

The Work of Archive in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse*

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Introduction

Regarding the theme of memory, Ann Whitehead traces the historical changes in ideas about it in her book *Memory: The New Critical Idiom*, treating various texts from Plato to the present, and the other aspects of memory such as trauma and oblivion. Whitehead says the idea of memory has three motifs: “inscription,” “spatial metaphors” and “body memory”¹ (Whitehead 9). In her tracing of its history, she points out that “[t]he notion of the mind as a writing surface is remarkably consistent in the Western tradition” (10).² Indeed, Sigmund Freud follows in this tradition of “scriptural metaphors” (Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing” 199) and uses the device of the “Mystic Writing-Pad,” which could evoke Plato’s wax tablet in *Theaetetus*, in order to compare the mental apparatus with it, as she also argues in her book. While the fictions of memory have a traditional heritage from ancient times, regarding the image of inscription, she argues that “[it] is, however, notable that across both discursive fields the predominant voices of memory are male. . . . it has therefore been necessary . . . to alternative archives, . . . to hear the voices of women and other disenfranchised groups” (12). Indeed, almost all of the texts which she introduces in her book were written by male authors such as Plato, Aristotle, John Locke, William

¹ Whitehead explains that the “spatial metaphors” mean “a strong affiliation between memory and place” (10) and the “body memory” means a kind of memory associated with “the senses of taste, touch, hearing, and smell, but notably not . . . sight” (12).

² Whitehead highlights some examples concerning the image of inscription, “for example, in Roman rhetorical manuals; in Locke’s metaphor of the child’s mind as a blank piece of paper waiting to be inscribed; in Freud’s ‘Mystic Writing Pad’; and in Cathy Caruth’s image of trauma indelibly engraved on the mind.” (10)

Wordsworth, Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust and so on.

Therefore, we have scope to explore women's writings in terms of "memory." Hence, I will focus on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse*, especially in terms of "inscription," though I will also focus to some extent on the relation between physical sense and memory. *Orlando* has the subtitle, "*A Biography*" and, just as the word biography indicates, Woolf depicts the life of Orlando, whose model is Woolf's friend and lover, Vita Sackville-West. Therefore, this novel is "dedicated to Vita Sackville-West in a spirit of love and fascination and also of irony" (Lee 138) and based on the history of her family at Knole. Though, as Lee says, *Orlando* is presented in a spirit of "irony," and the protagonist Orlando lives from the Elizabethan age to the present (the 1920s), that is, more than 300 years, changing his or her sex, nevertheless this novel is the character's biography.³ Hence, we can find an overabundance of memory in *Orlando*. On the other hand, *To the Lighthouse* is Woolf's nostalgic reminiscence, therefore "it was not written *for* the characters who are evoked in the novel" (Lee 138). In this novel, we can see the painter Lily Briscoe struggles with the memory of Mrs. Ramsay. In both of works, Woolf explores the way in which memory shapes the characters' selves and has influence on them.

In order to consider the relation between memory and these two works, I will refer to Freud's "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'," and Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, which is his later response to Freud's essay, though Whitehead does not discuss this. Freud treats the common features of the structure of the "Mystic Writing Pad" and the functioning of memory, and Derrida responds to his suggestion and focuses on repressed memory, the "archive." In this paper, I will explore the idea of memory, revealing the shared image of memory among her contemporaries as well as poststructuralist responses to it, and the method of representation and the effect of it in *Orlando*, and in *To the Lighthouse* through Lily Briscoe's painting.

³ Therefore, I use the pronoun "he" and "she," or "he/she" according to the case in his paper.

I. Physical Sense and “Capricious” Memory: Smell and Sight

As I mentioned above, the representation of memory has three key motifs and one of them is “body memory.” Regarding this motif, Marcel Proust explores it in his novel, *In Search of Lost Time*, published in 1913. In that novel, he depicts the relation between physical sense and memory.⁴ Whitehead argues as follows:

Throughout *In Search of Lost Time*, a physical sensation . . . acts as the catalyst for involuntary memory: the taste of the madeleine dipped in tea, the sensation of imbalance on unevenly laid cobblestones, the sounds of a spoon striking a plate or of water running through pipes, the touch of a heavily starched napkin brushing the lips. (104)

She takes the taste, the sense of balance, the sound and the tactile sensation as the examples of physical sense, which evoke the narrator’s unconscious memory, and points out that the narrator unconsciously recalls his memory of Combray, associated with his physical sense. In other words, the memory is engraved on the body.

