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THE LOGICAL IMAGINATION: THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

by

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with the premise that Virginia Woolf's novels exhibit a dual perspective of psychological mimesis and apocalyptic allegory, this dissertation formulates a critical theory of vision which operates on literary principles extracted, with a number of modifications, from two studies of Romantic transcendence: Thomas Weiskel's The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence, and the Second Essay of Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism.

The narrative role of the Woolfian "moment of being" is explored in her nine novels as a fictional analogue of Weiskel's "sublime moment," a metaphorical subplot in which the harmonious relation between the self and nature breaks down. When the moment of being does not merely collapse into a cycle of nature worship, it follows an Oepidal path of reactive identification in which the character identifies with the prevailing cultural pattern, or "father." Thus the fictional character experiences the moment of being as a failed psychological transcendence.

From the perspective of apocalyptic allegory, these novels engage the imagination of the reader by means of the "logical imagination": that is, the poetic Logos becomes the anagogic Word. This revolutionary concept of apocalypse is adapted from the theory of symbols that Frye discusses in Anatomy of Criticism, where the "anagogic symbol" is identified with the divine Word. In Woolf's allegory, "there is no God; we are the words" (Moments of Being, 72).

The view of Woolf's vision as a dual perspective implies that Woolf advocated, and developed, fictional forms that juxta-

pose realistic and mythopoeic constructs. Her characters, plots, and settings represent life in this world as a failed transcendence, while her mythical and metaphorical structures define for the reader an imaginative apocalyptic quest having five identifiable stages: 1) the presentation of an inner psychological realm where the imaginary and the real seem inextricable, 2) the discovery of the "out there" as a solid basis for imaginative identity, 3) the exploration of a crisis of vacancy out of which the imaginative self becomes reborn, 4) the establishment of an imaginative pattern as a prelude to the rejection of the "fatherhood" influence of history and society, and 5) the apocalyptic awakening of "ourselves" from the dream of history and of selfhood. From the investigation of these developments in Woolf's vision emerges a distinct novelistic canon.

This study, as a whole, documents Virginia Woolf's "own particular search--not after morality or beauty or reality--no; but after literature itself" (The Diary of Virginia Woolf, I, 214).

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE LOGICAL IMAGINATION

Despite the fact that critical installments toward a summa of Virginia Woolf's place in our literary heritage presently rival, in sheer quantity of print, the formidable critical and creative output of the writer herself, Woolf's critics do not seem to be approaching any unanimity regarding the nature of her artistic "vision." Most of the critics consider vision a form of belief and, thus, proceed to inquire about what it was Woolf believed in. Since belief is always belief in something, these critics must unfortunately detach Woolf's novels from their context in literature (to use Northrop Frye's phrase) and interpret them in non-literary contexts: biographical, historical, political, existential, and spiritual. Biographical readings stress Woolf's family tree, her gender, or her mental constitution; historical readings stress possible influences and tend to place her in the context of the Georgian literary movement; political readings make a case for her feminism, pacifism, or capitalism; existential readings treat her novels as though they were life itself; spiritual interpretations assume Woolf intended her novels to be vehicles for mysticism.[1] The following study proposes to abandon altogether the extra-literary search for allegorical readings of Woolf's novels. It begins, instead, with the premise that we need to stop compounding meanings for vision and start seeking the meaning of vision in Woolf's novels. This search first requires a retrospective survey of the critical and literary history of vision to discover both what it meant originally and why it has come to have such a bewildering variety of discrete contexts in the twentieth century.

Plato, according to Arthur O. Lovejoy,[2] bestowed upon Western civilization a legacy of dual vision, resulting finally in two polarized world-views:

"this-worldliness" and "other-worldliness." This-worldliness is concerned with man's natural life, identifying "the chief value of existence with process and struggle in time, an antipathy to satisfaction and finality, and a sense of the 'glory of the imperfect.'" Other-worldliness is concerned with a conceivable ideal life, and expresses "the belief that both the genuinely 'real' and the truly 'good' are radically antithetic to anything to be found in man's natural life" (Lovejoy, 25). Applied to artistic vision, these two terms must, at this point, be carefully distinguished and defined. This-worldliness refers to that artistic vision which limits itself to representing the physical world, the world we perceive with our senses. Other-worldliness chiefly expresses an imaginative ideal world, in the full knowledge that such a world does not and cannot exist.

Of course, Plato is only indirectly responsible for the development of critical traditions based on these two artistic perspectives. Plato, little concerned about art regardless of its perspective, ridicules this-worldly art in the Tenth Book of the Republic, where Socrates says that such art is merely the imitation of an imitation.[3] The significance of this attack on this-worldliness, for the history of literary criticism, is that Plato spurred Aristotle to later defend art-as-mimesis in his Poetics. Plato's scorn for the this-worldly perspective reveals itself again when he discusses "inspired" poetry. In the Ion, for example, Socrates attributes the source of poetic inspiration to God himself, and ironically equates inspiration with daemonic possession. In other words, when the poets claim to be inspired by the "other world" of God, they are not really other-worldly. According to Plato, the notion of an "existing" spiritual world which directly breathes knowledge into the human mind scants both the existing world perceived by the senses and the faculty of reason possessed by every man. Plato's other-

worldly Ideal of Ideals, by contrast, is a concept of perfection arrived at by reason and fleshed out by allegory as conceived by the imagination. Plato's other-worldly perspective is, of course, possible in art which expresses man's desire for an ideal world. Such art achieves a critical acceptance after the birth of Christ, in Longinus's On the Sublime, which investigates sublimity, or high style fused with noble thought. Longinus defends art as expression, and what is expressed is man's desire for a high and noble identity that raises him above his life in nature.

Plato believes that this-worldliness and other-worldliness must come together in a grand synthesis of logic and imagination. In the history of literary criticism, however, this dual vision has been lost. The Aristotelian tradition is not responsible for this loss; it has always been the chief representative of this-worldly perspective in art. It is the Longinian tradition which has gone awry. Originally concerned with other-worldliness, it has become divided into a number of theories all dealing with this-worldliness. One modern critic, W.H. Abrams,[4] calls the Longinian perspective "expressive" (to distinguish it from the "mimetic" theories descended from Aristotle's work). According to Abrams, the expressive mode views art from two possible perspectives: 1) "the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression," or 2) "the compulsion of the 'creative' imagination which, like God the creator, has its internal source of motion" (Abrams, 22). In the first instance, artistic vision is seen as based on the psychic life; in the second instance, on a spiritual, godlike, inner source.

The integrity of the Longinian perspective has been lost primarily because of an historical coincidence. Because Longinus formulated his critical theory after the birth of Christ, his other-worldly perspective was readily assimilated into a belief system. Plato warned against the doctrine of poetic

inspiration; the critical tradition did not heed the warning. According to Plato, an "inspired" poet is really a poète maudit, but the critical tradition took poète maudit to mean poet sublime. As Abrams points out, the tradition eventually "assimilated the pagan doctrine of inspiration to the 'mysteries' of the Christian faith" (Abrams, 189). By a trick of convention, the sublime poet either had to pretend, or really believed, that his imagination was a kind of relay between God (or the Muses) and mankind. During the Renaissance, when invocation to the Muses became a poetic convention, the Christian concept of deistic inspiration became a doctrine. Other-worldliness thus gave way to this-worldliness in the form of a belief in the reality of the "Creator" in relation to whom all imaginative poets are simply mortal counterparts. A major example of the assimilation of the Longinian perspective to the Christian belief system is Coleridge's concept of the "primary Imagination," held by most critics to be the cornerstone of Romantic critical theory:

> The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.[5]

As long as belief in God remained culturally vital, this concept of the imagination was not open to question. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the concept of God as a source of poetic imagination became a decaying fiction, the Longinian perspective acquired a psychological nature, as is evident in Browning's description of the "subjective poet" in his An Essay on Shelley:

> He . . . is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below as to the one above him, the supreme Intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth, --an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's own soul. Not what man sees, but what God sees,--the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand,--it is toward these things that he struggles. Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has

> to do; and he digs where he stands,--preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak.[6]

Here is the essence of Coleridgean "primary Imagination" cautiously attenuated: inspiration redefined as individual "intuition."

From these references to Coleridge and Browning, both poet/critics, it is clear that poets somewhere along the way adopted this-worldly attitudes to the imagination. By the end of the nineteenth century, mythopoeia (or the art of other-worldliness) is a rare phenomenon in poetry and fiction. Virginia Woolf, as critic, recognizes that the two most common modern forms of expressive art--the lyrical and the visionary--reveal imaginations which have become either introspective or illogically mystical. In Woolf's view, introspective belief is evident in what might be called "subjective" poetry: poetry taking the poet writing it as its subject. Mysticism is really spiritualism, a deceptive form of this-worldliness which demands belief in the reality of the spirit world. In subjective poetry, the once-resplendent Psyche is demoted to the rank of private psyche. Such poetry, according to Woolf, is only a record of the poet's ego-conflicts. For instance, in her essay on Mrs. Browning's Aurora Leigh, Woolf writes: "Through the voice of Aurora the character, the circumstances, the idiosyncrasies of Elizabeth Barrett Browning ring in our ears. Mrs. Browning could no more conceal herself than she could control herself, a sign no doubt of imperfection in an artist, but a sign that life has impinged upon art more than life should."[7] Far worse is the artistic failure of poetry unmediated by a fictional character. In lyric poetry, the poet's psychological conflicts not only ring in the reader's ear, they cry out loud and clear. In "The Narrow Bridge of Art," Woolf compares the lyric to a beautiful but fragmental cast-off, a rose leaf which cannot possibly enclose the immense rock of the modern

world:

> Nobody indeed can read much modern literature without being aware that some dissatisfaction, some difficulty is lying in our way. On all sides writers are attempting what they cannot achieve, are forcing the form they use to contain a meaning which is strange to it. Many reasons might be given, but here let us select only one, and that is the failure of poetry to serve us as it has served so many generations of our fathers. Poetry is not lending her services to us nearly as freely as she did to them. The great channel of expression which has carried away so much energy, so much genius, seems to have narrowed itself or to have turned aside.
>
> That is true only within certain limits of course; our age is rich in lyric poetry; no age perhaps has been richer. But for our generation and the generation that is coming the lyric cry of ecstasy or despair, which is so intense, so personal, and so limited, is not enough. The mind is full of monstrous, hybrid, unmanageable emotions. That the age of the earth is 3,000,000,000 years; that human life lasts but a second; that the capacity of the human mind is nevertheless boundless; that life is infinitely beautiful yet repulsive; that one's fellow creatures are adorable but disgusting; that science and religion have between them destroyed belief; that all bonds of union seem broken, yet some control must exist--it is in this atmosphere of doubt and conflict that writers have now to create, and the fine fabric of a lyric is no more fitted to contain this point of view than a rose leaf to envelop the rugged immensity of a rock.[8]

Here Woolf's dissatisfaction with the modern lyric is that it is too simple, too limited to contain the "monstrous, hybrid, unmanageable emotions" of the modern mind confronted with a world of "doubt and conflict." The "rose leaf" lyric is the product of an imagination which has become dwarfed and introspective, an "autistic" imagination (to borrow from psychology) whose visions are nothing but conflict fantasies. At a time when civilization needs epic poets to make some controlled order out of the chaos of history and culture, Woolf sees the best of her generation pursuing their own subjective dreams:

> The most sincere of them will only tell us what it is that happens to himself. They cannot make a world, because they are not free of other human beings. They cannot tell stories because they do not believe that stories are true. They cannot generalize. They depend on their senses and emotions, whose testimony is trustworthy, rather than on their intellects, whose message is obscure. And they have perforce to deny themselves some of the most powerful and some of the most exquisite of the weapons of their craft. With the whole wealth of the English language at the back of them, they timidly pass about from hand to hand and book to book only the meanest copper

> coins. Set down at a fresh angle of the eternal prospect they only record with agonized intensity the flying gleams, which light on what? and the transitory splendours, which may, perhaps, compose nothing whatever.[9]

The autistic imagination of the subjective poet involves an attendant problem of interpretation for the reader. How can he meaningfully interpret the poet's "gleam" when he has no signposts to take him into the autistic poem? Interpretation of such poetry becomes, in its extreme form, free-association. What the poet fails to do the reader cannot do for him. It is up to the poet, then, to find (if he can) the means to spring open the cages that imprison both the reader and himself: "That is your problem now, if I may hazard a guess--to find the right relationship, now that you know yourself, between the self that you know and the world outside."[10]

While the subjective poet cannot communicate his personal this-worldliness, the mystical poet not only ignores a means of escape but curls up in his cage and passes into a dreaming sleep. His visions of spirits may be other-worldly, but his belief in these visions and his attempt to make the reader believe in them are illogical. In other words, the mystical poet has an illogical imagination. He tries to pass off his visions as doctrine, and in so doing, claims for the other-worldly a reality--or this-worldliness--that it does not logically possess. Woolf argues, in a review of A.E.'s The Candle of Vision, that the only transcendent "mystery" is the concealment of mind from mind in this world:

> One of A.E.'s trances would come upon him, and he would find himself on a remote steppe, or exalted into communion with the spirits in a region of clouds and stars. Suppose, however, that this excursion had been not into the remote and invisible, but into the mind of the clerk, with his wrinkled face and blinking eyes, who sat beside him. According to some of us, that would have been a more exalted, difficult and imaginative affair altogether, a method no less true than the other of taking one's way out "into the infinite."[11]

Here Woolf identifies transcendence with perfect communication. And in "On

Being Ill," she frankly suggests that "Heaven-making must be left to the imagination of the poets" and that "[l]eft to ourselves we speculate . . . carnally."[12] The imagination, she suggests, remains this-worldly by speculating carnally on the "reality" of a transcendent world which is nothing but scraps and fragments of this world. The real limitation to be transcended is the ego. Human beings are divided and caged off in individual bodies, and the imaginations of individual men are alienated one from the other because of the existence of ego-structures--I and I and I-- selves in co-ordination rather than in communion. Modern subjective lyric, a literary structure imitating the "I," cannot possibly transcend the limitation of the ego. It simply reinforces an autistic imagination. Oracular expression, claiming knowledge of a transcendent reality, attempts to control the ego of others by usurping the freedom of the other's imagination. It reinforces an illogical imagination. Ultimately, the release from isolation can only be effected by a poetic imagination which emphasizes the fictiveness of the other-worldly and employs the other-worldly--myth and metaphor--to build bridges between mind and mind. Logically, imaginatively, the genuine other-worldly is the genuinely fictive: the mythical nature of myth and the metaphorical nature of metaphor. Such is the other-worldliness of Plato: a concept of the imagination as a bridge-maker, of art as a bridge between the material world of separated human bodies and an ideal world of human minds in communion. When dialectic could take him no further, Plato employed the myths of Ur and the Cave to lead to the wise man's untroubled vision of reality. For Plato, belief is sufficient to effect man's identity with nature, but man's identity as human is only achieved by an other-worldly vision.[13]

Thus, vision is not belief in a transcendent world but an imaginative conception of a world that does not exist. The foregoing survey reveals how vision tends to become assimilated in the need to believe. Myth historically solidifies into doctrine. The logical imagination tends to become illogical under the anxiety of its own other-worldliness. Human kind (to reverse Eliot's phrase) cannot bear very much unreality. But the social melancholy that accompanied the decline of Hebraism under the this-worldliness of science shows that the human imagination also cannot bear very much reality. Science has not solved the problems of order, identity, and community as did the Hebraic myth science called into question. Instead, it exalted reason over imagination, and in so doing, left us only with an evolving epistemology of natural order and the concomitant crisis in identity which is an all-too-familiar feature of modern human life. Science could not replace the joy it had destroyed. It could only offer a mimetic "vision" of the world as an inhuman mechanism. The poets, in turn, were presented with an opportunity not available to imaginative writers since the birth of Christianity. They could now exercise the power of other-worldliness while resisting the social pressure for them to assume the role of God's spokesmen.

Northrop Frye in his study of English Romanticism puts the matter succinctly. Up to the seventeenth century, according to Frye, the scientist and the poet were united in an acceptance of the Christian model of the universe. But the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo and Newton forced the scientists to reject the cosmology of the Bible, and as science swerved from belief, the poets in turn rediscovered the fact that "all myths are poetic in origin." Gradually, as the poets realized that the stories of the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem are projections of a human desire to seek a humanly meaningful order in nature, they became convinced that the holy garden and

the golden city are as indispensable in giving form to civilization as are the activities of science which give civilization its content.[14]

The implication for literary criticism is that it must learn to regard vision not as a belief but as an activity. Applied to Woolf, this implication suggests that literary critics must now ask why her visionary activity took the form of the novel, and how Woolf's novels differ in form from that of mimetic novelists. Plato recognized that man is both a creature of nature and a creator in his own right. He fashioned a system that would express this dual nature of man. For the modern writer who aims at a synthesis of this-worldliness and other-worldliness the imaginative challenge is also a challenge of form. The theme of man's dual nature is the same as it was for Plato and will be for a writer in the year 3000 A.D. But the modern writer's technical problem--how to achieve a formal separating-out of this-worldliness and other-worldliness--is unique because myth tends historically to be assimilated in doctrine. The imagination must always be one step ahead of history. It must always be rebuilding bridges between the real and the ideal so that civilization can continue to develop. It is the function of criticism to test and evaluate these bridges.

As a critic of the novel, Woolf was fully aware of the perspectives of this-worldliness and other-worldliness. In "Phases of Fiction,"[15] the mimetic writers or "truth-tellers" constitute the first phase, and the expressive writers or "poets" belong in the final phase of fiction. Truth-tellers satisfy the reader's belief in <u>this</u> world. In this phase of fiction, Woolf cites Defoe and Swift. The trinity of Bennett-Galsworthy-Wells also belong in this phase; in fact, Woolf's famous quarrel with Bennett centres on her belief that Bennett practises an attenuated form of truth-telling which "has nothing of truth in it but the respectable outside" ("Phases," 65). At

the other extreme are the "poets" (Proust, Tolstoy, Sterne), those who express the general life, or the other-worldly. However, despite the many phases of fiction, Woolf identifies a "sense of something that has not yet been said; of some desire still unsatisfied" ("Phases," 102). This is the desire for synthesis:

> But also we desire synthesis. The novel, it is agreed, can follow life; it can amass details. But can it select? Can it symbolize? Can it give us an epitome as well as an inventory? It was some such function as this that poetry discharged for us in the past. But, whether for the moment or for some longer time, poetry with her rhythms, her poetic diction, her strong flavour of tradition, is too far from us today to do for us what she did for our parents. ("Phases," 102).

This passage explains why Woolf didn't choose the poetic genre for her vision-making. She believed, it seems, that in her time a genuine this-worldly-other-worldly vision had a far better chance of successful expression in the prose medium: "the instrument best fitted to the complexity and difficulty of modern life" ("Phases," 102).

In Woolf's opinion, poetry no longer serves as an effective medium for expressing man's dual nature, chiefly because the image of man poetry creates is one-sided: a lyrical "I" indistinguishable from the natural man.[16] In the novel, "the instrument best fitted to the complexity and difficulty of modern life," the image of man is the fictional character, capable of representing, at one and the same time, both the natural man and the common life of men in general. This dual nature can only be expressed as long as the character lives in a believable setting along with other characters. If the setting becomes, for one moment, unbelievable, the novel is in danger of collapsing into mysticism; if the character is not set off against other characters, the novel risks collapsing into autism. These two dangers, respectively, beset the mystical novel and the psychological novel--the Scylla and Charybdis of the expressive novelist. As noted earlier, Woolf sees the

naturalistic novel, as written by Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells, as a weakened form of truth-telling "which has nothing of truth in it but the respectable outside" (see above, p. 10). Now, Woolf points out, when an expressive writer like E.M. Forster gives his novels a naturalistic setting and attempts to achieve a "moment of illumination" in which the setting is transformed, he ends up driving his novel onto the rocks. For, whereas he desires to achieve "a combination of realism and mysticism," the "conjunction of these two different realities seems to cast doubt upon them both."[17] In the moment of illumination, the real is cast into doubt, but so are the characters who exist in the fictional world: "What does this mean? we ask ourselves. What ought we to understand by this? And the hesitation is fatal. For we doubt both things--the real and the symbolical: Mrs. Moore, the nice old lady, and Mrs. Moore, the sibyl" (Ibid., 347). Whereas naturalism is the poetic novelist's Scylla, the stream-of-consciousness novel influenced by the psychological associationalism sometimes found in the Russian novel, is the poetic novelist's Charybdis. Woolf occasionally finds tumult and confusion in the Russian novels, particularly those of Dostoevsky, which seem "seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts which hiss and boil and suck us in."[18] When a writer like James Joyce follows the stream-of-consciousness into the "dark places of psychology," in A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man, the reader is forced to follow: "Is it due to the method that we feel neither jovial nor magnanimous, but centred in a self which, in spite of its tremor of susceptibility, never embraces or creates what is outside itself or beyond?"[19]

Only if he avoids the naturalistic Scylla and the psychological Charybdis can the expressive novelist create characters who represent man's dual nature. Such a novelist must set the mimesis of the natural world and

the expression of the imaginative world side by side. At one and the same time, his characters must represent man as a "poor bare fork'd animal" of nature and as a "god" of the imagination. In Woolf's essay, "On Not Knowing Greek," she shows how the Greek dramatists achieved the vision of man's dual nature by the formal distinction between the characters and the chorus:

> The intolerable restrictions of the [modern poetic] drama could be loosened . . . if a means could be found by which what was general and poetic, comment, not action, could be freed without interrupting the movement of the whole. It is this that the choruses supply; the old men and women who take no active part in the drama, the undifferentiated voices who sing like birds in the pauses of the wind; who can comment, or sum up, or allow the poet to speak himself or supply, by contrast, another side to his conception.[20]

She furthermore insists that every generation of novelists has had to face the problem of formally separating-out the mimetic world of action and the expressive world of thought: "For though Shakespeare (unless we consider 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."[21]

What, then, is this imagination capable of creating a double vision, of juxtaposing hypothetical thought with the continuum of action? Half the answer is that it is a mimetic imagination capable of truth-telling, which alone inspires belief in character. The other half is that it is capable of expressing hypothetical or "poetic" truth which is neither autistic self-searching nor illogical myth-mongering but the "logical" use of myth and metaphor to convey a hypothetical truth which is recognized as hypothesis. In short, the writer who is to achieve a synthesis must be able to juxtapose a strict mimesis and a logical expressiveness. He must have a strict and logical imagination:

> The looseness and freedom of Tristram Shandy, wonderfully though they encircle and float off such characters as Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, do not attempt to range and marshal these people in dramatic contrast together. Therefore it will be necessary for [the poetic novelist of the future] to bring to bear upon his tumultuous and contradictory emotions the generalizing power of a strict and logical imagination. Tumult is vile; confusion is hateful; everything in a work of art should be mastered and ordered. His effort will be to generalize and split up. Instead of enumerating details he will mould blocks. His characters thus will have a dramatic power which the minutely realized characters of contemporary fiction often sacrifice in the interests of psychology.[22]

The strict and logical imagination tells the truth about man's life in nature but juxtaposes this descriptive truth with a hypothetical expression of man's imaginative life outside nature. It differs from naturalism by showing an imaginative alternative to the scientific vision of mankind. It differs from mysticism in denying the reality of the spirit-world. It presents life both as it is and as it should be, at one and the same time. The poet of the logical imagination rides a Pegasus he has trained; the articulation of his vision is only possible if he perfects his skills as a poet: "[I]f we could imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us break her and bully her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty renewed."[23] The poet of the logical imagination is a visionary rather than a mystic, a layman rather than a priest--for the logical imagination is inherently communal and communicative:

> [There] are the priests who take you by the hand and lead you straight up to the mystery; there are the laymen who imbed their doctrines in flesh and blood and make a complete model of the world without excluding the bad or laying stress on the good. Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley are among the priests; they give us text after text to be hung upon the wall. . . . But Chaucer lets us go our ways doing the ordinary things with ordinary people. His morality lies in the way men and women behave to each other. We see them eating, drinking, laughing, and making love, and come to feel without a word being said what their standards are and so are steeped through and through with their morality.[24]

The logical imagination locates its ultimate source in the collective Logos; this is not a mystical "think-tank" nor is it to be thought a

universal library containing all the written works that can conceivably spring from the imaginations of articulate men. The collective Logos is the general human power to give a semblance of reality to what is not. The collective Logos is the "Word," by which is meant the imaginative conception of an ultimate source from which "words" derive their power to create the image of reality, ex nihilo:

> . . . it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool [of nature] is hidden a pattern; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are the parts of the work of art. Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. 25

From the Word comes the word "God," and God is real insofar as "we" suspend our disbelief in his unreality. He is an ultimate character in an ultimate fiction. Woolf is not proclaiming atheism or humanism here; on the contrary, by the assertion of apocalyptic other-worldliness in the midst of this-worldliness, she is asserting the freedom of both God and man from their potential, illogical absorption in this-worldliness.

Northrop Frye, in Anatomy of Criticism, suggests such an apocalyptic vision in his anagogic phase of symbolism:

> Nature is now inside the mind of an infinite man. . . . This is the conceivable or imaginative limit of desire, which is infinite, eternal and, hence apocalyptic.26

Frye's apocalyptic vision here bears a cognitive resemblance to the apocalyptic vision he articulates in his study of the poetry of William Blake. As Frye points out, Blake was one of the first poets to respond imaginatively to the historical decline of the myth implicit in Hebraic doctrine. Conceiving of the imagination as an intellectual power, Blake set about reconstituting (by means of mythopoeic structures) the Logos that science and Hebraic

doctrine itself had eclipsed. Blake was the first English poet, writes Frye, "to work out the revolutionary structure of imagery that continues through Romantic poetry and thought to our time."[27]

Woolf's apocalyptic vision, to be sure, represents an even more radical adjustment to other-worldliness than does the apocalyptic vision Frye identifies in Blake. Whereas Blake's anagoge is the human imagination, which he identifies with God, Woolf's anagoge is the Word even before it has been made anything. Woolf's Word is an eiron, a self-deprecator. In Woolf's time, the illogical imagination took myths about supreme beings and solidified them into doctrines of supreme races and supreme dictators. Consequently, Woolf, as an expressive poet, becomes excessively aware of the need for an apocalyptic vision that undercuts the imagination's power to inspire explicit belief in the reality of its creations. As the following chapters show, Woolf's ironic apocalypse differs from Blake's Romantic apocalypse not in kind but in degree. Since human society is always finding subtler and stronger ways to bind the human imagination to the rock of this-worldliness, the poet, like a supreme escape artist, must find subtler and stronger ways to escape. Woolf lived to hear Blake's most famous lyric ("And did those feet in ancient time") broadcast on the wireless and sung in the churches as a patriotic call to Englishmen to maim and kill their brothers and to destroy their brothers' cities. But as a visionary, she knew that the imaginative form of freedom is never actual warfare, always a "mental fight:"

> "I will not cease from mental fight," Blake wrote. Mental fight means thinking against the current, not with it.[28]

Chapter Two briefly outlines Blake's "mental fight" against the current of popular superstition and fearful belief to provide an introduction to Woolf's ironic apocalyptic vision--an ancient and everlasting vision, as it turns out, "unvanquished and unyielding" against the ancient and everlasting current of despair.

Notes to Chapter One

1. See, for example, Winifred Holtby, *Virginia Woolf* (London, 1932); E.M. Forster, "Virginia Woolf," The Rede Lecture, 1941, in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York, 1951), 242-258; Roger Poole, *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge, 1978); Nancy Bazin Topping, *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1973); J.K. Johnstone, *The Bloomsbury Group: A Study of E.M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and their Circle* (London, 1968); Irma Raantavaara, *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury* (Helsinki, 1953); Herbert Marder, *Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (London, 1968); Jeremy Hawthorn, *Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway": A Study in Alienation* (Sussex, 1975); Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel* (Urbana, Illinois, 1975); Jane Novak, *The Razor Edge of Balance: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (Coral Gables, Florida, 1975; part of the research for which involved a research boat trip to the Godrevy lighthouse); and Alice van Buren Kelley, *The Novels of Virginia Woolf: Fact and Vision* (Chicago, 1973). The reference to Northrop Frye relates to *The Secular Scripture: A Study of The Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1976), 59.

2. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University, 1933 (published at Cambridge, Mass., 1936). The summary which follows is drawn from *op. cit.*, Chapter Two, "The Genesis of the Idea in Greek Philosophy," 24 ff. I have adopted Lovejoy's terms, "this-worldliness" and "other-worldliness," in lieu of philosophical, critical, or theological pairs which might have misleading connotations. Also, I begin the historical survey with Plato rather than Aristotle because I believe the history of Western criticism really begins with Plato's expressed attitudes to the role of art in society.

3. Plato, *Republic*, X, 597 [Jowett translation].

4. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York, 1958).

5. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by J. Shawcross (2 vols., Oxford, 1907), I, 202.

6. Robert Browning, "An Essay on Shelley," *The Complete Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, ed. by Horace E. Scudder (Cambridge, Mass., c. 1895, 1009).

7. Virginia Woolf, "*Aurora Leigh*," *Collected Essays* [hereafter, *CE*], I (London, 1966), 212. Of course, Woolf's own personality enters into many of her characters, but as A.D. Moody insightfully points out: "So far as Virginia Woolf's personal history is relevant to her novels it is consumed in them" (*Virginia Woolf* [Edinburgh, 1963],1).

8. Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art," CE, II, 218-219. "Lyric" is a problem term in the Woolf lexicon because Woolf uses it elsewhere to signify a generalized, universal artistic perspective, as for example in "Henry James's Ghost Stories," CE, I, 287, where she writes of James: "The visionary imagination was by no means his. His genius was dramatic, not lyric." Nevertheless, Woolf's continual insistence on the ineffectuality of lyric poetry as a means of transforming modern life into artistic vision cannot be ignored. Cf. Ralph Freedman's The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Herman Hesse, Andre Gide, and Virginia Woolf (Princeton, New Jersey, 1963), which employs a dubious, perplexing use of "lyric," in calling The Waves "a purely lyrical novel . . . in which an artful design is composed of the soliloquies of several characters" (13). The statement overlooks the descriptive interludes of the novel and the architecture of the novel, as a whole.

9. Virginia Woolf, "How it Strikes a Contemporary," CE, II, 159-160.

10. Virginia Woolf, "A Letter to a Young Poet," CE, II, 191. Joan Bennett, alluding to a similar expression in another of Woolf's essays--"Modern Fiction"--indicates rightfully that: "The intricate and disciplined form of her own best novels is a means of escaping from a single point of view and creating 'what is outside itself and beyond'" (Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Cambridge, 2nd edition, 1964), 17).

11. Virginia Woolf, A review of The Candle of Vision, by A.E., Times Literary Supplement (October 24, 1918), 522 [not reprinted]. A.E.'s book, while not a poem, uses a highly metaphorical language, and thus qualifies as an example of the illogical use of metaphor.

12. CE, IV, 199.

13. Cp. Frye, "The Instruments of Mental Production," The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society (London, 1974), 18-19.

14. This summary is drawn from Northrop Frye, A Study of English Romanticism (New York, 1968), 10-11.

15. Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction," CE, II, 56-102. Hereafter "Phases."

16. "Live near me in Provence: we will sit under the cypresses and drink wine, and you shall write poetry--which by the by I'm going to tell the Oxford Undergraduates is a hobbled, shackled tongue tied vehicle now for the voice of the soul, which--did you know it?--now speaks in prose" (Virginia Woolf to V. Sackville-West, Tuesday, 5th April 1927), The Letters of Virginia Woolf [hereafter, LVW], Volume 3 (London, 1977), 359.

17. Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E.M. Forster," CE, I, 346, and 347, respectively. See also Mark Goldman, "Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster: A Critical Dialogue," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 7 (Winter, 1966), 387-400.

18. Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View," CE, I, 242.

19. Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," CE, II, 108.

20. Virginia Woolf, "On Not Knowing Greek," CE, I, 5-6. Cp. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays [hereafter, AoC] (Princeton, New Jersey, 1957), 218, for a similar view of the Greek chorus's function.

21. "On Not Knowing Greek," CE, I, 6.

22. Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art," CE, II, 228. While Woolf is ostensibly talking about a novel of the future, this 1927 essay partially describes a dramatic structure she had already developed in Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse, and anticipates her formal achievement in The Waves.

23. "Modern Fiction," CE, II, 110.

24. Virginia Woolf, "The Pastons and Chaucer," CE, III, 13.

25. Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings of Virginia Woolf [hereafter, MB], ed. by Jeanne Schulkind, Sussex, 1976, 33. This statement, written close to the end of Woolf's life, is the clearest formulation of a vision toward which her writing career moved, from the earliest ambiguous allusions to Miltonic Christianity in her first novel, to the literary apocalypse implied in the final profound statement in Between the Acts.

26. Frye, AoC, 119. Frye's theory of symbols is discussed in Chapter Two, below, where his concept of "apocalyptic" vision is interpreted and modified in the context of the "logical imagination" presented in the present chapter.

27. Northrop Frye, "The Keys to the Gates" [hereafter, "Keys"], in Some British Romantics, ed. by James V. Logan, John E. Jordan, and Northrop Frye (Columbus, Ohio, 1966), 9.

28. Virginia Woolf, "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," CE, IV, 174. In what follows, I make no claim for a Blake "influence" on Woolf, only for a similarity in the two visionaries as regards their common belief in the redemptive destiny of the human imagination epitomized in the activity of intellectual mythopoeia.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERARY APOCALYPSE: A BRIEF SURVEY

The logical imagination neither conforms to the doctrines of science nor aspires to the dogma of religion. Its chief claim is that man is a creature/creator--poised between the world and the Word. Imaginative, or symbolic, language expresses man's dual nature; and like man, the symbol of man in art (that is, the fictional character) has a dual reference, to this-worldliness and other-worldliness. Literary apocalypse, based on the logical imagination, traces an imaginative quest beginning in this-worldliness and culminating in other-worldliness. In terms of the character-as-symbol, this quest takes the form of a conceptual narrative symbolizing man's ascent from enslavement in nature (or this-worldliness) to his ultimate salvation-in-the-Word in which he discovers his metaphorically divine destiny (or other-worldly identity with the Word). Such a narrative of literary apocalypse is implied in the second essay of Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism.

Frye's essay, "Ethical Criticism: Theory of Symbols," requires a brief contextual introduction. Frye's first essay in Anatomy of Criticism conceives of literary apocalypse in an historical context. Implicit in this essay is a myth of the fall of man from an original Golden Age to the present Iron Age dominated by demonic forces tyrannizing society. Frye isolates five historical modes, each exhibiting typical fictional heroes with less and less power of action. In pre-medieval period literature, the

hero is a divine being; in the literature from the medieval period to the Renaissance, the hero is semi-divine; in the literature of the Renaissance, the hero is a leader who may be divinely inspired, as kings were said to be, but is essentially a mortal, subject to nature; from Defoe's time to the end of the nineteenth century, the hero is one of us (and, at this point, the term "hero" begins to seem inappropriate); finally, in the twentieth century, the hero is an almost-powerless anti-hero (a readily identifiable character in Woolf's novels). The key to this descending historical movement is the growing power of this-worldliness from the time of Christ to the present, as exhibited in the development of science and the decline of Christian myth.

Frye's second essay contains a direct implicit parallel to the imaginative quest of literary apocalypse in that it outlines a conceptual myth of evolution in which the symbol progresses from a state of relative dependence on nature to one of self-sufficient independence of nature. In a critical context, of course, Frye's theory of symbols is simply a descriptive framework based on the principle that "art contains a variety or sequence of meanings" (AoC, 72). In an imaginative context, the same theory constitutes a significant critique of the contest between the Word and the world, or other-worldliness and this-worldliness. Frye makes this relationship sufficiently clear when he points out "a parallelism . . . between the five modes of our first essay and the phases of symbolism in this one" (see AoC, 116). Frye's ethical theory describes five distinct phases of symbolism, each revealing a unique relation between the Word and the world. The

phases of symbolism, "a sequence parallel to that of medieval criticism" (AoC, 119), hypothetically recapitulate man's desire to escape his fate in nature and achieve an apocalyptic existence in the Word. The first, or "literal" phase, which "rests on a relatively recent development of literature" (AoC, 80), is based on a set of critical principles ("new criticism") derived from a study of twentieth century literature, and has no parallel in the medieval scheme. In this phase, the symbol as "motif" is simply and literally a verbal element or a unit of a verbal structure (AoC, 73). The next four phases (descriptive, formal, mythical, and anagogic) correspond to four modes of criticism, and hence, to the four historical modes of literature which form the respective centres of gravity of these critical modes. Thus, the symbol of man in each of these four phases represents the four levels of "hero" outlined by Frye in his first essay.

The literal phase is really the beginning and end of literary apocalypse in that Woolf's imaginative quest begins with the anti-hero as victim (under the power of the autistic imagination) and culminates with the anti-hero as victor (under the power of the logical imagination). The anti-hero as victim is prominent in Woolf's first two novels. The nature of the victimization accords with the first stage of literary apocalypse. Here, the imagination appears to be an autistic dream world, and the anti-hero is essentially powerless against nature because he is not sure whether nature is "real." The hallucinatory "voyage" of Rachel Vinrace and the Romantic illusions of Ralph Denham and Katharine Hilbery are essentially self-centred experiences, or psychological ones that need to be tested against reality but

never do get tested. In this sense, the other-worldly identity of these characters seems to them exceedingly dubious. They cannot decide which is dream, which reality.

The apocalyptic process begins with the second, or descriptive phase. Descriptively, the symbol is a "sign" or a verbal unit which conventionally stands for and points to things outside the literary work (AoC, 73). For Woolf, the descriptive phase introduces this-worldliness, in preparation for the inception of logical imagination in the next phase. The fictional character as pure sign appears only in biographical and historical contexts. In Orlando: A Biography, for example, Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare are signs, whereas Orlando is not. The typical common hero in this phase is both a motif and a sign. The common hero, the symbol of man as a compound of ineffectual other-worldliness and undeniable this-worldliness, is especially typical in Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway. Jacob Flanders is an absent presence whose other-worldliness is reflected in the mystery of his personality, and whose lusty this-worldliness is chronicled by the novel's biographer-narrator. In Mrs. Dalloway, the same dual identity is created in the Doppelgänger character represented by Septimus/Clarissa. The common hero reaches the second stage of literary apocalypse, an ironic identity in which his other-worldliness acquires power from its contact with this-worldliness. In discovering the reality of nature, the common hero finds a worthy enemy and, thus, becomes a fighter instead of a mere dreamer.

In the third, or formal phase, the imagination achieves a partial independence from nature. Here, the symbol is an "image"

or a formal unit of art with a natural content (AoC, 84). This phase is the centre of gravity for the logical imagination. The hero as image is the imaginative man sure of his imaginative identity: in other words, the artist. The formal phase inaugurates an "imaginative revolution" in which "the imitation of nature shift[s] from a reflection of external nature to a formal organization of which nature [is] the content" (AoC, 119). In this third phase of literary apocalypse, the hero is the image of the Creator, as is Lily Briscoe, who creates a world of art in To the Lighthouse. Yet, because the symbol in the formal phase is still "contained by nature" (AoC, 119), this phase is also the centre of gravity for the illogical imagination, which usurps the power of the Word in the name of this-worldliness. Woolf dramatizes the life-and-death struggle between the logical imagination and the illogical imagination in To the Lighthouse, in which Lily Briscoe must fight the ghost of Mrs. Ramsay--the maker of this-worldly illusion--before she can become a self-sufficient artist.[1]

In the fourth, or mythical phase, the imagination becomes strong enough to begin creating an order of art as complex and comprehensive as the order of nature. In this fourth phase of literary apocalypse, the symbol is an "archetype," which connects one poem (imaginative structure) with the whole body of literature (AoC, 99). The hero, in this phase, is a demigod; that is, a god capable of dying. Woolf's Orlando and Percival are archetypal heroes in this sense. The manner in which their deaths is represented, however, points out how the logical imagination takes an other-worldly attitude to myth. In the archetypal phase, the

symbol becomes a powerful tool for controlling people if the illogical imagination is either the maker or the interpreter of the myth. In this phase of her literary apocalypse, Woolf ironically undercuts the illogical use of myth. In Orlando, the hero's death is other-worldly, and the "biographer" who must record the hero's "death" becomes a fool in the eyes of any logical reader of the "biography." In The Waves, the hero's death is this-worldly, and the bardic poet, Louis, who would make this death symbolical is exposed as a tyrant. According to the logical imagination embodied in the novelist, Bernard, Louis would "roof us all in . . . confine us, make us one, with his red ink, with his very fine nib."[2] Bernard recognizes the other-worldliness of archetypal heroes. For Bernard, the heroic Percival is an archetypal symbol of man's desire for a life independent of nature; thus, the real Percival is not a demigod, but Bernard's semblable, who shares with Bernard the godlike identity of all men.

In the fifth, or anagogic phase, the imagination achieves an apocalyptic vision of nature as the content of a metaphorically divine body. In this final phase of literary apocalypse, the symbol is a "monad," or a symbol as the centre of one's total literary experience. "Nature," writes Frye, "is now inside the mind of an infinite Man. This is the conceivable or imaginative limit of desire, which is infinite, eternal and, hence, apocalyptic" (AoC, 119). In Woolf's literary apocalypse, "there is no God" (MB, 33), so her hero-as-monad is particularly difficult to grasp. In The Years and Between the Acts, she offers a vision

of total human community conceived as an other-worldly "We," a monad representing the Word. The best way to describe this monad is to say that it takes the form of a Supreme Artist (not identifiable as Woolf, herself) who is the creator of the "world as a work of art." In this phase, the power of the illogical imagination is exceedingly strong in that myth has the power to become religion. Woolf undercuts the illogical power of anagogy in her last two novels by effecting a return to the origins of the Word located in the literal phase of symbolism. "We" are the motifs which make up the Word; and, just as the motif has existence only in a hypothetical sense, so does the Word. In The Years, Eleanor Pargiter's strong interest in the historical reality of the god-man, Christ, gives way to an other-worldly concept of anagogy: the divine identity of the human community taken as a whole. This vision is reinforced by the other-worldly "song" of the caretaker's children at the end of "Present Day"--a totally incomprehensible gestalt of Greek and Latin, of words and syllables. Just as the Word begins with meaningless motifs which express nothing natural, it ends with an Unnameable monad which contains all. In Between the Acts, the meaning of Miss La Trobe's pageant utterly escapes the attempt made by the Reverend G. Streatfield to contain it within the context of Christian dogma. Instead, the search for identity gets thrown back upon the audience, who have seen themselves in mirrors as "[s]craps, orts, and fragments" (BTA, 221), motifs which are the rudiments of the Word. Only in the wordless music with which the pageant culminates does the anagogic mind appear: an "immeasurable profundity" (BTA, 220)

conceived by the logical imagination.

Literary apocalypse, as exemplified in Woolf's canon, raises two critical questions which need to be answered at this point. The first is relatively simple: What grounds are there for asserting that a poet's canon takes the form of an expanding ethical framework beginning in mimesis and culminating in anagogy? Frye, who notes such an imaginative development in the canon of William Blake, offers the following answer: " The idea of an individual canon, apart altogether from the choice between good and bad poems which every poet makes, is neither peculiar to Blake nor a mark of egomania. If a man of genius spends all his life perfecting works of art, it is hardly far-fetched to see his life's work as itself a larger work of art with everything he has produced integral to it. . . ."[3] Woolf's canon, in this sense, can be said to be a larger work of art in that her structural experiments in each novel make it possible for her to explore further and further the nature of imaginative identity.[4] The second question is: What are the archetypal bases of the logical imagination and the illogical imagination? The answer is contained in the following brief survey of Frye's theory of myths.

Frye's theory of symbols shows how two contrasting visions of human nature develop as the symbol expands its frame of reference from the first to the final phase. The expanding symbol gains a greater authority to constitute either a supernal other-worldliness or a supreme this-worldliness. The vision of literary apocalypse can only be imaginatively successful when both the poet and the reader have a logical imagination. The illogical

imagination, by contrast, usurps the growing power of the Word in an attempt to bind the human world to that of nature. Frye discusses these contrasting visions in the third essay of Anatomy of Criticism, where he distinguishes between the "apocalyptic world" and the "demonic world." Biblical myth, writes Frye, conceives of two archetypal settings, Heaven and Hell, either of which can be the ultimate dwelling-place of man. Literary apocalypse conceives of Heaven as a state of imaginative freedom; Hell, a state of imaginative bondage.

In the apocalyptic world conceived by the logical imagination, man and nature are unified by means of an "implicit metaphorical identity" (AoC, 136). Metaphorically, Christ is one God, one Man, one Lamb, one Tree, and one Stone. The body-politic is a metaphorical identity, as in Hobbes' Leviathan and the concept of "one life" Woolf refers to in Three Guineas: "A common interest unites us; it is one world, one life."[5] Metaphorically, sexual identity is suggested by the other-worldly concept of marriage as in the mystical marriage of the Lamb and Jerusalem in Revelations. Woolf's concept of androgyny belongs in this category, since it is an other-worldly concept of two sexes in conjugal harmony in "the great mind" (See AROO, 147-148; and BTA, 255-256). Metaphorical identity in the vegetable world is suggested by the Tree of Life in the garden of Eden. In Between the Acts, the starling-pelted tree observed by Miss La Trobe is an ingenious analogue to the Tree of Life (see BTA, 244-245). Metaphorical identity in the mineral world takes the Biblical form of the New Jerusalem, and in Woolf's vision, the form of a city-mind containing "the whole popu-

lation of the mind's immeasurable profundity" conceived in Between the Acts (220).

The demonic state, under the influence of the illogical imagination, represents the antithesis of metaphorical identity: this-worldly identity.[6] In the demonic state, the imagination is tyrannically enslaved by belief. In place of a hypothetical unity in a metaphorical divine body, the demonic vision presents a tyrannical god (who is really a Satan-figure). Such is the god of Nurse McInnis in The Voyage Out. The demonic political identity replaces total community with totalitarianism. Such is the political vision of the powerful Dr. Bradshaw, "the priest of science" (MD, 104), and, too, the "damned bully" (Mussolini?) Eleanor Pargiter reviles in The Years (356). The demonic sexual identity is suggested by the sterile hermaphrodite, the beast with two backs: a lust which destroys the spirit. This identity is clearly portrayed in the destructive battle of the sexes in The Voyage Out, Night and Day, To the Lighthouse, Orlando, and Between the Acts. The demonic vegetable identity takes the form of the Tree of Death, subtly suggested in Neville's vision of "death among the apple trees" in The Waves (17). The demonic mineral identity locates man in a city-as-mechanism, such as the labyrinthine metropolises portrayed in Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway (especially from the point of view of Septimus Warren Smith), The Waves, and The Years.

Even though the demonic vision is particularly prominent in twentieth-century art, it begins to acquire significance in Romantic literature. The modern attenuation of the Word's power

to assert other-worldliness makes Woolf's age an "age of unbelief" in which science and religion conspire to destroy the freedom of imagination. In this context, the logical imagination is skeptical of the Word's power to inspire belief; such an imagination effects apocalypse by means of an ironic tone and ironic structures. The ironic apocalypse historically descends from the Romantic apocalypse, which revolted against the literal use of myth in contemporary natural religion. "Civilization," writes Frye, "tends to try to make the desirable and the moral coincide" (AoC, 156). He adds that, as long as poetry follows religion toward the morally conventional, religious and poetic archetypes will be very close together; but poetry more naturally tends to follow human freedom toward the infinitely desirable. Therefore, when religious myth, in the late eighteenth century, became highly conventionalized in conceiving the universe as a giant mechanism and man as a deterministic being, poetry started to become revolutionary in its myth-making. Whereas much of the mythical framework of Biblical doctrine still survives, certain features of Woolf's apocalyptic vision can be identified only by means of an acquaintance with the revolutionary framework of Romantic myth. The revolutionary aspect of Romantic myth is that it created a change in the language of poetic mythology, and by so doing, freed the Word from the tyranny of literal meaning. As suggested in the first chapter, the central figure in the Romantic imaginative revolution is William Blake.

The signal innovation brought about by Romantic myth is a shift in the structure of the mythical cosmos. Before Blake, poets

conceived a cosmos which coincided with that of the Classical Golden Age. It arranged the universe spatially on four levels. On the top was God's heaven; below this was the garden-world, man's true home; next came the physical world we inhabit; and, at the bottom, was the world of sin, death and corruption. The Classical mythical cosmos survived in Christian myth as the four worlds of heaven, the garden of paradise, the "fallen" world, and hell. In the Middle Ages, Frye writes, this myth was closely linked with the scientific myth of an earth-centred cosmos, with heaven above and hell below. But after the sixteenth century, the links between the imaginative and the scientific cosmos weakened and gradually broke, "leaving the construct to survive only in poetry, and, even there, increasingly by inertia" ("Keys," 179). Science at this time, particularly physics and astronomy, fertilized the popular illogical imagination, which subsequently gave birth to a doctrinal religion called Deism. Deism adopted the scientists as its prophets in conceiving the universe as a giant mechanism constructed and set going by a Supreme Mechanical Engineer. Such a myth was imaginatively sterile and ethically dangerous because it condoned a mechanistic (or deterministic) view of man and left little room for the concept of free will. Blake insisted that such a concept of the universe and of man was imaginatively intolerable. Consequently, he rejected the astronomical version of universe as a fixed, mechanical, and lifeless illusion: "Blake's view," writes Frye, "is that the universe of modern astronomy, as revealed in Newton, exhibits only a blind, mechanical, subhuman order, not the personal presence of a deity. . . .[W]hat

was up there, according to Blake, is only a set of interlocking geometrical diagrams, and God, Blake says, is not a mathematical diagram."[7] In pointing out the this-worldliness of the heavens, the astronomers made "up there" unsuitable as a symbol of the other-worldliness of the apocalyptic vision of a humanized nature, and left us instead with "the world of heavenly bodies, circling around automatically and out of reach" ("Keys," 17).

Blake's response to the mechanistic universe was to repudiate the remote God-in-the-sky and substitute the other-worldly concept of the God within the mind. Characteristic of this centripetal concept is Blake's assertion that the four physical levels of the imaginative cosmos really represent projections of four "mental states" through which the imagination passes from birth to imaginative salvation. The organizing principle of this myth is an imaginative analogue of the biological cycle of birth-death-rebirth which conveys the theme of an eternal struggle between innocence-as-other-worldliness and experience-as-this-worldliness, or of imaginative myth solidifying into doctrine then exploding into renewed freedom. The key feature of the new poetic mythology is that it turns the old cosmology upside down. On the top is this-worldliness; below is the buried and potentially revolutionary other-worldliness. Frye writes: "In place of the old construct, therefore, in which man regains his happy garden home by doing his duty and obeying the law, we have an uneasy revolutionary conception of conscious values and standards of reality sitting on top of a volcano of thwarted and mainly sexual energy" ("Keys," 10).

In Blake's poetry, the forces of other-worldliness and this-worldliness are respectively characterized by the youthful and revolutionary Orc and the aged and reactionary Urizen--the rebellious son and the tyrannical father. Imaginatively, the dominion of Urizen is established when he binds his son in some subterranean place, where the boy remains a source of imminent revolution. Frye notes that this mythological construct of buried desire and governing, rationalizing tyrant has become a pervasive archetype in our present culture--in the psychology of Freud where the reality principle represses the pleasure principle, and in the politics of Marx where the ascendant class subverts the lower, working class. The Romantic myth also turns Christian doctrine upside down, making the Old Testament Yahweh a subverting Urizen and the New Testament Son of God a spiritual revolutionary against the letter of the law.

In Woolf's fiction, the conflict between the tyrant father-figure and the oppressed youth is a pervasive theme that has yet to be explored in the context of a revolutionary ethical framework. In this context, Rachel Vinrace of The Voyage Out no longer appears a pathetic virgin shrinking from sexual embraces, nor a rigid feminist rejecting the chauvinistic male, but an innocent other-worldly who bursts out of one confinement after another: Christian doctrine, conventional marriage, and a blind and instinctual society that operates under the power of natural law. James Ramsay in To the Lighthouse is not simply a classical Oedipal figure but an imaginative consciousness enslaved by the experiential con-

sciousness of both his parents.

The struggle between Orc and Urizen is unequal, chiefly because the youthful revolutionary is, by nature, a rebel without a cause. In other words, a suppressed Orc will not necessarily re-emerge into the surface world in the same form he left it. Repression may pervert his energetic nature so that it turns against itself. In Blake's poetry, the concept of the "Orc-cycle" gradually evolved into the concept of "Druidism": that is, in the mass orgies of sacrifice practised by the Druids, Blake symbolized his growing belief that the revolutionary spirit is always in danger of being reduced to a demonic this-worldliness, in which the possibility of the utter extinction of the Orc-spirit in man becomes a reality. From this perspective, the original construct of "buried innocence trying to push its way into experience" ("Keys," 22), is surmounted by "the death in which all life, individual or historical, ends" ("Keys," 9).

Woolf's innocent revolutionaries sometimes meet such a "fate worse than death," or at least brush with it. Rachel Vinrace only escapes what Shelley calls "the world's slow stain" by succumbing to fever and dying. Jacob Flanders is perhaps not so fortunate. Before he is sacrificed in the Druidical orgy of the Great War, Jacob is sown with "the seeds of extreme disillusionment" (JR, 158). Clarissa Dalloway excapes the death of her soul only fortuitously, by an adventitious second chance to meditate on the nature of her life; but the young man whose suicide provides Clarissa's redemption has run out of time. Rhoda, in The Waves, is also driven to suicide as the only means of escaping the death of the soul: "'Oh, life, how I have dreaded you . . . oh, human beings, how I have

hated you! . . . I have been stained by you and corrupted. . . . What dissolution of the soul you demanded in order to get through one day, what lies, bowings, scrapings, fluency and servility!'" (W, 145). Some characters, like Nurse McInnis in The Voyage Out and William Bradshaw in Mrs. Dalloway, are hopelessly possessed by the demonic force of conversion, as perhaps is Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse (see below, Ch. 7).

The demonic vision, ironically, discovers a more powerful ally in the natural cycle of rebirth than in the natural phenomenon of death. The power of rebirth is a terrifying prospect when the energy of civilization is repressed into a death-wish: such a civilization resists both social and imaginative evolution. In Blake's mythology, this is the condition of the fallen Tharmas, "a form of potential life" (FS, 234) which becomes transformed into eternal death. Tharmas is associated with the sea. In a world corrupted by demonic vision, the sea is a sinister symbol: the "womb and tomb" of all life, both natural and imaginative. The biological aspect of this symbol depicts the theme that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and that the new-born child is tainted from birth.[8]

Woolf's version of death-in-life, the eternal this-worldliness which perverts potential life, is epitomized in Richard Bonamy's demonic social vision "of carriages, irresistibly driven; of flower beds uncompromisingly geometrical; of force rushing round geometrical patterns in the most senseless way in the world" (JR,151-152).[9] This demonic vision of death-in-life perhaps lies behind Rachel Vinrace's fear of marrying and certainly explains

Septimus Warren Smith's fear of fathering children: "One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that" (MD, 99).[10] The vision of universal death-in-life reaches its imminent crisis in To the Lighthouse in James Ramsay's coming-of-age. James, aged sixteen, has the potential to become a stern and tyrannical lawgiver; and his final contest with the father is marked by a recurrence of his old fantasy of taking a knife and striking his father to the heart--of eros transformed into aggression (see Ch. 7, below). The theme recurs in the images of the "chained beast" in The Waves, in the pervasive gloom of the younger generation of Pargiters in The Years, and in the Darwinian survival-motif in Between the Acts.

Clearly, the continued edge that the power of rebirth gives the revolutionary Orc over the stern Urizen is no assurance that revolution by generation alone can possibly bring about renewed freedom. The best that rebirth can insure is an endless cycle. But for Blake, as Frye points out, "the emancipating of desire . . . is not the cause but the effect of purging reality" ("Keys," 33). In short, the purging of reality requires the establishment of a vision, in the midst of the experiential world, of the imaginative possibility of freedom with its conviction that the world can have a humane meaning and a humane form. So, four forces exist in the Blakean myth. Besides fallen love (Orc), fallen wisdom (Urizen), and fallen power (Tharmas, as the natural cycle), there is the force of fallen imagination. This fourth force

is Los, the imaginative form of time: "Los derives, not from the suppressed desires of the individual child, but from the deeper creative impulse alluded to in Biblical myths about the unfallen state. These myths tell us that man's original state was not primitive, or derived from nature at all, but civilized, in an environment of a garden and a city" ("Keys," 35). In Blake, as in the Bible, the imagination conceives of man's true home as an eternal city. But since Blake's mythology represents the traditional levels of existence in an ironic reversal, his imaginative, eternal city is not "up there" at the end of time, but "down there" at the beginning of man's history. Blake's symbol for the eternal city is the fabled Atlantis which belongs to the mythical Golden Age and is presently "buried" beneath the ocean. This identification also points to Blake's symbol for universal man: he is called "Albion" (the imaginative form of England) and is identified mythically with Atlas, the son of the sea-god, Poseidon: "Atlantis, according to Plato's Critias, was settled by the god Poseidon. . . whose eldest son was Atlas: this corresponds to the English tradition, preserved in Spenser, that Albion, the eponymous ancestor of England, was the son of Neptune."[11] Albion provides the missing link between natural man exiled in nature and threatened with annihilation, and apocalyptic man or the "human form divine" of Blake's poem, "The Divine Image." Albion is outside time, and thus immutable: "Albion includes, presumably, all the humanity that we know in the world of time and space, though visualized as a single Titan or giant. The history of the world from its creation, which was part of his fall, to the last Judgment is his sleep" (FS, 125). This

world is Albion's sleep, according to Blake, and his awakening will bring about the apocalypse.

In Woolf's fiction, the fourth force in man is the logical imagination, which overcomes the endless cycle of birth-death-rebirth by asserting a hypothetical other-worldliness as the alternative to nature. The logical imagination does not create a system but the potential for a system. The apocalyptic world conceived by the logical imagination is the Great Void, not a nothingness but a "centre of complete emptiness" (see below, Ch. 7). The logical imagination claims that man's other-worldliness originates in a gap or vacancy between the self and the world, and that this vacancy is made into a something-nothing by means of the Word--the thing before it has been made anything. The imaginative poets in Woolf's fiction--Septimus Warren Smith, Lily Briscoe, Bernard, Miss La Trobe--provide the youthful revolutionary implicit in all men with the means to escape a demonic vision of this-worldliness, by bringing the vision of nothingness into existence. Clarissa Dalloway's rebirth comes about not by Septimus's unwritten Immortal Ode to Time but by his suicide. Septimus, by destroying himself, destroys the tyranny of this-worldliness. He shows that the Word is a something-nothing. He plunges to the imaginative "centre" of human reality, and Clarissa follows in a ritual death that ironically gives her back her power to act. In To the Lighthouse, Lily Briscoe's "gift" to Mr. Ramsay is the gift of vacancy, symbolized by the objectifying power of art (which the novels of Scott represent to Mr. Ramsay as reader). As a result, Mr. Ramsay is able to shed his tyrannical demon and become "like a young man" again. Bernard, in The Waves, becomes a true poet only when he

loses his "self" in a mysterious crisis of vacancy reported in the phantom dinner party. In that vacancy, Bernard achieves an other-worldly identity with his friends, transcending sexual barriers, ethnic barriers, even the barrier of death. He emerges from the void as an imaginative horseman, an eternal fighter against the imaginative "death" represented by this-worldliness. Miss La Trobe, in Between the Acts, bestows on her audience the projective power to be what they are not. Thus, they can imaginatively transcend the blind, Darwinian forces of love, hate, and jealousy that hold them to this world. The vision she imparts to these modern "cave-dwellers" is not the revelation of the Divine but the knowledge of the void and the means to transform actuality into acting. She gives them back the original power of recovered speech.

Woolf's ironic apocalypse takes the Romantic apocalypse one step further.[12] No centre of vacancy characterizes Blake's apocalyptic Eden; no imaginative fight against the animal origins of man appears in his myth of redemption. Blake's mental fight was waged primarily against the Deistic religion and Newtonian physics of his time. Blake found sufficient other-worldliness in an anagogic myth of a buried God and a lost Golden Age. Blake's Los can fight myth with myth: "I must create a system," cries Los in Jerusalem, "or be enslaved by another man's." But Woolf lived in an age familiar with the biological theories of Darwin, the psychological theories of Freud, and the political exploitation of myth characteristic of Hitler's Nazism. Fearful of the powers

of their own myths, Woolf's fictional visionaries cry out that to avoid being enslaved by the system, they must avoid creating systems altogether. At the end of the pageant in Between the Acts, the voice of the pageant's author cries out over a megaphone: "'O we're all the same. Take myself now. Do I escape my own reprobation, simulating indignation, in the bush, among the leaves?'" (BTA, 219) Miss La Trobe's cry is an ironic cry against the illogical imagination. Woolf's "Los" is intensely self-critical. He must break his vision before it breaks the spirit of man. In the twentieth century, the apocalyptic vision has turned against its spokesmen, the hypothetical poets contained within the fictional world. The true author of the ironic apocalypse is the invisible and ubiquitous "We": poet and reader united in an imaginative search for man's other-worldly identity.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Cp. Woolf's allegory on "Killing the Angel in the House" ("Professions for Women," CE, II, 285-286). See also Ch. 7, below, which argues that the "angel" in To the Lighthouse is the image of sympathetic yet disturbingly powerful Mother Nature illogically projected onto Mrs. Ramsay by Lily Briscoe and Mr. Ramsay.

2. Virginia Woolf, The Waves [hereafter, W] (Hogarth Press; London, 1931), 200. A list of primary sources cited hereafter is given at the beginning of the Bibliography, together with an abbreviation key for the nine novels. To simplify documentation, all subsequent quotations from Woolf's novels are documented in the text by abbreviated title and page. See Bibliography, page 487.

3. Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake [hereafter, FS] (Princeton, N.J., 1947), 406. Cf. Woolf's remark on the successive novels of her individual contemporaries: "Coming out one by one, their books seem like parts of a design which is slowly uncovered" ("The Novels of E.M. Forster," CE, I, 342).

4. A Writer's Diary is an extended chronicle of an emerging canon suggesting the perfecting of a vision. Perhaps the most eloquent expression of this concept occurs when Woolf is in mid-career, about to begin The Waves: "[T]hat is my temperament I think, to be very little convinced of the truth of anything--what I say, what people say--always to follow the call of--the call of--" (Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary [hereafter, AWD], ed. by Leonard Woolf [Hogarth Press; London, 1953], 137).

5. Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas [hereafter, TG] (Hogarth Press; London, 1938), 258-259; see also Ch. 9, below. The phrase also appears in W, 162.

6. "[O]ne of the central themes of demonic imagery is parody, the mocking of the exuberant play of art by suggesting its imitation in terms of 'real life'" (Frye, AoC, 147).

7. Northrop Frye, "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism," in Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed., with a forward, by Northrop Frye (New York, 1963), 6.

8. Frye, FS, 234. This version of original sin is evident in Blake's "Infant Sorrow." See Blake: Complete Writings, with Variant Readings, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford, 1957), 217.

9. This enslavement of energy in mechanical form is considered from the point of view of repetition and rhythm in Allen McLaurin's Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved (Cambridge, 1973), 131: "Something which has rhythm when we are part of it becomes empty and repetitious if we see it from the outside."

10. Septimus also makes (false) claims, in an allusion to Antony and Cleopatra, that Shakespeare loathed copulation and procreation (MD, 98-99). As Beverly Ann Schlack notes, such allusions to Shakespeare's tragedy of love and death are symptomatic of the destructive effect of the Great War on Septimus's psyche. See Continuing Presences: Virginia Woolf's Use of Literary Allusion (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1979), 68-69. The suggestion here is that Eros is converted into Thanatos: the self-destructive or suicidal impulse.

11. Frye, FS, 126. See TTL, 319, for an ironic analogue to this myth of poetic origins.

12. Although Woolf was familiar with Blake's "And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time," there is no evidence to suggest that she studied his major prophecies nor that she would have deduced an apocalyptic vision from them if she had. Nor am I claiming that there is an "historical" influence of Blake on Woolf, only that Woolf's visionary response to modern life is partly conditioned by Romantic concepts of innocence versus experience, cycles of revolution, daemonization, sublimation, mythopoeia, organicism, and so on, all of which would be familiar to any well-read modern writer. Therefore, Blake's influence would have reached Woolf indirectly.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IRONIC APOCALYPSE: CHARACTERS AND SETTING

In the conclusion to A Room of One's Own, announcing that the mythical poet-sister of Shakespeare has never died and will someday create immortal works, Virginia Woolf reveals her belief in the ageless and deathless nature of the poet.[1] This concept forms the central thesis of "A Letter to a Young Poet":

> Once you begin to think of yourself seriously as a leader or as a follower, as a modern or as a conservative, then you become a self-conscious, biting and scratching little animal whose work is not of the slightest value or importance to anybody. Think of yourself rather as something much humbler and less spectacular, but to my mind far more interesting--a poet in whom live all the poets of the past, from which all poets in time will spring. . . . In short, you are an immensely ancient, complex and continuous character. . . .[2]

This view of poetry, assuming as it does a continuity both in the archetypal vision and in the visionary-as-archetype, explains why Woolf persistently eschews the lures of what she called "life itself"--the merely representational--and seeks instead the representative, enduring, and permanently significant details of life as the matter for her art. As she writes in her diary, "there's no trifling with words . . . can't be done: not when they're to stand forever" (AWD, 194).

