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THE CENTRAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE SECONDARY REFLECTOR

IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S

MRS. DALLOWAY, TO THE LIGHTHOUSE AND THE WAVES

by

Sally N. Seymour

B.A. (Hons.), Simon Fraser University, 1975

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

The Central Conscious and the Secondary Reflector
in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, To the
Lighthouse and The Waves

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Abstract

In my study of the novels of Virginia Woolf, I have noted the recurrence of a narrative technique which I call the "secondary reflector." This is a character, secondary to the central consciousness, who provides (for the reader as well as for the other characters in the story) an external, ordering perspective on the central character's thoughts and actions. Such a perspective is extremely beneficial to the "stream of consciousness" novel, for it mediates between the two worlds of subjective and objective, inner and outer, reality.

However, Woolf's particular use of this motif goes considerably beyond the question of technique in stream of consciousness writing. More significantly, the relationship between the central consciousness and the secondary reflector develops, in the course of Woolf's career, into an imaginative vision which involves a dualistic approach to reality, an approach that incorporates both subject and object, spiritual and material in the perception of truth.

While the embryo for this vision begins to form in her earliest novels, it is in Virginia Woolf's middle (and most accomplished) novels that the investigation into the nature of reality using a dualistic perspective is fully realized, and it is also in these novels (and particularly To The Lighthouse and The Waves) that the aspects of a dialectic vision play an increasingly significant role in Woolf's creative process. If, in Mrs. Dalloway, the primary concern is to distinguish reality from illusion by seeking public confirmation of the private vision, the implications of that mode of perceiving reality take on even greater significance when we find them, in To The Lighthouse and The Waves, serving as the principles of Woolf's

Abstract, continued

aesthetics. In Mrs. Dalloway, it is in the interplay between Peter Walsh's objective perspective and Clarissa's personal vision that Clarissa's final moment is given reality. In To The Lighthouse, Woolf seeks a way to extend that vision beyond the moment, and here art comes to the rescue by providing an analogue for that vision that will exist externally in time. Here the emphasis is on the artist perceiving rather than the subject perceived. Now we find both subjective and objective perspectives operating with the reflector/artist, as Lily Briscoe must weave a thread from one to the other in order to realize her painting.

But, just as To The Lighthouse carries us beyond Mrs. Dalloway by placing the momentary vision within the context of art and allowing it to exist in time, so The Waves takes us considerably beyond the moment in Lighthouse when the work of art is completed. Having identified the secondary reflector with the artist, Woolf now deals with time within the artist's life as the rhythms of perception continue to work after the vision or work of art has been realized. Here the central consciousness and reflector of that consciousness merge in the same body, as Woolf, in her most autobiographical novel, comes to realize that, for the artist, the perceiver and the subject perceived cannot be separated.

A close examination of the relationship between the secondary reflector and the central consciousness will provide an avenue into the study of the dialectical concerns which are embedded within the imaginative fabric of Woolf's novels and which inform Woolf's quest to find a kind of Coleridgian whole that will contain without compromise the dynamic relationships between these opposing forces.

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Perhaps the most significant change from the nineteenth- to the twentieth-century novel is to be found in authorial perspective. The discriminating, **explicitly moral novels of Dickens and Eliot, replete with** authorial intrusions which, as Virginia Woolf notes in "Phases of Fiction," "even if [they] impeded us in Dickens and George Eliot, upheld us and controlled us,"¹ give way to a Jamesian quest for the "air of reality" in which the all-knowing omniscient narrator is transformed into a "centre of consciousness" with ordinary human limitations. Because there was no longer a consensus of opinion concerning what 'reality' was, the author had to relinquish the practice of telling us what things are (and with it the luxury of knowing his assumptions were generally embraced) in favor of the more difficult task of showing us what they might be. The result is a narrative voice that is not only "impersonal" and indirect, but in many cases, ambiguous. "The usual supports," Woolf continues, "the props and struts of the conventions, expressed or observed by the writer, are removed. Everything seems aloof from interference, thrown open to discussion and light, though resting on no visible support. For the minds of which this world is composed seem oddly freed from the pressure of the old encumbrances and raised above the stress of circumstances."²

But if the post-Victorian, post-Edwardian novelists were free of "old encumbrances," they nevertheless found themselves entertaining a host of new difficulties, not the least of which revolved around the question of communication with the reader. By turning their attentions to the "inwardness of experience"³ rather than projecting that experience into the external world, these writers had to rely on the subtle nuances of

characterization rather than the less than subtle digressions and intrusions of an omniscient narrator.

In addition to this, the removal of a guiding author also put more pressure on the reader to assume what had previously been the author's sole responsibility. The stream of consciousness novel, as Leon Edel points out, "seemed to turn the reader into an author; it was he, ultimately who put the story together. . . ." ⁴ The reader, then, has become the creator of the novel and the drama takes place not so much in the story (as Edel notes elsewhere, there is no story) but in the reader's mind, in the attempt to group together and make sense of the disparate elements within the character's stream of consciousness. The reader must acquire the same "rage for wonderment" that James demanded of all of his characters at the same time he is forced "to hold to two levels of awareness: the story as told, and the story to be deduced." ⁵ In fact, according to Virginia Woolf, by giving over at least part of the task of creating to the reader, the modern writer is finally acknowledging what has been the reader's tendency all along, for, as she writes in her essay for the common reader: "Above all, [the common reader] is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole. . . . He never ceases, as he reads, to run up some rickety and ramshackle fabric which shall give him the temporary satisfaction of looking sufficiently like the real object to allow of affection, laughter, and argument." ⁶

However, while Virginia Woolf was one of the first novelists to acknowledge the reader's role in the new novel, she was just as quick to criticize those writers (the Edwardians were the primary offenders) who

would put too great a burden on the reader to bring to the novel all the writer had left out: "[the Edwardian's] books, then, were incomplete as books and required that the reader should finish them, actively and practically, for himself."⁷ Similarly, she was also leery of those writers (Hemingway is the one she singled out for chastisement) who, by reducing description, qualification and explanation to the barest minimum, would force "the reader to do rather more than his share of the work of creation."⁸

But while the problem of perspective may have been clarified by the recognition of the reader's role in the experience of the new novel, it has by no means been removed from the writer's concern. Indeed, the fact that the reader is called upon to come up with "some kind of whole" presupposes that there is, after all, some kind of pattern (nebulous and scattered though it may be) behind the conception of the novel.

Therefore, while the writer may allow his readers more space to feel their own way through the novel, he cannot totally abdicate his responsibility to supply the initial design. As Wayne Booth argues in The Rhetoric of Fiction, "the author's judgment is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it . . . though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear."⁹ While the exigencies of the stream of consciousness novel may require the writer to abandon the perspective of an all-knowing narrator, he cannot, on the other hand, allow his own narrative to be totally subsumed in the disordered fluidity of the mind he is exploring without some kind of guide to keep both the reader and writer on course within, as Woolf puts it, "that stream which people call, so oddly,

consciousness."¹⁰ Indeed, Booth argues that "the need for authorial judgment increases, naturally enough, with the increasing complexities of virtue and vices within the same character,"¹¹ and he goes on to point out that "to decide that your narrator shall not be omniscient decides practically nothing. The hard question is: Just how inconscient shall he be?"¹²

The problem, then, for the writer of stream of consciousness is to provide that indispensable guide without sacrificing the integrity of the "atmosphere of the mind"¹³ where the comic and serious flow together and reality may reside anywhere throughout a spectrum of possibilities. While some critics (Paul Goodman is one) have argued that there should be more rather than less interference by the author ("Generally, in any poem where the comic and serious, or other ethical kinds are mixed continually, there is required the systematic interference of the narrator to direct the reading,"¹⁴) yet, for the novelists in the early twentieth-century the pursuit of an "air of reality" (which is, after all, the justification for concentrating on the interior consciousness) forbade the use of those artificial and obvious conventions which writers of earlier periods found so useful to insure that the reader was recognizing the correct signposts.¹⁵

Therefore, in presenting that "incessant shower of innumerable atoms. . . as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday,"¹⁶ the author must include all possibilities while at the same time provide a perspective to insure that the reader is able to sort out the gold from the dross.¹⁷ What was needed, Virginia Woolf noted, was something that would serve the function of a Greek chorus or the authorial intrusion

but would still allow the author to maintain the realism of stream of consciousness:

. . . who can comment, or sum up, or allow the poet to speak himself or supply, by contrast, another side to his conception? Always in imaginative literature, where characters speak for themselves and the author has no part, the need of that voice is making itself felt. For though Shakespeare (unless we consider that his fools and madmen supply the part) dispensed with the chorus, novelists are always devising some substitute--Thackeray speaking in his own person, Fielding coming out and addressing the world before his curtain rises. So to grasp the meaning of the play the chorus is of the utmost importance. One must be able to pass easily into those ecstasies, those wild and apparently irrelevant utterances, those sometimes obvious and commonplace statements, to decide their relevance or irrelevance, and give them their relation to the play as a whole.¹⁸

One way to provide the reader with a key to the novel without sacrificing the fluidity of the perspective or the impersonality of the author is to make use of what James calls a "lucid-" or "secondary-reflector,"¹⁹ or what Guiget recognizes as an "answering witness,"²⁰ in other words, a character or characters secondary to the central consciousness who provide confirming, evaluating, or ordering perspectives for the central character's thoughts and actions.²¹ In addition to this, the secondary reflector²² also provides a kind of touchstone for the reader as he finds himself increasingly immersed in the central character's inner consciousness. Indeed, Edel tells us that for him Dorothy Richardson's central consciousness, Miriam Henderson, was unintelligible until he discovered through a secondary character (Pastor Lahman) an angle of vision on Miriam that gave him the necessary perspective on her character.²³

However, the secondary reflector is not to be confused with the first-person outside-observer who narrates the story, such as we find with Ishmael in Moby Dick or Marlow in Conrad's novels or Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby. The distinction is important and therefore worth a brief explanation. As much as Woolf was concerned with providing external perspectives on the central character, she was equally concerned that the narrator be more than a passive observer relying solely on outward appearances.²⁴ Furthermore, the outside narrator's implicit, if not explicit, pretension to "sum-up" the principal character goes against one of Woolf's most strongly held convictions about our perceptions of other people which is that we cannot ever completely "know" another person or, as S.P. Rosenbaum notes of Jacob's Room, "People cannot be summed up in Jacob's Room because people are not sums but Moorean organic unities that may be better or worse, greater or less, than the sums of their parts."²⁵ In order to avoid the limitations of the outside-observer and yet make use of the objective perspective it offers, Woolf maintains a third-person limited narration, allowing the reader to penetrate to the inner mind of the central character while the reflector (more integrated into the life of the novel than the passive observer-narrator) serves to illuminate certain aspects of that consciousness, providing (as Woolf once wrote) "lights on it coming from external sources."²⁶

II

These, then, are some of the technical advantages of a secondary reflector. However, Woolf's particular use of this motif goes considerably

beyond the question of mechanics in the stream of consciousness novel. More significantly, the dynamics inherent in the relationship between the central consciousness and the secondary reflector becomes itself a theme which goes to the heart of her imaginative vision; indeed, it informs the very substance of that vision. As we shall see, the relationship between the secondary reflector and the central consciousness is, in fact, a relationship that incorporates both subjective and objective criteria--inner and outer perspectives, feeling and reason, and it is in the interplay between these dualities that Woolf believes reality might be perceived.

Virginia Woolf was not convinced, as the novelists who preceded her were convinced, that reality was self-evident. Nor was she content, as the new wave of avant garde novelists who followed her were, to dismiss the distinction between reality and illusion as ultimately irrelevant or totally subjective. Her primary concern, in her writings as well as in her life, was to separate out from illusion what was truth, from the sham what was authentic. One kind of illusion that Woolf was particularly apprehensive about was sentimentality, an attitude she shared with her father, Leslie Stephen and many other writers, Dr. Johnson, T.S. Eliot, and Lytton Strachey,²⁷ for example. Her fear of lapsing into sentimentality in her own writings is well documented in her writer's diary,²⁸ particularly when she was writing her most important works, Mrs. Dalloway, To The Lighthouse, and The Waves, novels in which the concentration on intimate memories comes dangerously close to cliched and insipid emotions. While writing To The Lighthouse, for example, she noted, "The word 'sentimental' sticks in my gizzard (I'll

write it out of me in a story . . .) But this theme may be sentimental. . . ."29 However, if Virginia Woolf feared accusations of sentimentality from her critics, she was not reluctant to point out (significantly, through the perspective of the secondary reflector)³⁰ the sentimental lapses in her own central characters. As Jean Alexander notes, "Woolf is meticulous in showing the danger of sentimentality as well as the more serious danger of alienation from reality."³¹

Indeed, it is not surprising that Virginia Woolf was more wary than most people of the mind's ability to distort reality. A victim of periodic insanity, she was oftentimes dependent on the people around her for her sense of reality. Moreover, this dependence on other people for confirmation of her own perceptions was not limited to her periods of hallucinations but carried over into her work. Virginia Woolf was extremely sensitive to the criticism her novels received and oftentimes the suspense of waiting for her friends' approval of her writing brought on an attack of her illness, ironically producing the kind of illusionary visions she feared her novels would be damned for. Her works, then, were the vehicles for her private visions, written, as Guiget notes, "to go after truth--your own truth or other people's, confronting them with one another for the final verdict"³² and therefore it was necessary for this private vision to achieve its validation in the public arena. Furthermore, it was not so much popular success that she longed for but "understanding"³³ from selected friends whose lucid judgment she respected. Her fear was not that her novels wouldn't sell, but that they would be "dismissed as negligible."³⁴ "Her sleepless nights," Quentin Bell writes, "were spent in wondering whether her art, the whole meaning and purpose

of her life was fatuous, whether it might not be torn to shreds by a discharge of cruel laughter."³⁵ Underlying her fear of criticism was the fear not only that her novels were bad but (what was worse) that they were illusions, inauthentic, and false. "Her dread of the ruthless mockery of the world," Bell continues, "contained within it the deeper fear that her art and therefore her self was a kind of sham, an idiot's dream of no value to anyone."³⁶ "Suppose one woke and found oneself a fraud?" she wrote in her diary, "It was part of my madness that horror."³⁷ Living at a time when reality was no longer a matter of general consensus, it was of primary importance for Woolf to have her own private vision of truth confirmed by others both in her personal life and in her novels. "To believe that your impressions hold good for others," she wrote, "is to be released from the cramp and confinement of personality."³⁸

But this is not to say that Woolf was totally dependent on others for her own sense of reality. Rather, she believed that truth, or reality, would only emerge through the combination of subjective and objective (or, outside) perceptions. "She was fascinated by the fact," Jeremy Hawthorn points out, "that a human being's distinctness only reveals itself through contact with other people, and can only be fully perceived by another person. We exist simultaneously in terms of but distinct from other people--together with and apart from them."³⁹

The need to distinguish between reality and illusion and the means of doing so by submitting the inner vision to public confirmation or, transforming it into an objective form such as art, resulted in a two-pronged approach to reality involving both subjective and objective views, the fluidity of feelings and the order of reason in the final

perception of truth. In her novels Woolf was able to accomplish this interplay of perspectives in the relationship between the central consciousness and the secondary reflector. With the central consciousness she could delve into the inner recesses of the mind and follow the fluid stream of random impressions while simultaneously the perspective of the outside reflector allowed her to determine the significance of these subjective impressions from another point of view.

Furthermore, while Woolf was aware that the reflector's view might also be subjective, that view in combination with others allows for what Lawrence Durrell calls "a prism-sightedness"⁴⁰ or, as Auerbach explains it, "a close approach to objective reality by means of numerous subjective impressions received by various individuals."⁴¹ The secondary reflector, then, acts as a bridge between the two worlds of outer and inner reality, therefore relieving the stream of consciousness novel from a kind of preciousness that may result from an over emphasis of the inner life to the exclusion of all that lies outside the world of the mind. In "Notes on an Elizabethan Play" Virginia Woolf writes about the need for a perspective that would ascend to the heights of pure imagination ("the land of the unicorn and the jeweller among dukes and grandees"), while it still maintained a foot in what we assume to be reality (the world of people named "Smith" who live in "Liverpool"). In order to accomplish this, the artist must be able to position himself so that he may have access to both realms of experience:

Our contention . . . is that there is a station, somewhere in mid-air, whence Smith and Liverpool can be seen to the best advantage; that the great artist is the man who knows where to place himself above

the shifting scenery; that while he never loses sight of Liverpool he never sees it in the wrong perspective.⁴²

The interplay between a central consciousness and a secondary reflector provides this dual perspective, for the reader as well as for the writer.

Indeed, we can witness this scheme operating in Woolf's earliest novels. In The Voyage Out, Helen Ambrose contributes reason and objectivity to the youthful illusions of Rachel Vinrace as Rachel tentatively enters the new and confusing world of adult reality. Guiget notes that in this role Helen acts as "a kind of answering witness whose wisdom, partly detached, now serves as a mirror in which the consciousnesses of others is reflected and now presents a definite image with which they are contrasted."⁴³ In Night and Day, Woolf addresses herself to the question "what is the reality of any feeling"⁴⁴ and pursues her answer by using four characters (Ralph Denham, Katherine Hilbury, William Rodney and Mary Datchet) who all act as judges or reflectors for each other. The primary feeling in question is, of course, love and the problem is to distinguish what is "hallucination pure and simple--an intoxication, . . . a vision,"⁴⁵ from what can be understood with pure reason.

It is, however, in Virginia Woolf's middle (and most accomplished) novels that the investigation into the nature of reality using a dualistic perspective is fully realized, and it is also in these novels (and particularly the last two) that the aspects of a dialectic vision play an increasingly significant role in Woolf's creative process. If, in Mrs. Dalloway, the primary concern is to distinguish reality from illusion by seeking public confirmation of the private vision, the implications

of that mode of perceiving reality take on even greater significance when we find them, in To The Lighthouse and The Waves, serving as the principles of Woolf's aesthetics.⁴⁶ Our study of the secondary reflector, then, will involve two aspects. In Mrs. Dalloway we will be primarily concerned with exploring the relationship between the secondary reflector and the central consciousness in terms of the content of that novel and identifying in that relationship the dialectical nature of the perception of reality as it relates to the novel's dramatic unfolding. Having recognized these patterns, we will then be able to devote the major portion of our study (dealing with To The Lighthouse and The Waves) to a concentration on style or the creative process itself as it evolves out of the problems examined in Mrs. Dalloway. Therefore, a study of the relationship between the secondary reflector and the central consciousness will lead not only to a greater understanding of Woolf's novels, but finally, to a new appreciation of her aesthetics. In an examination of the relationships between Peter Walsh and Clarissa Dalloway, Lily Briscoe and Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, and Bernard and the other five characters in The Waves, we will be able to witness those dialectical elements which are embedded within the imaginative fabric of every novel and which inform Woolf's quest to find a kind of Coleridgean whole that will contain without compromise the dynamic relationships between these opposing forces.