Woolf also depicts the relation between physical sensation and memory in *Orlando* similarly to Proust’s attempt. For example, Orlando recalls his boyhood memory when Queen Elizabeth calls and embraces him.

. . . she [the Queen Elizabeth] pulled him down among the cushions where her women had laid her (she was so worn and old) and made him bury his face in that astonishing composition—she had not changed her dress for a month—which smelt for all the world, he thought, recalling his boyish memory, like some old cabinet at home where his mother’s furs were stored. (24)

In the above quotation, the smell of “the cushions,” a kind of fabric material, on

⁴ Regarding “body memory,” comparing Henri Bergson’s lesser emphasis on the role of the body, Whitehead argues that “. . . Proust differs from Bergson in according an entirely different role and value to the body in the process of remembering. If the body is trivial in status for Bergson, associated with the merely mechanical, it is essential to Proust’s involuntary memory and ushers in its precise and vivid recollections” (104). The “involuntary memory” in Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* [In Search of Lost Time], “refers to a conception of human memory in which external cues evoke recollections of the past, and which is thereby highly sensory and physical” (159).

the place where the Queen lies does not evoke Orlando's boyhood. It is the other fabric, Queen Elizabeth's dress, that induced him to remember "some old cabinet," relating it to "his mother's furs." The dress which stinks of the odor of the "worn and old" Queen, who did not change her clothes "for a month" is associated with his mother's furs and becomes the trigger that capriciously prompts Orlando's memory.⁵ Hence, the figure of Queen Elizabeth clearly corresponds to that of his mother due to the effect of her smell on his consciousness. The smelt dress has more power to remind him spontaneously of his mother's cabinet and his mother herself than the ordinary "cushions," though both "the cushions" and the "dress" consist of similar fabrics. Concerning the figure of his mother, the Queen's embrace has an analogy with what other mothers are likely to do for their children.

However, we may well notice the fact that the Queen's dress is associated with an "old cabinet" and that the Queen is "so worn and old." The depiction of her oldness could easily evoke the image of death (though Orlando's mother is not depicted in this novel). Indeed, the narrator describes her dwindling health; "[the Queen's body] held itself upright though perhaps in pain from sciatica" (21), "she was growing old and worn and bent before her time" (22) and she sits "bolt upright in her stiff brocades by the fire which, however high they piled, never kept her warm" (25). Here, the smell of the Queen's clothes can be associated with that of death and can lead him into the subsequent memory of death and acts as a *memento mori*. It is not an exaggeration to say that the experience of death would produce a kind of trauma for Orlando because he/she repeatedly experiences rebirth and gradually accumulates his/her memory of death as well as new lives.

Of course, sight has a strong affinity with memory as we can see in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (Whitehead 75–83). After his job as an ambassador to Turkey and being given the title of Duke, he is reborn and becomes a woman. She spends her time with Gypsies, but she decides to return to England because of her uncomfortableness among them. When she sees "[t]he cliffs of England" (149) on the ship, she experiences an unknown feeling as follows:

⁵ I use the word "capriciously" because Orlando did not recall the fur of his mother when he was presented to the Queen, whose old body seemed to smell "like a cupboard in which furs are kept in camphor" (16).