For Woolf, the apparently unique problems confronting modern man are really perennial problems in a modern form. She would have agreed with Frye that, even though the poet in each age "imposes the same kind of mythical form on his content, [he] makes different adaptations of it" (AoC, 63). Now, when a mythopoeic thinker like Woolf sets about to embody her vision in a literary structure ideally suited to the conventions of realism,

an ironic point of view is bound to result. Mimetically, setting and characterization are this-worldly. But mythically, the same characters acquire archetypal natures, and the setting becomes pre-apocalyptic. This tendency for myth and realism to undercut one another explains the curious inconclusiveness that critics persistently find in Woolf's characters. These characters are constantly measuring themselves against one another and asking themselves the question "What am I?" Clearly, such inconclusiveness does not suggest that Woolf is unable to create "character." What it does suggest is a conscious and obtrusive rhetoric of doubt operating on the very concept of "self" in these novels. What indeed, Woolf asks, is "I"? In the world of Woolf's audience, it seems, "human character is dissipated into shreds," and her characters formally represent this dissipation of identity in modern man. Woolf simply holds the mirror up to human nature; she is not to be held responsible for either the perplexity or the rage of the beholder. The present chapter, then, analyzes the double perspective of Woolf's characters and setting--the particular "angle of vision" from which Woolf, as a twentieth-century representative of the "eternal" poet, views the eternal prospect.

The historical characteristics of Blake's apocalyptic vision provide a useful introduction to the nature of characters and setting in the ironic apocalypse. Historically, Blake's poetry belongs to the "low mimetic" mode, the fourth of the five historical modes which Frye believes make up the panorama of Western literature thus far. "Low mimetic" is Frye's term for

the hero of a fictional work belonging to the period of literature "from Defoe's time to the end of the nineteenth century" (AoC,34). In the low mimetic mode "the characters exhibit a power of action which is roughly on our own level" (AoC,366). In fact, a key feature of low mimetic literature is its repudiation of larger-than-life social heroes. Thus, the low mimetic writer tends to devaluate god on thrones and kings on thrones and fathers whose homes are their castles. Blake's sky-god, for example, is ironically called "Nobodaddy"; his Zoa-who-would-be-king is Urizen, whose pride, like that of Milton's Satan, starts the machinery of the fall. Low mimetic heroes are individuals who recognize a fraternity among mankind. The most important decision the low mimetic hero makes is a decision to identify with the human community. His imaginative crisis usually revolves about the problem of how to achieve equality with other men without becoming a mere conformist or "social animal." Thus, Blake's four Zoas must learn to live in harmony, not as a primal horde but as imaginative brothers. The heroic standard of low mimesis is epitomized in the great Chain-of-Being which counsels against both the proud aspiration to godhead and the idle emulation of the animal world characterized by mindless group instinct and dominated by collective passional impulses. In this context, Blake's Urizen and Tennyson's Lucretius both demonstrate the folly of divine usurpation; Swift's Yahoos and Arnold's "ignorant armies" both reveal the degradation of mindless group instinct.

In much twentieth-century literature, the characters exhibit "a power of action inferior to the one assumed to be

normal in the reader or audience" (AoC, 366). In the ironic mode, even the concept of brotherhood is called into question because not only has the concept of a divine Father collapsed into an agnostic anxiety of orphanhood, but the metaphorical "motherhood" of nature has been given a demonic twist by the Darwinian theory of man's animal origin. Thus, whereas the low mimetic hero finds himself at war with men or with nature, the ironic hero also wars against his own body. The key ironic gesture seems to be a turning one's back on nature as it manifests itself in one's own physicality. The archetype of man as God's "image"--the potentially heroic "individual"--collapses into a duality between body and brain. The imaginative crisis of the ironic hero seems to be the problem of how to accept his limited heroism without becoming a self-proclaimed victim of self. The dangerous decision the ironic hero must make is to continue living in harmony with his body without aspiring to bodiless divinity or becoming a hollow, mindless, and instinctual creature of nature. Of Woolf's characters, those who reject the body usually become helpless mystics with suicidal impulses; those who relinquish their freedom for a life absorbed in the body usually approach what Peter Walsh in Mrs. Dalloway calls "the death of the soul."

The tendency for the ironic hero to withdraw into an autistic seclusion produces a landscape of "inner nature" whose circumference is the human brain. This construct is apparent in the following passage from Woolf's "An Unwritten Novel":

> But when the self speaks to the self, who is speaking? --the entombed soul, the spirit driven in, in, in to the central catacomb; the self that took the veil and

> left the world--a coward perhaps, yet somehow beautiful as it flits with its lantern restlessly up and down the dark corridors.[3]

This passage uncovers the unique dilemma projected by the poet in the ironic mode. It begins with a question about identity: "But when the self speaks to the self, who is speaking?" And what follows for answer is no egotistical affirmation as found in Blake, Byron, and Shelley, no quiet solitary self or "sole self" as found in Wordsworth and Keats,[4] but the entombed soul. In the ironic mode of literary apocalypse, it seems, the hero is of two minds, has two contradictory selves. One self speaks from within. The world, it says, is corrupt. To preserve my spirit I must find the "central catacomb"--an inner sanctuary; I must take the veil and leave the world. The other self speaks from a point of view "out there" in the world of nature. This self says that escape is really cowardice, the quest for the centre is really self-centredness. From this double bind no realistic escape seems possible. For some of Woolf's ironic heroes, even suicide is impossible. Hence, Clarissa Dalloway's acknowledgement of a Promethean bondage: "It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress" (MD, 203).[5]

For the Romantics, this crisis of identity had only begun. The "self" could leave the world of men and seek sanctuary in the world of nature. Frye writes:

> In a great deal of Romantic imagery human society is thought of as leading to alienation rather than identity, and this sense increases steadily throughout the nineteenth century as literature becomes more ironic in both

> tone and structure. In Romanticism there is an emphasis on the false identity of the conforming group--even for the most conservative Romantics the real social values are in a tradition which has probably been lost anyway--and, by contrast, on a kind of creative and healing alienation to be gained from a solitary contact with the order of nature outside society. For many writers today this sense of creative alienation has disappeared, and only the ironic view of society remains.[6]

The Romantic hero, able to identify with nature, was a unified individual being, confidently fighting the gargantuan forces of demonic society for the spiritual reclamation of nature:

> Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
> Bring me my Arrows of desire:
> Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
> Bring me my Chariot of fire.
>
> I will not cease from Mental Fight,
> Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green & pleasant land.[7]

But the ironic hero is self-divided. His spirit is at the mercy of his body; his body is at the mercy of an absurd, menacing natural world that seems to scorn its reclamation. The theory of evolution pronounces him the son of apes. Psychology makes belief in any free action exceedingly difficult:

> Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ (a common delusion), and has a message, as they mostly have, and threatens, as they often do, to kill himself, you invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve.[8]

Denied freedom of body and mind, the ironic hero is left facing a tyrannical society whose victim he ultimately becomes.

Yet, from the imagination's point of view, the cause of tyranny and victimization is the illogical imagination.

Blake's closest analogue to the illogical imagination is the "Selfhood." "Both the tyrant and his victim," writes Frye, "are in that state of animal absorption which Blake calls the Selfhood" (FS, 255). Woolf expresses the concept of animal self-absorption in terms of belief. In Between the Acts, Miss La Trobe points out that tyrants are only possible because we believe ourselves to be slaves: "A tyrant, remember, is half a slave" (BTA, 218-219).[9] The problem can be simply formulated by making a distinction between authorship and authority. The logical imagination is the author of other-worldliness (that is, the fictional antagonist is a hypothetical figure). The illogical imagination, on the other hand, invests real people and institutions with authority belonging to the logical imagination. In this sense, the scientific theories of Darwin and Freud have been given authority over the imaginative concepts of human identity and human freedom. While these scientific theories contain scientific truths, neither Darwin nor Freud is an author of imaginative vision. This authorship exclusively belongs to the logical imagination, which provides an other-worldly perspective on man's identity, and which complements the scientific perspective of such thinkers as Darwin and Freud. Frye writes:

> When a new truth appears, the imagination uses it imaginatively; and to the imagination such a new truth as the doctrine of the fit indicates how far away from the state of nature we ought to get. To the Selfhood, the same doctrine becomes a new excuse for bullying and mass murder. This is not Darwin's fault; he is an announcer or herald, not a conspirator. (FS, 255).

The double perspective also applies to Freud's discoveries leading to the doctrine of personal ego. To the Selfhood, this doctrine be-

comes a new excuse for deconsecrating the individual mind. But to the imagination, the same doctrine indicates how far away from the individual mind we ought to get. Conceived imaginatively, the doctrine of the psyche offers the ironic poet a unique symbol for the apocalyptic world:

> But when the self speaks to the self, who is speaking? --the entombed soul, the spirit driven in, in, in to the central catacomb, the self that took the veil and left the world--a coward perhaps, yet somehow beautiful as it flits with its lantern restlessly up and down the dark corridors.

This passage was previously examined thematically, but now we are in a position to see in it the imaginative concept of a universal human mind. In the ironic mode, in which the poet's content announces the Selfhood's abrogation of the "human form divine," the poet's form announces an anagogic mind engaged in auto-analysis. And the goal of this analysis is the abolition of a universal repression, leading to a resurrection of the body.[10] The resurrected body is an anagogic body--"every body"--as conceived by the hero of Finnegans Wake, who imagines his initials standing for "Here Comes Everybody." In Woolf's Between the Acts, the same formal construct appears at the end of Miss La Trobe's pageant with the playing of the gramophone tune:

> Like quicksilver sliding, filings magnetized, the distracted united. The tune began; the first note meant a second; the second a third. Then down beneath a force was born in opposition; then another. On different levels they diverged. On different levels ourselves went forward; flower gathering some on the surface; others descending to wrestle with meaning; but all comprehending; all enlisted. The whole population of the mind's immeasurable profundity came flocking; from the unprotected, the unskinned; and dawn rose; and azure; from chaos and cacophony measure; but not the melody of surface sound

> alone controlled it; but also the warring battle-plumed warriors straining asunder: to part? No. Compelled from the ends of the horizon; recalled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united. (BTA, 220-221)

Thus, in the ironic analogy of myth, the individual identity of the hero ceases to be the poet's subject and becomes, instead, his object. The poet's aim is no longer to show identity with a divine order through nature, but identity as an imaginative psyche in a universal body through art.

Psychology shows how the terms "subjective" and "objective" have reversed their traditional values in our age. To the Romantics, a subjective man eschewed generalizations and trusted to his senses. "The imaginative mind," as Frye interprets it in Blake's thought, "is the one which has realized its own freedom and understood that perception is self-development" (FS, 23). For Woolf, the subjective man is autistic and introspective. He avoids using his two eyes to perceive how his introspective generalizations might be false. Thus Bernard in the phantom dinner party is subjective when he imagines himself "[i]mmeasurably receptive, holding everything, trembling with fullness, yet clear, contained" (W, 206). He only becomes logically perceptive or objective when he catches the eye of his dinner companion and remembers that he is not omniscient but "an elderly man, rather heavy, grey above the ears" (W, 207). This objectivity, which starts with this-worldliness, is the logical basis of the apocalyptic vision. But Bernard cannot imaginatively develop much beyond this point because, as long as he lives, the

eyes of others will enslave him in this-worldliness by reminding him of his physical limitations as a selfhood. The resurrection of the body, in these novels, is achieved only by means of an omniscient point of view providing an other-worldly identity for the human community and, hence, for the individual member of this community. In The Waves, for example, the omniscient point of view presents the "world seen without a self" (without a selfhood) in the descriptive interludes, and this transcendent world encloses the lyric monologues of the six speakers within an other-worldly perspective. This angle of vision (it is much more than a device) gives a permanent imaginative identity to the characters, however much they conceive themselves isolated selfhoods. This double perspective collapses and imaginative identity fails if man's dual identity is expressed, lyrically, by a fictional character. Such a failure of apocalypse is shown by Woolf in the "central shadow" passage in The Waves. Having reached the vision of a world seen without a self, Bernard arrives at a point in his address to his dinner companion where he begins to express the freedom of a consciousness released from the limitation of the body:

> "So now, taking upon me the mystery of things, I could go like a spy without leaving this place, without stirring from my chair. I can visit the remote verges of the desert lands where the savage sits by the camp-fire. Day rises; the girl lifts the watery fire-hearted jewels to her brow; the sun levels his beams straight at the sleeping house; the waves deepen their bars; they fling themselves on the shore; back blows the spray; sweeping their waters they surround the boat and the sea-holly. The birds sing in chorus; deep tunnels run between the stalks of the flowers; the house is whitened; the sleeper stretches; gradually all is astir. Light floods the room and drives shadow beyond shadow to where they hang in folds inscrutable. What does the central shadow hold? Something? Nothing? I do not know.

> "Oh, but there is your face. I catch your eye. I, who had been thinking myself so vast, a temple, a church, a whole universe, unconfined and capable of being everywhere on the verge of things and here too, am now nothing but what you see--an elderly man, rather heavy, grey above the ears, who (I see myself in the glass) leans one elbow on the table, and holds in his left hand a glass of old brandy. That is the blow you have dealt me. I have walked bang into the pillar-box. I reel from side to side. I put my hands to my head. My hat is off--I have dropped my stick. I have made an awful ass of myself and am justly laughed at by any passer-by." (W, 207)

In this passage, as Bernard gradually picks up the main motifs of the interludes, he seems to have transcended the limitations of his body and become free to explore the "central shadow"--the hypothetical apocalyptic world. But Bernard ceases to be objective as soon as he begins to believe that the "central shadow" is this-worldly. The "central shadow" is Bernard's metaphor; when he forgets it is only a metaphor his imagination becomes illogical--he turns mystic. This mysticism, in turn, undercuts the reality of this world. His imagination is rendered logical again by the "blow" of his enemy, an act which pulls Bernard out of the inner labyrinth of self, back to this world and to an awareness of his body. Though the apocalyptic movement begins again with the image of the "pillar-box" as Bernard imaginatively projects himself into a hypothetical street, the reader is aware that Bernard is grateful to his dinner companion. The necessary enemy points out that Bernard has taken the imaginative for the real, the hypothetical for the genuine: "'I have made an awful ass of myself and am justly laughed at by any passer-by on the street.'" Nevertheless, since the "central shadow" is unreachable and untouchable because unrealizable, it serves effectively

as a symbol for the hypothetical other-worldliness which polarizes the this-worldliness revealed to the characters through their senses.

This passage from The Waves also illustrates the dramatic structure which Woolf employs in her character-presentation. Bernard's refusal to identify with his physical appearance and his inability to escape its reality confine him to a cyclical movement between the demonic circumference and the apocalyptic centre, so that his life forms a series of cycles which I shall tentatively call "life-rhythms."[11] The life-rhythm of the ironic hero covers an imaginative area of self between the apocalyptic identity in which all men imaginatively take part and the visible and vocal self which the other characters in the novel perceive. In a lyric structure, the life-rhythm would collapse into an autistic dialogue of self with self because the first-person narrator would act as the only medium through which the reader could perceive the character's fictional world. Doubt about the nature of the character's self would originate not in the character but in the reader, who would be tempted to confuse the character with the poet who creates him. But in all Woolf's novels, the characters are subordinated to an omniscient point of view and subjected, within the fictional context, to the perceptual powers of other characters. Woolf's first three novels create a tension between apocalyptic identity and demonic selfhood chiefly by a thematic contrast between a protagonist's (inner) impersonal identity and his (outer) social

self. Rachel Vinrace's fever-identity, Katherine Hilbery's daydream-identity, and Jacob Flanders' heroic Athenian identity[12] contrast with their social selfhoodsand, thus, tend to undermine the tyranny of this-worldliness in these novels. In the novels from Mrs. Dalloway on, Woolf sharpens the outline of her imaginative topography. At the centre is the apocalyptic world. The voice in the centre speaks through the omniscient narrator and is also the voice of the ironic hero whenever his life-rhythms take him close to the centre where he is able to glimpse the imaginative unity of all men. Rarely, in Woolf's fiction, does a character reach the centre. His bodily nature always recalls him to his selfhood existence. Only Septimus plunging to death, and Bernard imagining the "central shadow" come close to the centre. More often, the centre is suggested by the metaphorical concept of a collective imagination. The clearest example of the collective imagination is the audience of the pageant in Between the Acts. The medley of voices near the end of Jacob's Room, the spectators of the sky-writing plane in Mrs. Dalloway, the "sleepers" in the "Time-Passes" section of To the Lighthouse, and the first dinner-party in The Waves are others. Since the apocalyptic world is always polarized by the demonic (or selfhood) world, the logical location for the demonic world is the "out there" at the circumference. The surface reality of nature, including the human body, is demonic in that it limits the ironic hero to his physical form and enslaves him in the world of nature. As the narrator of "An Unwritten Novel" puts it: "The eyes of others, our prisons;

their thoughts, our cages" (HH, 20). Between the apocalyptic centre and the natural circumference the ironic hero lives.

An important step in Woolf's development of her imaginative topography is the discovery of the essential distinction between the personal centre and the imaginative centre. The narrator in Jacob's Room seeks a personal centre in Jacob Flanders: "something is always impelling one to hum vibrating, like the hawk moth, at the mouth of the cavern of mystery, endowing Jacob Flanders with all sorts of qualities he had not at all" (JR, 72). In Mrs. Dalloway, however, the centre acquires a purely metaphorical nature:

> A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people finding the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (MD, 280-281)

In this initially-perplexing passage, the attempt to communicate and the attempt to reach the centre are equated. Clarissa Dalloway knows that self-centredness can lead to the death of the soul. In the experience of love she explores an alternative route to the centre, by seeking it in another person. Such an experience as the kiss from Sally Seton begins in rapture, but the rapture inevitably fades; perfect communication is impossible. The death of Septimus, however, shows Clarissa that the centre is not to be found in any one person but exists only figuratively, as an imaginative concept. By making Septimus Clarissa's double, Woolf is able to suggest an imaginative unity between two charac-

ters who, in fact, never meet in body, and who have no blood ties. To the Lighthouse achieves a vision of the centre in the portrayal of Lily Briscoe's search for identity. In Part I, Lily seeks the centre in Mrs. Ramsay: "[S]he imagined how in the chambers of the mind and heart of the woman who was, physically, touching her, were stood, like the treasures in the tombs of kings, tablets bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out would teach one everything" (TTL, 82).[13] Only after Mrs. Ramsay's death does Lily realize that the centre is an imaginative centre, an other-worldly "centre of complete emptiness" (TTL, 275). After To the Lighthouse, Woolf explores the only route to the centre--the imagination embodied in art and thus freed of the selfhood. This vision reaches its apotheosis in Between the Acts where the ultimate identity of the characters is a hypothetical unity in this world conceived transcendently as an imaginative fiction: the whole world as a work of art.

Character in Woolf's novels turns out to be multi-dimensional, in accordance with the expansion and contraction of consciousness in life-rhythms. The levels of vision experienced by these characters correspond to the states of existence conceived in literary apocalypse. Moving from the circumference to the centre they are: enslavement in the body, struggle between this-worldliness and other-worldliness, and epiphany,[14] or the moment of vision. As in Blake's mythology, Woolf's apocalyptic world is not in time and space and is unrealizable in this world. Yet, without the hypothetical apocalyptic world,

the human world would consist of a hopeless cycle of attempts to communicate frustrated by enslavement in the self. In terms of literary apocalypse, when Woolf speaks in her essays of the modern crisis in belief, she is referring to the need for belief in our imaginative unity.

The ironic heroes in Woolf's fiction are many in number and include the lovers, the fighters, and the artists. The fully developed antagonists are few: Holmes and Bradshaw, Miss Kilman, Charles Tansley, and Bernard's silent dinner companion. But, since the selfhood is partly the effect of projection (it is Mrs. Ramsay's gift to reconcile Lily to Charles Tansley and, hence, to her own inner accuser), the heroes are almost always villains to other characters. Thus, figures like Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay become powerful archetypal presences to figures as various as Lily and James. Almost all the characters in The Waves are equally ambiguous. Jinny, for example, functions as a selfhood figure when she kisses Louis in the garden, thus shattering the mystical experience of the centre. The principal antagonist in Woolf's fiction is the illogical imagination of the ironic heroes themselves. They tend to project their images of divinity onto other characters then re-assimilate (or sublimate)[15] these images as though they really existed out there. In this sense, the selfhood of other characters turns out to be a very real means to the ironic hero's salvation because they help him to discover that his fears are only projections. Thus, Clarissa Dalloway looks upon Doris Kilman as a potential saviour: "She hated her: she loved her. It was enemies one

wanted, not friends" (MD, 192). In one very real sense, however, characters can be intensely demonic: characters who exploit the power they acquire from the imaginative projections of others come very close to being demonic. William Bradshaw is such a demon, exploiting man's need to believe in order, proportion, and community. Mrs. Ramsay also tends to exploit the mother archetype by attempting to keep everyone under her "protection."

The concept of life-rhythms, as a description of the ironic narrative, contributes to an understanding of the novelist's handling of time in works of literary apocalypse. It was noted earlier that Romantic poetry conceived a narrative structure in terms of individual biological development. Hence, Wordsworth's Prelude presents a vision in terms of the gradual development of the individual consciousness interacting with an external continuity: nature as the "prime teacher." However, a sense of external continuity is all-but-absent in Woolf's novels. The passage of time is always broken up, reversed, and halted by the consciousness of the characters. Their sense of time is often discontinuous, episodic, often regressive even in such formally chronological structures as The Waves, in which Bernard wonders whether there can be such things as stories. He thinks of time as a series of drops falling from the roof of the mind and forming a pool of fluid impressions in the unconscious.[16] At the end of the novel, he greets dawn with suspicion: "I will not call it dawn. What is dawn to an elderly man standing in the street looking up rather dizzily at the sky? Dawn is some sort of whitening of the sky; some sort of renewal. Another day;

another Friday; another twentieth of March, January or September. Another general awakening'" (W, 210). Life in the ironic apocalypse is a rhythmic experience based in struggle, rising to an intuition of permanence, falling into a fearful conviction of doom, and rising again. Chapter Four looks at the ironic narrative as a dual narrative recounting, at one and the same time, the helpless cycle of life-rhythms experienced by the selfhood, imitated in each of Woolf's novels, and the apocalyptic quest for imaginative identity, expressed in the external fiction[17] or imaginative dialogue which gradually develops between poet and reader in Woolf's novels taken as a whole.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own [hereafter, AROO] (Hogarth Press, London, 1929), 170-172.

2. Virginia Woolf, "A Letter to a Young Poet," CE, II, 184-185.

3. Virginia Woolf, "An Unwritten Novel," A Haunted House, and Other Stories hereafter, HH (Hogarth Press, London, 1944), 24.

4. "But what does one mean by 'oneself'? Not the self that Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley have described--not the self that loves a woman, or that hates a tyrant, or that broods over the mysteries of the world. No, the self that you are engaged in describing is shut out from all that. It is a self that sits alone in the room at night with the blinds drawn" (Virginia Woolf, "A Letter to a Young Poet," CE, II, 189).

5. Cf. Bernard, at the end of The Waves, goaded out of his beautiful death-wish by the imperative "must" (W, 210).

6. Frye, Studies in English Romanticism, 47.

7. William Blake, Milton, a Poem in 2 Books (1804-08), ll. 9-16, in Blake: The Complete Writings, with Variant Readings, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1969), 481.

8. Woolf, MD, 110. See also Woolf, "Freudian Fiction," Contemporary Writers: Essays on Twentieth Century Books and Authors, ed. Jean Guiguet (New York and London, 1965), 152-154.

9. See also Woolf, TG, 258.

10. Norman O. Brown, in Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History (New York, 1959), 307, makes the same point from a psychoanalytical point of view.

11. In Chapter Four, below, where this concept is discussed in terms of a structuralist model, it is called a "sublime cycle."

12. See below, Chapter Six.

13. Cf. Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," MB, 83.

14. In Epiphany in the Modern Novel (Seattle, 1971), 114-115, Morris Beja confuses the characters' epiphanies with the vision of the author, thus ascribing the rhetoric of doubt evident in the characterization to Woolf herself.

15. The relation between sublimation and the Longinian sublime is discussed in Chapter Four, below.

16. See, for example, W, 58, 104, 131, 133, 159, and 179.

17. "[Besides] the internal fiction of the hero and his society, there is an external fiction which is a relation between a writer and the writer's society" (Frye, AoC, 52). As Chapter Four, below, shows, the two levels of fiction constitute a dialectic between internal and external narrative, a twofold structure of mimetic cyclical narrative and expressive apocalyptic narrative, "ironic" in the sense that the two levels of fiction are contradictory.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUBLIME CYCLES AND APOCALYPTIC QUEST: THE IRONIC NARRATIVE

In the life-rhythms of her ironic heroes, Woolf portrays a cyclical movement in the consciousness of these characters between the perspectives of other-worldliness and this-worldliness. What she is fictionalizing is not, in any Aristotelian sense, the life of man in nature and society, but rather, the failure of man's imaginative identity with the Word. The condition of Woolf's ironic heroes is analogous to that of the sons and daughters of the fallen Albion: their cycles of existence recapitulate in this world the eternal struggle between the Word and nature. The nature of Woolf's internal fiction is thus based on that of her external fiction. And, since her external fiction involves the activities of absorption and ecstasis which, according to Frye, "constitute the central conception of the Longinian approach to literature" (AoC, 67), her internal fiction is approachable by means of some critical theory of the sublime.

At this stage, a few points must be made about the critical history of the sublime because critical attitudes to the sublime have been historically influenced by the illogical imagination at work in civilization in much the same way as the illogical imagination has influenced cultural attitudes to religious mythopoeia. Longinus's On the Sublime, emphasizing the conceptual and rhetorical power of the Word, establishes a principle of imaginative identity which anticipates Woolf's theory of the logical imagination. Woolf's concept of great

works of art as the indices of a godlike greatness in man himself[1] recapitulates Longinus's insistence on the hearer's identification with the role of creator in response to the sublime in art or in oration: "As if instinctively," Longinus writes, "our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard."[2] Thus, as hearers, we "sublime" ourselves, or attribute to ourselves the sublime power we experience in art. The Longinian sublime is the "reader's" sublime, for, in it, the sublime object is the poem experienced by the reader, and the sublime experience begins with his reading of the poem. However, under the influence of the illogical imagination, the reader's sublime turns demonic. This happens when the grand conceptions and the affective power belonging to the other-worldliness of the sublime are given a this-worldly context. The illogical imagination attempts to ascribe a this-worldly source to the reader's sublime: a paternal figure to replace the imaginative pattern which the sublime object discloses. Woolf's conception of literary apocalypse, in "A Sketch of the Past," cautions against the illogical form of the reader's sublime:

> Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. (MB, 72)

The greatness of a Shakespearean tragedy and a Beethoven quartet is the index of a greatness which "we" as an imaginative community possess. The greatness of God is an index of the greatness we

possess in conceiving of God. Only the illogical imagination believes that such greatness is the personal greatness of Shakespeare, of Beethoven, or even of God. Poetic authority and even Divine Authority are other-worldly. By making greatness a function of selfhood, the illogical reader, or interpreter, of sublime conceptions becomes alienated from the role of creator, and conceives himself either a passive creature or else a powerless antagonist of a powerful figure. Thomas Weiskel, in The Romantic Sublime, terms this illogical version of the reader's sublime the "negative sublime:" "The sublime remains negative, dialectical, a movement between two states, an indeterminate relation. . . . Psychologically, the structure suggests a compensation principle in which a kind of reactive identification saves the empirical mind from defeatism."[3] In Woolf's view, the negative sublime would be related to the "mystical" point of view of the illogical imagination, which believes in the this-worldly sublime power of a patriarchal figure, whether it be a tyrannical father, political leader, or stern god. As will be shown later in this chapter, the negative sublime is an important structural component of Woolf's internal fiction, which takes the form of sublime cycles.

An alternative to the reader's (Longinian) sublime came into prominence in the eighteenth century as the patriarchal creation myth gave way to a matriarchal, organic myth of creation. In this version of the sublime, the sublime object is not a work of art but rather an aspect of nature, and the sublime experience is that of internalizing the power perceived in nature.

Frye notes this version of the sublime, finding in it one explanation for the important role of nature in much Romantic poetry:

> The feeling that physical nature provides the missing complement to human nature takes many forms. In proportion as the old celestial imagery declined, it was replaced by the "sublime," which included it but gave it a different context. The sublime emphasized a sense of mystery and vagueness, not of order and purpose, coming through uncultivated nature, and addressing the individual or solitary man rather than the community. There is nothing new in this as a principle, but locating the sublime in mountains and oceans and wildernesses, where a solitary traveller confronts it, is relatively new as an emphasis in poetic imagery. Longinus, the main source of the theory of the sublime, had discussed it in a professional rhetorical context which is very different from its eighteenth-century picturesque developments.[4]

This version is the "poet's" sublime, since the sublime object is some aspect of nature perceived by the poet as significant, and the sublime experience involves a discovery of an otherworldly centre of vacancy which becomes the locale for imaginative power. The poet's sublime is an internalization by the poet of the power he perceives (and has himself projected on) nature. This concept is evident in the following passage from Wordsworth's The Prelude:

> Imagination--here the Power so called
> Through sad incompetence of human speech,
> That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
> Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
> Halted without an effort to break through;
> But to my conscious soul I now can say--
> "I recognize thy glory": in such strength
> Of usurpation, when the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours.[5]

The poet's sublime has the same spiritual, godlike tenor as the Longinian sublime, but is chiefly distinguished from the latter by the vehicle through which this tenor is expressed. The Blakean myth, as noted in Chapter Two, turned the Christian mythical topography upside down so that the divine world, in Blake's poetry, is a buried Eden rather than a heaven located in the highest celestial sphere. A somewhat similar inversion in the metaphorical, spatial vehicle of the Longinian sublime takes place in the eighteenth century. Whereas Longinus conceives of the sublime as a hypsos, or height, Wordsworth, in the passage quoted, writes of an "awful power" originating in "the mind's abyss," or depth. This change in the imagery of the sublime may, incidentally, have been due to the influence of the new science of psychology on the cultural lexicon. The OED dates the word "subliminal" ("below the threshold of sensation or consciousness") from Herbart's unter der Schwelle des Bewusstseins: under the threshold of consciousness (Psychol. als Wissenschaft, 1824, I., 47). A suggestion that the poet's sublime defines a subliminal world comes from Thomas Weiskel in a consideration of Blake's theory of the imagination: "Evidently Blake could still see the immensities of inner space from outside. The natural sublime established inner space by a conceptual metaphor in which the immeasurability of physical space was linked to the infinitude of our supersensible faculty" (RS, 7). The conceptual metaphor of inner space is evident in Woolf's ironic landscape, as noted in Chapter Three. By the illogical

imagination, however, the metaphor of the imaginative centre is taken literally and psychologically. In Woolf's internal fiction, the ironic heroes fail to achieve the poet's sublime; instead, it turns egotistical. Lily Briscoe seeks a mysterious centre of wisdom and knowledge in the mind of Mrs. Ramsay (TTL, 82), while Bernard locates the "central shadow" in his own psyche, so that his being seems to hold "everything" within itself. When the poet's sublime turns psychological, it becomes what Weiskel calls a "positive" sublime: "this is a 'positive' sublime that in the end would subsume all otherness, all possibility of negation" (RS, 49). The positive sublime is autistic, unable to recognize the selfhood of the "other," and is thus denied the knowledge that could result from a dialectical confrontation with the real world, whose this-worldliness negates the illusory, or dream nature of imaginative autism.

The sublime is an integral concept in Woolf's ironic narrative. Her external fiction, or apocalyptic narrative (outlined in Chapter Two),locates the poet's sublime at the critical point of imaginative identity, in the formal phase. The imaginative revolution in this phase comes about through the establishment of the other-worldly centre of emptiness as the birth-place of the logical imagination. The reader's sublime resolves the crisis of imaginative identification in the anagogic phase, in which the logical imagination chooses the other-worldly "pattern" of the Word rather than a mystical God as the anagogic ideal of which the human community, taken as a whole, is

the metaphorical vehicle: "we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself" (Woolf, MB, 72). The this-worldly versions of the sublime (the positive and negative sublime) figure in Woolf's internal fiction. In contrast to the apocalyptic quest Woolf engages in as poet, the characters experience sublime cycles: endlessly repeated attempts to achieve identity which must always collapse in face of the apparent motherhood of nature; endlessly repeated attempts to achieve identification which must always fail in the face of this-worldly god-figures. The sublime cycles of the characters are narrative units, or moments of being.

Woolf's critics have been particularly unsuccessful in analyzing the moments of being in her novels. Morris Beja and Alice van Buren Kelley, for example, tend to confuse the moments of being experienced by Woolf's characters (mimetic units) with experiences they suppose Woolf herself to have had (expressive units). Both critics cite the moments of being as evidence that Woolf is a mystical poet. Beja identifies the moment of being as a species of "epiphany"; that is, "a sudden spiritual manifestation from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind--the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it."[6] When Beja applies this formula to the moments of being experienced by Woolf's characters, he concludes that "the moments themselves are far more important than the meanings they involve."[7] The observation is shrewd,

but Beja does not recognize its inescapable conclusion, which is this: Woolf's characters represent the condition of man trapped in this-worldliness (i.e., for them the moments have no meanings), whereas Woolf herself transcends this-worldliness by locating the moments of being in an imaginative structure. Alice van Buren Kelley similarly fails to recognize the ironic contrast between the poet and the characters when she finds in Woolf's novels "moments of mystical understanding in which a person or object suddenly discloses the existence of a unity that transcends the bounded life of an individual."[8] Such a transcendence is simply not possible for Woolf's characters, living as they do in a naturalistic universe, and subject as they are to the negating influences of other characters. For Woolf's characters, the moments of being are failed transcendences: what these moments lead them to understand is that they are "bounded individuals" who cannot possibly escape the "real" world.

As Woolf's discussion of moments of being in "A Sketch of the Past" reveals, the moment of being is not a form of transcendence but must itself be transcended by an other-worldly perspective. According to Woolf, the moment of being is almost invariably unsolicited. It appears as a "hammer-blow" or as a shock which has great power to hurt:

> [A] shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it. I feel that I have had a blow; but it is not, as I thought as a child, simply a blow from a hidden enemy behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting

> it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together. Perhaps this is the strongest pleasure known to me. (MB, 72)

The moment of being is wordless, a "dumb horror" (MB, 78); only in that "strength of usurpation" Wordsworth speaks of in The Prelude, that "putting it into words" Woolf insists upon in "A Sketch of the Past," can the individual transcend his pain. Only by means of the poet's sublime can the individual transcend the limitations of life in nature. As Woolf points out, the "real thing behind appearances" becomes real only when it has been ordered and made "whole" by being put into words. For Woolf, the "pleasure" of the poet's sublime is a function of the power of the Word to establish an other-worldly context for experience.

Woolf's characters, even her artist-characters, are not real poets; they are images of the selfhood, ironic heroes, whose attempts at imaginative transcendence are doomed by the cold stare of nature and the eyes of others which imprison them in this-worldliness. Lily Briscoe, Bernard, and Miss La Trobe as selfhoods do not escape this-worldliness by engaging in imaginative pursuits (just as Woolf, as selfhood, does not escape this-worldliness by writing novels): "there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven . . . we are the words" (MB, 72). The other-worldliness of these characters lies outside character altogether, outside ego altogether. Insofar as these characters represent ego-structures of real people, they experience sublime cycles, hopeless attempts to escape this-worldliness, which are

nothing more than psychological conflicts. Clearly an analysis of the Woolfian moment of being in its true context as a mimetic psychological narrative requires a theory of projection and sublimation which can be applied to the characters of Woolf's fiction. Whereas the apocalyptic quest is an other-worldly, literary pursuit, the sublime cycles represent a purely psychological experience in the minds of Woolf's characters. The rudiments of such a theory of projection and sublimation have been established by Thomas Weiskel, who describes the "sublime moment" in psychological terms, as an internalization of the mind's conflict with nature:

> The metaphorical moment of the sublime would be understood as an internalization or sublimation of the imagination's relation to the object. The unattainability of the object with respect to the mind would be duplicated as an inner structure, so that in the sublime moment the mind would discover or posit an undefinable (ungraspable) domain within. (RS, 23)

The critical usefulness of Weiskel's formula when applied to Woolf's characterization is accidental, in fact. Weiskel errs by failing to distinguish between the fictional "I" of the Romantic poem and the "I" of the poet. Consequently, the Weiskelian sublime moment purports to examine the psychological states of the poet; it is a biographical approach. However, the analysis, without modification, rightly applies to the lyric "I," or persona, in the poem. Similarly, the sublime moment rightly applies to the moments of being experienced by Woolf's characters, though it would be a mistake to extend the analysis to the psyche of the author. This much said, I am adapting Weiskel's terms "positive sublime" and "negative sublime" to

signify this-worldly versions of the poet's and reader's sublime, respectively. The sublime moment, then consists of three phases of encounter between the mind of the fictional character and the fictional object world: this-worldliness, disruption of this-worldliness, reestablishment of this-worldliness. The (modified) three phases can be summarized as follows:

1. In phase one,"the mind [of the character] is in a determinant relation to the object, and this relation is habitual, more or less unconscious . . . and harmonious (RS, 23; phase one of positive and negative sublime).

2. In phase two "the habitual relation of mind and object suddenly breaks down" (RS, 23):

   (a) The breakdown occurs because the mind is suddenly in excess: "Here meaning is overwhelmed by an overdetermination which in its extreme threatens a state of absolute metaphor. . . . Verticality is the approppriate dimension, and the image is inevitably some variant of the abyss" (RS, 26-27). This is phase two of the positive sublime.

   or

   (b) The breakdown occurs because the object world is suddenly in excess: "The signifiers [sublime objects] cannot be grasped or understood; they overwhelm the possibility of meaning in a massive underdetermination that melts all opposition or distinction into a perceptual stream. . . . The imagery appropriate to this variety of the sublime is usually characterized by featureless (meaningless) horizontality or extension: the wasteland" (RS, 26). This is phase two of the negative sublime.

3. In the third phase "the mind recovers the balance of outer and inner by constituting a fresh relation between itself and the object such that the very indeterminancy which erupted in phase two is taken as symbolizing the mind's relation to a transcendent order" (RS, 24):

   (a) "Overwhelmed by meaning, the mind recovers by displacing its excess of signified into a dimension of contiguity which may be spatial or temporal" (RS, 29). Nature becomes idealized. This is the third phase of the positive sublime.

or

(b) Overwhelmed with meaninglessness, the mind recovers by inserting "a substituted term into the chain, i.e., through metaphor" (RS, 28). The mind posits a term of ultimacy: a God. This is the third phase of the negative sublime.

In the other-worldly context of literary apocalypse, these two forms of the sublime moment would represent the poet's and reader's sublime, respectively. The poet's sublime is resolved by conceiving the metaphorical "centre" of the ironic landscape as an other-worldly inner nature. The reader's sublime is resolved by substituting the Word as the pattern behind what Woolf calls "the cotton wool of daily life" (MB, 72). In Woolf's internal fiction--the positive and negative sublimes--the sublime remains psychological and the imagination remains this-worldly or illogical. Thus, the sublime moment is ironic. Each moment begins in a state of this-worldliness (the unstable harmony of a fool's paradise), moves through a stage of potential epiphany (in which the imaginative or other-worldly identity of the individual is disclosed), but collapses into renewed delusion because the illogical imagination believes in the reality of a metonymical Mother Nature and of a metaphorical God the Father. Thus, each sublime moment begins and ends in this-worldliness.

The sublime cycle establishes literal (i.e. this-worldly) forms of figurative identity and figurative identification. Whereas the poet's and reader's sublime respectively conceive of an identity founded in imaginative freedom ("the centre of complete emptiness") and an identification with the imaginative community ("We are the words"), the positive and

negative sublime are founded on selfhood identity (the "ego ideal") and selfhood identification (the patriarchal "superego"). The ego ideal is the mother as other, the ambivalent object of secondary narcissism. The ambivalent affect--mother-love versus mother-hate[9]--leads to the threshold of the negative sublime and, hence, to the reactive identification which culminates in god-worship (an acceptance of the stern superego: Blake's "Nobodaddy"; Plath's "Daddy"; Woolf's "tyrant" [TTL, 292]). The identity that precipitates from the positive sublime features an ambivalent affective relation to the object world (or demonic mother). The positive sublime thus leads to a polarizing pressure that marks the beginning of the negative sublime, and hence to the ultimate conception of a superego-figure (the demonic father). The sublime cycles bring into existence demonic, this-worldly forms of imaginative identity and imaginative identification: possessive matriarchy and tyrannical patriarchy: the Scylla and Charybdis of a civilization controlled by the illogical imagination.

The complete narrative pattern of the sublime cycle is evident in an early passage from To the Lighthouse, Woolf's imaginative psychoanalysis of the influence of mother and father on the developing poetic consciousness.[10] Mrs. Ramsay, her youngest son on her lap, is sitting at the drawing room window of the summer house:

> The gruff murmur, irregularly broken by the taking out of pipes and the putting in of pipes which had kept on assuring her, though she could not hear what was said (as she sat in the window), that the men were happily talking; this sound which had lasted now half an hour

> and had taken its place soothingly in the scale of sounds pressing on top of her, such as the tap of balls upon bats, the sharp, sudden bark now and then, "How's that? How's that?" of the children playing cricket, had ceased; so that the monotonous fall of the waves upon the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again as she sat with the children the words of some old cradle song, murmured by nature, "I am guarding you--I am your support," but at other times suddenly and unexpectedly, especially when her mind raised itself from the task actually in hand, had no such kindly meaning, but 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, and warned her whose day had slipped past in one quick doing after another that it was all ephemeral as a rainbow--this sound which had been obscured and concealed under the other sounds suddenly thundered hollow in her ears and made her look up with an impulse of terror.
>
> They had ceased to talk; that was the explanation. Falling in one second from the tension which had gripped her to the other extreme which, as if to recoup her for her unnecessary expense of emotion, was cool, amused, and even faintly malicious, she concluded that poor Charles Tansley had been shed. That was of little account to her. If her husband required sacrifices (and indeed he did) she cheerfully offered up to him Charles Tansley, who had snubbed her little boy.
>
> (TTL, 29-30)

The cyclicity of the sublime cycle is such that each cycle begins at the resolution of the negative sublime, and progresses through the positive sublime and negative sublime, thus concluding where it began, at the resolution of the negative sublime. In the passage above, Mrs. Ramsay begins with an already achieved metaphorical substitution: the "gruff murmur" of the men talking on the terrace is a metaphorical substitution for the "monotonous fall of the waves upon the beach," a sound that is "obscured and concealed" (i.e. repressed) by the human sounds reaching Mrs. Ramsay. The sublime narrative begins when the "gruff murmur"

ceases. At this point, Mrs. Ramsay passes through the three phases of the positive sublime rather quickly, in a single subordinate clause with a compound predicate: "so that the monotonous fall of the waves on the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts [phase one] and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again [the direct object could be almost anything; the mind is suddenly in excess; hence, this is phase two] as she sat with the children the words of some old cradle song, murmured by nature, 'I am guarding you--I am your support' [her mind recovers the balance of outer and inner by displacing its excess of meaning into the past: the "monotonous fall of the waves" is made to stand for "the old cradle song" of the archetypal mother; this is phase three]." The resolution of the positive sublime generates a polarizing pressure which leads to the negative sublime. The sublime mother, who now stands for nature, evokes an ambivalent emotional response in Mrs. Ramsay. Her wish to be soothed and consoled by the archetypal mother is countered by a fear of being overwhelmed and absorbed. This is the pre-condition of the negative sublime, which proceeds as follows: the original determinant relation between the rhythm of the waves and the rhythm of Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness [phase one] breaks down "when her mind raised itself from the task actually in hand," and the rhythm of the waves becomes a threatening form of power, as is evident in the images of "the ghostly roll of drums" and "the destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea" [the object world is suddenly in excess; this is phase two]; finally, Mrs. Ramsay re-

covers by an act of metaphor, a reactive identification [paragraph two; phase three] which equates power with the rational, godlike Mr. Ramsay who replaces irrational Mother Nature as Mrs. Ramsay's sublime object. Now the perceptual stream diminishes and is replaced with images of accounting, such as "expense" and "of little account." Mrs. Ramsay overcomes her terror by taking a sensible (i.e. rational) attitude to her crisis: the men have stopped talking on the terrace (i.e. the original source of her sublime cycle!). In this transfer of felt power from nature to a conceivable metaphorical source, Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness comes under the tyranny of the illogical imagination. She ascribes to her husband the sublime power of a primitive god whose wrath can only be suspended if he is offered a human sacrifice. Mrs. Ramsay propitiates her "god" by offering up to him "poor Charles Tansley." Her reward is a demonic participation in the god's role. Being the wife of this "god," Mrs. Ramsay assumes the role of the mother-goddess. The sublime cycle thus ends where it began, in the realm of the illogical imagination.

Even a cursory survey of the preceding analysis shows that the real sublime power at work in Mrs. Ramsay's sublime cycle is her imaginative faculty. She personifies nature by comparing the rhythm of the waves to an "old cradle song"; she metaphorizes her husband by conceiving him as a primitive god. But the other-worldly power Mrs. Ramsay possesses is concealed from her consciousness primarily because her imagination is this-worldly or illogical. In other words, to personify nature and symbolically transform man is one thing; to believe in the reality of these

imaginative acts is quite another. Sublime cycles such as this, whether this complex or much more rudimentary, characterize the illogical imaginative activity of many of Woolf's fictional people. The hero of Jacob's Room, for example, experiences a series of positive sublime cycles in continually falling in love with idealized visions of women. Neville, in The Waves, experiences a series of negative sublime cycles in perpetually identifying with heroic, godlike figures which he assumes correspond to the real men he adores.

Only in Woolf's external fiction, that dialogue between the poet and the reader, does the sublime transcend a cyclical, this-worldly path. In the external fiction, the imaginative faculty recognizes its own glory apart from nature. Here, the sublime crisis is no longer a psychological trauma; it becomes an imaginative turning point, an epiphany revealing the realm of the logical imagination. The crisis of vacancy reveals the truth of imaginative freedom, a "centre of complete emptiness" where all things are imaginatively possible. The crisis of inundation reveals the truth of imaginative totality, the Word, from which we as "words" derive our power, and in which we find an imaginative identification with the human community taken as a whole. The poet's sublime and reader's sublime develop out of the pursuits of writing and reading. This is the apocalyptic quest that begins for the poet in solitude and culminates in a union of poet and reader, a unified vision of the total human community as "the thing itself."

The apocalyptic quest takes in the whole of Woolf's canon, which is an extended quest in search of the right words and the right forms to express man's other-worldly identity. In this sense, form and content become one; the act of perfecting vision is indistinguishable from the vision itself. We (poet and reader) both make the words and are the words we make. The poet's imagination struggles with reality to locate its other-worldly origins. In the act of creating a work of art, the poet grows what Spenser calls a "second nature." The reader (the "patron" or "common reader") uses his imagination to recognize in the work of art both his own struggles with nature and the conceivable victory over nature effected by the Word. The apocalyptic quest begins, then, with the poet's sublime as an imaginative identity and culminates with the reader's sublime, the true sublime as expounded by Longinus. The goal of the quest is an imaginative unity of all poets and all readers, a total order of words which is literature itself.

The five chapters which follow trace Virginia Woolf's imaginative development of literary apocalypse, an evolving dialogue between poet and patron beginning in autism and concluding in imaginative community. The quest begins with a vision of an inner world in which the imaginary and the real are inextricably confused so that, at the same time, the whole world seems to be a dream and the dream world seems only fragile illusion. At this point, Woolf is what Harold Bloom calls an "ephebe,"[11] a new voice speaking to an ancient ongoing readership. Next, comes a "fall" into this-worldliness which heralds

the discovery of the "out there"--the real world--as the solid basis of vision. Woolf's first "experimental" works (some of the sketches in Monday or Tuesday, Jacob's Room, and Mrs. Dalloway) introduce the struggle of form with matter (i.e. content) that established her as an original (i.e. unique) artist. Here, she builds her vision on a commitment to life as seen without illusion. The poète maudit in Mrs. Dalloway, Septimus Warren Smith, is a paranoid psychotic; the mimetic world Woolf places him in shows the limits of his "visions." This stage is superseded by the crisis of vacancy--the discovery of an irreparable gap between the self and nature. In the midst of this crisis, the poetic self is born. In To the Lighthouse, Woolf struggles with her biographical origins in a quest for her other-worldly origins as a representative of the eternal poet. (Lily Briscoe, who is so much Woolf, is also so little Woolf. Lily's painting is a poor remnant of her voyage into emptiness; Woolf's novel is a communicable embodiment of that voyage.) In the next stage comes the crisis of imaginative identification, the poet's fight against the folly of this-worldly heroism. This crisis culminates, in The Waves, with Bernard's unfinished novel being tossed under a table to be swept up by the janitors. The novel he cannot write is The Waves, a vision of the "world seen without a self." This is the world of the novel's last line, the world that endures after Bernard has spoken his final lines. This world is beyond the individual. The real hero of the novel is the anonymous and impersonal voice of the narrator who is

neither Bernard nor Woolf. The hero is the "author" who exists only by virtue of an imaginative act on the part of the reader. Finally, the apocalyptic quest ends, in Woolf's last two novels, with a concept of the whole world (the meaningful human world) as a work of art, and of the human imagination in all men as the Author and Reader of this work. As the goal is reached, the sublime disappears in its own glory. In eternity, there are no heights or depths, no individual poets and readers, but "we"--the words, the music, "the thing itself." "We" are the unseen portions of the seen, the imaginative portions of the fictional characters. Though "they" are trapped in sublime cycles which make it impossible for these characters ever to transcend being the creatures they must be, "we" dwell outside life-in-time whenever we write or read an imaginative work. Our portion is the other-worldly, and as will be seen in the following chapters, this portion is the raison for Woolf's artistic profession, the pursuit of the apocalyptic vision which can only be made real by being put into words.

The structural irony of Woolf's narrative is Woolf's solution to the modern expressive writer's formal problem: how to separate the psychological from the visionary in a viable discourse of apocalypse between the writer and the reader. By distinguishing the subjective lives of the fictional characters from the imaginative roles of the writer/reader, Woolf conceives a dual human identity. The internal fiction narrates the story of identity in nature; the external fiction removes both writer and reader from this identity, and thus reveals a second, imagina-

tive identity. Weiskel, whose study makes no reference to Woolf's novels, nevertheless suggests the possibility of just such a formal transcendence:

> The imagination beyond identity could not be exercised in a discourse of the "I"--a form in which there is virtually no difference in consciousness among the "I" of the poem, the poet, and the reader. It would seem that only an ironic structure or a dramatic form can take us beyond identity. . . . The "I" must become a character viewed ironically, or in relation; the meaning of the poem a tacit construction not available to the protagonist. (RS, 163)

Woolf's ironic narrative is, in fact, a formal advance beyond the lyric mythopoeia[12] of such Romantics as Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley. Her ironic narrative ranges characters in a dramatic contrast, and presents them ironically, with a lesser degree of power than the reader, and with a more limited awareness of the Word than is shared between Woolf and her audience.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. I am referring to Woolf's "philosophy," as expounded in "A Sketch of the Past," MB, 72.

2. Longinus, "On the Sublime;" the Greek text, edited after the Paris Manuscript, with introduction, translation, facsimiles and appendices, by W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge, 1899), 55.

3. Thomas Weiskel, The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence [hereafter, RS] (Baltimore and London, 1976), 43-44.

4. Frye, A Study of English Romanticism, 28-29.

5. William Wordsworth, The Prelude; Or the Growth of a Poet's Mind [1850 version], ed., Ernest de Selincourt; rev., Helen Darbyshire (Oxford, 1959), 6: 592-603.

6. Morris Beja, Epiphany in the Modern Novel, 8.

7. Ibid., 114.

8. Alice Van Buren Kelley, The Novels of Virginia Woolf: Fact and Vision (Chicago, 1973), 4.

9. Cf. J. Lilienfeld, "Deceptiveness of Beauty: Mother Love and Mother Hate in To the Lighthouse," Twentieth Century Literature, 23 (October, 1977), 345-376.

10. See Woolf, AWD, 138; "Professions for Women," CE, II, 285-286; and "A Sketch of the Past," MB, 80-81.

11. See Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (New York, 1973), 10. The new poet (or "ephebe"), Bloom points out, "is already the anti-natural or antithetical man." Poetry, not the natural world, is the initial locus of his identity.

12. One virtue of Woolf's ironic structure is that it enables her to exercise her imagination beyond identity. The logical imagination makes a formal distinction between the "I" of the character and the "I" telling the novel. The emotional flights raised to a sublime pitch in so many Romantic poems are also present in Woolf's novels, but in the latter, the emotions are contained (or undercut) by the primacy of the omniscient voice. This principle is especially noticeable in the conclusion to The Waves, where Bernard's lyric apostrophe to death is undercut by the impersonal neutrality of "The waves broke on the shore" (W, 211). The vision that results is so comprehensive that it cannot be destroyed by further ironic reduction.

CHAPTER FIVE

DREAMS AND REALITIES: *THE VOYAGE OUT* AND *NIGHT AND DAY*

> One of the conditions of dreamland is that it should admit the phantoms of terror as well as of ecstasy. Wake, and the phantoms will disappear; but if you choose to dream, you must have your nightmares as well as your visions of undying bliss. . . . The true evil is not that the dreams sometimes take hideous shapes, but that all mixture of dreams and realities involves a distortion of facts. . . . The phantoms of the imagination do, in fact, obey different laws from those of reality.

Thus writes Virginia Woolf's father, Sir Leslie Stephen, the agnostic and rationalist, in 1898.[1] Sir Leslie may have been a severe critic of "the phantoms of the imagination," but his daughter, before she wrote her first novel, was a confirmed dreamer. In June, 1906, she expresses this in a letter to a literary mentor:

> But my present feeling is that this vague and dream like world, without love, or heart, or passion, or sex, is the world I really care about, and find interesting. For, though they are dreams to you, I cant [sic] express them at all adequately, these things are perfectly real to me.[2]

Nevertheless, Virginia Woolf's first two works of fiction explore the tension between the dreaming and waking worlds. The dream world seems to be the source of the poet's imagination, while the waking world, conditioned by the forces of civilization, contains injustices and tyrannies which the imaginative sympathies find odious. But, since the dream world is also the psychologically unconscious world, it has a demonic side involving powerful destructive forces that can sometimes cause violence, despair, even madness. The central dilemma posed in Woolf's early novels is that, while reason can become an oppressive

tyrant, imagination (linked as it is with the ambiguous libidinal forces at work in the unconscious) is often an unreliable and dangerous guide.

The Voyage Out and Night and Day explore the nature of the "autistic imagination" (see Ch. 1, 6-7). The Voyage Out examines the dream world at its most terrible. Rachel Vinrace, caught between the sublime influx represented by the symbolic sea/mother and the tyrannical pressure of an identification with a patriarchal society, breaks down under these pressures. She enters an hallucinatory nightmare world, which is scarcely distinguishable from madness, and she only achieves peace through death. Night and Day investigates the possibility of establishing a logical imagination in work and friendship. The significant thematic development in this novel concerns Mary Datchet's feminist humanism and Katharine Hilbery's identity crisis which culminates in the substitution of her archetypal "magnanimous hero" for the symbolic sea/mother as the principal object of identification. In neither novel, however, is the dilemma of dreams versus realities completely resolved. Woolf's vision of reality, in these novels, is ambivalent--the social order is villainous, yet some order is necessary to release the logical imagination from the dream world. The dream world is desirable, yet terrifying, grounded (as it seems) in an unconscious nature. On the other hand, reality itself does not seem a solid enough base for the imagination, given its fearsome tyranny. Woolf does not resolve the problem of transcending the autistic imagination until To the Lighthouse (discussed below, Ch. 7). The Voyage Out, as the

title implies, maps the territory of the autistic imagination; the territory is that of the positive sublime.

The chief protagonist of The Voyage Out, Rachel Vinrace, is a prototype of Septimus Warren Smith (Mrs. Dalloway) and Rhoda (The Waves). Archetypally, she is a figure of pathos: she represents a powerless victim of the dream world who is drowned by the powerful forces of her uncontrolled imagination. Rachel's symbolic element is water,[3] which suggests an unformed sea-world, the womb and tomb of life. Rachel's "voyage out," which begins as a holiday designed to launch her into the social world becomes, instead, a sublime encounter with the symbolic sea/mother. The sea/mother is embodied in two characters who ultimately preside over Rachel's fate: Helen Ambrose,[4] Rachel's substitute-mother, and Nurse McInnes, the Cerberean guardian over Rachel's hallucinatory immersion during the final chapters of the novel. Rachel is constellated by two more female characters: the bovine, maternal Susan Warrington, and the fiery, militant Evelyn Murgatroyd (prototypes of Susan and Jinny in The Waves). Unlike Susan, an earth-figure, Rachel flees the fecund world of generation. The sexual gate to reality is closed to Rachel after she is kissed passionately by Richard Dalloway early in the voyage. Following a momentary experience of expansion, Rachel has a nightmare in which she encounters a cripple in a cave, the first in a series of significant dreams that subsequently shape her fate:

> She dreamt that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and

> became a vault; she found herself trapped in it, bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering with long nails. His face was pitted and like the face of an animal. The wall behind him oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down.
>
> (VO, 86)

This dream leaves Rachel with the conviction, as she puts it to Helen, that "men are brutes" (VO, 92); and she later tells Terence Hewet that men and women should live separately because they bring out the worst in each other.

Nevertheless, Rachel is not by instinct the shrinking, virginal androphobe some readers believe her to be. Unlike Evelyn M., who reacts to a kiss from a man named Sinclair with a fiery militancy (VO, 301), Rachel refuses to let her disgust for men go unanalyzed. Her dream reveals to her that if men are brutes (i.e. creatures controlled by lust) so are women. When Helen tells Rachel about "prostitutes" (VO, 91) in Piccadilly, Rachel is suddenly aware of a crippling social system that makes the sexual instinct seem disgusting and evil: "It seemed to her as she recalled their talk that there was something lovable about Richard, good in their attempted friendship, and strangely piteous in the way they had parted" (VO, 91). In this light, the fearfulness of Rachel's nightmare becomes placed. She realizes a vast discrepancy between her instincts and the powerful social conditioning that has already diverted and deformed these instincts so that any genuine friendship with men is impossible: "By this new light she saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned

aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled for ever--her life that was the only chance she had--a thousand words and actions became plain to her" (VO, 93). Is she, then, not a cripple in a cave as much as Richard Dalloway is? This passage would seem to suggest so.

Rachel's imminent tragedy is thus prefigured early in the novel. The chance of friendship with Richard is a chance of self-transcendence. The failure of friendship dooms Rachel to a nightmare world of self-absorption. When, later, she meets Terence Hewet, Rachel's potential romance is precluded at the outset because she lives in a civilization that confines the life force into what the narrator of Jacob's Room calls "geometrical patterns" (JR, 152)--the double standard, the censure of a woman's sexual impulses, and the code of patriarchal marriage. In one scene, Rachel watches a butterfly opening and closing its wings as it suns itself on a rock, and she asks: "What is it to be in love?" (VO, 207) For answer, she discovers "a terrible possibility in life" (VO, 207)--that the love of man for woman, crippled by a tyrannical social code indistinguishable from the stupidity of nature, can destroy the imaginative life-force and leave only a vision of death.

The generative cycle unenlightened by imaginative vision amounts to no more than a futile attempt to overcome the vast forces of life and death epitomized in the natural sublime. In the episode describing the river voyage, Helen Ambrose feels man's powerlessness against nature and senses impending doom like that induced earlier in Rachel's nightmare of the cripple

in the cave. As they travel down the narrowing tunnel-like river and approach the cavernous expanse of forest, Helen begins to feel "presentiments of disaster:"

> The cries of the senseless beasts rang in her ears high and low in the air, as they ran from tree-trunk to tree-top. How small the little figures looked wandering through the trees! She became acutely conscious of the little limbs, the thin veins, the delicate flesh of men and women, which breaks so easily and lets the life escape compared with these great trees and deep waters. A falling branch, a foot that slips, and the earth has crushed them or the water drowned them. Thus thinking, she kept her eyes on the lovers, as if by doing so, she could protect them from their fate.
>
> (VO, 349-350)

At the very heart of the journey up the river, Terence and Rachel become engaged. In an impressionistic scene foreshadowing the perspectival distortions of Rachel's fever-world, Rachel reacts to her agreement to marry Terence by stumbling on the ground as Helen claps a congratulatory hand on her shoulder.[5] Undoubtedly, for Rachel, this is the terrible hand of fate:

> A hand dropped abrupt as iron on Rachel's shoulder; it might have been a bolt from heaven. She fell beneath it, and the grass whipped across her eyes and filled her mouth and ears. Through the waving stems she saw a figure, large and shapeless against the sky. Helen was upon her. Rolled this way and that, now seeing only forests of green, and now the high blue of heaven; she was speechless and almost without sense. At last she lay still, all the grasses shaken round her and before her by her panting. Over her loomed two great heads, the heads of a man and woman, of Terence and Helen.
>
> (VO, 347)

The remarkable feature of this scene is the imagery of inundation, though the sea is nowhere in sight. Thematically, Rachel has fallen into a crisis of inundation precipitated by Helen, her substitute-mother. In this crisis, Rachel's lover does not play

the role of saviour. On the contrary, he seems allied with the mother-figure (much as Paul Rayley aligns himself with Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse). The scene demonstrates that the love of a man for a woman, when under the control of the goddesses of Proportion and Conversion, is indistinguishable from the tyrannous natural vision which begins by fighting its enemy, life, on life's own terms, and ends by destroying the imaginative spirit altogether.

The intensely symbolic nature of the characterization in this novel indicates to what extent The Voyage Out is not simply a tragic love story. Terence and Rachel, though seen as lovers in the eyes of Helen, and in the society of Santa Marina, are very different from the traditional lovers of Romance literature because The Voyage Out is not a Romance.[6] Romantic love, in this novel, is itself a blocking agent which thwarts the development of the imaginative self. Both Rachel and Terence are imaginative selves trapped in a society of tyrannical convention. The Romantic convention is epitomized in the story of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde, which Rachel rejects early in the novel as being laughable and senseless.[7] What Rachel desires is a life of freedom and power like that of the sea, and a community of dignity and breadth such as that created by the music she plays at the "great round dance" (VO, 194): "They sat very still as if they saw a building with spaces and columns succeeding each other rising in empty space. Then they began to see themselves and their lives, and the whole of human life advancing very nobly under the direction of the music" (VO, 196). Terence's

imaginative self expresses itself in his desire to write a novel about silence, "the things people don't say" (VO, 262). But for both characters, the courage to pursue the other-worldly identity is frustrated by their individual acknowledgement of the accusatory limitations of life in the body. Neither has the conviction of an imaginative community strong enough to overcome their sense of alienation. Rachel's early enthusiasm for Christianity, an imaginative system which has been corrupted by the tyrannical forces in society, gives way to a frustrated erotic vision of Terence as her saviour. Terence's communal instinct, inherent in his fictional vocation and in his role as party-host, is replaced by a fearful and limited worship of the ideal lady he sees in Rachel. The Platonic ladder-of-love concept[8] which informs the visions of many great poets (and which Woolf partially adopts in Night and Day) does not achieve any transcendence in Terence's love for Rachel. Terence's desperate fixation on the object of his love, who is mortal, leads him, in the scene following Rachel's death, to despair of ever attaining a sublime love-death.

Many readers of the novel miss the ironic failure of the love-death, with its mystical ecstasy, which immediately precedes the real climax of The Voyage Out: Terence's intense disillusionment after leaving the room where the death has taken place. Representative is the opinion of Alice Van Buren Kelley, who writes: "Just before she dies . . . her fear leaves her, and her actual dying creates for both her and Terence the moment of perfect vision."[9] Even though Kelley must concede that the

moment passes--in fact, two chapters follow Rachel's death--she misses an opportunity to see Woolf's logical imagination at work. Woolf, in fact, has an important reason for casting the cold light of reason on Terence's "perfect moment of vision."[10] To understand Woolf's intention, Terence's Romantic vision, as it develops in the novel, requires closer examination than it has yet received.

As a representative novelist, Terence has before him a destiny as a spokesman for other-worldliness which he may or may not fulfill. The true tragedy of his life is that he nearly becomes a victim of the death of the soul, as the hero of his second projected novel does. His work-in-progress is about "a young man who is obsessed by an idea--the idea of being a gentleman" (VO, 263): "He is led into telling lies--my idea, you see, is to show the gradual corruption of the soul" (VO, 263). Terence's dilemma between the need for an other-worldly vision and the need for communal security (later developed in the character of Peter Walsh in Mrs. Dalloway) leads Terence to regress to a passive dependence on the mother/mistress, the ideal female archetype who can protect him from the combined forces of "the other" and the "out there." When he spies Helen and Rachel together in the villa, he suddenly falls in love with Rachel, after which dreams and realities become for him hopelessly intertwined:

> The night seemed immense and hospitable, and although so dark there seemed to be things moving down there in the harbour and movement out to sea. He gazed until the darkness numbed him, and then he walked on quickly, still murmuring to himself. "And I ought to be in bed, snoring and dreaming, dreaming, dreaming. Dreams and realities, dreams and realities, dreams and realities," he repeated all the way up the avenue, scarcely knowing what he said, until he reached the front door.
>
> (VO, 222)

The effect of Terence's illogical projection on Rachel is tyrannous. Imaginatively, she desires freedom. In the first chapter, for example, she tells Helen that she is going to "'t-t-triumph in the wind'" (VO, 18). A later vision of her identity aligns her metaphorically with the wind and the sea:

> The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel's mind, and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living.
>
> (VO, 95)

Despite the error of egotistic selfhood evident here, Rachel's imagination has a powerful freeing effect which polarizes the tyranny of nature's laws. Terence, on the other hand, would reduce Rachel to pure selfhood. He identifies her with nature through a vision of ideal womanhood (as Peter Walsh does Clarissa--though Clarissa is protected by her role as party-hostess). This projection is intolerable to Rachel because it threatens the absorption of Rachel's other-worldly identity into that of Terence. The identifiable symbol for this possessive absorption is the hermaphrodite which, in Blake's mythology, is the sexual equivalent of the death of the soul.[11] The hermaphrodite archetype is suggested by the image of "the beast with two backs" which appears at the dance where couples circle in mindless orbits. Terence responds to the dance with enthusiasm; Rachel responds with despair: "'This is my idea of hell'" (VO, 178). The "beast with two backs" image recurs in a more explicitly sexual form when Rachel and Terence, in the woods, accidentally come upon Susan and Arthur making love:

> They saw a man and woman lying on the ground beneath them, rolling slightly this way and that as the embrace tightened and slackened. The man then sat upright and the woman, who now appeared to be Susan Warrington, lay back on the ground, with her eyes shut and an absorbed look upon her face, as though she were not altogether conscious. Nor could you tell from her expression whether she was happy, or had suffered something. When Arthur again turned to her as a lamb butts a ewe, Hewet and Rachel retreated without a word.
>
> (VO, 163)

The theme of this passage is a function of point of view and mood. The embrace of Susan and Arthur is viewed from the outside; hence the physicality of the embrace is emphasized. Furthermore, the separateness of the two bodies is subsumed to the personification of the "embrace": it is the embrace which "tightened and slackened." In the second sentence, normal perspective is regained; the man sits upright, and the woman is revealed to be Susan Warrington. Even here, the possibility of a romantic interpretation is undercut by the ambiguous expression on Susan's face, and the possible suggestion of suffering. In the final sentence, the image of Arthur Venning "as a lamb butt[ing] a ewe" places the lovemaking in the context of brute nature and includes allusions to animal self-absorption, infantile fixation, and incest, together with a suggestion of aggressive dependence. The scene qualifies as a demonic parody of the other-worldly androgyne (AROO, 148). Instead of imaginative "mental fight," a bestial conflict of wills is subtly suggested. That this sexual scene leaves both Terence and Rachel dumb ("without a word") indicates how troubling it is to their emerging Romantic vision.