Chapter I

Mrs. Dalloway

Of all Virginia Woolf's characters, Mrs. Dalloway is, no doubt, the most difficult to come to terms with. One can't help but like her-- she is charming, sensitive, and her quiet faith in the saving grace of civilized (British) behavior, though misguided perhaps, is, nevertheless, admirable. On the other hand, that charm, lavished indiscriminately, can seem frivolous; while her sensitive probings into the meaning of life and death sometimes miss their mark and descend into sentimental cliché. But perhaps most perplexing of all, there are her parties--all that strutting and fretting for no apparent reason. These contradictions in the novel's central consciousness have nourished two more-or-less opposing trends in the criticism of Mrs. Dalloway. Simply, there are those who like Clarissa and those who don't. Less simply, the former (Bernard Blackstone is typical) see in Mrs. Dalloway's random thought excursions a paradigm for Virginia Woolf's own interpretation of modern consciousness: "Things are what they are, and we have moved out of the moral, discriminating world of Dickens and Thackeray. We might call this absence of judgment a note of modernity and indeed of maturity."¹ Others, however, find it difficult to believe that Woolf is in complete sympathy with Mrs. Dalloway. For instance, A.D. Moody sees the novel as a comedy or a parody using the figure of Mrs. Dalloway to reflect the absurdities of upper-class English society: "The treatment of her, as of her society, is consistently critical, and though her surface brilliance and vivacity evoke a sympathetic response in writing, there is also a steady judgment of her deep inadequacy, a grave insistence upon the dissipation

and death of her spirit in glittering triviality."²

It should not be too surprising, then, that eventually there would be an amalgamation of these interpretations. In a recent article by Francis Gillen, both perspectives are affirmed in a view of the novel that recognizes the ambiguity as not only intentional but of major significance to the work's imaginative vision.³ By constantly moving the reader back and forth between an affirmative and critical judgment, between insane vision and sentimental platitude, Woolf presents us with a field of possibilities rather than one particular perspective.⁴

But if, in Mrs. Dalloway, as Morris Philipson suggests, "the range of literary expression lies along a spectrum between chaos at one extreme and cliché at the other"⁵ the problem, it seems, is to discover at what point or points the legitimate vision or emotion exists. What lies between the insane visions of Septimus Smith and the hypocritical platitudes of Sir William Bradshaw? How can we be sure that our moments of insight are neither hallucinatory nor sentimental? This problem not only dictates narrative technique in the novel, it lies at the very center of Mrs. Dalloway's dilemma, and what's more, she is consciously (almost too consciously) aware of the problem. Is she really feeling something like a profound suspense before the striking of the clock or is it merely "her heart affected by influenza"? Even her charitable inclinations are brought into question when she recognizes, in these deeds, her ulterior desire to have people think well of her. Desperately wanting to believe in the existence of unqualified beauty, love, friendship, her sudden recognition of the extent of her hatred for Miss Kilman casts further doubt on the purity of the human soul: "[it is] as if the whole

panoply of content were nothing but self-love! this hatred!".⁶

However, for Mrs. Dalloway, the only way to validate the inner vision, to affirm the efficacy of the moment, is to bring it from the subjective, private world into the objective public arena where, after all, those tests for legitimacy are designed.⁷ Noting this theme in

Mrs. Dalloway, Morris Philipson writes:

The excellence of Virginia Woolf's artistry rests in her ability to show that such moments do not depend upon ourselves alone. They are appreciated by us in subjective isolation; but they are contingent upon our arriving at a balance between belief in what our best self is at the moment and belief in the accuracy of interpretation of everything outside of ourselves that we depend upon. This is precisely why reciprocal relations are the necessary condition for shared experience. Although the momentary consciousness of integration is perceived by each one in himself, the soundness of the objective reality on which it is based is continually subject to being confirmed or confuted by others.⁸

It is, then, this need to affirm the subjective vision which determines the meeting point between the private and public worlds of Mrs. Dalloway.

The subtlety with which Woolf leads us to a realization of this dilemma is remarkable. By deftly maneuvering in and out of the surreal, the real and the sham, revealing insane vision here and insensitive platitude there, Woolf puts us in the same position that Mrs. Dalloway finds herself in; for, like Mrs. Dalloway, we must decide what is authentic insight and what is merely sentiment posing as truth. However, Woolf does not allow us to remain suspended over indiscriminated realities without a way out. There is in the novel, for the reader and for Mrs. Dalloway, a 'secondary reflector' to provide another view of Mrs. Dalloway's private world.

Little critical attention has been given to Peter Walsh. Rather, the tendency has been to zero in on Septimus Smith (Mrs. Dalloway's "double"), juxtaposing his "insane" visions with her flights from objective reality. When Peter Walsh is considered critically, it is most often in his capacity to uncover certain facets of Clarissa that she does not reveal herself. However, a closer look at Mrs. Dalloway shows Peter to have a much more significant role in the novel.

While we don't encounter Peter in person until a third of the way into the novel, his spiritual presence is noted on the very first page when Mrs. Dalloway, remembering her youth at Bourton, recalls being interrupted in her thoughts by Peter's comment, "Musing among the vegetables . . . I prefer men to cauliflowers" (p. 5). It should not be surprising that all of Clarissa's recollections of the past center around this particular summer at Bourton, for it was at this time that she experienced, seemingly for the first and only time, something like an epiphany, a burst of emotion so strong that she momentarily transcended the mundane reality of her own world. The moment occurs when Sally Seton suddenly turns and kisses her:

Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life . . . Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not look at it--a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked . . . she uncovered or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling! (p. 40)

Earlier, Clarissa describes in more detail the quality of this emotion

and here the sexual nature of the experience, its resemblance to orgasm, is more explicit:

It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus, an inner meaning almost expressed. (p. 36)

The moment, however, is immediately destroyed when she is brought back to reality by the sudden intrusion of Peter Walsh (at that time her fiancé): "It was like running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible" (p. 41)! Peter's interruption, then, not only breaks the spell, but (as happens when we find we have been observed in a supposedly private moment) it must force her to look at what she has just experienced through his eyes, thereby realizing the sexual implication of her emotion ("it was shocking, it was horrible").

Peter's interruption of Clarissa in this highly charged moment suggests the superego, the public self, intruding on the id, questioning it, censoring it.⁹ Indeed, from this point on Clarissa seems to internalize Peter in this role so that even when he is not physically present she continually calls up his figure, asking him to pass judgment on whatever she may be thinking or experiencing at the time. Having chosen to marry Richard instead of Peter in order to preserve a part of herself from the rigors of constant scrutiny (significantly, the decision is made soon after the traumatic interruption on the balcony with Sally)

it is ironic that it is this very aspect of her relationship with Peter that she seems unable to do without. Couched beside her own idea of herself there is always the image of Peter, critical, judgmental, causing her to wonder "if he were with me now, what would he say?" (p. 9), or "what would he think . . . when he came back" (p. 41)? A chance meeting with the pompous Hugh Whitbred (who, after all, she seems rather to like) calls up Peter's opinion of Hugh (highly unfavorable) which cannot help but cast a slight pallor on her confidence in her taste in friends. Although it has been decades since that summer at Bourton, Peter's criticisms of her at that time--that she would make an excellent hostess and that she was cold, and prudish--continue to plague her self-image years later.

It is significant, too, that it is Peter who makes her conscious of such concepts as "sentimentality" and "civilization": "She owed him words: 'sentimental' and 'civilization'. They started up everyday of her life as if he guarded her. A book was sentimental; an attitude to life 'sentimental' (p. 41). Indeed, the notion of sentimentality (and its concomitant reflection on the quality of feeling) is of particular concern with Woolf in this novel. The word itself appears in numerous contexts: watching for the Queen, Mr. Bowley is affected "suddenly, inappropriately, sentimentally" (p. 23); Clarissa fears that she is being "sentimental" in thinking of the past (p. 41); Peter feels that Clarissa is a "trifle sentimental" (p. 53), although he is able to recognize his own pride in his Anglo-Indian family background as "sentiment" (p. 62), while later he is wary of the sentimentality in dwelling on ~~thoughts~~ of violent death: "but thinking became morbid, sentimental, directly one

began conjuring up doctors, dead bodies . . ." (p. 167). When it is not mentioned directly, the idea of sentimentality is often implied: Peter's criticism of the way Clarissa so melodramatically calls out "Here's my Elizabeth" (p. 55), or the insincere sentiments in the platitudes of Sir Bradshaw or the self-pitying religious piety of Miss Kilman.

Not permitting herself to pass judgment on her characters' emotions directly, Woolf succeeds in arousing her reader's critical awareness by these frequent references to the dangers of sentimentality.

In exploring the boundaries of legitimate emotion Woolf at once recognizes the difficulties inherent in working with any character in isolation from others. Consequently, we need to incorporate Peter Walsh in our view of Mrs. Dalloway. But if Peter is to provide a perspective on Mrs. Dalloway (for the reader as well as for Clarissa), Woolf must establish his credentials for such a responsibility. At the beginning of the novel, he is more a part of her consciousness than he is a character in his own right, and in this respect he appears almost too critical if not totally unsympathetic. In order to provide a perspective on Mrs. Dalloway's inner reality, Peter's viewpoint must be broad enough to contain her contradictions, yet sensitive enough to provide insight and understanding. Peter's experience, then, must to some extent, parallel Clarissa's; he must be at least partially sympathetic with her view of the world in order to be critical of it. It is, therefore, this aspect of their relationship that Woolf reveals when, finally, we meet Peter in person the morning of Mrs. Dalloway's party.

Up to this point, all we know of Peter is that he was once in love with Clarissa and that his criticisms of her at that time continue

to have a considerable effect on her self-image. We are not very surprised, then, to find that he has maintained his tendency to view her critically ("there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage . . . and politics" [p. 46]) or that he is still able to create in her a sense of her inferiority--making her feel "frivolous, empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox" (p. 49). But what is somewhat unexpected is the revelation of another side of Peter that seems to delight in Clarissa's sophisticated, upper-class charm: "But it was delicious to hear her say that--my dear Peter! Indeed it was all so delicious--the silver, the chairs; all so delicious" (p. 47)! From sudden outbursts like this and, later, when Peter unexpectedly breaks down while relating the circumstances of his love affair in India (rather mundane, curiously enough) we begin to perceive an emotional, if not to say sentimental, side to Peter.

This meeting between Peter and Clarissa is enlightening in another respect, for, in spite of the fact that they are engaged in a battle, a confrontation, it is the degree of their intimacy that is most noticeable. Like the characters in The Waves, Peter and Clarissa seem to intuit what the other is thinking before it is actually said. It is as if there were only one consciousness present; or, rather, two wills so alike that the conflict seems to originate from the same source. For all that Peter criticizes the vanity of Clarissa's superficial existence, she can come back on the same track and attack the vanity of his love affair: "In love! . . . That he, at his age should be sucked under in his little bow-tie by that monster! And there's no flesh on his neck; his hands are red; and he's six months older than I am" (p. 50)!¹⁰

They even become associated with the same image. Peter's life-long habit of constantly opening and closing a pocket knife--suggesting his tendency to cut away the inessential from experience in order to extract what is at the very heart of the moment (significantly, the knife usually opens when he is about to become critical) finds its parallel in Clarissa's idea of her own critical facility. Having been told about Peter's mistress in India, she shapes her impression in her mind's eye "with three strokes of a knife" (p. 51), and this image is anticipated by an earlier reference to her ability to slice "like a knife through everything, at the same time [she] was outside, looking on" (pp. 10-11).

The intimacy between Clarissa and Peter, glimpsed at their meeting, is given greater emphasis once Peter leaves the Dalloway home and wanders through the streets of London. Here, Peter's walk parallels Clarissa's brief outing earlier in the day and in this aspect his stream of thoughts, running along the same course Clarissa's had (and, in some cases, provoked by the same scenery), serves as a reflection of the earlier section.

For instance, Peter is surprised to find himself uncharacteristically overcome with a feeling of chauvinistic pride in English society: "There were . . . moments of pride in England, in butlers; chow dogs; girls in their security. Ridiculous enough, still there it is, he thought. And the doctors and men of business and capable women all going about their business, punctual, alert, robust" (p. 62). This outburst of patriotism has its precursor in Clarissa's earlier thoughts on the brilliance of London society: ". . . the whirling young men, and laughing girls in their transparent muslins who, even now, after dancing all night, were taking their absurd wooly dogs for a run; and even now, at this hour,

discreet old dowagers were shooting out in their motor cars on errands of mystery" (p. 7). By using the same content in their thoughts, Woolf establishes a connection between Clarissa and Peter, while, at the same time, the difference in Peter's style serves to cast a critical reflection on Clarissa's earlier moment. Unlike Clarissa, Peter is consciously aware of the distance between his momentary visions and reality. Each flight of fantasy is carefully bounded by an outer awareness of the sentimental or ridiculous qualities of the mood. However, the dual nature of his personality allows him to enjoy the moment at the same time he realizes the illusion of its reality. Clarissa may wonder about the truth of these perceptions, but Peter is definitely aware of the contradictions in his feelings.

It is all the more significant, then, that Woolf uses Peter to launch her into an elaborate metaphor on the nature of reality and unreality. As Peter sleeps, Woolf describes a solitary traveller (since we have just left him, one tends to ascribe his identity to Peter) who, on his journey, is tempted by the visions that arise "in front of the actual thing":

often overpowering the solitary traveller and taking away from him the sense of the earth, the wish to return, and giving him for substitute a general peace, as if (so he thinks as he advances down the forest ride) all this fever of living were simplicity itself; and myriads of things merged in one thing; and this figure, made of sky and branches as it is, had risen from the troubled sea (he is elderly, past fifty now) as a shape might be sucked up out of the waves to shower down from her magnificent hands, compassion, comprehension, absolution. (pp. 64-65)

While Woolf does not usually indulge in overly schematized metaphors,

it is tempting to see Peter as the solitary traveller (he is, after all, a bachelor), our guide through the forest of Mrs. Dalloway's consciousness.

Furthermore, the concern with what is real and what is illusion is suggested in Peter's and Clarissa's common use of the term "made-up" when referring to their momentary visions. Enjoying her walk through London, Clarissa muses: "For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh . . ." (p. 6). Later, following his impulsive pursuit of a strange young woman through the streets of London, Peter uses the same expression to describe his amusing fantasies: "And it was smashed to atoms--his fun, for it was half made up, as he knew very well; invented, this escapade with the girl; made up, as one makes up the better part of life, he thought--making oneself up; making her up; creating an exquisite amusement, and something more. But odd it was, and quite true; all this one could never share--it smashed to atoms" (p. 61). Again, Peter's elaboration of this paradox serves to fill out Clarissa's partial insight.

But even more significant in the above quotation is the last line "all this one could never share" which recalls Mrs. Dalloway's determination to bring her private moments out into the public, to "pay back from this secret deposit of exquisite moments" (pp. 33-34). Here, at last, is the source of Peter's admiration for Clarissa. While Peter is capable of flights from reality into visions of beauty, peace, exquisite happiness, and indeed is capable of appreciating these moments with full awareness of their unreality, he is not able (as

Septimus, too, is finally not able) to bring the quality of this vision into existence in the outside world--it invariably "smashes to atoms."

It is Peter, then, with his ability to contain contradictions who brings us closer to a recognition of Clarissa's genius (although, at this point, he is still unsure of just what it is that attracts him). He notices that while she is emotional on the surface, Clarissa is nevertheless shrewd: "she had a perfectly clear notion of what she wanted . . . with that extraordinary gift, that woman's gift of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be" (p. 85). While she is too worldly, "cared too much for rank and society and getting on in the world" (p. 85), she is nevertheless able to draw from this reverence for "old Countesses" something very real, a notion of bravery, courage, which comes across in her upright posture, her refusal to be caught slouching. Finally, distilling all her contradictions and (for the moment) abandoning his intellectual constructs, Peter approaches the source of Clarissa's magic with the almost mystical realization that it was simply "Clarissa one remembered. Not that she was striking; not beautiful at all; there was nothing picturesque about her; she never said anything specially clever; there she was, however; there she was" (p. 85).

With this last observation Peter anticipates the final line of the novel. However, while the words are the same, the final remark takes on greater significance summing up as it does, the experience of Clarissa's party. Interestingly enough, though, for all he is able to realize Clarissa's power to convey something ineffably wonderful by her very presence, Peter is, at this point, unable (and no doubt the reader shares his perplexity) to appreciate the significance of the parties that matter

so much in Clarissa's life: "she frittered her time away, lunching, dining, giving these incessant parties of hers, talking nonsense, saying things she didn't mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing discrimination" (p. 87). Indeed, there seems to be a good reason for maintaining Peter's skepticism at this point, for, by allowing Peter to remain distrustful of this aspect of Clarissa's life, Woolf can later rely on his less than sympathetic perspective when she brings Peter into Clarissa's party. The idea behind the party (like the idea behind a work of art) must be eventually subjected to public approval or rejection. Peter's presence at the party, then, serves, as does his presence throughout the novel, as the public view of a private vision--here, the private vision in the public form of a party.

While it may be a little too pat to view the party as a detailed microcosm of the whole novel, it is difficult not to comment on the similarities between the party (and the notions that invest it with meaning) and a work of art. Disturbed that both Peter and Richard fail to realize the significance of her parties, Clarissa tries to justify to herself just why it is she feels these parties are so important:

But suppose Peter said to her, 'Yes, yes, but your parties--what's the sense of your parties?' all she could say was (and nobody could be expected to understand): They're an offering . . . Oh, it was very queer. Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; someone up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence, and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom?

An offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow, it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano. She muddled Armenians and Turks; loved

success; hated discomfort, must be liked; talked oceans of nonsense; and to this day, ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know.

All the same, that one day should follow another; . . . that one should wake up in the morning, see the sky, walk in the park; meet Hugh Whitbread; then suddenly in came Peter; then these roses; it was enough. After that, how unbelievable death was!-- that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all. (pp. 135-136)

The explanation, running erratically in and out of a long stream of consciousness, remains somewhat cryptic, but what is noteworthy is the indication of a creative impulse somewhere near the center of it all; in the idea of an offering, the desire to communicate something of oneself, in the need to draw disparate elements together, to put order on chaos, "to create", "to combine," and finally, what must lie behind all creativity, the denial of death and the affirmation of life.