Happily, the sight of her native land after long absence excused both start and exclamation, or she would have been hard put to it to explain to Captain Bartolus the raging and conflicting emotions which now boiled within her. How tell him that she, who now trembled on his arm, had been a Duke and an Ambassador? How explain to him that she, who had been lapped like a lily in folds of paduasoy, had hacked heads off, and lain with loose women among treasure sacks in the holds of pirate ships on summer nights when the tulips were abloom and the bees buzzing off Wapping Old Stairs? Not even to herself could she explain the giant start she gave, as the resolute right hand of the sea-captain indicated the cliffs of the British Islands. (150)

She confronts “[h]appily” the white cliffs of England and she sways in the gap between the present and her masculine past which included being “a Duke and an Ambassador” and her sexual experience of lying “with loose women among treasure sacks in the holds of pirate ships on summer nights.” When Orlando was a man in the seventeenth century, he was so lustful that he and his lover, Sukey, had “fallen asleep among the rubies” after their love-making (28). She attempts to explain to the captain, who has a kind of authority on his ship, but she cannot do it and can only “trembl[e] on his arm.” Moreover, she herself cannot explain the cause of “the giant start she gave.” This inexplicable state of her mind could be related to the idea of the “unconscious” or the archive as repressed memory, which I will discuss later. She only recognizes “the raging and conflicting emotions which now boiled within her.” Indeed, “the raging and conflicting emotions” can be related to Orlando’s bisexuality, but the true reason why “even to herself she [cannot] explain the giant start she gave” is left unexplained.

II. Character of Memory: Freud, Derrida and Woolf

Before the discussion of the character of memory Woolf suggests in *Orlando*, I will introduce Freud’s essay “A Note Upon the ‘Mystic Writing-Pad’” and Derrida’s *Archive Fever*. Freud, in his essay, suggests the affinity between the psychic apparatus and the “Mystic Writing Pad,” which is “a small contrivance that promises to perform more than the sheet of paper or the slate” (Freud 228). This pad has mainly two parts; a wax slab and a covering sheet on it made of an upper layer of celluloid and a waxed paper. The reason why the “Mystic Writing Pad” can “perform more than the sheet of paper or the slate” is that this pad is characterized by “an unlimited receptive capacity and a retention of permanent

traces” (227). You can write anything on the surface of the celluloid by using something cuspidate and erase easily your writing by detaching the celluloid from the waxed paper.⁶ The most interesting feature of this device is that “it is easy to discover that the permanent trace of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights” (230) after you erase the writing on it. This indicates that the base of this pad, “the wax slab,” can preserve “permanent traces of what has been written” (230). Therefore, Freud argues as follows:

. . . I do not think it is too farfetched to compare the celluloid and waxed paper cover with the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* and its protective shield, the wax slab with the unconscious behind them, and the appearance and disappearance of the writing with the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception. (230)⁷

He has confidence that the writing pad and the mental apparatus share similar modes of functioning and distinctively claims that “the wax slab” could be compared with “the unconscious.” This argument indicates that the memory or the trace of an impression is retained in the unconscious.

⁶ Regarding the more detail of this pad, see below:

The Mystic Pad is a slab of dark brown resin or wax with a paper edging; over the slab is laid a thin transparent sheet, the top end of which is firmly secured to the slab while its bottom end rests on it without being fixed to it. This transparent sheet is the more interesting part of the little device. It itself consists of two layers, which can be detached from each other except at their two ends. The upper layer is a transparent piece of celluloid; the lower layer is made of thin translucent waxed paper. When the apparatus is not in use, the lower surface of the waxed paper adheres lightly to the upper surface of the wax slab.

To make use of the Mystic Pad, one writes upon the celluloid portion of the covering-sheet which rests on the wax slab. . . . [A] pointed stilus scratches the surface, the depressions upon which constitute the ‘writing’. In the case of the Mystic Pad this scratching is not effected directly, but through the medium of the covering-sheet. At the points which the stilus touches, it presses the lower surface of the waxed paper on to the wax slab, and the grooves are visible as dark writing upon the otherwise smooth whitish-grey surface of the celluloid. If one wishes to destroy what has been written, all that is necessary is to raise the double covering-sheet from the wax slab by light pull, starting from the free lower end. (228–29)

⁷ *Pcpt.* means “perception” and *Cs.* does “consciousness” here.