Terence's relation with Rachel nevertheless turns out to be a contest of wills. Supported by the encouragement of

Helen and by the long-standing tradition of patriarchal marriage, Terence defies Rachel to survive without the mutually supportive relationship he offers her. The contest of wills is dramatized in a symbolic play-fight in which Rachel and Terence pretend they are standing together on a rock surrounded by the sea. The rock here represents the world of "realities" created over the centuries by generations of humans in society. The sea is, of course, the unconscious powerful "dream" world which every human possesses from the time of birth:

> "There are moments," he continued, "when, if we stood on a rock together, you'd throw me into the sea."
>
> Hypnotized by the force of his eyes in hers, she repeated, "If we stood on a rock together--"
>
> To be flung into the sea, to be washed hither and thither, and driven about the roots of the world--the idea was incoherently delightful. She sprang up, and began moving about the room, bending and thrusting aside the chairs and tables as if she were indeed striking through the waters. He watched her with pleasure; she seemed to be cleaving a passage for herself and dealing triumphantly with the obstacles which would hinder their passage through life.
>
> "It does seem possible!" he exclaimed, "though I've always thought it the most unlikely thing in the world--I shall be in love with you all my life, and our marriage will be the most exciting thing that's ever been done! We'll never have a moment's peace--" He caught her in his arms as she passed him, and they fought for mastery, imagining a rock, and the sea heaving beneath them. At last she was thrown to the floor, where she lay gasping and crying for mercy.
>
> "I'm a mermaid! I can swim," she cried, "so the game's up."
>
> (VO, 365)

This scene foreshadows the onset of Rachel's illness in Chapter Twenty-five, when Terence reads to her from Milton's Comus. Rachel, it turns out, is ill-fitted to be a mermaid. In Woolf's fiction, the supreme mermaid is Clarissa Dalloway "lolloping on the waves and braiding her tresses" (MD, 191). Rachel, on the

other hand, anticipates Rhoda, "the nymph of the fountain always wet" (W, 183), who can never emerge successfully from the autistic sea of dreams.

The irony of juxtaposing Terence's reading the song to Sabrina and the onset of Rachel's fever has been pointed out by Avrom Fleishman:

> . . . the famous song points the irony of Rachel's demise: like the Lady of the masque, she has been a virgin wooed by a river, but instead of being aided by a divine force she goes down to her death.[12]

But a different irony is suggested by the placement of the allusion in the text. What could Woolf mean by alluding to the story of a woman placed under a spell by a sexual sorcerer at a point in the novel before Rachel is put under the spell of fever? And what could she have meant by putting the lines of Milton's "Attendant Spirit" into Terence's mouth? Clearly, the story of the Lady refers to Terence's idealism and not Rachel's. By assuming the role of Milton's attendant spirit (a role which he shares with Helen and Nurse McInnis) Terence reveals an adherence to the code of chastity represented by Milton's version of Christianity, a doctrine which Rachel rejects earlier in the novel in her demonic vision of Nurse McInnis at prayer.[13] The placement of the allusion in the text makes it unquestionably clear that Terence has cast Rachel in the role of the Lady of the masque. As mentioned earlier, Rachel herself becomes implicated in the code of chastity shortly after she has been kissed by Richard Dalloway. The kiss itself opens the sexual gate to vision for Rachel, but she soon feels uncomfortable "as if she and Richard had seen

something together which is hidden in ordinary life, so that they did not like to look at each other" (VO, 85). In this action, in Rachel's nightmare, and in her subsequent discussion with Helen, Rachel's exultation is crippled by the spectre of shame. Her illness, then, which begins with Terence's reading of Comus, is a highly ironic counterpoint to the fate of the Lady of the masque. The real Comus in Rachel's world is the passionate Richard Dalloway. Rachel, unlike the Lady of the masque, intuits that her Comus is an erotic saviour. But Terence (and earlier Helen), reminding Rachel of her duty to the social code, spells out to Rachel her only course of action: to become unconscious in order to re-establish her identity with her own inner nature, even if it means a helpless confrontation with the symbolic sea.[14] Like Septimus Warren Smith in Mrs. Dalloway, who surrenders to madness rather than perpetuate his "sin of indifference," Rachel surrenders to illness rather than live as a cripple in a cave.

The progress of Rachel's illness is perhaps the most painful record of human isolation in Woolf's canon. The illness takes Rachel completely into the autistic world; and Terence, isolated from the company of Rachel, makes a similar voyage out to the "skeleton" world of the in-itself. The counterpointing of Rachel's experiences with the dream world and Terence's with the world of realities describes a composite rhythm of expansion and contraction which Woolf was later to term the "central rhythm" (W, 68). As the life of society becomes increasingly remote for

both protagonists, they individually discover the existence of the mind alone, and the mind confronted with nature--truths that lie beneath the world of everyday life and shape civilizations and individuals alike.

Terence is the first to react to Rachel's headache. He experiences the fall from Beulah to Generation as a feeling of catastrophe accompanied by the image of a ruined shelter[15]:

> For a few moments they sat looking at one another in silence, holding each other's hands. During this time his sense of dismay and catastrophe were almost physically painful; all round him he seemed to hear the shiver of broken glass which, as it fell to earth, left him sitting in the open air.
>
> (VO, 399-400)

Meanwhile, Rachel becomes isolated in her fever world until she is "completely cut off, and unable to communicate with the rest of the world, isolated alone with her body" (VO, 402-403). Earlier in the novel, Rachel expresses a desire to obliterate the dichotomy between night and day: "the nights were black bars separating her from the days; she would like to run all the days into one long continuity of sensation" (VO, 272). Now, in the fever-world, the very reverse happens:

> . . . Rachel woke to find herself in the midst of one of those interminable nights which do not end at twelve, but go on into the double figures--thirteen, fourteen, and so on until they reach the twenties, and then the thirties, and then the forties. She realized that there is nothing to prevent nights from doing this if they choose.
>
> (VO, 403)

The waves of light and darkness, of day and night, of reality and dream, have become one wave of darkness, night and dream. Rachel has entered the negative sublime, her inner counterpart

to Terence's fall from Beulah to Generation.

Rachel begins to have more nightmares. The first is of Nurse McInnis as a deformed little woman playing cards in an underground cave:

> She shut her eyes. When she opened them again several more hours had passed, but the night still lasted interminably. The woman was still playing cards, only she sat now in a tunnel under a river, and the light stood in a little archway in the wall above her. She cried "Terence!" and the peaked shadow moved across the ceiling, as the woman with an enormous slow movement rose, and they both stood still above her.
>
> (VO, 404)

This nightmare recapitulates Rachel's nightmare of the "little deformed man" after her sexual experience with Richard Dalloway. The "woman" here is Nurse McInnis: the recapitulation shows that both sexes are cripples in caves. The impressionistic setting also picks up an earlier motif, involving the Nurse:

> She was a limpet, with the sensitive side of her stuck to a rock, for ever dead to the rush of fresh and beautiful things past her. The face of this single worshipper became printed on Rachel's mind with an impression of keen horror.
>
> (VO, 279)

A limpet on a rock under a river, a card-playing woman in a tunnel under a river: the rock is Nurse McInnis's religion, and the tunnel is Rachel's autistic dream world. Both settings are under a flowing stream--an image of the sexual life-force. Religious sublimation and sexual repression are, then, one and the same. Both the feverish girl and the card-playing Nurse are cut off from the world of realities; both live in an autistic dream.[16] Rachel calls to Terence for deliverance, but she is alone with her alter-ego, the watcher over Rachel's voyage into death.

Terence, meanwhile, standing unsheltered in the world of realities, tries desperately to rebuild the ruined shelter. His visits to Rachel are frustrating attempts to re-establish their old relationship, attempts which reveal the futility of Terence's Romantic vision of love. The breakdown of this vision is suggested by a shift in pronoun reference in the following summary:

> She was not the same; he could not bring *them* back to their old relationship; but although he knew that it was foolish he could not prevent himself from endeavouring to bring *her* back, to make her remember, and when this failed he was in despair.
>
> (*VO*, 406; italics mine)

Counterpointing Terence's yearning for the protective female is Rachel's dream-sequence envisioning the female will in the form of the *mater terribilis*. Woolf presents this theme through the motif of aggressive old women armed with knives,[17] occurring first in a panoramic narrative-description of England as the ship makes its way to sea:

> In thousands of small gardens, millions of dark-red flowers were blooming, until the old ladies who had tended them so carefully came down the paths with their scissors, snipped through their juicy stalks, and laid them upon cold stone ledges in the village church.
>
> (*VO*, 28)

The motif is picked up in a scene in Santa Marina just after Rachel has paid a visit to Evelyn M.:

> Two large women in cotton dresses were sitting on a bench with blood-smeared tin trays in front of them and yellow bodies across their knees. They were plucking the birds and talking as they plucked. Suddenly a chicken came floundering, half-flying, half running into the space, pursued by a third woman whose age could hardly be under eighty. Although wizened and unsteady on her legs she kept up the chase, egged on by the laughter of the others; her face was expressive of furious rage, and as she ran she swore in Spanish. Frightened by hand-clapping here, a

> napkin there, the bird ran this way and that in sharp angles, and finally fluttered straight at the old woman, who opened her scanty grey skirts to enclose it, dropped upon it in a bundle, and then holding it out cut its head off with an expression of vindictive energy and triumph combined. The blood and the ugly wriggling fascinated Rachel, so that although she knew that some one had come up behind and was standing beside her, she did not turn round until the old woman had settled down on the bench beside the others. Then she looked up sharply, because of the ugliness of what she had seen. It was Miss Allan who stood beside her.
>
> "Not a pretty sight," said Miss Allan, "although I daresay it's really more humane than our method."
>
> (VO, 308)

This sight of the old woman with a knife recurs in Rachel's delirium. Only this time there is more than one victim, and the process seems to be speeded up:

> "You see, there they go, rolling off the edge of the hill," she said suddenly.
>
> "Rolling, Rachel? What do you see rolling? There's nothing rolling."
>
> "The old woman with a knife," she replied, not speaking to Terence in particular, and looking past him. As she appeared to be looking at a vase on the shelf opposite, he rose and took it down.
>
> "Now they can't roll any more," he said cheerfully. Nevertheless she lay gazing at the same spot, and paid him no further attention although he spoke to her.
>
> (VO, 406)

The motif appears once more. The first time, the victims are vegetable; the second time, animal; this time, the victim is human:

> Her eyes were not entirely shut, the lower half of the white part showing, not as if she saw, but as if they remained open because she was too much exhausted to close them. She opened them completely when [Terence] kissed her. But she only saw an old woman slicing a man's head off with a knife.
>
> "There it falls!" she murmured. Then she turned to Terence and asked him a question about a man with mules, which he could not understand. "Why doesn't he come? Why doesn't he come?" she repeated.
>
> (VO, 414)

Rachel's question may apply either to Terence, whom she may not recognize, or to her father, who is expected to arrive any day (VO, 362). But the thematic significance of Rachel's hallucination is clear. It must be left to the psychologists to speculate on the sexual symbolism of this motif, but as the head is the seat of reason (and the father is usually the archetypal symbol of reason, as Blake's Urizen is) Rachel's fear is of the loss of reason, the closest Woolf comes in this novel to associating the dream-world with madness.[18]

After this, Rachel puts up a brief fight trying to decipher the meaning behind the "hot, red, quick sights which passed incessantly before her eyes" (VO, 416). But she cannot understand their significance and, finally, the images recede leaving her motionless at the bottom of a symbolic sea:

> While all her tormentors thought that she was dead, she was not dead, but curled up at the bottom of the sea.
>
> (VO, 416)

Her state recalls Mr. Pepper's discourse on the monsters of the deep in the first chapter of the novel:

> He professed himself surprised to learn that although Mr. Vinrace possessed ten ships, regularly plying between London and Buenos Aires, not one of them was bidden to investigate the great white monsters of the lower waters. . . . And Mr. Pepper went on to describe the white, hairless, blind monsters lying curled in the ridges of sand at the bottom of the sea, which would explode if you brought them to the surface, their sides bursting asunder and scattering entrails to the winds when released from pressure.
>
> (VO, 17-18)

This particularly demonic image of the unconscious revolutionary energy, which Blake calls Orc, foreshadows the violent storm

that breaks out after the death of Rachel, and in some ways represents all the violence of her repressed inner life.[19] Rachel's temporary state of peace is paralleled at this point in the novel with Terence's discovery of a state of subterranean peace as he stands looking out at the night:

> As he stood . . . in the darkness, able only to see the shapes of trees through the fine grey light, he was overcome by a desire to escape, to have done with this suffering, to forget Rachel was ill. He allowed himself to lapse into forgetfulness of everything. As if a wind that had been raging incessantly suddenly fell asleep, the fret and strain and anxiety which had been pressing on him passed away. He seemed to stand in an unvexed space of air, on a little island by himself; he was free and immune from pain. It did not matter whether Rachel was well or ill; it did not matter whether they were apart or together; nothing mattered--nothing mattered. The waves beat on the shore far away, and the soft wind passed through the branches of the trees, seeming to encircle him with peace and security, with dark and nothingness. Surely the world of strife and fret and anxiety was not the real world, but this was the real world, the world which lay beneath the superficial world, so that, whatever happened, one was secure. The quiet and peace seemed to lap his body in a fine cool sheet, soothing every nerve; his mind seemed once more to expand, and become natural.
>
> (VO, 418-419)

Here are epitomized the essential characteristics of the autistic imagination. Dreams and realities become illogically confused as Terence allows himself to "lapse" into the unstable harmony of the imminent sublime moment. The gestational, prelapsarian state of autism is rendered as an island vision (recalling Terence's "if we stood on a rock together" [VO, 365]). But, here, Terence is alone and, because alone, "immune from pain." The otherness of Rachel becomes immaterial ("it did not matter whether they were apart or together") because Terence has regressed to a state where the whole of nature seems the protective, enclosing body

of the maternal womb. Ironically, Terence's "real world" is identical with this illusory harmonious state, a "quiet and peace" that "seemed to lap his body in a fine cool sheet" (italics mine; n.b. the ingenious pun which creates a metaphorical alignment between waves of the sea and the mother's lap).

But Terence's state of harmony with nature is shortly upset by a conversation with Nurse McInnis:

> "If you ask me," she began in a curiously stealthy tone, "I never like May for my patients."
> "May?" Terence repeated.
> "It may be a fancy, but I don't like to see anybody fall ill in May," she continued. "Things seem to go wrong in May. Perhaps it's the moon. They say the moon affects the brain, don't they, Sir?"
>
> (VO, 420)

This conversation leads Terence to another insight; he begins to realize that the buried world of repose can be terrible as well as soothing. The moon has two archetypal aspects here. As a symbol of the world of repose, it represents the Beulah state of balance and love.[20] But as the controller of the tides, the moon also, is associated with the terrible female-will as an engulfing tidal wave.[21] In addition to this, the moon in certain phases causes lunacy. Thus, Terence recoils from his former passive dependence on nature:

> He could not get used to his pain, it was a revelation to him. He had never realized before that underneath every action, underneath the life of every day, pain lies, quiescent, but ready to devour; he seemed to be able to see suffering as if it were a fire, curling up over the edges of all action, eating away the lives of men and women. He thought for the first time with understanding of words which had before seemed to him empty: the struggle of life; the hardness of life. . . . Never again would he feel secure; he would never believe in the stability of life, or forget what depths of pain lie beneath small happiness and feelings of content and safety.
>
> (VO, 420-421)

This discovery leads Terence to question, for the first time, the security and the shelter afforded by Romantic love: "It seemed to him as he looked back that their happiness had never been so great as his pain was now. There had always been something imperfect in their happiness, something they had wanted and had not been able to get. It had been fragmentary and incomplete, because they were so young and had not known what they were doing" (VO, 421). He begins to realize the sublime alien power of nature and the relative powerlessness of the human organism:

> How vast and dark it must be tonight, lying exposed to the wind; and in all this great space, it was curious to think how few towns were, and how small little rings of light, or single glow-worms he figured them, scattered here and there, among the swelling uncultivated folds of the world. And in those towns were little men and women. Oh, it was absurd, when one thought of it, to sit here in a little room suffering and caring. What did anything matter? Rachel, a tiny creature, lay ill beneath him, and here in his little room he suffered on her account. The nearness of their bodies in this vast universe, and the minuteness of their bodies, seemed to him absurd and laughable. Nothing mattered, he repeated; they had no power, no hope.
>
> (VO, 422)

Terence's bleak experience of contraction contrasts with the sense of tremendous expansion in Rachel's next hallucination, in which she begins to surface. But as Rachel rises from the watery depths, she becomes a blanket of snow melting off the vast masses of substance:

> She had come to the surface of the dark, sticky pool, and a wave seemed to bear her up and down with it; she had ceased to have any will of her own; she lay on top of the wave conscious of some pain, but chiefly of weakness. The

> wave was replaced by the side of a mountain. Her body became a drift of melting snow, above which her knees rose in huge peaked mountains of bare bone.
>
> (VO, 423)

The image of melting snow on the mountain (a characteristic Woolfian circumference of the ironic landscape)[22] links Rachel with a later ironic hero--Septimus Warren Smith "lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society, who lay like a coverlet, a snow blanket smitten only by the sun, for ever unwasted, suffering for ever, the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer" (MD, 29). Unlike Septimus, however, Rachel is in the process of returning to the sea, just as melting snow on the mountain begins the water cycle anew. She makes no effort to check her dissolution and lets herself be carried passively forward to death: "All sights were something of an effort, but the sight of Terence was the greatest effort, because he forced her to join mind to body in the desire to remember something. She did not wish to remember; it troubled her when people tried to disturb her loneliness; she wished to be alone. She wished for nothing else in the world" (VO, 424).

Rachel's death is preceded by an allusion to Milton's ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," recited by Ridley Ambrose:

> Peor and Baalim
> Forsake their Temples dim,
> With that twice batter'd God of Palestine
> And mooned Astaroth--
>
> (VO, 428)

Archetypally, Milton's Christ is "a greater Sun" who predicts the downfall of the king of winter and night.[23] A Christian

interpretation of this allusion is incorrect because Woolf portrays Christianity in this novel as itself a reign of darkness. The only alternative is that the allusion prophesies a renewal of the revolutionary quest for the freedom from cant, anticipated in the earlier image of Rachel's body as a blanket of snow being melted by the sun to recommence the life-cycle: an image of rebirth. A parallel might be drawn between Milton's pagan gods and the evil spirits which people The Voyage Out. The licentious Peor is suggested in Rachel's visions of lustful dwarves in caves; the majestic Baalim suggests Nurse McInnis's rock-god; the Philistine god, Dagon ("that twice batter'd God of Palestine"), suggests the author of the "reasonless law" (VO, 322) which, according to Helen, controls the lives of people in society. The last deity mentioned, "the mooned Astaroth," suggests the terrible moon-goddess alluded to in Nurse McInnis's conversation with Terence (VO, 420). After Rachel's death, the moon wears a halo--a phenomenon which augurs rain. That night, the moon seems to hold nature in a spell of stillness, but this spell is broken by the arrival of the sun, after which the rhythm of life revives. In the allusion to Milton's "Nativity" ode, then, Woolf celebrates the returning cycle of Generation symbolized by a new dawn.[24]

Rachel's death does effect a purging of individual vision because it provides a crisis of vacancy in which all the characters can reassess their lives and reaffirm their will-to-live. The novel thus presents a three-part structure of life-

death-rebirth which anticipates Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and The Waves. In The Voyage Out, the crisis of vacancy is chiefly overcome by the redeeming power of time and by the symbolic release of pent-up grief (the storm which breaks out in the last chapter). However, because the rebirth in this novel is the natural cyclic rebirth of threefold vision,[25] the power of death remains an undiminished source of anxiety. The exorcism of the old gods remains an epiphanic vision only. For some of the characters, Rachel's death represents only a confirmation that life is meaningless. For others, Rachel's death is an unpleasant interruption of a holiday. The only hint of imaginative victory over death is the effluent creative activity of the hotel guests in the last chapter. They tell stories of storms; Mr. Pepper and Mr. Eliot play chess; a group of ladies engage in needlework; Mrs. Paley plays patience, and Miss Allan spins stories to herself about her "imaginary uncle" (VO, 452). St. John Hirst contemplates the human beings in the room and imagines them forming a very comforting pattern:

> He lay back in his chair, half-seeing the others, half-hearing what they said. He was terribly tired, and the light and warmth, the movements of the hands, and the soft communicative voices soothed him; they gave him a strange sense of quiet and relief. As he sat there, motionless, this feeling of relief became a feeling of profound happiness. Without any sense of disloyalty to Terence and Rachel he ceased to think about either of them. The movements and the voices seemed to draw together from different parts of the room, and to combine themselves into a pattern before his eyes; he was content to sit silently watching the pattern build itself up, looking at what he hardly saw.
>
> (VO, 456)

What this pattern is becomes clear from Hirst's earlier moment of vision in which he pronounces "love" the key to the riddle of existence.[26] But the love he speaks of is not that of man for woman because, as Terence Hewet has discovered, Romantic love rests on a very insecure illusion: that two people can be fused in a single identity. St. John's vision of love is more like that expressed by Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse: ". . . 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" (TTL, 77). But as the procession of people troop off to bed, the pattern breaks up. The cycle of day and night, of realities and dreams continues unbroken. Not until Woolf writes To the Lighthouse in 1927 does she make another voyage to the heart of the positive sublime.

Both the pantheism of Rachel and the Romantic idealism of Terence in The Voyage Out lead to an inescapable cul de sac: the womb/tomb of nature. Hirst's vision of a social pattern in the epilogue suggests, on the other hand, that if man and nature can never be fast friends, man might make his vision within the dwelling-place afforded by civilization. In Night and Day, the role of the individual is to merge his private dreams in the larger dreams of society--to dedicate his life to the greater human vision. The chief problem confronting the major characters is that of reconciling their private nocturnal dreams to their public diurnal lives; and when that proves impossible, they must establish the basis for a new social order.

The patterns of order available to the characters representing an ironic age are conditioned by progress myths, inspired by the doctrine of evolution, according to which man is slowly evolving into a higher spiritual being. The role of the individual in this evolution is to dedicate himself to the common pursuit. However, the simple act of dedication does not really solve the problem of order in an evolving society. The dream of a total human order seldom coincides with the reality of public life. Because the dreams of men can be exploited to perpetuate a corrupt society, social myths need to be tested against private intuition by each new generation. Meanwhile the individual can test the validity of the dream world by attempting to realize it in the social realm. This is the line of development pursued in Night and Day. The Voyage Out traces the path of the positive sublime, in that Rachel Vinrace makes a voyage to the autistic dream world when the negating influences of the social realities are absent. Night and Day, by contrast, draws the protagonists out to the this-worldly circumference of the ironic landscape where their dreams are subject to a strict and logical abjuration.

The structural key to the novel is its title metaphor. "Night" defines the dream world, while "day" defines the world of social realities. The world of realities acts as a check to the autistic imagination just as waking dispels nightmares. But the metaphor also has ironic implications. Insofar as the dream world is also the world of imagination, reality is subversive of visionary activity. Apocalyptically, in other words, this-world represents night and the imaginative other-world represents day.[27]

Thus, the structure of Night and Day develops a dichotomous thesis: to persist in dreaming is to court delusion, but to abandon dreams altogether is to abandon the imaginative truths that can reform the social reality. The tentative solution offered by this novel is to set dream and reality in an alternating pattern, while gradually revealing the imaginative values inherent in the dreams shared by the chief protagonists.

The nocturnal/diurnal cycle is, according to Freudian psychology, an acceptable compromise for keeping the instincts under control so that the society can maintain itself. The cycle of waking and dreaming allows the ego and id to take shifts; the daytime (i.e. the period of waking consciousness) is a reign of sanity while the nighttime (i.e. the period of dreaming consciousness) is a reign of insanity: "What once prevailed in the waking state, when our psychic life was still young and inefficient, seems to have been banished into our nocturnal life."[28] In Rachel Vinrace's fever-world in The Voyage Out, this cycle breaks down and she finds herself in an endless night of uncontrolled dreams. Ralph Denham in Night and Day respects the nocturnal-diurnal cycle (for much the same reasons Leslie Stephen offers in "Dreams and Realities"):

> In [his] dreams, of course, he figured in noble and romantic parts, but self-glorification was not the only motive of them. They gave outlet to some spirit which found no work to do in real life, for, with the pessimism which his lot forced upon him, Ralph had made up his mind that there was no use for what, contemptuously enough, he called dreams, in the world which we inhabit. It sometimes seemed to him that this spirit was the most valuable possession he had; he thought that by means of it he could set flowering waste

> tracts of the earth, cure many ills, or raise up beauty where none now existed; it was, too, a fierce and potent spirit which would devour the dusty books with one lick of its tongue, and leave him in a minute standing in nakedness, if he gave way to it. His endeavour, for many years, had been to control the spirit, and at the age of twenty-nine he thought he could pride himself upon a life rigidly divided into the hours of work and those of dreams; the two lived side by side without harming each other.
>
> (ND, 131)

The work regimentation that Ralph Denham accepts only reluctantly, Mary Datchet accepts wholeheartedly. Perhaps because she believes her work is a valuable contribution to the human vision, Mary gladly takes her rank as a "private in the army of workers" (ND, 42). During the day, she leaves her room to go to work, confident that "to have sat there all day long, in the enjoyment of leisure, would have been intolerable" (ND, 75). In fact, Mary "regarded all who slept late and had money to spend as her enemy and natural prey" (ND, 75). There is more than a hint of the revolutionary Orc-figure in Mary: "Mary felt . . . that she was the centre ganglion of a very fine network of nerves which fell over England, and one of these days, when she touched the heart of the system, would begin feeling and rushing together and emitting their splendid fireworks" (ND, 229).[29] Both Mary's dream of "splendid fireworks" and Ralph's "fierce and potent spirit which would devour the dusty books with one lick of its tongue" (ND, 131), suggest a powerful inner fire potentially capable of rivalling "the broad illumination shed by the eyes of all the people who are in agreement to see together" (ND, 330). But for neither character does work provide a suitable outlet for this spirit. Ralph regulates its expression so as not to coincide

with the working day; and Mary's revolutionary instincts contrast sharply with the mundane nature of her daily work.

To Katharine Hilbery, Mary's work seems nothing but an archaic, dark, and useless ritual: "The view she had had of the inside of an office was of the nature of a dream to her. Shut off up there, she compared Mrs. Seal, and Mary Datchet, and Mr. Clacton to enchanted people in a bewitched tower, with the spiders' webs looping across the corners of the room, and all the tools of the necromancer's craft at hand; for so aloof and unreal and apart from the normal world did they seem to her, in the house of innumerable typewriters, murmuring their incantations and concocting their drugs, and flinging their frail spiders' webs over the torrent of life which rushed down the streets outside" (ND, 92). In the opening chapter, Katharine herself is portrayed as an "enchanted" person in a "bewitched" dwelling. The Hilbery house impresses Ralph Denham as a quiet enclosure remote from the torrent of life: "it seemed to Mr. Denham as if a thousand softly padded doors had closed between him and the street outside. . . . With the omnibuses and cabs still running in his head, and his body still tingling with his quick walk along the streets and in and out of traffic and foot-passengers, this drawing-room seemed very remote and still" (ND, 2). The room with the family relics suggests both "a chapel in a cathedral" and a "grotto in a cave," and Rachel herself assumes the nunlike office of exhibiting the relics of her poet-grandfather, Richard Alardyce, to the curious who come to visit.

In this house, Katharine lives a captive life: "Denham noticed that, although silent, she kept sufficient control of the situation to answer immediately her mother appealed for help, and yet it was obvious to him that she attended only with the surface skin of her mind" (ND, 5). Ralph's observation recalls the opening paragraph of the novel, in which Woolf first alludes to the night-day motif: "It was a Sunday evening in October, and in common with many other young ladies of her class, Katharine Hilbery was pouring out tea. Perhaps a fifth part of her mind was thus occupied, and the remaining parts leapt over the little barrier of day which interposed between Monday morning and this rather subdued moment, and played with the things one does voluntarily and normally in daylight. But although she was silent, she was evidently mistress of a situation which was familiar enough to her, and inclined to let it take its way for the six hundredth time, perhaps, without bringing into play any of her unoccupied faculties" (ND, 1). Thus, Katharine manages to escape only by projecting her hopes and dreams into the future.

The social myth of progress holds an attraction for Katharine, Ralph, and Mary chiefly because it promises a better life in the future for the individual as well as the society. The dreams of youth can thus be reconciled to the social myth. Everything is to be gained in the future. For older people, however, the myth of personal evolution has little to offer this side of the grave, so they often adopt a myth of decline: a story of the "good old days." Such a myth takes the form of ancestral (biological or cultural) hero worship, and is epitomized in Mrs. Hilbery's

reverence for both her father's and Shakespeare's biographical existence.[30] However, Katharine's awareness of the heroic past occasions anxiety about the present:

> Her descent from one of these gods [Richard Alardyce] was no surprise to her, but matter for satisfaction, until, as the years wore on, the privileges of her lot were taken for granted, and certain drawbacks made themselves very manifest. Perhaps it is a little depressing to inherit not lands but an example of intellectual and spiritual virtue; perhaps the conclusiveness of a great ancestor is a little discouraging to those who run the risk of comparison with him. It seems as if, having flowered so splendidly, nothing now remained possible but a steady growth of good, green stalk and leaf. For these reasons, and for others, Katharine had her moments of despondency. The glorious past, in which men and women grew to unexampled size, intruded too much upon the present, and dwarfed it too consistently, to be altogether encouraging to one forced to make her experiment in living when the great age was dead.
>
> (ND, 33)

For Katharine, like Ralph and Mary, work involves contributing to a vision of a better life. Katharine assists her mother in writing the definitive biography of Richard Alardyce. The biography promises to be a valuable contribution to the literary heritage. But all Katharine's efforts at progress are frustrated by the literary methods of Mrs. Hilbery. The chaos to which Mrs. Hilbery's method reduces the complex writing project causes Katharine to waver uncertainly between admiration for her ancestors and disgust for the accumulated history of the past which infects her present life: "Sometimes Katharine brooded, half-crushed, among her papers; sometimes she felt that it was unnecessary for her very existence that she should free herself from the past; at others, that the past had completely displaced the present, which, when one resumed life after a morning among the dead, proved to be of an utterly thin and inferior composition" (ND, 38).

For Katharine, Ralph and Mary, the belief in sharing in the vision of society, which motivates the "daylight" world of work, is very hard to sustain because the work itself often seems small and irrelevant and absurd. At the same time, the "night" world of these characters is usually a melancholy dream world of hopeless escapism. Katharine pictures "an empty land where all this petty intercourse of men and women, this life made up of the dense crossings and entanglements of men and women, had no existence whatever" (ND, 106). Mary dreams of "walking out on to the down, and hearing nothing but the sheep cropping the grass close to the roots, while the shadows of the little trees moved very slightly this way and that in the moonlight, as the breeze went through them" (ND, 45). And Ralph, "in private, when the pressure of public opinion was removed . . . let himself swing upon strange voyages which, indeed, he would have been ashamed to describe" (ND, 129). Katharine sometimes dreams of the world of outer space where the stars dwell and she also has a passion to study mathematics. Katharine's ambition "to study mathematics--to know the stars," (ND, 203) is related to her desire to escape human nature. "'I don't care much whether I ever get to know anything,'" she tells her cousin, Henry, "'but I want to work out something in figures--something that hasn't got to do with human beings. I don't want human beings particularly'" (ND, 203).

These dreams are all related to the Blakean Ulro state, "that of the individual reflecting on his memories of perception and evolving generalizations and abstract ideas."[31] In Katharine's

world this state has been created not only by the hopelessness of her working life but also by the prospect of a perfectly loveless marriage to William Rodney. Lacking love for this man, Katharine chooses to identify instead with a transcendent world of Platonic Forms:

> Being a frequent visitor to that world, she could find her way there unhesitatingly. If she had tried to analyse her impressions, she would have said that there dwelt the realities of the appearances which figure in our world; so direct, powerful and unimpeded were her sensations there, compared with those called forth in actual life. There dwelt the things one might have felt, had there been cause; the perfect happiness of which here we taste the fragment; the beauty seen here in flying glimpses only.
>
> (ND, 145)

The world of ideal Forms re-appears in Rhoda's vision in The Waves (W, 99-100), but Katharine envisions one ideal which does not figure in Rhoda's vision:

> She met no acquaintance there, as Denham did, miraculously transfigured; she played no heroic part. But there certainly she loved some magnanimous hero, and as they swept together among the leaf-hung trees of an unknown world, they shared the feelings which came fresh and fast as the waves on the shore.
>
> (ND, 145)

Katharine's dream of the magnanimous hero[32] offers an imaginative resolution to the sublime crisis of inundation which Woolf portrays in Rachel's symbolic drowning in The Voyage Out. Rachel's defeat by the sea-mother, discussed earlier, is partly due to the weakened state of what Jung would call her animus. Rachel's first dream is of a little deformed man crippled in a cave. In Katharine's dream, the animus archetype controls the power of the sea, embodied in the tamed horse, and Katharine's harmonious relation to this archetype allows her to share in this

power vicariously, in "the feelings which came fresh and fast as the waves on the shore." Woolf appears to have been wrestling with the problem of bringing the male sexual archetype into the light of consciousness as early as 1909 when she was engaged in writing The Voyage Out. Clive Bell, at this time, commented on her portrayal of male characters in the early drafts:

> . . . I must tell you again that I think the first part too didactic, not to say priggish. Our views about men & women are doubtless quite different, and the difference doesn't matter much; but to draw such sharp & marked contrasts between the subtle, sensitive, tactful, gracious, delicately perceptive & perspicacious women, & the obtuse, vulgar, blind, florid, rude, tactless, emphatic, indelicate, vain, tyrannical, stupid men, is not only rather absurd, but rather bad art, I think.

She replied:

> Your objection, that my prejudice against men makes me didactic "not to say priggish," has not quite the same force with me; I don't remember what I said that suggests the remark; I daresay it came out, without my knowledge: but I will bear it in mind. I never meant to preach, & I agree that like God, one shouldn't. Possibly, for psychological reasons which seem to me very interesting, a man in the present state of the world, is not a very good judge of his sex; and a "creation" may seem to him didactic.[33]

Woolf seems to have taken Bell's advice concerning the male characters in The Voyage Out without sacrificing her portrayal of the male archetype in its aspect as reason distorted and crippled by the obtuse morality of a tyrannical double standard. Instead, Woolf expresses the demonic theme of tyranny in Rachel's dream sequences. In the hallucinatory dreams, the male archetype is discovered to be a victim of the terrible female-will. The demon becomes the hermaphroditic phallic-mother--an old woman with a knife.

But the male archetype also has an apocalyptic tenor--reason emancipated by the imaginative powers--very different from that of the cripple in the cave. In the experimental sketch, "The Mark on the Wall," written during the composition of Night and Day, Woolf identifies men with "the real standard things"[34] which the mind gratefully invokes in order to check the uncontrolled stream of consciousness (the sublime equivalent of the threatening power of nature). The image of the knight on horseback appears in the first paragraph when the narrator's eyes rest on the burning coals in the hearth: "I looked up through the smoke of my cigarette and my eye lodged for a moment upon the burning coals, and that old fancy of the crimson flag flapping from the castle tower came into my mind, and I thought of the cavalcade of red knights riding up the side of a black rock" (HH, 40). But the narrator is relieved to discover the mark on the wall, and from that point on, the mark becomes her mind's focus in its subconscious wanderings: "Rather to my relief the sight of the mark interrupted the fancy, for it is an old fancy, an automatic fancy, made as a child perhaps" (HH, 40). In Night and Day, Katharine's dream of the hero on horseback represents a development of the "automatic fancy" of knights storming a castle. In terms of the sublime, Woolf is exploring the magnanimous horseman as a symbol for a possible real standard thing that can resolve the crisis of inundation associated with the archetypal mother. In fact, Katharine's vision of love exhibits the characteristic pattern of the sublime moment: the image of loss of control associated with the power of water,

followed by a reactive identification in which the mind identifies with an imaginative principle of power under control:[35]

> Easily, and without correction by reason, her imagination made pictures, superb backgrounds casting a rich though phantom light upon the facts in the foreground. Splendid as the waters that drip with resounding thunder from high ledges of rock, and plunge downwards into the blue depths of night, was the presence of love she dreamt, drawing into it every drop of the force of life, and dashing them all asunder in the superb catastrophe in which everything was surrendered, and nothing might be reclaimed. The man, too, was some magnanimous hero, riding a great horse by the shore of the sea. They rode through forests together, they galloped by the rim of the sea.
>
> (ND, 107-108)

This dream features a startling break in imagery between the image of the "superb catastrophe" and that of "the man . . . riding a great horse by the shore of the sea," which requires the reader to shift perspective. The key to this modulated image is the sublime reactive identification in which the source of power is metaphorically transferred by Katharine from the water to the hero on horseback. The same reactive identification takes place in Katharine's later moment of being as she looks at the stars outside Stogdon House:

> Tonight they seemed fixed with unusual firmness in the blue, and flashed back such a ripple of life into her eyes that she found herself thinking that tonight the stars were happy. Without knowing or caring more for Church practices than most people of her age, Katharine could not look into the sky at Christmas time without feeling that, at this one season, the Heavens bend over the earth with sympathy, and signal with immortal radiance that they, too, take part in her festival. Somehow, it seemed to her that they were even now beholding the procession of kings and wise men upon some road on a distant part of the earth. And yet, after gazing for another second, the stars did their usual work upon the mind, froze to cinders the whole of our human history, and reduced the human body to an apelike, furry form, crouching amid the brushwood of a barbarous clod of mud. This stage was soon succeeded by another, in which there was nothing in the universe save stars and

> the light of stars; as she looked up the pupils of her eyes so dilated with starlight that the whole of her seemed dissolved in silver and spilt over the ledges of the stars for ever and ever indefinitely through space. Somehow simultaneously, though incongruously, she was riding with the magnanimous hero upon the shore or under forest trees . . . .
>
> (ND, 204-205)

The sublime elements of inundation and reactive identification here are represented in the image of inundating starlight "incongruously" juxtaposed with the image of riding with the magnanimous hero.

The magnanimous hero of Katharine's dream is the Romantic male counterpart to the image of the ideal lady presented in The Voyage Out and Night and Day in the dream worlds of Terence Hewet and Ralph Denham. With the addition of the hero archetype in Night and Day, Woolf explores the possibility of marriage as a social epiphany of the vision of Romantic love. In its formal aspect, Night and Day presents a comic narrative in which a hero and heroine struggle against the way of the world in order to pave the way for a renewed vision of society. The dramatic form of this narrative has been explained by Northrop Frye in Anatomy of Criticism: "The total mythos of comedy, only a small part of which is ordinarily presented, has regularly what in music is called a ternary form: the hero's society rebels against the society of the senex and triumphs, but the hero's society is a Saturnalia, a reversal of social standards which recalls a golden age in the past before the main action of the play begins. Thus we have a stable and harmonious order disrupted by folly, obsession, forgetfulness, 'pride and prejudice,' or events not under-

stood by the characters themselves, and then restored."[36] In Night and Day, the comic pattern begins in medias res, with the daylight world of realities subverting the inner world of dreams, until gradually the world of dreams begins to exert a powerful force over the world of realities and the action culminates in an anagnorisis in which appearance and reality exchange places.[37] The motivating force in this novel is the dream of love which, for Ralph Denham, takes the form of the vision of an ideal female, and, for Katharine, takes the form of the magnanimous hero. None of the chief characters is left untouched by the power of this dream. Before the end of the novel, the vision of love leaves in its wake a series of recognitions--for Mary Datchet, William Rodney, and for both Katharine and Ralph.

In one respect, the analogy between the action of this novel and the traditional action of a comic drama must not be pushed too far. In comic drama, the characters embody traditional roles and the unfolding of the drama takes place as a conflict between these characters. In an ironic fiction, the traditional roles are represented as internal states of conflict within the individual characters' minds. Thus, the real "hero" is the archetypal hero of Katharine's dream-world. Similarly, the real blocking character (or senex) is not Katharine's father so much as a deeply conservative element in her own psyche. The same pattern applies to the other characters. The real "heroine" of the fiction is the ideal lady of Ralph Denham's dream world. His love for Katharine is a projection of this ideal onto Katharine.

Even in this most conservative of Woolf's novels, the significant actions occur inside the minds of the chief characters and, therefore, the structural comic pattern--blocking, anagnorisis, rebirth--needs to be described in the context of the sublime cycle.

The first significant development in the novel, Katharine's agreement to marry Rodney, corresponds to the resolution by compromise of the negative sublime. In this action, Katharine turns her back on her dream world and thus blocks the passage of the "magnanimous hero" from the world of dreams to the world of realities. At the same time, Katharine's betrothal to Rodney acts as an impassible barrier to the "ideal lady" of Ralph's dream world. Ralph's dream of the ideal lady antedates his introduction to Katharine Hilbery, but in Chapter Two he projects this ideal onto Katharine: "In taking her he had provided himself with something the lack of which had left a bare place in his mind for a considerable time" (ND, 18). Ralph's discovery of Katharine's engagement in Chapter Twelve is juxtaposed with an allusion to Claudio's vision of death in Measure for Measure (III, i, 124-126):

> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendant world. . . .
>
> (ND, 159)

The allusion conveys a theme of loss of control and apocalyptic destruction.[38] As a result of Ralph's disillusionment, his vision of the ideal lady undergoes a catastrophic change.

> All things had turned to ghosts; the whole mass of the world was insubstantial vapour, surrounding the solitary spark in his mind, whose burning point he could remember, for it burnt no more. . . . He saw the dun-coloured race

> of waters and the blank shore. But life is vigorous; the body lives, and the body, no doubt, dictated the reflection, which urged him to movement, that one may cast away the forms of human beings, and yet retain the passion which seemed inseparable from their existence in the flesh. Now this passion burnt on his horizon, as the winter sun makes a greenish pane in the west through thinning clouds. His eyes were set on something infinitely far and remote; by that light he felt he could walk, and would, in future, have to find his way. But that was all there was left to him of a populous and teeming world.
>
> (ND, 163-164)

Katharine's engagement to Rodney also precipitates the misalliance of Ralph and Mary. Mary encounters Ralph in his depressed state and invites him to spend Christmas with her family at Disham. Mary Datchet shares Katharine's dream of the maganimous hero, and early in the novel she projects this dream onto Ralph Denham, whom she compares to the noble statue of Ulysses in the British Museum (ND, 80). For Mary, the conflict between dreams and realities takes the form of two versions of "marriage." Gaining upon the traditional Romantic dream in her mind is an androgynous vision in which Mary sees herself as a potential hero. Socially, Mary's dream of a marriage to her work is made possible by her participation in the feminist movement. As a conceptual feminist, she must insist on the termination of masculine privilege. Under the influence of this conception Mary becomes disturbed by the powerful magnetic pull of Ralph Denham. She recognizes that Romantic love contains the possibility of a helpless idolatry on the part of the woman: "She could not prevent herself from doing now what she often blamed others of her sex for doing--from endowing her friend with a kind of heavenly fire, and passing her life before it for his sanction" (ND, 169). For

Rachel, in The Voyage Out, the alternative to idolatry is a lonely death-in-life. For Mary, the alternative is martyrly self-glorification. When Ralph's spectre threatens to dominate her mind at her suffrage meeting, she manages to rout this spectre by conjuring up an image of herself as a martyred hero whom Ralph cannot persuade to move: "In one of those flights of fancy, not characteristic of her but tiresomely frequent this afternoon, she envisioned herself battered with rotten eggs upon a platform, from which Ralph vainly begged her to descend" (ND, 174). But this vision does not survive the onset of night: "The dark removed the stimulus of human companionship, and a tear actually slid down her cheek, accompanying a sudden conviction within her that she loved Ralph, and that he didn't love her" (ND, 178). At Disham, however, Mary finds herself unable to surrender to her love for Ralph because of "a stubborn kind of respect for herself which lay at the root of her nature and forbade surrender, even in moments of almost overwhelming passion" (ND, 234). Mary's strength of purpose, in fact, is strengthened by Ralph's fidelity to his vision of love which is revealed to Mary at the Inn when he catches a glimpse of Katharine Hilbery outside the window. In a flash of revelation, Mary realizes that Ralph loves Katharine. And this truth makes Mary free: "The truth seemed to support her; it struck her, even as she looked at his face, that the light of truth was shining far away beyond him; the light of truth, she seemed to frame the words as she rose to go, shines on a world not to be shaken by our personal calamities" (ND, 243).

The light of truth revealed to Mary in the Inn gives her the strength to refuse Ralph Denham's marriage proposal. Mary's refusal has a purgative effect on Ralph. He experiences a psychological "fall" which culminates in a recognition of freedom: "He slipped through all the grades of despondency until he reached a bottom of absolute gloom. Failure seemed to mark the whole of his life; he had failed with Katharine and now he had failed with Mary. Up at once sprang the thought of Katharine, and with it a sense of exulting freedom, but this he checked instantly" (ND, 263). Ralph begins again to feel uneasy about his dream world, but this time the force of his spirit is directed against the world of realities: "A moralist might have said that at this point his mind should have been full of self-reproach for the suffering he had caused. On the contrary, he was extremely angry, with the confused impotent anger of one who finds himself unreasonably but efficiently frustrated. He was trapped by the illogicality of human life. The obstacles in the way of his desire seemed to him purely artificial, and yet he could see no way of removing them" (ND, 266).

Having renounced an easy compromise, Mary dedicates herself to the pursuit of truth at the cost of sacrificing all hope of personal happiness. From this point on, she becomes a Promethean figure, a bringer of light in the form of "a hard reality, unimpaired by one's personal adventures, remote as the stars, unquenchable as they are" (ND, 275). Mary's first redemptive action is to persuade Katharine of the truth of imagin-

ative love. In response to Katharine's assertion that love is perhaps an illusion and that only abstract ideas are real, Mary replies "'I think affection is the only reality'" (ND, 287), and she tells Katharine "'I haven't any authority from Ralph to say it; but I'm sure of this--he's in love with you!'" (ND,291). In the act of renouncing her personal pride, Mary sheds her loneliness and experiences a moment of communion with Katharine in which the archetypal Romantic heroine is miraculously reborn:

> She came back silently, and sat once more by Katharine's side. Mary had no wish to speak. In the silence she seemed to have lost her isolation; she was at once the sufferer and the pitiful spectator of suffering; she was happier than she had ever been; she was more bereft; she was rejected, and she was immensely beloved. Attempt to express these sensations was vain, and, moreover, she could not help believing that, without any words on her side, they were shared.
>
> (ND, 293)

By the light of Mary's truth, Katharine experiences a sudden revelation in which she becomes convinced of the solidity of her own dream world. Mary has said "'I'm in love'" (ND, 294):

> It was a scene to dwell on with so much wonder that not a grain of pity occurred to her; it was a flame blazing suddenly in the dark; by its light Katharine perceived far too vividly for her comfort the mediocrity, indeed the entirely fictitious character of her own feelings so far as they pretended to correspond with Mary's feelings. She made up her mind to act instantly upon the knowledge thus gained, and cast her mind in amazement back to the scene upon the heath, when she had yielded, heaven knows why, for reasons which seemed now imperceptible. So in broad daylight one might revisit the place where one has groped and turned and succumbed to utter bewilderment in a fog.
>
> (ND, 294)

The flame of truth that springs from Mary passes to Katharine, and she rushes to Rodney's rooms excited by the reality of the discovery of love. As a result of this meeting, Katharine encourages Rodney to speak the truth of his own feelings, and he reveals that he might be in love with Cassandra Otway. At this moment, Ralph Denham enters and the scene ends with Ralph and Katharine leaving together.

Ralph's instinct is to take Katharine home via the river rather than the Strand. This detail has a symbolic significance in the novel because, in Katharine's mind, the human stream and the natural stream represented by the Strand and the Thames correspond to two aspects of her dream world. On her way to Mary's rooms, earlier in the evening, Katharine reflects that "if she went by the Strand she would force herself to think out the problem of the future, or some mathematical problem; if she went by the river she would certainly begin to think about things that didn't exist--the forest, the ocean beach, the leafy solitudes, the magnanimous hero" (ND, 284). Now with Ralph by the river, Katharine is psychologically disposed to consider the problem of love.

Ralph takes the initiative by bringing into the open the substance of his Romantic dream-world: "'I've made you my standard ever since I saw you. I've dreamt about you; I've thought of nothing but you; you represent to me the only reality in the world'" (ND, 313). The effect of Denham's confession on Katharine is to free her own dream world, and she achieves a

double perspective in which she simultaneously perceives herself as a fiery heavenly body and as a human body walking with Ralph beside the river: "She felt herself possessed of two bodies, one walking by the river with Denham, the other concentrated to a silver globe aloft in the fine blue space above the scum of vapours that was covering the visible world" (ND, 317). That this vision is wholly imaginative is made clear by Woolf's description of the real sky at the same moment: "She looked at the sky once, and saw that no star was keen enough to pierce the flight of watery clouds now coursing rapidly before the west wind" (ND, 317). The new-found reality of the imaginative world has a similar strengthening effect upon Ralph: "He himself was also strangely transfigured. He had complete mastery of all his faculties. For the first time he was in possession of his full powers. The vistas which opened before him seemed to have no perceptible end" (ND, 318). They make a date to meet later in Kew Gardens.

Shortly after this, Katharine's feelings undergo an insurrection in which she rejects the daylight world of social conventions and the inner phantom voices that articulate her duties with respect to Rodney and to Ralph and she sides instead with the inner light of love which she has seen shining in Mary, Ralph and Rodney: "The only truth she could discover was the truth of what she herself felt--a frail beam when compared with the broad illumination shed by the eyes of all the people who are in agreement to see together; but having rejected the visionary voices [i.e. the voices of society], she had no choice but

to make this her guide through the dark masses which confronted her" (ND, 330). In Katharine's mind, Mary, Ralph, and William Rodney represent the light of love:

> She thought of three different scenes; she thought of Mary sitting upright and saying, "I'm in love--I'm in love"; she thought of Rodney losing his self-consciousness among the dead leaves, and speaking with the abandonment of a child; she thought of Denham leaning upon the stone parapet and talking to the distant sky, so that she thought him mad. Her mind, passing from Mary to Denham, from William to Cassandra, and from Denham to herself--if, as she rather doubted, Denham's state of mind was connected with herself --seemed to be tracing out the lines of some symmetrical pattern, some arrangement of life, which invested, if not herself, at least the others, not only with interest, but with a kind of tragic beauty. She had a fantastic picture of them upholding splendid palaces upon their bent backs. They were the lantern-bearers, whose lights, scattered among the crowd, wove a pattern, dissolving, joining, meeting again in combination.
>
> (ND, 331-332)

The imagery here combines a number of themes belonging to the ironic apocalyptic vision. The light of love in Katharine's vision is an inner light. She conceives of Mary, Ralph and Rodney as sparks in the gigantic human mind represented by the city. The passage of these sparks through the "mind" traces a pattern. This image recalls Mary's earlier vision of herself as "the centre ganglion of a very fine network of nerves which fell over England" (ND, 78). In Katharine's vision, the image of electrical impulses in the brain next undergoes a transformation in which the points of light expand into "splendid palaces," an imaginative concept of the "reality" of the inner light. In this image, the three figures become Atlas-figures, not holding up the heavens, but bearing the tremendous weight of their visions

because there is presently nowhere on earth where they can establish these "splendid castles" so that humanity might dwell therein. In the next image, the familiar ironic landscape appears. In this landscape, the world of "realities" is a labyrinth laced with dark corridors, and the visionaries are restless searchers bearing the lantern of truth. This image is related to the imagery of the "dark corridors" passage from "An Unwritten Novel."

> But when the self speaks to the self, who is speaking?--the entombed soul, the spirit driven in, in, in to the central catacomb; the self that took the veil and left the world--a coward perhaps, yet somehow beautiful as it flits with its lantern restlessly up and down the dark corridors.
>
> (HH, 24)

Finally, the light image returns to the natural realm, in which the three figures weave a pattern among the city crowds.

Following her revelation of a community of dreamers, Katharine decides to break her engagement to Rodney, and advance the prospects of his love for Cassandra. Having done this, she goes to Kew for her meeting with Ralph. At Kew, they form a friendship pact which constitutes the turning-point of the novel. Encouraged by Ralph's belief in friendship, Katharine challenges the "reality" which insists on a barrier between the self and the "other" who is "out there:"

> . . . as in her thought she was accustomed to complete freedom, why should she perpetually apply so different a standard to her behaviour in practice? Why, she reflected, should there be this perpetual disparity between the thought and the action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on the one side of which the soul was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night? Was it not possible

> to step from one to the other, erect, and without essential change? Was this not the chance he offered her--the rare and wonderful chance of friendship?
>
> (ND, 358-359; italics mine)

The light-dark imagery in this central passage does not convey the natural theme of darkness in solitude versus daylight in society. Rather, it presents the apocalyptic theme of the outer world of present society as the true "night" of the soul and of the inner, dream world as the soul's imaginative daylight world. The key to this equation is the "soul," an entity that has a dubious role in Katharine's life up to this point. Earlier, she renounces the inner "light" in resigning herself to marry a man she does not love. Now, Katharine's discovery of the reality of friendship in Mary and Ralph shifts her perspective on the worlds of dreams and realities, so that she challenges the "broad illumination" shed by a society that does not have the courage to dream of a better existence. In the outer, social world, the soul is "contemplative and dark as night;" in the inner, dream world, the soul is "active and in broad daylight." The metaphorical association between imaginative reason as "light" and the natural world as "darkness" in a society governed by blind, instinctual, selfhood forces anticipates Bernard's apocalyptic rejection of an identification with the natural pattern in The Waves: "that unfeeling universe that sleeps when we are at our quickest and burns red when we lie asleep" (W, 199). In Katharine's moment of discovery, however, an apocalyptic assertiveness is partly weakened by an uncertainty about the status of

the imaginative world. Upon returning home from her meeting with Ralph, Katharine forms a conception of life similar to that expressed in Socrates's allegory of the cave in the Republic;[39] yet, the imaginative world appears an arbitrary, if desirable, "light of illusion:"

> With her eyes upon the dark sky, voices reached her from the room in which she was standing. She heard them as if they came from people in another world antecedent to her world, a world that was the prelude, the antechamber to reality; it was as if, lately dead, she heard the living talking. The dream nature of our life had never been more apparent to her, never had life been more certainly an affair of four walls, whose objects existed only within the range of lights and fires, beyond which lay nothing, or nothing more than darkness. She seemed physically to have stepped beyond the region where the light of illusion still makes it desirable to possess, to love, to struggle.
>
> (ND, 373)

Katharine, at this point in the novel, turns her back on the shadows in the cave ("the dream nature of our life . . . beyond which lay nothing, or nothing more than darkness"), but she is still not able to discern in the mind any evidence of a permanent daylight world of vision. Yet, she yearns for this world and, naturally enough, decides to visit Mary whose light, burning in the night, represents the light of truth. She returns from this visit with the conviction that she would like to join Mary's society.

Katharine's fate, however, is destined to take her on a very different path from that of Mary, and Katharine does not return to Mary for some time--not until she learns first-hand what it is to love. In the meantime, Ralph has two visions which reveal to him both the glory and the ignominy of Romantic love.

In the first, he experiences a sense of exaltation precipitated by the discovery that he loves Katharine: "They seemed to pass in and out of each other's minds, questioning and answering. The utmost fullness of communion seemed to be theirs. Thus united, he felt himself raised to an eminence, exalted, and filled with a power of achievement such as he had never known in singleness. . . . Thus, he forgot the inevitable limitations; he forgot her absence, he thought it of no account whether she married him or another; nothing mattered, save that she should exist, and that he should love her" (ND, 409). He feels the need to impart his feelings to someone "because his discovery was so important that it concerned other people too" (ND, 410). He goes instinctively to visit Mary, but is unable to impart his vision to her. Next, he seeks out Rodney's rooms, but Rodney is not home. Finally, out of desperation, Ralph walks to the Embankment and tries to tell his discovery to an old man. The old man refuses to listen, but rehearses instead the history of his own woes. This human being who will not listen convinces Ralph of the truth that Katharine has tried earlier to express to him: the inevitable loneliness of human beings. Impressed by this truth, Ralph has a second vision:

> . . . an odd image came to his mind of a lighthouse beseiged by the flying bodies of lost birds, who were dashed senseless, by the gale, against the glass. He had a strange sensation that he was both lighthouse and bird; he was steadfast and brilliant; and at the same time he was whirled, with all other things, senseless against the glass.
>
> (ND, 417-418)

In Woolf's mythology, the lighthouse is always a symbol of what Blake calls the "Beulah" or married state. The lighthouse, consisting of a flame protected by a solid structure, signifies the kind of haven provided by the married state. As the protector of an inner vision, Ralph can conceive of himself as a lighthouse, and of Katharine as "the light itself" (ND, 419). But the lighthouse exists in a fallen world. Outside the haven, the world is battered by sea and wind and storm. As an individual living in the fallen world, Ralph is outside the lighthouse and, like the flying birds tossed by the storm, he is a victim of nature, while the lighthouse itself collaborates in his destruction. The demonic aspect of the lighthouse is a theme Woolf develops in To the Lighthouse.[40] In Night and Day, this demonic vision lasts a moment only. When Ralph finally meets Rodney outside Katharine's house, he projects the vision of alienation onto Rodney: "In comparison with Rodney, Denham felt himself very secure; he saw Rodney as one of the lost birds dashed senseless against the glass; one of the flying bodies of which the air was full. But he and Katharine were alone together, aloft, splendid, and luminous with a twofold radiance. He pitied the unstable creature beside him; he felt a desire to protect him, exposed without the knowledge which made his own way so direct. They were united as the adventurous are united, though one reaches the goal and the other perishes by the way" (ND, 422). This scene of high winds and darkness culminates in a moment of mutual understanding in which both Ralph and William

confess to having been fools of love: "they seemed to be aware of some common knowledge which did away with the possibility of rivalry, and made them feel more sympathy for each other than for anyone else in the world" (ND, 423).

The alien vision of human life that Woolf sketches in the loneliness of Mary Datchet's fate and in the tempest dream of Ralph complements the theme of Romantic love developed in the final chapters. Romantic love is scrutinized in a candid dialogue between Katharine and Ralph. Katharine admits love but will not agree that she loves Ralph: "'One can be in love with pure reason?' she hazarded. 'Because if you're in love with a vision, I believe that's what I'm in love with'" (ND, 449). Thus, Katharine imparts to Ralph her secret love of mathematics.

Nevertheless, Katharine does "fall" in love with Ralph during a period when her mother is away visiting Shakespeare's tomb. Whereas the conjunction of these two actions has led many critics to assign Mrs. Hilbery the role of redeemer in the novel,[41] a close examination of Katharine's falling in love (i.e., into the delusion of Romantic love) reveals that Mrs. Hilbery actually has very little to do with it. The departure of Mrs. Hilbery clearly serves as a period of vacancy, like that which Woolf effects in the central section of To the Lighthouse where the mother's influence is objectified through the perspective of distance. But, unlike Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic daughter, Lily Briscoe, Katharine does not escape the realm of the positive sublime. The return of Mrs. Hilbery causes Katharine to regress

to a state of unstable harmony.

The first effect of Mrs. Hilbery's absence on Katharine is that she begins to embark on solitary dream-journeys resembling those of Rachel in The Voyage Out:

> She was, for example, walking down a road in Northumberland in the August sunset; at the inn she left her companion, who was Ralph Denham, and was transported, not so much by her own feet as by some invisible means, to the top of a high hill. Here the scents, the sounds among the dry heather-roots, the grass-blades pressed upon the palm of her hand, were all so perceptible that she could experience each one separately. After this her mind made excursions into the dark of the air, or settled upon the surface of the sea, which could be discovered over there, or with equal unreason it returned to its couch of bracken beneath the stars of midnight, and visited the snow valleys of the moon.
>
> (ND, 460-461)

After the arrival of William and Cassandra, Katharine's impulses take an abrupt turn and she becomes obsessed with the need to find Ralph Denham. Though Katharine's ostensible reason for this action is that she wants to reach Denham before he arrives at her house and, thus, avoid the prying eyes of William and Cassandra, the adventure which follows makes it clear that Katharine is really motivated by a deep psychological need. Though she is pressed for time, Katharine makes a side-trip to the Strand to watch the traffic, forgets about Ralph, suddenly remembers, misses him at his place of work, decides to go to his house, forgets his address, and goes to Mary Datchet's rooms to get it. What motivates Katharine is the anxiety of material loss, triggered by the absence of her mother, and subsequently transferred into a desire to find Ralph Denham: "It was a desire now--wild, irrational, unexplained, resembling something felt in childhood" (ND, 469). Once at Mary's, Katharine

discovers that something important has happened in her life--she has fallen in love with Ralph Denham: "she was not ashamed of her extravagance so much as exalted to one of the pinnacles of existence, where it behooved the world to do her homage. No one but she herself knew what it meant to miss Ralph Denham on that particular night; into this inadequate event crowded feelings that the great crises of life might have failed to call forth. She had missed him, and knew the bitterness of all failure; she desired him, and knew the torment of all passion" (ND, 475).

But, by the time Katharine reaches her house, this mood is spent. The physical culmination of her adventure has ironic overtones which cannot be overlooked:

> An extraordinary clearness of sight seemed to possess her on beholding him. So little, so single, so separate from all else he appeared, who had been the cause of these extreme agitations and aspirations. She could have laughed in his face. But, gaining upon this clearness of sight against her will, and to her dislike, was a flood of relief, of certainty, of humility, of desire no longer to strive and to discriminate, yielding to which, she let herself sink within his arms and confessed her love.
>
> (ND, 479)

The bathos that temporarily predominates the conclusion to Katharine's adventure indicates the direction in which the Romantic theme will move in the final chapters of the novel. Having through the course of their experience established the reality of the dream world, Katharine and Ralph proceed to subject the dream world to logical analysis. They establish that love fails, or "lapses" occur, whenever a discrepancy occurs between the ideal and the object of love:

> Either because Katharine looked more beautiful, or more strange, because she wore something different, or said something unexpected, Ralph's sense of her romance welled up and overcame him either into silence or into inarticulate expressions, which Katharine, with unintentional but invariable perversity, interrupted or contradicted with some severity or assertion of prosaic fact. Then the vision disappeared, and Ralph expressed vehemently in his turn the conviction that he loved only her shadow and cared nothing for her reality. If the lapse was on her side it took the form of gradual detachment until she became completely absorbed in her own thoughts, which carried her away with such intensity that she sharply resented any recall to her companion's side.
>
> (ND, 501)

Parallel to this intellectual quest is the sense that the vision Katharine and Ralph are engaged in establishing necessarily betokens the downfall of traditional social order epitomized in the house of Katharine's father. This is keenly felt by Mr. Hilbery, convinced that "his house was in a state of revolution" (ND, 505). In this period of "interregnum" (ND, 506), Katharine works openly and in broad daylight at her mathematics: "she had somehow risen to be mistress in her own kingdom; assuming her sovereignty unconsciously" (ND, 507).

The return of Mrs. Hilbery from Shakespeare's tomb re-establishes peace, but she does not bring Katharine any revelations that have not already been provided by the mere fact of her absence. She sees only ugliness in Katharine's love for abstract symbols and provides her daughter with one last exemplum in order to communicate her vision of the love between men and women: "'We were in a little boat going out to a ship at night,' she began. 'The sun had set and the moon was rising over our

heads. There were lovely silver lights upon the waves and three green lights upon the steamer in the middle of the bay. Your father's head looked so grand against the mast. It was life, it was death. The great sea was round us. It was the voyage for ever and ever'" (ND, 511-512). The "ancient fairy-tale" has a hypnotic effect on Katharine and the sound of her mother crooning the word "love" makes Katharine think of "the breaking of the waves solemnly in order upon the vast shore that she gazed upon" (ND, 512). Though soothed by her mother's words, Katharine tries to explain her sense of the essential loneliness of people, of the sense of vacancy "as if something came to an end suddenly" (ND, 512-513) when the illusion fails. But Mrs. Hilbery placidly assures Katharine that "'we have to have faith in our vision'" (ND, 513), and together, they look for a moment "into the abyss" (ND, 513). Finally, when Mrs. Hilbery shows Katharine that she will help her to override her father's ruling and send for Ralph, Katharine suddenly regresses to early childhood and worships her mother as though she were a goddess: "Once more she felt that instead of being a grown woman, used to advise and command, she was only a foot or two raised above the long grass and the little flowers and entirely dependent upon the figure of indefinite size whose head went up into the sky, whose hand was in hers, for guidance" (ND, 513-514). Katharine's vision of her mother is obviously regressive and ironic in that the "figure" who provides "guidance" is as disillusioned and depressed by the "abyss" as Katharine herself. Mrs. Hilbery is an immensely attractive figure, but her recommendation of a Romantic vision

she only half believes in suggests that she is more an ironic hero than a triumphant one.[42] As will be shown presently, Katharine turns from the uncertain consolation of her mother to the stoical example of life lived without illusion provided by Mary Datchet. From this point on, the Romantic vision becomes increasingly problematical when applied to the spiritual dilemmas experienced by the chief characters.