It should not be too presumptuous, then, to look on the party as Clarissa's artistic creation. Like characters in a novel, the people Clarissa has chosen for her party seem almost immortal: "it was odd how standing there one felt them going on, going on, some quite old . . ." (p. 189). Also, there is the sense that these guests are both unnatural and in another way more real than people in normal life, ". . . everyone was unreal in one way; much more real in another . . . it was possible to say things you couldn't say anyhow else, things that needed an effort; possible to go much deeper" (p. 189). As in a work of fiction, it is a heightened reality in which certain characteristics are exaggerated and yet the exaggeration gives an insight into what has heretofore remained hidden from public view. Furthermore, it is not just any party, it is Clarissa's party, her creation and indeed she is quite put out when she

must compromise her good judgment and include someone like Ellie Hendersen whom she feels is wrong for the total effect.

However, it is important to realize that the party is more than just a metaphor for a work of art; in the terms of the novel it is Mrs. Dalloway's artistic creation and as such it becomes the outward expression of the inner vision. The party, then, answers the major concern of the novel: the problem of bringing the private vision into public view. Like Septimus, Mrs. Dalloway is isolated in her private world until she can find the proper form to convey her vision. As in a work of art, the meaning (in this case, that people must come together, showing only their very best selves, and somehow lend credence to the belief in the goodwill of mankind) must rise out of the form.

But it is even more complex than this, for, just as the party is an expression of an inner vision, so it also serves (by its success or failure) as the public arbiter of that vision, the final tribunal where that creation will be confirmed or refuted. Indeed, it seems that Woolf must have put something of her own agonizing experience waiting for a new novel to be reviewed into Mrs. Dalloway's pre-party jitters. Like an actor about to go on stage, Clarissa alternates between abject fear and stoic determination to see it out. She wonders why she submits herself to such tortures, "why seek pinnacles and stand drenched in fire?" and in the next breath, just as vehemently assures herself that it is better to go down in flames than "dwindle away like some Ellie Hendersen" (p. 185). At one point she acknowledges how important this party is to her, "she did think it mattered, her party, and it made her feel quite sick to know that it was all going wrong, all falling flat" (p. 186),

yet in another mood she feels it is, after all, not worth the ordeal: "And yet for her own part, it was too much of an effort. She was not enjoying it. It was too much like being--just anybody, standing there; anybody could do it . . ." (p. 188).

For the reader, however (if not for Mrs. Dalloway), the most important observer at the party is Peter Walsh, for (outside the authorial view, which is sparse) it is Peter's critical perspective that we feel most confident with. As we have seen earlier in the novel, Peter has the ability to appreciate the imaginative beauty which floats in front of the "actual thing" at the same time he is critically aware of the reality within. It is a stance which involves him on the outside looking in on the glamorous surface of experience while he is also inside perceiving the reality beneath that facade. Significantly, this perspective finds its objective correlative immediately before Peter enters Clarissa's party when, walking through the London streets to his destination, Peter (suspending, for the moment, his critical awareness) imaginatively floats on the pleasure-promising surface of London night-life seen from the outsider's perspective: ". . . windows lit up, a piano, a gramophone sounding; a sense of pleasure-making hidden, but now and again emerging when, through the uncurtained window, the window left open, one saw parties sitting over tables, young people slowly circling, conversations between men and women. Absorbing, mysterious, of infinite richness, this life" (pp. 180-181).

But having assured us of his imaginative sensitivity to beauty, Woolf reasserts Peter's critical function by having him exchange the outer perspective for the inner as he enters Clarissa's party: "The

brain must wake now. The body must contract now, entering the house, the lighted house, where the door stood open, where the motor cars were standing, and bright women descending: the soul must brave itself to endure. He opened the big blade of his pocket knife: (p. 182).

True to form, Peter's first impression of Clarissa is highly critical: "She was at her worst--effusive, insincere. It was a great mistake to have come. He should have stayed at home and read his book . . ." (p. 185). And, sensitive as she has been to Peter's opinion of her throughout the novel, Clarissa intuits Peter's criticism: "She could see Peter out of the tail of her eye, criticizing her, there, in that corner. . . . It was extraordinary how Peter put her into these states just by coming and standing in a corner. He made her see herself; exaggerate. It was idiotic" (p. 185). Like a captious reviewer with his critical reputation on the line, Peter claims to have no mercy (p. 191), declaring the Prime Minister to be an ineffectual figure and Hugh Whitbred's pomposity more harmful than the gory deeds of a psychopathic murderer. And, in spite of the hyperboles, we tend to agree with Peter's perceptions--especially when (echoing Septimus Smith) he immediately sizes up Sir William Bradshaw as a "humbug".

It is a highly dramatic moment, then, when Peter, in his role as disparaging observer is unexpectedly overcome by a vision of Clarissa that seems to transcend all his former criticisms:

And now Clarissa escorted her Prime Minister down the room, prancing, sparkling, with the stateliness of her grey hair. She wore earrings, and a silver-green mermaid's dress. Lolloping on the waves and braiding her tresses she seemed, having that gift still; to be; to exist; to sum it all up

the moment as she passed; . . . There was a breath of tenderness; her severity, her prudery, her woodenness were all warmed through now, and she had about her . . . an inexpressible dignity; an exquisite cordiality; as if she wished the whole world well. (p. 192)

Suddenly, the superficial aspects of the party drop away and the meaning behind the form shines through: Clarissa's vision of dignity, cordiality, a tenderness that wishes all the world well. Furthermore, Peter's comparison of Clarissa to a mermaid in green dress lolloping on the waves recalls the experience of the solitary traveller whose perception of the prosaic world is momentarily replaced by (among other fantastic sights) "sirens lolloping away on the green sea waves," communicating a message of "charity, comprehension, absolution" (p. 64). Peter's vision of Clarissa, then, is not a denial of his earlier criticisms, but rather represents another level of perception in which the insight is informed by kindness, understanding, forgiveness, and, above all, love.

Later, in conversation with Sally Rossiter, we are given an insight into Peter's ability to realize the essence of Clarissa Dalloway. The hint comes in what appears to be almost contradictory statements. In answer to Sally's declaration that one ought to always say what he feels, Peter replies, "But I don't know . . . what I feel" (p. 212). However, shortly after this, in response to Sally's complaint that she often despaired of humans ever really knowing one another and that for this reason she sometimes preferred gardening to human relationships, Peter asserts (echoing his comment at Bourton years earlier) that he preferred human beings to cabbages and that he doesn't agree we know nothing of each other, on the contrary, "We know everything . . . at least he did"(p.213).

While Peter is able to realize all aspects of Clarissa, able to contain her contradictions, he is yet not able to sort out these contradictions into one particular feeling about her. He cannot (as Clarissa said earlier she could not) say of himself or of Clarissa "I am this, I am that". Clarissa remains greater than the sum of her parts. Her sentimentality and her sincerity, her egoistic need to be thought well of and her charitable love of humanity, are all included in, yet transcended by Peter's final view of her in the last lines of the novel: "What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement? It is Clarissa . . . For there she was" (p. 215).

However, there is still the question of whether a dinner party is not a rather inadequate medium for the profound notions Woolf intends it to convey. But it is not, I think, a frivolous choice on Woolf's part. By using the party as the medium for the expression of Clarissa's imaginative vision, Woolf asserts the potential existence of a world rich with possibilities behind the seemingly mundane. While writers like Arnold Bennett or Thackeray might limit themselves to the superficial aspects of the party (Thackeray would be impressed with the number of Lords and Ladies in attendance; Bennett, no doubt, with the details of the dinner), for Woolf, these things are not nearly so important as what lies beneath that surface. Rather than face reality straight on, creating a one-dimensional effect, Woolf is more interested in the reflections off mirrors which add depth and a new perspective to the ordinary figure. "But suppose," Woolf muses in "The Mark on the Wall":

the looking-glass smashes, the image disappears and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is no longer, but only that shell of a

person which is seen by other people--what an airless, shallow, bald prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in. As we face each other in omnibuses and underground railways we are looking into the mirror; that accounts for the vagueness, the gleam of glassiness, in our eyes. And the novelists in the future will realize more and more the importance of these reflections, for of course there is not one reflection but an almost infinite number; those are the depths they will explore, those the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the descriptions of reality more and more out of their stories.¹¹

After her first two more-or-less conventional novels, The Voyage Out and Night and Day, Woolf attempted, in Jacob's Room to abandon the traditional approach in favor of concentrating solely on impressionistic reflections. However, evolving almost exclusively through a shifting flux of impressions, the novel suffers from the lack of a perspective on these reflections. At times, then, it becomes necessary for the narrator to abandon her overview and intrude directly into the story. As David Daiches points out, "There is discernible [in Jacob's Room] a certain lack of confidence on the author's part in her own technique. She has to introduce herself at intervals, in propria persona, to explain her doubts and difficulties to the reader, and enlist his sympathy."¹²

But in Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf is able to reveal the impressionistic inner world of Mrs. Dalloway at the same time she maintains her hold on objective reality through the perspective of Peter Walsh. Finally, it is Peter who carries us from an objective view of Mrs. Dalloway and her party into a perception of the depths of consciousness behind the woman and her creation.

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Chapter II

To The Lighthouse

A number of parallels can be drawn between Mrs. Dalloway and Virginia Woolf's next novel, To The Lighthouse. The central consciousness in each novel is a middle-aged, attractive, upper-middle class housewife. Both women enjoy being surrounded by other people-- particularly people they feel are in need of being coupled. Like Mrs. Dalloway in her need to bring odd separate souls together, Mrs. Ramsay revels in matchmaking--aligning Paul Rayley with Minta Doyle, Lily Briscoe with William Bankes. But in both cases, the motive for this matchmaking seems less to arise out of a conviction that marriage is the best of all possible worlds than it does from an almost aesthetic desire for order--the bringing together of disparate elements into a complementary whole. Yet, on the other hand, they also share a need for privacy when, periodically, they can reach down into an inner world where they find a core of integrity that is untouched by the demands of husband and friends.

In addition to similarities in the central consciousness, there are also certain motifs which Virginia Woolf carries over from Mrs. Dalloway into To The Lighthouse. For instance, in both novels there is a somewhat mystical character (not unlike Mrs. Wilcox in Howard's End) who serves as a unifying presence at the periphery of the events in the story. The mysterious woman in the apartment across the way from Mrs. Dalloway's house finds a parallel in the silent figure of the poet Carmichael in To The Lighthouse, who, like the woman in the apartment,

appears periodically throughout the novel but most significantly at the final moment when the separate forces in the novel reach their completion.

There is also a similarity in the narrative technique of each novel: the inner thoughts of both Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay are presented to us in the voice of an omniscient narrator which is supplemented by the reflections of numerous outside observers. Furthermore, this narrative perspective dictates a certain similarity in the structures and rhythms of both novels. Structurally, Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay are each at the center of a circle of characters. Rhythmically, there is the sense of expansion and contraction (centripetal and centrifugal movement) as the thoughts of the central characters move out to the world around them while the reflections of the secondary characters are directed back into the center.

Finally, there appears in both novels one of Virginia Woolf's favorite set-pieces: the dinner party. Serving a symbolic as well as a structural function, the dinner party becomes the objective correlative for the novel as a whole: the imposition of order on chaos, the merging of disparate entities into a communal whole.

However, for all of the parallels between the two novels, To The Lighthouse proceeds considerably beyond the scope of Mrs. Dalloway. While Mrs. Dalloway ends with the symbolic party, the dinner party in To The Lighthouse occurs at the center of the novel. What is the culminating vision in Mrs. Dalloway is, in To The Lighthouse only an early plateau in that novel's ascent. But it is this discrepancy between the novels in the placement of the dinner party scene that provides us with a clue to the greater scope of To The Lighthouse.

If (as we have seen in Mrs. Dalloway) the party elicits comparison with a work of art (order on chaos, the creative merging of separate elements into a whole larger than its parts, etc.) it must also call to our attention the obvious difference between a party and a work of art: a party is, after all, temporal, a moment in time, while a work of art should be timeless. In To The Lighthouse it is not enough to simply realize, or even to partake of, that moment when disparate elements are drawn together (when, for example, Peter can say of Mrs. Dalloway, "there she is"). In an effort to extend that moment the energy in To The Lighthouse is directed toward finding a way to translate that realization into a form that is impervious to time. But the problem involves not only how this can be accomplished, but who, within the novel, can accomplish it.

In Mrs. Dalloway it was Peter Walsh who from his detached, yet penetrating perspective could reveal the unity of Mrs. Dalloway's presence to us, and so in To The Lighthouse it is the secondary reflector-- Lily Briscoe--who must perform the same task. However, it is where Lily Briscoe differs from Peter Walsh that we are made aware of the greater horizons of To The Lighthouse. For all that Peter Walsh can realize Mrs. Dalloway's essence and communicate this essence to us, his vision is, after all, only temporary. He is not an artist (he never did write the novel he intended) and therefore his epiphanic vision of completion dissolves with the moment. Lily, on the other hand, is an artist and with this vehicle Woolf can explore in To The Lighthouse two elements that she could not handle in Mrs. Dalloway. In To The Lighthouse she is not only able to invest the momentary vision with a sense

of permanence in the completion of Lily's painting ("you and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays [Lily imagines Carmichael to proclaim] all changes; but not words, not paint")¹, but, Woolf is also able to explore the aesthetic and philosophical problems of observer and subject in artistic creation. In her role as artist Lily is much more intellectually and aesthetically conscious of her observation of Mrs. Ramsay than was Peter Walsh with Mrs. Dalloway. Furthermore, because the emphasis is now on the process of aesthetic creation more than on the result, we will find that Lily, as secondary reflector, is not so secondary after all. Indeed, given the concerns of the novel, she gains equal footing with Mrs. Ramsay.

However, before we can fully realize Lily Briscoe's importance in To The Lighthouse, it is necessary that we understand why she is, as outside observer, necessary to the working out of the vision of the novel. If, as we have implied, the novel is about art and Mrs. Ramsay as the subject of that art, why isn't the example of Mrs. Ramsay alone sufficient to reveal to us her aesthetic qualities? Certainly she qualifies (as Mrs. Dalloway does not) as an aesthetically sensitive person. In spite of the fact that she claims she hasn't time to read, we learn that she is familiar with great literature (it is she who is able to inform Paul Rayley that the character he is trying to recall is Wronsky in Anna Karenina). And, (as Woolf builds on this small incident) we are then provided with a passage (typical of Woolf's delightful skill of mixing profundity with mockery) in which Mrs. Ramsay's approach to literature is juxtaposed against Mr. Ramsay's use of it. What Mr. Ramsay seeks in Sir Walter Scott turns out to be a combination

of ego-gratification (if Sir Walter Scott is still readable, he reasons, than his own work might last) and absorption in the sentimentalities of the story. Mrs. Ramsay's pleasure in a Shakespearian sonnet, on the other hand, is purely aesthetic: "'Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose," she read, . . . And then there it was, suddenly entire; she held it in her hands, beautiful and reasonable, clear and complete, the essence sucked out of life and held rounded here--the sonnet" (p. 181). Furthermore, she is able to recognize the elements of this aesthetic response in other aspects of her life. That same sense of wholeness and completion which the sonnet creates is duplicated in a moment at the dinner party when the multiple personalities at the table come together as one: ". . . there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out . . . in the fact of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; . . . she had the feeling . . . already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that endures" (p. 158). And again, at the dinner party, she is drawn to contemplate the aesthetic forms in a bowl of fruit: "Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes, then over the horny ridge of the shell, putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape, without knowing why she did it, or why, every time she did it, she felt more and more serene . . ." (p. 163).

But there, in the last lines of the above passage, is the answer to our query about the necessity for Lily's perspective in the novel. For all that Mrs. Ramsay may serve as the subject of an aesthetic vision and for all that she may be capable of having moments of aesthetic

pleasure, she is yet incapable of communicating this vision because she is unconscious of the intellectual constructs which lie behind her powers. Like Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay does not possess an outside perspective on herself; she is not aware of her effect on others. Indeed, she seems to be "presiding with immutable calm over destinies she completely failed to understand" (p. 78). In other words, she is much too grounded in life to be aware of her role in it. She is too involved in being art to bring that subjective quality into objective perspective. Indeed, she seems to feel that those moments of serenity, of coalescence, "are spoilt . . . by saying them." "Aren't we more expressive," she wonders, "to rest in silence, uncommunicative; to rest in the extreme obscurity of human relationships" (p. 256)? The question she poses is, of course, the old problem of life versus art. Art is, in one sense, inferior to life because it can never equal the fullness of those inexpressible moments in Mrs. Ramsay's private thought. But left within the mind of Mrs. Ramsay, that moment is not only limited in time, it is limited to the subjective world of the inner being--it cannot be transformed into something others may share.

It is interesting to note that when Woolf first conceived of To The Lighthouse, the character of Lily Briscoe was not, apparently, anticipated. Her original intention, as she notes in A Writer's Diary, was to re-create a period from the family life of her own childhood and by doing this, perhaps "write-out" what she felt to be the unhealthy dominance of her parents' personalities in her own psyche²: "This is going to be fairly short; to have father's character done complete in it, and mother's; and St. Ives; and childhood; and all the usual things

I try to put in--life, death, etc. But the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat, reciting 'We perished, each alone,' while he crushes a dying mackerel" (p. 75).³ Begun (at least partly) as a therapeutic exercise and centered on her father, the novel turns out to be centered much more on Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe with the emphasis on art rather than on Woolf's personal problems of childhood guilt and parental dominance. However, it should not be difficult to understand how the transformation takes place nor why the character of Lily Briscoe is found to be so necessary to the work. In the first place, while it might have been a personal need that impelled Woolf to write about her relationship with her father, it was the professional artist in her that diverted her attention to her mother who, like Mrs. Ramsay, seemed to suggest qualities we associate with a work of art. In the second place, Woolf realized (indeed it is a recurring theme throughout her works) that the creative process takes place in the interplay between the artist's psyche and the object he is re-creating and the resulting work of art is a reflection of that dynamic. In order to duplicate this process of recollecting her mother and having that recollection transformed to art, Woolf had to include, in the novel, the subject of the work of art (Mrs. Ramsay) as well as the artist who is observing her. In To The Lighthouse, then, Lily Briscoe stands in the same perspective to Mrs. Ramsay as Virginia Woolf, writing the novel, stands to the recollection of her mother. By placing Lily in the same position as herself, Woolf is able to examine, through Lily's creative activity, the complete process whereby objective and subjective visions come together in the final work of art. The result, then, is a work of art in process as

well as a work of art completed. It is (to use Coleridge's terms) a "self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency". It can only be in the process of Lily's struggle to draw together the conflicting elements in her re-creation of the Ramsays that we are able to experience their essence.