Derrida responds to this suggestion by Freud in his note in *Archive Fever*, which is based on a lecture given in London, “The Concept of the Archive: A Freudian Impression,” in 1994. He suggests a machine for “printing” as a more appropriate image of memory instead of the “‘mystic pad,’ this *exterior*, thus archival, model of the *psychic* recording and memorization apparatus” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 18–19), because the writing pad is merely “a child’s toy” (Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing” 228), and he uses the word “archive” to describe it. He begins his book with a discussion of the etymology of “archive” itself;

As is the case for Latin *archivum* or *archium* . . . , the meaning of “archive,” its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that *place* which is their house (private house, family house, or employee’s house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents’ guardians. (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 2)

The word “archive” includes the implication of the controllers, “the *archons*” in ancient Athens, and combines this with its present meaning, “the document.” The interesting point is that Derrida also uses the image of the location of the archive as Freud says, “the place where [the] ‘memory’ has been deposited” (Freud, “A Note Upon the Mystic Writing-Pad” 227). The archive, the document produced by “printing,” undoubtedly needs a place in which to preserve itself such as a “private house, family house, or employee’s house” under the law of the *archon*. The reason why Derrida uses the printing machine as a replacement for the writing pad is that the former can indicate his idea that “the copy of an impression [is] a sort of archive” and that repression “directly concern[s] the structures of archivization” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 28). That is, according to Derrida, our impression is (re)pressed into our unconscious as in the printing machine. The title *Archive Fever* therefore intimates that the repressed archive is repeatedly reprinted and threatens the subject like trauma.⁸

⁸ “Derrida’s archive is mnemonically unreliable insofar as it is somewhat feverish,

Both Freud and Derrida use the traditional image of inscription to refer to memory—especially in case of Derrida, repressed memory—by using the word “archive.” Woolf shows her idea of memory in *Orlando* in ways that suggest some similarities with both Freud’s and Derrida’s perspectives.

. . . nature, . . . has further complicated her task and added to our confusion by providing not only a perfect rag-bag of odds and ends within us—a piece of a police-man’s trousers lying cheek by jowl with Queen Alexandra’s wedding veil—but has contrived that the whole assortment shall be lightly stitched together by a single thread. Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after. Thus, the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling the inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting, like the underlinen of a family of fourteen on a line in a gale of wind. (72–73)

The memory affects the self capriciously for her, like “the underlinen” blown by “a gale of wind.” Here, the image of “underlinen,” works as a metaphor of something beneath the conscious mind because the “underlinen” is covered with other clothes.⁹ Moreover, “[m]emory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither” like “the seamstress” and retains the permanent trace on the fabric or the “underlinen” and sews “the rag-bag of odds and ends,” “together by a single thread” as a result. Considering Lord’s argument that “[f]ollowing Derrida, the inscription on the Mystic Pad is also graphic. Memory made metaphor through the visual cues of fabric and tatters, [which] brings home the texture in the layer and the materiality of the word” (147), we can say she uses the image of “underlinen” with a meaning similar to that of Freud’s mystic writing pad and Derrida’s archive, and shares with them the traditional idea of inscription. That is, in the case of Woolf, she compares the mental apparatus of memorization with a fabric and the trace of memory with the “single thread” that

hallucinatory, fragmentary, and, . . . somewhat sick. . . . there is trauma in Derrida’s” (Rapaport 76).

⁹ Catherine M. Lord argues that “Each pair of pants . . . can signify a sheet of paper” (148). This seems to recall the waxed paper under the celluloid paper of the mystic writing pad.

holds it together. The metaphor used by Freud and Derrida is related to the text (the trace written by something cuspidate on the surface of the pad or printed text), but Woolf's is related to a textile.¹⁰ Like Freud and Derrida, she also adopts the metaphor of writing to depict the nature of memory.

She describes the character of memory uniquely, comparing it with "the seamstress" and pointing out its capriciousness in the above quotation. She uses the metaphor of the capricious seamstress to imply the unpredictable and free aspect of memory. In other words, this implies the uncontrollableness of memory. Therefore, Orlando cannot perfectly recall Nick Greene's¹¹ face when he tries to toss "them [a whole budget of papers] in the face of [a] sneering loose-lipped man" (95). Orlando cannot clearly discover the seam or stitch of his face.