In the climax of Night and Day--the night journey of Katharine and Ralph--the two forms of social evolution that the younger generation of characters explores, as epitomized in Mary's work and in the projected marriage of Katharine and Ralph, are merged in the theme of quest and identity. Mary's final meeting with Katharine (in Chapter XXXI) culminates in a vision of mutual quest in which Mary discovers that she and Katharine, though following different destinies, are proceeding to the same goal: "She imagined a point distant as a low star upon the horizon of the dark. There for her too, for them both, was the goal for which they were striving, and the end for the ardours of their spirits was the same; but where it was, or what it was, or why she felt convinced that they were united in search of it, as they drove swiftly down the streets of London, side by side, she could not have said" (ND, 478-479). In the final chapter, Mary's vision takes a more definite shape in Katharine's mind as she stands outside Mary's lighted window at night. Katharine hails Mary's light in a spirit of comradeship: "It signalled to her across the dark street; it was a sign of triumph shining there for ever, not to be extinguished this side of the

grave. She brandished her happiness as if in salute; she dipped in it as if in reverence. 'How they burn!' she thought, and all the darkness of London seemed set with fires, roaring upwards; but her eyes came back to Mary's window and rested there satisfied" (ND, 536). Katharine's vision of Mary's light suggests the image of a lighthouse, fixed in the darkness, giving its light for the guidance of the storm-beleaguered. Katharine and Ralph, in their vision of marriage, also assume the symbolic qualities of the lighthouse: "They were victors, masters of life, but at the same time absorbed in the flame, giving their life to increase its brightness, to testify to their faith" (ND, 535).

In the final paragraph of the novel, the lovers walk down to the river, the symbolic source of life, and enter "the enchanted region":

> She might speak to him, but with that strange tremor in his voice, those eyes blindly adoring, whom did he answer? What woman did he see? And where was she walking, and who was her companion? Moments, fragments, a second of vision, and then the flying waters, the winds dissipating and dissolving; then, too, the recollection from chaos, the return of security, the earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun. From the heart of his darkness, he spoke his thanksgiving; from a region as far, as hidden, she answered him. On a June night the nightingales sing, they answer each other across the plain; they are heard under the window among the trees in the garden.
>
> (ND, 537-538)

The night-and-day motif is epitomized in this ironic climax with its polarized vision of the natural and imaginative worlds. In the natural world, the lovers dwell in night. Their speech seems instinctive like that of nightingales calling to each other "across the plain." But in the imaginative world, they

dwell in daylight, "earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun." The natural world signifies their essential isolation from each other and their subservience to the dominance of nature. The imaginative world, however, signifies the "heart of darkness," the centre of emptiness which makes the imaginative "daylight" vision possible. In this imaginative sense, the heart of darkness is a "good night." Nevertheless, the centre of emptiness (since it is still, in this novel, a personal, existential centre) seems a source of solitude. Thus, the novel ends on a note of hope rather than poetic faith: "For a moment they waited, and then loosed their hands. 'Good night,' he breathed. 'Good night,' she murmured back to him" (ND, 538).

For Woolf to end Night and Day between the acts of engagement and marriage is a startling departure from the comic-romantic mode. The society that emerges at the end is uncertain about the reality of its own visionary triumph. The lovers are not sure whether they love each other or some projected archetype. Night and Day, being the only one of Woolf's novels structured both implicitly and explicitly on the theme of duality, offers no final synthesis precisely because its author perceives a vision of humanity confused by an uncertainty about whether either the imaginative or natural world is most real. "If one is to deal with people on a large scale and say what one thinks," writes Woolf in her diary, "how can one avoid melancholy? I don't admit to being hopeless though--only the spectacle is a profoundly strange one; & as the current answers don't do, one

has to grope for a new one, & the process of discarding the old, when one is by no means certain what to put in their place, is a sad one" (DVW, I, 259). St. John Hirst, in The Voyage Out, claims to have found a key to the riddle of life: the key is love. But, in the elaborate and painful intricacies of the love relationships in Night and Day, modelled so carefully upon the structure of Romantic comedy, the social vision of love turns out to be a blind, artificial labyrinth.[43] The new society that struggles to be born at the end of the novel is based on fidelity to truth, and the truth is that whatever man's condition or state, he remains deluded and lonely so long as he is in love only with his personal dreams. The characters in The Voyage Out and Night and Day ask themselves what it means to be in love. That this question has only an other-worldly answer is the theme of the novels that follow.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Sir Leslie Stephen, "Dreams and Realities," An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays (London, 1893), 114 and 120. Both the presentation of personal nightmares in The Voyage Out and the archetypal nightmares in the "Time Passes" episode of To the Lighthouse suggest that Woolf's concept of the logical imagination might have its biographical roots in her father's philosophy. Dreams and Realities, incidentally, was an early title for Night and Day. See Charles G. Hoffman, "'From Lunch to Dinner': Virginia Woolf's Apprenticeship," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 10, no. 4 (Winter, 1969), 616.

2. Virginia Woolf to Madge Vaughan, June ? 1906, (LVW, I, 227).

3. See VO., 15, 16, 20, 198, 261, 270, 298, 318, 332, 346, 356, and 416.

4. Helen is engaged in embroidering "a great design of a tropical forest" (VO, 30), and in Chapter XV Hirst compares Helen at work to one of the Greek Fates: "With one foot raised on a rung of a chair, and her elbow out in the attitude for sewing, her own figure possessed the sublimity of a woman's of the early world, spinning the thread of fate" (VO, 245-246).

5. The managerial aggressiveness of Helen Ambrose is argued in Mitchell A. Leaska's "Virginia Woolf's The Voyage Out: Character Deduction and the Function of Ambiguity," Virginia Woolf Quarterly, 1, no. 2 (Winter, 1973), 18-41. I would argue, however, that the sublime power of Helen over Rachel is not a function of Helen's character but of her role as symbolic mother.

6. But, see Avrom Fleishman, Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading (Baltimore and London, 1975), 3 ff.

7. VO., 33. Cf. Fleishman, op. cit., 15.

8. A classical exposition of the ladder-of-love philosophy is contained in the teachings of Diomita to Socrates summarized in the Symposium.

9. Alice Van Buren Kelley, The Novels of Virginia Woolf: Fact and Vision, 32.

10. That Terence, and not Rachel, has this moment of being is clear from the context. The passage beginning "They seemed to be thinking together . . ." is an indirect reporting of Terence's thoughts.

11. "Satan is described by Blake as a 'Hermaphrodite,' a sterile fusion of subject and object into an indivisible abstract or spectral world" (Frye, FS, 135).

12. Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading, 20. Beverly Ann Schlack also offers a careful analysis of the Comus allusion in order to suggest that Rachel's plight parallels that of Milton's Lady. See Continuing Presences: Virginia Woolf's Use of Literary Allusion, 20-27.

13. VO, 278-279. The Nurse prefigures the religious Doris Kilman. Cf. MD, 142.

14. The thematic significance of Rachel's illness is widely disputed. David Daiches fails to enlighten when he suggests that "Rachel Vinrace is sent to her death because for the moment Virginia Woolf can see no more of the quality of life by meditating on her further" (Virginia Woolf [New York, c. 1942, 2nd ed., 1963], 12). Herbert Marder postulates that "Rachel was too jealous of her independence to marry anyone, and that the novelist has evaded the implications of this fact" (Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf, 21). Beverly Ann Schlack asserts that Rachel's illness is psychosomatically induced by Terence's reading of Comus: "After hearing this disguised, symbolic telegraph message to her unconscious, this command to Sabrina to rescue 'insnared chastity,' Rachel must flee" (Continuing Presences, 23). In defence of both Woolf's formal integrity and her mimetic fidelity, the illness conveniently provides a plausible background against which Rachel's established psychological conflicts can dramatize themselves in the form of hallucinations.

15. The ruined shelter is an image of the sublime crisis of vacancy here and elsewhere in Woolf's writing. A notable recurrence is the decay of the summer house in the "Time Passes" episode of To the Lighthouse.

16. The "impression of keen horror" Rachel feels at the spectacle of the nurse during the church service is significantly out of proportion to the circumstance, suggesting that the crouched figure in the chapel approximates the crippled figure of Rachel's first nightmare.

17. This aspect of the female will as phallic-mother is another instance of the hermaphrodite motif in the novel. It recurs in the characterization of Betty Flanders in Jacob's Room.

18. The image of the old woman with a knife occurs again in Night and Day (523), where Ralph relates it to a fear of the loss of Katharine. It is interesting that in Night and Day, where the theme is love rather than reason, Ralph imagines the knife aimed at Katharine's heart.

19. Students of Virginia Woolf's biography might also relate this image to the violent periods of madness Woolf underwent in 1913, after completing the manuscript of The Voyage Out; and in 1915, when the novel was published.

20. "Our world is sublunary, and Beulah, being immediately above it, is associated with the moon" (Frye, FS, 230).

21. Frye points out that the moon goddess Diana is also the hell goddess Hecate. See FS, 234.

22. The mountain is the terrestrial location furthest from the centre of the ironic landscape, for which reason it sometimes represents a state of alienation in modern mythopoeic literature. Two examples that come to mind are Arnold's landscape in "Empedocles on Etna," and Hopkins's internal landscape in the sonnet, "No Worst, There is None."

23. The archetypal King of Darkness reappears at the end of "Time Passes" in TTL, where he is driven out by the awakening of the archetypal poet, embodied in Lily Briscoe and Augustus Carmichael.

24. "I wanted to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life as various and disorderly as possible, which should be cut short a moment by the death, and go on again--the whole was to leave a sort of pattern and be somehow controlled" (Virginia Woolf to Lytton Strachey, 28 Feb. [1916], LVW, II, 82). Again, the positive sublime is suggested. The tumult and disorder signal a condition of "absolute metaphor" (Weiskel, RS, 26) which is resolved by death as a sort of embrace (cf. MD, 202), a seeking after a lost relation to the mother, ultimately to nature.

25. The sublime cycle begins all over again for Terence when he catches sight of the people in the room outside Rachel's sickroom: " . . . it suddenly came over him that here was a world in which he would never see Rachel again" (VO, 432).

26. See VO, 382. Hirst's moment of vision at the end of the novel anticipates the gradual evolution of Woolf's vision toward imaginative community in the later novels. James Naremore insightfully points out the greater sagaciousness of Hirst's final communal vision as opposed to the dreamlike Romantic visions of Terence and Rachel: "For the first time, Hirst experiences one of those passive, drowsy moods that have been typical of Rachel and Hewet. But Hirst's vision, perhaps to show that for the first time he has yielded to the impulse of love, perhaps to show that he is potentially more wise, has people in it; and thus may be seen as analogous to Virginia Woolf's vision" (The World Without a Self: Virginia Woolf and the Novel [New Haven and London, 1973], 54).

27. The apocalyptic vision of an endless day is glimpsed by Rachel in VO (272): " . . . the nights were black bars separating her from the days; she would have liked to run all the days into one long continuity of sensation."

28. Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, trans. A.A. Brill (New York, 1938), 510.

29. Cf. ND, 232.

30. "If you are young, the future lies upon the present, like a piece of glass, making it tremble and quiver. If you are old, the past lies upon the present, like a thick glass, making it waver, distorting it" (Woolf, "The Moment: A Summer's Night," CE, II, 293). Myths of decline and progress fail to redeem the present unless they reconcile the panorama of history with the facticity of the individual life. Thus, the most optimistic episodes of Night and Day occur when Mrs. Hilbery turns from her pilgrimage at Shakespeare's grave to address her daughter's emotional needs, and when Ralph and Katharine temporarily curb their daydreams of remote, ideal love to communicate to each other the substance of these dreams. It is worth noting that Woolf's subsequent novels subsume historical visions to epiphanic glimpses of the eternal present.

31. Frye, FS, 48.

32. The pervasive significance of this symbol in Woolf's fiction has been analyzed by John F. Hulcoop, who identifies the magnanimous hero as a transformational symbol of the mind's ability to overcome obstacles (in "Soliloquies of the 'Interior Paramour': A Polysemous Approach to the Works of Virginia Woolf" [A Lecture Series Delivered at the University of British Columbia, Fall, 1975]).

33. These excerpts are drawn from Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography (London, 1972), I, 209 and 211, respectively.

34. Woolf, "The Mark on the Wall," HH, 44. Further references to this sketch in the ensuing paragraph are incorporated into the text.

35. The magnanimous hero displaces the selfhood figure (representative of a socially-conceived patriarchy) as the resolver of the crisis of the negative sublime. This is not to say that Katharine enters the realm of the reader's sublime: the vision is a daydream, not an imaginative victory over this-worldliness. Apocalyptically, the magnanimous hero is epitomized in the vision of the archetypal poet which the reader of The Waves achieves in the final pages of that novel.

36. Frye, AoC, 171.

37. That is, images of light begin to proliferate as the novel moves to its climax. Yet, the comic pattern here is complicated or displaced so that it takes on an ironic colouring, where contradictory beliefs are simply juxtaposed rather than being reconciled. James Hafley notes the irresolution of this "resolution": ". . . the novel ends with three attitudes toward society: Rodney and Cassandra Otway respect it, Mary wishes to reform it, and Katharine and Denham reject it" (The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as a Novelist [New York, 1954], 27).

38. This allusion anticipates Ralph's later vision of the wind-beleaguered birds in ND, 417-418.

39. Fleishman, op. cit., 37 mentions this allusion but misses the ironic reversal of the light-dark symbolism.

40. In the "Time Passes" episode of TTL, the lighthouse throws indifferent beams across the floor of the ruined shelter: "The place was gone to rack and ruin. Only the Lighthouse beam entered the room for a moment, sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the darkness of winter, looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw" (TTL, 213-214; italics mine).

41. See especially Kelley, Fact and Vision, 39. Herbert Marder, on the other hand, sees Mrs. Hilbery as a victim of patriarchal family life: "Mrs. Hilbery is a lovable character; she has a genius for giving parties; her sympathy for the people around her is genuine and her intuitions extremely acute. But her personality is incomplete, one-sided, because she has never had a chance to really develop her mind" (Feminism and Art, 35). The following excerpt of a letter from Virginia Woolf to Vanessa Bell, despite the mischievous tone Woolf often adopts in her letters to her sister, throws a contrasting light on the issue: "my only triumph [over the meddling aunts and cousins who made a horror of the Stephen sisters' adolescent social life] is that the Ritchies are furious with me for Mrs. Hilbery [who is based on Woolf's Aunt Anny Ritchie]; and Hester is writing a life of Aunt Anny to prove she was a shrewd, and silent woman of business" (June 1921, LVW, II, 474).

42. For Mrs. Hilbery, the "centre of emptiness" Lily Briscoe is to face in TTL is practically unbearable. Unable to lay the ghost of her parents' sorrow (in which respect she resembles her author, who is obsessed by the ghost of her parents until the writing of To the Lighthouse [see MB, 80-81, and AWD, 138], Mrs. Hilbery cannot develop a logical imagination. Her faith in a Romantic vision of marriage seems more a defence against the anxiety of vacancy than an imaginative affirmation founded in the void. Her identification with Shakespeare, like that with her father, takes the form of the negative sublime resolved, not that of the reader's sublime. She is a devotee of the self-hood of these poets, and she thus engages in shrine-making and shrine-visiting.

43. Jean Guiguet notes the confluence of "a certain Shakespearean structure [and] a certain Proustian quality" in the novel (Virginia Woolf and Her Works [London, 1965], 213). However, the novel seems to be more than the blending of Elizabethan and modernistic influences suggested by Guiguet. Night and Day, in fact, attempts an ironic structure. Mimetically, it represents a group of characters whose dream worlds are analogous to the world-view of Shakespearean Romance, with its magnanimous heroes and ideal ladies. Expressively, it subjects the analogue to an analytical critique characteristic of the modern novel of ideas.

CHAPTER SIX

A DROWNED SAILOR ON A ROCK: *JACOB'S ROOM* AND *MRS. DALLOWAY*

The central theme of Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway is the martyrdom of a youthful revolutionary by a tyrannical society. In Blake's prophecies, this martyrdom is represented by the dead Orc hanging on the dead tree or stretched, like Prometheus, on the rock of Ulro.[1] Woolf's youthful revolutionaries are characteristically set against the sea, the typical symbolic background of the ironic mode. The symbolic sea claims Rachel in The Voyage Out. In Night and Day, where Mrs. Hilbery claims that marriage is a voyage for ever and ever, the sea is a hostile background to existence. In Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway the "drowned" victim appears on a "rock" above the "sea" as a spectacle of martyrdom for all to behold. Jacob and Septimus, scapegoats of a society that has lost touch with its soul, resemble Orc figures fixed in time by their deaths.

The vision of the "out there" as a "Rock of Ages" is a new development in Woolf's symbolism. Woolf discovers in these novels that death has a redeeming aspect. Rachel Vinrace experiences a fall beyond the mineral world into the unformed world of the symbolic sea where the only thing permanent is change itself. The twofold vision (or Blakean Generation) that Woolf explores in Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway suggests that she had discovered what Northrop Frye calls "the protective aspect of the 'Rock of Ages'": that is, "the fact that the limit of death is interposed between life and annihilation; that the physical world is solid and permanent, and orderly enough for the

imagination to get a grip on it . . ." (FS, 225-226). A brief review of Woolf's fiction up to the writing of Jacob's Room reveals the beginnings of an epistemology grounded in the object world. The Voyage Out merely touches on such an epistemology: "[Rachel] was overcome with awe that things should exist at all. . . . She forgot that she had any fingers to raise. . . . The things that existed were so immense and so desolate. . . . She continued to be conscious of these vast masses of substance for a long stretch of time, the clock still ticking in the midst of the universal silence" (VO, 145). But this consciousness of reality is later lost during Rachel's illness; she succumbs to the autistic imagination. The object world is more intrusive in Night and Day, in which the autistic imagination is defined as a "lapse" of consciousness from waking reality. At the end of the novel, the timeless world of nature is invoked in a passage that prefigures the interludes of The Waves: "On a June night the nightingales sing, they answer each other across the plain; they are heard under the window among the trees in the garden" (ND, 538). In three sketches written contemporaneously with Night and Day, Woolf further develops a theme of waking from autism to a profound realization of the solidity of the object world. In these sketches a narrative consciousness transcends autism by focusing upon a particular external object: a flowerbed ("Kew Gardens"), a snail ("The Mark on the Wall"), and a woman in a railway carriage ("An Unwritten Novel"). In the latter two sketches, the rudiments of the ironic landscape begin taking

shape: a centre of human consciousness[2] and a this-worldly circumference. The meditating consciousness of the narrator moves between make-believe and reality. The "mark" on the wall and the woman in the railway carriage exist independently of the imagination of the narrator and thus stabilize and limit the wanderings of the imagination. In "An Unwritten Novel," the narrator makes up a fictional life for her female companion in the railway carriage. And, when the woman turns out to be not the doom-haunted spinster of the unwritten novel, but instead, a happily married woman whose grown-up son meets her at the station, the artist/narrator achieves that distinct separation of imagination and reality that characterizes the logical imagination: "Well, my world's done for! What do I stand on? What do I know? That's not Minnie. There never was a Moggridge. Who am I? Life's bare as bone" (HH, 26).

This theme, that life is "bare as bone," is developed in Jacob's Room. First, the novel repudiates Rachel Vinrace's vision of life as "patches of light" passing over "vast blocks of matter" (VO, 358) in favour of an acceptance of flesh, blood, and bones as the physical and visible parts of the soul. Early in the novel, Jacob picks up a sheep's jawbone on the beach as a totem of his identity with the physical world, and Jacob himself as seen by the narrator is not only an unknown consciousness but also "the most real, the most solid, the best known to us" (JR, 71). Second, the novel insinuates an existential vision of life seen without illusion. The controlling symbol for this theme is the "room." Throughout the novel, Jacob's rooms represent the

ambiguous effects of life bounded by walls. His room at home and his rooms at his "alma mater"--Cambridge--represent gestational shelters analogous to the Blakean Beulah, whose archetypal form is the womb.[3] They therefore stand for the autistic imagination oblivious to the suffering and injustice going on outside the shelter. His rooms in London and elsewhere after Jacob leaves Cambridge represent places of freedom in which Jacob attempts to come to terms with the real world.

Jacob's story, then, is twofold and tragically ironic. His youthful idealism is fostered by forces in society which are neither youthful nor idealistic; yet, by the time he realizes that society has bequeathed him an ignoble birthright, Jacob's spirit has been too depressed to fight any longer. In the end, his life is sacrificed to make "room" for freedom in a society which gives him no room to be really free.

As a personification of "this-worldliness," Jacob anticipates Percival of The Waves.[4] Like Percival, who "had a kind of beauty which defends itself from any caress" (W, 172), Jacob is an irresistible focus of "presence" to the other characters (including the narrator). As a representative of "other-worldliness," Jacob is an "absence" or an "unseizable force" which eludes all attempts of the eyes of others to pin him down. The source of Jacob's power to instill belief in "other-worldliness" is his almost mystical silence and his solitary aloofness associated with his various rooms. The source of his power to instill belief in "this-worldliness" is the stern vision of reality he adopts in the symbolic prelude of the novel. The

novel opens with a view of Betty Flanders on the beach lamenting, in a letter to Captain Barfoot in Scarborough, the death of her husband, Seabrook: "Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale blue ink dissolved the full stop; for there her pen stuck; her eyes fixed, and tears slowly filled them" (JR, 5). Against these images of uncontrolled expansion Jacob is introduced. Like his dead father, Jacob is an absent presence.[5] He has wandered from the company of his brother, Archer:

> "Ja--cob! Ja--cob!" shouted Archer, lagging on after a second.
>
> The voice had an extraordinary sadness. Pure from all body, pure from all passion, going out into the world, solitary, unanswered, breaking against the rocks --so it sounded.
>
> (JR, 7)

Meanwhile, Jacob has a psychological adventure. He climbs a rock and finds a crab in the hollow at the top. Just as he is about to jump down, he sees "an enormous man and woman" on the sand. The sight terrifies him and he begins to run until he sees "a large black woman" on the sand, whom he mistakes for his nurse. The "woman" turns out to be a rock. He discovers that he is lost; but, just as he is about to wail, he finds an old sheep's skull and picks it up. At that moment, his mother appears, but he no longer needs her comfort. The whole scene recapitulates the psychological drama of the sublime moment. Jacob's harmonious relation to his environment is disturbed when he sees the "enormous man and woman"[6] on the sand. This sight triggers a crisis of vacancy--the spectre of death. His fear drives him to seek the symbolic primordial object--the mother--an archetype which he projects onto his nurse. But the discovery that he is embracing

a rock plunges Jacob back into terror. His terror is resolved when he finds the sheep's skull, an object with which he achieves identification. At the end of the chapter, the sheep's jaw has become Jacob's totem--replacing the opal-shelled crab in the bucket--and he keeps it beside his bed as an object of power.[7]

The scene at the end of Chapter I describing Jacob and Archer in the nursery anticipates a scene in To the Lighthouse in which Mrs. Ramsay wraps her shawl around a boar's skull which James has nailed to the wall.[8] Jacob and James are kindred spirits who identify themselves with a hard reality. In To the Lighthouse, James later transfers his identification with the mineral world to the phallic lighthouse, a fact which suggests that this-worldly identification is related to what the Freudians would call a genital organization of the personality.[9] In Jacob's Room, a similar identification is suggested by the polarization of the sexes in a society heading toward a global war and by the breakdown in the androgynous Greek ideal suggested in the final chapters of the novel. The aggressive alternative to Jacob's reactive identification is suggested in the relationship between Archer and Mrs. Flanders in the nursery (which anticipates that of Cam and Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse). Archer is terrified by the storm which is raging outside; he has a sense of water rushing in. His mother reacts by telling him a consoling story about fairies and birds and a mother bird with a worm in her mouth. The "old cradle song" eventually lulls him to sleep. But the consoling illusion, a significant theme in Woolf's vision, has an ambiguous function. Archer's fear is precipitated by a crisis of

the negative sublime characterized by a fear of inundation. In this context, Mrs. Flanders's fairy story seems an inappropriate response. She succeeds in superimposing the image of an harmonious nature over Archer's image of nature in tumult; the hypnotic spell she imposes on Archer embodies metaphorically the mechanism of repression. In other words, she lulls him into a false sense of security, while the original anxiety remains a source of imminent crisis.

The theme of the fostering mother, or alma mater, is developed in the third chapter of the novel when Jacob goes to Cambridge. As a child, Jacob constantly rebels against maternal protection. Unlike Archer, Jacob seeks out solitary paths--wandering alone on the beach, sleeping soundly in the midst of the storm, exploring forests in search of moths and coming home late so that "his mother took him for a burglar" (JR, 21). But when Jacob goes up to Cambridge in October, 1906, he enters a larger "room" which the narrator describes in terms of the sheltered flame--a variation of the lighthouse image characteristic of the Woolfian Beulah. Here, for example, is a description of the young men in King's College Chapel:

> Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as though nothing dense and corporeal were within. What sculptured faces, what certainty, authority controlled by piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance. Thick wax candles stand upright; young men rise in white gowns; while a subservient eagle bears up for inspection the great white book.
>
> An inclined plane of light comes accurately through each window, purple and yellow even in its most diffused dust, while, where it breaks upon stone, that stone is softly chalked red, yellow, purple. Neither snow nor greenery, winter nor summer, has power over the old stained glass.

> As the sides of a lantern protect the flame so that it burns steady even in the wildest night--burns steady and gravely illuminates the tree-trunks--so inside the Chapel all was orderly. Gravely sounded the voices; wisely the organ replied, as if buttressing human faith with the assent of the elements. The white-robed figures crossed from side to side; now mounted steps, now descended, all very orderly.
>
> (JR, 30)

The tone of the passage, with its Miltonic inversions, its elegant syntax, is undercut by the inclusion of incongruous details: the image of the young men as ethereal spirits wearing great boots, the military overtones of "march" and "inspection," the reference to the "tree-trunks." The narrator's evidently ironic attitude to the sheltered state is made clearer in the passage that follows since it recalls Jacob's earlier experiences while moth-hunting:

> . . . If you stand a lantern under a tree every insect in the forest creeps up to it--a curious assembly, since though they scramble and swing and knock their heads against the glass, they seem to have no purpose--something senseless inspires them, as they amble round the lantern and blindly tap as if for admittance, one large toad being the most besotted of any and shouldering his way through the rest. Ah, but what's that? A terrifying volley of pistol-shots rings out--cracks sharply; ripples spread--silence laps smooth over sound. A tree--a tree has fallen, a sort of death in the forest. After that, the wind in the trees sounds melancholy.
>
> (JR, 30)

The contrasts and parallels between the chapel and the forest point out some of the ironies of the sheltered state. The Chapel is compared to a lantern guarding the flame of the spirit. The lantern in the forest guards a real light. But, just as the lantern excludes the creatures of the forest who "blindly tap as if for admittance," the Chapel excludes many who would enter.[10] Meanwhile, "a terrifying volley of pistol-shots rings out" in the

forest--a fallen tree. But the image now becomes merged ironically with the orderly silence of the Chapel. The fallen tree foreshadows a fallen civilization; the pistol-shots foreshadow the war which breaks out at the end of the novel.

Throughout the narrative of Jacob's Cambridge life, the narrator points out the implicit duality of the sheltered life. Traditionally, the "truth" is inside the shelter--religion, science, the wisdom of the ages. But outside the shelter is the immediate truth--survival, chaos, the confusion of the present. The professors of Greek, science, and philosophy are portrayed as priests of the illogical imagination leading the young men to the gates of mystery. But, these "priests" embody a crude this-worldly tyranny as well. Huxtable resembles the Biblical Jacob lying "on a pillow of stone," (JR, 38), but he is wracked by gout and emerges as a figure of "paralysis and constriction" (JR, 38). Sopwith is a talker: "Talking, talking, talking--as if everything could be talked--the soul itself slipped through the lips in thin silver discs which dissolve in young men's minds like silver, like moonlight" (JR, 39). But the narrator envisions a time "when the silver discs would tinkle hollow" (JR, 39). The professional Cowan is "Virgil's representative among us" (JR, 40), but the bucolic wisdom of the poet contrasts sharply with the mundane severity of Cowan, engaged in "ruling lines between names, hanging lists above doors" (JR, 40). Thus, the ironist casts her own light on these figures, demystifying them. The "truth" professed by these high-priests is also undercut by the theme of memento mori which echoes throughout this

section, as in the following, foreshadowing of lives cut short by war:

> Behind the grey walls sat so many young men, some undoubtedly reading, magazines, shilling shockers, no doubt; legs, perhaps, over the arms of chairs; smoking; sprawling over tables, and writing while their heads went round in a circle as the pen moved--simple young men, these, who would--but there is no need to think of them grown old. . . .
>
> (JR, 41)

The foreshadowing of youth cut short by tyrannical forces is repeated on the following page: "Richard Bonamy, reading Keats no longer, began making long pink spills from an old newspaper, bending forward, and looking eager and contented no more, but almost fierce. Why? Only perhaps that Keats died young--one wants to write poetry too and to love--oh, the brutes! It's damnably difficult" (JR, 42). In addition, the cramping isolation of the place of shelter is evident in the young men's escapist activities and in their sense of oppression. Their isolation is epitomized in a panoramic vision which closes the section: "Before one's eyes would come the bare hills of Turkey--sharp lines, dry earth, coloured flowers, and colour on the shoulders of the women, standing naked-legged in the stream to beat linen on the stones. The stream made loops of water round their ankles. But none of that could show clearly through the swaddlings and blanketings of the Cambridge night" (JR, 43). In this environment, Jacob is as an infant, swaddled and blanketed in his rooms: "Back from the Chapel, back from the Hall, back from the Library, came the sound of his footsteps, as if the old stone echoed with magisterial authority: 'The young man--the young man--the young man--back to his rooms'" (JR, 45).

The summer that Jacob concludes his studies at Cambridge, he accompanies Timmy Durrant on a sailing expedition to the Scilly Isles. In the boat, Jacob temporarily recovers his childhood identification with nature as a rock of ages:

> "Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee,"
>
> sang Jacob.
>
> Like a blunt tooth of some monster, a rock broke the surface; brown, overflown with perpetual waterfalls.
>
> "Rock of Ages,"
>
> Jacob sang, lying on his back, looking up into the sky at mid-day, from which every shred of cloud had been permanently displayed with the cover off.
>
> (JR, 50)

This time, Jacob's appeal to the "rock" for protection bears signs of a reactive identification. The hymn is traditionally an appeal for God's protection. But here, the treatment is ironic. The rock has primeval, predatory associations, and the sky promises no vision of a heavenly Creator. On the other hand, the rock-of-ages vision does provide protection against the symbolic sea:

> By nine all the fire and confusion has gone out of the sky, leaving wedges of apple-green and plates of pale yellow; and by ten the lanterns on the boat were making twisted colours upon the waves, elongated or squab, as the waves stretched or humped themselves. The beam from the light-house strode rapidly across the water. Infinite millions of miles away powdered stars twinkled; but the waves slapped the boat, and crashed, with regular and appalling solemnity, against the rocks.
>
> (JR, 50-51)

The rocky seashore limits the flow of the waves, and a rocky base secures the lighthouse above the turbulent sea.[11]

Following this vacation interlude, however, Jacob meets Timmy's sister, Clara Durrant, and he once more comes under the

spell of the autistic imagination. His rock of ages vision is nearly subverted in what remains of his life by a vision of woman as an ideal, in the fashion of the Greeks.[12] This "Athenian" vision is a legacy from his Cantabridgian days. At the heart of it is the goddess, Athena, the symbol of wisdom and beauty. Clara Durrant in the greenhouse is the first embodiment of Jacob's Athenian vision.[13] But their relationship is never allowed to develop into the Romantic love of the chief characters in Woolf's first two novels. Sexual love is the real basis of the vision of love in Plato's ethos,[14] and it is characteristic of Jacob that he should attempt to ground his Athenian vision in the world of experience. After meeting Clara, Jacob has a number of sexual experiences with women. The first of Jacob's lovers is the prostitute, Florinda.

Florinda, a strange admixture of sexuality and virginity, is the product of a society in which the sexual instinct is perverted by a false code of morality. When she first appears in the novel at a Guy Fawkes celebration, she is associated with the element of fire and with the colours red and yellow, and she thus prefigures the fiery Jinny in The Waves. But, whereas Jinny embodies a lusty life-force, Florinda is intensely melancholy. The two symbols of Florinda's destiny are a photograph of the tombstone beneath which her father is buried and her name "bestowed upon her by a painter who had wished it to signify that the flower of her maidenhood was still unplucked" (JR, 76). With a tombstone/rock for her heritage and an identity

founded on illusion, Florinda shares a common destiny with Jacob. At the Guy Fawkes dance they become ironic emblems of ritual fertility gods--carriers of the life-force and at the same time symbols of transience and doom.

> "We think," said two of the dancers, breaking off from the rest, and bowing profoundly before him, "that you are the most beautiful man we have ever seen."
>
> So they wreathed his head with paper flowers. Then somebody brought out a white and gilt chair and made him sit on it. As they passed, people hung glass grapes on his shoulders, until he looked like the figure-head of a wrecked ship. Then Florinda got upon his knee and hid her face in his waistcoat. With one hand he held her; with the other, his pipe.
>
> (JR, 74)

This scene symbolizes the duality of Jacob's relationship with Florinda. Jacob, the beautiful man, is heroic. But he is also prosaic, stiff and awkward. Florinda, sitting on his knee, is the image of fidelity; but hiding her face in his waistcoat, she reveals her insecurity, her paradoxical modesty. Florinda inspires Jacob: "She had called him Jacob without asking his leave. She had sat upon his knee. Thus did all good women in the days of the Greeks" (JR, 75). He sees Florinda as the embodiment of chastity: "Wild and frail and beautiful she looked, and thus the women of the Greeks were, Jacob thought; and this was life; and himself a man and Florinda chaste" (JR, 77). But Jacob's idealization of Florinda does not withstand the test of experience. Her lack of intelligence is a stumbling-block for him--he questions "whether she had a mind" (JR, 78). Furthermore, Jacob discovers that the sexual instinct is inharmoniously integrated with the

aims of the intellect:

> The problem is insoluble. The body is harnessed to a brain. Beauty goes hand in hand with stupidity. . . . In spite of defending indecency, Jacob doubted whether he liked it in the raw. He had a violent reversion towards male society, cloistered rooms, and the works of the classics; and was ready to turn with wrath upon whoever it was who had fashioned life thus.
>
> Then Florinda laid her hand upon his knee.
>
> After all, it was none of her fault. But the thought saddened him. It's not catastrophes, murders, deaths, diseases, that age and kill us; it's the way people look and laugh, and run up the steps of omnibuses.
>
> Any excuse, though, serves a stupid woman. He told her his head ached.
>
> But when she looked at him, dumbly, half-guessing, half-understanding, apologizing perhaps, anyhow saying as he had said, "it's none of my fault," straight and beautiful in body, her face like a shell within its cap, then he knew that cloisters and classics are no use whatever. The problem is insoluble.
>
> (JR, 81)

Jacob's relationship with Florinda indicates the general tendency to sexual polarization in society, which Woolf chronicles in the latter chapters of the novel. The female in such a society belongs either to the class of "women who don't" or "women who do" --the virgin or the prostitute. Clara Durrant, a "virgin chained to a rock" (JR, 122), represents Jacob's ideal lady, but he has a more elemental attachment to Florinda. In Clara's world of paper flowers and calling-cards and dressing for dinner, Jacob is an outsider. Women, in Clara's world, resemble the remote, tantalizing task-mistresses of the courtly-love convention. One of Clara's suitors writes verses to her ending "And read their doom in Chloe's eyes" (JR, 83). At the Durrant party, Elsbeth Siddons sings "Who is Sylvia?" (JR, 87), while Jacob, hoping to win an audience with Clara, is frustrated by the demands of party eti-

quette. By contrast, Jacob's liaison with Florinda is healthy and satisfying. He emerges from sexual relations with Florinda "amiable, authoritative, beautifully healthy, like a baby after an airing, with an eye clear as running water" (JR, 91). The only worm in this Eden is that Florinda is promiscuous. For her, sex is an end in itself and she ends by breaking Jacob's heart:

> Yes, whether it was for chocolate creams, hot baths, the shape of her face in the looking-glass, Florinda could no more pretend a feeling than swallow whiskey. Incontinent was her rejection. Great men are truthful and these little prostitutes, staring in the fire, taking out a powder-puff, decorating lips at an inch of looking-glass, have (so Jacob thought) an inviolable fidelity.
>
> Then he saw her turning up Greek Street upon another man's arm.
>
> (JR, 93)

This sight of Florinda with another man precipitates in Jacob a crisis of vacancy which he only overcomes through the redeeming power of time.

Jacob comes out of his crisis only to find himself once more under the spell of his Athenian vision. He is obsessed by an ideal image of Clara even while he is frustrated by the societal constraints which keep him and Clara carefully apart:

> Alas, women lie! But not Clara Durrant. A flawless mind; a candid nature; a virgin chained to a rock (somewhere off Lowndes Square) eternally pouring out tea for old men in white waistcoats, blue-eyed, looking you straight in the face, playing Bach. Of all women, Jacob honoured her most. But to sit at a table with bread and butter, with dowagers in velvet, and never say more to Clara Durrant than Benson said to the parrot when old Miss Perry poured out tea, was an insufferable outrage upon the liberties and decencies of human nature--or words to that effect.
>
> (JR, 122)

Thus, mixed with his admiration for Clara is a deep pessimism and a growing realization that society moulds people and, in moulding, destroys them. When he visits Greece, Jacob begins to suspect that even the Athenian vision is a tyrannical cult of beauty perpetuated by the nursemaids, and that the Greek ideal of physical perfection (of which Athena and Apollo are the paradigms) is one of the moulds which destroy the human spirit:

> It is the governesses who start the Greek myth. Look at that for a head (they say)--nose, you see, straight as a dart, curls, eyebrows--everything appropriate to manly beauty; while his legs and arms have lines on them which indicate a perfect degree of development--the Greeks caring for the body as much as for the face. And the Greeks could paint fruit so that the birds pecked at it. First you read Xenophon; then Euripides. One day--that was an occasion, by God--what people have said appears to have sense in it; "the Greek spirit;" the Greek this, that, and the other; though it is absurd by the way, to say that any Greek comes near Shakespeare. The point is, however, that we have been brought up in an illusion.
>
> (JR, 136-137)

Jacob begins to realize, with a sense of gloom, that he is helpless to change the conditions of life: "He would go into Parliament and make fine speeches--but what use are fine speeches and Parliament, once you surrender an inch to the black waters?" (JR, 137-138) Standing at the window of his hotel, he has a profound insight:

> There he saw three Greeks in kilts; the masts of ships; idle or busy people of the lower classes strolling or stepping out briskly, or falling into groups and gesticulating with their hands. Their lack of concern for him was not the cause of his gloom; but some more profound conviction--it was not that he himself happened to be lonely, but that all people are.
>
> (JR, 140)

Against the background of spiritual gloom, Jacob's final love affair with the Greek spirit, embodied in Sandra Wentworth Williams, takes place. Beautiful, veiled, unfaithful to her husband, Sandra identifies herself with the beauty of Greece: "How beautiful the evening was! and her beauty was its beauty" (JR, 141). Sandra, who first appears under the influence of Tchekov's plays (JR, 141) to have a magnanimous love for everything, is easily routed from this vision by the recollection of her self-sufficient beauty: "She forgot the peasants. Only there remained with her a sense of her own beauty, and in front, luckily, there was a looking-glass" (JR, 141).

Jacob, too, soon comes under the spell of Sandra's beauty, and equates it with truth:

> Very beautiful she looked. With her hands folded she mused, seemed to listen to her husband, seemed to watch the peasants coming down with brushwood on their backs, seemed to discriminate between truth and falsehood, Jacob thought, and crossed his legs suddenly, observing the extreme shabbiness of his trousers.
>
> (JR, 145)

This theme becomes a key to a meditation on the Parthenon:

> Although the beauty is sufficiently humane to weaken us, to stir the deep deposit of mud--memories, abandonments, regrets, sentimental devotions--the Parthenon is separate from all that; and if you consider how it has stood out all night for centuries, you begin to connect the blaze (at midday the glare is dazzling and the frieze almost invisible) with the idea that perhaps it is beauty alone that is immortal.
>
> (JR, 147-148)

The feeling of the immortality of beauty which is eternally "out there" and entirely independent of Jacob, intensifies his gloom: "the sight of Hymettus, Pentelicus, Lycabettus on the one side, and the sea on the other, as one stands in the Parthenon at sun-

set, the sky pink feathered, the plain all colours, the marble tawny in one's eyes, is thus oppressive" (JR, 149). This feeling is related to the insoluble problem Jacob discovers earlier--that the brain is harnessed to a body controlled by unknown instincts. Jacob's feeling of oppression on beholding the treasures of Greek sculpture soon localizes in his own body: "he was beginning to think a great deal about the problems of civilization, which were solved, of course, so very remarkably by the ancient Greeks, though their solution is no help to us. Then the hook gave a great tug in his side as he lay in bed on Wednesday night; and he turned over with a desperate sort of tumble, remembering Sandra Wentworth Williams with whom he was in love" (JR, 149).

The sense of fatalism that accompanies Jacob's falling in love derives partly from the forms of society, partly from the force of nature. Richard Bonamy, talking in London with Clara, is amazed at "an existence squeezed and emasculated within a white satin shoe" (JR, 151). When he leaves Clara, certain that she loves Jacob and can do nothing whatever about it, Bonamy experiences "a queer feeling . . . of carriages irresistibly driven; of flower beds uncompromisingly geometrical; of force rushing round geometrical patterns in the most senseless way in the world" (JR, 151-152). The same concept of force bound up in the forms of society leads the narrator to wonder how much of Jacob consists of a set pattern, alien to him, by which he is forced to exist: "So we are driven back to see what the other side means--the men in clubs and Cabinets--when they say that character-

drawing is a frivolous fireside art, a matter of pins and needles, exquisite outlines enclosing vacancy, flourishes, and mere scrawls" (JR, 154-155). These men, who have already been moulded by the system, criticize the novelists for failing to capture the human spirit:

> It is thus that we live, they say, driven by an unseizable force. They say that the novelists never catch it; that it goes hurtling through their nets and leaves them torn to ribbons. This, they say, is what we live by--this unseizable force.
>
> (JR, 155)

The irony of the repeated phrase, "they say," is clear. These men pay lip-service to the human spirit, glibly suggesting that it is the business of the novelists to prove that this spirit exists. In fact, this spirit has been crippled by the "geometrical patterns" imposed by society. Soldiers and naval men, men of commerce, scientists, chancellors, businessmen, the traffic policeman--all act in complete obedience to the collective will. The force that runs through the veins of the "impassive policeman at Ludgate Circus" (JR, 155) is the energy of a slave: "Not an ounce is diverted into sudden impulses, sentimental regrets, wire-drawn distinctions" (JR, 155).

The inevitable personal result of such slavery is spiritual death. The narrator hints that such a fate will surely attend Jacob in the future. His affair with the worldly Sandra Wentworth Williams is gradually poisoning his spirit: "He was suffering, perhaps. He was credulous. Yet there was something caustic about him. He had in him the seeds of extreme disillusionment, which would come to him from women in middle life" (JR, 158). The hint of doom is repeated in a reference to Jacob's mother

sleeping in Scarborough: "The salt gale blew in at Betty Flanders's bedroom window, and the widow lady, raising herself slightly on her elbow, sighed like one who realizes but would fain ward off a little longer--oh, a little longer!--the oppression of eternity" (JR, 160). At the same time, a symbolic storm is brewing and sweeping across the major settings of the novel, bringing darkness with it. The narrator links this darkness with a widespread loss of faith, a resignation to "the thin voice of duty" (JR, 161) which is the modern substitute for the life-spirit embodied in religion. With some irony, the narrator suggests that this gloomy vision of life is restricted to outsiders, thinkers, and visionaries: "But who, save the nerve-worn and sleepless, or thinkers standing with hands to the eyes or some crag above the multitude, see things thus in skeleton outline, bare of flesh?" (JR, 162) For the dwellers in Surbiton, however, "the skeleton is wrapped in flesh" (JR, 162); and hope is renewed with the rise of the sun:

> Sunlight strikes in upon shaving-glasses; and gleaming brass cans; upon all the jolly trappings of the day; the bright, inquisitive, armoured, resplendent, summer's day, which has long since vanquished chaos; which has dried the swamp and stood glass and stone upon it; and equipped our brains and bodies with such an armoury of weapons that merely to see the flash and thrust of limbs engaged in the conduct of daily life is better than the old pageant of armies drawn out in battle array upon the plain.
>
> (JR, 163)

This paean to life is underscored with irony. The summer's day, so seemingly eternal yet so transient, seems to represent the glory of civilizations, so bright, yet so soon over. Our

civilization has given us physical and intellectual weapons with which to conquer chaos, but we still have no weapons to conquer time. The Byzantine Empire passed, the Greek Empire passed; likewise, the Roman. So too, the civilization of our time must pass away. Tradition, Woolf seems to suggest, is no help to us.

When Jacob returns to London, he no longer seems the inhabitant of a sheltered room. Like practically every character who appears in this section of the novel, Jacob becomes one of the homeless people on the brink of war: Jacob and Bonamy in Hyde Park, Clara and Mr. Bowley exercising the Aberdeen terrier, Julia Eliot on an errand of mercy, Fanny Elmer walking along the Strand, the Reverend Andrew Floyd walking in Piccadilly, a procession of dowagers and "jaded men" on their way home, the patrons of the opera on their way to the performance, and Mrs. Pascoe standing in her cabbage-garden "looking out to sea" (JR, 175). The atmosphere in this chapter is ominous, filled with presentiments of disaster. In Hyde Park, where Jacob sits with Bonamy, "small children ran down the sloping grass, stretched out their arms and fell" (JR, 164). Clara Durrant, stopping before the statue of Achilles, is startled by a riderless horse: "'Oh, Mr. Bowley! Oh!' Gallop--gallop--gallop--a horse galloped past without a rider. The stirrups swung; the pebbles spurted" (JR, 167). Julia Eliot has a momentary vision of a skeleton world:

> Five minutes after she had passed the statue of Achilles she had the rapt look of one brushing through crowds on a summer's afternoon, when the trees are rustling, the wheels churning yellow, and the tumult of the present seems like

> an elegy for past youth and past summers, and there rose in her mind a curious sadness, as if time and eternity showed through skirts and waistcoats, and she saw people passing tragically to destruction.
>
> (JR, 168)

Amidst "the tumult of the present," Jacob in Hyde Park makes one last attempt to find a solid basis for his Athenian vision: "Jacob, leaning forward, drew a plan of the Parthenon in the dust in Hyde Park, a network of strokes at least, which may have been the Parthenon, or again a mathematic diagram. And why was the pebble so emphatically ground in at the corner?" (JR, 169). The pebble, representing the cornerstone of Jacob's ideal society, is also a symbol of Jacob himself--an outcast of the "cities which the elderly of the race have built upon the skyline" (JR, 43)--the stone which the builders rejected. Moments later, when the news of war reaches Whitehall, Jacob simultaneously acknowledges his exclusion from his society and recognizes his exclusion from the future of society with a gesture of anger and despair: "Jacob rose from his chair in Hyde Park, tore his ticket to pieces, and walked away" (JR, 173). From this point on he is truly an outsider. The Reverend Andrew Floyd, Jacob's childhood tutor, seeing Jacob on the street after all these years, "started forward, as Jacob crossed the road; but hesitated, and let the moment pass, and lost the opportunity" (JR, 174). Clara on the way to the opera also sees Jacob, but when Mrs. Durrant turns in the direction of her daughter's glance, Jacob is not there. Far away in the Cornish Hills, Mrs. Pascoe looks out to sea; beyond that, in Greece, the red light of sunset

shines on the Parthenon. As the sounds of war mingle with those of peace, the night falls:

> Mrs. Pascoe had gone indoors long ago.
> But the red light was on the columns of the Parthenon, and the Greek women who were knitting their stockings and sometimes crying to a child to come and have the insects picked from its head were as jolly as sand-martins in the heat, quarrelling, scolding, suckling their babies, until the ships in the Piraeus fired their guns.
> The sound spread itself flat, and then went tunnelling its way with fitful explosions among the channels of the islands.
> Darkness drops like a knife over Greece.
>
> (JR, 175)

The image of Greece as a prone victim caught at the moment of sacrifice symbolizes the death of Jacob's Athenian vision.

The night itself becomes the dark age that begins with the war, and implies another beginning. This "night" persists over the passage of fictional time, and surrounds Betty Flanders in bed in Scarborough while the sound of guns rumbles in the background. The widow lady tries desperately to deny the reality by cloaking it with a veil of illusion:

> "The guns?" said Betty Flanders, half-asleep, getting out of bed and going to the window, which was decorated with a fringe of dark leaves.
> "Not at this distance," she thought. "It is the sea."
> Again, far away, she heard the dull sound, as if nocturnal women were beating great carpets. There was Morty lost, and Seabrook dead; her sons fighting for their country. But were the chickens safe? Was that some one moving downstairs? Rebecca with the toothache? No. The nocturnal women were beating great carpets. Her hens shifted slightly on their perches.
>
> (JR, 175)

This passage echoes the scene in the first chapter in which Mrs. Flanders soothes Archer to sleep with a fairy story in the midst

of a tremendous storm. Now the maker of illusions is herself in need of an illusion to help her sleep while the reality, the war, rages out there.

The novel concludes in Jacob's empty room, the symbol both of his death and of his release from the confining place of shelter. Richard Bonamy stands in the room examining the scattered about letters, notes, and writings that pick up motifs from earlier in the novel: an essay beginning "The eighteenth century has its distinctions," a bill for a hunting crop, Sandra's letters, an invitation from Mrs. Durrant to attend a dinner party, an invitation from Lady Rocksbier, a prose poem beginning "Listless is the air in an empty room." As Bonamy stands at the window, he cries out twice Jacob's name, echoing the cry of Archer for his brother in the first chapter. But the novel does not simply describe a cycle. Jacob's death has fixed him in time; his wasted potential calls forth an elegiac utterance in which there is no consolation.

In Mrs. Dalloway (1925), Woolf presents a society just recuperating from the crisis of the war. Social recuperation, like bodily convalescence, benefits from two insights. The first is that, at any moment, a crisis may occur. This imminent possibility leads to the second insight, namely, that the moment is very precious--every moment is a new start which can either be wasted or used to the fullest advantage. This duality implies that the crisis of vacancy is actually a moment of freedom from habit or convention. Time is thus not only the repository of tradition but also the medium of regeneration. This concept of time is reflected in the structure of Mrs. Dalloway which, like

Jacob's Room, is episodic, but concentrates its action on a Wednesday in June, 1923.[15] By observing this unity in time, Woolf implies that one day can be as significant as a lifetime.

Living in a state of perpetual crisis also requires living without illusions. As Woolf shows in her early fictions, illusion is no specific against the shock of the present moment. In The Voyage Out, Terence Hewet, when not under the Romantic illusion, inclines to the view that we "live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, knowing nothing, leaping from moment to moment as from world to world" (VO, 147), and he discovers the truth of this view when his projected marriage to Rachel is annihilated by Rachel's sudden illness and death. In Jacob's Room, the outbreak of war has the same effect of undermining the illusions of the generation of young men represented by Jacob. Mrs. Dalloway explores the theme of marriage without illusion; and, as Clarissa Dalloway discovers on a certain Wednesday in June, 1923, such a marriage can only exist as part of a larger conceptual pattern, but cannot be sufficient in any "this-worldly" sense.[16]

A traditional justification for marriage as one flesh is put forth by Richard Dalloway in The Voyage Out: "'It is impossible for human beings, constituted as they are, both to fight and have ideals. If I have preserved mine, as I am thankful to say that in great measure I have, it is due to the fact that I have been able to come home to my wife in the evening and to find that she has spent her day in calling, music, play with the children, domestic duties--what you will, her illusions have not

been destroyed. She gives me courage to go on'" (VO, 71). This is the kind of marriage the Dalloways have in The Voyage Out. Clarissa keeps Richard's mind off politics and off the war, while Richard, whom Clarissa describes as "'man and woman as well'" (VO, 65), provides Clarissa the security to maintain her illusions. Yet, Clarissa is not completely happy. Quoting from Shelley's Adonais, she seems to hint that marriage exacts a spiritual cost that makes one worldly:

> "He has outsoared the shadow of our night,
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain--
>
> you remember?
>
> Can touch him not and torture not again
> From the contagion of the world's slow stain."
>
> (VO, 62)

The Dalloway marriage, in The Voyage Out, is a psychological contract. Richard protects Clarissa's sanity by providing emotional support. Clarissa gives Richard "courage to go on" by fostering his ideals. The spiritual cost of this contract, on Clarissa's side, is developed fully in Mrs. Dalloway.

As in Jacob's Room, the focus here is on the corruption of innocence and the destruction of the innocent. But the vision is darker, and considers the themes of madness and complete spiritual atrophy, which are fates far worse than death. Clarissa's marriage is described in religious imagery as a nun-like cloistered withdrawal from the world, yet the effects of this devotion are anything but spiritual. In the context of the psychological sublime, Clarissa's life in marriage resembles

Nurse McInnis's life fastened to a rocklike religion. Clarissa gives up not only her identity but also her participation in the life-principle to participate in the life of social convention:

> Often now this body she wore . . . this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing--nothing at all. She had the oddest feeling of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying; no more having children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.
>
> (MD, 13)

Clarissa's astonished solemnity here reveals traces of the negative sublime successfully resolved. Her marriage is a reactive identification with a patriarchal society; and, hence she participates in a pilgrimage up Bond Street. But in this novel, Woolf also examines what would happen to the individual if the negative sublime were not resolved at all. Hence, Clarissa has a double,[17] the madman, Septimus Warren Smith.

Unlike Clarissa, Septimus lives in a state of perpetual crisis unchecked, for the most part, by reason. His failure (an evocative word in this novel) is that he withdraws psychologically from the world of social realities. Society considers war sublime; Septimus is wracked by guilt for his participation in the War. Society glorifies marriage; Septimus marries only to escape the spiritual paralysis the War has meted out to him. Society worships war-heroes; Septimus sees such heroism as great sin. Jacob Flanders is spared, in death, the more horrible death of spiritual atrophy, but Septimus can save his soul only by going insane. The tragedy is that, by withdrawing from the real world, Septimus enters the terrible world of the autistic imagination. He may wish to be a saviour of a society, but his wish is impotent:

> Look, the unseen voice bade him, the voice which now communicated with him who was the greatest of mankind, Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society, who lay like a coverlet, a snow blanket smitten only by the sun, for ever unwasted, suffering for ever, the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer, but he did not want it, he moaned, putting from him with a wave of his hand that eternal suffering, that eternal loneliness.
>
> (MD, 29)

Woolf implies in this novel that the regression into autism cannot lead to regeneration of society, and that the only route to enlightened wisdom must pass directly through this-worldliness. The insanity of Septimus is an autistic blending of other-worldliness and this-worldliness. He only achieves a separation of these two worlds at his death, in which he vigorously "embraces" this world without losing his dream of individual freedom and a loving union between the self and the rest of mankind. Thus he becomes a "drowned sailor on a rock" (MD, 77)--a Promethean martyr. The same role is ascribed to Clarissa, the central figure in the novel. At the end of the novel, she inherits Septimus's dream of universal love and, in effect, lives on in this world--in her marriage and party-giving--to complete Septimus's redemptive destiny. The thematic aim is to show how martyred innocence (Septimus) can effectively redeem a world that has lost, or misplaced, its own innocence (Clarissa).

Marriage is a pervasive motif in Mrs. Dalloway. Three actual marriages are juxtaposed: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dalloway, Mr. and Mrs. Septimus Warren Smith, and Dr. and Mrs. William Bradshaw. In addition, both Clarissa and Peter Walsh meditate

on the marriage they might have had. Impossible "marriages" include Septimus and his officer, Evans; and Clarissa and Sally Seton (both homosexual relationships). Finally, an imaginative "marriage" is implied between Clarissa and Septimus (a kind of psychic marriage). There is even a suggestion of a kind of marriage feast represented by parties (which may have a mythical basis in Christian parables, and comic-romantic drama). Structurally, marriage is a union of imagination and reality, of self and world. Other themes are generated from the central matrimonial metaphor: the destruction of individual freedom, psychological infantilism, security, and fulfillment.

The delightful opening of the novel, Clarissa's extended internal monologue as she walks up Bond Street to buy flowers for her party, reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of her marriage to Richard. The strengths include privacy: "For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him" (MD, 12). The weaknesses include isolation: "this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (MD, 13). Essentially, her marriage is a compromise solution to the conflict between her love of life and fear of life. The margin of privacy provided to Clarissa by her marriage allows her to give her parties; the security it affords guards her against the shocks of the real world.

In contrast to the Dalloway marriage is the unstable marriage of the Septimus Warren Smiths. Whereas Clarissa's

Richard is identified with the reality principle inherent in patriarchal society, Septimus is out of harmony with it. This is dramatized in the scene introducing the mysterious car which represents "the majesty of England" (MD, 19). When the car comes to a halt in a traffic jam, Septimus develops an awful fear of uncontrolled expansion and fiery apocalyptic destruction: "there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought" (MD, 18). In essence, a madman challenges, in spite of himself, the centrality of the social realities. Septimus, whose madness accentuates his sense of subjective identity, is symbolically a blocking agent in the "solemn progress" up Bond Street that Clarissa refers to (MD, 13). In this respect, Septimus is a rebel and an outcast. His status also affects the status of his wife, Rezia, who is torn between loyalty to her husband and loyalty to the social realities:

> People must notice; people must see. People, she thought, looking at the crowd staring at the motor car; the English people, with their children and their horses and their clothes, which she admired in a way; but they were "people" now, because Septimus had said, "I will kill myself"; an awful thing to say. (MD, 18)

Rezia has more at stake than social respectability, however. To lose Septimus means to lose her identity. A theme of the fatal divorce of self and object world is suggested when Rezia's wedding ring slips on her finger (MD, 27).[18] The effect on Rezia

is a sudden intense loss of human identity, which is compared by allegory, to the alien namelessness of a body of land stripped of its human significance:

> I am alone; I am alone! she cried, by the fountain in Regent's Park (staring at the Indian and his cross), as perhaps at midnight, when all boundaries are lost, the country reverts to its ancient shape, as the Romans saw it, lying cloudy, when they landed, and the hills had no names and rivers wound they knew not where--such was her darkness. . . .
>
> (MD, 28)

The contrast between Rezia and Clarissa (one a foreigner; the other, a member of a respectable, longstanding, upper-middle-class British family) partly explains why Clarissa can tolerate a little independence in marriage while Rezia cannot. Nonetheless, Clarissa repeatedly expresses an awful fear of life, and at one point suggests that marriage has preserved her from destruction: "quite often if Richard had not been there reading the Times, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing with another, she must have perished" (MD, 203). On the surface, the two passages quoted suggested that the two wives achieve psychological stability from the mere presence of, and sense of union with, the two males, their husbands; and that the husband, de facto, protects the wife from the symbolic mother. But something is amiss here. Septimus, in his madness does not protect Rezia from the flood of "darkness" and the dissolution of identity. Some other principle is working here, and it needs to be identified because it represents a further development in Woolf's exploration of the logical imagination. Rezia undergoes

a sublime crisis when her wedding ring slips from its position on her finger; Clarissa feels protected from perishing by the presence of Richard reading the Times. The ring and newspaper are symbols of social stability and reality. Hence, the sublime power of males originates in the patriarchal dictum that designates a man head of the household; symbolically, he is the focus of logic and reason. Male superiority by dint of his unerring judgement is a convention that filters down from a patriarchal God through King and State to the individual man (head of the family).

It is no coincidence, then, that Clarissa persistently conceives of her domestic role in religious ritual. The instances of this analogy between housewifery and worship are unmistakable. During her walk, she refers to "this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway" (MD, 13). On returning to her house, she feels "like a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils and the response to old devotions" (MD, 33). What Clarissa is worshipping is not a man but a religion: being Mrs. Dalloway.

As the focus in this novel is on the social system, the symbolical relationship between Clarissa and Septimus, much noted by critics,[19] needs to be considered in the context of patriarchal marriage as outlined above. From this point of view, Septimus is a failure. There is a suggestion that his war experiences have left him, if not actually impotent, incapable of fulfilling his conjugal duties: "One cannot bring children into

a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying now this way, now that" (MD, 99). Clarissa, likewise, fails her spouse in her conjugal duties: "she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment--for example on the river beneath the woods at Clieveden--when, through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed him" (MD, 36). The similarity goes further; in both characters the erotic energies seem to have been dammed up by a repression of homoerotic impulses. Septimus's madness is a reaction to guilt generated when he represses grief at the death of his beloved officer, Evans: "when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably" (MD, 96). Clarissa relates her conjugal failure to her resentment of the expression of sexual love between women: "For that she could dimly perceive. She resented it, had a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, sent by Nature (who is invariably wise)" (MD, 36).[20] However, homoeroticism merely functions as a motif here to convey the tyranny of social opinion, which forces the individual to betray not only his emotional instincts but also the love offered by other people.[21] The erotic instincts, thus thwarted, turn demonic and instigate cold indifference, as in Septimus's "feeling very little" at Evans's death, and Clarissa's brutal rejection of Peter Walsh's love.

The sin of indifference first appears as a theme in Night and Day when Katharine berates herself for breaking off her engagement with Rodney: "What were his faults in comparison with the fact that he cared for her? What were her virtues in comparison with the fact that she did not care for him? In a flash the conviction that not to care is the uttermost sin of all stamped itself upon her inmost thought; and she felt branded for ever" (ND, 255). However, the fact that this theme is dropped later in the novel represents one flaw in an otherwise sensitive study of human emotions and relationships. Woolf's convenient pairing of Rodney and Cassandra in Chapter XXIX is a stock device right out of romantic comedy and is inappropriate in the subtle human drama Night and Day unfolds. This theme is developed, however, in Mrs. Dalloway. It can be traced, for example, in the relationship between Clarissa and Peter Walsh.

Peter Walsh, like many of Woolf's male characters, is a Romantic idealist. He disapproves of Clarissa's domestic life, preferring to remember her as she was in the "moonlight" shed by "his own grief, which rose like a moon looked at from a terrace" (MD, 47). He is the man Clarissa rejected to marry Richard Dalloway: "with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable, and when it came to that scene in the little garden by the fountain, she had to break it with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined, she was convinced; though she had borne about her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish"

(MD, 10). Her ambivalent feelings for Peter are revealing. On the one hand, she rejects the dream world that living with Peter would have plunged her into (the name, "Peter," meaning "rock" seems ironically intended in this novel). On the other hand, Clarissa carries remorse for rejecting Peter (just as Septimus does regarding Evans).[22] The rejection of Romantic idealism, it seems, is an ambiguous solution to the problem of human love. To be in love with an illusion is sheer autism; but to reject such love is tantamount to closing other people out of one's heart, unless some other means can be found to achieve love. The ambiguity is not easily resolved. Clarissa is right to refuse Peter's marriage offer. He would have attempted to force her to embody some impossible ideal, or else he would have become quickly disillusioned.

For, Peter is a dreamer. In the novel, he reenters Clarissa's life as she is mending her green dress for the party she will be giving in the evening. The interview begins in surprise for Clarissa, goes through a stage of a ritual battle of egos, and culminates in Peter's bursting into tears (MD, 52). It is the aftermath of this interview, however, that is most revealing of Peter's psychic dependence on the symbolic mother (of whom Clarissa is merely the chief embodiment for Peter). Woolf dramatizes this revelation in two adventures--both creations of Peter's mind--that he has after leaving Clarissa's house.

Peter's first "adventure" is his flirtation with the anonymous woman he sees at Trafalgar Square: "a young woman

who, as she passed Gordon's statue, seemed . . . to shed veil after veil, until she became the very woman he always had in mind" (MD, 59). Peter endows this woman with maternal qualities: "The thin long cloak which the wind stirred as she walked past Dent's Shop in Cockspur Street blew out with an enveloping kindness, a mournful tenderness, as of arms that would open and take the tired--" (MD, 59). As Peter pursues her, she changes, turns down a little street and, finally, as she enters a house, becomes associated with Clarissa, whose house he has just left. The contrast between Peter's fantasy and the reality of the girl unmasks the illusion: "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" (MD, 61). Yet, Peter suppresses his discovery with a phrase which is both an ego defense and a denial of reality: "'No matter'" (MD, 61) he says, and the sounds of his boots on the pavement pick up the refrain.

Peter's second "adventure" takes the form of a dream he has sitting next to an elderly nurse in Regent's Park. As Peter falls asleep, he endows the nurse with maternal qualities: "In her grey dress, moving her hands indefatigably yet quietly, she seemed like the champion of the rights of sleepers, like one of those spectral presences which rise in twilight in woods

made of sky and branches" (MD, 63). Peter casts himself in the role of a "solitary traveller" (MD, 63), and he is thus symbolically related to the baby in the perambulator who is watched over by the grey nurse. The traveller's dream begins with a statement of absolute autism: "Nothing exists outside us except a state of mind" (MD, 63). He compares real men and women to "miserable pygmies" (MD, 63), and conceives of nature as the projection of an ideal woman: "advancing down the path with his eyes upon sky and branches he rapidly endows them with womanhood" (MD, 64). This ideal woman takes many archetypal forms: nurturer (profferring "great cornucopias full of fruit"), temptress (like "sirens lolloping away on the sea green waves"), adversary (dashing "in his face like bunches of roses"), and watery spectre (rising "to the surface like pale faces which fishermen flounder through floods to embrace"). She is chiefly associated with the sea, the archetypal unformed world of the autistic imagination, beguiling the solitary traveller to renounce the world in a self-destructive gesture of passive resignation:

> Such are the visions which ceaselessly float up, pace beside, put their faces 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. So, he thinks, may I never go back to the lamplight; to the sitting-room; never finish my book; never knock out my pipe; never ring for Mrs. Turner to clear away; rather let me walk straight on to this great

> figure, who will, with a toss of her head, mount me on her streamers and let me blow to nothingness with the rest.
>
> (MD, 64)

This female-archetype, both protector and destroyer, becomes polarized, as the traveller moves out of the woods and into the village, into two discrete presences. The first is the "ominous" evening "as if some august fate, known to [the villagers], awaited without fear, were about to sweep them into complete annihilation" (MD, 65). The other presence is the figure of an elderly woman awaiting the traveller. This figure becomes a landlady, Peter Walsh's Mrs. Turner, who, "bending to remove the cloth, becomes soft with light, an adorable emblem which only the recollection of cold human contacts forbids us to embrace" (MD, 65). Even this figure becomes indistinct as she asks "'There is nothing more to-night, sir?'" (MD, 65).