Indeed, there is evidence in A Writer's Diary that suggests that Woolf had become particularly concerned, at this point, with the process of transmuting the stuff of real life into art. In a passage that was written, significantly, during the time she was working on To The Lighthouse, she recalls a visit to Thomas Hardy and his wife and wonders how she could capture the essence of that moment in life through art:

What I thought was this: if art is based on thought, what is the transmuting process? I was telling myself the story of our visit to the Hardys, and I began to compose it; that is to say to dwell on Mrs. Hardy leaning on the table, looking out, apathetically, vaguely, and so would soon bring everything into harmony with that as the dominant theme. But the actual event was different.⁴

Furthermore, the questions that arose out of the Hardy visit were more than just passing interests, for six months before she had been mulling over the same problem of transmuting life into art and had begun to propose a theory of fiction that would revolve around the notion of perspective:

. . . I think I will find some theory about fiction . . . The one I have in view is about perspective. . . I don't think it is a matter of 'development' but something to do with prose and poetry, in novels. For instance Defoe at one end; E. Bronte at the other. Reality something they put at different distances. One would have to go into conventions; real life; and so on.⁵

But if the notion for a "theory of fiction" was never pursued beyond the proposal, certainly the ideas on which it was based found their way into her next novel, where, as we have pointed out, the transmuting process, and the nature of perspective are integral questions in the working out of To The Lighthouse.

It would not be presumptuous, then, to see To The Lighthouse as Woolf's most "artistic novel". It is, as Ruby Cohen has noted "a work of art about art"⁶. Its concerns are those of the artist: how wisdom, knowledge, beauty (qualities which Lily, at one point, notes in Mrs. Ramsay) can be extended beyond the subjective momentary realization into art. While Peter Walsh is brought up short in the face of this dilemma, saying of Mrs. Dalloway's essence, "all this one could never share", Lily, as the artist, is able to progress beyond Peter in search of a solution.

For Virginia Woolf, the creative process was more investigation than representation. Her writing served as a way of finding out about experience more than as a medium in which to record what she might already know. This is particularly the case in To The Lighthouse where her investigation of experience takes in two related themes: the nature of emotions or feelings and how these phenomena might be observed and communicated in the objective world. Furthermore, the method by which these problems are examined can be seen in terms of a dialectic that involves dissolution on one hand, and unification on the other. Each emotion or experience is first separated into its various elements and then, once it has been broken up, it is brought together again. It is not unlike the process Coleridge described in his definition of the

primary imagination: "The primary imagination . . . dissolves, diffuses and dissipates in order to recreate."⁷ Finally, because the constant interchange between diffusion and recreation is so integral to the imaginative vision of the novel, it is important that we witness this creative process working through Woolf's narrative technique. Therefore, in a close textual analysis, we will look first at how Woolf manages to dissolve and separate the various elements of her vision before she brings them together in the final synthesis.

When she began working on To The Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf noted in her diary that she might ". . . do something in To The Lighthouse to split up emotions more completely. I think I'm working in that direction"⁸ and indeed, we can observe this diffusing process working in the novel's leisurely beginning where, as if viewed through a prism, Mrs. Ramsay is presented to us in several separate roles at once. Simultaneously she is supervising her son's play, posing for Lily Briscoe's painting and pursuing a train of thought that has its source in a prospective trip to the lighthouse. These various aspects of Mrs. Ramsay's character--her role as a mother, her symbolic significance as a coalescing of aesthetic principles, and her inner world of emotions and feelings--will determine the novel's thematic content, but what concerns us at this point are the emotions she is in the process of analyzing. The substance of her thoughts, it seems, is not so much the actual trip to the lighthouse but rather the nature of the emotions that are elicited in various individuals at the prospect of the trip. Observing her son, she notes the variety of feelings that come into play at the mention of a trip to the lighthouse: his inability to

distinguish dreams of the future from the reality of the present ("future prospects with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand"), the tendency to attach the prevailing emotion to inanimate objects so that the picture of a refrigerator is endowed with "heavenly bliss" and the potential for murderous revenge that lies beneath the surface when that hope for a trip is shattered.

Angered by her husband's apparent complacency in being the cause of her son's shattered hopes (there will be no trip, he asserts, because the wind is in the wrong direction), Mrs. Ramsay then attempts a similar analysis of his present state of mind. She admires her husband's unswerving dedication to facts ("he was incapable of untruth, never tampered with a fact, never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being") and yet notes his secret pleasure "in disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife" and finally, she acknowledges his unabashed conceit in his own accuracy of judgment.

As the first part of the novel progresses, this dissolving of states of minds into various parts continues as each new character is brought into the scene. Charles Tansley, Lily Briscoe, William Bankes, Paul and Minta, Nancy and Andrew--are all submitted to close analysis as we encounter them through the various perspectives of Mrs. Ramsay, the omniscient narrator, or each other. But while many critics have recognized the technique of presenting one character through several perspectives⁹, they have overlooked the fact that the same treatment is given to emotions or states of mind. Lily Briscoe and William Bankes, for instance, attempt to "split-up" or separate their various impressions about each other and about Mr.

and Mrs. Ramsay in a series of thoughts that occasionally break into their conversations. And, the notion of a dissecting process is further enhanced by William Bankes' unconscious use of a pen-knife to punctuate his questions about Lily's painting (indeed, we've seen the pen-knife work, symbolically, for the same purpose with Peter Walsh in Mrs. Dalloway). Similarly, we are asked to picture Mr. Ramsay's philosophy in separate stages, as a proceeding from one letter of the alphabet to the next, each separate element added to the next as he cumulates his way toward Z.

In her determination to "split-up" emotions in the first part of To The Lighthouse Woolf also establishes an important proposition which is crucial to the novel's final synthesis. By demonstrating that each state of mind is made-up of conflicting elements, she also reveals the essential dialectical nature of any particular emotion--a proposition which is as integral to her aesthetics as it is to her philosophy of reality. Indeed, this mixture of opposing emotions within a single individual is fully revealed throughout the dissolving process in the first section. There is, for example, Mrs. Ramsay's need for privacy:

. . . it was a relief when they [her children] went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of--to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others (p. 95).

and, on the other hand, her desire to be surrounded by people, always inviting more friends than they could accomodate in their summer home,

always needing more people, wanting more children to care for and worry about.

There has been a tendency, in the critical interpretations of To The Lighthouse, to view the dialectics inherent in the novel too schematically. We would be ignoring the complexities of the novel (and of Woolf's aesthetics) if we assume that Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Ramsay are to be viewed as opposing principles in a feminine/masculine or intellect/emotion dialectic. While on a very simplified level these oppositions can be observed, we should not ignore the fact that there exists such a conflict within each individual character which in turn makes the working out of a synthesis much more complex. "Feelings, which used to come single and separate do so no longer," Woolf writes in "The Narrow Bridge of Art," "Beauty is part ugliness; amusement part disgust; pleasure part pain. Emotions which used to enter the mind whole are now broken upon the threshold."¹⁰ Therefore, as we have been made aware of the conflicting aspects of Mrs. Ramsay's personality, so we might identify similar oppositions in Mr. Ramsay. Alongside his refusal to let the feelings of others sway him from reciting the cold hard truth, we must recognize his weakness for sentimental literature-- his chanting of Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" and his enjoyment of the melodrama in Sir Walter Scott. While Mrs. Ramsay praises him for his ability to shed the superfluties of life (p. 68), William Bankes recalls Mr. Ramsay pausing in his abstruse contemplations to notice a chicken crossing the road with her brood (p. 35). A paragon of stoicism, Mr. Ramsay has absolutely no self-control when he feels the need of hearing his praises sung by others.

Nor are these opposing elements within a single personality limited to just the central characters. For instance, we find that William Bankes' praise of Mr. Ramsay is mixed with a personal jealousy for his family life; in Lily Briscoe, an overwhelming emotion of romantic love can momentarily displace her independent self-reliance. On the outside, James (as a child) appears ". . . the image of stark and uncompromising severity" while inside, more like his mother, he is extremely sensitive to the subtlest fluctuations in mood.

Having presented the opposing forces working within individual personalities, Woolf carries this dialectical pattern into the discursive portions of the novel. Ideas are presented in the form of opposing views rather than as conclusions for one side or another. Masculine and feminine points of view are weighted and compared, the advantages and disadvantages of marriage and bachelorhood are discussed. Even the tone in which these notions are presented is double-edged for (as Mrs. Ramsay describes her reaction to Paul and Minta's engagement) there is something that is both "profound and yet mocking" throughout these discussions.

In addition to this, the imagery of the novel also suggests duality. The sound of waves is, for Mrs. Ramsay, both comforting ("I am guarding you--I am your support") and frightening ("like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat the measure of life, made one think of the destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea . . ." [pp. 27-28]). Even more suggestive is the image of the skull with Mrs. Ramsay's shawl draped over it, but, unless we realize the degree to which the double vision permeates this novel, we are liable to mis-interpret this image. Nancy

toppings Bazin, (among others) explains Mrs. Ramsay's motive in covering the skull as a desire to "cover over" the cold hard facts of life:

Virginia Woolf would not, like Mrs. Ramsay, cover a 'horrid' skull with a green shawl and then say it was like a mountain, a bird's nest, or a garden. Mrs. Ramsay knew the difference too . . . but Virginia Woolf would have a harder time pretending it was something other than what it was. Like her mother [Virginia Woolf's?] Mrs. Ramsay tried to soften the blows and threats to human happiness; but, to Virginia Woolf and her father, a fact was a fact.¹¹

But, to the contrary, the covering of the skull is not an attempt to repress that element of death and destruction in life, but rather the action suggests the potential in the imagination to perceive two opposing ideas at once--beauty co-existing with destruction, life held in solution with death. While the skull covered with the shawl can elicit in Cam's imagination a beautiful mountain, ". . . valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes," it is still, for James, nothing but "a boar's skull" (pp. 172-173). Furthermore, that ability of the imagination to realize opposing notions which this scene illustrates, is re-echoed at the end of the novel when we again have Cam and James together, this time riding in the boat to the lighthouse. As they approach their destination Cam has a sudden moment of dual vision as she describes the scene on two levels: ". . . it was very exciting--it seemed as if they were doing two things at once; they were eating their lunch here in the sun and they were also making for safety in a great storm after a shipwreck" (p. 304). Moreover, Cam's readiness to at last understand the duality of experience is anticipated in a scene shortly before this when, looking back from

the middle of the bay at their summer home, she views it from a double perspective--as it exists in time: "All those paths and terraces and bedrooms" and as it exists (like the skull with the shawl) in the timelessness of the imagination: "it was a hanging garden, it was a valley, full of birds, and flowers, and antelopes . . . (p. 303). And, at this time, James is having his realization also. The Lighthouse, to which he has had a romantic attachment from that moment when he was denied visiting it as a child, suddenly becomes stark and mundane as the boat draws nearer to it. But just as he is about to take perverse pleasure in having his last romantic illusion cut loose, he realizes that the Lighthouse is neither one thing nor the other but has a reality in both visions:

James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?

No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too. It was sometimes hardly to be seen across the bay. In the evening one looked up and saw the eye opening and shutting and the light seemed to reach them in that airy sunny garden where they sat (pp. 276-77).

While the Lighthouse is, without doubt, the primary symbol in the novel, there are many other images which contain dual or opposing meanings. But if these images serve to reveal something about the philosophical and aesthetic bases of the novel, they also (by the very fact that they are concrete symbols of ideas--for the characters as well as for the reader) suggest something about the method within the work.

Throughout the novel we are made aware of the tendency of Woolf's

characters to attach their inner thoughts (whether they be emotional or intellectual) to concrete objects in the outside world. Examining the whole of Mr. Ramsay's life, William Bankes resorts to the scene of a Westmoreland road with a hen and her chickens crossing it. Thinking of Mrs. Ramsay, he focuses on the construction work going on in a building outside his window. Similarly, Lily must find an image to concentrate on (a plain, white, deal table) in order to comprehend Mr. Ramsay's philosophy. With the promise of a visit to the Lighthouse, James' emotion of "heavenly-bliss" is transferred to the picture of a refrigerator in a mail-order catalogue. That images play a crucial role in the novel is quite appropriate for, as we argued earlier, To The Lighthouse is about art and the artist in this novel is an 'image-maker'. It is Lily, as painter who will create the culminating image in the work with her painting. But our concern at this point should be directed to the process by which that final image comes about.

II

We have noted, in the first section, that Woolf's narrative technique involves splitting-up states of mind into various, oftentimes conflicting, emotions. In order to be in a position to realize the variety of these phenomena, it is necessary that the author maintain a certain distance from the subject matter, permitting a wide view of the range of possibilities. That "doubting perspective"¹² which Auerbach perceives in Woolf's treatment of Mrs. Ramsay is, in part, a result of her refusal to narrow that perspective by coming too close to her character. Earlier, we had suggested that Woolf put her experience of recollecting her mother

mother into Lily Briscoe's experience of realizing Mrs. Ramsay in her painting. If we now turn to examine Lily's experience within the novel, we will perceive this same 'doubting perspective' in her vision of Mrs. Ramsay.

As soon as we are introduced to Lily we are made aware of a certain ambivalence in her attitude to Mrs. Ramsay, the subject of her painting, for, if she is extremely attracted to her, she also seeks to extricate herself from this attraction. Early in the novel, for example, Lily is sketching her portrait of Mrs. Ramsay when she is suddenly overcome with an almost irresistible desire to "fling herself . . . at Mrs. Ramsay's knee and say to her . . . 'I'm in love with you . . . I'm in love with this all'" (p. 32). In order to overcome such an overpowering impulse she leaves Mrs. Ramsay to go for a walk with William Bankes. Finally, as they approach the bay the emotions that had been building up in Lily are dispersed as she succumbs to the beauty of the scene before her: "It was as if the water floated off and set sailing thoughts which had grown stagnant on dry land, and gave to their bodies even some sort of physical relief. First, the pulse of colour flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam, only the next instant to be checked and chilled by the prickly blackness on the ruffled waves" (p. 33). Here there is not only the sense of expanding outward, leaving the complexities of the world behind her, but there is also an aesthetic pleasure in the rhythm of opposing forces in the movement of the waves as they draw forward and recede. Having internalized these elements in the scene, Lily is then, in the conversation that immediately follows, able to regain her objective perspective on Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and that

distancing allows her to begin to realize the opposing forces that go into that relationship.

However, this distant perspective is not a stable one and therefore, shortly after the moment of relief, we find Lily struggling again to achieve the proper objectivity. Just as she is about to say something critical of Mr. Ramsay, she realizes that her objective stance is so precarious that in order to maintain it she cannot even risk looking at him:

. . . looking down, she thought, he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust, and kept looking down, purposely, for only so could she keep steady, staying with the Ramsays. Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called 'being in love' flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love (pp. 72-73).

This thought, coupled with her observation of William Bankes' love for Mrs. Ramsay, is sufficient to suspend Lily's objective perspective and she finds herself, once again, succumbing to the rapturous glow of the Ramsays. But what is particularly significant, in terms of the creative process, is the method by which Lily manages to re-gain her objective perspective. As she is made aware of Bankes' love for Mrs. Ramsay, Lily begins (unconsciously, it seems) to compare it with her own feeling for Mrs. Ramsay. She notices, for instance, that unlike her own desire to "fling herself" at Mrs. Ramsay's knees, there is something impersonal in Bankes' love: "It was . . . distilled and filtered; love that never attempted to clutch its object, but, like the love which mathematicians bear their symbols, or poets their phrases, was meant to be spread over the world and become part of the human gain" (p. 74).

There is, then, an aesthetic or formalistic aspect to this love, like the emotion one has in viewing art, and musing on this aspect, Lily realizes that what she is witnessing is something that should be translated into an objective form where others may partake of it:

The world by all means should have shared it, could Mr. Bankes have said why that woman pleased him so; why the sight of her reading a fairy tale to her boy had upon him precisely the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem, so that he rested in contemplation of it, and felt, as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued (p. 74).

At this point there is an interruption in Lily's stream of thoughts as she directs her attention back to her painting of Mrs. Ramsay. It seems, however, that it is "infinitely bad"; it doesn't convey her vision of Mrs. Ramsay at all; something is missing, once more it will never be seen by anyone and Tansley has said that women can't paint, can't write. But, finding no solace in this train of thought, Lily returns to her former musings, only this time the concentration is less on Bankes' feelings and more on the object of those feelings (which also happens to be the object of her painting). It is at this point, then, that we reach the climax of the passage, for Lily has finally regained her objective perspective and she remembers what it was she didn't like about Mrs. Ramsay: "She now remembered what she had been going to say about Mrs. Ramsay. She did not know how she would have put it; but it would have been something critical. She had been annoyed the other night by some highhandedness" (p. 75). But the rhythm of the passage has not yet reached its final completion for, having re-established the

former distance from the subject there follows a balancing out between the two extremes as Lily, acknowledging both the good and bad aspects in Mrs. Ramsay, becomes (like Bankes) more impersonal in her analysis of the problem: "[Mrs. Ramsay] was unquestionably the loveliest of people . . . but also, different too from the perfect shape which one saw there. But why different, and how different? . . . How did she differ? What was the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a crumpled glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its twisted finger, hers indisputably?" (p. 76).

Throughout this passage, there has been no overt declaration that what Lily is thinking bears any relation to what she is doing (painting a picture of Mrs. Ramsay), yet the connection is obvious for within the long stream of consciousness that this passage presents we have, step by step, as it were, the structural rhythms of the creative process that will determine the completion of her painting (as well as the completion of the novel). At the center of a revolving circle of friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay (particularly Mrs. Ramsay) exert what amounts to a magnetic power to draw others (and here, we are most concerned with Lily) into their center. Lily's loss of objective distance as she draws closer to Mrs. Ramsay describes a centripetal movement. Correspondingly, as the passage moves onto completion we are presented with the centrifugal force as Lily slowly makes her way back to her former analytic objectivity. To summarize, then, the creative process begins with Lily trying to realize her portrait of Mrs. Ramsay. Finding that she is becoming too involved with the subject she seeks distance (literally and figuratively) in contemplating the waters of the bay. However, this moment of release

is too precarious to be maintained and once again she finds herself (as she is made aware of William Bankes' love for Mrs. Ramsay) drawn back into her perplexing intimacy with Mrs. Ramsay. Slowly, then, she begins again to withdraw, but this time it is accomplished not by leaps of imagination (such as she experienced in a vision at the bay) but by a step-by-step plodding into the problem at hand. She begins by analyzing William Bankes' feelings for Mrs. Ramsay and the qualities that she recognizes--his impersonality and the resemblance of his emotion to aesthetic pleasure--touches her own creative impulse so that as an artist she finds a desire to translate this emotion into an objective form. This line of thought returns Lily to her own painting and, while she finds it wanting, she has nevertheless re-gained sufficient objectivity to allow her to take up again the relentless analysis of her subject. At last the criticism which she could not voice before is allowed to come, but this negative criticism levels off into a synthesis where all aspects of Mrs. Ramsay are now brought into play. In terms of structure the passage describes a complete circle with the Ramsays at the center as the creative process works through a rhythm of opposing movements: the centripetal force which propels Lily from the outer bounds of objectivity into subjective involvement with her subject is checked and countered by a centrifugal force which re-establishes the distant perspective. Somewhere in the balance of these forces lies the work of art.