III. Memory as Archive: Orlando's Archon and Lily Briscoe's Painting

Jacques Derrida uses the idea of the "archive" as a metaphor of repressed memory. In his work *Archive Fever*, we can see the relation between the archive and memory clearly as I mentioned above. *Orlando* is a highly fictionalized biography of Vita Sackville-West. Therefore, it is natural that the writer needs archives to create the protagonist's life. The narrator regrets the fact that the records of Orlando are partly lost as follows: "It is, indeed, highly unfortunate, and much to be regretted that at this stage of Orlando's career, when he played a most important part in the public life of his country, we have least information to go upon" (110). It is certain that he played an important role in Turkey as the fact that "he had a finger in some of the most delicate negotiations between King

¹⁰ For example, Derrida discusses the relation between text and textile or texture in "Plato's Pharmacy":

The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web: a web that envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. (69)

¹¹ Orlando met Nick Green, the poet, during the Elizabethan age and invited him to his house. However, his talk was so dull that he came to dislike him, though, indeed, his character made Orlando excited.

Charles and the Turks—to that, treaties in the vault of the Record Office bear testimony” (110) reveals. However, almost all of the documents about him were burned and lost because of the revolution and Fire of London. Therefore, “[o]ften the paper was scorched a deep brown in the middle of the most important sentence” (110). The documents the narrator depends on are notably incomplete; “his [John Fenner Brigge’s] manuscript is full of burns and holes, some sentences being quite illegible” (118); “Miss Penelope Hartopp, . . . carries on the tale in a letter much defaced too, which ultimately reached a friend at Tunbridge Wells” (119).¹² Therefore, I would like to raise a question: what could the scorched documents imply? One answer is indeed that they describe Orlando’s character from different points of view.¹³ Another is that they enhance the secret aspect of his character because “[j]ust when we thought to elucidate a secret that has puzzled historians for a hundred years, there was a hole in the manuscript big enough to put your finger through” (110). Orlando’s secret is escaping from the historians’ hands and is not revealed; therefore the scorched paper with holes in it can symbolize Orlando’s lack of factual identity and we have no choice but “to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination” (110). Another answer to this question, however, could be “his secret passions” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 101). Symbolically, the scorched parts can be connected to the trace of Orlando’s secret passion or lustful fire which burns his archives like a fever “to burn the archive and to incite amnesia” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 12). I will use a part of Lord’s words: “[t]oo much libido will burn up the page” (142). Actually, he lay with Sukey in the treasure and fell in love with Sasha, who is a noble Russian princess. As he was in his greatest period at this time, he was probably in his prime in a sexual sense. Even if, therefore, someone archeologically tries to find his hidden memory, or “to elucidate a secret that has puzzled historians for a hundred years,” the answer or the evidence, the repressed archive, is never revealed. However, one document or archive which seems to keep its secret remains in Orlando’s room, like a kind of archivist’s vault or office:

¹² John Fenner Brigge is “an English naval officer” (117) and Miss Penelope Hartop is the “daughter of the General of that name” (119).

¹³ Lee says Woolf tends “to create scenes and characters through different observers” (142).

It [a document of far greater significance] was nothing less, indeed, than a deed of marriage, drawn up, signed, and witnessed between his Lordship, Orlando, Knight of the Garter, etc., etc., etc., and Rosina Pepita, a dancer, father unknown, but reputed a gipsy, mother also unknown but reputed a seller of old iron in the market-place over against the Galata Bridge. (123)

The secretaries accidentally discover the document with his signature which proves the unequal engagement between Orlando and the Gipsy daughter whose identity is unknown. In the room, although the secret archive is hidden in the various archives such as the “poetry, in which frequent mention was made of an oak tree,” the “various state papers and others of a private nature concerning the management of his estates in England” (123), it is archeologically uncovered. The archive is a kind of residue, which appears from the unburned place, or the remains of a fire, and exposes Orlando’s secret.