The story of the solitary traveller is an allegory on the state of sleep, in which the mind seeks to be rejoined to the body and, so, awakened. Peter cannot awaken until he experiences "the recollection of cold human contacts" the repression of which keeps him isolated in an autistic world. This recollection takes the form of his next dream, set in Bourton "that summer, early in the 'nineties, when he was so passionately in love with Clarissa" (MD, 65-66). The narrator does not present this dream directly, but moves back "out there" to show Peter Walsh snoring on the bench in Regent's Park and waking suddenly with the words "the death of the soul" (MD, 65). When he awakens, he recollects his dream of Clarissa. This dream is thematically

related to that of the solitary traveller. The traveller's fear of embracing his landlady becomes transformed into the story of the man who has "married his housemaid" (MD, 66). In the dream, when Clarissa learns that the woman has had a child before marriage, she says "'Oh, I shall never be able to speak to her again!'" (MD, 66):

> He hadn't blamed her for minding the fact, since in those days a girl brought up as she was knew nothing, but it was her manner that annoyed him; timid; hard; arrogant; prudish. "The death of the soul." He had said that instinctively, ticketing the moment as he used to do--the death of her soul.
>
> (MD, 66)

The double-edged truth that emerges from these dreams is that both Clarissa and Peter lack "something central which permeated" (MD, 36). Peter is helpless because his soul has left the centre and is projected "out there" in the form of the Blakean "female will." Clarissa's soul has succumbed to a spiritual death and is in danger of being destroyed by what Shelley calls "the contagion of the world's slow stain."

One solution to the problem of lacking something central is a poetic identity based in vacancy itself--or a "centre of complete emptiness," which Woolf does not fully explore until the writing of To the Lighthouse (see Ch. 7). The alternative she examines in Mrs. Dalloway is a concept of redemption through reconciliation. Theologically, "the death of the soul" is the result of sin. Clarissa's "sin," both in Peter's dream and in his recollections of their relationship, is a sin of self-centredness, a refusal to love others. Peter's "sin" is also

that of self-centredness. His jealousy, defensiveness, and readiness to judge people, indicate a selfishness in Peter which Clarissa later recognizes at her party: "But why did he come, then, merely to criticize? Why always take, never give?" (MD, 184). However, now that Peter has seen Clarissa again, he begins to realize that Clarissa's party-giving is a form of caring, and that her marriage to Richard makes her party-giving possible. Peter's objections to Clarissa's marriage (apart from basic jealousy) are the result of opinions he has absorbed from Sally Seton: "she [had] implored [Peter], half laughing of course, to carry off Clarissa to save her from the Hughs and the Dalloways and all the other 'perfect gentlemen' who would 'stifle her soul' . . . make a mere hostess of her, encourage her worldliness" (MD, 84). But having left Clarissa this morning, "Remember my party!" ringing in his ears, Peter begins to realize that Clarissa has preserved through marriage the ability to give to others: "Not that she was striking; not beautiful at all; there was nothing picturesque about her; she never said anything especially clever; there she was, however; there she was" (MD, 85). Peter begins to reconsider Clarissa and to understand the concept of heroism Clarissa has adopted from such figures as Lady Bexborough who espouses a concept of stoic humanitarianism[23] which Peter calls "this atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness" (MD, 87). But before Peter can reconcile himself to Clarissa's way of life, he must exorcise the selfish bitterness he feels towards women. His jealous love is the result of

his Romantic idealism which attempts always to clutch its object. Jealous love, Peter realizes, has caused him to weep at Clarissa's this morning, because he fears that Daisy is cheating on him while he is away. Peter blames Clarissa for his unhappiness, "realizing what she might have spared him [by marrying him], what she had reduced him to--a whimpering, snivelling old ass" (MD, 89). This delusion leads Peter to the conclusion that "women don't know what passion is" (MD, 89). However, at this point in his meditation, Peter encounters an old beggar woman singing a song of the death of a lover and of her eternal love for him which outlasts the history of the world.[24] The old woman's song universalizes the roles of lover and beloved, redeeming love from the personal associations which stifle the soul:

> Still remembering how once in some primeval May she had walked with her lover, this rusty pump, this battered old woman with one hand exposed for coppers, the other clutching her side, would still be there in ten million years, remembering how once she had walked in May, where the sea flows now, with whom it did not matter--he was a man, oh yes, a man who had loved her. But the passage of ages had blurred the clarity of that ancient May day; the bright-petalled flowers were hoar and silver frosted; and she no longer saw, when she implored him (as she did now quite clearly) "Look in my eyes with thy sweet eyes intently," she no longer saw brown eyes, black whiskers or sunburnt face, but only a looming shape, a shadow shape, to which, with the bird-like freshness of the very aged, she still twittered "give me your hand and let me press it gently" . . . .
>
> (MD, 91)

The old woman's song of faithfulness in love evokes a sympathetic gesture in Peter, who "couldn't help giving this poor creature a coin as he stepped into his taxi" (MD, 91). Peter's gift prophesies his reconciliation with Clarissa, who feels like an old woman: "unspeakably aged" (MD, 10) and "shrivelled, aged,

breastless" (MD, 35). It also foreshadows the redemption of the novel's concluding scene, when Peter alone of all the guests, waits for Clarissa to return from the empty room.[25]

The old woman's song also effects a reconciliation between Rezia and Septimus. Rezia's "sin" like Clarissa's is a "contraction" of spirit which alienates her from Septimus because he is "mad" and therefore incapable of maintaining in her a sense of security. She puts her faith instead in Dr. Holmes: "Dr. Holmes was such a kind man" (MD, 102). And, when Dr. Holmes is unable to help Septimus, she turns to Sir William Bradshaw: "They were going to Sir William Bradshaw; she thought his name sounded nice; he would cure Septimus at once" (MD, 92). At the same time, when Rezia hears the old woman sing "and if some one should see, what matter they?" (MD, 91), she feels momentarily secure, if only her love could be courageous enough to face the world alone.

Her fidelity to Septimus intensifies when Bradshaw proposes to cure Septimus by isolating him in a rest home. Rezia now discovers how mistaken she was in putting faith in this man. By this discovery, Rezia renews her fidelity to Septimus:

> Never, never had Rezia felt such agony in her life! She had asked for help and been deserted! He had failed them! Sir William Bradshaw was not a nice man.
>
> (MD, 109)

Rezia's discovery of the true nature of William Bradshaw achieves the unmasking of "the priest of science" (MD, 104) and, thus, presents Septimus's madness in a new context. When reason is mis-

used as a subversive rationalization against the inner promptings of true conscience, it becomes an active agent in "the death of the soul." The War has taught Septimus that it is not rational to care very deeply about the loss of human life. When Evans is killed, Septimus "congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably" (MD, 96). But his reactive identification, originally conceived as a defense against the anxiety of loss, cuts him off entirely from the life force. In worshipping reason, he has almost killed his soul.[26] In this light, Septimus's sudden surrender to madness, "a melodramatic gesture which he assumed mechanically and with complete consciousness of its insincerity" (MD, 100), can be seen as a deliberate gesture aimed at preserving his soul--a desublimation in which he turns his back on reason. Sir William, on the other hand, worshipping the Goddesses of "Proportion" and "Conversion," is portrayed as reason's slave and an enemy to life: "Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion--his, if they were men, Lady Bradshaw's if they were women" (MD, 110). While proportion attempts to desensitize the soul, conversion aims at demonic possession. Her "lust is to override opposition, to stamp indelibly in the sanctuaries of others the image of herself" (MD, 113). In worshipping conversion, Sir William makes Lady Bradshaw one of the Goddess's most submissive victims: "Fifteen years ago she had gone under. It was nothing you could put your

finger on; there had been no scene, no snap; only the slow sinking, water-logged, of her will into his. Sweet was her smile, swift her submission" (MD, 111).

The tyrannical Bradshaw marriage acts as a demonic contrast to the marriage of Richard and Clarissa. Whereas Lady Bradshaw's parties indicate how completely she sacrifices herself for her husband's success, Clarissa's parties are given partly for humanitarian purposes. Against Peter and Sally's belief that someone like Richard Dalloway stifles Clarissa's soul must be weighed Richard's good-humoured tolerance of Clarissa's party-giving and his respect for the privacy of her soul. Clarissa appreciates this privacy and reciprocates: "there is a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf; and that one must respect, thought Clarissa . . . for one would not part with it oneself, or take it, against his will, from one's husband, without losing one's independence, one's self-respect--something, after all, priceless" (MD, 132).

At the same time, the gulf that exists between Clarissa and Richard opens up the prospect of vacancy, at least in Clarissa's life. One problem Lady Bradshaw does not have to wrestle with (albeit at the cost of her spiritual freedom) is the problem of identity: she devotes her life to the service of her husband. Clarissa cannot fool herself that she needs to live a life devoted to Richard's career. She has already come home to find him gone and to discover the "emptiness that lies about the heart of life." Her party-giving is an attempt to establish

an identity with other people. She is aware how people live as if cloistered in separate rooms, and she attempts to bring them together in her drawing-room and so run their separate lives together into one life: "Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; some one 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; to whom?" (MD, 134-135)

However, in one important respect, Clarissa's parties represent a flight from vacancy, inherent in her concept of life. Worshipping continuity, even the continuity of the moment, she cannot face the possibility of imminent crisis: "that one day should follow another; Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; 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" (MD, 135). Nevertheless, Clarissa refuses to accept easy answers to the problem of vacancy. She will not agree with Peter Walsh that "life was all plain sailing" (MD, 134) and that seeking love in one individual can overcome the basic isolation of the individual. More strongly, she is opposed to the comfortable promise of immortality offered in the religion of Doris Kilman. Both love and religion, Clarissa is sure, force the soul, exploit one's fear of isolation and of vacancy. While watching an old woman going about her business in the house opposite, Clarissa begins to wonder whether any solution

exists to the problem of solitude. Privacy is necessary, but isolation is unendurable: "Somehow one respected that--that old woman looking out of the window, quite unconscious that she was being watched. There was something solemn in it--but love and religion would destroy that, whatever it was, the privacy of the soul. The odious Kilman would destroy it. Yet it was a sight that made her want to cry" (MD, 139-140).

Even "the odious Kilman" is a victim of solitude, as the narrator's sympathetic portrayal of her background makes clear.[27] Like Septimus Warren Smith, Miss Kilman's destiny has been determined considerably by the Great War. But, whereas Septimus is praised for his conduct in the war despite his failure to mourn the death of his friend, Miss Kilman is punished by society for refusing to consider the Germans her enemies. Nor has nature been kind to her. She has "an unlovable body which people could not bear to see" (MD, 142). And she is repulsive to Elizabeth, Mrs. Dalloway's daughter, for whom she has an overpowering love. Against all these odds, Doris Kilman weighs her faith in God, her only means of reconciliation with a world which has no love for her: "Sometimes lately it had seemed to her that, except for Elizabeth, her food was all that she lived for; her comforts; her dinner, her tea, her hot-water bottle at night. But one must fight; vanquish; have faith in God. Mr. Whittaker had said she was there for a purpose. But no one knew the agony! He said, pointing to the crucifix, that God knew. But why should she have to suffer when other women, like Clarissa Dalloway, escaped? Knowledge comes through suffering, said Mr. Whittaker" (MD, 142-143).

What exactly has Clarissa "escaped?" Certainly she has her own private suffering, but she obviously has certain social advantages denied to Miss Kilman. Her marriage to Richard protects her from people like Bradshaw who would force her soul. She has enough material security to soften the blows of experience, whereas Doris Kilman is "like a wheel without a tyre . . . jolted by every pebble" (MD, 143-144). In essence, fortune has smiled on Clarissa Dalloway, and the sight of Doris Kilman is a painful reminder to Clarissa that "with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white" (MD, 15), Clarissa and Doris Kilman would have been on the same side. This awareness that chance alone has largely determined her happiness makes Clarissa very uncomfortable with respect to Miss Kilman; the latter is Clarissa's "enemy" chiefly because she acts as a reminder of how fragile Clarissa's security really is. In Clarissa's soul, the hatred of Miss Kilman is like a monster whose stirrings make "all pleasure in beauty, in friendship, in being well, in being loved and making her home delightful, rock, quiver, and bend as if indeed there were a monster grubbing at the roots, as if the whole panoply of content were nothing but self love! this hatred!" (MD, 15). In short, "the odious Kilman" is a projection of Clarissa's conscience, a reminder that Clarissa has done very little to deserve her priveleged position.

The relationship between Doris Kilman and Elizabeth Dalloway is, in some sense, a parodic counterpoint to Clarissa's psychic conflict which takes throughout the novel the form of a double self-image: adult and child. Doris Kilman's Elizabeth

is a symbol of youth and beauty which the older woman both craves to possess and feels obligated to renounce. Elizabeth is a free spirit, ungraspable and elusive. To her, Miss Kilman is both fascinating and terrifying. She admires Miss Kilman for being "frightfully clever" (MD, 144); at the same time "she made one feel so small" (MD, 144). The crux of Miss Kilman's renunciation of Elizabeth is her spiritual marriage to "Our Lord." And so, she retreats into the Abbey in order to subdue the desires of "the flesh." Clarissa's marriage to Richard requires a similar renunciation of youth, an acceptance of a social dedication: "this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (MD, 13). And so, Clarissa becomes a votary of the domestic sanctuary. Clarissa's psychic childhood self survives in her dependent relation to Richard including the stolen moments in which she has brief adventures in escape.

The renunciation of childhood is an underlying theme in Elizabeth's "adventure" on the Strand after leaving Miss Kilman. Now that she is coming of age, Elizabeth realizes that her time of freedom is coming to an end: "it made life a burden to her, for she so much preferred being left alone to do what she liked in the country, but they would compare her to lilies, and she had to go to parties, and London was so dreary compared with being alone in the country with her father and the dogs" (MD, 148). At the same time, Elizabeth is aware of an inner drive to take her place in the eternal procession of civilization.

She becomes stimulated by what the narrator of Jacob's Room calls "the unseizable force"--the concentration of personal energy into the power that creates civilization: "It was the sort of thing that did sometimes happen, when one was alone--buildings without architects' names, crowds of people coming back from the city having more power than single clergymen in Kensington, than any of the books Miss Kilman had lent her, to stimulate what lay slumbrous . . . on the mind's sandy floor, to break surface, as a child suddenly stretches its arms" (MD, 151). She conceives of herself as having stolen away from her father's house to explore "a strange house by night, with a candle, on edge lest the owner should suddenly fling wide his bedroom door and ask her business" (MD, 151). In thus venturing outside her private "room" in search of community, Elizabeth resembles characters like Mary Datchet--privates in the "army of the upright"who work outside the shelter afforded by traditional marriage, a role which embraces the community as an adopted "family": "She liked the geniality, sisterhood, motherhood, brotherhood of this uproar. It seemed to her good" (MD, 152).

Elizabeth's concept of the extended family points towards what may be the novel's deep solution to the problem of vacancy. She conceives of the lively uproar in the Strand as a "military music" (MD, 152) which has a power of consolation to those whose lives are impoverished by the death of a loved one:

> The noise was tremendous; and suddenly there were trumpets (the unemployed) blaring, rattling about this uproar; military music; as if people were marching; yet had they been dying--had some woman breathed her last, and whoever

> was watching, opening the window of the room where she had just brought off that act of supreme dignity, looked down on Fleet Street, that uproar, that military music would have come triumphing up to him, consolatory, indifferent.
>
> It was not conscious. There was no recognition in it of one's fortune, or fate, and for that very reason even to those dazed with watching for the last shivers of consciousness on the faces of the dying, consoling.
>
> (MD, 152)

The rhythms of life in the city--the indomitable heartbeat of civilization--provide a link between life and annihilation when the rhythms of nature fail. This theme will become clear in the final section of the novel, in which Clarissa's party-giving becomes significative of human effort to survive in the midst of a vision of death.

Elizabeth's adventure reveals the power of civilization to overcome the crisis of vacancy; but in civilization itself certain forces are at work aimed at destroying the soul even as they preserve the body. In the final scene between Septimus and Rezia, these destructive social forces, embodied in Holmes and Bradshaw, come to the fore; Septimus discovers that death has a positive aspect--as a preserver of the life of the soul. This section of the novel recapitulates the major reactions to the sublime crisis of vacancy that Woolf's fiction has explored up to this point: female-will worship, art as illusion, and marriage. Septimus's final discovery is that of an inner self-sufficiency which enables him to fulfill the Promethean role he has conceived for himself much earlier. The scene begins in the double shelter represented by the "room" and by Septimus's marriage to Rezia, and culminates in a double crisis--a demonic

influx in which Dr. Holmes intrudes into the place of shelter, and a protective reaction in which Septimus flings himself out the window to his death. Each crisis is accompanied by a discovery. At the crisis of influx, Septimus discovers an inner self-sufficiency in a spiritual union with Rezia. At the crisis of Septimus's suicide, Rezia completes the act of reconciliation with Septimus and achieves the unmasking of the "brute," Holmes.

In the first part of the scene, Septimus continues in a passive relation to nature "out there." Nature first takes the form of a symbolic sea with a soothing rhythm: "Every power poured its treasures on his head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen it lie when he was bathing, gloating, on the top of the waves, while far away on shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away. Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more" (MD, 154). This state of harmony echoes Clarissa's earlier moment of harmony while sewing in her drawing-room (MD, 45); again the allusion to Cymbeline tickets the moment with an imminent crisis. But Septimus is "not afraid"; his fear is put to rest by a further vision of Nature as a beautiful veiled creature: "At every moment Nature signified by some laughing hint like that gold spot which went round the wall--there, there, there--her determination to show, by brandishing her plumes, shaking her tresses, flinging her mantle this way and that, beautifully, always beautifully, and standing close up to breathe through her hollowed hands Shakespeare's words, her meaning" (MD, 154). Finally, Septimus projects his sense of a protective Nature onto Rezia sewing a hat for Mrs.

Peters: "there she was, perfectly natural, sewing, with the pursed lips that women have, the set, the melancholy expression, when sewing" (MD, 157). "There she was," a rock of ages, a solid basis for reality, making Septimus's autistic dream-world vanish: "Miracles, revelations, agonies, loneliness, falling through the sea, down, down into the flames, all were burnt out, for he had a sense, as he watched Rezia trimming the straw hat for Mrs. Peters, of a coverlet of flowers" (MD, 157). This sense of reality gives him courage, and he picks up the hat and makes a design for it, and Rezia sews it together: "It was wonderful. Never had he done anything which made him feel so proud. It was so real, it was so substantial, Mrs. Peters' hat" (MD, 159). But his moment of security is undermined when Mrs. Filmer's granddaughter comes in with the paper and Rezia goes out with her, leaving him alone in the room: "He was alone with the sideboard and the bananas. He was alone, exposed on this bleak eminence, stretched out--but not on a hill-top; not on a crag; on Mrs. Filmer's sitting-room sofa" (MD, 160). When she returns, a new vacancy opens up as Septimus recalls that "Bradshw said they must be separated" (MD, 162); but Rezia assures him that Holmes and Bradshaw "could not separate them against their wills" (MD, 163). Now Septimus envisions Rezia as a beautiful life-force firmly rooted: "She was a flowering tree; and through her branches looked out the face of a lawgiver, who had reached a sanctuary where she feared no one; not Holmes; not Bradshaw; a miracle, a triumph, the last and greatest" (MD, 163). Then he envisions her as a powerful Atlas-figure: "Staggering he saw her mount the

appalling staircase, laden with Holmes and Bradshaw, men who never weighed less than eleven stone six, who sent their wives to court, men who made ten thousand a year and talked of proportion; who differed in their verdicts (for Holmes said one thing, Bradshaw another), yet judges they were; who mixed the vision and the sideboard; saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet inflicted. Over them she triumphed" (MD, 163). But even this illusion does not prevail. When Holmes bursts in, Septimus realizes that Rezia is only "a little hen, with her wings spread barring his passage" (MD, 164). Septimus determines that Holmes will not get at him; he seizes upon death as his ultimate rock-of-ages; the ultimate safeguard of the privacy of the soul: "It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw liked that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings? Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared at him. Holmes was at the door. 'I'll give it you!' he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings" (MD, 164). By his death, Septimus internalizes his marriage to Rezia, and re-assumes the possession of his own will.

Septimus's suicide has a very unnerving effect on Dr. Holmes. As a physician, Dr. Holmes is dedicated to preserving life; he is professionally engaged in a conflict with death. Therefore, he cannot come to terms with Septimus's giving his life away. But Dr. Holmes' attitude to life is also somewhat

ambivalent. In calling Septimus a "coward," he reveals the death-wish in his own psyche, which he carefully represses in the fantasy of life as warfare and of suicide as a betrayal of one's duties to one's comrades in war. He resents the fact that Septimus escapes so easily while he must go on fighting. Septimus's suicide also precipitates an emotional trauma in Dr. Holmes. He becomes "white as a sheet, shaking all over" (MD, 165). In short, Dr. Holmes discovers that the "military" code by which he lives is only an illusion, that the individual life is actually founded on free will. Momentarily arrested in his flight from death, Dr. Holmes discovers the tremendous freedom and the tremendous responsibility that come from living face to face with the present moment.

For Rezia, Septimus's suicide becomes a moment of epiphany in which she discovers the true hollowness of the sublime reactive identification. Up to this point she reverences men like Holmes and Bradshaw, investing them with a certain godlike power. Her illusion of power "out there" has blocked the way to reconciliation with Septimus. But when Septimus takes his destiny in his own hands, Rezia discovers an inner strength in her husband. For her, Septimus's death is not an act of cowardice but of courage. It convinces Rezia of the power of the individual to determine his own destiny. It also convinces her to have neither fear nor undue respect for people like Holmes and Bradshaw. And as she falls asleep under sedation, she suddenly sees Dr. Holmes through a vision made clear by her new-found freedom: "She saw the large outline of his body dark against the

window. So that was Dr. Holmes" (MD, 166). Stripped of his aura of sublime power, Dr. Holmes turns out to be an ordinary man.

The scene which follows Septimus's death portrays civilization at its most intense as the novel draws toward the culmination of the June day. The central character in this section, Peter Walsh, looks at London much as Elizabeth Dalloway does in her excursion to the Strand prior to Septimus's death. He is inspirited by the uproar. Septimus appears indirectly in this section as the mysterious occupant of the ambulance Peter hears on his way to his hotel room: "Every cart or carriage of its own accord drew aside to let the ambulance pass. Perhaps it was morbid; or was it not touching rather, the respect which they showed this ambulance with its victim inside--busy men hurrying home, yet instantly bethinking them as it passed of some wife; or presumably how easily it might have been them there, stretched on a shelf with a doctor and a nurse" (MD, 166). The scene recalls an early scene in the novel when the people on the street pay respect to a mysterious grey car which is to them a symbol of majesty. Now they pay homage to the dead and to death--the leveller of great and common men alike. The spectacle of death in the midst of life leads Peter Walsh to meditate on the theme of community, a sense of brotherhood with all men. The focus of his meditation is Clarissa Dalloway. Clarissa has two significant roles in Peter's life. As the woman he has wanted to marry, she stands for the archetypal romantic heroine, who by refusing to marry Peter has turned him into a solitary traveller.

As a party-giver who has invited him to her party, she represents a communal force. The first role drives Peter back into the autistic self who wishes nothing but to return to the symbolic womb. The second role leads him forward to a shared life in society. At the end of the section, Peter identifies with Clarissa's communal role and decides to go to her party.

The spectacle of death which brushes past Peter in the street creates a significant moment in which he becomes aware how death both joins mankind together in a common destiny and makes each man aware that he is isolated from his fellow beings: "really it took one's breath away, these moments; there coming to him by the pillar-box opposite the British Museum one of them, a moment, in which things came together; this ambulance; and life and death. It was as if he were sucked up to some very high roof by that rush of emotion, and the rest of him, like a shell-sprinkled beach, left bare" (MD, 167). He remembers Clarissa's pantheistic theory: "a transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe, or say that she believed (for all her scepticism), that since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places after death" (MD, 168). But Peter's own faith in a human community is still hampered by his Romantic idealism, his need to be enclosed in the love of one woman. He is obsessed with the past, with memories of his love for Clarissa, with the protective tutelage that has charac-

terized her love for him: "They tramped miles along roads. She would break off to get her bearings, pilot him back across the country; and all the time they argued, discussed poetry, discussed people, discussed politics (she was a Radical then); never noticing a thing except when she stopped, cried out at a view or a tree, and made him look with her; and so on again, through stubble fields, she walking ahead, with a flower for her aunt, never tired of walking for all her delicacy: to drop down on Bourton in the dusk" (MD, 169-170). But when Peter reaches his hotel to find a note from Clarissa, his dream is boldly shattered: "it upset him. It annoyed him. He wished she hadn't written it. Coming on top of his thoughts, it was like a nudge in the ribs. Why couldn't she let him be? After all, she had married Dalloway, and lived with him in perfect happiness all these years" (MD, 170). He begins to think of his dependence on women, intuiting that marriage to Clarissa would have been unsuccessful because she would not have devoted herself entirely to him the way Daisy does: "It did come, after all, so naturally; so much more naturally than Clarissa. No fuss. No bother. No finicking and fidgeting. All plain sailing. And the dark, adorably pretty girl on the verandah exclaimed (he could hear her) Of course, of course she would give him everything! she cried (she had no sense of discretion), everything he wanted! she cried, running to meet him, whoever might be looking" (MD, 172). But his dream of an exclusive relation with Daisy is checked by the thought of death, of how one of these days he would die and Daisy would go on living, or if he retired he would come to disregard her. The

thought of death checks Peter's autism and makes him recognize, despite his dependence on women, a need to be "sufficient to himself" (MD, 174); at the same time, he feels that "Clarissa had sapped something in him permanently" (MD, 175).

Peter's dilemma--his feelings of dependence and his need to be sufficient to himself--is partly resolved when he goes down to dinner and strikes up an acquaintance with the Morris family. The sense of community Peter feels with these people frees him from the bondage of his Romantic idealism, just as Elizabeth is freed earlier from family bondage by "the geniality, sisterhood, motherhood, brotherhood" (MD, 152) of the people in the Strand. Taken into the intimacy of kinship, Peter regains his self-sufficiency and his self-respect: "it is superb, it is absolutely superb, thought Peter Walsh, swaying a little backwards and forwards with his liqueur glass in his hand among the hairy red chairs and ash-trays, feeling very well pleased with himself, for the Morrises liked him" (MD, 176). He is now disposed to see Clarissa in her communal role. He decides to go to her party: "For this is the truth about our soul, he thought, our self, who fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-flickered spaces and on and on into gloom, cold, deep, inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the wind-wrinkled waves; that is, has a positive need to brush, scrape, kindle herself gossiping" (MD, 177; italics mine). The image of the soul here includes "the other" and is thus an acknowledgement of something that exists outside the self. Peter leaves his

death-wish behind him and joins the triumphal procession of the city in its war against the onset of night. The lights, the electricity, the activity of the city resist the natural ebb of the day: "I resign, the evening seemed to say, as it paled and faded above the battlements and prominences, moulded, pointed, of hotel, flat, and block of shops, I fade, she was beginning, I disappear, but London would have none of it, and rushed her bayonets into the sky, pinioned her, constrained her to partnership in her revelry" (MD, 177-178). Peter, too, is suspended in his decline into death: "here he was starting to go to a party, at his age, with the belief upon him that he was about to have an experience" (MD, 179). He has a sense of an effulgent stream of people hurrying to Clarissa's party. As he nears the house, he prepares himself for his adventure: "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" (MD, 181). He opens the blade of his pocket-knife as if preparing for battle.

The paradox that Peter Walsh finds inherent in human community as he prepares for Clarissa's party becomes heightened at the party itself. The social gathering provides an opportunity to get outside oneself and overcome solitude. But, even in community, solitude exists: "the soul must brave itself to endure" contact with others. Although Peter Walsh comes to the party hoping to reestablish his intimacy with Clarissa, he is bemused to discover her more remote than ever, armed with the weaponry of a social hostess in all her splendour: "She was at her worst--

effusive, insincere. It was a great mistake to have come. He should have stayed home and read his book" (MD, 184). The theme of solitude in community is also represented by Ellie Henderson, Clarissa's poor relation, who stands alone in a corner of the Dalloway drawing-room the whole evening. Clarissa is annoyed at Peter's aloofness and Ellie's timidity, seeing them as signs that her party will be a failure. But the hostess herself feels strangely isolated at her own party. She is aware that playing the role of social hostess keeps her at arm's length from other people: "Every time she gave a party she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that every one was unreal in one way; much more real in another. It was, she thought, partly their clothes, partly being taken out of their ordinary ways, partly the background; it was possible to say things you couldn't say anyhow else, things that needed an effort; possible to go much deeper. But not for her; not yet anyhow" (MD, 187-188). The idea returns to her, at her moment of triumph escorting the Prime Minister about the room: "these semblances, these triumphs . . . had a hollowness; at arm's length they were, not in the heart; and it might be that she was growing old, but they satisfied her no longer as they used" (MD, 192).

The sense of hollowness Clarissa feels in the role of social hostess is part of a more pervasive sense of emptiness she feels in her role as Mrs. Richard Dalloway earlier in the day. In marrying Richard, Clarissa renounces her childhood freedom, but she does not really evolve out of a childhood state. Richard provides her with security in return for which Clarissa

builds up around her marriage an illusory bliss and creates for herself an imaginary identity. She conceives of her marriage in terms analogous to a religious vocation and of herself as a "nun" devoted to the worship of her husband and her home. However, this illusion is threatened by Doris Kilman, Clarissa's enemy, who condemns Clarissa's way of life as selfish and irresponsible. Clarissa's curious love-hate feeling for Miss Kilman culminates in a minor epiphany for Clarissa earlier that morning (see MD, 14-15). Now, at her party, Clarissa returns to her feeling for Miss Kilman, and concludes that her own way of life is indeed illusory: "Kilman her enemy. That was satisfying; that was real. Ah, how she hated her--hot, hypocritical, corrupt; with all that power; Elizabeth's seducer; the woman who had crept in to steal and defile (Richard would say, What nonsense!). She hated her: she loved her. It was enemies one wanted, not friends" (MD, 192). Clarissa's family and friends and her position in society shelter her from the dangers of life but they also keep her in an enchanted world which more and more resembles a death-in-life. In order to win her freedom, she must recognize the sources of power "out there"--people like Doris Kilman and William Bradshaw--and make the effort to stand up to them.

Clarissa recognizes a will-to-power in William Bradshaw. Watching him talk to Richard at her party, she thinks how terrible it would be to come under his dominion: "Why did the sight of him, talking to Richard, curl her up? He looked what he was, a great doctor. A man absolutely at the head of his profession, very powerful, rather worn. For think what cases came before him--

people in the uttermost depths of misery; people on the verge of insanity; husbands and wives. He had to decide questions of appalling difficulty. Yet--what she felt was, one wouldn't like Sir William to see one unhappy. No; not that man" (MD, 200). Her fear of Sir William remains unspecific until Lady Bradshaw mentions that one of his patients has killed himself that afternoon. On hearing of Septimus's suicide, Clarissa discovers the terror that lies concealed beneath the present moment: "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought" (MD, 201). Her instinct is to retreat. She goes into the "little room" where the Prime Minister and Lady Bruton have been talking, but finds it empty: "There was nobody. The party's splendour fell to the floor, so strange it was to come in alone in her finery" (MD, 202). At first she resents the Bradshaws having destroyed the illusion of security created by her party. But soon, she begins to project herself into the mind of Septimus, to feel what he felt; and, in imagination, she vicariously experiences his death. With her own horror of death, Clarissa finds it difficult to understand why Septimus would throw his life away. What she discovers is that death is sometimes a preserver, not always a destroyer. It can preserve the soul from corruption, the body from slavery, and the mind from madness.

As a preserver of the soul, death may come to the innocent before the world has had the chance to corrupt them. Both Peter and Sally feel that Clarissa is becoming more worldly the longer she lives. Clarissa herself now discovers how close she has come to the death of the soul:

> They (all day she had been thinking of Bourton, of Peter, of Sally), they would grow old. A thing there was that mattered; a thing wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death.
>
> (MD, 202)

Death also preserves one from becoming enslaved to powerful individuals like William Bradshaw who seek to destroy the soul scientifically by means of controlling the body: "if this young man had gone to him, and Sir William had impressed him, like that, with his power, might he not then have said (indeed she felt it now), Life is made intolerable; they make life intolerable, men like that?" (MD, 203). Finally, Clarissa realizes what she intuits earlier that day: how dangerous life is, how precarious a thing sanity is, how she has only kept her sanity because Richard is always there to shelter her: "Even now, quite often if Richard had not been there reading the Times, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing with another, she must have perished. She had escaped. But that young man had killed himself" (MD, 203). These discoveries lead Clarissa to a new understanding of her role as a social hostess. Enlightened by the death of Septimus, she passes judgment on herself, and she actualizes the Promethean role which, up to now, she has not really taken seriously. She learns that if her parties are to be gifts to life, she must pay the price of renunciation. Like Prometheus, she must suffer by being fixed to life as to a rock:

"Somehow it was her disaster--her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand there in her evening dress" (MD, 203). For Septimus, loving life as he sits on the window ledge of Mrs. Filmer's drawing room, death is the noblest of gifts to mankind. Now, for Clarissa, desiring the embrace of death perhaps for the first time in her life, the noblest of gifts to mankind is to go on living.

Septimus's death renews Clarissa's life. Though she has been in grave danger of the death of the soul, she now reviews her life through a purified vision. Though she fears power figures such as Miss Kilman and William Bradshaw, she finds an inner strength in the knowledge of the inviolable privacy of the soul. The latter discovery comes to her with a shock of delight as she goes to the window to find the old lady in the room opposite staring straight at her. Lastly, Clarissa achieves a concord between her individual personality and her role as Mrs. Richard Dalloway, emboldened by the self-sufficiency she discovers in Septimus.

The purification of Clarissa's identity is completed by her final reconciliation with Peter Walsh. Peter still feels she has betrayed him in marrying Richard. As the narrative shifts from Clarissa in the little room to Peter and Sally at the party, with Peter wondering where Clarissa has gone, the reader gets a final impression of Peter's loneliness. Sally thinks of him with pity: "it must be lonely, at his age to have no home, nowhere to go" (MD, 209). Sally has reconciled herself to Clarissa: "she

put that friendship first" (MD, 210). But Peter, the "solitary traveller," is still blocked in his love for Clarissa by the recollection of her betrayal of his love: "'But I do not know,' said Peter Walsh, 'what I feel.' . . . He had not found life simple, Peter said. His relations with Clarissa had not been simple. It had spoilt his life, he said" (MD, 210-211). But he is now able to accept Richard: "That good fellow--there he was at the end of the room, holding forth, the same as ever, dear old Richard. . . . Of them all, Richard seemed to him the best, he said--the most disinterested" (MD, 211).

Peter's acceptance of Richard is possible because age has given Peter the power of objectivity he lacks in youth: "When one was young, said Peter, one was too much excited to know people. Now that one was old, fifty-two to be precise . . . now that one was mature then, said Peter, one could watch, one could understand, and one did not lose the power of feeling, he said" (MD, 212). His ability to retain his feelings for other people, combined with a wise objectivity provides a powerful counterforce to the strong sense of doom that builds up around Clarissa as the novel draws to a close. The party is breaking up; Elizabeth stands beside her father to bid the last of the guests farewell (in doing so she seems to have usurped her mother's role as party-hostess). Even Sally gets up to leave; but Clarissa does not return. Peter sits on until, finally, his fidelity is rewarded: "'I will come,' said Peter, but he sat on for a moment. What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excite-

ment? It is Clarissa, he said. For there she was" (MD, 213).

This concluding picture of Peter's oxymoronic "terror" and "ecstasy" at the return of Clarissa reprises the ambiguities of life-in-time exhibited in this novel. Peter stands once more at the threshold of experience. The moment is charged with the potential for either freedom or vacancy. But the prospect is hopeful because Clarissa's soul has been purified of its "sin of indifference" by Septimus's act of courage. The rock-of-ages vision in Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway reveals a vital alternative to the deadening reactive identification at the heart of social convention. Death overcomes the divisions between self and self demanded by society, and the logical imagination that Woolf discloses in Clarissa's imaginative meditation on Septimus's death secures an elegiac triumph for the "drowned sailor on a rock."

Notes to Chapter Six

1. See Frye, FS, 137.

2. The other-worldly "centre of emptiness" replaces this subjective centre in To The Lighthouse. See Ch. 7 below.

3. See Frye, FS, 227.

4. Cf. Schlack, Continuing Presences, 49.

5. Allen McLaurin writes that "what [Jacob's Room] attempts is to clear a space between the fixity of a statue and the elusiveness of an 'absence'" (Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved, 126).

6. Jacob's terror might be related to the trauma of the "primal scene," signifying danger to the mother and consequent anxiety about the loss of the mother. See Weiskel, The Romantic Sublime, 112.

7. The Biblical allusion here is unmistakably ironic. Unlike Samson, Jacob Flanders does not rout the Philistines, and his sheep's jaw is less a weapon of righteousness than a memento mori.

8. See TTL, 176-178.

9. See Herbert Marder, Feminism and Art, 135; cf. Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death, Ch. IX.

10. Social and class barriers kept many people out of the universities, and the only women present in this scene are the wives of the dons and professors.

11. The imagery in this passage anticipates the incorporation of sublime nature in To The Lighthouse.

12. This theme reappears in The Years in Edward Pargiter's vision of Kitty Malone as an English Antigone. See Y, 54.

13. See JR, 60-61.

14. See above, Chapter 5, n. 8.

15. No one, I think, has pointed out the significance of Wednesday as the temporal setting of this novel. Since the day is named after the Anglo-Saxon god of war, "Woden," it serves to underscore the pervasiveness of the theme of war in Mrs. Dalloway.

16. See Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London, 1929), 143; and Ch. 7 below.

17. See Mrs. Dalloway (1st Modern Library edition; New York, 1928), vi.

18. By page 75, Rezia has taken off her wedding-ring, which causes Septimus to reflect that "[t]heir marriage was over."

19. This point is stressed, for example, in Isabel Gamble, "The Secret Sharer in Mrs. Dalloway," Accent, 16 (Autumn, 1956), 235-251; and Alex Page, "A Dangerous Day: Mrs. Dalloway Discovers her Double," Modern Fiction Studies, 7 (Summer, 1961), 115-124.

20. The beautiful "match burning in a crocus" passage (MD, 36), which expresses a Sapphic experience, is curiously repressed as the novel proceeds. Instead, Clarissa recalls her love for Sally Seton by allusion to Othello's "If it were now to die, 'twere to be most happy" (MD, 51, 281; Othello, II, i, 191-192). Though I would not stress a parallel between Othello's murder of Desdemona and the subsequent cooling of Clarissa's relationship with Sally, it is significant that the Clarissa/Sally relationship undergoes an ironic twist at Clarissa's party (MD, 188). Furthermore, Clarissa's rejection of Peter may represent a displacement of a rejection of Sally, in that Peter and Sally are consistently conjoined in Clarissa's memory. See especially MD, 40-41.

21. Cf. Shalom Rachman, "Clarissa's Attic: Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway Reconsidered," Twentieth Century Literature, 18, no. 1 (January, 1972), 3-18.

22. Clarissa's ailing heart "affected, they said, by influenza" (MD, 6) might be symbolically related to the grief and anguish "like an arrow sticking in her heart" she bears for having rejected Peter. And this failure of the heart may parallel Septimus's mental failure stemming from his sin of indifference against Evans. Also, Woolf explicitly parallels Peter Walsh and Evans (MD, 78-79) when Septimus mistakes Peter for Evans in Regent's Park.

23. Cf. MD, 12: "This late age of the world's experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears. Tears and sorrow; courage and endurance; a perfectly upright and stoical bearing. Think, for example, of the woman she admired most, Lady Bexborough, opening the bazaar."

24. The "song" of the beggar-woman is adapted from a song for All Soul's Day by Richard Strauss. See J. Hillis Miller, "Virginia Woolf's All Souls Day: The Omniscient Narrator in Mrs. Dalloway," in The Shaken Realist: Essays in Modern Literature, ed. Melvin J. Friedman and John B. Vickery (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1970), 114-115.

25. The "room" motif here, as in Jacob's Room, conveys the theme of privacy vs. isolation. On pages 139-140 Clarissa wit-

nesses the progress of the old woman next door to her attic room with a mixture of joy at the inviolable "privacy of the soul" (MD, 140), and sorrow at the loneliness of the individual. At the end of the novel, in her own "little room" (MD, 201), Clarissa feels only joy on beholding the old woman (perhaps a vision of herself grown old) preparing for bed. By this time, Clarissa is convinced that rooms are not inviolable: Peter earlier intrudes into her privacy, just as Holmes invades the privacy of Septimus's flat. But the fact that death preserves the inviolability of the soul is established by Septimus's triumphant plunge to death, which Clarissa experiences vicariously.

26. Cf. Nurse McInnis (VO, 279), "for ever dead to the rush of fresh and beautiful things past her."

27. That Woolf feels sympathy for (rather than with) Doris Kilman must be stressed. Elizabeth's tutor emerges as a harmless counterpart to William Bradshaw, the tyrannical "priest of science" (MD, 104).

CHAPTER SEVEN

A CENTRE OF COMPLETE EMPTINESS: *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

To the Lighthouse presents a conflict between the powerful mother-figure Mrs. Ramsay sometimes symbolizes and the self-sufficient artist Lily Briscoe must become. The conflict is succicntly expressed in Woolf's essay, "Professions for Women." Before Woolf herself could become a self-sufficient artist she had "to do battle with a certain phantom"--namely "the Angel in the House," of which Mrs. Ramsay (modelled on Woolf's mother, Julia Duckworth Stephen) is clearly an incarnation: "I did my best to kill her . . . . Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing."[1] The Angel in the House, created by a patriarchal society, is a phantom and, hence, a product of the illogical imagination. This phantom is the chief blocking agent in the quest for imaginative freedom,[2] and unless it is annihilated, the necessary movement from naïve innocence to enlightened experience cannot take place. The "centre of complete emptiness" (TTL, 275) in the middle section of the novel formally represents a break in the representational design, a passage of time in which the logical imagination can map out the territory of the ironic landscape's apocalyptic centre.

It must be noted that the illogical imagination, and not Mrs. Ramsay, is the villain in this work. Woolf's portrayal of Mrs. Ramsay as a martyr to domestic life suggests a powerful feminism in this novel (a stance that is even more pronounced in Lily Briscoe's struggles to become an artist). Like Mrs. Hilbery

and Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay has admirable emotional, spiritual, and creative qualities which are literally wasted in the domestic sphere. She cherishes a forlorn hope that "she would cease to be a private woman whose charity was half a sop to her own indignation, half a relief to her own curiosity, and become, what with her untrained mind she greatly admired, an investigator, elucidating social problems" (TTL, 20). Instead, she is moulded by the social system into the embodiment of the Great Mother, a mould which Lily Briscoe succeeds in breaking only when she is finally reconciled, in Part Three, with the generous spirit of the unnamed woman that readers of To the Lighthouse know only by the name of "Mrs. Ramsay."

The character of Mr. Ramsay deserves a similar apologia. He has sacrificed the better part of his career to become a husband and father, and this sacrifice has taken its mental toll of him, as evidenced by his restless pacing and his doom-and-gloom approach to life. Hence, his paternal and marital tyranny exemplifies a reactive identification with a patriarchal society. He, too, has been moulded. And, just as Lily must find atonement with the woman trapped in the role of Mrs. Ramsay, James must achieve a reconciliation with the man who is his father, an innocent "wheel" on the "waggon" of patriarchal society (TTL, 284).

Critics who assert that marriage is the thematic locus of To the Lighthouse,[3] as it is with Woolf's previous fictions,[4] are therefore mistaken. Marriage, here, is a theme somewhat to the left of centre; art is somewhat to the right. In the centre is the theme of poetic consciousness struggling to exorcise two omnipresent phantoms--The Angel Mother and Tyrant Father--that

block the quest for identity. In sublimated form, these archetypal presences reduce into phenomenological presences, which can be termed "matter" and "pattern," respectively.[5] A brief review of Woolf's thematic exploration of marriage to this point reveals insights pertinent to an analysis of sublime crisis. In terms of the sublime, "matter" plays the role of sublimated object-world, and "pattern" stands for the "meaning" which the self apprehends in its resolution of the sublime crisis. In marriage, which is the this-worldly realization of Romantic love, the husband achieves an erotic relation to the object-world by a process of metonymy in which the wife stands for mother nature. Rachel Vinrace and Katharine Hilbery represent potential means for putting this imaginative strategy in effect in the eyes of Terence Hewet and Ralph Denham, respectively. Mrs. Dalloway, as the title implies, centralizes this theme. The wife, in marriage, achieves ascendancy over the object-world by a process of metaphor in which the felt sense of power "out there" is transferred to the eroticized "other" as a pattern for power under control. This process underlies Rachel's (failed) reactive identification with Terence: Katharine's identification with Ralph as a "magnanimous hero," and Clarissa's identification with Richard, who "saves" her from madness. The dual structure of marriage provides a reasonable opportunity for self-growth--that is, the reintegration of the projected archetype, or what Woolf later calls the "androgynous mind" (AROO, 148). However, under the pressure of fear and selfishness, the dual structure collapses into a rigid pattern of illusion and tyranny.

The Ramsay lighthouse quarrel dramatizes the pattern of illusion in that marriage. The harmonious pattern, essentially a cycle, initially breaks down in face of the generative sequence, represented in the Ramsay's youngest son, James. The quarrel is started by Mr. Ramsay who refuses to allow the illusion of his wife's affirmative powers to extend to James. Mrs. Ramsay's affirmation that James may, indeed, make the lighthouse trip about which he has so long dreamed constitutes a usurpation of Mr. Ramsay's paternal role, and he reacts with the assertion of a meteorological deity that the weather will not be fine. Correspondingly, his version of the lighthouse trip is rather bleak: for him, it is "the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness" (TTL, 13). Mrs. Ramsay may have reservations about the cruelty of her husband, but she has too much at stake to be roused to fight. As long as her husband reinforces his paternal role, she retains her powerful maternal role:

> Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity.
>
> (TTL, 15; italics mine)

Mrs. Ramsay's maternalism knows no limits. For example, Charles Tansley, Mr. Ramsay's academic disciple who parrots his master's attack on James's hopeful spirits, recalls coming under Mrs. Ramsay's spell during their walk into town. The romantic ardor that the

beautiful matron inspires in this dry man of intellect almost succeeds: "Under the influence of that extraordinary emotion which had been growing all the walk . . . he was coming to see himself and everything he had ever known gone crooked a little. It was awfully strange" (TTL, 26). More strange is his irrational vision of Mrs. Ramsay as a Demeter-like nature goddess:

> With stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen and wild violets--what nonsense was he thinking? She was fifty at least; she had eight children. Stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen; with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair --He took her bag.
>
> (TTL, 27)

The hypnotic repetitions which gradually overcome Tansley's common sense, until he figures himself a chivalrous hero, tend to evoke bathos (goddesses, in fact, seldom carry shopping baskets). Nevertheless, the episode reveals the power of the mythical heritage from which Mrs. Ramsay as beautiful mother draws her sublimity.

However, Tansley's spell is mercifully short-lived as his taunts in the drawing room indicate. Mrs. Ramsay, possibly in the frustration of defeat, abandons her usual charitable attitude and frankly reflects that Charles is an "odious little man" (TTL, 29), whereupon she experiences (perhaps because her training prohibits any censure of the masculine sex) a rather sobering moment of being (analyzed in Ch. 4 above, 75-78). Mrs. Ramsay overcomes this critical moment by reaffirming her original sublime reactive identification. She wards off the terror by substituting an awesome respect for a god who requires sacrifices: "if her husband required sacrifices (and indeed

he did) she cheerfully offered up to him Charles Tansley, who had snubbed her little boy" (TTL, 30). It is significant that Mrs. Ramsay, in this offering, makes Charles Tansley a scapegoat for the equally unjust Mr. Ramsay.

Meanwhile, the austere "god," the sublime object of Mrs. Ramsay's reactive identification, is presently overheard reciting a particularly subjective adaptation of Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," a preoccupation which exposes him to idle speculation by Lily Briscoe and William Bankes. With the introduction of these characters, the one a spinster-artist, the other a childless widower, Woolf also introduces a subtle counterpoint to the marriage theme. In one respect, both Lily and Bankes are outsiders. Lily recalls Mary Datchet of Night and Day who has by nature and by circumstance contracted a marriage to her work. Bankes resembles Peter Walsh, in that he is an old friend of the family whose affections have been partly alienated by Mr. Ramsay's decision to marry. But by this stage in Woolf's literary development, marriage has lost some of its former awesomeness, and the outsiders enjoy an improved status. Lily's intense impersonal dedication to her craft and Bankes's common-sense appreciation of Miss Briscoe ("poor, presumably, and without the complexion or the allurement of Miss Doyle certainly, but with a good sense which made her superior to that young lady," [TTL, 33]) set them apart from the emotional imbroglio of the Ramsays. Bankes points out Mr. Ramsay's eccentricities, the inevitable result of a life encumbered with

"fluttering wings and clucking domesticities" (TTL, 40). Lily, however, bids him to think of Mr. Ramsay's work: "Naturally, if one's days were passed in this seeing of angular essences, this reducing of lovely evenings, with all their flamingo clouds and blue and silver to a white deal four-legged table (and it was a mark of the finest minds so to do), naturally one could not be judged like an ordinary person" (TTL, 41). But she finds it impossible to "judge people" and her attempt to sum up in her mind her accumulated impressions of Mr. Bankes and Mr. Ramsay results in an orgasmic explosion. Simultaneously, a shot goes off, and a flock of starlings explodes from the trees. Jasper has been shooting the birds. A moment later, Mr. Ramsay runs into Lily and Bankes shouting "'Someone had blundered!'" (TTL, 44). The confusion settles down as the starlings settle back into the trees.

This very complex simultaneity of events, linking three kinds of explosion (the firing of a gun, the release of concentrated power in Lily's mind, and the holocaust represented in the Tennyson poem quoted by Mr. Ramsay), sharply contrasts with the serene isolation of James and Mrs. Ramsay behind the drawing-room window to which the narrative now returns. But as Mrs. Ramsay continues to discuss the lighthouse trip, apocalyptic forebodings intrude even into this place of shelter. Nature and time conspire in its ruin: "things got shabbier and got shabbier summer after summer" (TTL, 47). A more subtle presentiment of disaster is occasioned by Mrs. Ramsay's project at hand: while the night

approaches inexorably, she discovers that the reddish-brown stocking she is knitting to send to the lighthouse-keeper's son is still too short. Her anxiety, in all its mysterious disproportion to the fact, is visible on Mrs. Ramsay's face:

> Never did anybody look so sad. Bitter and black, half-way down, in the darkness, in the shaft which ran from the sunlight to the depths, perhaps a tear formed; a tear fell; the waters swayed this way and that, received it, and were at rest. Never did anybody look so sad.
>
> (TTL, 49)

The apparent reasons for Mrs. Ramsay's sadness--the merciless passing of time against which human effort is almost powerless--do not quite "explain" her sadness. The explanation is to be found in the psychological sublime, by whose laws the most trivial experiences are rendered momentous. Finishing the stocking means, for Mrs. Ramsay, flouting her husband's authority, and to do this is to surrender herself to the deep terror of the negative sublime: a sense of the overpowering presence of the symbolic sea. Yet, not to make the effort to finish would be to surrender to her old antagonist, life.

James's role in the Ramsay marriage requires discussion at this point, particularly since the boy is the immediate agent of the Ramsays' quarrel. Sitting on his mother's knee, James represents the autistic imagination dwelling in a state of naïve innocence. Significantly, James is the only major character who does not leave the place of shelter in "The Window." The Ramsay couple react in opposite yet similar ways to this embodiment of innocence. According to Mr. Ramsay, such innocence is purely

naïve; he insists that all his children learn the stern "truth" of experience, "that life is difficult; facts uncompromising" (TTL, 13). Mrs. Ramsay looks upon innocence in a more "sympathetic," but scarcely less fatalistic light: "For that reason, knowing what was before them--love and ambition and being wretched alone in dreary places--she had often the feeling, Why must they grow up and lose it all?" (TTL, 96). For each of the parents, the "education" of James represents a desired victory over the particular psychological compromise which keeps them in a state of self-perpetuating illusion. Mr. Ramsay displaces onto his son his particular need to face life with courage. The same need motivates his philosophical quest. Mrs. Ramsay displaces onto her son her need to fortify her spirit in its contest with immitigable fate. Both versions of reality are necessarily doomed to failure, however, because of the subtle workings of projection in the Ramsay marriage. Mr. Ramsay's concept of the sternness of nature cannot gain ascendancy over his passive adoration of the beauty of the world, which he projects onto his wife; and Mrs. Ramsay's concept of nature's false dominion over the human spirit is rendered ineffective by the reactive identification, which deflects the sense of felt power onto her husband. To use a term later employed by Woolf, neither of the Ramsays has an "androgynous mind." The result of this dual projection is that it fosters in James all the symptoms of a classical Oedipus complex. He hates his father (really Mrs. Ramsay's projected version of power) and passively loves his mother (or the personified version of "Mother Nature" which he adopts from his father).

Years later, when he can objectify his parents and effect a withdrawal of projection, James will be able to resolve his conflict. In the meantime, he remains the focus of his parents' individual self-conflict.

Mr. Ramsay's self-conflict, like that of his wife, is perpetuated by a failure of courage at the crisis of the sublime moment. His particular philosophical interest, "subject and object and the nature of reality" (TTL, 40), is an objective counterpart of his identity crisis. If Mr. Ramsay had the courage to face the abyss he would see that subject (self) and object (world) represent distinct (i.e., imaginative versus natural) realities. As it is, he errs twice. First, his concept of "subject" is muddled by an adherence to the selfhood. He really desires an "objective" self that has the permanence of the object-world. Second, his concept of "object" includes "the other" as object. His wife, for example, is equated with "the beauty of the world" (TTL, 61). This illusion is a source of anxiety because "the other" is doomed to die. In Part Three, the memory of his wife's death is perpetuated in Mr. Ramsay's bleak assessment of life: "'We perished, each alone.'"[6] In "The Window," however, Mr. Ramsay is still able to circumvent his anxiety by a return to the object-world epitomized in his wife (as archetypal mother). This process is best exemplified in the episode in which Woolf allegorizes Mr. Ramsay's philosophical quest as an attempt to go through the alphabet of logic from A to Z. He gets stuck fast at R, possibly because R is the initial letter of both Reality

and his surname (hence, selfhood), Ramsay. At the same time, his will becomes paralyzed as he catches sight of the impenetrable hedge which like the waves for Mrs. Ramsay reminds him of the transience of human life:

> How many men in a thousand million, he asked himself, reach Z after all? Surely the leader of a forlorn hope may ask himself that, and answer, without treachery to the expedition behind him, "One perhaps." One in a generation. Is he to be blamed then, if he is not that one? provided he has toiled honestly, given to the best of his power, till he has no more left to give? And his fame lasts how long? It is permissible even for a dying hero to think before he dies how men will speak of him in the hereafter. His fame lasts perhaps two thousand years. And what are two thousand years? (asked Mr. Ramsay ironically, staring at the hedge). What, indeed, if you look from a mountain-top down the long wastes of the ages? The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare. His own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two, and would then be merged in some bigger light, and that in a bigger still. (He looked into the darkness, into the intricacy of the twigs).
>
> (TTL, 59)

Here, as Mr. Ramsay tells himself a story in which he is the leader of an expedition to truth, he gradually loses belief in his own story. Reaching Z is a "forlorn hope," and Ramsay a "dying hero." Soon, the expedition becomes the "doomed expedition," and Mr. Ramsay, preferring to be rescued, gives up the role of dying hero:

> Who shall blame him, if, so standing for a moment, he dwells upon fame, upon search parties, upon cairns raised by his grateful followers over his bones? Finally, who shall blame the leader of the doomed expedition, if, having adventured to the uttermost, and used all his strength wholly to the last ounce and fallen asleep not much caring if he wakes or not, he now perceives by some pricking in his toes that he lives, and does not on the whole object to live, but requires sympathy, and whiskey, and someone to tell the story of his suffering to at once.
>
> (TTL, 60)

At this point, Mr. Ramsay returns to his wife at the drawing-room window, having now cast himself in the role of a chivalrous hero paying "homage to the beauty of the world" (TTL, 61). Like Mrs. Ramsay in the "gruff murmur" passage, he responds to the crisis of vacancy by seeking the symbolic mother,[7] whom he now projects onto his wife:

> He was a failure, he repeated. Well, look then, feel then. Flashing her needles, glancing round about her, out of the window, into the room at James himself, she assured him, beyond a shadow of a doubt, by her laugh, her poise, her competence (as a nurse carrying a light across a dark room assures a fractious child), that it was real; the house was full; the garden blowing. If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him; however deep he buried himself or climbed high, not for a second should he find himself without her. So boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was lavished and spent; and James, as he stood stiff between her knees, felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy.
>
> Filled with her words, like a child who drops off satisfied, he said, at last, looking at her with humble gratitude, restored, renewed, that he would take a turn; he would watch the children playing cricket. He went.
>
> (TTL, 63-64; italics mine)

As soon as Mr. Ramsay leaves, Mrs. Ramsay goes through a gradual process of dissolution which displays the ambiguities of her emotional compromise. First, her sublime image of her husband is shaken; she conceives of herself and her husband as "two different notes, one high, one low, struck together" (TTL, 64). But this gives way to "some faintly disagreeable sensation" (TTL, 64) becoming more specific when she hears "dully, ominously, a wave fall" (TTL, 65). At the back of this sensation is a

submerged memory of her sublime crisis in the "gruff murmur" passage (which also contains a music metaphor). She concludes that the source of her discomfort is that "she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband" (TTL, 65), and that she is dissatisfied with "their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that anyone could see" (TTL, 65). She resents having to shield him from uncomfortable facts (the bill for the greenhouse, the mendacity of his last book, and the burdens that small hardships cause the children): "all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together, and let the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness" (TTL, 65).

Mrs. Ramsay has more at stake than the loss of a hero-figure. Otherwise, she would simply let the truth set her free. She is vain of her beauty and covets power, as the sight of old Mr. Carmichael, perhaps one of the few men immune to her charms, painfully reminds her: "It injured her that he should shrink. It hurt her. And yet not cleanly, not rightly. That was what she minded, coming as it did on top of her discontent with her husband: the sense she had just now when Mr. Carmichael shuffled past, just nodding to her question, with a book beneath his arm, in his yellow slippers, that she was suspected; and that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity" (TTL, 63).

Mr. Ramsay, returning to his cerebrations, experiences a similar moment of truth as he continues to meditate on the nature of "subject" (or self) and "object" (or nature). Egotism

has led him to a sense of personal failure. Therefore, he tries to move away from egotism by arguing that the progress of civilization does not depend on the lives of great men such as Shakespeare: "He would argue that the world exists for the average human being" (TTL, 70). He conceives for himself an identity based on alienation: "It was his fate, his peculiarity, whether he wished it or not, to come out thus on a spit of land which the sea is slowly eating away, and there to stand, like a desolate sea-bird, alone" (TTL, 71-72). Then, to adopt a more humanly meaningful image, he imagines himself rather as "a stake driven into the bed of a channel upon which the gulls perch and the waves beat [and which] inspires in merry boat-loads a feeling of gratitude for the duty it has taken upon itself of marking the channel out there in the floods alone" (TTL, 72). But he cannot maintain this pose; instead, he seeks out again the consolations of family life: "the figure of his wife reading stories to the little boy" (TTL, 72-73); then he chastises himself for being consolable; even his self-chastisement he cannot honestly accept: "It was a disguise; it was the refuge of a man afraid to own his own feelings, who could not say, This is what I like--this is what I am" (TTL, 73). And so, the whole effort of truth-seeking collapses into ironic pathos.[8]

At this point, Mr. Ramsay runs into William Bankes and Lily Briscoe for the third time, which leads them to further speculation about the Ramsays. Lily cannot quite agree with Bankes that Mr. Ramsay is "a bit of a hypocrite" (TTL, 75) because, whenever she sees Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay together, "what

she called 'being in love' flooded them" (TTL, 76). In fact, Lily's ambivalent perspective on the Ramsays demonstrates once more the general conflict between illusion and perception which pervades this section of the novel. Mr. Ramsay's exaltedness, Lily believes, exempts him from being judged as other men. Lily's adoration of Mrs. Ramsay involves Lily in a crisis of identity against which she fights with all her might. Mrs. Ramsay worships a deity which Woolf, in Mrs. Dalloway, calls "the Goddess of Conversion." Under the influence of this goddess, Mrs. Ramsay forces a religion of marriage onto Lily, who recalls arguments far into the night, with Mrs. Ramsay preaching marriage, and with Lily herself urging "her own exemption from the universal law; plead[ing] for it" (TTL, 81) until "she had laid her head on Mrs. Ramsay's lap and laughed and laughed and laughed, laughed almost hysterically at the thought of Mrs. Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand" (TTL, 81).

Lily's susceptibility to Mrs. Ramsay's influence belongs to the realm of the psychological sublime. Because of her fatal weakness for the older woman's beauty, Lily unconsciously projects qualities of greatness onto Mrs. Ramsay that no one person can reasonably be expected to possess. Because Lily locates greatness "out there," she is powerless before it. As a result, she experiences an unmitigated crisis of vacancy. She desires most of all to close the gap between herself and the adored object:

> What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? Could the body achieve it, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one? 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.
>
> Nothing happened. Nothing! Nothing! as she leant her head against Mrs. Ramsay's knee.
>
> (TTL, 83)

The gap between self and object remains; and Lily's fascination with the goddess Mrs. Ramsay continues unabated.

The problem of vacancy in Lily's inner life translates itself into a problem of space in the picture she is trying to paint: "It was a question, she remembered, 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" (TTL, 86). Few generalizations can be made about Lily's picture because in itself it is neither mimetic nor representational art.[9] Thematically, the picture concerns the relationship between two structures, the crux of the relationship being "the vacancy in the foreground" separating the two structures. The two solutions Lily considers are either extending a line from one side into the middle, or placing a third structure in the centre. Her chief dissatisfaction with both solutions, if carried out, is that

"the unity of the whole might be broken." The picture is both autobiographical and abstract: "the residue of her thirty-three years, the deposit of each day's living, mixed with something more secret than she had ever spoken in the course of all those days" (TTL, 34), and the record of "that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children" (TTL, 36). In short, it wrestles with a problem of identity which can only be faced in one of two ways: by reunification or by apocalypse. Lily is not prepared to consider a break in the unity of the design as an aesthetic solution[10] since such a rupture is a "danger" she is not prepared to risk. What she must continue to face, then, is the prospect of acquiring an identity in a marriage forced upon her by her beloved Mrs. Ramsay.

