activity within a subject” (Whitehead a, 1967, p. 176). As a result, John may be interpreted as Whitehead’s “society”, a togetherness of actual occasions, which experiences an object that is also experiencing John and provokes some special feelings on his part. According to Whitehead, this is precisely what aesthetic experience should be like – a rhythmic togetherness of atomic vibrations between the experiencer and the thing experienced (Dadejik et al., 2021, pp. 116-117). Moreover, in the aforementioned quotation, Woolf undermines the traditional view of solid objects as passive blocks of matter and adopts the processual tendency to define things as “bundles of powers” (Rescher, 1996, p. 52), hence as active entities which are capable of inducing subjective reactions.

In this light, John can be regarded as a perceiving subject who realizes the creative potentiality of each object, hence also its value: “The creativity is the actualization of potentiality, and the process of actualization is an occasion of experiencing. Thus viewed in abstraction objects are passive, but viewed in conjunction they carry creativity which drives the world” (Whitehead a, 1967, p. 179). This suggests that any occasion of experience, or any object and society, can participate in the general creativity that aims at the production of the utmost beauty (Whitehead a, 1967, p. 265). Consequently, each element of reality is intrinsically beautiful as ‘beauty is a quality which finds its exemplification in actual occasions’ (Whitehead a, 1967, p. 252), and this beauty is actualized in the process of perception and experience. It seems that John, although alienated

from his established lifestyle and duties, is becoming increasingly aware not only of this beauty hidden in the everyday, but also the aesthetic values springing from diverse combinations of interacting objects. One of the last objects John finds is a piece of broken china in the shape of a star and he wonders about its uniqueness and contrast with other objects on his mantelpiece:

Set at the opposite end of the mantelpiece from the lump of glass that had been dug from the sand, it looked like a creature from another world – freakish and fantastic as a harlequin. It seemed to be pirouetting through space, winking light like a fitful star. The contrast between the china so vivid and alert, and the glass so mute and contemplative, fascinated him, and wondering amazed he asked himself how the two came to exist in the same world, let alone to stand upon the same narrow strip of marble in the same room (Woolf, 1920, p. 105).

The quotation manifests John's fascination by the ordinary object which is elevated to the status of a work of art generating aesthetic experience and the experience of Whiteheadian "vivid values" resulting from synthesized contrasts: "The discord enhances the whole, when it serves to substantiate the individuality of the parts" (Whitehead a, 1967, p. 282).

In *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead points out that modern scientific and industrial progress resulted in the neglect of values and aesthetic experience from the material reality. He claims that the materialist basis of science "directed our attention to things as opposed to values", which led to the exclusion of "ultimate values" (Whitehead b, 1967, pp. 202-203). Interestingly, Woolf suggests a very similar idea in her essay "Docks of London" where she talks about turning everything into a commodity, which is classified only in terms of its monetary and utilitarian value: "One tusk makes a billiard ball, another serves for a shoe-horn – every commodity in the world has been examined and graded according to its use and value" (Woolf d, 2009, p. 196). Thus, Woolf herself was aware of the neglect of values underlying everyday things and commodities and in her short story "Solid Objects", she embodies an artist who should cultivate our 'habits of aesthetic apprehension' and to make us aware of the "individualized aesthetic value" (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 199). The last collected object mentioned in the story is a piece of iron which is described as "alien to the earth", probably "a dead star" and afterwards John's obsession gains more intensity as the man spends most of his time ransacking "all deposits of earth" where he finds discarded objects with the greatest value: "As his standard became higher and his taste more severe the disappointments were innumerable, but always some gleam of hope, some piece of china or glass curiously marked or broken, lured him on" (Woolf, 1920, p. 106).

This story has already been analyzed by Bill Brown via his 'thing theory' suggesting that things which no longer serve their common function may be presented to us in a new light as aesthetic objects while "we begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us" (Brown, 2009, p. 140). Brown claims that this reappraisal of objects and reassessment of their new value is possible only when they lose their function in our everyday lives. On the contrary, Lorraine Sim suggests that the story depicts a character who experiences "excitement at the mystery and strangeness of the world" (Sim, p. 47) and learns to reattribute "the overlooked value' to the 'everyday material world" (Sim, p. 52), which is closer to the idea discussed in the previous paragraphs. Whilst John represents as a compulsive character who is completely

alienated from other people and his personal duties, he may be regarded as a Whiteheadian poet who experiences the “rapture” caused by the observation of reality and relearns to appreciate the beauty in his environment which was devoid of its “intrinsic worth” (Whitehead b, 1967, p. 196). In contrast to Brown, both Woolf and Whitehead propose a theory claiming that anything, regardless its primarily utilitarian value, may be a trigger of aesthetic experience and have some emotional and transformative impact on the experiencer in the same way as any piece of art.