The archive is connected to the secret memory and many accumulated archives embarrass the subject. Orlando’s lifespan is more than 300 years and he/she changes his/her sex. First, Orlando is a man who serves Queen Elizabeth and probably second, he is still a man in the Elizabethan age and works as an ambassador in Turkey. Third, Orlando becomes a woman during the eighteenth century and nineteenth century, and marries Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine. Last, she is reborn as a woman again in the 1920s.¹⁴ After her last rebirth (at least in this work), she is so embarrassed that she cannot accept her situation. However, though she was in the Victorian age a moment earlier, she drives a car and goes to the city to buy “sheets for a double bed” (275) in a shop. While the shopman goes to get those sheets, she takes “out a little looking-glass and powder puff” and thinks as follows, recalling her first meeting with Sasha in the Elizabethan age:

Honestly, though she was now thirty-six, she scarcely looked a day older. She looked just as pouting, as sulky, as handsome, as rosy (like a million-candled Christmas tree, Sasha had said) as she had done that day on the ice, when the Thames was frozen and they had gone skating— (276)

She recalls her memory with Sasha, but it should be a traumatic experience for

¹⁴ She is reborn from the Victorian age in the present day, 1928, after she gives birth to a boy.

Orlando because she did not appear in the place where they promised to meet for their elopement. She soon encounters there “a figure—was it a boy’s or was it a girl’s—young, slender, seductive—a girl, . . . furred, pearled, in Russian trousers” though actually she is “a fat, furred woman” (276). This woman reminds her of Sasha; therefore Orlando confuses this woman with Sasha herself, who appeared like “a figure, which, whether boy’s or woman’s, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him [Orlando] with the highest curiosity” and was “about middle height, very slenderly fashioned, and dressed entirely in oyster-coloured velvet, trimmed with some unfamiliar greenish-coloured fur” (34). The figure of the woman makes her remember Sasha’s betrayal and she shouts “Faithless!” (276). The archive, which repeats the subject’s trauma recurs or is represented in Orlando’s traumatic encounter, or she suffers from it like a fever, as if the repressed or hidden material were revealed by archeologists. It is worth noticing that the fur in “some old cabinet at home” which firstly evoked his mother—in other words the archive in “some old” house—presented in front of him as what causes his trauma. Indeed, this also reminds us of the power of English cliffs which gave her an inscrutable “start and exclamation.”

After her shopping and encounter with the fat furred woman, who evokes the annoying Sasha, near her car, she is struck by the clock which strikes eleven o’clock; therefore “[e]leven times she was violently assaulted” (279). Then, she irritatedly drives her car, “for it [the present] is a great shock to the nervous system, hearing a clock strike” (279). She cannot believe or accept the fact that she is reborn in the twentieth century after the birth of her son in the Victorian age, and cannot endure the power of time, the clock, to indicate to her the present moment. Therefore, she does not have the ability to assemble her identity as well as to endure the pressure of the present time.¹⁵ In other words, she suffers from the overabundance of memory and of her identity. In order to organize her memory and identity, she called “Orlando?” with a note of interrogation in her voice and waited,” but “Orlando did not come” (281) because “she had a great variety of selves to call upon” (282). In other words, Orlando him/herself is the whole of her archive and shares one androgynous body, or the house. Of course, here, we can read her difficulty in accepting her bisexuality and fluctuation

¹⁵ Of course, here, we can see the heaviness of accumulated time in her mind and body.

between her different identities and unified identity like a multiple personality. Therefore, Orlando needs “the conscious self, which is the uppermost, and has the power to desire, wishes to be nothing but oneself,” that is, “the true self and it is, . . . compact of all selves we have it in us to be; commanded and locked up by the Captain self, the Key self, which amalgamates and controls them all” (283). In other words, what she needs here is her absolute *archon* who controls her scattered archives.