Mrs. Ramsay's role as an agent of conversion is further developed in her project to make a match of Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle. Woolf handles this material with a masterly irony by juxtaposing Mrs. Ramsay's meditations on the machinations necessary to the success of her project with her actual task at hand, the recitation of the story "The Fisherman and His Wife" to James sitting upon her knee: "And where were they now? Mrs. Ramsay wondered, reading and thinking, quite easily, both at the same time; for the story of the Fisherman and his Wife was like the bass gently accompanying a tune, which now and then ran up unexpectedly into the melody" (TTL, 90-91). The imagery of this passage recalls that of the "gruff murmur" passage in

which the sound of the waves acts as bass to the domestic sounds of husband and children that constitute the melody. The fairy story nicely recapitulates the structure of the negative sublime. The fisherman's wife overcomes a crisis of inudation (the tremendous storm that results from her wish to be God) by adopting a reactive identification in which she assumes her "rightful" place as the obedient spouse of her husband. With this rhythmic bass for background, Mrs. Ramsay practises her role as proselytizer for the state of matrimony. At the same time, she is aware that her fear of life has driven her to compromise her self-esteem:

> And here she was, she reflected, feeling life rather sinister again, making Minta marry Paul Rayley; because whatever she might feel about her own transaction and she had had experiences which need not happen to everyone (she did not name them to herself); she was driven on, too quickly she knew, almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children.
>
> (TTL, 96)

Also on Mrs. Ramsay's conscience is the lighthouse quarrel and a suspicion that by capitulating to Mr. Ramsay's tyranny she is transmitting a religion of fear and despair to her youngest son. No sooner does she finish reading him the fairy story than the lighthouse is lit. Although James does not repeat his question about the lighthouse trip, Mrs. Ramsay is sure that his hopes have been destroyed, thinking to herself meanwhile that "children never forget" (TTL, 99). This phrase becomes the focus of a nexus of feelings. As she doffs the robe of motherhood and contracts her being into a "wedge-shaped core

of darkness" (TTL, 99), she is led into another moment of being which culminates in an incredible lapsus linguae:

> Not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience (she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles), but as a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there, she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at--that light for example. And it would lift up on it some little phrase or other which had been lying in her mind like that--"Children don't forget, children don't forget"--which she would repeat and begin adding to it, It will end, It will end, she said. It will come, it will come, when suddenly she added, We are in the hands of the Lord.
>
> (TTL, 100-101)

Annoyed by the patent falseness of this comforting phrase, aware that the world is not in the hands of a benign God, Mrs. Ramsay is once more roused to activity, and takes up her knitting again. But she is stopped by "the sound of the sea" (W, 103). This reappearance of the archetypal "mother" terrifies her into a renewed search for identity. She seeks the light again:

> She saw the light again. With some irony in her interrogation, for when one woke at all, one's relations changed, she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call (she woke in the night and saw it bent across their bed, stroking the floor), but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotized, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose

> bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!
>
> (TTL, 104)

This time Mrs. Ramsay avoids the formulaic "We are in the hands of the Lord" and faces the truth that "no happiness lasted" (TTL, 102), by relinquishing her selfhood to the intense impersonal flood of ecstasy associated with sexual passion. Her expression "It is enough! It is enough!" asserts the sufficiency of the moment of happiness. The most significant thematic feature of this passage is that the "waves of pure lemon" (the archetypal female) do not cause anxiety (as in the earlier "gruff murmur" passage) but ecstasy.[11] Nevertheless, there is a hint of panic in the repeated phrase, perhaps because for all her relinquishing of self in this experience, Mrs. Ramsay's mind is not completely "one" with the "silver fingers" or the "waves of pure delight." As a mature adult, she has crossed the threshold of experience and the yellow light of sunset on the water intimates not only life but also death in the world outside the window. Hence she cannot completely, except for a moment, overcome her solitude. The next moment, she is donning her green shawl to seek the protection of her husband in the garden. Mrs. Ramsay is aware of her husband's strengths and weaknesses, but at this moment she avoids dwelling on the latter: "He said the most melancholy things, but she noticed that

directly he had said them he always seemed more cheerful than usual. All this phrase-making was a game, she thought, for if she had said half what he said, she would have blown her brains out by now" (TTL, 110). She furbishes up her respect for him by considering the keenness of his intellect: "Indeed he seemed to her sometimes made differently from other people, born blind, deaf and dumb, to the ordinary things, but to the extraordinary things, with an eye like an eagle's" (TTL, 111). She concludes that "a great mind like his must be different in every way from ours" (TTL, 112). Soothed, assured, Mrs. Ramsay pursues with renewed fervor the vocation of the convert, to convert others to her way of life: "Ah, but was that not Lily Briscoe strolling along with William Bankes? She focussed her short-sighted eyes upon the backs of the retreating couple. Yes, indeed it was. Did that not mean that they would marry? Yes, it must! What an admirable idea! They must marry!" (TTL, 113).

Woolf, in Mrs. Dalloway, depicts with unconcealed invective the wrongs perpetrated by worshippers of the Goddess of Conversion. In To the Lighthouse, her portrayal is more subtle though the message is unchanged. Matchmakers like Mrs. Ramsay force the soul by exploiting its dependence on the body. She traffics in appearances. Attractive people like Minta and Prue and Paul Rayley have market value in the marriage trade. Unattractive people like Charles Tansley and Lily Briscoe she pities. In the matter of sex, she also cramps people into categories. That there are two genders is, of course, undeniable.

But to hold that a difference in gender necessitates a division of souls into two categories is hardly defensible. This concept, that too keen a fixation on the bodily self can destroy the imaginative vision of human identity, underlies the Biblical myth of the fall of Adam and Eve, the first parents. Woolf alludes to the Biblical fall in the episode dealing with the Rayley-Doyle engagement. The two "innocents" in this episode are the Ramsay brother and sister, Andrew and Nancy, who accompany Paul and Minta on a treasure hunt on the beach. Some way into the hunt, Paul and Minta go off by themselves. Andrew goes alone to the "Pope's Nose" (TTL, 118), and Nancy investigates a shallow pool. When the tide starts coming in, Nancy runs behind a rock and finds the couple in an embrace:

> And Andrew shouted that the sea was coming in, so she leapt splashing through the shallow waves on to the shore and ran up the beach and was carried by her own impetuosity and her desire for rapid movement right behind a rock and there oh heavens! in each others arms were Paul and Minta! kissing probably. She was outraged, indignant. She and Andrew put on their shoes and stockings in dead silence without saying a thing about it. Indeed they were rather sharp with each other. She might have called him when she saw the crayfish or whatever it was, Andrew grumbled. However, they both felt, it's not our fault. They had not wanted this horrid nuisance to happen. All the same it irritated Andrew that Nancy should be a woman, and Nancy that Andrew should be a man and they tied their shoes very neatly and drew the bows rather tight.
>
> (TTL, 119-120)

Despite the displaced realism, the central features of the post-Edenic state of "sin" are inescapable: shame, the desire to cover up, an uneasy recognition of sexual differences, and the denial of guilt. Shortly afterwards, Minta announces that

she has lost her grandmother's brooch, "a weeping willow it was (they must remember it) set in pearls" (TTL, 120). So significant to Minta is the loss of the tree-brooch that, if she had been Eve lamenting the loss of the Tree of Life, she could not have been more sorrowful: "It was her grandmother's brooch; she would rather have lost anything but that, and yet Nancy felt, though it might be true that she minded losing her brooch, she wasn't crying only for that. She was crying for something else. We might all sit down and cry, she felt. But she did not know what for" (TTL, 121-122).

Given the allusion to the fall in this episode, the return trip to the Ramsay house can be designated a descent from Eden. Indeed, Paul and Minta are about to become sacrificial victims to Mrs. Ramsay's nuptial tyranny. Paul's exile from innocence is elaborated as a descent from adolescence into the world of adult experience: "He would prove what he could do. And as they came out on the hill and saw the lights of the town beneath him, the lights coming out suddenly one by one seemed like things that were going to happen to him--his marriage, his children, his house. . . . As they turned by the cross roads he thought what an appalling experience he had been through, and he must tell some one--Mrs. Ramsay of course, for it took his breath away to think what he had been and done" (TTL, 122-123). He returns, with the others, not to a place of shelter but to a dangerous flame which draws him, like a fascinated moth, to his destiny: "The house was all lit up, and the lights after the

darkness made his eyes feel full, and he said to himself, childishly, as he walked up the drive, Lights, lights, lights, and repeated in a dazed way, Lights, lights, lights, as they came into the house, staring about him with his face quite stiff" (TTL, 123-124).

The eroticism implicit in Paul and Minta's acquiescence to the social command provides the energy for a triumphant renewal of Mrs. Ramsay's power at the dinner party which follows almost immediately. Ostensibly a communion, the dinner turns out to have undertones of a sacrificial rite and Mrs. Ramsay, the high priestess who presides over it. By way of preparation, Mrs. Ramsay summons the feminine arts to her aid. She brushes and combs her hair and decks herself out in a black dress, a necklace, and a shawl. Then, she descends among her guests "like some queen who, finding her people gathered in the hall, looks down upon them, and descends among them, and acknowledges their tributes silently, and accepts their devotion and their prostration before her" (TTL, 129).

The dinner begins in an atmosphere of malaise as Mrs. Ramsay faces "an infinitely long table and plates and knives" (TTL, 130) and Mr. Ramsay sits at the far end "all in a heap, frowning" (TTL, 130). Mrs. Ramsay feels "out if it" (TTL, 130) and remarks to herself on the "sterility of men" (TTL, 131). Lily notices "how old" and "how worn" (TTL, 132) Mrs. Ramsay looks. Charles Tansley remarks to himself that "it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy" (TTL, 134). William Bankes

thinks the dinner "a terrible waste of time" (TTL, 133) and experiences "the disagreeableness of life, sitting there, waiting" (TTL, 146). Mr. Ramsay silently intimates that "he hated everything dragging on for hours like this" (TTL, 149).

The peculiar malaise that surrounds the assembled guests is not, however, due to senescence. In the "veneer of civilization" images that follow, Woolf expresses a theme of repression, an unnatural turning back on itself of energy. The theme of the animal force in man being unnaturally and almost unsuccessfully "domesticated" is epitomized in the emblematic shawl worn by Mrs. Ramsay[12] who sees to it that no unpleasantless breaks out among the diners. This theme makes its first appearance in William Bankes's contemplated "treachery" (to expose his dislike of Mrs. Ramsay) which he conceals by forcing himself to be courteous: "He felt rigid and barren, like a pair of boots that has been soaked and gone dry so that you can hardly force your feet into them. Yet he must force his feet into them" (TTL, 140).[13] The theme is more clearly apparent in the behaviour of Charles Tansley, who "had come down in his ordinary clothes" (TTL, 134) and who can barely control his disdain for "these mild cultivated people" (TTL, 143). Lily Briscoe senses the destructive energy that is in him: "Sitting opposite him could she not see, as in an X-ray photograph, the ribs and thigh bones of the young man's desire to impress himself lying dark in the mist of his flesh--that thin mist which convention had laid over his burning desire to break into the conversation?" (TTL, 141-142). Mrs. Ramsay forces Lily to apply a balm to Tansley's ego, and thus

prevents an outburst. The theme is also present in Mr. Ramsay's anger at Carmichael's helping himself to a second plate of soup: Mrs. Ramsay "saw his anger fly like a pack of hounds into his eyes, his brow, and she knew that in a moment something violent would explode, and then--but thank goodness! she saw him clutch himself and clap a brake on the wheel, and the whole of his body seemed to emit sparks but not words. He sat there scowling" (TTL, 143-149). Finally, to prevent Rose and Roger from breaking out into "spasms of laughter" (TTL, 149) at their father, Mrs. Ramsay directs them to light the candles.

Mrs. Ramsay's domestic fiat lux exhibits two disturbing features. First, it is an illusion by means of which "any accurate view of the outside world" (TTL, 151) is occluded. Second, it opens a this-worldly center of emptiness mysteriously aligned with an amplification of Mrs. Ramsay's powers. The candlelight recalls the image of the moth attracted hypnotically to the flame--Paul Rayley approaching the Ramsay house. And now, Mrs. Ramsay experiences a moment of "expectation" (TTL, 152) which is instantanteously, and therefore eerily, fulfilled: "They must come now, Mrs. Ramsay thought, looking at the door, and at that instant, Minta Doyle, Paul Rayley, and a maid carrying a great dish in her hands came in together" (TTL, 152). The dinner becomes a symbolic festival with overtones of pagan ritual:

> Mrs. Ramsay peered into the dish, with its shiny walls and its confusion of savoury brown and yellow meats, and its bay leaves and its wine, and thought, This will celebrate the occasion--a curious sense rising in her, at once freakish and tender, of celebrating a festival, as if

> two emotions were called up in her, one profound--for what could be more serious than the love of man for woman, what more commanding, more impressive, bearing in its bosom the seeds of death; at the same time these lovers, these people entering into illusion glittering eyed, must be danced round with mockery, decorated with garlands.
>
> (TTL, 155-156)

In this passage, Mrs. Ramsay, in her role as high priestess, offers Paul and Minta up as sacrificial victims to the illogical imagination. The physical reward of marriage is a renewal of the species, but the fertility ritual is tyrannical and "freakish" when considered in the light of Paul's strong reservations about proposing to Minta.

Mrs. Ramsay sits flanked by her male conquests. On one side is William Bankes, once more under the spell of her beauty. On the other is Paul,"all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent" (TTL, 157). Outside the charmed circle sits Lily Briscoe, who regards Mrs. Ramsay's power with fright, seeing in it the earmarks of wilful conversion: "She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end . . . . She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly" (TTL, 157). The nature of this "spell" is indicated by its effect on Paul. Infected by his romance, Lily asks him to let her join in a proposed search for the brooch: "But what did he reply to the offer? She actually said with an emotion that she seldom let appear, 'Let me come with you'; and he laughed. He meant yes or no--either perhaps. But it was not his meaning--it was the odd chuckle he gave, as if he had said, Throw yourself over a cliff if you like, I don't care. He turned on her cheek the

heat of love, its horror, its cruelty, its unscrupulosity. It scorched her, and Lily, looking at Minta being charming to Mr. Ramsay at the other end of the table, flinched for her exposed to those fangs" (TTL. 158-159). This, then, is the underside of marriage, the demonic love that Mrs. Ramsay worships; a love which shuts out; a love which finds for its centre one person, not even a person but an ideal projection (cf. Ralph Denham's demonic vision of birds dashed senseless against the lamp of the lighthouse in ND, 417). This love "turns a nice young man with a profile like a gem (Paul's was exquisite) into a bully with a crowbar (he was swaggering, he was insolent) in the Mile End Road" (TTL, 159). Mrs. Ramsay's power, it seems, is like that of Circe: it has the property of reducing the human to the level of the beast.

Such, at any rate, is Lily's vision of Mrs. Ramsay, as the hostess presides over the destinies of the assembled guests. The reader, however, cannot miss the ironic discrepancy between role and identity in the portrayal of the Ramsays. Symbols of marriage to the other characters, the Ramsays are also struggling individuals faced with the same uncertainties as a Lily Briscoe or a Charles Tansley. The dramatic contrast between the role (high priestess) and the identity (childlike woman) of Mrs. Ramsay is clearly evident in the extended interior monologue which follows the hostess's "triumph." In this meditation, Mrs. Ramsay's dependence on the "masculine" intellect approaches the level of reverence. First, she becomes aware of "a coherence

in things, a stability" (TTL, 163) and seeks out the lighthouse beam through the window only to be confronted with a "ripple of reflected lights" (TTL, 163). Then she seeks the comfort of male conversation, which recalls her experience of the "gruff murmur" of the men on the terrace: "she let it uphold her and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world, so that she could trust herself to it utterly, even shut her eyes, or flicker them for a moment, as a child staring up from its pillow winks at the myriad layers of the leaves of a tree" (TTL, 164). This sense of stability focuses in upon Mr. Ramsay, but begins to disintegrate because the discussion has turned to the subject of great men and reputation. Mrs. Ramsay knows that her husband will soon be in a pother because of his sense of failure as a philosopher. And even as Minta plays the role of solacer, Mrs. Ramsay becomes uncomfortable: "he would laugh at Minta, and she, Mrs. Ramsay saw, realising his extreme anxiety about himself, would, in her own way, see that he was taken care of, and praise him, somehow or other. But she wished it was not necessary: perhaps it was her fault that it was necessary" (TTL, 167). However, other forces are at work to destroy Mrs. Ramsay's moment of stability. A hand reaches out to the fruit centrepiece and snatches a pear. Then there are dissemblers in the group--her own children: "for they did not join in easily; they were like watchers, surveyors, a little raised or set apart

from the grown-up people" (TTL, 169). Thus, the dinner comes to an end with Mrs. Ramsay's energy close to depletion.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming impression of the dinner is that it celebrates Mrs. Ramsay's personal triumph. It culminates in Mr. Ramsay's reciting a lyric poem, celebrating the value of love between men and women in the face of the unheeding changes of nature. The poem becomes a chant, and the chant a ritual as Augustus Carmichael joins in, bowing to Mrs. Ramsay "as if he did her homage" (TTL, 172). She leaves the dinner table with a feeling of victory. Paul and Minta have become engaged; William Bankes has noted her domestic triumph; even her old accuser, Augustus Carmichael has been won over to her charms and pays her a chivalrous obeisance. Mrs. Ramsay regards her triumph with pleasure, as if she indeed wins some victory over nature and over time: "Yes, that was done then, accomplished; and as with all things done, become solemn. Now one thought of it, cleared of chatter and emotion, it seemed always to have been, only was shown now, and so being shown, struck everything into stability" (TTL, 175).

Mrs. Ramsay's plausible moment of "triumph," however, is dissipated by time's inevitable passage. No sooner does she leave the dinner table than "a sort of disintegration" (TTL, 173) sets in. Although Mrs. Ramsay's charm has created a moment of stability, like all charms it is only a counterforce applied against the natural forces of change. Charms also have little control over the "out there," as Mrs. Ramsay discovers

when she checks on her two youngest children in the nursery. She is annoyed to discover that while she has been creating a moment of stability in the dining room her old enemy, life, has been at work in the nursery: "There was James wide awake and Cam sitting bolt upright, and Mildred out of bed in her bare feet, and it was almost eleven and they were all talking. What was the matter? It was that horrid skull again. She had told Mildred to move it, but Mildred, of course, had forgotten, and now there was Cam wide awake and James wide awake quarrelling when they ought to have been asleep hours ago. What had possessed Edward to send them this horrid skull? She had been so foolish as to let them nail it up there. It was nailed fast, Mildred said, and Cam couldn't go to sleep with it in the room, and James screamed if she touched it" (TTL, 176).

The children's quarrel over the boar's skull is an interesting parallel to the quarrel of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay over the proposed lighthouse trip. James, like his father, identifies with the bare-as-bone vision of reality. For James, the boar's skull is a mark on the wall, a solid and lifeless object reminiscent of the scrubbed kitchen table Lily Briscoe identifies with Mr. Ramsay's philosophy. For Cam, on the other hand, the boar's skull is a living presence, a horned, branching demon, an inundating presence resembling in its power Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic sea. Mrs. Ramsay's intervention in the quarrel takes the characteristic form of compromise. She deals with Cam's fear by covering it up with illusion. Using her own shawl, she

transforms the boar's skull into a beautiful natural landscape. Reverting to the "old cradle song," she lulls her daughter to sleep, hypnotizing, gently forcing:

> . . . she came back to Cam and laid her head almost flat on the pillow beside Cam's and said how lovely it looked now; how it was like a beautiful mountain such as she had seen abroad, with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes ... She could see the words echoing as she spoke them rhythmically in Cam's mind, and Cam was repeating after her how it was like a mountain, a bird's nest, a garden, and there were little antelopes, and her eyes were opening and shutting and Mrs. Ramsay went on saying still more monotonously, and more rhythmically and more nonsensically, how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots and antelopes and gardens, and everything lovely, she said, raising her head very slowly and speaking more and more mechanically, until she sat upright and saw that Cam was asleep.
>
> (TTL, 177-178)

Seeing that James is quite content without illusion (he only needs assurance that the boar's skull is "unhurt" by her illusion), Mrs. Ramsay considers the lighthouse quarrel in a new light. James asks again whether he'll be able to go, and his mother says he will not. But now she blames not only Tansley and her husband, but also herself: "He lay down. She covered him up. But he would never forget, she knew, and she felt angry with Charles Tansley, with her husband, and with herself, for she had raised his hopes" (TTL, 178).

As "The Window" moves to its close, the sublime crisis remains an imminent possibility uneasily covered over by the "thin veils of civilization" (TTL, 54)--Mrs. Ramsay's illusionary arts. The dinner party is already part of the past; the children sleep only after much effort on Mrs. Ramsay's part; the emblematic

shawl is only tentatively wrapped about the skull; the weather is unsettled. Mrs. Ramsay herself is troubled. Only for a moment, when a small party from the household invites her to join them on the beach to watch the waves, is Mrs. Ramsay suddenly possessed by "a mood of revelry" (TTL, 180). She does not join them, however--aware of some symbolic fear of the waves--but seeks the company of her husband in the other room: "she was withheld by something so strong that she never even thought of asking herself what it was. Of course it was impossible for her to go with them" (TTL, 181).

Part One closes with the consolidation of the mutually-dependent relationship that is the Ramsay marriage. The episode is characterized by a motif of search which begins with Mrs. Ramsay's deep desire to find something the nature of which she is not even conscious of. She is seeking two things: the first is her knitting equipment; the second is the protective love of her husband. These two aims turn out to be directly opposed, although they both focus on the lighthouse quarrel, which has not yet been settled. The ostensible issue is whether or not the weather will be fine the next day. Mrs. Ramsay's imaginative commitment to struggle with humanity against doom demands that she make every effort to finish her stocking. But to finish the stocking requires that she turn her back on the sublime reactive identification--her implicit reverence for her husband--that makes it possible for her to cope with the "out there." She makes a noble effort to be courageous. As she sits with her

knitting, she commences a fairly cold analysis of Mr. Ramsay. She notices that he is reading Sir Walter Scott to disprove a remark made by Charles Tansley at dinner denouncing the Waverley novels. She knows that Mr. Ramsay is playing a psychological game in which he hopes to demonstrate that Scott's immortality is still intact and, hence, that the "undying" fame of great men (chiefly of himself) is assured. She also knows that even if he loses the argument, her husband will not be honest: "And if he came to the conclusion 'That's true' what Charles Tansley said, he would accept it about Scott. (She could see that he was weighing, considering, putting this with that as he read.) But not about himself" (TTL, 182). Not liking to think of her husband's egotism and his dependence on fame "she grew still like a tree which has been tossing and quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by leaf, into quiet" (TTL, 182). The crisis of vacancy is on her again. She sinks deeper into the abyss "as one passes in diving now a weed, now a straw, now a bubble" (TTL, 183), but she arrests her fall by recalling a line from the poetic tribute recited at the end of the dinner party. Putting down her knitting, she imitates her husband in seeking through literature some touchstone which will give her security--an affirmation of her role as goddess. Characteristically, the book of poems becomes a tree, something solid to stabilize her sense of life as a shifting phantasmagoria:[14] "And she opened the book and began to read at random, and as she did so she felt that she was climbing backwards, upwards, shoving her way up under

petals that curved over her, so that she only knew this is white, or this is red" (TTL, 183-184). She comes upon a line from Browne's "Syrens' Song"[15]--an appropriate allusion to her own role as beautiful and dangerous seductress--then is suddenly roused by the sound of her husband "slapping his thighs" (TTL, 184).

Mr. Ramsay has, in fact, found his evidence. He is amused and moved by Scott's story. Nevertheless he needs to be stabilized by his wife's presence: "Don't interrupt me, he seemed to be saying, don't say anything; just sit there" (TTL, 184). Through Scott is transmitted what he earlier seeks from his wife--fulfillment, fortification, vigour, relief, and a sense of triumph, and more than that, a victory over his egotistical concerns. He "forgot his own bothers and failures completely in poor Steenie's drowning and Mucklebackit's sorrow" (TTL, 185). The difficulty is in remembering "the whole shape of the thing," (TTL, 186), which, still concerned about his "position" in the eyes of others, Mr. Ramsay finds disquieting. Thus he seeks out again the reflection of his greatness in his wife's eyes, though he would not disturb her against her will: "So he returned to the other thought--if young men did not care for this, naturally they did not care for him either. One ought not to complain, thought Mr. Ramsay, trying to stifle his desire to complain to his wife that young men did not admire him. But he was determined; he would not bother her again" (TTL, 136; italics mine). Thus, Mr. Ramsay remains suspended in the liminal world between dreams and realities. Not trusting his own feelings about the qualities of

Scott's vision, caught up in an analytical mill of his own making, he doubts.

Mrs. Ramsay has now begun reading Shakespeare's Sonnet XCVIII. She, too, is distracted by the presence of her spouse, by her need for his support and, as she reads the solemn couplet: "Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,/ As with your shadow I with these did play" (TTL, 187), the whole edifice of imaginative reality seems to collapse, and the conclusion of Shakespeare's sonnet becomes merely the substance of a silent apology and excuse for her withholding her attention from her husband. The key to this psychological development is a set of contrasts--shadow/object and silence/word--which Mrs. Ramsay conceives to define her relation to her husband. As Mrs. Ramsay's earlier sublime crises reveal, the eye and the ear are the two organs through which the breakdown of the barrier between the self and the "out there" occurs. In the first crisis she becomes terrified by the sound of the waves which "thundered hollow in her ears" (TTL, 30). In the second crisis, the symbolic sea takes the form of "waves of pure lemon" (TTL, 103) which she emotionally equates with an "ecstasy [which] burst in her eyes" (TTL, 103). The aural crisis of vacancy is a corresponding absence of sound; the visual crisis of vacancy is an absence of light, or a shadow. Now that husband and wife sit silent, Mrs. Ramsay experiences a need for her husband to speak: "Anything, anything, she thought, going on with her knitting" (TTL, 188). Her visual crisis of vacancy takes the form of a sense of living

entombment: "Do say something, she thought, wishing only to hear his voice. For the shadow, the thing folding them in was beginning, she felt, to close round her again. Say anything, she begged, looking at him, as if for help" (TTL, 188-180). The intensity of her silent demand draws them together "involuntarily" (TTL, 189), and Mrs. Ramsay can feel her husband's mind "like a raised hand shadowing her mind." (TTL, 189). What she wants is some assurance that he will play the role of omnipotent protector. This he gives her:

> "You won't finish that stocking to-night," he said, pointing to her stocking. That was what she wanted --the asperity in his voice reproving her. If he says it's wrong to be pessimistic probably it is wrong, she thought; the marriage will turn out all right.
>
> (TTL, 189)

Mr. Ramsay has played the game at the cost of his newly-acquired integrity; consequently, he demands reciprocation. He silently demands a token of maternal protection from his wife: "He wanted something--wanted the thing she always found it so difficult to give him; wanted her to tell him that she loved him. And that, no, she could not do" (TTL, 189-190). Instead, she finds a way to satisfy him without giving up the illusion that he is the embodiment of reason and order. She ostensibly concedes the argument about the weather upon which the success of the lighthouse trip depends. In so doing, she casts him in a double role: meteorological god and dependent child[16]:

> "Yes, you were right. It's going to be wet tomorrow." She had not said it, but he knew it. And she looked at him smiling. For she had triumphed again.
>
> (TTL, 191)

This is not the "triumph over life" (TTL, 100) that comes of losing personality. Rather it is the triumph of security in marriage that comes with the role of Great Mother. Thus, by means of a negation and an affirmation, a "no" and a "yes," the Ramsays perpetuate a marriage founded on mutually-supportive projections. Mr. Ramsay is hopelessly entangled in a need for sympathy and a gnawing egotism that poisons his objectivity. Mrs. Ramsay is trapped helplessly in a domestic servitude of so long a standing that she has virtually become "nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions" (TTL, 54). Such a marriage has nefarious repercussions on others as well. James has to suffer his father's high-handedness; and Lily, Mrs. Ramsay's coercion. The only way out of such a cycle of tyranny is apocalypse: an explosion of such magnitude that only the solid fragments of the nuclear family remain. Such an apocalypse occurs in the second part of To the Lighthouse, "Time Passes."

"Time passes" consists of two movements, a downward movement or desublimation, and an upward movement or anagnorisis. These two movements are implicit in the title of the section. Literally, the passing of time undermines the role-as-identity structure portrayed in "The Window" so that "mother" becomes desublimated into a vision of nature as impersonal "matter." Metaphorically, the passing of time suggests the "death" of time and the consequent recognition of the self's identity outside nature and time. In this sense, time "passes away."[17]

The narrative in this section takes the form of a symbolic night leading to dawn. In the downward movement, night literally dominates; in the upward movement, the night is a symbolic "dark night of the soul," a time of search and analysis, of frustration leading to discovery. The containing form of this narrative is the dream, which also has two thematic aspects. Since the dreamer, externally, is covered with the darkness of unconsciousness, he undergoes a disintegration of personality. Eventually, character fragmentation is transcended as individual characters dissolve into one character--the restless searcher. The summer cottage in the Hebrides becomes the symbol of the character's mind. This character absorbs the individual quests portrayed in "The Window": Mr. Ramsay's philosophical search for the nature of reality (the relation between subject and object), the innocent quest of Cam and James (the relation between the shawl of illusion and the "limit of opacity"[18] represented by the boar's skull), and finally the artistic vision of Lily Briscoe (the relation between art as "mirror," and nature itself). The goal is reached by crossing a centre of emptiness, a point of disintegration symbolized by the imminent destruction of the house, beyond which identity is established. Subject, shawl, and mirror give way to object, skull, and impersonal nature, and in an act of discovery the restless searcher finds that what he has been looking for is there all along--an inner space of freedom and the power of creation.

Woolf dramatizes the downward movement or desublimation by associating the onset of night with a universal deluge: "Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness" (TTL, 195-196). In this flood, personality dissolves and the body itself seems to be broken up into fragments: "there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say 'This is he' or 'This is she.' Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something, or somebody groaned, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness" (TTL, 196). The crisis of inundation is preluded by "certain airs [which] detached from the body of the wind . . . crept round corners and ventured indoors" (TTL, 196). For a moment, the illusion of order remains. The airs do not trespass into the minds of the sleepers. But as the last light in the house is extinguished (the reading lamp of Augustus Carmichael) the drama of desublimation begins in earnest:

> It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave falling, which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But alas, divine goodness twitching the cord, draws the curtain; it does not please him; he covers his treasures in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth. For our penitence deserves a glimpse only; our toil respite only.
>
> (TTL, 198)

Now the "sleeper" (TTL, 199) appears and dreams begin. The first dream enacts the desublimation of the protective mother into

the shapeless roar of the sea: "Also the sea tosses itself and breaks itself, and should any sleeper fancying that he might find on the beach an answer to his doubts, a sharer of his solitude, throw off his bedclothes and go down by himself to walk on the sand, no image with semblance of serving and divine promptitude comes readily to hand bringing the night to order and making the world reflect the compass of the soul. The hand dwindles in his hand: the voice bellows in his ear" (TTL, 199). The failure of image in this dream coincides with the death of Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Ramsay's crisis of vacancy, which Woolf describes in a parenthesis (TTL, 199-200).

The desublimation of the "mother" has the effect of stripping away the beautiful veil of illusion which prevents the autistic imagination from discovering the reality "out there." In Woolf's ethic from Jacob's Room on, the only possible way for the autistic imagination to develop is by going out, through experience. In "Time Passes" this theme is allegorized in the gradual loosening of Mrs. Ramsay's shawl in the nursery until the beast's skull she has been hiding is again in full view (TTL, 212). This process, a significant feature of the dream of the "sleeper" in his voyage from night to dawn, has an interesting prototype in a passage from an essay Woolf wrote in 1919:

> What is it that happens between the hour of midnight and dawn, the little shock, the queer uneasy moment, as of eyes half open to the light, after which sleep is never so sound again? Is it the experience, perhaps--repeated shocks, each unfelt at the time, suddenly loosening the fabric? breaking something away? Only this image suggests

> collapse and disintegration, whereas the process I have in mind is just the opposite. It is not destructive whatever it may be, one might say that it was rather of a creative nature. Something definitely happens. The garden, the butterflies, the morning sounds, trees, apples, human voices have emerged, stated themselves. As with a rod of light, order has been imposed upon tumult; form upon chaos. Perhaps it would be simpler to say that one wakes, after Heaven knows what internal process, with a sense of mastery.[19]

The shawl makes its appearance after Mrs. Ramsay's death as a "swaying mantle of silence" (TTL, 201) in the empty house. Its first loosening is described in a profound rhetorical exaggeration: "Once only a board sprang on the landing; once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture, as after centuries of quiescence, a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley, one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro" (TTL, 201-202). The discrepancy between the simple action and the heightened rhetoric signals the psychological sublime, recalling the scene between Cam and Mrs. Ramsay in the nursery. The next reference to the loosening of the shawl and its possible dropping off is related to the stroke of the lighthouse beam through the window: "When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again. But in the very lull of this loving caress, as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder;

another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed" (TTL, 205-206). The final reference to the shawl occurs in the context of the Great War:

> But slumber and sleep though it might there came later in the summer ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt, which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too. Then again silence fell; and then, night after night, and sometimes in plain mid-day when the roses were bright and light turned on the wall its shape clearly there seemed to drop into this silence, this indifference, this integrity, the thud of something falling.
>
> (TTL, 206-207)

In a parenthesis, Woolf juxtaposes this episode with the death of Andrew, the eldest Ramsay son, in the War. In Jacob's Room and Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf's imagination seizes upon the Great War as a demonic rite of passage. She carries the theme further here by making the Great War "a giant voice" shrieking in a nightmare experienced by the restless searcher.

The central development in the sleeper's dream--and in this stage in Woolf's visionary growth--is the imaginative quest of the sleeper on the beach. This quest consists of four episodes framed by parenthetical references to the fictional world in which the Ramsays live. The first episode is the desublimation of the female personification of nature (followed by Mrs. Ramsay's death). The second shows the sleeper studying the object world (TTL, 203-204, followed by Prue Ramsay's marriage). The third reveals the sleeper overcoming visions of chaos by

recourse to the beauty of returning spring (TTL, 204-205, followed by Prue's death in the early stage of pregnancy). In the final episode, the speaker rejects nature's consolations in favour of a "nobler" human vision (TTL, 207-208, followed by the issue of a volume of war poems by Augustus Carmichael). The juxtaposition between vision and incident points up the ironic discrepancy between the world of man and the world of nature. In the end, the mirror is broken and the sleeper recognizes that the "motherhood" of nature is only a delusion.

Woolf portrays this visionary quest by means of three interconnected analogies: between the walker on the beach and the artist; between the mirror-pool and the mirror-mind; and between man and nature. The walker on the beach looking into a pool sees nature reflected. If the pool is smooth, the image he sees includes himself (man) as part of nature. If the pool is troubled, the reflection is distorted, but the walker concludes that the "real" relation between man and nature is essentially unchanged. The artist, like the walker on the beach, depends on reflection. He looks into his mind as into a mirror. If his mind is sound, the artist's vision is perfectly reflected. However, if his mind is troubled, his vision is distorted. But the artist concludes that the "real" vision is intact. Therefore, he finds it worthwhile "to range hither and thither in search of some absolute good . . . single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure" (TTL, 205). So with Lily Briscoe in the first

stage of her art-quest in Part One. Rather than face the anxiety of the positive sublime, she resorts to a self-deluded quest for the absolute in the figure of Mrs. Ramsay: "did she lock up within her some secret which certainly Lily Briscoe believed people must have for the world to go on at all?" (TTL, 82)

However, the sleeper on the beach rejects the mimetic vision at one point where the Great War is raging. This last episode of the sleeper's quest is so significant in the vision of To the Lighthouse that it will be quoted in its entirety:

> At that season those who had gone down to pace the beach and ask of the sea and sky what message they reported or what vision they affirmed had to consider among the usual tokens of divine bounty--the sunset on the sea, the pallor of dawn, the moon rising, fishing-boats against the moon, and children pelting each other with handfuls of grass,--something out of harmony with this jocundity, this serenity. There was the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance, come, gone; there was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath. This intrusion into a scene calculated to stir the most sublime reflections and lead to the most comfortable conclusions stayed their pacing. It was difficult blandly to overlook them, to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within.
>
> Did Nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence she saw his misery, condoned his meanness, and acquiesced in his torture. That dream, then, of sharing, completing, finding in solitude on the beach an answer, was but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence, when the nobler powers sleep beneath? Impatient, despairing, loth to go (for beauty offers her lures, has her consolations), to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken.
>
> (TTL, 207-208)

Here, at the centre of the middle section to the novel, the structure of the positive sublime is subjected to a powerful critique which culminates in an imaginative revolution against the very concept of the sublime motherhood of nature. In this critique, the poet's sublime is established. The passage begins with a reference to the affirming power of "sea and sky" (i.e. nature as a reflex of "divine bounty"). The searcher on the beach does not find affirmation this time, however. He finds "something out of harmony" with the "jocundity" and"serenity" of the seashore: "a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath." The stain is not in nature; it comes from man. The human world is at war; human blood is being shed. Confronted with this disharmony, the searcher on the beach renounces the apparent consolation of sublime nature: "It was difficult blandly to overlook [the ashen ship and the purple stain], to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within" (italics mine). The "bland surface of the sea" assumes a demonic significance. The surface of the sea is initially soothing and pleasant, but it is a false and dangerous calm that causes the searcher on the beach to overlook the horrors really present in the human world. The searcher determines not to imitate nature's apparent consolation, not to "blandly overlook" the tokens of suffering represented by the "purplish stain." Instead, the searcher criticizes both

a belief in the maternal tutelage of nature and an imaginative vision ("that dream of sharing, completing, finding in solitude on the beach an answer") based on such a belief in nature's maternal tutelage. The concept of nature as a mirror of divine goodness is denounced. The "nobler powers" are beneath, in the souls of men. The "mirror itself was but a surface glassiness which forms in quiescence, when the nobler powers sleep beneath." When the "nobler powers" wake (as they do in this passage) contemplation becomes unendurable; the imagination must become revolutionary. Since nature is devoid of human values, it becomes untenable to hold that the "bland" vision reflected in nature is, in any way, a human vision: "The mirror was broken:" that is, the concept of nature as a mirror of the true sublime is demolished. In discovering the essential independence of man from nature, the sleeper discovers the apocalyptic salvation immanent in the crisis of vacancy. Nature is not a sublime mother, neither sublime nor maternal. The "nobler powers" dwell in the logical imagination, and are nowhere to be found in nature. Thus the crisis of vacancy turns out to be an epiphany of imaginative identity, the pre-condition of the poet's sublime. The poet's sublime itself indicates a rebirth (independent of nature) of the imagination, a waking which is a waking for all time, an apocalypse.

But before the sleeper can wake (or be reborn) he has yet to pass through a centre of emptiness. Woolf depicts this crisis by symbolizing the near-obliteration of the Ramsays' summer residence: "If the feather had fallen, if it had

tipped the scale downwards, the whole house would have plunged to the depths to lie upon the sands of oblivion" (TTL, 215). This metaphor implies more than just natural decay. It suggests the total destruction of form in "the pool of Time" (TTL, 215). However, re-creation is made possible by resublimation. Only this time "matter" is left "out there" and what is internalized is vacancy--the very relation between the self and the "out there." Likewise, "pattern" is internalized as the power which makes projection possible (the "nobler powers" perceived beneath the surface of the mind in the sleeper's dream). Mrs. McNab and Mrs. Bast, who are personifications of disciplined will devoted to honest work, repair the house for the return (after ten years) of the surviving members of the Ramsay household. These symbolic midwives assist at the "rusty laborious birth" (TTL, 216) of the reconstructed house. The house that is born of these labours, unlike the house in "The Window," is a structure of pure potentiality (vacancy translated into freedom), the reign of "mother" and of "father" being over.

The dream of the sleeper is concluded by being absorbed into the sleep of Lily Briscoe,[20] who arrives "late one evening in September," a time of year which coincides with the beginning of "The Window," suggesting a return to the beginning of a cycle. Now that the mysterious ten years' turmoil is over, peace has returned. This peace also suggests not simply a return to innocence, but an innocence tried and tempered by experience. The old cradle song is still being sung by "the

voice of the beauty of the world" (TTL, 219), but this time the sleeper will not be seduced. He will not pay homage to "night flowing down in purple; his head crowned; his sceptre jewelled" (TTL, 220). Instead, he replies that the night is no king, only night: "it was vapour this splendour of his, and the dew had more power than he" (TTL, 220). The beguiling voice entreats him to rest in peace: "why not accept this, be content with this, acquiesce and resign?" (TTL, 220). But to do so would mean an eternal entrapment in the world of the illogical imagination.[21] The sleeper must wake, be reborn, undergo a fortunate fall back into time, recover his body:

> Lily Briscoe stirring in her sleep clutched at her blankets as a faller clutches at the turf on the edge of a cliff. Her eyes opened wide. Here she was again, she thought, sitting bolt upright in bed. Awake.
>
> (TTL, 221)

"The Lighthouse," the third section of the novel, completes the imaginative quest by means of a series of philosophical meditations by Lily, James, Cam, and Mr. Ramsay. Three observations will serve as a guide to the thematic movement of this final section. First, as the section and novel titles suggest, "The Lighthouse" is both the third stage of and also a microcosm of the collective quest. Thus, second: individual projects (the trip to the lighthouse, the completion of Lily's painting) recapitulate the general quest for an identity-relationship between the self and the "out there" with which the novel as a whole is concerned. In other words, the individual

quests refer back to the single quest of the "sleeper" in "Time Passes": the many who are one. Therefore, third: the recovery of identity which is sought individually by Cam and James and Mr. Ramsay and Lily has a mythic counterpart in dreams of the "sleeper;" that is, the recovery of a Golden Age before time began. This recovery of timelessness takes the form of going back in time: first, through memory; second, through a reversal of the sublime moment.[22] This quest back through time is marked by three ordeals, at the centre of which is a dĕbat. The first ordeal is the ordeal of tyranny (projected in Mr. Ramsay). The second is the ordeal of vacancy (Lily's encounter with space: the children's encounter in the becalmed ship). Finally, there is the ordeal with nature (Lily's encounter with the projected power of Mrs. Ramsay, and the children's encounter with the sea). The dĕbats take the form of unspoken colloquies (Lily and Carmichael on the relative powers of mother nature and of art; Cam and James on the protective and tyrannical aspects of the father). The quest is completed in a double vision of an impersonal order (Lily's vision of the paradox of "complete emptiness"; the children's vision of Mr. Ramsay purged of his subliminal identification. For James, this vision of his father is identical with a discovery of his own identity epitomized in the light as "a stark tower on a bare rock" (TTL, 311-312).[23]

Lily's first ordeal is a fight with the tyrant of sympathy. Mr. Ramsay, now a widower possessed by an "imperious need" (TTL, 227), bears down upon her as she sits at the dining-room window. She fights him off momentarily by pretending to

drink from her empty coffee cup. When this token ritual proves futile, she seeks outside the double protection of Augustus Carmichael (TTL, 229) and her canvas: "a barrier, frail, but she hoped sufficiently substantial to ward off Mr. Ramsay" (TTL, 231). When even this barrier fails, Lily relenting, attempts to satisfy the "greedy, distraught" (TTL, 232) man by playing the role of the sympathetic female. But she fails in this strategem too, and only succeeds in provoking Mr. Ramsay to increase the force of his demand for sympathy. Woolf develops this ordeal by means of water imagery. Lily "ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion" (TTL, 234) but experiences a feeling of insufficiency in being "a dried up old maid" (TTL, 234). Consequently, Mr. Ramsay unleashes an "enormous flood of grief" (TTL, 235) that threatens to sweep Lily away "in its flow" (TTL, 235). Lily has to protect herself from the waters of Ramsay's self-pity: "His immense self-pity, his demand for sympathy poured and spread itself in pools at her feet, and all she did, miserable sinner that she was, was to draw her skirts a little closer round her ankles, lest she should get wet" (TTL, 236). Her very failure as a "woman" turns out to be an incorruptible "mental chastity"[24] which dispels Mr. Ramsay's helpless dependence by referring him to his good sense and his ability to take care of himself. She praises his boots and thus breaks the spell: "His pall, his draperies, his infirmities fell from him" (TTL, 237). Together, they reach "a sunny island where peace dwelt, sanity reigned

and the sun for ever shone, the blessed island of good boots" (TTL, 238). The pun on "pall" and the reference to "draperies" recapitulate the loosening of Mrs. Ramsay's shawl on the skull in the nursery. The references to "sanity" and "the sun" suggest a theme of logic overcoming illusion, which the emblematic "boots" reinforces.[25] Lily thus conquers the tyrannous lust for sympathy, that has Mr. Ramsay in thrall, by refusing to assume the role of "Angel in the House."

Now that Ramsay and the children leave for the lighthouse, Lily begins her second ordeal, this time with "this formidable ancient enemy of hers" (TTL, 245)--her art. Art is an object of worship, but unlike the archetypal "father" it is not content with worship: "Other worshipful objects were content with worship; men, women, God, all let one kneel prostrate; but this form, were it only the shape of a white lamp-shade looming on a wicker table, roused one to perpetual combat, challenged one to a fight in which one was bound to be worsted" (TTL, 245). Lily is, in effect, moving backwards through the sublime moment in order to recover the origins of power. In the "perpetual combat" of art she encounters perpetual crisis, unsignified except by images of vacancy. Her canvas is "white and uncompromising" (TTL, 242) and spreads through her mind "an emptiness" (TTL, 242). The canvas confronts her with "its uncompromising white stare" (TTL, 243). As Lily begins to paint, the formless form of her ancient enemy becomes delineated: "she scored her canvas with brown running nervous lines which had no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space . . . what could be more formidable than that space?" (TTL, 244).

Her impulse is to surrender the contest. She asks herself why she paints at all. She does not paint for fame; she knows that the picture she paints will probably never be displayed. She wonders whether she does it to prove a point to detractors like Charles Tansley who say that women can't paint or write; the answer to this query takes the form of a scene from the past in which Lily is playing ducks and drakes with Charles Tansley on the beach in the presence of Mrs. Ramsay. She owes to Mrs. Ramsay "this moment of friendship and liking--which survived, after all these years and stayed in the mind almost like a work of art" (TTL, 248-249). Lily's answer is that art expresses "some common feeling which held the whole together" (TTL, 295) and a sense of the community of man. Art is one means of making the good permanent, of removing the vacancy between the self and the other.

The scene shifts to Mr. Ramsay, James, and Cam in the boat, where the children face an ordeal with the "father," parallel to Lily's ordeal with Mr. Ramsay. James and Cam have formed a compact "to resist tyranny to the death" (TTL, 252). Their first instinct is to escape: "They might land somewhere; and be free then" (TTL, 255). Ramsay seems likely to be the vanquisher, at least over Cam, as he stages a "drama" (TTL, 257) in which he is the bereft widower receiving "exquisite pleasure in women's sympathy" (TTL, 257); "I will make her smile at me, he thought" (TTL, 259). He asks her who is looking after the puppy, whereupon James despairs of maintaining his sister's

loyalty: "I shall be left to fight the tyrant alone. The compact would be left for him to carry out. Cam would never resist tyranny to the death, he thought grimly, watching her face, sad, sulky, yielding" (TTL, 259). Cam's dilemma demonstrates the paradox of all historical revolutions against tyranny. As Blake has shown, youthful energy tends historically to solidify into aged tyranny. The revolutionary overthrows the tyrant, only to set up a new tyranny. So with James and his father. Cam already sees in James the figure of the Old Testament Yahweh: "James the lawgiver, with the tablets of eternal wisdom laid open on his knee (his hand on the tiller had become symbolical to her), said, Resist him. Fight him. . . . And to which did she yield?" (TTL, 260). Eventually, though she answers Mr. Ramsay's first question and passes on to her father "a private token of the love she felt for him" (TTL, 261), Cam does not answer her father's second question about naming the puppy; she does not yield to him a second time.

Now, on shore, Lily encounters her third enemy and faces her third ordeal. In this ordeal, she goes back to the origins of the sublime moment, the ambiguous symbolic sea: the womb and tomb of all life. She begins with the sensation of dammed-up feelings. The undischarged sympathy she feels too late, only after Mr. Ramsay leaves for the lighthouse, blocks the flow of her creative powers: "It made it difficult for her to paint" (TTL, 263). To recover her power of feeling, Lily tunnels her way again into the past. She perceives the obstacle to sympathy in terms of a lack. Contrasting herself

with Minta, she sees that what is lacking in her relationship with Mr. Ramsay is a sexual energy: "that reduced their relationship to something neutral, without that element of sex in it which made his manner to Minta so gallant, almost gay" (TTL, 263). She conjures up a memory of Mrs. Ramsay sitting silent on the beach beside her, and Lily's love for her returns in an image of solemnity: "as if a door had opened, and one went in and stood gazing silently about in a high cathedral-like place, very dark, very solemn" (TTL, 264). Like Clarissa, in Mrs. Dalloway, Lily senses in herself the lack of "something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of men and women" (MD, 36). So, she searches back through the past to recover this power. Her search leads her to the Rayley-Doyle marriage, which "had turned out rather badly" (TTL, 267). For a moment, she seems to triumph over Mrs. Ramsay, who planned the marriage. She asks herself what Mrs. Ramsay's "mania for marriage" (TTL, 270) has amounted to. Now she has a sudden vision of Eros, the instinct embodied in Paul Rayley. The vision is exhilarating, but rather frightening:

> Suddenly, as suddenly as a star slides in the sky, a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind, covering Paul Rayley, issuing from him. It rose like a fire sent up in token of some celebration by savages on a distant beach. She heard the roar and the crackle. The whole sea for miles round ran red and gold. Some winy smell mixed with it and intoxicated her, for she felt again her own headlong desire to throw herself off the cliff and be drowned looking for a pearl brooch on a beach. And the roar and the crackle repelled her with fear and disgust, as if while she saw its splendour and power she saw too how it fed on the treasure of the house, greedily, disgustingly, and she loathed it.
>
> (TTL, 270-271)

Thinking of Paul, Lily recalls the dinner party in "The Window" in which she draws back from the Eros vision by taking refuge in her art: "it had flashed upon her that she would move the tree to the middle, and need never marry anybody" (TTL, 271). However, Lily's withdrawal sets up an obstacle to the creative flow. In effect, she has alienated herself from the ambiguous archetypal mother, from matter itself as an object of erotic love. While this withdrawal serves as a means to self-protection (it prevents her from being abosrbed and annihilated by the "out there"), it also threatens a state of ultimate alienation (what Weiskel calls "the sense of loss--of self-esteem or of 'narcissistic supplies'"[26]).

The crisis of vacancy that follows the above meditations takes the form of an apocalyptic encounter with the Great Void which becomes not only the turning point of this novel, but also the turning point of Woolf's imaginative career:

> It had seemed safe, thinking of her. Ghost, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of day or night, she had been that, and then suddenly she put out her hand and wrung the heart thus. Suddenly, the empty drawing-room steps, the frill of the chair inside, the puppy tumbling on the terrace, the whole wave and whisper of the garden became like curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness.
>
> (TTL, 275)

In the midst of this profound vacuity, Lily encounters the Word--the source of all imaginative life. The silent dialogue between Lily and the Word is dramatized as an imaginary débat with Augustus Carmichael (though the real Carmichael lounges

oblivious of Lily, on the lawn). The argument recapitulates the broken mirror section of "Time Passes"--centering on the question of whether nature supplements what man advances. The "pool" image returns: "the whole world seemed to have dissolved in this early morning hour into a pool of thought" (TTL, 275). Lily feels that if Carmichael were to speak his speech would "ren[d] the surface of the pool . . . a hand would be shoved up, a blade would be flashed" (TTL, 276). This image, recalling the origins of the famous "Excalibur" of the Arthurian myth, reintroduces the "nobler powers" of the critical "Time Passes" section. Is there nothing beneath the centre of emptiness? Or is the centre of emptiness only a reflection hiding the nobler powers? Lily believes the former. Augustus Carmichael, Lily reasons, would suggest the latter: "'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (TTL, 276). Lily looks at her canvas for corroboration, but the image is blurred because the pool has been stirred--by her own tears. She makes one last attempt to compose the scattered vision through the magic of words: "For one moment she felt that it they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation, why it was so short, why it was so inexplicable, said it with violence, as two fully equipped human beings from whom nothing should be hid might speak, then, beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape; if they shouted loud enough Mrs. Ramsay would return" (TTL, 277). She cries out twice the name of Mrs. Ramsay, then plunges into the "waters of

annihilation" (TTL, 278).

At this point, Woolf juxtaposes Lily's agon with a picture of Macalister's boy, on the boat, cutting flesh from a live fish and tossing it back into the sea. This detail completes the broken-mirror motif in which a submerged, mutilated body produces the token of suffering and pain signified by the image of the "purplish stain." When Lily surfaces again, she recovers the power of sensation. This is her greatest revelation: "She had not obviously taken leave of her senses" (TTL, 278). The pain of want and anger lessen. She has discovered the "nobler powers" that live beneath the centre of emptiness--the "something" that exists behind "nothing." The apparently insurmountable problem of the positive sublime considered in The Voyage Out is solved. The "abyss" which opens up in the crisis of vacancy is also the centre of imaginative freedom, the "unfathered vapour" that rises from the "abyss" in the Simplon Pass episode of Wordsworth's Prelude (see above, Ch. 4, p. 66). Lily now finds that her memory of Mrs. Ramsay is "relieved for a moment of the weight that the world had put upon her" (TTL, 278), and Lily's anxiety of loss is dispelled by the consoling power of the Word: "For days after she had heard of her death she had seen her thus, putting her wreath to her forehead and going unquestioningly with her companion, a shadow, across the fields. The sight, the phrase, had its power to console."[27] This scene is "consoling" in two respects: it presupposes an apocalyptic counterpart to the

demonic world (the existence of Pluto implies the existence of Zeus) and abolishes the finality of death (because the dead return periodically, life-and-death is a cycle--"the vision must be perpetually remade" (TTL, 279).

In the boat "now half way across the bay" (TTL, 280) James experiences the last two ordeals that stand in the way of his successful identity quest. The first is an ordeal of stasis which compares with Lily's fight with the "formidable ancient enemy." Lily is forced by her art to stand fixed before a white canvas on a perfectly beautiful morning; James is forced by the tyrant, his father, to stand with his eyes fixed on the white canvas sail. Now everything comes to a standstill. The sail droops. The heat of the sun increases. James looks at his father menacingly and challenges him silently: "Why were they lagging about here? he would demand, or something quite unreasonable like that. And if he does, James thought, then I shall take a knife and strike him to the heart" (TTL, 282). This highly personal symbol represents James, now older than when he first conceives of striking his father to the heart. He knows that he doesn't want to kill his father "but the thing that descended upon him--without his knowing it perhaps: that fierce sudden black-winged harpy, with its talons and its beak all cold and hard, that struck and struck at you . . . and then made off" (TTL, 283). In this process of separation, James detaches the terror and hatred inspired by his father from the figure of Mr. Ramsay himself: "there was a waste of snow and rock very

lonely and austere; and there he had come to feel, quite often lately, when his father said something which surprised the others, were two pairs of footprints only; his own and his father's. They alone knew each other" (TTL, 284). To locate the source of his terror and hatred, James journeys back into the past until he reaches a state of naïve innocence--the first stage of the sublime moment. Appropriately, the setting for this idyllic phase is a "garden," a place of harmony. The incongruous element in this setting is a "waggon" steered by some force independent of the individual. Mr. Ramsay is a "wheel" on this wagon--an innocent (because not self-willed) part of the machine. James supposes an act of violence causing pain--the wagon wheel running over a foot and crushing it--and discovers that the wheel is innocent in this act. Now James translates his allegory. The foot represents his innocent hopefulness expressed in his desire to go to the lighthouse. The wheel is Mr. Ramsay's cruel veto: "'It will rain,' he remembered his father saying" (TTL, 286). The wagon is a social structure modelled on natural law; the driver, a social attitude of reverence for nature mixed with fear of turning against nature and heading into a world of chaos and vacancy in which all order disappears. Now James sees the lighthouse and makes a great discovery. This stark and straight tower is nothing like the lighthouse of his dreams. This discrepancy makes him search for the source of his original lighthouse vision of "a yellow eye that opened suddenly and softly in the evening" (TTL, 286); he is taken

back to a memory of his mother. As James thinks of his mother, he begins to hate his father again. He cannot help himself out of his dilemma. He is held powerless between two forces--although he identifies with his father, he still believes that his mother "alone spoke the truth" (TTL, 288). He feels as though he is bound by a rope knotted by his father. He returns to his old symbol of striking his father to the heart. But at the most intense moment of his crisis, the wind picks up and the boat moves forward.

Woolf does not show James's dive into the symbolic sea in search of his antemundane origins (as she does Lily's). Instead, she implies his immersion in the destructive element indirectly, through the eyes of Lily Briscoe on shore. Now that the breeze has moved the boat forward, the "brown spot in the middle of the bay" (TTL, 280) has disappeared. The sea is now vacant on the surface, "without a stain on it" (TTL, 289), and Lily imagines that the expedition has been "swallowed up" (TTL, 289). She looks at a "great scroll of smoke" (TTL, 289) left by a vanished steamer and compares it to a flag drooping "mournfully in valediction" (TTL, 289).

The action on the boat is now focused upon Cam who, meditating on the vanished island, engages in a silent débat with James on the true nature of Mr. Ramsay. With one hand in the sea, and her eyes on her father, Cam (like her mother before her) feels a security afforded by the "admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence" (TTL, 164). She recalls scenes from

her childhood in which she feels safe among the old men in the study: "here one could let whatever one thought expand like a leaf in water" (TTL, 291). Certain that her father is not a vain tyrant, but lovable and wise, she looks at him as if to validate her belief with her own eyes. Her view is confirmed. Silently, she wills James to look at his father. But James's eyes are fixed on the sail. She supposes James will iterate Mr. Ramsay's tyranny, his vanity, his egotism. Cam wishes again that James would only use his two eyes and look at his father "reading the little book with his legs curled" (TTL, 292).

Cam's reappraisal of Mr. Ramsay may have superficial similarities to Mrs. Ramsay's reactive identification, but Cam's essential concept of her father places him not in the role of "god" but that of reader. The point is significant in that it introduces the concept of the "reader's sublime" (see above, Ch. 4, p. 64). The focus of Cam's attention is the little book Mr. Ramsay is reading (possibly an edition of Cowper's poems). In part, her sense of security among the old men in the study is due to the presence of books (see TTL, 291). The "little book with the shiny cover mottled like a plover's egg" (TTL, 292) appears to be a source of her father's wisdom. To Cam, the book seems like the passage her father follows in his quest for truth, "pushing his way up and up a single narrow path" (TTL, 292). Cam identifies with her father as reader by imitating his project, experiencing vicariously the story of Cowper's castaway: "she went on telling herself a story about escaping from a sinking

ship . . . . About here, she thought, dabbling her fingers in the water, a ship had sunk, and she murmured, dreamily, half asleep, how we perished, each alone" (TTL, 293).

On shore, Lily begins to explore the concept of "complete emptiness," becoming aware now of the sufficiency or completeness of this emptiness: "Empty it was not, but full to the brim. She seemed to be standing up to the lips in some substance, to move and float and sink in it, yes, for these waters were unfathomably deep" (TTL, 295). Lily remembers feeling such completeness ten years before, being in love with this place. She knows now that this love is not greedy and possessive eros, but rather "the love that never attempted to clutch its object" (TTL, 77)--or agapē. This love is also creative, in that it looks at the object world as the material to be chosen and shaped so as to make "one of those globed compacted things over which thought lingers, and love plays" (TTL, 296). The artist in the service of agape--the artist creating a world alternative to the natural world in order to give expression to the dream of a human community--must establish the this-worldly-other-worldly perspective of the logical imagination. This attempt at dual vision is expressed in Lily's quest as a desired balance between her picture (an imaginative world) and Mr. Ramsay (a representative of the human community for whom this imaginative world is created): "that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; Mr. Ramsay and the picture" (TTL, 296). To achieve this balance, Lily

must resist the seductive power of the world of nature; she must go back to "the thing itself before it has been made anything" (TTL, 297). For this final quest, Lily must re-create the figure of Mrs. Ramsay so that she is no longer a powerful and seductive nature-mother but simply a human being--a member of the human community. By way of preparation, Lily begins to isolate the virtues of Mrs. Ramsay by means of a series of recollections. The first concerns the figure of Augustus Carmichael who "did not want anything of [Mrs. Ramsay]" (TTL, 299). Analyzing Carmichael's (and her own) particular dislike of Mrs. Ramsay, Lily concludes that Mrs. Ramsay's instinct for sympathy acts as a rebuke to the artistic credo of objectivity: "this, like all instincts, was a little distressing to people who did not share it; to Mr. Carmichael perhaps, to herself certainly. Some notion was in them both about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought" (TTL, 301). Lily discovers, however, through a recollection of Charles Tansley (as Mrs. Ramsay might see him) that the artist must not let objectivity develop into godlike indifference. Woolf symbolizes the attitude of godlike indifference by Lily's absent-minded interference with a colony of ants in the grass, juxtaposed with her meditation on Tansley. She remembers seeing Tansley during the war preaching brotherly love from a platform: "There he was, lean and red and raucous, preaching love from a platform (there were ants crawling about among the plantains which she disturbed with her brush--red, energetic ants, rather like Charles Tansley)" (TTL, 302). She

admits that her dislike for him is probably a projection: "He did for her instead of a whipping-boy" (TTL, 303). But she still is not able to conquer her prejudice: "She raised a little mountain for the ants to climb over. She reduced them to a frenzy of indecision by this interference in their cosmogony. Some ran this way, others that" (TTL, 303). However, she manages to resolve her personal conflict with Tansley by calling up the figure of Mrs. Ramsay accepting Ramsay's proposal of marriage --an instance of Mrs. Ramsay's ability to make contact with others by means of a simple "yes": "Probably she said one word only, letting her hand rest still in his. I will marry you, she might have said, with her hand in his; but no more. Time after time the same thrill had passed between them--obviously it had, Lily thought, smoothing a way for her ants" (TTL, 305). The final use of the possessive "her ants" suggests how Lily, through the example of Mrs. Ramsay's instinct to care, is beginning to temper her credo of artistic objectivity by incorporating feeling into it. The result is an ethos of thought tempered by feeling, or an imagined and therefore imaginative version of marriage. Now Lily recollects the Ramsay marriage ("no monotony of bliss," [TTL, 305]) in order to test it against the concept of imaginative marriage. The real marriage does not measure up; it fosters tyranny, cowardice, and illusion. Lily must envision Mrs. Ramsay without succumbing to social prejudices. She is helped by the appearance of a figure at the drawing-room window that throws "an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step" (TTL, 309). Her job now is not to be "bamboozled" (TTL, 109)

into investing this shadow with sublime power. She must keep the object-world at arm's distance so as to make it represent an order not found in life: "One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy" (TTL, 309-310). Lily nearly fails--a "wave of white" (TTL, 310) passes over the window like some return of vacancy--but the shadow remains:

> "Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!" she cried, feeling the old horror come back--to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table. Mrs. Ramsay--it was part of her perfect goodness to Lily --sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat.
>
> (TTL, 310)

By means of a real shadow to base her vision on, Lily imaginatively creates a correspondent substance--the figure of Mrs. Ramsay engaged in an act of caring. Having created this significant figure, Lily turns her thoughts instinctively to Mr. Ramsay--"as if she had something she must share" (TTL, 310) --in a gesture of impersonal love which completes the poet's sublime.

The action turns to Mr. Ramsay in the boat, reading; an imaginative participation in art which links him with Lily painting on the shore. James meanwhile, having undergone a symbolic sea-change, achieves his final vision of the lighthouse: "So it was like that, James thought, the lighthouse one had

seen across the bay all these years; it was a stark tower on a bare rock. It satisfied him. It confirmed in him some obscure feeling of his about his own character. The old ladies, he thought, thinking of the garden at home, went dragging their chairs about on the lawn. Old Mrs. Beckwith, for example, was always saying how nice it was and how sweet it was and how they ought to be so proud and they ought to be so happy, but as a matter of fact James thought, looking at the Lighthouse stood there on its rock, it's like that."[28]

This phallic identification, left to itself, could only perpetuate a sterile, destructive male rivalry founded on tyranny. (Minutes later, for example, James thinks grimly how his father never praises him.) But the phallic vision is subordinated to the "reader's sublime" at work in the figure of Mr. Ramsay. In "The Window," Ramsay experiences the freeing powers of literature and renounces his egotism and his gloom: "But now, he felt, it didn't matter a damn who reached Z (if thought ran like an alphabet from A to Z). Somebody would reach it--if not he, then another" (TTL, 184-185). Now this sense returns to him, and removes the block that could have prevented the "human vision" from being passed on from one generation to the next.[29] The reader's sublime is first seen at work in a vision Cam has of her father: "It was thus that he escaped, she thought. Yes, with his great forehead and his great nose, holding his little mottled book firmly in front of him, he escaped. You might try to lay hands on him, but then like a bird, he spread

his wings, he floated off to settle out of your reach somewhere far away on some desolate stump" (TTL, 313). The imagery here recalls Ramsay's earlier vision of himself as "a desolate sea-bird, alone" (TTL, 72) but gives special emphasis to his power of freedom.[30] At this point, despairing of her own power of freedom, Cam begins to drowse under the hypnotic influence of her mother's version of reality conveyed to her ten years earlier in the nursery. All she sees of the island now is a blue haze, which she compares to "a pale blue censer swinging rhythmically this way and that across her mind" (TTL, 313). But just as she is about to fall asleep, her father finishes his book and, calling her to adventure ("Come now," (TTL, 313)), he breaks the spell.

The party on the boat now have lunch, a simple communion which counterpoints the elaborate ritualized dinner party of "The Window." Mr. Ramsay finds consolation in the power of mankind, through the generations, to continue on through time, thus challenging death and disaster. In this way, the trip to the lighthouse takes on the larger significance of the human odyssey, "a great expedition" (TTL, 315) into the future of mankind. This sense of the human power to endure the ordeals of time gives Ramsay the ability to look at the sea fearlessly and without illusion. All the talk on board about the great storm of last winter, in which three men drowned, does not extinguish his hopes and does not arouse his self-pity as the children expect it will: "to their surprise all he said was 'Ah' as if he thought to himself, But why make a fuss about that? Naturally men are drowned in a storm, but it is a perfectly straightforward affair,

and the depths of the sea (he sprinkled the crumbs from his sandwich paper over them) are only water after all" (TTL, 316). Now he passes on this gift of mastery over nature to his youngest son: "'Well done!' James had steered them like a born sailor" (TTL, 316). The effects of this praise are miraculous. The compact to resist tyranny dissolves away: "They watched him, both of them, sitting bare-headed with his parcel on his knee staring and staring at the frail blue shape which seemed like the vapour of something that had burnt itself away. What do you want? they both wanted to ask. They both wanted to say, Ask us anything and we will give it you" (TTL, 318). But Mr. Ramsay no longer wants anything. He has moved into "that other final phase . . . when it seemed as if he had shed worries and ambitions, and the hope of sympathy and the desire for praise" (TTL, 242) which Lily notices earlier in the morning. His spirit has been renewed; his children now identify with him as with a man of courage facing without fear the three great archetypal presences of the sublime moment--the symbolic sea which is merely water, the abyss of vacancy which is merely space, and the tyrant god which is merely an illogical projection of the imagination's own power:

> He rose and stood in the bow of the boat, very straight and tall, for all the world, James thought, as if he were saying, "There is no God," and Cam thought, as if he were leaping into space, and they both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock.
>
> (TTL, 318)

The final phase of the quest belongs to Lily Briscoe, no longer merely the spectre of a skimpy old maid, but now an

artist in her own right. In this broad cultural role, she gives Mr. Ramsay what she has wanted to give him earlier in the day--not the sympathy a woman gives to a man, but the consolation an artist gives to humanity. As her second, the figure of Augustus Carmichael rises from the depths to stand beside her, a symbol of the "nobler powers" that sleep beneath, of the true origins of humanity: "He stood there spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny" (TTL, 319). Lily's final step, her final decisive line in the very centre of the enclosed vacancy on her canvas, constitutes an anagnorisis--a poetic "birthmark"[31] proving that Lily has been imaginatively born out of the centre of emptiness:

> She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying her brush down in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.
>
> (TTL, 320)

The thematic centre of gravity in To the Lighthouse (as its prepositional-phrase title indicates) is not that which is the goal of the quest but quest itself. In other words, the journey, not the arrival matters. Woolf's art has reached what Frye calls the "formal phase" of symbolism where artistic creation "seems to be an activity whose only intention is to abolish intention, to eliminate final dependence on or relation to something else, to destroy the shadow that falls between itself and its conception" (Frye, AoC, 89). In this novel, the imagination affirms itself by destroying the "shadow" of

Mother Nature that falls upon the imaginative centre, and by perceiving Mother Nature herself as "out there" on the circumference of the ironic landscape. The next quest on which Woolf's logical imagination embarks is an arch-quest to awaken the "nobler powers [which] sleep" (TTL, 208) at the centre of the ironic landscape. The plural "powers" signifies the imagination of Everyman--the common reader--whose "sleep" connotes the passivity of the illogical imagination. This quest is a dangerous "absorbing pursuit" (W, 191) because the poet risks being absorbed into this sleep himself.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Woolf, "Professions for Women," CE, II, 286.