Conclusions. One of the main objectives of this article was to emphasize that while it is not known whether Woolf and Whitehead were familiar with each other’s works, they were contemporaries, and their thoughts are strikingly similar in many respects. Using different tools, Woolf her experimental fiction and critical essays about the art of writing and Whitehead his system of speculative thought, both were discontent with the materialist tone of the then science, philosophy, and fiction. As it has been demonstrated in the second section of this article, both the philosopher and the writer focused on experience, cherished it as the foundations of the material world, and agreed that it should be the subject of philosophy and fiction. Moreover, it has been indicated that experience for Whitehead and Woolf is always aesthetic as it transmits an emotion, or a feeling of rapture, induced by objects in our surroundings which is intrinsically beautiful and valuable. As a result, it was suggested that both Woolf and Whitehead do not draw a clear distinction between the experience of art and the experience of the ordinary reality around us. Whitehead wants philosophy to be as close to the concrete and mundane facts as possible and Woolf claims that anything can be the stuff of fiction, and stresses particularly our relation to the material surroundings. Consequently, Whitehead claims that art should focus on the neglected aspects of our experience and enhance our aesthetic appreciation of reality since art is just the extension of elements and values that may already be found in nature. The second section of this essay was concerned with Woolf’s short stories “The Mark on the Wall”, where the writer examines our perceptual processes and warns against perceiving things in our surroundings as generalisations or abstractions, and “Solid Object”, which analyses the interaction between the subject and the object and the emotional and transformative impact of this perception on the perceiver, for example by means of new appreciation of things around us as aesthetic objects. It has been demonstrated that in these stories, Woolf embodies Whitehead’s idea of an artist who should instruct their audience to reveal the values and aesthetic aspects hidden in our environment. To conclude, it is necessary to suggest that this lack of aesthetic appreciation was characteristic not only of the early 20th century but that it seems even more resonating in our time which still suffers from the two evils highlighted by Whitehead – the loss of our true relation to our environment and the neglect of value, hence even the aesthetic value, integrated in this environment. Therefore, Woolf’s and Whitehead’s aesthetic theories discussed in this article may be instructive also for contemporary artists who should also aim at drawing closer the ordinary and the aesthetic in order to foreground the worth of the external world, which we, human beings, destroy continuously.

Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements

The author declare no conflict of interest.

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Вероніка КРАЙЧКОВА

**ПОШУК КРАСИ ТА ЦІННОСТЕЙ ЩОДЕННО:
ВІРДЖІНІЯ ВУЛФ ТА ПРОЦЕСНА ЕСТЕТИКА**

Анотація. У цій статті досліджуються паралелі між естетизованим викладом реальності Вірджинії Вулф у її художній літературі та естетикою процесу Альфреда Норта Уайтхеда, яка підкреслює той факт, що будь-який досвід можна класифікувати як естетичну насолоду яскравими цінностями. Якщо вчені часто асоціюють Вульфа з високою модерністською естетикою і формалізмом, письменника захоплювала повсякденність і привабливість звичайних предметів, які викликають сильний емоційний відгук у суб'єкта, що сприймає. Особливо в її ранніх оповіданнях «Значок на стіні» та «Тверді предмети» головні герої демонструють дитяче бажання досліджувати навколишні об'єкти та потребу проникнути «глибше, подалі від поверхні, з її важкими окремими фактами». Так само у своїй філософській системі Вайтхед хоче вийти за межі того, що ми вже знаємо про зовнішній світ, і дослідити внутрішні органічні відносини, що стоять за зовнішнім виглядом речі, або, за словами Вульфа, «шаблон за ватою» повсякденності. У «Науці і сучасному світі» Уайтхед стверджує, що проблема сучасної цивілізації полягає у відсутності мистецтва, досвіду та цінностей в повсякденному, і що саме митець має виховувати «звички естетичного сприйняття». Вулф також відкидає дихотомію. Між мистецтвом у його вузькому й широкому значенні, що розуміється як естетичне задоволення реальності, і стверджує у своєму відомому есе «Сучасна художня література», що предметом сучасного мистецтва може бути що завгодно і що художня література повинна художньо перекладати враження «звичайних людей».

Ключові слова: Вулф, Уайтхед, естетика процесу, звичайний досвід, мистецтво

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DEEP ASSUMPTIONS

Abstract. The author studies the practices of understanding the world in Western and Buddhist cultures on the basis of comparing the attitude to the reality of the world and the reality of the human person. The author believes that the scientific vision of the universe, which has become dominant in Europe and which has influenced the scientific revolution of modern times, offers great advantages in terms of technological development of mankind, but it ignores the spiritual needs of the individual. Therefore, the author considers the synthesis of both traditions as a necessary prerequisite for overcoming the current worldview crisis. The article is

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