One of her *archons* would be in her house, or metaphorically her house itself in Derrida’s words, because when she drives and enters her park, “the Orlando whom she had called came of its own accord” and “the whole of her darkened and settled” through the work of “a single self, a real self” (286). While Orlando spends her 360 years, changing her identity and sex, the oak tree is depicted as a symbol of the unchangeable subject as follows:

The ferny path led, with many turns and windings, higher and higher to the oak tree, which stood on the top. The tree had grown bigger, sturdier, and more knotted since she had known it, somewhere about the year 1588, but it was still in the prime of life. The little sharply frilled leaves were still fluttering thickly on its branches. (296)

Though the oak tree has grown since 1588, its “little sharply frilled leaves” are “still fluttering thickly on its branches” and “in the prime of life,” just as Orlando herself “scarcely look[s] a day older” (276). The tree also functions like the *archon* which controls archives and gives her a sense of security. The tree is a counterpart of Orlando and assures her of her existence like her poem “The Oak Tree,” which preserves Orlando’s archive of 360 years. Moreover, it is worth noticing that “a little square book bound in red cloth fell from the breast of her leather jacket—her poem ‘The Oak Tree’” (188) and she leaves it under the tree. “The Oak Tree” as the trace of memory seems to be offered to the tree as the *archon*, which has the same name itself.

The function of archives is recording or remembering, but sometimes it tends to threaten the subject as we can see in the depictions of the smell of Queen Elizabeth, which seems to tell Orlando of the repeatedly forthcoming death, the sight of English cliffs and the documents which uncover his/her repressed secret. Therefore, the archive has a kind of illness in Derrida’s words. Regarding oblivion and archive, Whitehead says “[t]he archive is accordingly associated for

Nora not with remembering but with forgetting” (143).¹⁶ If the archive makes the subject forget the subject's memory and we can say the painting or the canvas can be one kind of archive, what can Lily Briscoe's painting in *To the Lighthouse* mean?

Lily is a painter and tries to finish her painting from the beginning to the end, and eventually completes it after the death of Mrs. Ramsay. In a sense, she is possessed by the memory of Mrs. Ramsay: ““Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!’ she cried, feeling the old horror come back—to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still?” (219) Then, she mitigates her emotion and sees in a vision that “Mrs. Ramsay . . . sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step” (219). Suddenly, she begins to paint her picture.

Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was—her picture. Yes, with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision. (226)

The empty steps, the absence of Mrs. Ramsay in the real world, gives her the power to paint her picture. Therefore, we can say, by finishing her painting, her inner memory of Mrs. Ramsay is preserved in the external world: the canvas is an archive. In other words, she can obliterate Mrs. Ramsay's existence and keep her memory in the external archive. She succeeds in burning the oppressive archive in her inner self with her “intensity.” This oblivion makes her an

¹⁶ Pierre Nora is a French historian and wrote *Les Lieux de mémoire* [*Realms of Memory*] in 1984–1992. He states as follows:

Modern memory is first of all archival. It relies entirely on the specificity of the trace, the materiality of the vestige, the concreteness of the recording, the visibility of the image. . . . What we call memory is in fact a gigantic and breathtaking effort to store the material vestiges of what we cannot possibly remember, . . .” (8)

independent woman and gives her the power to live without Mrs. Ramsay. The archive “would be hung in the attics” and “destroyed.” Furthermore, this action seems to have the effect of freeing her from the “archive fever” which means the oppressive effect of memory. Therefore, her vision of Mrs. Ramsay, who sits on the step (219), vanishes from her consciousness. Hence, she can have “her vision” on her own without depending on Mrs. Ramsay.

Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, Woolf and Freud explored “memory” in their own ways. Woolf wrote the biographical novel *Orlando* and the autobiographical *To the Lighthouse*, and depicted the way in which memory constructs oneself and makes one unstable, and her exploration of memory could be treated as a kind of memory writing. On the other hand, Freud suggested a “mystic pad” as similar to the mental apparatus of memorization and clarified that memory remains unconscious, preserving a trace of the impressions it received earlier. Considering Derrida’s idea of the disease-like “archive,” which means mainly repressed memory, we can find the reason why Orlando is embarrassed by his/her memory and cannot construct his/her identity, and why Lily can be overwhelmed by the existence of Mrs Ramsay. Here, we can unexpectedly find the contemporariness of Woolf and Freud or psychoanalysis, and the necessity of Derrida’s critical idea as an additional perspective on Freud’s theory.

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