2. That is, the transformation of the positive sublime (the ambiguous dream world explored in The Voyage Out) into the poet's sublime (the Great Void as the apocalyptic centre of the ironic landscape). See above, Ch. 2, p. 38.

3. See Kelley, The Novels of Virginia Woolf, 115 for a brief review of this critical stance.

4. A possible exception, Jacob's Room, nevertheless features Jacob in pursuit of an ideal lady who is embodied in his Athenian vision, which includes his impossible relationship with Clara Durrant.

5. The meeting-point of psychology and the sublime is examined at length by Thomas Weiskel in The Romantic Sublime, 83-164. The resemblances between mother/mater/matter and between father/pater/pattern are not simply phonetic but inherently conceptual. Imaginatively, the resemblances are apotheosized in the concepts of Mother Earth, and God the Father, the emblems of the Romantic and Hebraic traditions which continue to shape the cosmos of Western culture in the age of Freud.

6. This phrase, from Cowper's "The Castaway," is picked up by Mr. Ramsay in Part Three as a formula for his sublime crisis. The allusion also echoes Mrs. Ramsay's terrifying vision of "engulfment in the sea" (TTL, 30).

7. See Woolf's discussion of the "infantile fixation" at the heart of patriarchal society, TG, 228-248.

8. The peculiar pitfalls of the infinite regress of consciousness become a thematic concern in The Waves in Woolf's analysis of the illusion of selfhood.

9. Attempts to ascribe tenors to Lily's painting belong to the same level of criticism as that which speculates about the number of children Lady Macbeth had. The painting has meaning only as a revelation of Lily's character.

10. This revelation comes to Lily in Part Three. See TTL, 229.

11. This remarkable passage is very similar to Woolf's account of her earliest memory of lying in the nursery at St. Ives (upon which setting this novel is based): "It is of hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. It is of hearing the blind

draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out. It is of lying and hearing this splash and seeing this light, and feeling, it is almost impossible that I should be here; of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive"("A Sketch of the Past," MB, 64-65).

12. This theme is suggested by the use to which she puts the green shawl in the nursery (177) to conceal the "black pig" from Cam. But see Lee M. Whitehead, "The Shawl and the Skull: Virginia Woolf's 'Magic Mountain,'" Modern Fiction Studies, 18 (Autumn, 1972), 401-415.

13. The "boots" motif in this novel represents the social self, and particularly the masculine ego. In Part Three, Lily praises Mr. Ramsay's boots to staunch his flood of self-pity and satisfy his plea for sympathy. Later, in the boat, James recalls his father's tyranny, in a fantasy of a foot being crushed by a wagon wheel. A six year old boy does not have a sufficiently developed masculine ego to protect himself against paternal aggression. James's fantasy, incidentally, evokes the classical figure of Oedipus ("lame of foot").

14. Cf. TTL, 164, "She let it uphold her . . . leaves of a tree," and TTL, 174, " . . . used the branches of the elm trees outside to help her stabilize her position." Such an appeal to the impersonality of art has an imaginative destiny as the reader's sublime, an integral part of the apocalyptic vision--but only when the reader is able to purge himself of personal conflicts. Mrs. Ramsay, on the contrary, is using literature as a flight from vacancy. Cf. Mr. Hilbery who reads a Scott novel to Katharine to counteract her revolution against his authority: "before his daughter could protest or make her escape, she found herself being turned by the agency of Sir Walter Scott into a civilized human being" (ND, 505).

15. This allusion has been identified by Fleishman, Virginia Woolf, 128.

16. This closing scene echoes Mrs. Ramsay's earlier sympathetic gesture on page 63: "If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him . . ." but more particularly it repeats Mr. Ramsay's "'But . . . it won't be fine'" (TTL, 12). In other words, she is playing the role of Mr. Ramsay's father (Mr. Ramsay to his James). The Harcourt Brace edition of the novel makes this role assignation even clearer: "'Yes, you were right. It's going to be wet tomorrow. You won't be able to go'" (To the Lighthouse [Harcourt, Brace & Co.; New York, 1927], 186; italics mine).

17. An earlier instance of title as double entendre (Night and Day) also describes both a sequence and an apocalypse.

18. Blake's term for matter. The fact that matter is "real" represents a stabilizing of existence in the absence of an apocalyptic pole of vision. See Frye, FS, 135; cf. the rock and bone images in Jacob's Room.

19. Virginia Woolf, "Reading," CE, II, 25. Italics mine. Also, the "rod of light" in this passage is an interesting analogue to the lighthouse beam in To the Lighthouse. The whole passage is a remarkable prototype of the birth of the logical imagination expressed in the structure of this novel.

20. At the beginning of "Time Passes, the archetypal dreamer falls asleep male: "Mr. Carmichael who was reading Virgil, blew out his candle. It was past midnight" (TTL, 198). At the end of the section, the archetypal dreamer awakens female, as Lily Briscoe (TTL, 221). This sex-change perhaps accounts for the surfacing of Mr. Carmichael beside Lily Briscoe in the novel's final moments, and it suggests the androgynous nature of the "great mind" allegorized in Part Two. Also, the imaginative sex-transformation of Orlando is prefigured here.

21. Cf. Woolf's advice to V. Sackville-West on beginning a novel: "I believe that the main thing in beginning a novel is to feel, not that you can write it, but that it exists on the far side of a gulf, which words can't cross: that its [sic] to be pulled through only in a breathless anguish" (LVW, III, 529).

22. Part Three dramatizes a psychological working out of complexes on the part of the chief characters. In this sense, it takes the form of a conscious analysis of the imaginative desublimation that is achieved in Part Two by means of metaphorical progression. Weiskel describes "desublimation" as a reduction of fictional forms from the status of objects of belief to that of make-believe (i.e., the very process that takes place in the logical imagination). See The Romantic Sublime, 56-57.

23. The issue of James's adolescent vision of the lighthouse reveals one of the serious shortcomings of synchronic interpretations of literature. Too many critics have cited James's dual vision of the lighthouse on page 286 ("For nothing was simply one thing") as evidence that James's childhood dream of making a journey to the "yellow eye" is realized in Part Three. On the contrary, on pages 311-312 James rejects his childhood notion of being able to make an actual journey to what is, after all, an imaginative vision.

At this point, he develops a logical imagination. The diachronic relation of these two episodes is incontrovertible evidence that the direction this novel moves toward is that of a dual vision which distinguishes between fiction and fact; that is, between the lighthouse as visionary goal and the lighthouse as a stone tower topped by a reflecting lamp. Cf. Bernard's discovery about the world-in-itself after the death of Percival: "'I was like one admitted behind the scenes; like one shown how the effects are produced'" (W, 188).

24. I have adapted the term from Woolf, TG, 150, where it refers to the incorruptibility of the female artist against the temptations of material gain. The "gain" Lily refuses is emotional. (Were she to give Ramsay feminine sympathy, he would worship her as he has Mrs. Ramsay.) As a result, Lily is left with "emptiness" (TTL, 239) when he departs for the lighthouse, but this emptiness becomes her means of arriving at the truth of her final vision.

25. Cf. n. 13 above.

26. The Romantic Sublime, 102.

27. TTL, 279. The mythical allusions to Demeter and Persephone here need no further elaboration since they have been fully examined by Joseph L. Blotner in "Mythic Patterns in To the Lighthouse," PMLA, 71 (1956), 547-562. Allan McLaurin misses the redemptive possibilities inherent in an imaginative vision of inner space when he discusses Lily's response to the loss of Mrs. Ramsay: "If space is not given an underlying form, then it becomes a void, a negation. It is like a painful emotion which has not yet been transmuted into art. In this way, Lily sees the death of Mrs. Ramsay as a space which must be filled if her pain is to be eased" (The Echoes Enslaved, 201). McLaurin believes that Lily fills this vacancy "by 'moving the tree to the middle,' just as Virginia Woolf moves the lighthouse to the central position in her novel" (op. cit., 201), but if this simple aesthetic solution of Lily's were at all adequate she would not have agonized through the long self-analysis that she imposes on herself in "The Lighthouse." Nor would Virginia Woolf have deliberately opened a centre in her novel had she not been intrigued by the structural possibilities of intentional vacancy: "this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to do by my friends, the flight of time and the consequent break of unity in my design. That passage (I conceive the book in 3 parts. I. at the drawing room window; 2. seven years passed; 3. the voyage) interests me very much. A problem like that breaks fresh ground in one's mind; prevents the regular ruts" (AWD, 80-81; italics mine).

28. TTL, 311-312. In this identification, the earlier lighthouse vision, fostered by his mother, has disappeared. His rejection of feminine sentimentality, embodied in "[o]ld Mrs. Beckwith," suggests an initiation into a cult of masculinity.

29. In other words, James could conceivably become a tyrannical father, inheriting and perpetuating what Septimus calls the "secret signal which one generation passes, under disguise, to the next . . . loathing, hatred, despair" (MD, 98).

30. In Part One, Mr. Ramsay undergoes a metamorphosis, at one point, from being a "bird" to being "a stake driven into the bed of a channel" (TTL, 72), an image suggesting neither freedom nor life--but aligning him with the central symbol of the novel. Here, as a reader, he is compared by Cam to a "sea-bird" again. And, the final picture of Mr. Ramsay in the novel, springing onto the rock like a young man, shows how he has regained his human identity as well as his youthful spirit.

31. "To draw a line is a primary step in incorporating energy in form" (Frye, FS, 97). To interpret this line as a symbol of Mr. or Mrs. Ramsay, the lighthouse, a tree, or any representational configuration is to miss the point of Lily's vision of art as an activity sui generis. Like the incomprehensible "song" of the caretaker's children in The Years (463-464), the "line" simply is.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ABSORBING PURSUIT: *ORLANDO* AND *THE WAVES*

The biographical and historical sources of Orlando have been meticulously traced elsewhere and do not need to be summarized here.[1] Considered imaginatively as a chronicle of the poet's sublime, however, the novel yields insights into the nature of poetic identity and reader identification. In fact, the chief dramatic tension in Orlando comes from the essential conflict between bodily selfhood and imaginative self, or "nature and letters."[2] Woolf intends to demonstrate that the mind is capable, at one and the same time, of believing in this-worldliness and making believe in other-worldliness. The reality sense comes from the figure of Orlando's biographer for whom the work of re-creating the life of Orlando is an "absorbing pursuit" (W, 191) taking place between "the blind land" (O, 265) of the autistic self and the all-too-real world of history. The imaginative sense comes from the other-worldly Orlando, a supreme escape artist continually transcending the limitations of the selfhood. Together, these two figures make up the dual identity of all men living in this our world. At times, the biographer becomes alienated from Orlando. At these times, he behaves like the typical Woolfian ironic hero shielded from contact with the "out there." At other times, he seems to disappear altogether when he gets absorbed in Orlando's story. At these times, when he is without a self, the story is most real, the poetic identity most alive.

The theme of exploration that underlies this imaginative biography suggests that Orlando is not so much a fictionalized

life story of a real poet as an allegorical chronicle of the archetypal poet in the making. The most remarkable idiosyncrasy of the protagonist is an ability to escape the formative influences of nature and society combined. In this sense, the novel contrasts strongly with Woolf's earlier imaginative "biography," Jacob's Room, in which the dramatic movement consists of a gradual closing-in of the antagonistic forces culminating in the pathetic death of the hero. In Orlando on the other hand, Woolf embarks on an "escapade" (AWD, 105) in which, employing satire and parody, she exposes the conventionality of convention by refusing to be influenced by realistic considerations. Despite its chronological structure, touching on five centuries of English history, the novel's essential narrative movement traces a series of life rhythms, its six chapters featuring six dramatic escapes or self-creations of the protagonist. Throughout, the compelling character of Orlando shows that nothing is sacred but the sanctity of freedom, nothing profane but the obscenity of tyrannical convention.

One curiosity in this novel is that Orlando takes over four centuries to complete his poem, "The Oak Tree." This colossal writer's block is explicable in terms of a conflict, in Orlando's life, caused by the opposing influences of nature and letters. In the first pages of the novel (which begins in the Elizabethan era), nature is personified by the Queen herself; it is also represented in the sublime phenomenon of the Great Frost, and in the Russian Princess with whom Orlando falls in love. Of Elizabeth's tough-mindedness and iron will often

discussed by biographers and historians, only glimpses are shown. Instead, she takes the role of a powerful maternal figure to whom Orlando offers a bowl of rose-water. Elizabeth's Orlando, like Mrs. Ramsay's James, is an innocent child who is to be protected from the harshness of the outer world: "Innocence, simplicity were all the more dear to her for the dark background she set them against" (O, 24). When Orlando is eighteen, Elizabeth summons him to Whitehall and sets an emerald on his left hand, a symbol of matriarchal identification which remains powerful for most of Orlando's life. He becomes her court favourite, and a liaison begins between the beautiful youth and the aged Queen, which keeps the young nobleman from going off to the Polish Wars but nearly stifles his spirit:

> At the height of her triumph when the guns were booming at the Tower and the air was thick enough with gunpowder to make one sneeze and the huzzas of the people rang beneath the windows, she pulled him down among the cushions where her women had laid her (she was so worn and old) and made him bury his face in that astonishing composition--she had not changed her dress for a month--which smelt for all the world, he thought, recalling his boyish memory, like some old cabinet at home where his mother's furs were stored. He rose, half suffocated from the embrace. "This," she breathed, "is my victory!"--even as a rocket roared up and dyed her cheeks scarlet.
>
> (O, 26)

In the vicinity of the Royal Court, the Frost has little effect; but its cruelty is apparent outside the haven. Against this background, Orlando falls into the most fatal love of his career, with the Russian Princess, Sasha. The imminent dangers of this first tumultuous love, awakening Orlando's infinite capacity for feeling, are foreshadowed in the image of the great thaw with

which the narrator characterizes Orlando's new state: "For as he looked the thickness of his blood melted; the ice turned to wine in his veins; he heard the waters flowing and the birds singing; spring broke over the hard wintry landscape; his manhood woke" (O, 39). However, certain presentiments of crisis cast doubt on the relationship between Orlando and Sasha. Woolf deftly contrasts the "heat" of passion with the indifferent reality of the frost: "they would marvel that the ice did not melt with their heat, and pity the poor old woman who had no such natural means of thawing it, but must hack at it with a chopper of cold steel" (O, 43). The sight of the old woman depresses Orlando, who succumbs to a melancholy vision of the ultimate victory of death over all life. Finally, Orlando is dispirited by an essential alienation from his Sasha: "The doubt underlying the tremendous force of his feelings was like a quicksand beneath a monument which shifts suddenly and makes the whole pile shake. The agony would seize him suddenly" (O, 47). When the crisis is precipitated by his discovery of Sasha in the arms of a sailor, Orlando blames his imagination for fooling him. At this point, his love undergoes a violent reaction formation. The catalyst is a performance of Shakespeare's Othello: "The frenzy of the Moor seemed to him his own frenzy, and when the Moor suffocated the woman in her bed it was Sasha he killed with his own hands" (O, 54). Othello's famous remorse speech ironically becomes Orlando's invocation to the emptiness he now finds at the heart of life: "a huge eclipse." His sublime crisis culminates in a terrible freeing of his emotions symbolized in the great flood which ends the chapter.

In Chapter Two, Orlando falls into a prolonged trance--as much the effect of his remorse for hating Sasha (nature) as of her desertion. (It remains for further chapters to effect his reconciliation with the archetypal feminine principle he now rejects.) Orlando's mysterious trance[3] indicates an inner crisis suggesting the mysterious transformation-processes of the sublime: "But, if sleep it was, of what nature, we can scarcely refrain from asking, are such sleeps as these? Are they remedial measures--trances in which the most galling memories, events that seem likely to cripple life for ever, are brushed with a dark wing which rubs their harshness off and gilds them, even the ugliest and basest, with a lustre, an incandescence? . . . And then what strange powers are these that penetrate our most secret ways and change our most treasured possessions without our willing it?" (O, 64) When Orlando wakes, he undergoes a transformation in which he renounces his former identification with nature (Sasha) in favour of an identification with letters (Shakespeare). The change comes about when he attempts to resume his poetic vocation. At the moment of setting pen to paper, he pauses. This pause is "of extreme significance in his history" (O, 73) for it leads to the establishment of Orlando's poetic identity. Although memory brings him a picture of Sasha, he "substituted for the face of the Princess a face of a very different sort" (O, 74)--the face of Shakespeare. Orlando now vows to become "the first poet of his race" (O, 76).

However, in making the poet out to be a hero, Orlando enters into an illogical state of "father" worship which resembles the Oedipal resolution of the negative sublime: "to Orlando

in the state he was now in, there was a glory about a man who had written a book and had it printed, which outshone all the glories of blood and state. To his imagination it seemed as if even the bodies of those instinct with such divine thoughts must be transfigured" (O, 77). His hero-worship is put to test when he invites Nick Greene to his estate. The contrast between Orlando's projected ideal and the rather plain figure of Mr. Greene slightly disappoints Orlando. The visit is humorously portrayed as an ironic contrast between illusions. Orlando apologizes for his worldly riches; Greene attempts to impress Orlando with his lost ancestral nobility. As for "the sacred subject of poetry" (O, 81), Orlando gathers only that the art of poetry is dead in England, that the Sublime (Greene calls it "La Gloire," O, 83) is no longer the aim of the poets, and that poets are really ordinary people. These doctrines impress Orlando with both hilarity and contempt. He finds himself laughing at anecdotes about his "gods," but restless at finding his ideal to be hollow. But when Greene publishes a satire of Orlando, the young nobleman is stung by his hypocrisy, and vows no more to take other poets as his model. He burns his poetical works, retaining only his poem "The Oak Tree."

The biographer now launches into an apparent digression on "time," which has the effect of casting the conventional notion of continuity, including the continuity of poetic succession, into doubt. The moment, and the prospect of freedom which opens at every moment, seem to be the reality of time. The effect of this discovery on Orlando is that he vows to write from now on

to please himself, upon which he destroys the tyrannical reign of memory: "as a cur ducks if you stoop to shy a stone at him, Memory ducked her effigy of Nick Greene out of sight; and substituted for it--nothing whatever" (O, 96). By this means Orlando discovers (as Lily Briscoe discovers) the centre of emptiness--the imaginative source of poetic freedom.

But faced with "nothing whatever," Orlando regresses to a Tennysonian desire to make his ancestral home a this-worldly palace of art. He refurbishes the mansion and gives splendid entertainments. At the height of the revels, he retreats to his solitary room to write poetry. But a shadow crosses his path. This shadow turns out to be the Archduchess Harriet who, like the Evil One, manages to make her way into the most impregnable regions--Orlando's workroom. Orlando's emotional reaction to the Archduchess is not the single projection of ideal love, but a twofold projection; a compound of the "natural sympathy which is between the sexes" (O, 107) and a gross animal lust which threatens to devour the spirit. These two forms of love take the respective forms of the mythical bird of Paradise (lacking feet and, thus, a symbol of letters) and the vulture (symbolic of brutal nature): "For Love . . . has two faces; one white, the other black; two bodies; one smooth, the other hairy. It has two hands, two feet, two tails, two, indeed of every member and each one is the exact opposite of the other. Yet, so strictly are they joined together that you cannot separate them" (O, 108).

The suggestion of the archetypal hermaphrodite here points out the essential sterility of the imagination absorbed

in this-worldliness. The vulture of lust befouls Orlando's palace of art: "Orlando was haunted every day and night by phantoms of the foulest kind. Vainly, it seemed, had he furnished his house with silver and hung the walls with arras, when at any moment a dung-bedraggled fowl could settle upon his writing table. There she was, flopping about among the chairs; he saw her waddling ungracefully across the galleries. Now, she perched, top heavy upon a fire screen. When he chased her out, back she came and pecked at the glass till she broke it" (O, 109). Consequently, he appeals to King Charles to be sent to Constantinople. This measure allows him to escape from the vulture of Lust and prepares the way for his mysterious transformation into a woman in the next chapter.

Orlando's flight from the vulture of lust represents a characteristic form of sublimation, a diverting of the sexual energies to "higher" social aims. The biographer notes that while Orlando is an Ambassador in Constantinople he "formed no attachments" (O, 116). Lily Briscoe seems to have effected a similar personal adjustment in believing that a devotion to her art can save her from the "dilution" of the married state. Nevertheless, the tyrannical implications of sublimation (explored in all Woolf's novels to this point) suggest the essential evil of having "force rushing round geometrical patterns" (JR, 152). The sexual instinct, it turns out, has a common origin with the other-worldliness of the imagination. It is an "unseizable force" (JR, 155) which resists solidification into the forms of civilization. Orlando, at the height of his fame--as the "golden circlet of

strawberry leaves" signifying his symbolic godhead is placed on his brow--is rousted by a rebellion of the natives. Shortly thereafter, he falls into a trance and wakes--as a woman.

The whole tenor of Chapter Three rests upon a conflict in the mind of Orlando's biographer between truth to nature and truth to letters. In order to undercut the natural vision Woolf throughout the chapter employs irony. The biographer's devotion to natural truth--like that of the doctors in Mrs. Dalloway--betrays a fear of uncertainty (in terms of the sublime, a fear of vacancy). He deplores the scarcity of documentary evidence concerning this phase of Orlando's life, preferring to stick to "the firm, if rather narrow, ground of ascertained truth" (O, 120) but is aware that a continuous logical narrative requires that he employ the narrow bridge of art: "We have done our best to piece out a meagre summary from the charred fragments that remain, but often it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination" (O, 110). The biographer, in this respect, is a "reader" of Orlando's life who is caught between a need for the "firm" ground of truth and a desire for meaning and order that only the narrow bridge of art can lead him to. He is, thus, a mask for the common reader who imposes on the poet conflicting demands. Truth he must have; order he cannot renounce. We will give him order, Woolf seems to say, and let him accept it as truth if he dare. What emerges is a revelation of the conventionality of convention. Orlando changes from man to woman; that is not logical. But the biographer simply and conventionally substitutes "she" for "he" and continues with the story. For

the reader, the sudden obtrusiveness of convention constitutes a desublimation; the fictiveness of Orlando is thrust upon him, precluding his escape from the burden of freedom so that he must accept that there is no belief but poetic faith. He must therefore accept the fictiveness of Orlando.

The rhetoric of desublimation--the release of fact into fantasy--conveys the androgynous nature of poetic identity; that is, the exemption of the poetic imagination from the socially-imposed limitations of gender. Once the reader of Orlando can accept on poetic faith the anti-biological androgyny of the hero, he can regard as proper the imaginative unity of men and women, different though they be physically. This desublimation extends to "matter" and "pattern" as well. Matter need not be sublimated as a projection of "mother nature." Instead, it refers to the thing itself--nature pure and simple. Likewise, pattern need not be confined to the forms of civilization projected as the patron or the patriotic model of the father-land. Instead, it refers to convention or an arbitrary communal pattern.

In Orlando, the effects of desublimation are dramatized as the metamorphosis of the poet's body--man or woman it matters not which; since convention is the ultimate arbiter of this-worldliness in an imaginative context. Hence, during Orlando's stay in Constantinople, both nature and letters achieve a desublimation epitomized in Orlando's sex-transformation. The narrative of this desublimation proceeds as follows: Orlando's flight from the vulture of lust is a fleeing from nature, which threatens to undermine his poetic identity. He puts his energies

at the disposal of the Empire and is rewarded with a ducal title. Now the reward of the self-sacrifice demanded by sublimation--as Woolf suggests in her anatomy of the goddesses of Proportion and Conversion--is the power to apportion and to convert. The illogical imagination, trading on fear, demands subservience and belief. Indeed, Orlando at this time possesses "the power to stir the fancy and rivet the eye" (O, 115), but his innate mental chastity keeps him from a fate like that of Conrad's Mr. Kurtz; Orlando's peers in the Empire are the real tyrants in this episode. One such character, John Fenner Brigge, an eyewitness to Orlando's ceremony of honour, comments smugly on the intended effect of a fireworks display upon the natives: "I came to the conclusion that this demonstration of our skill in the art of pyrotechny was valuable, if only because it impressed upon them . . . . the superiority of the British . . ." (O, 117). The moment of Orlando's coronation also signals the attack of the natives. The biographer is not sure whether the rebellion is preplanned or the effect of disillusion at expecting a miracle and finding none. This "unseizable force" is momentarily checked: ". . . the Admiral ordered the bugles to be sounded; a hundred blue-jackets stood instantly at attention; the disorder was quelled, and quiet, at least for the time being, fell upon the scene" (O, 120). The temporary reign of quiet is transposed to Orlando's trance--as with all his trances, an indication of some inner process precipitating meaning out of crisis. One eyewitness records Orlando's letting a gypsy woman up to his rooms--an indication of his release from the strictures of sublimation. His trance continues for seven days, at the end of which the

natives set fire to the town. Orlando only escapes death because the rebels believe him to be already dead, but he is robbed of his ducal signs.

The theme of desublimation next focuses, psychologically, upon the biographer, in whom two forces are at war: poetic truth (letters), which is ever-changing, and biographical truth (nature), which is static. The biographer refers to biographical truth and its attendants, candour and honesty, as "austere Gods who keep watch and ward by the inkpot of the biographer" (O, 123). The "silver trumpets" of poetic truth represent poetry as prophecy, and the logical imagination which recognizes the eternal mental warfare of matter and spirit. The three Ladies in the Masque are "Angels in the House" who try to protect Orlando's masculine identity and to hide his essentially androgynous nature. Our Lady of Purity is associated with the lamb (naïve innocence) and with snow (both an elusive veil and frozen state of the life-waters). Our Lady of Chastity is associated with the ignis fatuus (or foolish fire, a "burning but unwasted fire" [O, 123]). She would freeze life. Our Lady of Modesty is associated with virginity and fears fruition; she is an enemy to change. Poetic truth, on the other hand, is associated with the sun or life-principle. Primarily, it represents the "unseizable force," the miraculous power of rebirth or eternal renewal of generation in nature and creative freedom in art. The three ladies would kill Orlando where he lies; poetic truth would transform him. It is poetic truth that triumphs, driving the three Ladies out of the room and bringing Orlando back to life as a woman.

For the biographer, this power of letters over nature, much though he regrets it, restores his powers of continuity. He can resume his story. For Orlando --as archetypal poet--the generative power of nature has been internalized. Though physically a woman, he is imaginatively an androgynous spirit, the image of a fertile imagination. By means of his new-found power he will later be able to breed works that wake. He has now achieved an imaginative reconciliation with the female principle which he earlier loses when deserted by the Russian princess.

The gypsies, with whom Orlando now takes up company, seem to represent an imaginative antithesis to the English love of nature. They scorn the concepts of property and homeland. They particularly ridicule Orlando's romantic love of nature, and thus echo the skeptical voice in the "Time Passes" episode of To the Lighthouse: "Did Nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence she saw his misery, condoned his meanness, and acquiesced in his torture" (TTL, 207-208). They are an obscure and homeless people whom Orlando, as a woman scorning fame and desiring anonymity, finds compatible. She is tempted to marry among them but is prevented by an essential difference between their world-view and hers. Basically, Orlando is able both to accept nature's indifference and recognize its beauty. The gypsies, however, have no imaginative love of nature. In short, the imagination has no place in their world-view. They are in a state of animal self-absorption--food, drink, and shelter comprise the extent of their vision. On this point "much bad blood was bred between them" (O, 136)

and Orlando's relations with the gypsies soon become strained by the intolerance of belief. Their this-worldliness conflicts with Orlando's other-worldliness. Far from being a satiric norm, the gypsies turn out to be worshippers of the same goddesses of Proportion and Conversion who preside over the civilized English. For the "poet" in Orlando, whose continued existence depends on the fostering influence of the English genius loci, the homeless state becomes deadly. She reacts rather disconsolately to the barren landscape as a rock-of-ages vision of nature and superimposes upon it a vision of England's green and pleasant land. She decides to set sail for England just in time to escape death at the hands of the gypsies: "Honour, they said, demanded it, for she did not think as they did" (O, 139).

About the sublimity of poets, however, she is adamant; she still sees the poet as a god, because, for her, the sublimity of poets is still an emanation of the natural selfhood of the poet:

> . . . as the ear is the antechamber to the soul poetry can adulterate and destroy more surely than lust or gunpowder. The poet's, then, is the highest office of all, she continued. His words reach where others fall short. A silly song of Shakespeare's has done more for the poor and the wicked than all the preachers and philanthropists in the world. No time, no devotion, can be too great, therefore, which makes the vehicle of our message less distorting. We must shape our words till they are the thinnest integument for our thoughts. Thoughts are divine, etc. Thus it is obvious that she was back in the confines of her own religion which time had only strengthened in her absence, and was rapidly acquiring the intolerance of belief.
>
> (O, 158)

Here, Orlando reveals the "intolerance of belief" in insisting that "thoughts are divine." The error is in believing that the poet is a hero because poetry can offer the consolation of an ideal world, when in fact all poets, as human beings, are pursued by natural instincts. Nature pursues, and the poet must be a supreme escape artist to retain his freedom intact. And, if the poet is a supreme escape artist, nature is a supreme master of disguises.

The deceptive power of nature--the pursuer--is dramatized in Orlando's second meeting with the Archduchess Harriet, who appears as a shadow across the page of Orlando's manuscript. Orlando is first amused at the reappearance of her old foe: "At the thought that she had fled all the way to Turkey to avoid her seduction (now become excessively flat),[4] Orlando laughed aloud. There was something inexpressibly comic in the sight" (O, 162). But the situation soon becomes serious when the Archduchess flings off her disguise and reveals herself an Archduke. This apparent transformation parodies Orlando's own profound sexual transformation, and recalls Orlando uncomfortably to a consciousness of her bondage to nature: "a consciousness of her sex, which she had completely forgotten" (O, 162).

But one who has been on both sides of the sex barrier possesses no ordinary consciousness. Orlando sees right through the Romantic illusion which has complicated the lives of so many previous characters in Woolf's fiction: "'If this is love,' said Orlando to herself, looking at the Archduke on the other side of the fender, and now from the woman's point of view, 'there

is something highly ridiculous about it'" (O, 163). She has, in fact, the privileged perspective of an outsider: a clear-sightedness unclouded by the effects of sex and a common sense which understands the artificiality of social sex-roles.[5] By means of this perspective she easily outwits the Archduke and effects another miraculous escape--this time from marriage. He presses his suit; she suggests they play a game. The game becomes tedious; Orlando sets out to disillusion her suitor by cheating. He forgives her womanly weakness with due chivalry. She refuses to accept his magnanimity and slips a toad between his skin and shirt, then compounds the insult by laughing at him. Thus, she escapes by refusing to play her part and, by extension, undermining the "male" role of the Archduke.

Relieved by the departure of the Archduke, Orlando nevertheless experiences a crisis of vacancy: "As the sound of the Archduke's chariot wheels died away, Orlando felt drawing further and further from her an Archduke (she did not mind that), a fortune (she did not mind that), a title (she did not mind that), the safety and circumstances of married life (she did not mind that), but life she heard going from her, and a lover" (O, 167-168). As a woman she cannot freely pursue life. When she decides to take a walk in the Mall, she becomes the immediate centre of a curious mob: "She had forgotten that ladies are not supposed to walk in public places alone" (O, 174). She is forced to take advantage of the reappearance of the Archduke who offers her "the protection of his arm" (O, 174). She subsequently seeks "life," then, in a more conventional mode: in the place of

shelter afforded by that fabricator of illusions, the social hostess.

The fantasy world created by the social hostess, as Orlando now experiences it, resembles a precarious fool's paradise in which the imagination is lulled into passivity. Orlando's biographer points out that, although illusion is one of man's greatest needs, it can be dangerous when it attempts to usurp the power of the logical imagination: "illusions are shattered by conflict with reality, so no real happiness, no real wit, no real profundity are tolerated where the illusion prevails" (O, 181; italics mine). The charmed circle of the hostess is not a centre of complete emptiness but a beautiful shawl wrapped around a skull. The hostess keeps her guests under the spell of the illogical imagination.[6]

By contrast, the ironic poet and the satirist, representing the logical imagination, are notorious for destroying such fool's paradises. In To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay fears Augustus Carmichael becuase he does not need the protection of her illusions. In Orlando, Lady R. fears Alexander Pope because he threatens to awaken the logical imagination of the guests:

> . . . the door opened and a little gentleman entered whose name Orlando did not catch. Soon a curiously disagreeable sensation came over her. To judge from their faces, the rest began to feel it as well. One gentleman said there was a draught. The Marchioness of C. feared a cat must be under the sofa. It was as if their eyes were being slowly opened after a pleasant dream and nothing met them but a cheap wash-stand and a dirty counterpane.
>
> (O, 183)

Orlando's eyes are opened too, and she becomes more strongly than ever fascinated by the poet-as-hero. She decides to accompany him home, during which time she engages in an inner debate.

The subject of the debate is whether the poet qua man is genuinely sublime or whether such identification merely confuses nature and letters. (Hence, the debate is a critique of Lily Briscoe's "sublime" vision of Augustus Carmichael.) During the first stretch of darkness, Orlando is impressed that Pope is "the greatest wit in Her Majesty's dominions" (O, 185-186). But at the lamppost, she is struck by the insignificance of man compared to the immensity of time and of nature: "their progress through Berkeley Square seemed the groping of two blind ants, momentarily thrown together without interest or concern in common, across a blackened desert" (O, 186). Then, as the light diminishes again, she is impressed with the "light" of Pope's intellect, an impression undercut by the reader's knowledge that Orlando is "apostrophising the hump on the cushion" (O, 186) rather than Pope's forehead. When they reach the streetlamps at Berkeley Square, she discovers her mistake and begins to despise Pope for his physical deformities. Once in darkness again, she apostrophizes Pope's manhood: "If I want to worship, have you not provided me with an image of yourself and set it in the sky?" (O, 187). In other words, it is male poets who are largely responsible for myths about a god who is essentially male. However, when they reach the big lamppost at Piccadilly Circus,

the falseness of the patriarchal myth is revealed: "Looking Mr. Pope full in the face, 'It is equally vain,' she thought, 'for you to think you can protect me, or for me to think I can worship you. The light of truth beats upon us without shadow, and the light of truth is damnably unbecoming to us both'" (O, 187). In this light, Orlando escapes finally the illusion of poet-hero-worship in recognizing what Woolf, in A Room of One's Own, calls "the pathetic devices of the human imagination" (AROO, 53) for making the merely human over into the sublimely heroic. If the poet is androgynous, he is qua poet, a something-nothing. Thus, the true source of poetic sublimity is not the man, but poetic activity itself.

What Orlando discovers in her acquaintance with the "great" poets of the eighteenth century is that the human imagination has a stubborn tendency to confuse what Blake would call the Selfhood with the imaginative man. When the biographer points out that "every secret of a writer's soul, every experience in his life, every quality of his mind is written large in his works" (O, 190)--the expression of a common platitude--and juxtaposes this view with the popular clamour for biographies and histories of these same writers, he is pointing out an inconsistency in the popular imagination. The logical conclusion to this discrepancy, between what the common reader expects in art and what he finds, is that art is not autobiography and tells us nothing about the poet as an individual. By extension, the truths art conveys are not scientific or religious truths but

"something-nothings" (O, 176) and should not be mistaken for documents or deeds. This essential distinction between the literary truths of art and the natural truths of biography is demonstrated clearly by Woolf's ironic juxtaposition of passages from Addison's and Swift's writings on the one hand and, on the other hand, retrospective "predictions" based on these passages about the respective fates of the writers. Addison writes about woman as a "romantic animal," a concept in the tradition of Romantic idealism which (in Woolf's novels) is a constant source of human suffering. Yet, from this passage, the biographer extrapolates impossibly Addison's "benignity," his "urbanity," and his respectability. Swift writes about his hero's freedom from the tyrannical forces of society while in the land of the Houyhnhnms. From this, the biographer concludes that the writer is "violent," and will die in a madhouse. When the irony of this "critique" is understood, the imaginative man (or poet qua poet) clearly appears to be a thing apart from the personal self of the poet. In essence, the literary man neither merits the worship nor deserves the scorn that arises from an illogical biographical "interpretation" of his work. Thus, when Orlando, discouraged by Pope's high-handedness and by his prejudices against women, plops the sugar into his tea, the thematic emphasis is not on Orlando's disillusionment nor on Pope's vitriolic revenge so much as on the illogical imagination that encourages people to make literary "lions" of their poets and encourages poets to invest themselves unlawfully with a sublime aura usurped

from the sublime imagination itself.

Confused by her disillusionment with Pope, Orlando begins her search for "life and a lover" all over again, drawing a deep solace from the inspiration of things-in-themselves: "For, Heaven knows why, just as we have lost faith in human intercourse some random collocation of barns and trees or a haystack and a waggon presents us with so perfect a symbol of what is unattainable that we begin the search again" (O, 195). From the wit of the great men of letters, she turns to the simple talk of street-women which "tasted like wine after the fine phrases she had been used to" (O, 198). She merges into the general life so completely, changing from the clothes of women to those of men and back again, that the biographer is forced to forego "an exact and particular account of Orlando's life at this time" (O, 199). On one occasion, however, she witnesses a shadow-play--"a page torn from the thickest volume of human life" (O, 201)--Dr. Johnson, Mr. Boswell, and Mrs. Williams drinking tea behind a blind. Though she cannot hear a single word of the famous Dr. Johnson's conversation, Orlando imagines that she hears "the most magnificent phrases that ever left human lips" (O, 202). And with this tribute to the sublime power of the imagination to suggest what no biographer can quite catch with his net of words, nor any poet, Orlando moves out of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, against a background of gathering clouds.

The nineteenth century is marked by a return of the uncontrolled power of nature (or crisis of inundation) which, in nature, takes the form of a pervasive "damp" leading to

excessive vegetable growth combined with the destruction of the artifacts of civilization. As in the "Time Passes" section to To the Lighthouse, the this-worldly ascendancy of nature over the other-worldly power of "letters" allegorizes the uncontrolled imagination, unchecked by an imaginative.reactive identification, or marriage, of the creative principle and the Logos. The destructive effect of this process is epitomized in the fate of Eusebius Chubb who "after writing thirty-five folio pages one morning 'all about nothing'" (O, 207), takes a stroll in his garden where nature is running rampant, and observes how the "heavenly hierarchy" seems to sanction an "undistinguished fecundity" (O, 208). Finding no other escape, he embraces the ultimate rock of ages--death. The theme of "undistinguished fecundity" thus operates at two levels. Historically, the decline of religious belief in the nineteenth century removed a traditional ordering principle in society. On the personal level, the release of imagination from the traditional source of inspiration caused the imagination to become an illogical or, as the biographer puts it, a "disordered imagination" (O, 208). In the mind of Orlando, as archetypal poet, this "undistinguished fecundity" is projected in a vision of "a pyramid, hetacomb, or trophy (for it had something of a banquet-table air)--a conglomeration at any rate, of the most heterogeneous and ill-assorted objects, piled higgledy-piggledy in a vast mound where the statue of Queen Victoria now stands" (O, 209). The emotions, too, become incongruously mixed. The afternoon sky causes "a pleasurable

anguish" (O, 209). Mrs. Bartholomew, the housekeeper, feels that "it was pleasant to weep" (O, 211).

When Orlando takes out the manuscript of "The Oak Tree," she finds it impossible to write. Her pen blots. The blot spreads. Moreover, the pen begins to write of its own accord: "the pen began to curve and caracole with the smoothest possible fluency" (O, 215). It composes automatically "the most insipid verse she had ever read in her life" (O, 125). The specimens quoted by the biographer are full of conventional doggerel and sentimental gush: "She was all of a quiver, all of a stew. Nothing more repulsive could be imagined than to feel the ink flowing thus in cascades of involuntary inspiration" (O, 215). The biographer further describes Orlando's malady in terms which suggest the Romantic concept of the "correspondent breeze." Orlando's nerves are played upon by this involuntary inspiration as though they constitute an aeolian harp: "an extraordinary tingling and vibration all over her, as if she were made of a thousand wires upon which some breeze or errant fingers were playing scales" (O, 216). Eventually, the sensation localizes in the third finger of her left hand--the wedding-ring finger--signifying some "hiatus" or "strange oversight" (O, 216) on her part. She displeases the spirit of the age by remaining unmarried.

We know that the nineteenth century was an age when unmarried women writers felt they had to adopt male pseudonyms in order to gain a sympathetic audience for their work. As the biographer points out later, "the transaction between a writer

and the spirit of the age is one of infinite delicacy, and upon a nice arrangement between the two the whole fortune of his works depends" (O, 239-240). But Orlando's unmarried state has more than just an historical significance. Convention alone is not the only factor inhibiting her poetic spirit. In fact, she buys a wedding ring to provide the appearance of respectability, but her involuntary inspiration persists. The real issue here is that of poetic identification. The literary faculty alone does not make a good poet. His gift to man must be a mental fight against the natural vision. He must not only feel: he must dedicate himself to the imaginative community of mankind. In such a context, marriage is a symbol for imaginative communion: not the union of man and woman, but the union of poet and mankind gives poetry force and direction. In Mrs. Dalloway, for example, the poet, Septimus Warren Smith, becomes engaged to Lucrezia "one evening when the panic was on him--that he could not feel" (MD, 96). But his marriage to Lucrezia does not right the balance of his illogical imagination. Only his supreme gift of the logical imagination--"'I'll give it you'" (MD, 164)--addressed to humanity appeases the spirit of the age epitomized in the party-giver, Clarissa Dalloway.

So with Orlando. Stepping out of doors one autumn afternoon, she observes the companionship of individuals both human and animal and echoes the cry of loneliness of Milton's Adam: "'Everyone is mated except myself,' she mused, as she trailed disconsolately across the courtyard. There were the rooks; Canute

and Pippin even--transitory as their alliances were, still each this evening seemed to have a partner. 'Whereas, I, who am mistress of it all,' Orlando thought, glancing as she passed at the innumerable emblazoned windows of the hall, 'am single, am mateless, am alone.'"[7] She is led by a trail of falling bird feathers to a solitary pool "mysterious as the lake into which Sir Bedivere flung the sword of Arthur" (O, 223), and hence to the Woolfian "centre of complete emptiness" which, for Lily Briscoe, symbolizes the threshold between the world of nature and the literary world of the "nobler powers which dwell beneath." Since Orlando has already exorcised the subterranean "gods" of poetry, she pursues the path of the positive sublime in a Keatsian urge to drink "forgetfulness" (O, 223). Spraining her ankle and falling helpless on the spongy turf, she nearly accomplishes this wish, when she begins to hear a regular rhythm coming as if from the centre of the earth. The rhythm first sounds like a clock, then the beating of a hammer,[8] and finally resolves itself into an image of the Woolfian magnanimous hero on horseback.

Shelmerdine Bonthrop Marmaduke Esquire is only partly a romantic fairy-tale hero. His gallantry and courage are certainly those of a Prince Charming or a chivalrous knight, but he has other qualities more germane to his symbolic role in Orlando's poetic growth. For one thing, he is a sailor, one of Woolf's symbolic voyagers on the sea of life. He is also a lover of solitude, a trait that distinguishes him from the typical

Woolfian ironic lover, who usually pursues his ideal lady with the frantic insecurity of a child after its mother. Essentially, Shelmerdine is as other-worldly (or fictive) as the androgynous Orlando. As Orlando is the archetypal poet, Shelmerdine is the archetypal common reader--the imagined patron for whom the poet writes. A competent, dedicated, unselfconscious man of action, Shelmerdine anticipates Percival in The Waves.[9] His chief function, like that of Percival, is to give a depth of feeling and an ethical purposiveness to Orlando's creative imagination: "The vision which she had . . . of this boy (for he was little more) sucking peppermints, for which he had a passion, while the masts snapped and the stars reeled and he roared brief orders to cut this adrift, to heave that overboard, brought the tears to her eyes, tears, she noted, of a finer flavour than any she had cried before. 'I am a woman,' she thought, 'a real woman at last.' She thanked Bonthrop from the bottom of her heart for having given her this rare and unexpected delight" (O, 227-228).

The final chapter of the "biography" dramatizes the essential paradox of any "summing up." The convention of biography usually requires that the biographer bring the life of his subject to a close and, at the same time, "sum up" the achievements of his biographical subject--those triumphs rescued from the pool of time that insure the subject's immortality. But this is no conventional "biography," and the paradox inherent in its summing up translates into a tension between ritual death

and the perpetual pursuit of an unseizable goal. This tension operates on two levels. The biographer, in pursuit of "life's meaning" (O, 244), nearly brings his book to the point of extinction twice when his biographical subject escapes his observing eye. Orlando in pursuit of "the wild goose" (O, 281), life, is perpetually stunned by the shock of the present moment which opens a new vacancy at every prospect. For both the biographer and Orlando, the tension is resolved by the continuity of life. The book is saved from "extinction" by the miraculous return of Orlando to the world of action; and Orlando, as archetypal poet, overcomes the crisis of the present moment in her imaginative visions of her husband, Shel, surmounting a crisis of inundation at Cape Horn.

The chapter opens with Orlando finally sitting down to finish her poem, "The Oak Tree." She has managed to appease the spirit of the age without becoming absorbed in it as a purely contemporary poet: "Orlando had so ordered it that she was in an extremely happy position; she need neither fight her age, nor submit to it; she was of it, yet remained herself" (O, 240). The key to her miraculous escape--her unorthodox marriage to Shel--provides her with an imaginative "pattern" of identification, thus freeing her from a potential absorption in the this-worldly "pattern" represented by contemporary society. The poet's identification, in other words, can take one of two paths. The path of tyrannical reason demands that he reinforce prevailing social values. Before her marriage to Shel, Orlando

is in danger of becoming a slave to tyrannical reason. Her wretched verse about being "but a vile link/ Amid life's weary chain" reiterates the gloomy side of the theory of biological evolution. After her marriage to Shel, Orlando is able to pursue the path of imaginative identification, a concept of the poet being not so much the unacknowledged legislator of mankind as the acknowledged prophet of human freedom.

While Orlando writes, the biographer (who is the real ironic hero in this novel) is faced with the same problem of poetic identification. Convention demands that he provide action. But since his subject is engaged now in thought and imagination, he is hard-pressed to provide continuity. Nor can he adopt the conventions of the "male novelists" and discuss Orlando's amours because she is not engaged in illicit affairs, but simply working on a poem. Nothing remains to do but abandon Orlando until she has finished: "If then, the subject of one's biography will neither love nor kill, but will only think and imagine, we may conclude that he or she is no better than a corpse and so leave her" (O, 242). Since the use of the imagination is denied the biographer, he has no recourse but to cast a quizzical eye upon the creatures of nature. Separated from his subject the biographer becomes selfconscious, almost autistic, and his language begins to run in a rhymed and metrical pattern. As for discovering the "meaning" of life, nature provides no response to his inquiry but exhibits its own indifferent being. Nature is totally unresponsive to the "word." It simply is.

If the biographer's solitary lyric voice were allowed thus to continue, the book would surely grind to a halt. But at the critical moment, he is recalled to his subject--for Orlando has finished her poem. Now she in turn discovers with a shock the fair, indifferent spectacle of nature which has been going on all the time she has been writing. She is almost "felled to the ground" (O, 244) by the discovery that the world of nature and the world of letters are totally separate. She is revived, however, by the further discovery that the "word" possesses a life of its own, independent of nature:

> The manuscript which reposed above her heart began shuffling and beating as if it were a living thing, and, what was still odder, and showed how fine a sympathy was between them, Orlando, by inclining her head, could make out what it was saying. It wanted to be read. It must be read. It would die in her bosom if it were not read. For the first time in her life she turned with violence against nature.
>
> (O, 245)

The source of this violent reaction-formation is Orlando's discovery that her creative power does not descend from nature after all but seems to rival that of nature. The poem, originally intended as a tribute to the land that is her inspiration, has no significance whatever to nature. Nature is blind and indifferent, nonconscious, and totally devoid of intelligence.[10]

The sympathy between Orlando and her poem leads the poet to an identification with the human community. But she discovers that humanity is to a large extent absorbed in the natural life. Watching the stream of pedestrians on the Strand, she observes

a procession of self-absorbed egos whose lives run parallel to one another but do not seem to intersect. A man in despair rubs shoulders with a joyful man: "indeed, she came to the conclusion that there was neither rhyme nor reason in any of it. Each man and each woman was bent on his own affairs" (O, 247). By chance, she runs into Nick Greene now become "the most influential critic of the Victorian age" (O, 249). The strange reappearance of this historical figure after three hundred years marks him out as an archetypal character: the embodiment of the classical spirit in its worst sense. He continues to make deities out of the poets of the past and catches at any chance to disparage the poets of the present. Orlando rightly suspects his intention to publish her poem "but there was nothing for it but to submit to what was evidently his wish and the fervent desire of the poem itself" (O, 253).

Neither the self-absorbed human stream that crosses the Strand nor the toadying littérateur can sustain the free spirit of poetry. Instead, Orlando finds her imaginative rock of ages in a vision of man as a courageous mariner on the archetypal sea. Though her poem on "The Oak Tree" is finished, leaving "a bare place in her breast where she used to carry it" (O, 253), she continues a poetic dialogue represented by the other-worldly cypher language she uses when communicating with her husband at Cape Horn. By means of this "little language such as lovers use" (W, 169), Orlando can convey "a whole spiritual state of the utmost complexity" (O, 254). Such phrases as

"Rattigan Glumphoboo" (O, 254) are other-worldly precisely because they cannot be coaxed into meaning but stand for an "unseizable force" like life itself. Orlando discovers the resilient other-worldliness of the imagination when she makes believe that a penny steamer on the Serpentine is really Shel's boat in the teeth of a gale at Cape Horn. In this moment of being, she enters a psychological state in which the commonplace is transformed into the sublime:

> If one looks at the Serpentine in this state of mind, the waves soon become just as big as the waves on the Atlantic; the toy boats become indistinguishable from ocean liners. So Orlando mistook the toy boat for her husband's brig; and the wave she had made with her toe for a mountain of water off Cape Horn; and as she watched the toy boat climb the ripple, she thought she saw Bonthrop's ship climb up and up a glassy wall; up and up it went, and a white crest with a thousand deaths in it arched over it; and through the thousand deaths it went and disappeared--"It's sunk!" she cried out in an agony--and then, behold, there it was again sailing along safe and sound among the ducks on the other side of the Atlantic.
>
> "Ecstasy!" she cried. "Ecstasy! . . ."
>
> (O, 258)

Once again, in this scene of sublime terror and ecstasy released into imaginative play, the other-worldliness of Orlando's marriage is dramatized. It resembles the symbiotic relationship between the writer and the patron expressed in "The Patron and the Crocus": "They are twins indeed, one dying if the other dies, one flourishing if the other flourishes" (CE, II, 152).

Imaginatively, the "death" of poet or patron means their absorption into this-worldliness: the poet who cannot feel and the patron paralyzed by a pervading sense of doom. Woolf explores this imaginative symbiosis in the Clarissa/ Septimus

relationship. In Orlando, poetic "ecstasy" flourishes (or flowers forth) in Orlando's "hyacinth" husband, the incarnation of the imaginative patron who "fathers forth"[11] even in an age when the stream of civilization has "coagulated and massed itself in golden blocks" (O, 259), and literature seems to have grown old and "corpulent" (O, 262).

The Orlando/ Shelmerdine marriage symbolizes the eternal renewal of both art and civilization and their emancipation from the tyranny of the illogical imagination. The narrative of this freeing of the waters takes the form of another break in the narrative in which tyrannical reason (or sublimation) and imaginative energy struggle in the mind of the biographer. Halted by the internal censor (as when Orlando becomes a woman), the biographer cannot relate what happens to Orlando next. Simultaneously, he rebels against the convention by singing an ode to "natural desire" (O, 264) and lamenting the slowing down of the stream of life under the freezing influence of the forces of sublimation: "For dark flows the stream--would it were true, as the rhyme hints 'like a dream'--but duller and worser than that is our usual lot; without dreams, but alive, smug, fluent, habitual, under trees whose shade of an olive green drowns the blue of the wing of the vanishing bird when he darts of a sudden from bank to bank" (O, 265). He fiercely resists entering the autistic dream-world--"dreams which splinter the whole and tear us apart in the night when we would sleep" (O, 265)--but desires sleep itself, death's counterfeit. Again, just as the

biography is at the point of extinction, life rushes back, this time in the form of the "kingfisher," who heralds the birth of Orlando's son:

> But wait! but wait! we are not going, this time, visiting the blind land. Blue, like a match struck right in the ball of the innermost eye, he flies, burns, bursts the seal of sleep; the kingfisher; so that now floods back refluent like a tide, the red, thick stream of life again; bubbling, dripping . . . .
>
> (O, 265)

Thus, with the familiar signals of life (fire, bird, blood) the biographer records the miracle of eternal renewal.

The birth of Orlando's son also heralds the onset of the twentieth century, the familiar world of the Woolfian ironic hero. In the final section of the biography, Orlando emerges from the fixed and settled "tunnel" of the past into the daylight world of the present moment, the circumference of the ironic landscape where the pressure of "reality" is so great and the mind so susceptible to the influx of sensation that it becomes very dangerous to live even one day. No device of the conscious mind, it seems, can withstand the hammer-strokes of the clock which assault Orlando's ears this last recorded day of her biography. Her personal past means nothing in the face of the present; her ancestral past avails naught against the agelessness of the earth in the eternal present. Even by fixing her consciousness on the phenomenal world in the present moment she cannot achieve stability because the all-too-real is all-absorbing, all-encompassing, and threatens her apocalyptically with the death

of her consciousness (i.e. absence). The imagination, which replaces the presence of the present with the presence of the absent, is her only weapon against reality. The discovery of this power is the last of Orlando's miraculous escapes.

Orlando's experience begins with a sensation of being shot through the tunnel of the past to emerge in the present moment, ten o'clock in the morning, the eleventh of October, 1928. The striking of the clock is like an "explosion" (O, 268) which causes her to start violently: "For what more terrifying revelation can there be than that it is the present moment?" (O, 268) She defends herself by trying to pay little attention to the "out there": "she did not allow these sights to sink into her mind even the fraction of an inch as she crossed the plank of the present, lest she should fall into the raging torrent beneath" (O, 269). The penalty for this measure is that it allows the dream world to come uppermost. Thus Orlando watching the people on the street sees them as a swarm of bees and has to regain "perspective" by blinking her eyes. For the moment, as she enters Marshall & Snelgrove, the pressure of the present is removed by the power of illusion. In this place of shelter, however, her imagination plays tricks on her eyes. Someone in the fancy-goods department lights a pink candle and Orlando has an apparition of Sasha, the Russian Princess, now grown a stout old woman. The bumping sound of the lift on the ground floor is the sound of a broken pot thrown upon the shore by the waves. And as Orlando leaves the store, Oxford Street is the mountainous

landscape where Orlando has lived with the gypsies. By dipping into the past, she loses sight of the present; and when the clock strikes eleven the shock is overwhelming.

The identity, as the biographer points out, consists of innumerable selves like clocks. The "most successful practitioners of the art of life" (O, 274) contrive that all the selves operate harmoniously. In Orlando, for whom the sense of identity is made up of a continuous succession of selves, memory is a cohesive agent joining the innumerable selves into a single self. But memory is also a "hussy" (O, 74) which plays queer tricks on the mind by joining together the most incongruous of elements in the most illogical fashion. In this context, the present moment represents a redemptive force since it annihilates what might be a false identity and substitutes for it innumerable fragments of identity. This process takes place in Orlando as she motors quickly out of London. Not only are the sights before her eyes chopped up into rudimentary "motifs" of identity, but she herself becomes "disassembled" (O, 276) and is forced to make herself into herself all over again. She calls out her own name, but "Orlando" does not come. What she is looking for is not a familiar role but the "true self" (O, 279), the essential "I," towards which all her roles gravitate. She commences a self-inventory which, since each of the selves in succession either contradicts or disputes the others, turns into a wild goose chase.[12] The self-inventory eventually narrows down to a single paradox. Fame--that is, the winning of personal

immortality by becoming part of historical or racial memory--is for the most part delusion; yet works of art produced by genius seem the only way for humanity to rise above the endless natural cycle of birth and death followed by oblivion. Orlando notices that even though her poem has won a prize and has gone into seven editions, the crowd in the market-place does not even notice her but instead watches a porpoise in the fishmonger's shop.

Fame has another significance, however, outside the personal. The famous is the familiar; it belongs not so much to history as to the everlasting human "family." In To the Lighthouse, when Mr. Ramsay opines that "the stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare" (TTL, 59), he overlooks the fact that Shakespeare is the vehicle and not the "father" of the imaginative vision which lives in his works. In Orlando, Shakespeare is treated as her imaginative predecessor, not her historical ancestor. It is this view of Shakespeare that Orlando now adopts. The recollection prompts her to renew not her absorbing pursuit of fame or immortality, but the pursuit of the "unseizable force," life itself, which alone gives the poet a continuous identity apart from his biological, historical selfhood: "And it was at this moment, when she had ceased to call 'Orlando' and was deep in thoughts of something else, that the Orlando whom she had called came of its own accord" (O, 282).

Thus recollected, Orlando drives up the approach to her ancestral estate. Yet, once inside the place of shelter, she begins once more to wander from the present moment. Clinging

to one last illusion, she fancies that her identity apart from nature is somehow preserved in the house: "She, who believed in no immortality, could not help feeling that her soul would come and go forever with the reds on the panels and the greens on the sofa" (O, 285). She makes her way to the "heart" of the house where the absorbing pursuit is symbolized by the giant tapestry hung there, forever depicting the fictional hunter in pursuit of the mythological nymph: "Still the hunter rode; still Daphne flew" (O, 285). The Keatsian pun on "still" here points out the paradoxical nature of life represented in artifice. However much art appears to defeat the erosive power of time, the timeless world of art is also lifeless. So with the consummate work of generations--Orlando's house. Time has passed over it: "It belonged to time now; to history; was past the touch of the living" (O, 286). As for recapturing life in the past and achieving a continuous identity with what no longer exists, that too is an illusion. Orlando fancies that the long gallery is as "a tunnel bored deep into the past" (O, 287). By looking into its depths she seems to be reversing the flow of time until she attains the distant perspective of a monk. Suddenly, the clock strikes four, demolishing once and for all the tunnel into the past and, with it, the historical identity of Orlando: "Never did any earthquake so demolish a whole town. The gallery and all its occupants fell to powder. Her own face, that had been dark and sombre as she gazed, was lit as by an explosion of gunpowder" (O, 287).[13] The house and its details become bare,

distinct, and insignificant. Its this-worldly presence becomes all-too-clear.

These assaults of time on Orlando are only partly destructive (in the sense that change destroys what seems permanent). But, in a visionary or other-worldly context, they are reconstructive. Memory may be the mother of the muses, but memory is a hussy and the daughters of memory are bothersome deities who would either freeze life, veil it, or flee from it. Time, the trumpet-blower, is the herald of truth--which is ever-changing. The striking of the clock shatters Orlando's bemusement, announcing that the time for truth is always at hand. Recalled thus to the present moment, Orlando is brought back to life. Her face, which is "dark and sombre," is now lit up "as by an explosion of gunpowder." She feels both the bracing effects of immediacy and the terror of expectancy; the exhilaration of renewed pursuit and the awful fear of potential absorption.

Both time and the imagination have the power to change what is into what is not and both have the power to remain untouched by change. When the imagination is under the power of memory, it is essentially powerless because it has already become absorbed in what the narrator of To the Lighthouse calls the "pool of Time" (TTL, 215). When imagination is under the power of sensation, it struggles with time for the possession of "reality." Together, memory and sensation determine the inner and outer limits of the life-rhythms: autism in the mind and selfhood in the body. Orlando, once released from memory,

becomes the slave of sensation. When she is in this state, she enters into a life-and-death struggle with "presence," or this-worldliness which is its immanent form. By great effort, she fixes herself in the present and stands watching Joe Stubbs fashion a cart wheel. The clock strikes the quarter hour, and Orlando is suddenly revolted by the sight of the carpenter's nailless thumb. In the very centre of this crisis, however, her imagination gives birth to a shadow (which is also a pool). The biographer calls this shadow that which "is always absent from the present" (O, 289), that which inspires "terror" (O, 289) as time does, and that which, like time, "has the power to change whatever it adds itself to" (O, 289). This symbol (which anticipates the "central shadow" of The Waves) signifies the power of the imagination united to the Word or Logos. It is the past and present seen from the perspective of the hypothetical future, the "pool or sea in which everything is reflected" (O, 290)--the prophetic or imaginative form that time can take: "This shadow now, while she flickered her eye in her faintness in the carpenter's shop, stole out, and attaching itself to the innumerable sights she had been receiving, composed them into something tolerable, comprehensible" (O, 289). In this context, her Serpentine vision (to which she now returns) becomes clear. Through this vision, she goes beyond "the white arch of a thousand deaths" (O, 290)--beyond the present moment--to a hypothetical or other-worldly present which contains the real present and is not contained by it.

Orlando now makes a final pilgrimage to the great oak tree at the top of the hill to perform the ceremony of burying a copy of her poem, "The Oak Tree." The ambiguous nature of this rite--it is both a fertility rite and a mournful valediction--shows Orlando at her final crisis of poetic identity. She is resistant to a centre-of-emptiness identity constellated with an imaginative identification with the human community chiefly because the public reception of her poem has been shallow and discouraging. Nature, on the other hand, has mothered Orlando's poem, and it is to nature's bosom that Orlando decides to return the poem. Orlando sees nature as her lover (for the time being): "Was not poetry a voice answering a voice? . . . What could have been more secret, she thought, more slow, and like the intercourse of lovers, than the stammering answer she had made all these years?" (O, 272) But, underlying this love of nature is a refusal to relinquish the selfhood, a vestigial snobbery, a possessiveness. No sooner does she reflect that the land "was my land once" (O, 293) than the memory of the homeless gypsies and their barren land rises before her in mockery of her illusory identity with nature. In this apparition, nature itself (including human life) becomes an alien on a gigantic rock in space. This-worldliness, including the personal "I," announces itself the ancient enemy of imagination. (This insight, however, is only implicitly suggested in Orlando and does not get developed explicitly until the end of The Waves when Bernard

recalls the death of the self and his vision of the world seen without a self; therefore, it really belongs to the next stage of Woolf's imaginative development and will be discussed in its place, in the next section.)