We began our investigation of Lily's role in the novel by discussing the notion of distance in the artist's perspective on his subject. But it should be evident now that in the creation of art the objective perspective alone is not sufficient--the view from without must be balanced by

the view from within; the impersonal must be held in solution with the intensely personal. Indeed, in another passage which follows shortly upon the one we have been examining, we find Lily beginning from the other end of the dialectic. This time it is not impersonality nor "intellectual knowledge" of Mrs. Ramsay's essence that she seeks, but rather it is intimacy--a kind of involvement that she had previously fought against: "for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs. Ramsay's knee" (p. 79).

Throughout the first section of To The Lighthouse, Woolf details over and over again the play of opposing forces residing in Lily's creative process. (There is, for example, the dinner party where Lily goes through several stages ranging from an overwhelming sense of involvement in the romantic love of Paul and Minta to disassociation from such feelings through an active concentration on the technical problems of her painting, and these levels of perspective, in turn, serve to punctuate the various degrees of intimacy and isolation that each member of the party experiences as the evening progresses.) It is, however, the cumulative effect of these passages that prepares us for the last section of the novel. By splitting up emotions and carrying the reader through the various stages of near and distant perspectives, Lily, as secondary reflector, allows us to experience, as it were, the perplexing anguish of creation along with her. In addition to this, like the composer of a symphony, she also prepares us to recognize in the third section what will be a recapitulation of the dominant themes of the first.

But before we move on to the last section, we ought to touch briefly upon the intervening "Time Passes". In this pause between the first and third sections, the concentration on personality, emotion, feeling, activity is suspended. There is neither a central consciousness nor a secondary reflector. But, similar to the italicized pieces in The Waves, there is a continuity maintained in the rhythm of the passage.

Like Lily's moment of release when she stands contemplating the vast space of the bay, or like the "loss of personality" Mrs. Ramsay experiences when she pauses to reflect on the third stroke of the Lighthouse ("one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose . . . some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity" [p. 96]) "Time Passes" allows the readers a similar respite as it distances them from the affairs of the novel. However, as in Lily's and Mrs. Ramsay's experience, it also reveals horror behind the painted veil. As if chastising us for becoming too involved with the characters of the novel, Woolf informs us bluntly--almost off-handedly--of the deaths of Mrs. Ramsay, Prue, and Andrew. With unrelenting mockery she explodes the sentimental hopes and romantic philosophies of her characters. Only one truth remains: the capriciousness of time in its destruction of man and all of his works.

But as the passage of time in this middle section distances us from the personalities of the first section, the rhythms of "The Window" continue unabated. The play of centripetal and centrifugal forces which moves us back and forth in perspective in the first section is re-asserted in "Time Passes" when Woolf, having taken us to the farthest limits of objectivity, reverses direction bringing the house back to life with the

reappearance of humanity in the form of a cleaning woman (her tone of mockery is never entirely dropped) and once again the ideals and romantic dreams which had been on the point of destruction are allowed to return.

As we noted earlier, the third section in many ways echoes the themes and rhythms of the first section. Once again we are involved in the problems of the secondary reflector's creative process and this process continues to describe a revolving circle of centripetal and centrifugal forces. However, in comparing "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" it is possible to perceive a difference in the pre-dominance of one force over the other. Since the first section opens with all of the characters grouped together on the island and in intimate contact with one another, the effort is primarily directed toward achieving distance. Indeed, a distant perspective was required if the various emotions were to be separated from one another. Because of Mrs. Ramsay's magnetic power to draw others into her world, all of the characters (and especially Lily) were constantly (with varying degrees of success) intent on achieving some kind of objective perspective in which to understand her. However, as the third section opens, the situation is reversed. With the death of Mrs. Ramsay, the passage of ten years time and the removal of Mr. Ramsay to the boat traveling to the Lighthouse, distance has been imposed. The effort now must be directed to bringing these scattered perspectives back into the center. The goal is not dispersment, but connection and it is the secondary reflector, Lily Briscoe, who must discover that connection.

At one point in the first section, Lily, trying to explain the problems of her painting to Bankes, suddenly remembers that "it was a

question . . . [of] how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken" (p. 83). At this point the notion of connection is solely a technical one but in "The Lighthouse" it will expand to inform the entire creative process. Indeed, we find Lily echoing the above statement early in "The Lighthouse" when, coming down to breakfast on her first morning at the summer home, memories of the past clash with the realities of the present:

If only she could put them together, she felt, write them out in some sentence, then she would have got at the truth of things. . . . The extraordinary unreality was frightening; but it was also exciting. Going to the Lighthouse. But what does one send to the Lighthouse? Perished. Alone. The grey-green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how to bring them together? (pp. 219-220)

This thought reminds her of her unfinished painting and her earlier solution involving connection. But as Lily will realize, the problem is not so much one of technique as perspective ("so much depends, she thought, upon distance: whether people are near us or far from us . . ." [p. 284]). The connections must be made outside of the painting before they can take place within it.

If, in the first section, the effort to resist the pull of Mrs. Ramsay and her world required a great deal of self-restraint, the method by which Lily must return to that nucleus of personal involvement is even more difficult for she risks losing herself in the process.¹³

Consequently, we see Lily, at the beginning of the section, divided; half reluctant to abandon the ordered peace of objectivity before plunging into the chaos of her complicated feelings about the Ramsays:

She felt curiously divided, as if one part of her were drawn out there--it was a still day, hazy, the Lighthouse looked this morning at an immense distance; the other had fixed itself doggedly, solidly, here on the lawn. She saw her canvas as if it had floated up and placed itself white and uncompromising directly before her. It seemed to rebuke her with its cold stare for all this hurry and agitation; this folly and waste of emotion; it drastically recalled her and spread through her mind first a peace, as her disorderly sensations (he [Mr. Ramsay] had gone and she had been so sorry for him and she said nothing) trooped off the field; and then, emptiness (p. 234).

But the horror of that uncompromising "emptiness" extends beyond the canvas to include Lily's own being for, as the last section unfolds, we are made to realize that as Lily creates her painting, she is also creating herself through art. Consequently, before she begins she must divest herself of all the trappings of her former existence: "she was . . . drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers--this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention" (p. 236). Without her former defenses, she is almost without a self: "before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt" (p. 237).

Through Lily, as the secondary reflector in the novel, we will

be presented with one of the finest descriptions of the creative process to be found in modern literature. But "description" is, perhaps, the wrong word. No where are we 'told' what is happening; rather we are carried into the experience of artistic creation through the contrapuntual rhythms of Lily's thoughts. For example, as Lily abandons her distant (ordered and objective) perspective for intimate participation in the heart of her subject matter (going from the periphery of the circle to its nucleus), we experience the centripetal force, which, significantly, Woolf images as a swimmer about to plunge into the waves: "All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests" (p. 235). But shortly after this image of descent, Woolf brings in another image which suggests an outward surging away from the center: "Certainly [Lily] was losing consciousness of outer things. And as she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, . . . her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues" (p. 238). The fountain is, of course, a traditional literary image for the source of creativity, but in its use in this passage it is particularly reminiscent of the fountain in Coleridge's symbolic poem about the creative process, "Kubla Khan". In that poem the fountain appears to check the poem's pattern of descent; while defying linear time, it casts up images of past and future in its "Ancestral voices prophesying war". In a similar manner we see Lily descending into herself and, as

she does so, contracting her perspective to a single pinpoint of concentration. Having rid herself of all worldly distractions she is then able to discover the spring of memories which, acting as an erupting fountain, disperses that contracted perspective back out away from the center where the ordering process will take place. What is happening here, in terms of the creative process is perhaps best described by Coleridge in his essay "On Poesy or Art":

. . . the artist must first eloin himself from nature in order to return to her with full effect. . . . He merely absents himself for a season from her, that his own spirit, which has the same ground with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its main radicals, before he approaches to her endless compositions of them. . . . for this does the artist for a time abandon the external real in order to return to it with a complete sympathy with its internal and actual.¹⁴

Moreover, this exchange of opposing forces--contraction and expansion, centrifugal and centripetal movement builds a foundation for the many other dialectical elements of the novel. However, while many critics have been sensitive to the double-edged perception in the novel's imaginative vision (subjective/objective, inner/outer, female/male principles, emotion/intellect, art/life, the island and the Lighthouse--the examples are legion) they have, for the most part, assumed that this dialectic involved mutually exclusive terms and that in the end one must be chosen at the expense of the other.¹⁵ Norman Friedman's brief summary of various critical interpretations of the novel illustrates this point:

One claims that Mr. Ramsay is undergoing a transition from his former intellectual personality to a newly

discovered intuitive view; another that Lily is moving from a concern with form (art) to a concern with content (life); still another sees a shift from time to the timeless; while a fourth sees an allegory of Christ's Ascension, involving a movement from the god of Wrath to the God of Mercy; yet another sees a transition from egoism to selflessness; while a sixth thinks of this simultaneous convergence as a clumsy device which resolves nothing.¹⁶

The trip to the Lighthouse, Friedman aptly notes, "is too often seen as a one-way ride."¹⁷ If, however, we recall the source from which these opposing elements derive--i.e. in the experience of Lily's creative process--the tendency to see them as mutually exclusive forces will be avoided for, as we have seen, there is a constant exchange occurring between the centripetal and centrifugal, the inner and outer perspectives. But we should also beware (as we return our attention to Lily's execution of her painting) of making another erroneous assumption about these opposing elements. It would be a mistake to view their reconciliation in the completion of the work as a dilution of extremes--in other words, to interpret the novel (as many critics have) as a working toward some kind of happy medium where art becomes more life-like and life more artistic, or where male becomes more female and vice-versa. (While Woolf promoted the notion of the androgynous mind in A Room of One's Own: ". . . in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female. . . . The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together spiritually co-operating. . . . Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous"¹⁸, she was not arguing [as she points out in "Women and Fiction"] for a kind of unisexuality where male and

female become indistinguishable. The key word is "harmony," the working together of opposite forces in such a way that neither is compromised by the other.

In the novel itself there are several instances that illustrate this distinction, but perhaps the best example is one which evolves through a comparison of painting techniques. Early in "The Window" we are briefly introduced to Paunceforte, a local artist whose characteristic style involves blending the distinctions of shapes and forms under a wash of delicate pastels. Later in the section Lily compares her own painting style with Paunceforte's: "She could have done it different of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral" (p. 75). While Paunceforte would seek to reconcile discordances by blending them together so that they are no longer evident, Lily is determined to maintain the oppositions (the fluttering softness of a butterfly's wing against the solid structure of a cathedral arch) and yet seek an overlying form that will provide unity. This unity (like Coleridge's "sphere of agency") is anticipated in numerous images that occur throughout the novel which describe circular or dome shapes. At one point Lily compares the artist to a bee who wanders the world drawn by "sweetness or sharpness" and then brings these diverse elements back to mingle in the "dome-shape" hive (significantly the image also describes movement outward and inward) and then, she sees Mrs. Ramsay in the "shape of a dome" (p. 80). Using a similar analogy, Lily compares

her opposing feelings about the Ramsays to "a company of gnats, each separate, but all marvelously controlled in an invisible elastic net" (pp. 40-41). Finally, we are led to anticipate the role of art in the creation of this unity when the sound made by closing her paint box "seemed to surround in a circle forever the paint box, the lawn, Mr. Bankes, and that wild villain, Cam, dashing past" (p. 83).

What we have been dealing with here is the aesthetic notion of harmonized chaos or "unity working through diversity"--both Coleridgean concepts.¹⁹ These are, not coincidentally, the same notions which inform Woolf's own aesthetic ideals embodied in what she calls "the moment" and best illustrated in her essay "The Moment: Summer Night." Since it is as brief as it is illuminating, we will use Ralph Freeman's summary of that essay:

The scene is a night in the country before a summer house, involving four people, the observer among them, who are desultorily gathered as separate entities. The darkness surrounds them like an envelope nearly opaque, penetrated only by a few appearances. Sense impressions--voices, shuffling feet, a match striking, glimmering ends of cigarettes--are the starting points of a vision which evolves from the periphery of consciousness to its center (the group of percipients), to radiate again outward and encompass the universe as a whole. In this way, the entire process of awareness is exhibited, from the first moment of striking up an acquaintance with the facts of the world through sensation, to an awareness of their universal implications.²⁰

Working in a similar way to Lily's creation of her painting, "The Moment" describes a "transparent envelope" or sphere in which the perspective moves from the outer rim of consciousness, back into the center and then out again. There is, however, a very crucial difference between

that presentation and what we experience in To The Lighthouse. In the essay, Woolf uses an omniscient narrator to present the scene. As readers, our role is passive; we can only accept what is put before us as the way things are since we have no notion that they could be perceived in any other way. The design is, in a sense, imposed on us from without. However, in To The Lighthouse, Woolf provides a 'secondary reflector' between the reader and the object of reflection (the Ramsays) and by doing so she adds another dimension to the total effect. Through the character of Lily Briscoe we can not only witness the result of the creation but, also, we are enabled to experience from within the process that is involved in creating the work of art.

Through this discussion we have frequently had occasion to quote Coleridge's definition of art as a "self-witnessing and self-effecting sphere of agency." So far we have concentrated on the last part of that phrase but now we are ready to acknowledge the implications behind "self-witnessing and self-effecting" and that implication involves the distinction between another Coleridgean concept--"mechanic and organic form":

The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form.²¹

In other words, the artist should not "impose" the form from the outside, but rather he should "witness" the diverse elements within his imagination as they proceed to their own formal unity (while at the same time the

diversity is still evident). We will recall that Lily was reluctant to impose unity in the manner of Paunceforte by artificially blending together what was, in nature, not blended. She saw her elements distinct and she was as intent on retaining that distinction as she was also determined to discover their unity. Consequently, as we see her in the process of creation in the third section, she seems to be witnessing the picture completing itself or finding its own form as she divests herself of her will and allows her intuitive sense to participate in the relationships as they are proceeding. But if this is true for the artist in creation, so it should also be the case for the reader or viewer of the work of art. As we are confronted with a work of art, we should be aware not only of the unified whole but also actively participating in the relationship of various elements within the whole. (In nature, Coleridge explains, there is always flux so a representation of nature should reflect fluidity as well as stasis--"nature naturing" rather than "nature natured".) Furthermore, this principle is also the basis for Roger Fry's notion of "significant form":

. . . in all cases our reaction to works of art is a reaction to a relation. . . . it is not an emotion about sensations, however necessary a responsive sensualism may be for our apprehension of aesthetic wholes. Nor is it an emotion about objects or persons or events.²²

Had the Bloomsbury Group been sufficiently conscious of itself as a group to produce a manifesto, "significant form" would no doubt have been found at the top of the list.

But in order for the reader or viewer of a work of art to be able to participate in those "relations" it is incumbent on the artist to reveal

the diversity of the work as well as its unity. "The sight of what is subordinated and conquered," Coleridge notes, "heightens the strength and the pleasure; and this should be exhibited by the artist either inclusively in his figure, or else out of it, and beside it to act by way of supplement and contrast."²³

If this notion is somewhat easier to visualize in the plastic arts, it is also, no doubt, somewhat easier to accomplish there. However, Woolf brilliantly incorporates the medium of paint with literature by using Lily Briscoe to reflect the object of her work and in doing this she comes closer to realizing "significant form" in literature than any writer before her. Through Lily as the secondary reflector we are able to realize the final product by having witnessed the coalescing of its diversities. Because the unity of the whole is a rhythm rather than a static structure, it is essential that we experience this rhythm and it is through our participation in Lily's efforts that this occurs. Just as Lily senses herself falling "in some rhythm which was dictated to her . . . by what she saw, so that her hand quivered with life, this rhythm was strong enough to bear her along with it on its current" (pp. 237-238), so in the play of centrifugal and centripetal forces, in the exchange of distant and close perspectives (within the creative mind as well as more literally, in the alternation between Mr. Ramsay in the boat and Lily on the island) we experience the same sense of rhythm. Our concentration, then, is on Lily rather than either Mr. or Mrs. Ramsay for the essence of these personalities cannot be perceived isolated from the perceiver.

As Peter Walsh enables us to perceive the significance of Mrs.

Dalloway's presence, so through Lily Briscoe we realize the essence of the Ramsays. But in To The Lighthouse the moment of vision is allowed to extend beyond time by revealing its coming into being coincident with the creative process involved in Lily's art. While Mrs. Ramsay dies early in the novel, she is nevertheless very much alive at the end in Lily's painting. But what is most amazing is that our realization of her immortality is accomplished without our ever having to visualize the representation of her in the painting. Indeed, rather than presenting us with the static result of paint on canvas, Woolf conveys the eternity of art by leading us into participation with the constantly alternating rhythms involved in Lily's imagination.

Chapter III

The Waves

It was a recurring problem in the rhythms of Virginia Woolf's creative life that after the relief of finishing a major novel there would inevitably follow a period of severe emotional depression--perhaps the artist's equivalent of post partum depression. However, when this cloud descended after the completion of To The Lighthouse it seemed to contain something in addition to the usual vague dissatisfaction and ennui. Always sensitive to the subtle changes in her moods, Woolf made note of this curious feeling in her diary on September 30, 1926:

I wished to add some remarks . . . on the mystical side of this solicitude [according to J.W. Graham, the word should be 'solitude'] how it is not oneself but something in the universe that one's left with. It is this that is frightening and exciting in the midst of my profound gloom, depression, boredom, whatever it is. One sees a fin passing far out. What image can I reach to convey what I mean? Really there is none, I think. The interesting thing is that in all my feeling and thinking I have never come up against this before. Life is, soberly and accurately, the oddest affair; has in it the essence of reality. I used to feel this as a child--couldn't step across a puddle once, I remember, for thinking how strange--what am I? etc. But by writing I don't reach anything. All I mean to make is a note of a curious state of mind. I hazard the guess that it may be the impulse behind another book. At present my mind is totally blank and virgin of books. I want to watch and see how the idea at first occurs [sic]. I want to trace my own process.

Woolf's premonition that this "curious state of mind" would be the impulse for another book proved correct, for that image of a fin in a waste of water (an image that will prove not as cryptic as it seems at first)

became the embryo for The Waves.

Just as there was a new quality in the emotional let-down that preceded The Waves, so there was something unusual in Woolf's emotional state during the writing of the novel that was unlike her previous periods of productivity. Of course Woolf always suffered great emotional strain while writing her novels, and in this aspect the writing of The Waves is no different. But underlying the usual insecurities and doubts, the longing to be finished and the regret at having started, there was a faint note of exhilaration that seemed to temper the heretofore unrelieved suffering of bringing a novel to life. "Unlike all my other books in every way," she writes in her diary, "it is unlike them in this, that I begin to re-write it, or conceive it again with ardour, directly I have done. I begin to see what I had in my mind; and want to begin cutting out masses of irrelevance and clearing, sharpening and making the good phrases shine."² Elsewhere she referred to it as an "ecstatic book"³ or as "an adventure which I go on alone"⁴.

However, contrary to what we might surmise, this barely suppressed excitement seemed not to derive from a new-found confidence in the value of her writing ("good" was as high as she went in her praise of the novel and she undercut this hesitant judgment with the disclaimer that it was "incoherent, inspissate--one jerk after another"⁵), but rather from the perception that she had, for the first time, kept intact the integrity of the initial vision. "I might have done something easy and fluent," she noted, "and this is a reach after that vision I had, the unhappy summer--or three weeks--at Rodmell, after finishing the Lighthouse"⁶. What's more, Woolf's growing realization of the personal

honesty in the style of this novel served to mitigate those usually incapacitating fears of its eventual failure: "I think this is the greatest opportunity I have yet been able to give myself; therefore I suppose the most complete failure. Yet I respect myself for writing this book--yes--even though it exhibits my congenital faults."⁷ Six months later, she remarked: "Whether good or bad, it's done; and as I certainly felt at the end, not merely finished, but rounded off, completed, the thing stated--how hastily, how fragmentarily I know; but I mean that I have netted that fin in the waste of water which appeared to me over the marshes, out of my window at Rodmell when I was coming to an end of To The Lighthouse."⁸ Finally, with the novel out and the reviews coming in (usually an agonizing period for her) she was able to say with apparent satisfaction "The Waves is the first work in my own style!"⁹

That the novel which Woolf considered to be her most successful at fulfilling her own imaginative vision should be cast in a form that is so completely innovative is not surprising, for she had always struggled against the limitations of the traditional novel. The work bears as much a resemblance to a play or a poem (Woolf refers to it, at one point, as a "play poem"¹⁰) as to a novel. Indeed, it seems that Woolf was attempting to combine the separate advantages of all three genres in one work. A series of dramatic monologues, for example, eliminates the problem of providing an omniscient narrator while poetry has the advantage of eliminating all the waste and deadness: "this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting from lunch to dinner."¹¹ In its place we have the pure, saturated moment: "Why admit anything to literature that is not poetry--by which I mean saturated, Woolf wrote, "is that not my

grudge against novelists? that they select nothing?"¹²

However, if the style of The Waves is innovative, the major thematic concerns remain the same as in her previous work: the exploration and communication of "the moment," which involves the interplay of subjective and objective perspectives, inner and outer realities.

We have already discussed how this interplay of opposites is objectified in the relationship between the central consciousness and the secondary reflector in Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse. We will find, in The Waves, that the same paradigm applies, although the emphasis has shifted. While Peter Walsh provides our perspective on Clarissa in Mrs. Dalloway, our attention is centered on Clarissa who somehow embodies the opposing forces that come together in the climax of the novel. In To The Lighthouse, the link between the central consciousness and the secondary reflector is more evident. Our attention, which is centered on Mrs. Ramsay in the first part, is transferred to Lily Briscoe in the third part. In accordance with this shift, the drama of the novel takes place in the creative process whereby Lily realizes her vision of Mrs. Ramsay in terms of art. Finally, in The Waves, as we shall see, the central consciousness and secondary reflector (the soul that embodies the vision and the soul that communicates it) achieve the highest level of integration when they are merged within the single character of Bernard. The result is that the artist is now the subject of his art or, as Woolf noted at one point in her diary: "states of soul in creating"¹³. Woolf's mood of exhilaration during the writing of the novel is, then, understandable when we recognize that The Waves does not present a break with her previous works but rather a breakthrough to a way of unifying

the dialectical elements in those works.

But for all that The Waves seems to present a complete divergence in style, there is evidence of its evolvment out of To The Lighthouse. The "Time Passes" section in Lighthouse and the exordia of The Waves serve a similar purpose by revealing the constant rhythm of time and nature that goes on behind the human world of the novel. In addition to this, there is a parallel in the structural sequence; To The Lighthouse begins within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness but ends within the mind of Lily Briscoe. Similarly, The Waves first takes us into the inner consciousnesses of the six characters, but in the last chapter we have only Bernard, who (like Lily with Mrs. Ramsay) creates the perspective for our final vision of these characters.

Yet in spite of the stylistic and contextual similarities between the two novels, The Waves introduces a number of new interpretative problems, the most immediate being whether or not we are to see the six personalities as separate characters in the conventional sense or as aspects of one voice. Indeed, the voices have individual names, spend their lives in different places, and certainly see themselves as separate beings. However, the problem in choosing to view these personalities as "real" characters is that it leads us to expect a corresponding realism in their narrative treatment. J. W. Graham, for instance, raises the question of whether or not we can view these voices as "stream of consciousness" or "interior monologue" when they all speak (or think) in the same style: "Because Virginia Woolf makes no attempt to distinguish the style of one speaker from that of any other, it is difficult to read the speeches as stream-of-consciousness; and this difficulty is increased when we

perceive that the rhythm, sentence structure, and vocabulary of any one speaker do not change noticeably between childhood and middle age."¹⁴

If, on the other hand, we view these personalities not as "six voices in search of characters, but as a single being in search of voices,"¹⁵ as Guiget proposes (and I concur), then we are able to admit such terms as "stream of consciousness" or interior monologue" without the conventional demands to psychological realism which those concepts imply. Indeed, there is a good deal of support for the argument that these are not separate individuals but "incarnations of various aspects of the individual soul of the narrating Consciousness"¹⁶.

In a review of Coleridge the Talker, Woolf noted that the method employed in that volume (an attempt to realize the essential Coleridge through his various comments on various topics) was the only way of getting at the truth of a complex personality, "to have it broken into many splinters by many mirrors and so select".¹⁷ We have noted such a method in the beginning of To The Lighthouse where Woolf "splits-up" emotions and she employs it to even greater extent in The Waves. If these voices will eventually become inextricably mixed in "the globe of life" that Bernard describes in his summing up, we see them first as distinct and separate voices at the beginning of the novel.

As these characters come into being (paralleling the world coming into definition with the sunrise in the exordia) they are (as Bernard describes later) "pierced with arrows of sensation [which] happen in one second and last forever."¹⁸ Indeed, even in their simple responses to a world of sight and sound we can perceive the distinctions that will determine their future perspectives. Bernard's "ring" that "quivers

and hangs in a loop of light" will become the transparent globe of life with "walls of thinnest air" (p. 220). Susan's "slab of pale yellow . . . spreading away until it meets a purple stripe" hints at the fields of wheat meeting the horizon at dusk that will later be her world. Jinny's "crimson tassel . . . twisted with gold threads" foreshadows her life of sensuality and elegant evenings in society. Neville's awareness of proportion in his vision of a "globe . . . hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill" reveals his tendency toward aesthetic concerns. Louis hears (as he will always hear) the stamping of a great beast whose foot is chained. Here the image works on two levels, for it not only symbolizes Louis' own future predicament (feeling he is destined to be a great historical scholar, he is forced to spend his life tied to the business world of London) but also suggests his awareness of time and the inescapability of the past.

However, the distinctions in these passive responses to the world take on greater significance when we see these characters begin to act in relation to each other. In the first scene we find Louis behind a wall trying to hide from the others. Already he perceives that he is an outsider in their world but he is able to achieve a sense of belonging in the world of the past. He imagines himself to be a tree whose "roots go down to the depths of the world" where he sees "women passing with red pitchers to the river. . . . camels swaying and men in turbans" (p. 9). However, this imaginative retreat from the present world is shattered when Jinny, whose "imagination is the body's" and who delights in the sensual immediacy of the "here and now", discovers Louis and kisses him. Susan witnesses this impetuous kiss and in jealousy and rage runs off to the

woods, an action she will repeat as an adult when she rejects the complexities of society and embraces the simple and basic laws of nature in the life of a farmer's wife. Meanwhile, we find Rhoda fantasizing that the petals floating in a bowl are ships traveling to distant shores. Like Louis and Susan, Rhoda also seeks another world to escape from the others, but her retreat has no roots (in time or space) connecting it to the real world. Her world is completely imaginary, a private place of serenity and exotic beauty that she spends the rest of her life trying to realize.

While this is going on, Bernard, who has been working with Neville in the tool shed, is distracted by Susan's distress and leaves his tools in order to comfort her (characteristically) with a story. Neville, however, is upset by Bernard's tendency to be so easily distracted, to leave things in the "lurch", unfinished, as he pursues another train of thought. Neville hates "dangling things; . . . dampish things . . . wandering and mixing things together" (p. 15), and this includes Bernard's stories which are most often broken off before they are completed. Neville, the future aesthete, loves order and preciseness, so he looks forward to getting back to their school work, where there is order, where the "copy-books are laid out side by side on the green baize table" (p. 15).

As their lives continue to unfold, the characters strive to realize the world in accordance with their highly individual initial responses; while at the same time (in the exordia that punctuates the passages of their lives) Woolf reminds us of the inexorability of time and space, as the sun moves across the sky and the waves beat relentlessly on the shore. However, against this impetus toward differentiation Woolf

sets up a counter movement toward unification which is revealed on the two occasions that she draws all of the characters together.

The first occasion occurs when they are in their early twenties and they meet at a farewell dinner for Percival who is going to India. As his name suggests, Percival's function in the novel is symbolical. A shadowy figure, seen only from the outside, in outline, he exemplifies the unambiguous man of action. Therefore, he is a symbol for each character as well, for, in a sense, each character has created him in the image of what he is not ("he is my opposite" Bernard says): the idealized version of the whole, integrated man. Because the characters are trapped in their separate, incomplete worlds and painfully aware of the vanity that causes them to emphasize these differences, it is Percival (as Louis says) "who makes us aware that these attempts to say 'I am this, I am that,' which we make coming together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false. Something has been left out from fear. Something has been altered, from vanity. We have tried to accentuate differences. From the desire to be separate we have laid stress upon our faults, and what is particular to us" (p. 117).

As they enter the restaurant (each in his own fashion--Jinny makes a grand entrance, Rhoda slinks behind pillars, Susan approaches matter-of-factly, slightly disgusted by the superficial luxury of the room), each character clings desperately to his own identity as to a life raft. But gradually, their love for Percival (or what he stands for) spreads to include the others, and for a moment they are able to come out of their individual, separate worlds, and what was the discord of clashing wills becomes a harmonious blending in which each note still sounds its own

sound but is now also a part of a chord, or as Bernard describes it, "a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves--a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution" (p. 108).

However, the moment does not last--the rhythms of their lives carry them back into differentiation. They go out into the world pursuing their separate paths and later we hear that Percival is killed in India.

The next time they come together is at Bernard's instigation at Hampton Court, for it was here that Bernard was to take Percival before he died and so, in guilt and sorrow, Percival's ghost hangs over the occasion, reminding them of dreams that are no longer possible. Now as they meet they are past middle-age, and they no longer look forward to the possibilities of the future but instead to the irrevocability of the past. Therefore, the clash of wills, the defensive assertions of personalities are more violent than on the first occasion. Neville, who continues to search for the perfect lover, defends the fluidity and freedom of his life against Susan who has "stuck like a limpet to the same rock" in her unvaried life on the farm. "At breakfast," Neville says, "Custom blinds your eyes. At that hour your relationship is mute, null, dun-coloured. Mine at that hour is warm and various" (p. 182). But Neville, Susan argues, is too fluid. In his eyes "even apples . . . have a filmed look" (p. 184), whereas she sees things as they are, "square, prominent, undissolved" (p. 184).

But these defenses, as Neville points out, are not meant to hurt the other but rather are put forth in order to "refresh and furbish" their beliefs in themselves, which momentarily wavered as they came together.

Gradually, then, as on the first occasion, they come together. This time, however, the moment of merging is different. Twenty years ago, when they faced the future, completeness (symbolized by Percival) seemed possible--a seven-sided flower with each different petal contributing its distinct shade of colour to the beauty of the whole. Now, with Percival dead and with them looking toward their own deaths, the moment of integration assumes a death-like quality: a vast amorphous bubble which dissolves distinctions ("the blue of midday and the black of midnight") and in which they might float off to "escape from the here and now" (p. 192). Here, integration is possible only if they release their distinct identities "as silence falls I am dissolved utterly and become featureless and scarcely to be distinguished from another" (p. 192). If indifference now replaces the excitement of the previous merging and there is emptiness where before there was fullness, it is, at least, peaceful: "what matters," Bernard says, "anxiety is at rest. The vainest of us, Louis perhaps, does not care what people think. Neville's tortures are at rest. . . . I reflect now that the earth is only a pebble flicked off accidentally from the face of the sun and that there is no life anywhere in the abysses of space" (p. 193). But just as the exuberance in that first coming together faded, so this indifference also passes; life returns: "We must," Neville says, "oppose ourselves to this illimitable chaos . . . this formless imbecility." In spite of the peacefulness of this moment of unification, life is better: "Making love to a nursemaid behind a tree, that soldier is more admirable than all the stars" (pp. 193-194).

I have tried, with as little elaboration as possible, to provide

a brief sketch of the first section of The Waves in order that we may be able to deal more thoroughly with Bernard's recollection of these moments in the second section. Yet any attempt to comprehend the "globe of life" that the first section describes by extracting bits and pieces from it will necessarily fall short. "Whatever sentence I extract whole and entire from this cauldron," Bernard says in his summing up, "is only a string of six little fish that let themselves be caught while a million others leap and sizzle, making the cauldron bubble like boiling silver, and slip through my fingers" (p. 202). Indeed, by selecting out even a single aspect we distort the formal rhythms of the whole in which (as we will realize) the meaning of The Waves is to be found. The tensions we have observed; the inexorability of time and space as each character tries to form the world to his own vision, the agony of the soul trapped within its own personality while it longs for love and communion with others, and the problems of personality and impersonality (the former defines the individual but is limited; the latter is limitless but also lifeless) are made evident only through the accumulation of images, sensations and impressions as each character adds his drop to the boiling cauldron. The meaning can only be found (if it is to be found anywhere) in a vision that perceives the whole, a whole (like George Moore's organic unities) that is greater than the sum of its parts.

This circumstance puts the reader in a unique position. In Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse we could rely on the secondary reflector, a character who had insight into the inner mind of the central consciousness and yet was distant enough from that consciousness to juxtapose that subjective world with objective reality. In this way Peter Walsh controls

and guides our final impression of Mrs. Dalloway, and Lily Briscoe creates our final vision of Mrs. Ramsay. But in the first section of The Waves we have only the inner world of the mind (albeit a many faceted mind) and no character outside of that mind to serve as objective perspective on that inner world. Only the reader, assuming the role of secondary reflector, can assimilate these varied impressions, as Josephine Schaeffer points out:

The reader's consciousness is one of the chief unifying elements in the novel which becomes, in its way, a means of enlarging that consciousness. Each time a new I occurs, the reader, still full of the I just finished speaking, must shift his perspective a little. As he does so, the I's, though distant, overlap. The reader embodies both and each. The result is the sensation of hearing one's own voice.¹⁹

But the mere assimilation or perception of these perspectives within the mind of the reader is not sufficient. If it were, the novel would end with the first section. In an early draft of The Waves, Woolf describes such a mind perceiving mixed sensations, but, as she continues, this perception must lead to explication in order to complete the vision:

The woods of Elvedon are seen through the soul; and life is mixed with other lives; and the mind is haunted with the figure of a lady, writing, between two windows . . . the mind, like a vine, has forever now to find a phrase to net things in; for otherwise they must perish. And then, when the phrase has been found, it must be spoken aloud, to somebody else.²⁰

The germinal notion for The Waves, we will recall, arose one day when Woolf, sitting at a desk before the window, had a vision of a fin in a waste of water. The passive state of her mind in perceiving this image

gradually became active as she sought the phrase to net this vision, a way to communicate and thereby preserve it, and that activity of ordering in recreation became also a part of the total moment. "Now this is very profound," Woolf wrote in a letter to Vita Sackville-West, "what rhythm is and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to get it, and in writing (such is my belief) one has to recapture this and set this working (which has nothing to do with words) and then, as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it."²¹ In order to give the total experience of the moment ("the moment whole") in her novel, Woolf had to include both the perception and the ordering of that perception in the re-creating, and it is at this point that the artist takes over. Because Woolf was loathe to leave such a burden to the reader (we recall her criticism of Hemingway who "forced the reader to do rather more than his share of the work of creation"²²) we have Bernard's entrance as narrator in the second section. As Lily Briscoe emerges in the last section of To The Lighthouse to create our vision of Mrs. Ramsay, so Bernard enters the last section of The Waves to bring order to the various perspectives of the other characters.

But if it seems that Bernard's role as a reflector on the others is a natural extension of Lily Briscoe's role in Lighthouse, it is curious that only days before she was to begin the last section in the first draft of The Waves Woolf was still searching for a narrative technique that would gather all of the voices together: "It might be a gigantic conversation," she wrote at one point, and then later: "How to end, save by a tremendous discussion in which every life shall have its voice--a mosaic--I do not know."²³ Ten days later, she began to write the last

section, but as J. W. Graham notes, "there is no sign in the manuscript of any attempt at a conversation in which every life has its voice; instead, she gave all the lives through one voice, Bernard's."²⁴ That Woolf was apparently reluctant to single out one of the voices for the role of narrator is not surprising, for throughout the year of writing the first draft (which bears little resemblance to the published work) she had been trying to avoid giving any of the voices a privileged view of all the others. Instead, an omniscient narrator described the events in the children's lives (usually in the past tense), while a narrator within the story (not one of the six voices but a vague contemplative figure who is sexless and nameless, although sometimes called "the mind") intrudes from time to time to comment on these events. The result is extremely laboured, as the following example from the first draft reveals. The omniscient narrator has just described the scene in which Susan is upset at seeing Jinny kiss Louis, and now the narrator intrudes to comment on the significance of that emotion:

I am not laying too great a stress upon all this. I am not exaggerating the intensity of children's feelings! Indeed, there is nothing more certain than that children are tortured by jealousy and love long before they know their own names; the mind was certain of this.²⁵

It is no wonder, then, that we find Woolf, in her diary, asking herself, "Who thinks it? And am I outside the thinker? One wants some device which is not a trick."²⁶ In spite of the awkward reference to "the mind," the voice of the omniscient narrator and the thoughts of "the mind" are still too close to be distinguished.

The question that arises is why Woolf continued for so long with

this obviously inadequate technique when she had in the past quite successfully handled this problem of outside perspective on the inner thoughts of a character with the "device" of a secondary reflector. The answer seems to lie in her original conception of The Waves as a work that was to extend beyond the scope of her previous novels. In all of her other works (but particularly in Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse) the theme had been the presentation of a central consciousness from both inner and outer perspectives until the two views merged in an insightful moment of integration. But in all of these works that central consciousness was someone other than the author. Because these novels originated in the author's observation of another consciousness (Kitty Maxse was the original for Mrs. Dalloway, Julia Duckworth Stephen for Mrs. Ramsay), Woolf could not only imaginatively present the inner thoughts of that character, but also duplicate her experience of observing that character through the perspective of the secondary reflector. Indeed, as the reflector is transformed from a mere observer in Peter Walsh to the observer-artist in Lily Briscoe, the identity between the author and reflector becomes more evident. Nevertheless, both the author and reflector are involved in a process of observing and recreating someone else.

The Waves, however, began not in the observation of another person, but from Woolf's observation of herself in a moment when the sight of a fin in a waste of water created a "wave" in the mind that seemed to contain all of the aspects of her life brought together in an intense moment of revelation. It was to understand and recreate this moment that she began The Waves.

Early in the writing of The Waves Woolf referred to the work in her diary as her "autobiography,"²⁷ but it is a most challenging kind of autobiography. Not only could it not be done in the first-person, but, on the other hand, there could be nothing in it that was not inherent in the moment she was trying to recreate--no secondary reflector or outside observer: "waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that don't belong to the moment; this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner; it is false, unreal, merely conventional."²⁸ But if Woolf was intent on avoiding the "appalling narrative business," she nevertheless recognized early the need for some kind of guide: "But there must be more unity between each scene than I can find at present. . . . How am I to make one lap, or act, between the coming of the moths, more intense than another; if there are only scenes? One must get the sense that this is the beginning; this the middle; that the climax--when she opens the window and the moth comes in. . . . But who is she? I am very anxious that she should have no name. I don't want a Lavinia or a Penelope; I want 'she'. But that becomes arty, Liberty greenery gallery somehow; symbolic in loose robes."²⁹ While the subject of the work was intensely personal, the "she" had to be completely impersonal--an "eyeless"³⁰ narrator who could maintain the distance needed to comment on the various selves and yet still be a part of that self. It is no wonder, then, that Woolf had difficulty in finding the appropriate technique. While her first experiment employing "the mind" as narrator maintains the degree of impersonality she sought, it remains too vague to be conceived as part of the complex that includes the six other characters. (Indeed, if

anything, such an appellation as "the mind" even more than a "Lavinia or Penelope" strikes one as "arty".)

There is no evidence in the Writers Diary to indicate what led Woolf finally to abandon "the mind," but it is interesting to note that the form which eventually replaced it seems to have its origin in some of the discoveries she made in Lighthouse. Not only is the structure similar (as we noted earlier), but the identity that is implicit between the subject created and the creator of the subject in Lighthouse (the painting of Mrs. Ramsay is also a part of Lily's personality since Lily had to "become" Mrs. Ramsay in order to recreate her³¹) becomes explicit in The Waves, as Bernard is both the personality observed and the observer of that personality (a "self-witnessing sphere of agency").

In light of her previous works, then, the use of Bernard in the reflector's role does not present a drastic change in perspective. Furthermore, that Woolf did not bother to record the exact moment when she discovered this method of telling her story may be because it was not so much a break with the former method as a natural emergence out of it. For even in the first draft Bernard (sometimes called John, Johnnie, Archie or Roger) had already been assigned the artist's role. Woolf simply had to realize, it seems, that the "artist" part of herself, which she had given to Bernard, was also the same part that was now doing the writing of The Waves.

But in order for us to accept Bernard in this role Woolf had to carefully establish the uniqueness of his perspective in terms of the other five characters. Before we go on to Bernard's section, then, we ought to understand just what that uniqueness is by going back to those

passages in the first section which deal with his perspective.

As early as the opening scene Woolf begins to establish Bernard's identity as a "phrase-maker" by having him tell Susan a story in order to comfort her. But even more significant than the telling of the story is the story's content: the world of Elvedon. If Elvedon is fascinating, it is also hostile. He and Susan are intruders who, if they are caught, will be nailed like stoats to the stable door or "shot like jays and pinned to the wall" (p. 14). In order to escape they must run to the beechwood and hide under the trees. This world which Bernard imagines not only reflects back on their previous experience in real life (feeling the hostility of neglect when she saw Jinny kiss Louis, Susan ran to hide in the woods) but also foreshadows the essential concern of Bernard's future life. It is in order to avoid being "pinned down" that Bernard maintains his characteristic fluidity throughout his adult life. This fluidity, which manifests itself as a tendency to be distracted by everything around him also allows him to realize aspects of himself in the others' personalities without limiting himself to any one of them ("I am not one person," Bernard says, "I am many people; . . ." (p. 237). Like Jinny and Neville, he is social, needing constant contact with others to bring him into the "here and now," but also (like Rhoda and Louis) he seeks out the "profound depths once in a while to exercise [his] prerogative not always to act, but to explore, to hear vague, ancestral sounds of boughs creaking, of mammoths; to indulge impossible desires to embrace the whole world with the arms of understanding--impossible to those who act" (p. 97) and, like Susan he is also drawn to the commonplace--the simple life of birthing and dying

that those who live close to nature realize. In his ability to combine all of these aspects then, Bernard is distinct from the others; "Very few of you," he points out, "have the double capacity to feel [like Susan, Jinny and Rhoda], to reason [like Louis and Neville]" (p. 65).

This capacity of Bernard's to both feel and reason, to empathize and understand, combined with his skill with words, prepares us to receive Bernard as the reflector for all of the others. But there is still one other aspect of his character that should be realized and that is the manner in which this fluidity affects his perspective on the others.

In the introduction to this thesis I quoted a passage from "Notes on an Elizabethan Play" in which Woolf locates the great artist's perspective as a point mid-way between everyday reality and imaginative vision. That passage deserves repeating at this juncture:

Our contention merely is that there is a station, somewhere in mid-air, whence Smith and Liverpool can be seen to the best advantage; that the great artist is the man who knows where to place himself above the shifting scenery; that while he never loses sight of Liverpool he never sees it in the wrong perspective.

Changing the metaphor only slightly, Bernard declares that it is "the panorama of life, seen not from the roof, but from the third-story window, that delights [him]" (p. 207). Unlike the other characters who are so completely emeshed in their own personally defined worlds--Louis, Bernard tells us, "was disgusted by the nature of human flesh; Rhoda by our cruelty; Susan could not share; Neville wanted order; Jinny love" (p. 207)--Bernard was "preserved from these excesses" by his ability to remain in his third-story window, close enough to understand

them, yet not so close that he lost the perspective of the whole. "I am so made," Bernard says, "that, while I hear one or two distinct melodies, such as Louis sings, or Neville, I am also drawn irresistibly to the sound of the chorus chanting its old, chanting its almost wordless, almost senseless song that comes across courts at night" (p. 211). Able to identify with each individual character, he is also aware (as the others are not) of the background of time and space (suggested in the exordia) against which each character acts out his life "so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another" (p. 41). This perspective, then, not only defines Bernard's position in the novel, but also qualifies him as the artist who will draw together the diverse elements of the novel's world.

However, it ~~is~~ at this point that the dialectical structure of The Waves imposes itself on our explication of the work. In the novel, every thesis is followed by its antithesis: "Let a man get up and say, Behold, this is truth," Bernard notes, "and instantly I perceive a sandy cat filching a piece of fish in the background" (p. 160). The moment, Bernard tells us, includes both "triumph" in the perception of "truth" and "humiliation" when the elements of that ordered vision of the universe dissolve back into chaos. Therefore, if it seems that in the last paragraph we have at last been able to make a definitive statement about Bernard's character, we must now qualify that statement by reminding ourselves (as the character continuously reminds us) that Bernard is not one and simple, but many and complex. While most critics find Bernard's distinction from the other five characters in his ability to see "the world without imposing upon it an order that is merely an extension of

his desires, of his personality,"³² we must realize that this is true of only one aspect of Bernard. In addition to being the reflector, the story-teller who can see all the others in perspective, he is also the central consciousness, the one who is being reflected upon. As the central consciousness, then, he is not just Bernard but, at various times, Susan, Jinny, Rhoda, Louis and Neville, and in these incarnations he is also subject to their highly personal and selective visions of the world.

In Bernard's summing-up, Woolf must find a way to present the subjective visions that we associate with the five other characters as well as the objective, impersonal observer, within a single consciousness and throughout the life of that consciousness. How she accomplishes this is no less than amazing. Building on the two notions of time that are suggested in the first section (the linear progression of time as the characters go from childhood to old age and the cyclical rhythm of nature imaged in the waves) she erects a dialectical structure in which Bernard is able to convey both the diversity and unity of his life within a single whole. As Bernard takes us from his childhood to the present we are able to appreciate the variety of his states of consciousness in a series of moments, but within each moment there is a rhythmical pattern (like the rise and fall of waves) that goes from the personal and subjective to the impersonal and objective and back again, creating a sense of continuity as one moment blends into the next. But let us now turn to these moments to fully appreciate how this structural pattern works.

The first of these "moments" occurs when Bernard hears of Percival's

death. Caught up in the pleasantries of his domestic life in which his fascination with commonplace, day-to-day occurrences seems to preclude the grand philosophical statements on life in general ("Heaven be praised," I said, 'we need not whip this prose into poetry. The little language is enough'") Bernard finds that the news of Percival's death suddenly causes this immediate world to collapse around him. Now the "little language" is not enough:

There should be cries, cracks, fissures, whiteness passing over chintz covers, interference with the sense of time, of space; the sense also of extreme fixity in passing objects; and sounds very remote and then very close; flesh being gashed and blood spurting, a joint suddenly twisted--beneath all of which appears something very important, yet remote, to be just held in solitude. (p. 226)

At this point Bernard goes from personal involvement in living to impersonal reflection on life, and all that had been disjointed, "helter-skelter," merges in a moment of penetrating vision:

To see things without attachment, from the outside, and to realize their beauty in itself--how strange! And then the sense that a burden has been removed; pretence and make-believe and unreality are gone, and lightness has come with a kind of transparency, making oneself invisible and things seen through as one walks--how strange. (p. 226)

Wanting this triumphal moment of understanding to last, Bernard resists being drawn back to the everyday life (he ignores "newspaper placards") and turns to art: "Madonnas and pillars, arches and orange trees, still as on the first day of creation, but acquainted with grief, there they hung, and I gazed at them. 'Here' I said, 'we are together without

interruption" (p. 227).

Significantly, this shift from the "moment" in life to the "moment" transferred to art parallels the same shift that Woolf made in the transition from Mrs. Dalloway to To The Lighthouse. Now, in The Waves, Woolf takes us one step further, for here, even art cannot prevent the rhythms of life from going on. Because he cannot live his life in art, Bernard is unable to maintain the impersonality of the moment as his own personal involvement with the world around him begins to assert itself, and he becomes self-conscious of the inadequacy of the phrases he used to sum up Percival's death: "So the sincerity of the moment passed; so it became symbolical; and that I could not stand. Let us commit any blasphemy of laughter and criticism rather than exude this lily-sweet glue; and cover him with phrases . . ." (p. 228).

Like Shelley's poet returning to the real world after his vision "behind the painted veil," Bernard discovers what he thought was truth to be illusion, and now what seems to be the meaningless absurdity of the world is unbearable:

I observed with disillusioned clarity the despicable nonentity of the street; its porches; its window curtains; the drab cloths, the cupidity and complacency of shopping women; and old men taking the air in comforters; the caution of people crossing; the universal determination to go on living, when really, fools and gulls that you are, I said, any slate may fly from a roof, any car may swerve, for there is neither rhyme nor reason when a drunk man staggers about with a club in his hand--that is all. I was like one admitted behind the scenes; like one shown how the effects are produced. (p. 228)

But into the depths of this depression a spark is lit:

But if you hold a blunt blade to a grindstone long enough, something spurts--a jagged edge of fire; so held to lack of reason, aimlessness, the usual, all massed together, out spurted in one flame hatred, contempt. I took my mind, my being, the old dejected, almost inanimate object, and lashed it about among these odds and ends, sticks and straws, detestable little bits of wreckage, flotsam and jetsam, floating on the oily surface. I jumped up. I said, 'Fight! Fight!' I repeated. It is the effort and the struggle, it is the perpetual warfare, it is the shattering and piecing together--this is the daily battle, defeat or victory, the absorbing pursuit. (p. 232)

Like Carlyle's "Everlasting Nay" Bernard's existential refusal to submit to this ~~meaninglessness~~ reverses the downward movement and the world begins to reorganize itself into order, and his skill as an artist with words becomes meaningful again: "The trees, scattered; put on order; the thick green of the leaves thinned itself to a dancing light. I netted them under with a sudden phrase. I retrieved them from formlessness with words" (p. 232).

This time, in order to retain the vision and also incorporate his various selves into this new perception of order, Bernard seeks out Neville, his oldest friend who had been with him throughout his several incarnations and who (on another level) also represents that aspect of himself that is most concerned with the aesthetics of order. This seems to work for awhile--various artists of the past are brought forth and set in perspective, ". . . we shared our Pecks, our Shakespeare's; compared each other's versions, allowed each other's insight to set our own Peck or Shakespeare in a better light . . ." (p. 234), but gradually Neville falls away from this communion of minds as his personal needs assert themselves. Bernard perceives that Neville is distracted, anticipating the entrance of another lover and this vulnerability to the

vagaries of personal relationships reminds Bernard of his own longing for Percival; the impersonal vision of intellect and order is once again shattered.

The gathering for the next wave begins in the gathering together of all the characters at Hampton Court, the scene which ended the first section of the novel. At first extremely self-conscious as they come together ("for each by that time was committed to a statement and the other person coming along the road to the meeting-place dressed like this or that, with a stick or without, seemed to contradict it" [p. 238]), they gradually cast aside their personal distinctions and come together to create--only for a moment--the complete human being they "have failed to be, but at the same time, cannot forget" (p. 238). "The moment was all;" Bernard declares, "the moment was enough. And then Neville, Jinny, Susan and I, as a wave breaks, burst asunder, surrendered . . . to the next leaf, to the precise bud; to a child with a hoop . . ." (p. 239).

But if they once again resumed their personal concerns, something of the moment remained with Bernard this time so that he was not able (as of old) to immediately return to the "senseless merriments" of everyday life. What he realized in that moment of merging with the others is that the loss of personal desire, the loss of that tendency to be distracted by the commonplace that invariably undercut whatever vision of truth he thought he had, was also a loss of identity ("I do not altogether know who I am--Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs" [p. 237]), and therefore a form of death ("Was this streaming away mixed with Susan, Jinny, Neville, Rhoda, Louis, a sort of death?" [p. 240]). The wave (a tidal one this time)

had now carried him to such a distance that he completely lost contact with the world. Without personal desire, without identity he was also without the working material of the artist: "But how describe the world seen without a self? There are no words. . . . How describe or say anything in articulate words again" (p. 247)?

It is at this point that Bernard leaves off recollecting his life and brings his story into the present. If in his previous descents from the heights of his moments he had been distressed with the absurdity of life, he is now resigned, indifferent:

Let a woman come, let a young man in evening-dress with a moustache sit down; is there anything that they can tell me? No! I know all that, too. And if she suddenly gets up and goes, 'My dear,' I say, 'you no longer make me look after you.' The shock of the falling wave which has sounded all my life, which woke me so that I saw the gold loop on the cupboard, no longer makes quiver what I hold. (p. 251)

It would seem that the novel should end here. Desire and curiosity are things of the past. "My being," Bernard says, "lies deep, tideless, immune, now that he is dead, the man I called 'Bernard,' the man who kept a book in his pocket in which he made notes . . ." (p. 250). But, marvelously, the rhythm of the moments do not stop, the waves continue to rise and fall. Suddenly Bernard, who had thought he had done with living, catches the glance of his audience and in that glance sees himself mirrored ("To be myself," we recall him saying earlier, "I need the illumination of other people's eyes" [p. 99]). Before he can prevent it self-awareness begins again. His body, which it seemed the last wave had drowned, suddenly re-emerges as "an elderly man, rather heavy, grey above the ears . . ." (p. 251). Now identity, personality, starts to

form again: "However beat and done with it all I am, I must haul myself up, and find the particular coat that belongs to me. . . . I, I, I, tired as I am, spent as I am . . ." (p. 255). With personality and self-awareness the world (distractions, vanity, envy, desire) returns: "Once more, I who had thought myself immune, who had said, 'Now I am rid of all that,' find that the wave has tumbled me over, head over heels, scattering my possessions, leaving me to collect, to assemble, to heap together, summon my forces, rise and confront the enemy" (p. 252). As this awareness of an audience recalls him to the helter-skelter of the world, so it also revives the old desire of the artist to find a phrase to unify these complexities: "under your gaze with that compulsion on me I begin to perceive this, that, and the other. The clock ticks; the woman sneezes; the waiter comes--there is a gradual coming together, running into one, acceleration and unification" (p. 253).

And now Woolf completes the cycle, for the new wave that begins to form takes us back to the opening passage of the book as Bernard perceives "a general awakening": "The stars draw back and are extinguished. The bars deepen themselves between the waves. The film of mist thickens on the fields. A redness gathers on the roses, even on the pale rose that hangs by the bedroom window. A bird chirps. Cottagers light their early candles. Yes, this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again" (p. 255). What is more, the renewal that takes place in the universe is internalized in Bernard. As Bernard feels "something rising beneath [him] like a proud horse whose rider first spurs and then pulls back," (p. 256), we recall from an earlier passage the central image of the novel, the fin on a waste of water:

I see far out a waste of water. A fin turns. This bare visual impression is unattached to any line of reason, it springs up as one might see the fin of a porpoise on the horizon. Visual impressions often communicate thus briefly statements that we shall in time to come uncover and coax into words. (p. 162)

Now Bernard has become identified with that fin, and the desire to know it, to understand it, to place it in the universe is finally nothing other than the need to know, understand and order himself in the world. That he will fall short of this, that the wave will disperse itself on the shores, dissolving the vision, no longer matters; for it is the "effort" that counts, because without it there is death: "It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man's. . . . Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death" (p. 256)!

Contrary to the assumptions of many critics, The Waves does not conclude in a rejection of art, but rather a recognition that art cannot replace life. While the work of art must contain the contradictory forces of life that go into its making, so these forces continue to operate in the artist's life after they have been objectified in the work of art. There is not one moment, then, but several. As the waves continue to rise and fall, so does the creative mind experience the coalescing of forces as they dissolve to form again. ("Beauty," Jinny reminds us, "must be broken daily to remain beautiful" [p. 49].) Finally, that fear that our moments of vision may be illusion (a fear that led to Woolf's attempt to locate the reality of the moment in the conjunction of the subjective and objective, the personal and impersonal) becomes itself a part of the

pattern ("moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably"). It does not matter that the moments when we seem to perceive "the true order of things" might be a "perpetual illusion," for it is in "the effort" to continually seek the truth that life and art exist. The denial of death that is inherent in art exists not in its immortality as an object, but rather in our perception of the effort to realize the contradictory forces of life that went into its creation. It was this life force, no doubt, that Cyril Connolly recognized when he said that The Waves ". . . is one of the books which comes nearest to the mystery of Life."³³

In his volume Appreciations, Walter Pater writes:

Into the mind sensitive to "form," a flood of random sounds, colors, incidents, is ever penetrating from the world without, to become, by sympathetic selection, a part of its very structure, and, in turn, the visible vesture and expression of that other world it sees so steadily within, nay, already with a partial conformity thereto, to be refined, enlarged, corrected, at a hundred points; and it is just there, just at those doubtful points that the function of style, as tact or taste, intervenes.³⁴

Noting the similarity between Pater's conception of style and Virginia Woolf's "transparent envelope" Igor Webb points out that for Pater (as well as for Woolf):

. . . there exists a 'pattern' within parallel to the pattern without: when these two versions of reality fail to merge at these doubtful points style 'intervenes'. In this way art comes to the rescue of life and assuages our loneliness, our fear that we are trapped in our solipsism. However, in Virginia Woolf's novels--as indeed in Pater's passage--there

always remains the possibility that the individual perception may in fact be merely private and unique and that an external analogue may be either non-existent or beyond human discovery.³⁵

It is this fear--the possibility that the pattern perceived in the visionary moment may, in fact, be illusion--that supplies the impetus for Woolf's search for an objective, external confirmation of that inner vision. Clarissa, we will recall, wonders whether there is really something substantial in that pregnant moment of profound suspense before the striking of the clock or whether it is merely "her heart affected by influenza." Consequently, she internalizes Peter Walsh's external perspective to act as judge³⁶. It is, then, in the interplay between Peter's objective perspective and Clarissa's personal vision that Clarissa's final moment is given reality.

But in spite of Peter's function as the reflector of Clarissa's inner vision, Woolf's center of interest in Mrs. Dalloway remains primarily with Clarissa. However, when the reflector is also an artist, as in To The Lighthouse and The Waves, the center of interest is transferred to the reflector. It is, after all, the outside perceiver who must do all the work: participating in the inner vision to realize its content and then transforming that subjective vision to a public, objective form. What's more, it is significant that Woolf chose an artist for her secondary reflector, for the process of drawing the inner vision into objective reality is, essentially, the creative process. Lily Briscoe and Bernard are not only reflectors, they are also transformers and as such they are no longer secondary. By giving her reflectors, Lily Briscoe and Bernard, the additional role of artist, Woolf reveals her increasing fascination with the creative process. If (as many critics maintain

To The Lighthouse succeeds on a higher level than Mrs. Dalloway, it is, (at least in part) due to this added element. The secondary reflector, as an artist, provides Woolf with the necessary framework in which to explore the process whereby the private vision transcends the personal.

Furthermore, the recognition of a creative process inherent in the secondary reflector's role seems to lead Woolf to a growing awareness of her own creative process in her writing. As an author, she is both central consciousness and secondary reflector: the one who has the private vision and the one who brings it into the public form of art. Woolf's acknowledgement of this duality is made evident in The Waves. Having had a vision of a fin on a waste of water, but at the same time aware of herself experiencing that vision, Woolf begins her most autobiographical novel by attempting to record, subjectively and objectively, all of the ramifications of that experience. The vehicle for this exploration is Bernard who, like Woolf, is both central consciousness and secondary reflector, capable of private feeling and public expression.

Woolf began, in Mrs. Dalloway, by exploring subjective and objective notions of reality in separate characters. In To The Lighthouse we see these opposites begin to merge in the character of Lily Briscoe who must enter into the private world of Mrs. Ramsay in order to bring her vision into her painting. But, just as To The Lighthouse carried us beyond Mrs. Dalloway by placing the moment within the context of art and allowing it to exist in time, so The Waves takes us considerably beyond the moment in Lighthouse when the work of art is completed. Having identified the secondary reflector as an artist, Woolf now deals with time within the

artist's life as the rise and fall, inner and outer rhythms continue to work after the vision or work of art has been realized. Here the central consciousness and reflector of that consciousness merge in the same body, as Woolf, in her most autobiographical novel, attempts to capture that moment when, having ridden the wave from the heights of the visionary moment back down into disillusion, she sees a "fin in a waste of water" that images the glimmering of a new vision on the horizon.

Footnotes

- ¹ Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction," in Collected Essays, Vol. II by Virginia Woolf, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 80.
- ² Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction," p. 81.
- ³ Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel (New York: Grossett and Dunlop, 1955), p. 12.
- ⁴ Edel, p. 15.
- ⁵ Edel, p. 50.
- ⁶ Virginia Woolf, "The Common Reader," in The Common Reader (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), p. 1.
- ⁷ Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in Collected Essays, Vol. II (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 327.
- ⁸ Virginia Woolf, "An Essay in Criticism," in Collected Essays, Vol. II (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967) p. 257.
- ⁹ Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 20.
- ¹⁰ Virginia Woolf, "Middlebrow" in Collected Essays, Vol. II, p. 202.
- ¹¹ Wayne Booth, p. 187.
- ¹² Wayne Booth, p. 165.
- ¹³ The phrase was used by Henry James in his famous debate on the novel with Walter Besant. Quoted by Edel in The Modern Psychological Novel, p. 23.
- ¹⁴ Paul Goodman, The Structure of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 117.

Footnotes, continued

15 One way of achieving this is by skillful selection in the recording of a character's inner consciousness. In this way a writer might maintain the illusion of random thoughts while at the same time he subtly guides the reader to the proper perspective on his character. Indeed, it was the lack of selection that Woolf saw as the major flaw in the Edwardian novelists: "Three-quarters of the novels that appear today are concocted of experience to which no discipline, except the mild curb of grammar and the occasional rigors of chapter divisions, has been applied" ("Life and the Novelists," Collected Essays, Vol. II, p. 132). And, it was through his skill with selection that James Joyce became the most innovative writer of his day, for, as Edell points out, "Joyce was exercising close selection and arrangement even when he seemed to dredge up a great deal of unrelated associational matter. His selection was addressed to the creating of an illusion that there had been no selection" (Edell, p. 22). (However, Joyce might have been too successful in maintaining the illusion of no selection, for his critics continued to maintain that stream of consciousness writing was the recording of "unsorted abundance".

16 Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction" in Collected Essays, Vol. II, p. 6.

17 "The Mark on the Wall" is a good example of the variety of responses that may result from one stimulus. In this short story, an unidentified mark on a wall calls up in the observer numerous thoughts and fantasies about its origin. While some of these thought excursions are insightful and revealing, others are quite absurd. As S. P. Rosenbaum notes, "The story presents not merely these ideas but also the ludicrous discrepancy between them and their cause, between ranging speculations and the mark that the narrator cannot be bothered to identify" ("The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf" in English Literature and British Philosophy, ed. Rosenbaum (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1971, pp. 324-25). Woolf is doing two things at once here. While she undoubtedly reveals certain profundities about the potentialities of the imagination in its relaxed meandering from thought to thought, she is also warning us to keep our wits about us, indeed our sense of humor. In the discrepancy between the thought and the object that produces it we must beware of the imagination's tendency to drift into absurdity, sentimentality and pure fantasy.

18 Virginia Woolf, "On Not Knowing Greek" in Collected Essays, Vol. I, p. 6.

19 Quoted in Booth, p. 245.

Footnotes, continued

²⁰ Jean Guiget, Virginia Woolf and Her Works, trans. Jean Stewart (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1965), p. 201. "Helen [is] chiefly an observer and at the same time a kind of answering witness whose wisdom, partly detached, now serves as a mirror in which the consciousness of others is reflected and now presents a definite image with which they are contrasted."

²¹ The use of a "secondary reflector" is by no means a new technique for Jane Austen found its value in Emma a century before James was to refer to it directly in his prefaces and notebooks. The problem in Emma was to establish our sympathy with Emma at the same time that we are also to be aware of her faults. The first half of this problem is solved by revealing most of the story through Emma's eyes, thereby assuring that we travel with her rather than against her. The second part of the problem is given to Knightly who, as a "chief corrective" (Booth's term) provides a perspective through which we can judge Emma's faults as well as her good points. However, as the technique is used by James and particularly Woolf, the reflector is not so much a "corrective" but rather provides the source of another point of view.

²² For the sake of simplicity, I will adopt, from these various terms, the label "secondary reflector" and use it throughout the discussion.

²³ Leon Edel, pp. 70-71.

²⁴ Since Woolf found fault with the medium of film for its inability to move inside a character's mind ("We have been letting ourselves bask in appearances. We have sat receptive and watched, with our eyes rather than our minds as we do at the cinema what passes on the screen in front of us. . . . How they dressed, what they ate, the slang they used--we know all that; but not what they are. . . . ["Life and the Novelist", Collected Essays, Vol. II, pp. 133-34]), so an observer-narrator such as Isherwood's passive narrator who likens himself to a camera would have the same limitations.

²⁵ S. P. Rosenbaum, "The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf" in English Literature and British Philosophy, ed. S.P. Rosenbaum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 327.

²⁶ Quoted in Charles G. Hoffman, "From Short Story to Novel: The Manuscript Revisions of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway," Modern Fiction Studies, 14 (Summer 1968), p. 174.

²⁷ Jean Guiget, p. 141.

Footnotes, continued

- 28 Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954), references to "sentimentality" appear on pp. 98, 100, 106.
- 29 A Writer's Diary, p. 79.
- 30 In Mrs. Dalloway, Peter Walsh, for example, is particularly critical of sentimental lapses in Clarissa. See Chapter I for a further discussion of this element.
- 31 Jean Alexander, The Venture of Form in the Novels of Virginia Woolf (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1974), p. 86.
- 32 Jean Guiget, p. 99.
- 33 Jean Guiget, p. 98.
- 34 Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 32.
- 35 Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography, Vol. II (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), p. 11.
- 36 Quentin Bell, Vol. II, p. 28.
- 37 From an unpublished part of Woolf's diary, 16 May, 1927. Quoted in Bell, p. 28, Vol. II.
- 38 Virginia Woolf, "How It Strikes a Contemporary" in Collected Essays, Vol. II, p. 159.
- 39 Jeremy Hawthorn, Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway: A Study in Alienation (Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1975), p. 12.
- 40 Quoted in Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf, The Inward Voyage (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 113.
- 41 Erich Auerbach, "The Brown Stocking" in Mimesis, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 536.
- 42 Virginia Woolf, "Notes on an Elizabethan Play" in Collected Essays, Vol. I, p. 55.

Footnotes, continued

⁴³ Guiget, p. 201.

⁴⁴ Virginia Woolf, The Question of Things Happening, The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1912-1922, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth Press, 1976), p. 400. (Letter to Janet Case, 19 November 1919.)

⁴⁵ Virginia Woolf, Night and Day (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969) p. 393.

⁴⁶ In the Preface to the second edition of his book on Virginia Woolf (New Directions, 1963) David Daiches remarks that if he were to write another work on Woolf he would begin with a "careful analysis of Mrs. Dalloway which I now see as the most central and in a sense the most fulfilled of all her novels, and then proceed to use the ideas developed in that analysis in discussing her approach to fiction and her other works."

Chapter I - Mrs. Dalloway

¹ Bernard Blackstone, Virginia Woolf (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1962), p. 10.

² A. D. Moody, "Mrs. Dalloway as Comedy," from Chap. 2 of Virginia Woolf (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1963), rpt. in Critics on Virginia Woolf, ed. Jacqueline E.M. Latham (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 48.

³ Francis Gillen, "'I Am This, I Am That': Shifting Distance and Movement in Mrs. Dalloway," Studies in the Novel, No. 4, pp. 484-493.

⁴ In his article "Interpreting the Variorum" (Critical Inquiry Spring 1976, p. 467), Stanley E. Fish argues that critical controversy over the interpretation of a text need not be solved one way or the other, but that the text might be meant to hold all possibilities: "But what if that controversy is itself regarded as evidence, not of an ambiguity that must be removed, but of an ambiguity that readers have always experienced?"

⁵ Morris Philipson, "Mrs. Dalloway, 'What's the Sense of Your Parties?'," Critical Inquiry, September, 1974, p. 145.

⁶ Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 15. All subsequent quotations from this novel will be from this edition.

Footnotes, continued

⁷ Even Septimus feels the need to validate his visions against objective reality ("one must be scientific, above all scientific"), and so Dr. Holmes tells him to get outside of himself, to relate more to the outer world. Ironically, though, it is the outside world that destroys him, that labels his visions "insane". Consequently he must remain within himself, ("Away from people--they must get away from people" [p. 29]).

⁸ Morris Philipson, p. 128.

⁹ Another possible way to see this relationship is in Jungian terms of the "animus" and "anima". Peter then, becomes the animus, or masculine aspect of Clarissa's consciousness while her presence in Peter's thoughts suggests his feminine anima.

¹⁰ It is difficult not to perceive the presence of sour grapes in both of their attacks--a part of Peter, no doubt, envies the security and comfort of Clarissa's position and Clarissa is obviously jealous of Peter's ability to continue to love and be loved. While this doesn't necessarily invalidate their criticisms, it does highlight another aspect of their like-mindedness.

¹¹ Virginia Woolf, "The Mark on the Wall," A Haunted House (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973); pp. 46-47.

¹² David Daiches, Virginia Woolf (New York: New Directions, 1942), p. 60.

Chapter II - To The Lighthouse

¹ Virginia Woolf, To The Lighthouse (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1927), p. 267. All subsequent quotations from this novel will be from this edition.

² Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 135.

³ A Writer's Diary, p. 75.

⁴ A Writer's Diary, p. 94.

⁵ A Writer's Diary, p. 82.

Footnotes, continued

- ⁶ Ruby Cohen, "Art in To The Lighthouse," Modern Fiction Studies, 8: Summer 1962, p. 127.
- ⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIII in English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 452. We will have more to say on the significance of Coleridgean thought in To The Lighthouse later in this section.
- ⁸ A Writer's Diary, p. 80.
- ⁹ For example: Norman Friedman, "The Waters of Annihilation" ELH (1955), pp. 61-79.
- ¹⁰ Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art" in Collected Essays Vol. II, p. 222.
- ¹¹ Nancy Toppings Bazin, "Virginia Woolf's Quest for Equilibrium" Modern Language Quarterly 32: 303-319, Sept. 1971, p. 314.
- ¹² Auerbach, p. 531.
- ¹³ One aspect of this loss of self seems to come from the author's identification with the work of art. Indeed, Woolf made this identification when, as Bell notes, "she feared that her art and therefore her self was a kind of sham, an idiot's dream of no value to anyone" (Vol. II, p. 28).
- ¹⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art" in English Romantic Writers, p. 494.
- ¹⁵ See footnote #4, Chapter I, Mrs. Dalloway.
- ¹⁶ Norman Friedman, "The Waters of Annihilation" p. 61.
- ¹⁷ Friedman, p. 62.
- ¹⁸ Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (Middlesex: Penguin, 1945) p. 97.

Footnotes, continued

¹⁹ This is not the first (nor will it be the last) occasion that we've found Coleridge's aesthetics useful in interpreting the novel. Indeed, our tendency to recall Coleridge as we examine the novel may not be entirely unintentional on the author's part. That Woolf was familiar with Coleridge's aesthetic theories we, of course, know, but even more suggestive that Woolf had Coleridge in mind when she was writing this novel is the remarkable resemblance between Carmichael and Coleridge. Not only is there the allusion to an unhappy marriage in Carmichael's past and the hint of an opium addiction in his elder years, but he is also described as a poet who "should have been a good philosopher" (p. 19).

²⁰ Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Herman Hesse, Andre Gide, and Virginia Woolf (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 198.

²¹ Coleridge, "Mechanic and Organic Form" in English Romantic Writers, p. 500.

²² Roger Fry, quoted in: J. K. Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group (New York: Noonday Press, 1963), p. 50.

²³ Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art," p. 496.

Chapter III - The Waves

¹ Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 100.

² Woolf, A Writer's Diary, pp. 155-156.

³ Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 169.

⁴ Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 170.

⁵ Woolf, A Writer's Diary, p. 168.

⁶ Woolf, AWD, p. 155.

⁷ AWD, p. 156.

⁸ AWD, p. 165.

Footnotes, continued

- ⁹ AWD, p. 172.
- ¹⁰ AWD, p. 134.
- ¹¹ AWD, p. 136.
- ¹² AWD, p. 136.
- ¹³ AWD, p. 142.
- ¹⁴ J. W. Graham, "Point of View in The Waves: Some Services of the Style" in Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Criticism, ed. Thomas S.W. Lewis (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), p. 95.
- ¹⁵ Guiget, p. 285.
- ¹⁶ J. W. Graham, p. 108.
- ¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, "The Man at the Gate" in Collected Essays Vol. III, p. 220.
- ¹⁸ Virginia Woolf, The Waves (Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), p. 205. All subsequent quotations from this novel will be from this edition.
- ¹⁹ Josephine O'Brien Schaefer, The Three-Fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf (London: Mouton & Co., 1965), p. 159.
- ²⁰ Virginia Woolf, The Waves: The Two Holograph Drafts, ed. and transcribed, J. W. Graham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 17, (Vol. I, p. 33 of holograph). All subsequent quotations from holograph drafts will be from this edition.
- ²¹ Quoted in: Aileen Pippett, The Moth and Star (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), p. 225.
- ²² Virginia Woolf, "An Essay in Criticism," Collected Essays Vol. II, p. 257.
- ²³ AWD, p. 151.
- ²⁴ J. W. Graham, "Point of View in The Waves" p. 109.

Footnotes, continued

²⁵ Virginia Woolf, The Waves: Holograph Drafts, p. 14 (Vol I, p. 27 of draft).

²⁶ AWD, p. 143.

²⁷ AWD, p. 140.

²⁸ AWD, p. 136.

²⁹ AWD, p. 140.

³⁰ AWD, p. 134.

³¹ In his article "The Subjective Character of Critical Interpretation," (College English, Vol. 36, No. 7, p. 743) David Bleich, arguing for the reader's subjective interpretation of the text, points out that "the observer is always a part of what is being observed."

³² Igor Webb, "'Things in Themselves': Virginia Woolf's The Waves" in Modern Fiction Studies, Vol. 17 (Winter, 1971-72) p. 571.

³³ Cyril Connolly, Enemies of Promise (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 49.

³⁴ Walter Pater, Appreciations (London: Macmillan, 1890), p. 28.

³⁵ Igor Webb, pp. 570-571.

³⁶ Bernard does the same with Percival.

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- . The Years. Middlesex: Penguin, 1969.
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