Once again, the clock strikes. But this time the disruption is not violent because the pool of the mind is refluent. Now, although nature resumes its usual aspect, Orlando is absorbed in the imaginative world where her husband forever braves the arch of a thousand deaths. She pays no attention to the oak tree now. Instead she calls "Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine!" (O, 294). Poetry is a voice answering a voice; but not the voice of the poet answering the crooning song of nature. The poet represents a second nature, and the poet's voice is answered by the voice of humanity. In the moment of calm that now descends, Orlando waits for the voice to answer her voice. In the moonlight, her ancestral house rises like a "phantom castle" (O, 295) no longer hers. The "dead Queen" (O, 295) appears and Orlando invites her to enter: "'The dead Lord, my father, shall lead you in'" (O, 295). Orlando now waits as the "cold breeze of the present" brushes her cheek. This zephyr of time is transformed into the "roar" of an airplane "coming nearer and nearer" (O, 295). The arrival of Shelmerdine echoes his first appearance in the biography when he rescues Orlando from "death" as the bride of nature. He now rescues her from death in the present moment. His vehicular form, then a horse, now an airplane, becomes the wild goose--the symbol

of that prophetic spirit[14] which always flies out of reach of the present moment. Now, all is contained in the present moment, and when the clock strikes the last stroke of midnight, the sense is not of something which has come to an end but of something which is about to begin.[15]

In her 1928 diary, Woolf wrote that Orlando taught her "how to keep the realities at bay" (AWD, 136). This comment suggests in what sense Woolf does not "explore" in this novel. The "realities" of the out there, the other, and the selfhood are kept at a distance, in Orlando, by the devices of a "biographical" frame, an archetypal protagonist, and a relatively immune (because secluded) narrator. The "reality" problem had yet to be tackled in a form where the imaginative world does not completely envelop what is out there. This might explain why The Waves, the inception of which pre-dates Orlando, went through radical structural changes during the process of composition. Woolf's original plan to have a woman thinking the story (AWD, 102) possibly suggested the autobiographical rhetoric of the selfconscious biographer in Orlando, evident at those points in the story when the story breaks down (Orlando's sex-change, her completion of "The Oak Tree," and her maternal confinement). But while the selfconscious narrator effectively conveys the life-

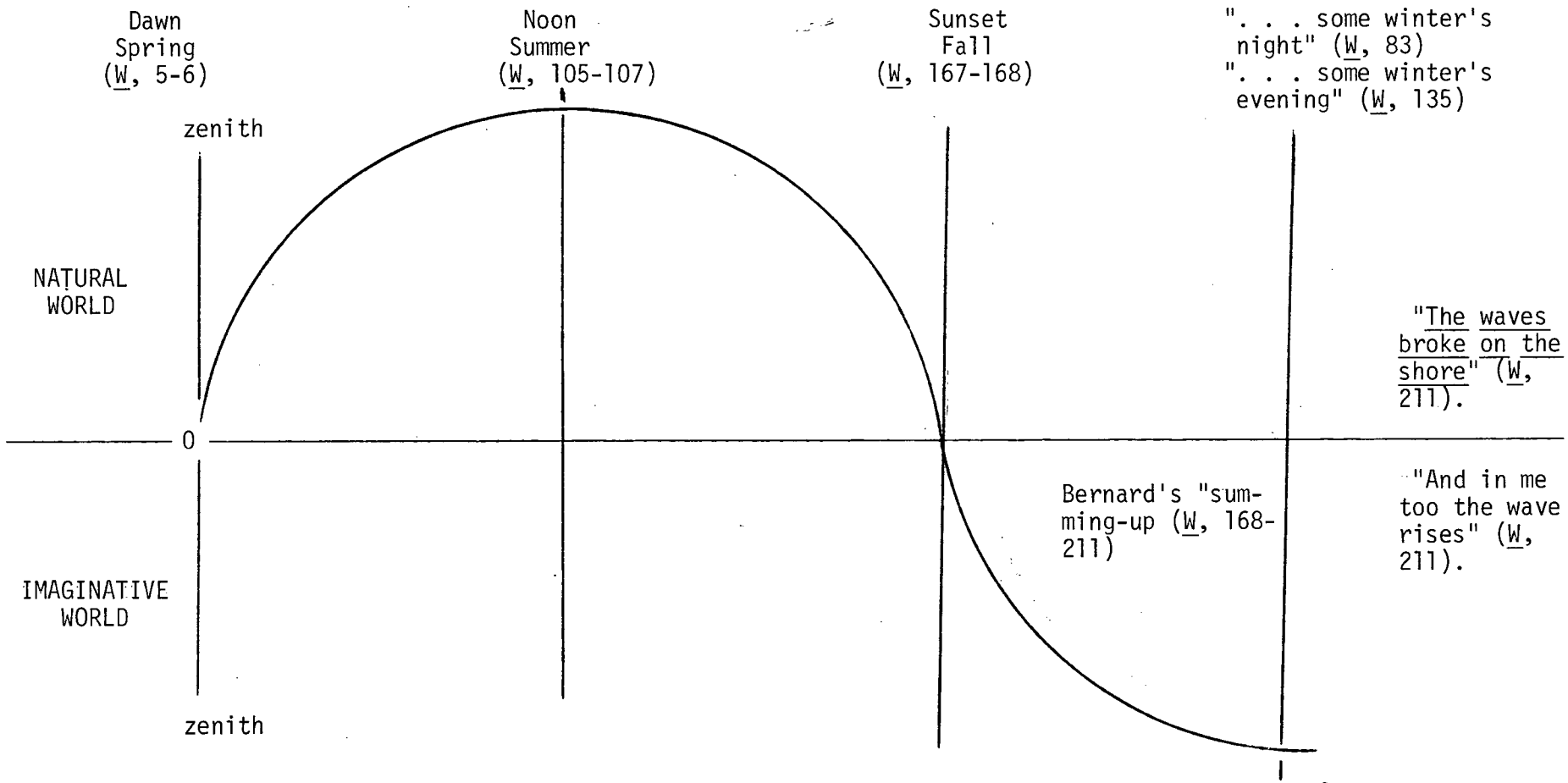
rhythms between the autistic self and the world of history "out there," he is essentially immune to "the eyes of others" (HH, 20). Thus, he exists in a no-man's-land between the mimetic and expressive worlds, even though the reader knows the "biographer" is an imaginative figure. Nor does the figure of Orlando adequately represent (except in the final chapter) the ironic hero because he/she has power--sexual ambience, extended youth, longevity--far above that of the common reader.

The Waves tackles the "reality" problems avoided in Orlando without either collapsing into a lyric structure or becoming absorbed into pure mimesis. The mimetic world is set apart and bracketed in the descriptive interludes, while the expressive world is embodied in the minds of the six protagonists. By means of this structure, Woolf creates a mimesis of the imaginative world which is not absorbed into the lyric "I" of the author but hurled out into a fictional matrix. Thus, the six protagonists represent the human world in its dual aspect: selfhood and imaginative man. The selfhood aspect is grounded in the "out there" and in the fact of the body as perceived by "the eyes of others." Within this complex environment, Woolf creates a dramatic structure. Ranged in dramatic contrast, six variations of imaginative life are presented. Each character responds imaginatively to this-worldliness in a distinctive, characteristic fashion. This does not mean that the characters are necessarily symbolical,

only that they respond differently to their common human power to symbolize that which is not--the other-worldly power of the Word shared by all men.

The form of the novel might be experimental, but its thematic movement--tracing human life from childhood to maturity--is archetypal. Wordsworth's The Prelude, tracing the growth and development of the poetic mind, is an identifiable analogue. Woolf's version, however, substitutes a dramatic for a lyric structure, and views nature ironically as an alien presence which initially seems to provide a model for the developing imagination but actually takes an opposite course altogether from the imaginative movement of the novel. Some critics of The Waves have noted the diurnal and seasonal sequence presented in the interludes (dawn to midnight; spring to winter) and have suggested that these sequences parallel the lives of the protagonists from birth to death. Avrom Fleishman, for example, refers to a juxtaposition of the two prose series "so that the passage from dawn to dusk is paralleled by the passage from youth to age," a movement complemented by "the changing of the seasons from spring to winter."[16] Such a reading, however, misses the irony generated by the adventitious death of Percival in the episode corresponding to midday and summer in the interludes. It would be a mistake to assume that the physical development of the characters parallels the imaginative rhythm of the novel. In fact, a brief outline of the relation between the natural and imaginative cycles in the novel reveals an inverse relation

suggested by Bernard in his summing-up. The natural world presented in the interludes, as Bernard points out, constitutes "that unfeeling universe that sleeps when we are at our quickest and burns red when we lie asleep" (W, 199). The following summary outlines the major developments of the novel's "absorbing pursuit"--the eternal warfare between the natural and imaginative worlds (see diagram, next page): the first descriptive passage presents dawn in spring; the corresponding narrative in the first episode describes the archetypal "fall" in the garden. The imaginative unity of the characters is disrupted by the discovery of the limits imposed by the body. The fifth descriptive interlude presents the sun at its zenith in the summer solstice. The fifth episode, commemorating the death of Percival, represents a "dark night of the soul" which leads to an intensification of the individual characters' sense of personal doom and physical isolation. This is the imaginative nadir of the novel. The eighth interlude presents the onset of night in late autumn leading to winter. This is immediately followed by Bernard's summing-up, the "story" of life that he is destined to tell "some winter's night" (W, 83). This effort of the imagination counteracts the flood of darkness described in the eighth interlude, and in telling the "story" of his life, Bernard absorbs the natural cycle revolving from the spring of childhood to the winter of age. His final trope, addressed to his physical or bodily will, establishes an imaginative return of summer and of youth. He becomes young



THE "ABSORBING PURSUIT" IN THE WAVES

like Percival, with long hair flying back as he rides against death. The epilogue, which describes the waves breaking on the shore, is paradoxical: nature is the enemy that the imagination needs. The imagination itself represents an other-worldly "sea" against which the waves of effort continually break, but are never silenced.

Some readers of The Waves have cited the psychological complexity and linguistic precociousness of the children to suggest that the characters are allegorical masks for an omniscient conciousness.[17] Whether or not such theories are defensible (considering Woolf's refusal to create lyric structures), the unusual sophistication of the children's minds suggests a deliberate departure by the author from the conventional portrayal of childhood as a stage of naïve innocence. To a Romantic, such as Blake or Wordsworth, the child is a symbol of innocence. To Woolf, however, "childlike" and "childish" appear to be interchangeable terms for an imagination incapable of accepting its autonomy from the motherhood of nature. Blake, after the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, divided youth and imagination into two characters (Orc and Los). Woolf shows the same polarization by contrasting the physical self and the imaginative self within one character. James Ramsay, aged six, already shows the severity and probity of a judge; but since he has the body of a child, he is powerless to struggle with his father. Similarly, the six children in The Waves do not

simply represent the state of innocence that, as is often said of such a fabled state, is all too soon lost. They are also imaginative selves trapped in childhood bodies. Thus Louis, who has a vision of himself as an ancient bard, is limited by the fact that he is also "'a boy in a grey flannel suit'" (W, 9); and Rhoda, who imagines herself mistress of a fleet of sailing vessels, is also a little girl who dreams of escaping from her aunt on spring-heeled boots.

In the first episode, the "fall" into selfhood assumes two crisic forms: the garden crisis and the crisis with the symbolic sea. The garden crisis involves the concept of nature as mother-earth. Louis's vision of himself as a world-tree (recalling Orlando's identity with the oak tree) suggests the innocent garden world before the fall: "'I am green as a yew tree in the shade of the hedge. My hair is made of leaves. I am rooted to the middle of the earth'" (W, 9). Louis's consoling vision of selfhood protects him from having to acknowledge his physical limitation. His "fall" occurs when Jinny kisses him. The danger of a garden-world identity, as perceived by Jinny, is that, since the vegetable world is inanimate, an identification of consciousness with the vegetable world implies a death-in-life. Her crucial moment-of-being in the first episode begins with a shock at perceiving that the leaves behind the hedge seem to be alive. This projection by Jinny of animate life onto the vegetable world strains her logical powers. She fails to explain the illusion in reasoning that a bird on its nest has made the leaves flutter :

"'I parted [the leaves] and looked; but there was no bird on a nest. The leaves went on moving. I was frightened'" (W, 9). Her sublime moment reaches its crisis of inundation when she perceives Louis "green as a bush, like a branch, very still" (W, 9). She recovers by kissing Louis and bringing him back to life. Harmony is restored for her by his awakening. She is thus freed from the terrifying illusion that her heart is of the same order of nature as the moving leaves. She regains an awareness of the unseizable force in the individual, which is distinct from the animation of the leaves by the external force of the wind. For Louis, by extension, the kiss is a redeeming action which reminds him that he is not a tree rooted in the earth, however much he deplores this discovery. Susan, who has been looking at her "flower-pot" (W, 9), shares Louis's illusion of being grounded in the garden-world. When she sees Jinny kiss Louis, her illusion is likewise shattered, and she is driven to a radical search for union with nature: "'I shall sleep under hedges and drink water from ditches and die there'" (W, 10). Susan is redeemed by Bernard who, by means of allegory, points out the alien nature of the garden world. Exploring the garden, they go through a sea-change as they "sink through the green air of the leaves" (W, 11) to emerge in "Elvedon" (W, 12). In this other-worldly setting, Bernard points out the tyrant "out there," who is, naturally enough, the gardener. He casts the gardener in the role of enemy from whom escape *is* possible. Even though Susan lacks Bernard's imaginative power,

she "sees" the fictional world, and that sight recovers for her the power of action. The alien vision of the garden-world achieves its apotheosis in Neville's experience of "death among the apple trees" (W, 17). The crisis of this sublime moment is precipitated by the violent death of a villager, the news of which reaches Neville while he is looking at an apple tree. The leaves of the apple tree become "fixed" (W, 17). Neville only overcomes this "unintelligible obstacle" (W, 18) by means of a reaction-formation that takes the form of a concept of doom. In later life, he achieves a stability by identifying with a series of youthful Eros-figures, but the price of this identification is a dissolution of individuality in his concept of "the other," so that reason overcomes the sublime crisis at the expense of the sympathetic powers. This psychic adjustment is ultimately autistic, since it requires keeping "reality" at arm's length. Thus Neville is doomed always to live in carefully prearranged places of shelter.

The crisis with the symbolic sea is more pervasive than the garden crisis in this episode. Neville and Bernard, who make toy boats, and Rhoda, who makes petals swim in a basin, all identify with reality in terms of the vessel of consciousness afloat on a sea of reality. For all three characters, the consciousness is defined in terms of artifice. For Rhoda, it is a vessel; for Neville, a knife which separates "I" from "not I"; for Bernard, the power of the word. For Neville and Bernard, artifice is a basis for varying degrees of identification with "the other." Bernard's phrase-making creates "an insubstantial

territory" (W, 11) among consciousnesses; Neville's more limited adjustment realizes itself in a phallic hero-worship. For Rhoda, however, the ego structure collapses during the crisis of inundation. She is unable to achieve a meaningful transformation of the "out there" (indicated by her inability to identify with her own body) and thus cannot establish identification with "the other." She strongly resembles Rachel Vinrace and Septimus Warren Smith, a resemblance which provides a clue to her sublime crisis. Like Rachel and Septimus, Rhoda is denied access to her own unseizable force (the erotic instinct) chiefly because she is psychologically amphibious. In other words she has not been successful in distinguishing herself from the oceanic mother. Significantly, Rhoda's "tyrants" in this episode are symbolic mother figures: Miss Hudson who forces her to remain in the schoolroom when the others have left, Mrs. Constable and her aunt who appear in Rhoda's dream of being pursued at the end of the episode. Her recurring evocations of wasteland and flood throughout the novel typify the state of perpetual crisis of a consciousness that is never able to achieve a stable identity.

In contrast to Rhoda's crisis of inundation is Bernard's symbolic baptism near the end of the episode. The evening bath dramatizes Bernard's happy adjustment to the liminal world between the self and the "out there." Of all the characters, Bernard most successfully alternates between autism and perception (including sensation). The stream of water Mrs. Constable pours

over Bernard not only defines his body to him ("'I am covered with warm flesh'" [W, 19]) but also becomes the basis for an inner stream or reservoir of consciousness that underlies his power of phrase-making: "'Rich and heavy sensations form on the roof of my mind; down showers the day--the woods; and Elvedon; Susan and the pigeon. Pouring down the walls of my mind, running together, the day falls copious, resplendent'" (W, 19). Thus, for Bernard, the sublime influx comes not as a homogeneous inundation but as a stream of discrete scenes which form the basis of the poetic consciousness. The sense of doom that haunts Neville and Rhoda, Bernard is able to overcome by putting it into phrases and stories.[18]

In the second episode, scenes from the boys' and girls' schools are juxtaposed to show the different ways the sexes are initiated into the forms established by tradition to deal with the pervasive sense of doom in human life. The boys are provided with two general patterns for identification: religion and athletics. The Christian tradition, to this point in Woolf's fiction, has been presented as a rather ambiguous solution to the problem of identity. While a character like Septimus Warren Smith bears similarities to the passive Christian hero who gives his life for the redemption of the soul, other characters like Nurse McInnis (The Voyage Out) and Doris Kilman (Mrs. Dalloway) demonstrate the joylessness and life-denying aspects of Christianity. In The Waves, only Louis, conditioned by an a priori reverence for tradition and authority, identifies with the Christian pattern. His respect for the Headmaster,

Dr. Crane, who wears a crucifix on his waistcoat, is psychologically motivated by his own need for respect and belonging. He remembers, with humiliation, being forgotten when Christmas presents were distributed, and like Doris Kilman, Louis achieves identity in religion, a feeling of belonging he does not get from his fellows: "'I recover my continuity as he reads. I become a figure in a procession, a spoke in the huge wheel that turning, at last erects me, here and now'" (W, 25). Louis later replaces this communal identification with a project to become a member of the poetic brotherhood: "'Our boyish, our irresponsible years are over. But we have forged certain links. Above all, we have inherited traditions. These stone flags have been worn for six hundred years. On these walls are inscribed the names of men of war, of statesmen, of some unhappy poets (mine shall be among them). Blessing be on all traditions, on all safeguards and circumscriptions!'" (W, 42) But the price of worshipping the Goddess of Conversion is a shrivelling of the humanitarian impulse. Louis later becomes a proselytizing tyrant hoping to bind all men together in a "'steel ring of clear poetry'" (W, 92).

Neville regards Christianity as a "sad religion" (W, 25), a cold ritual offering only an unimaginative identification with grief-stricken victims. His last impression of "the statue of our pious founder" (W, 44) before leaving the school forever is both mocking and irreverent: "'There, for the last time, I see the statue of our pious founder with the doves about

his head. They will wheel for ever about his head, whitening it, while the organ moans in the chapel'" (W, 44). Bernard, whose gift it is to reject nothing wholly, shares Neville's dissatisfaction with the Hebraic tradition, but also absorbs his impressions of the pious Headmaster into the effulgent stream of consciousness in which he dwells. He conceives of Dr. Crane's sermon as a "growl" (W, 26), a grindstone that crushes life and destroys beauty: "'He has minced the dance of the white butterflies at the door to powder'" (W, 26). This phrase becomes potentially useful to him, and he plans to enter "butterfly powder" in his writer's notebook. Likewise, his way of reducing the sublime figure of Dr. Crane to human proportions is to make up a slightly irreverent story about him (W, 36) to amuse Neville. Bernard's story is not simply a triumph of defensive irony, however. In fictionalizing Dr. Crane, Bernard locates the Headmaster's sense of personal doom and his inability to escape the majestic oratorical role-playing he is known for: "'What forces, he asks, staring at the gas-fire with his shoulders hunched up more hugely than we know them (he is in his shirt-sleeves remember), have brought me to this? What vast forces? he thinks, getting into the stride of his majestic phrases as he looks over his shoulder at the window'" (W, 36). Even though this story foreshadows Bernard's own ironic helplessness before his own role-playing in the final sublime paragraph of The Waves, Bernard's insight into the human condition is itself a triumph over ironic heroism.

An alternative route to achieving stability, besides the Christian model, is the Hellenic tradition, which prescribes a harmony between the soul and the body. In Jacob's Room, Woolf subjects this model to stern scrutiny, finding its inherent cult of beauty lacking in breadth of humanity. Since beauty (in Woolf's view) is not always truth, beauty can be dangerously seductive. But the code of athletic heroism, examined in the character of Percival, suggests a further component of the Hellenic tradition which parallels the imaginative activities of ritual and magic. The ethos of gamesmanship is founded on a vision of nature as pure potentiality. Nature is simply a space. The game is constructed upon a hypothetical imaginative matrix of borders and territories. Outside the magic lines the forces of chaos and formlessness reign. But inside the border, the world of experience is orderly and serene, regulated as it is by rules. What is "magic" about the game is that it implies that physical skills, a knowledge of the rules, and perseverance--the qualities of the athletic hero--somehow indicate an equal mastery over the undefined territory of life itself. By identifying with an athletic hero we are projecting onto another human being our imaginative desire to have mastery over the "out there." Orlando performs this ritual when she identifies imaginatively with Shel's mastery over the waves. In The Waves, Percival becomes a seductive figure who encourages by example an implicit belief in the power of the selfhood over that of nature. That his allure is deceptive and thwarts the development of the

logical imagination is not realized until his death in a polo game shows that even athletic heroes are no match for the absurdities of life. For Neville, Percival is a more effective symbol of a "god" than is the "stricken figure of Christ" (W, 25). Christ's death implies human limitation, whereas the figure of Percival seems to Neville immortal: "'He sees nothing; he hears nothing. He is remote from us all in a Pagan universe'" (W, 25-26). For Louis, Percival's prowess is a painful reminder of his own limited selfhood. Percival inspires belief; Louis, only ridicule. Louis can never be sure whether Percival really is superhuman. Louis's mistake, of course, is his emphasizing the bodily rather than other-worldly human power epitomized in Percival. This power, which is inherent in the imaginations of all men, Louis projects outside himself. And as long as the sense of imaginative power is "out there" it is hopelessly beyond him: "'it is Percival I need; for it is Percival who inspires poetry'" (W, 29). For Bernard, too, Percival represents the accusing selfhood of "the other." Yet, Bernard's reaction to Percival is not one of envy. Since Percival inspires belief, he saps Bernard's power of make-believe. Bernard knows that the fanciful stories he tells are not true; but they lighten and sustain others in the face of this-worldliness. The presence of Percival, however, encourages Bernard to make his stories believable (hence, this-worldly). But, for Bernard, this would be a mistake. Without benefit of fantasy, he would be unable to convince his "patrons" that the

belief in what is not is man's only weapon against doom. In Bernard, himself, self-consciousness creeps in. And, when this happens, his powers fail. This is truly death, as Neville somehow intuits:

> ". . . Bernard goes on talking. Up they bubble--images. 'Like a camel,' ... 'a vulture.' The camel is a vulture; the vulture a camel; for Bernard is a dangling wire, loose, but seductive. Yes, for when he talks, when he makes his foolish comparisons, a lightness comes over one. One floats, too, as if one were that bubble; one is freed; I have escaped, one feels . . . . And then we all feel Percival lying heavy among us. His curious guffaw seems to sanction our laughter. But now he has rolled himself over in the long grass. He is, I think, chewing a stalk between his teeth. He feels bored; I too feel bored. Bernard at once perceives that we are bored. I detect a certain effort, an extravagance in his phrase, as if he said 'Look!' but Percival says 'No.' For he is always the first to detect insincerity; and is brutal in the extreme. The sentence tails off feebly. Yes, the appalling moment has come when Bernard's power fails him and there is no longer any sequence and he sags and twiddles a bit of string and falls silent, gaping as if about to burst into tears. Among the tortures and devastations of life is this then--our friends are not allowed to finish their stories."
>
> (W, 27-28)

Despite Neville's insight here, his last statement undercuts Bernard's crisis, and only after Percival is dead (and the pressure of his selfhood is removed) can Bernard regain his imaginative power by identifying with Percival as a fellow ironic hero.

At the girls' school, education into traditional cultural patterns of identification takes a different form. Religious and athletic rituals are observed here too, but the emphasis is on identification with the bodily self-image. The

supreme survivor in this environment is Jinny, whose imagination is the body's (W, 92). Significantly, Jinny is the best athlete of the three: "'Everything in my body seems thinned out with running and triumph'" (W, 33). For Susan, separated from the imaginative influence of Bernard, the school experience is an agony and an emptiness, and she regresses to her old habit of burying her anguish, figuratively, in the ground. She tears the pages from the calendar, rolls them into a ball and tosses them into the trash basket. Her instincts are to give, and to possess in solitude. She is already forming her future role as participant in the generative cycle adding to the increase of nature--a role which is meaningless in the absence of an imaginative vision, but becomes extremely significant in Woolf's last fictions (see below, Ch. 9) allied as it is to the rejuvenating power of time. For Rhoda, the instinct for natural increase is an odious, blind animal self-absorption that wastes the potential for freedom immanent in every moment. Later in life, she will accuse human nature of wasting the blank spaces that lie between the hour and hour. For her, the force that drives the body through birth, growth, maturity, and decline is like an "emerging monster to whom we are attached" (W, 47). In general, the girls' identificatory patterns involve romantic attachments to a conceived "lover," or significant other. Susan is fixated on her father, indicating her fascination with the generative sequence--she later identifies with her children. Jinny's animal magnetism is conditioned by a social instinct;

hence, her promiscuity (and affinity for the series of skirt-chasers who bed with her). Rhoda's romantic instinct is mediated through art as expressed in Shelley's "The Question": "'To whom shall I give all that flows now through me, from my warm my porous body? I will gather my flowers and present them--Oh! to whom?'" (W, 41).[19]

In the thrid episode a further division in the character groupings occurs when Susan leaves Jinny and Rhoda to live in the country, and Louis leaves Bernard and Neville to work in the city. The "room" settings in this episode convey the same dual theme of security/ isolation that Woolf examines in Jacob's Room. Here, the theme is further elaborated by the interpolation of identity between the natural self and "the other." Thus, the room stands not only for ego identity, but also for the experiential no-man's land created by the conjunction of individual life-rhythms. In this "unsubstantial territory," the room becomes the arena for the crises of inundation/ vacancy to take place in, the index of too much and too little stimulation from "the other." Thus, the process of identity-formation, in this novel, is not so much a function of solitary contact with the "out there" as an interaction between the natural life and one's imagination. As Woolf notes in her 1926 diary, the consciousness of "oneself" cannot really exist in solitude because in solitude "it is not oneself but something in the universe that one's left with" (AWD, 101).

Bernard's untidy room at Cambridge resembles the lumber room of his own mind. At the same time, it is a refuge from the social self who creates "the single impression" (W, 55). The Bernard who is "evasive" in public is "complex and many" in private. Yet, the security of the private room is also Bernard's undoing. By isolating him from the contact of others, the room creates an autistic world: "'The truth is that I need the stimulus of other people. Alone, over my dead fire, I tend to see the thin places in my own stories'" (W, 58). Bernard's solution to the problem of autism, at this point, is to identify with the poets of the past. He emulates Byron. But even this identification is unreal, as Neville is quick to point out (W, 62-63). It is Neville himself, in Bernard's room, who sends out from his eyes the arrows of perception that fix Bernard's identity:

> "O friendship, how piercing are your darts--there, there, again there. He looked at me, turning to face me; he gave me his poem. All mists curl off the roof of my being. That confidence I shall keep to my dying day. Like a long wave, like a roll of heavy waters, he went over me, his devastating presence--dragging me open, laying bare the pebbles on the shore of my soul. It was humiliating; I was turned to small stones. All semblances were rolled up. 'You are not Byron; you are your self.' To be contracted by another person into a single being--how strange."
>
> (W, 64)

After Neville leaves, Bernard's "familiars" (W, 64) come out of hiding. But now Bernard looks out the window and listens to the "rollicking chorus" (W, 65) of some boys shouting hunting

songs. He also sees a "contrast" (W, 66), an old woman walking home with her shopping bag. The true complexity, Bernard realizes, is the complexity of the "out there."

Neville's sense of identity more strongly suggests autism than does Bernard's. When Neville is "out there" he is able to join things together by means of a poetic rhythm: "'Now begins to rise in me the familiar rhythm; words that have lain dormant now lift, now toss their crests, and fall and rise, and fall and rise again'" (W, 59). But, alone in his room, Neville fails to maintain this rhythm because he shuts the world out:

> "I am the most slavish of students, with here a dictionary, there a notebook in which I enter curious uses of the past participle. But one cannot go on for ever cutting these ancient inscriptions clearer with a knife. Shall I always draw the red serge curtain close and see my book, laid like a block of marble, pale under the lamp?"
>
> (W, 63)

For Louis, who is homeless, the problem of identity is even more difficult to solve. He sits with his book in an eating-house where he perceives the expansion and contraction of some "central rhythm . . . the common mainspring" (W, 68), but he is excluded from it because he is an exile. Meanwhile, the door of the diner is perpetually opening and closing, exposing Louis to a perpetual sublime influx. Since Louis is shut out from the central rhythm, he overcomes inundation by invoking the illogical imagination. He regresses to his child-hood dream of being a world-tree rooted in the earth's centre.

Under the influence of this oneiric consciousness, the "out there" is dissolved into nothingness. His identity, thus, fluctuates between the sleeping and waking worlds--the illogical vision of eternity and the present disorder of the eating house: "'I am for ever sleeping and waking. Now I sleep; now I wake. I see the gleaming tea-urn; the glass cases full of pale-yellow sandwiches; the men in round coats perched on stools at the counter; and also behind them, eternity. It is a stigma burnt on my quivering flesh by a cowled man with a red-hot iron'" (W, 69).

Susan's "room," resembling the house-and-garden world of the descriptive interludes, is her father's farm in the country. She achieves in reality that rootedness in the natural world Louis can only dream about. Susan's identity takes the form of animal self-absorption. She is not wakened by the disorder of civilization but by the wind lifting the blind and the birds singing in chorus. She does not identify herself as a woman, but rather as an intergal part of nature's vast cycle. She associates the "hard thing" (W, 71) that has formed in her side with her maternal vocation. She speculates on her future husband: "'What has formed in me I shall give him. I shall have children'" (W, 71). Thus, she becomes part of the sequence of generations, herself indistinguishable from the natural cycle in which she lives. Isolated, however, from the eyes of others, she senses a vacancy. As she sits with her sewing in the evening, she remembers the garden of childhood, and the scene of her primal jealousy: "'I sit with my sewing by the

table. I think of Jinny; of Rhoda; and hear the rattle of wheels on the pavement as the farm horses plod home; I hear traffic roaring in the evening wind. I look at the quivering leaves in the dark garden and think 'They dance in London. Jinny kisses Louis'"(W, 72).

Susan's adjustment to the rhythms of nature is also an adjustment to the cycle of day and night. Jinny, on the other hand, identifies with the artificial light of civilization, which ignores the onset of night: "'I feel myself shining in the dark. Silk is on my knee. My legs rub smoothly together. The stones of a necklace lie cold on my throat. My feet feel the pinch of shoes. I sit bolt upright so that my hair may not touch the back of the seat. I am arrayed, I am prepared'" (W, 73). She finds her identity as a happy warrior in the daily battle of society life: "'I pass them, exposed to their gaze as they are to mine. Like lightning we look but do not soften or show sign of recognition'" (W, 73). The rhythm of the dance figures in this world--the almost involuntary rhythm of an "unseizable force" constricted into geometric patterns:

> "Now with a little jerk, like a limpet broken off from a rock, I am broken off: I fall with him; I am carried off. We yield to this slow flood. We go in and out of this hesitating music. Rocks break the current of the dance; it jars, it shivers. In and out we are swept now into this large figure; it holds us together; we cannot step outside its sinuous, its hesitating, its abrupt, its perfectly encircling walls. Our bodies, his hard, mine flowing, are pressed together within its body; it holds us together; and then lengthening out, in smooth, in sinuous folds, rolls us between it, on and on."
>
> (W, 74)

The images of bodies united in the dance and of the sinuous collective body recall by contrast Rachel Vinrace's terrified reaction to a similar dance scene and Helen Ambrose's vision of nature as a "reasonless law like a snake," in The Voyage Out. The reactive difference here (Jinny's ecstasy) is due to a thematic polarization between the natural cycle and erotic energy (embodied, respectively, in Susan and Jinny) in The Waves. No longer are the remorseless natural cycle and the "unseizable force" which is the basis of all art and civilization envisioned as one and the same. Jinny opposes the natural cycle and aligns herself with the spirit of civilization.

In the light of this distinction between the natural and human worlds, Rhoda's reaction of terror at the party is not in response to the dance itself but to the sublime influx coming from "the other." As in the eating-house scene, the focus of the sublime influx here is the "door." Jinny, who continually seeks sensation, looks expectantly and hopefully at the door: "'The door opens. The door goes on opening. Now I think, next time it opens the whole of my life will be changed'" (W, 75). Rhoda fears most the crisis that will destroy her dream world when she turns her gaze "out there": "'The door opens; the tiger leaps. The door opens; terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me'" (W, 75). To protect herself, she looks out the window. Unlike Bernard, who seeks "'the rollicking chorus'" of life itself, Rhoda sees only a silent dream world when she looks "out there": "'When I have passed through this

drawing-room flickering with tongues that cut me like knives, making me stammer, making me lie, I find faces rid of features, robed in beauty. The lovers crouch under the plane tree. The policeman stands sentinel at the corner. A man passes. There is, then, a world immune from change'" (W, 77). The dream world partially protects her from the shocks of reality, but the dream world is itself an inundating force, unless checked by reality. Thus, Rhoda remains helpless between two worlds. Her final statement, "'I am also a girl, here in this room'" (W, 77), is not only a desperate acceptance of the limitations of the body; it is also an incantatory formula for survival against the imaginative flood (bordering on psychosis) that has her perpetually in thrall.

In the dinner-party episode which follows, the room-as-identity image (together with the door-as-influx image) is elaborated into a communal quest for identification. In this quest, the figure of Percival is made to stand for the "lover" (or common imaginative "body") of each of the six characters. At this point, the quest is still this-worldly because Percival physically represents the athletic hero whose success in a circumscribed and ritualized model of the "out there" implies (by identification) the power of each of the characters to gain mastery over the sense of doom coming from the "out there." That Percival's "heroic" nature is the effect of imaginative projection cannot be too strongly stressed. Each of the characters responds to him in a characteristic identificatory

pattern established in youth (a fact which is made clearer in their later adjustments to the news of his death).

Bernard's speech, leading up to the dinner party, expresses the plight of poetic consciousness under the pressure of this-worldliness. He attempts to polarize the centre-of-emptiness identity and the natural in-the-body identity, while aligning himself with the former. Momentarily, in the train, he identifies with an imaginative community opposed to the natural this-worldliness of the city: "'We are about to explode in the flanks of the city like a shell in the side of some ponderous, maternal, majestic animal'" (W, 80). But this other-worldly identity fails chiefly because Bernard's recent engagement to be married aligns him (like Susan) with the natural generative cycle: "'It is, however, true that I cannot deny a sense that life for me is now mysteriously prolonged. Is it that I may have children, may cast a fling of seed wider, beyond this generation, this doom-encircled population, shuffling each other in endless competition along the street? My daughters shall come here, in other summers; my sons shall turn new fields'" (W, 82). In contrast to this "'central stability"' (W, 82) of continuity, the poetic identity is ephemeral, not because it is centred in vacancy, but because the continuity of the story seems nothing but a sequence of transitory bubbles without the confirmation of the reader's sublime: "'I conceive myself called upon to provide, some winter's night, a meaning for all my observations--a line that runs from one to another, a

summing up that completes. But soliloquies in back streets soon pall. I need an audience. That is my downfall. That always ruffles the edge of the final statement and prevents it from forming'" (W, 83). Thus, Bernard remains in a liminal world, shrinking from his poetic destiny to be a self without a self and unable to maintain a this-worldly identity in day-to-day living. His anticipation of the dinner-party with his friends is, thus, ambivalent. The dinner party has an imaginative destiny as an "unsubstantial territory" encompassing the poet's and reader's sublime; but Bernard's fear of vacancy drives him to a this-worldly identification with his friends in order to form a community of bodies in opposition against nature. This identification is doomed chiefly because nature controls the selfhood--nature alone possesses the power of physical life and physical death.

As noted earlier, the presence of the this-worldly community at the dinner party is epitomized in the "presence" of Percival as the object of this-worldly identification. Neville's identification, as he waits for Percival to come through the door of the dining-room, is conditioned by an earlier experience at Cambridge: "'Yesterday, passing the open door leading into the private garden, I saw Fenwick with his mallet raised . . . . Then descended upon me the obscure, the mystic sense of adoration, of completeness that triumphed over chaos. Nobody saw my poised and intent figure as I stood at the open door. Nobody guessed the need I had to offer my being to one god; and perish, and disappear'" (W, 37). The same illogical mysticism undercuts

the real world of the dining-room: "'Already the room, with its swing-doors, its tables heaped with fruit, with cold joints, wears the wavering, unreal appearance of a place where one waits expecting something to happen'" (W, 85). Weakened by the irreality of such expectations, Bernard's vision of an imaginative community fails to rouse Neville's sympathies: "'Now, perceiving us, he waves a benevolent salute; he bears down with such benignity, with such a love of mankind (crossed with humour at the futility of 'loving mankind'), that, if it were not for Percival, who turns all this to vapour, one would feel: Now is our festival; now we are together. But without Percival there is no solidity. We are silhouettes, hollow phantoms moving mistily without a background'" (W, 87).

Percival's presence sharpens the sense of this-worldly identity in each of the six characters by creating a substantial territory of selfhood. The fatuousness of such an identity lies in its being grounded in nature (that is, the physical presence of the youthful Percival) so that, unlike an identity founded in the imaginative centre of emptiness, it is subject to the erosive powers of time and death. Only Bernard, whose gift it is to suspect the permanence of the moment--"for what endures?" (W, 91)--sees the futility of the this-worldly identity. But, engaged to be married, Bernard compromises his other-worldliness and willingly acquiesces to the group's view of Percival as a "hero" (W, 88).

The assembled friends take refuge in the selfhood because they fear the Word (Bernard's ultimate source of identity). Speech threatens to disclose the centre of emptiness which their this-worldly imaginations cannot face. "'This talking,'" says Susan, "'is undressing an old woman whose dress had seemed to be part of her, but now, as we talk, she turns pinkish underneath, and has wrinkled thighs and sagging breasts. When you are silent you are again beautiful'" (W, 94). Neville insinuates that words are only "crazy platforms" (W, 99) and that "[s]peech is false" (W, 99). According to Susan, the centre of emptiness is a "furious coal-black stream that makes us dizzy if we look down into it" (W, 98). When the annihilation of selfhood is thus threatened by the negative sublime, the imagination turns illogical. Thus, the characters execute a general reactive identification--they substitute for the rushing stream their several illogical "god" constructs. Rhoda identifies with an abstract geometrical anagoge perceived in a "hollow" by the seashore:

> "There, on the short, firm turf, are bushes, dark leaved, and against their darkness I see a shape, white, but not of stone, moving, perhaps alive. But it is not you, it is not you, it is not you; not Percival, Susan, Jinny, Neville or Louis. When the white arm rests upon the knee it is a triangle; now it is upright--a column; now a fountain, falling. It makes no sign, it does not beckon, it does not see us. Behind it roars the sea. It is beyond our reach."
>
> (W, 99)

Neville, contradicting Rhoda, identifies with a personal Eros-figure: "'One waits and he does not come. It gets later and later. He has forgotten. He is with someone else. He is faithless, his love meant nothing. Oh, then the agony--then the intolerable despair! And then the door opens. He is here'" (W, 100). Jinny identifies with an apocalyptic sun-god: "'Our hands touch, our bodies burst into fire. The chair, the cup, the table--nothing remains unlit. All quivers, all kindles, all burns clear'" (W, 100). Louis identifies with the brutish red-eared common man (W, 101) whom the bardic poet must somehow integrate with the eternal procession of humanity. Susan and Bernard, the one loved by Percival and the other engaged to be married, identify with what Bernard calls the "central stability" of the human race; that is, the principle of generative renewal. "'Everything is now set,'" says Susan, "'everything is fixed. Bernard is engaged. Something irrevocable has happened. A circle has been cast on the waters; a chain is imposed. We shall never flow freely again'" (W, 102).

But inevitably, the crisis of vacancy passes; and Bernard is the first to celebrate its end: "'The stone is sunk; the moment is over. Round me there spreads a wide margin of indifference. Now open in my eyes a thousand eyes of curiosity. Anyone now is at liberty to murder Bernard, who is engaged to be married, so long as they leave untouched this margin of unknown territory, this forest of the unknown world'" (W, 103). It is also worth noting that Bernard's contribution to the

final epiphanic moment--"this globe whose walls are made of Percival" (W, 104)--is his adaptability. He embodies the spirit of change, "like some supernal quicksilver" (W, 104).[20]

As in To the Lighthouse, the major crisis of vacancy in The Waves--the death of Percival--occurs in the central section of the book. But, whereas the deaths in the former novel occur in the archetypal night (represented in the "night's darkness" of the "Time Passes" episode), Percival's death coincides with high noon in the archetypal day defined in the descriptive interludes. Percival's death suggests an eclipse of the noon-day sun (Bernard later adopts this image to define his own death of self in the period preceding the final summing-up). The effect of this image, thematically, is to undermine the archetypal identity of the diurnal arc with the biographical passage of life from birth to death. The corresponding epiphany amounts to a denial of Percival's identity as a sun-god. What is disclosed instead is the inhumanity of natural patterns and the non-natural identity of the human world. Therefore, the crisis of vacancy that occurs as a result of Percival's death thus provides the six protagonists with a unique opportunity for imaginative apocalypse: a disclosure of the other-worldly identity of humankind. However, the sense of selfhood (grounded in nature) is still so strong that either they cannot forego the temptation to cast Percival in the role of a dying fertility god, or they make him symbolical in some other way. In this sense, Percival's death does not, as it might, lead to a vision of

common unity. Instead, it sharpens the contrast between self and self by aggravating what Woolf, in her diary, calls the "screen-making habit," the habit of reducing "the other" to a selfhood: "But all this is a great mistake. These screens shut me out. Have no screens, for screens are made of our own integument; and get at the thing itself, which has nothing whatever in common with a screen" (AWD, 97). Only Bernard, who holds suspect the neat symmetry and superficial truth of "stories," which reduce "the other" to a defined "character," is capable of seeing that "one life" should be conceived neither as a personal possession of the self or of "the other," nor as a symbolic abstraction. Even for him, this discovery is not made until his own screen-making habit collapses in the period preceding the final summing-up.

The process of screen-making continues in the several sections leading up to the reunion dinner, for which reason these episodes will be discussed here as a single unit. The conventional pathos of bereavement, an undoubtable feature of the characters' experience in this novel, has received the attention of many readers of the novel, but at the expense of a minimizing the essential selfishness of the bereaved. The tyrant for sympathy is of course familiar to Woolf. As pointed out in Chapter Seven, the figure of Mr. Ramsay as widower "like a lion seeking whom he could devour" (TTL, 241) is the apotheosis of such tyranny. No less than the "sin of indifference," the sin of sympathy-mongering is self-centred and leads to a

rejection of the imaginative community. Not one of the characters in The Waves is untouched by at least one of these two forms of selfishness.

Neville, whose relation to Percival is that of the conventional erotic lover, condemns the human stream that passes the window where he holds the fatal telegram: "'Women shuffle past the window as if there were no gulf cut in the street, no tree with stiff leaves which we cannot pass. We deserve then to be tripped by molehills. We are infinitely abject, shuffling past with our eyes shut'" (W, 108). Yet, he exempts himself from the general condemnation, first by striking the pose of the anchoritic sufferer, finally by casting himself in the role of scapegoat: "'Women shuffle past with shopping-bags. People keep on passing. Yet you shall not destroy me. For this moment, this one moment, we are together. I press you to me. Come pain, feed on me. Bury your fangs in my flesh. Tear me asunder. I sob, I sob'" (W, 109). In the sixth episode, however, this pose has failed as Neville effects a new erotic attachment: "'You are you. That is what consoles me for the lack of many things--I am ugly, I am weak--and the depravity of the world, and the flight of youth and Percival's death, and bitterness and rancour and envies innumerable'" (W, 129). The point is not that Neville has "betrayed" Percival, only that in loving the selfhood of Percival rather than the humanity in Percival, Neville loves only this-worldliness--that which can be possessed, that which can die, and that

which can be superseded by another as his present object of love will inevitably be superseded: "'But if one day you do not come after breakfast, if one day I see you in some looking-glass perhaps looking after another, if the telephone buzzes and buzzes in your empty room, I shall then, after unspeakable anguish, I shall then--for there is no end to the folly of the human heart--seek another, find another you'" (W, 129). Neither does Neville achieve an imaginative identification via the reader's sublime because, like Mrs. Ramsay, he misreads poetry as a belief system. Just as Mrs. Ramsay interprets Shakespeare's "From you I have been absent in the spring" in terms of her dependency relationship with her husband, so Neville reduces the heroes of classical poetry to symbols of his personal lovers: "'Colours always stain the page; clouds pass over it. And the poem, I think, is only your voice speaking. Alcibiades, Ajax, Hector and Percival are also you'" (W, 129). In this association, the deceased Percival is merely a symbol. Even in middle age, when Neville seems to have lost the egotism of youth and is able to find impersonal satisfaction in poetry ("'Nothing is to be rejected in fear or horror'" [W, 141]), he has not essentially changed: "'Then I hear the one sound I wait for. Up and up it comes, approaches, hesitates, stops at my door. I cry, "Come in. Sit by me. Sit on the edge of the chair." Swept away by the old hallucination, I cry, "Come closer, closer"'" (W, 142).

Rhoda's reaction to Percival's death is an increase of her loathing for humanity. The human stream becomes a procession

of ugly faces: "' . . . faces and faces, served out like soup-plates by scullions; coarse, greedy, casual; looking in at shop windows with pendent parcels; ogling, brushing, destroying everything, leaving even our love impure, touched by their dirty fingers'" (W, 114). More remarkably, she feels the grief of her friends is hypocritical: Louis will use Percival's death as an excuse for making others believe in his own bardic authority; Bernard will use the death as copy;[21] Jinny will feed her own ego; Susan will vent her anger briefly, sheltered as she is by her own marriage; Neville will forget Percival on seeing the next "beautiful boy" (W, 115) who passes his window. Rhoda consoles herself when she attends a chamber concert: "'The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation'" (W, 116; italics mine). Her refuge in the abstraction of mathematics--her concept of the "perfect dwelling-place" (W, 116)--aligns her with Louis's whose mysticism also reduces individuality to an abstract collectivity. Not surprisingly, she becomes Louis's lover for a time; but her essential loathing of human nature eventually drives her from his bed. Her final monologue before the reunion dinner reveals that her love for Percival, like Neville's, has been a selfhood love equally subject to the erosive power of time: "'I threw my bunch into the spreading wave. I said, "Consume me, carry me to the furthest limit." The wave has broken; the bunch

withered. I seldom think of Percival now'" (W, 146). Thus she is left with a self-defeating death-wish that can lead only to her inevitable suicide. She will embrace death, not like Septimus Warren Smith who gives up his freedom to make others free, but as a last grasp at freedom betraying a deep distrust of her fellow-man.

Louis's fortunes begin to rise about the time Percival should have reached the height of his own career. All Louis's exertions have been to destroy the ancestral oak, the symbol of a national continuity from which he is excluded by birth, and to set up a different continuity: "'I shall give back to the street and the eating-shop what they lost when they fell on these hard times and broke on these stony beaches. I shall assemble a few words and forge round us a hammered ring of beaten steel'" (W, 120). For Louis, Percival's death is merely symbolic: "'Percival has died (he died in Egypt; he died in Greece; all deaths are one)'" (W, 121). Released from the opposition of Percival's presence, Louis achieves, perhaps, the most impregnable, screened-off identity of all: "'Here is the pen and paper; on the letters of the wire basket I sign my name, I, I, and again I'" (W, 121). In middle-age, Louis, like Neville, sensing perhaps the inevitable failure of the selfhood, has moments when the impersonal identification to which the reader's sublime gives rise leads to an awareness of the other-worldly imaginative community. He apostrophizes the freedom of the "western wind," subject of the famous

anonymous lyric. He laments the burden of his selfhood: "'It would have been happier to have been born without a destiny, like Susan, like Percival, whom I most admire'" (W, 143). He even deems, for a moment, the intense absorptivity of his poetic endeavour an attempt to incorporate the world into his own being: "'I am like some vast sucker, some glutinous, some adhesive, some insatiable mouth. I have tried to draw from the living flesh the stone lodged at the centre'" (W, 143). But he will not acknowledge the centre of emptiness, the death at the heart of life. Death, for Louis, is a "continuity and permanence" (W, 144), a luxury he will not allow himself, an overwhelming peace he expects never to find.

Susan, on her farm with her husband and children, has become one with the natural cycle. All her love is narrowed into a jealous protectiveness, a desire to control the fortunes of her children: "'Sleep, I say, and feel within me uprush some wilder, darker violence, so that I would fell down with one blow any intruder, any snatcher, who should break into this room and wake the sleeper'" (W, 122). Her selfhood takes the form of a desire for immortality through her own progeny. Though Percival is dead, she makes her son over into a new Percival, one who lives for her alone: "'"His eyes will see when mine are shut," I think. "I shall go mixed with them beyond my body and shall see India. He will come home, bringing trophies to be laid at my feet. He will increase my possessions"'". (W, 122-123). Only momentarily does she surrender her selfhood

to wish that "the fullness would pass from me" (W, 123). In middle-age Susan becomes a Mother Earth figure. But she remembers her moment of childhood rootlessness when Bernard's poem about the wood-pigeon makes her feel free: "'The pigeon rose. I jumped up and ran after the words that trailed like the dangling string from an air ball, up and up, from branch to branch escaping. Then the fixity of my morning broke, and putting down the bags of flour I thought, Life stands round me like glass round the imprisoned reed'" (W, 136-137). She momentarily thinks of Percival "who loved me" (W, 137); but her ultimate allegiance is to the natural life and to her illogical vision of standing at the beginning of a sequence of generations composed of her children who inherit her territory: "'For the most part I walk content with my sons. I cut the dead petals from the hollyhocks. Rather squat, grey before my time, but with clear eyes, pear-shaped eyes, I pace my fields'" (W, 137).

Jinny, associated with the selfhood in community, reveals a selfhood vision of involuntary instinct and a robotlike behaviour (automatic, as opposed to absorbing, pursuit) carefully disguised under the veil of civilization. With the "body's imagination" (W, 125), Jinny cannot maintain a sense of community; always one man breaks off from the crowd and follows her. But earlier images of the dance now give way to those of a frantic hunt in some primeval forest: "'Now I hear crash and rending of boughs and the crack of antlers as if the beasts of

the forest were all hunting, all rearing high and plunging down among the thorns. One has pierced me. One is driven deep within me'" (W, 126). The suggestion of violent sexuality here is given a tragic twist by the Shelleyan allusion.[22] In the next episode, the Darwinian landscape of Jinny's world gives way to a Dantesque Inferno vision. Involuntary instinct becomes a sense of immitigable doom; conditioned response becomes a demonic, so that the world is viewed as a mechanism: "'Millions descend those stairs in a terrible descent. Great wheels churn inexorably urging them downwards. Millions have died. Percival died. I still move. I still live. But who will come if I signal?'" (W, 137). Now that the sexual power is beginning to ebb, Jinny knows the terror of solitude epitomized in the "army of the dead" (W, 138) she envisions descending. She identifies instead with "the army of victory with banners and brass eagles and heads crowned with laurel-leaves won in battle" (W, 138). With the aid of the cosmetic arts, she makes the necessary repairs to her selfhood: "' . . . I will powder my face and redden my lips. I will make the angle of my eyebrows sharper than usual. I will rise to the surface, standing erect with the others in Piccadilly Circus'" (W, 139). This affirmation of effort is undercut, however, by the ominous figure of the Grim Reaper in Jinny's final, natural image of "the other": "'For I still excite eagerness. I still feel the bowing of men in the street like the silent stoop of the corn when the light wind blows, ruffling it red'" (W, 139).[23] In this pre-harvest vision, too,

is an ironic suggestion that the army of the upright is ultimately indistinguishable from the army of the dead.

Bernard sees the death of Percival as the loss of an "opposite" (W, 111). Percival is essentially silent, of strong convictions, solid, substantial, judicial, and purposeful. Bernard has a number of "infirmities" (W, 111) which Percival, by his presence, reproves. He makes phrases too easily, is easily distracted, loves sequences, cannot concentrate his will on a definite aim but vacillates "weakly." For Bernard to call these qualities infirmities is ironic, since they are the essential qualities of the logical imagination. The point of Bernard's self-deprecation is that it shows him more strongly than ever under the influence of Percival. Percival's death removes the pressure of the opposite only to reapply the pressure of opposition in an internalized sublimated form. As a result, Bernard tries to become Percival-like. He desires a self who is silent, definite, substantial, and purposive. He notes how painters, because they can abstract themselves from their paintings, are immune to the dissolution of self which the poet cannot escape. Poets, he thinks, are scapegoats--Promethean sufferers--because their works are wrought from the very integument of personality as though torn regularly and habitually out of the living flesh while their lives are perpetually on display like that of Prometheus chained to the rock. If the poet can be "heroic" (W, 111), his is a heroism without glory or sublimity. He is a scapegoat for his opposite--Bernard is already discovering

the common reader to be a Percival-figure, the poet's opposite. But Bernard is still beguiled by the belief in a selfhood. He desires to make of his life a final and ultimate story drawn out and plotted by a biographer-self, a Bernard of the future. In the seventh episode, Bernard's biographer-self presides over a crisis of the negative sublime. Bernard recalls the events that have led up to his visit to Rome. The first event is a rupture between the present and the past, time tapering to a drop and falling. As usual when the present is detached from the past, the consciousness is inundated with an excess of presence, and the sequence of selves, usually joined into one self by the process of habit, is suspended: "'I see what habit covers. I lie sluggish in bed for days. I dine out and gape like a codfish. I do not trouble to finish my sentences, and my actions, usually so uncertain, acquire a mechanical precision'" (W, 131). In this particular crisis, Bernard executes a reactive identification by purchasing a ticket for the "eternal city." This centre of Christendom becomes the site of an internal débat between the selfhood (or biographer-self) and the imaginative self (the ironic self who is constantly aware of something which is always absent from the present). The ironic self rejects several strategies of reactive identification. Neither romantic idealism nor mystical idealism satisfies the ironic self: "'I am not one of those who find their satisfaction in one person [like Neville], or in infinity [like Louis or Rhoda]'" (W, 132). The "central stability"

represented by marriage and children has proven to be an illusory veil: "'For many years I crooned complacently, "My children . . . my wife . . . my house . . . my dog." As I let myself in with my latchkey I would go through that familiar ritual and wrap myself in those warm coverings. Now that lovely veil has fallen'" (W, 132-1-3). The biographer-self would conceive of episodes or drops of time as stages leading to a culmination or final crowning of one's life. But the ironic self questions why there should be a culmination: "'And why should there be an end of stages? and where do they lead? To what conclusion?'" (W, 133) The notion that the selfhood can attain immortality, or that all human life is continued and completed in an ultimate god-figure does not satisfy Bernard's imaginative self: "'Let a man get up and say, "Behold, this is the truth," and instantly I perceive a sandy cat filching a piece of fish in the background. Look, you have forgotten the cat, I say'" (W, 133). This sense of that which is always absent from the present--the unseizable force of the imagination--makes Bernard doubt whether "the true story" (W, 133) can exist. Inevitably, the rhythm of life is restored after this moment of detachment, but Bernard records the experience with a note-book entry: "'Leaning over the parapet I see far out a waste of water. A fin turns. This bare visual impression is un-attached 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. I note under F., therefore, "Fin in a waste of waters." I, who am perpetually making notes in the margin of my mind for some final statement, make this mark, waiting for some winter's evening'" (W, 135). The immediate use to which Bernard puts this phrase, however, shows that the "fin in a waste of waters" is an image for "the other," and not the "out there." He imagines a woman entering the restaurant where he will dine. He projects himself as an apocalyptic phrase-maker: "'"Look where she comes against a waste of waters." A meaningless observation, but to me, solemn, slate-coloured, with a fatal sound of ruining worlds and waters falling to destruction'" (W, 135). The "other" here is the projected biographer-self who makes the apocalyptic "observation," not the woman. Bernard refers to the "fatal sound" of the observation as though it has the power to annihilate the "out there." Since Bernard's "other" is this projected, objective phrase-maker, not the imaginative community, he is still beguiled by the selfhood; the story he tells is told about himself as storyteller. He has yet to discover the centre of emptiness in which the poet's sublime is founded. As Neville observes earlier in the novel: "'We are all phrases in Bernard's story, things he writes down in his notebook under A or under B. He tells our story with extraordinary understanding except of what we most feel. For he does not need us'" (W, 50-51).

The shaping of individual identities during the period following Percival's death is nearly completed at the time of

the reunion dinner, which constitutes the eighth episode of the novel. The reunion begins as a retrospective gathering in which each character attempts to define and justify himself before the eyes of the others. At the first dinner, this egotistical division is partly overcome by a common love of Percival, the symbolic ambassador of their common youth on the threshold of life's adventure. The first dinner is a celebration of life which seems at its zenith, like the midday sun. But Percival's sudden death, like an eclipse of the sun, exposes the true darkness and lifelessness which are immanent in life. At the reunion dinner the egotistical conflict has nothing to resolve it but the presence of death. Bernard acts as the spokesman for the others in the short space of disembodied silence before the sounds of life hail them back to the land of the living:

> "As silence falls I am dissolved utterly and become featureless and scarcely to be distinguished from another. It does not matter. What matters? We have dined well. The fish, the veal cutlets, the wine have blunted the sharp tooth of egotism. Anxiety is at rest. The vainest of us, Louis perhaps, does not care what people think. Neville's tortures are at rest. Let others prosper--that is what he thinks. Susan hears the breathing of all her children safe asleep. Sleep, sleep, she murmurs. Rhoda has rocked her ships to shore. Whether they have foundered, whether they have anchored, she cares no longer. We are ready to consider any suggestion that the world may offer quite impartially."
>
> (W, 159)

Bernard is the first to ascertain the impartial suggestion the world has to offer. What he notices is the illusory nature of

the earth-centred vision of the cosmos (including the seasonal and diurnal cycles presented in the interludes). Bernard's observations of a gigantic lifeless universe in which "the earth is only a pebble flicked off accidentally from the face of the sun" (W, 159) bring back a general state of anxiety. This world-view is elaborated by Louis, whose vision of the "abysses of time" (W, 160) undermines his earlier meditations of the continuity of history signified by women carrying red pitchers to the Nile. Bernard reflects, further, on the illusion of historical selfhood, embodied in the symbolic succession of monarchs: "'how strange it seems to set against the whirling abysses of infinite space a little figure with a golden teapot on his head'" (W, 161). He also loses faith in the power of the community of selfhoods: "'And we ourselves, walking six abreast, what do we oppose, with this random flicker of light in us that we call brain and feeling, how can we do battle against this flood; what has permanence?'" (W, 161).

Bernard's disbelief in permanence, expressed here, recalls his earlier rhetorical "for what endures?" (W, 91) posed at the first dinner party. While the other characters believe they have found their own formulas for permanence, Bernard continues to believe in the importance of the eye's evidence (which is the this-worldly foundation of vision) as the basis of imaginative reality. At the first dinner party, Bernard believes that the communion of the seven friends makes "one thing, not

enduring--for what endures?--but seen by many eyes simultaneously" (W, 91). He uses the image of the "seven-sided flower" (W, 91) as its symbol. Now that Percival is dead, Bernard remarks that the seven-sided flower has become a six-sided flower (W, 162). Bernard's version of reality here, a form of phenomenological agnosticism, displays skepticism as to the reality of the "out there." Bernard's flower, with no one to see it, could not exist. By extension, Bernard's selfhood has become attenuated because Percival no longer lives to look upon him, a notion which is reinforced when it is remembered that Bernard earlier describes himself as "many-sided" (W, 83). He defines himself, throughout the novel (up to the final episode), in terms of his presence-to-others. In episode five, for example, he stresses his need for an audience as his only means to self-definition, and contrasts this need with the autonomy of the "authentics," Louis and Rhoda, who "exist most completely in solitude" (W, 82). What Bernard doesen't realize is that the "authentics" fall into the error of mysticism precisely because they eschew "the eyes of others." At the second dinner party, the "authentics" have their chance to assert their versions of reality; they stand apart like "conspirators" while Bernard and the others walk out in the gardens at Hampton Court. But their "incantation" (W, 163) is rendered ineffective because of their mutual distrust. Neither can impart to the other what each has the individual power to conceive. Both, for personal reasons, have a deep distrust of the human community and of each

other (Rhoda has already ceased to be Louis's lover), and, hence, they are individually trapped in an autistic world which does not embrace what lies outside:

> "'If we could mount together, if we could perceive from a sufficient height,' said Rhoda, 'if we could remain untouched without any support--but you, disturbed by faint clapping sounds of praise and laughter, and I, resenting compromise and right and wrong on human lips, trust only in solitude and the violence of death and thus are divided.'"
>
> (W, 164)

Only Bernard's "thousand eyes of curiosity" (W, 103) seem capable of transcending the autistic imagination. Bernard, unlike Louis and Rhoda, sees solitude as a curse. Yet, since the time of Percival's death, Bernard is only able to escape solitude only by invoking the presence of the internalized "other" who leads him to search for the "true story." At the end of the second dinner party, however, Bernard senses his "other" waning. He begins to lose personal existence as he tells a story about a shopkeeper going to bed. At the same time, he recovers the sequence of time, "the happy concatenation of one event following another in our lives" (W, 166). This sense of continuity is augmented by his renewed awareness of the chorus of "boasting boys" (W, 167) and by the "just perceptible murmur of the breeze" (W, 167). All these forces of change undermine Bernard's sensation of being one self: "'I cannot keep myself together'" (W, 166). The fiction of the "everlasting road" gives way to a concept of movement without any perceptible end in sight: "'We have been walking for hours it seems. But where?'" (W, 167) As memory fades, so does Bernard's sense

of the internalized opposite: "'I am not a judge. I am not called upon to give my opinion'" (W, 167). In this state of flux, everything has the potential to be identical with everything else: "'Houses and trees are all the same in this grey light. Is that a post? Is that a woman walking?'" (W, 167) Bernard, himself, feels unsubstantial and, hence, impervious to the destructive power of life: "'Here is the station, and if the train were to cut me in two, I should come together on the further side, being one, being indivisible'" (W, 167). But this phantom identity is polarized by an awareness of the unconscious or bodily will, which Bernard fails to discover as his true selfhood. Holding the return half of his ticket to Waterloo firmly in his right hand even in sleep, Bernard demonstrates his continued link with the "out there" through his body's unconscious intention to go on living.[24]

The final episode of the novel, Bernard's "summing up" exhibits the inconclusiveness of the ironic biography, a theme articulated in the final chapter of Orlando. The subject of the ironic biography is not one self but many selves; such a biography does not culminate in death and achievement but in the continuation of life and renewed effort. This inconclusiveness, however, does not constitute failure, unless it be failure of the selfhood. What emerges is not the record of one life but life itself. Qua story, the ironic biography is a "spiritual autobiography" or the "true story"--not a factual account but a story that is truly a story. The biographer-self who speaks

is the true Bernard in his other-worldly identity as poet. Since this biographer-self is created by the story he must tell, it is a self without a self--a self founded in the centre of emptiness of the poet's sublime and brought into existence as a factor of the reader's sublime. The time of soliloquies in back streets is over. The true story has begun. The audience is assembled. This audience is not only Bernard's anonymous dinner-companion but also the anonymous reader of The Waves mirrored in the dramatic mimesis of the phantom dinner party.

Bernard's story preludes with an apologia (a justification for telling a story at all) which expresses the paradox of the ironic apocalypse, the fact that mind is concealed from mind by the existence of ego-structures. It is requisite upon him, therefore, to tell a story that will act as a narrow bridge between his own imagination and that of his dinner companion, a story that is not a neat design, but a story, rather, that is like "enormous clouds . . . marching over the sky, tattered clouds, wisps of cloud" (W, 169)--a contrast to the measured march of day across the sky. To this purpose, he pretends that the scenes which make up his life constitute a purely artificial sequence, such a progression from beginning to end as that to be found in a child's picture book. He alludes to the opening of the Gospel according to John, thus pointing out the fictiveness of the setting described in the descriptive interludes: "'In the beginning, there was the nursery, with windows opening on to a garden, and beyond that the sea'" (W, 169).

The scenes from childhood Bernard describes do not constitute a spring of life but a "fall" into bodily existence. A suggestion of the theme of "birth astride the grave" characterizes Bernard's account of his baptism into the sentient life: "'Then Mrs. Constable raised the sponge above her head, squeezed it, and out shot, right, left, all down the spine, arrows of sensation. And so, as long as we draw breath, for the rest of time, if we knock against a chair, a table, or a woman, we are pierced with arrows of sensation--if we walk in a garden, if we drink this wine. Sometimes indeed, when I pass a cottage with a light in the window where a child has been born, I could implore them not to squeeze the sponge over that new body'" (W, 170). The natural world itself, in Bernard's recollection, is not a benign, fostering influence as it is, for example, in the childhood scenes in Wordsworth's The Prelude. The garden-world in which Bernard consoles Susan contains "roots that were hard as skeletons" (W, 170). The scene at "Elvedon" features sinister "gardeners" implacably sweeping up dead leaves with "great brooms" and a woman at a window writing with fixity. The child's awareness of these forces takes the form of a personal sense of helplessness before the day-to-day reality: "'It is as if one had woken in Stonehenge surrounded by a circle of great stones, these enemies, these presences'" (W, 171). In this concept of childhood, the Romantic notion of birth as a "sleep" is given a demonic twist. Birth, as Bernard conceives it, is a gradual awakening to a sense of being doomed.

The period from youth to young adulthood, in Bernard's story, is characterized by a growing sense of individual solitude as each of the friends experiences those moments of being which precipitate selfhood identities: "'Louis was disgusted by the nature of human flesh; Rhoda by our cruelty; Susan could not share; Neville wanted order; Jinny love; and so on. We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies'" (W, 171). Bernard, as a novelist-in-the-making, is partly able to mitigate the pressure of selfhood by writing down notes on his friends and envisioning them as "figures" (W, 172). He recalls Percival now as the embodiment of an unseizable force: "'What is startling, what is unexpected, what we cannot account for, what turns symmetry to nonsense--that comes suddenly to mind thinking of him'" (W, 172). Louis, in Bernard's story, is not so much the tyrannical bard as a victim of "the eyes of others." Bernard fishes the figure of Louis out of the pool of time, comments briefly on Louis's "enigmatic" character, then returns him "to the pool where he will acquire lustre" (W, 173). Neville is next conjured up against the dull background of college life where "nothing broke with its fin that leaden waste of waters" (W, 174). Bernard also recalls the choruses, the boasting boys, and the people on trains, part of "the copious, shapeless, warm, not so very clever, but extremely easy and rather coarse aspect of things" (W, 174). He also recalls "phantoms" (W, 175) which like birds inhabit some other-worldly garden, that is, the figures of Jinny, Susan, and Rhoda: "birds

who sang with the rapt egotism of youth by the window; broke their snails on stones, dipped their beaks in sticky, viscous matter; hard, avid, remorseless" (W, 175). The birds become foals in adolescence and, later, Susan is the first to become "wholly woman, purely feminine" (W, 175). The figure of Susan, in Bernard's story, epitomizes the fate of the selfhood bound to the senseless cycle of generation. He remembers envisioning even in childhood, a laughing servant in the attic of Susan's childhood home whirring "the wheel of the sewing-machine round and round" (W, 176). This spurious association which Bernard makes at the height of Susan's agony in the garden in the first episode, reminds Bernard how his own selfhood has been transformed into a biographer-self: "'On the outskirts of every agony sits some observant fellow who points'" (W, 176). This is the biographer-self. Like Orlando, who identifies with the permanence of the oak tree, Bernard identifies with the willow tree: "'The tree alone resisted our flux'" (W, 177). Whereas the oak tree, in Woolf's symbolism, represents the continuity of generations, the willow stands for the continuity of the personal existence. In To the Lighthouse, for example, Minta loses the willow-tree brooch given her by her grandmother precisely at the point at which she consents to be the wife of Paul Rayley. For Bernard, the willow is a standard to measure the degree of success or failure of personal adjustment to this-worldliness. The conceivable extremes of adjustment are epitomized in the versions of the willow tree established by Rhoda and Jinny. Rhoda's illogical mysticism

dissolves the reality of the tree: "'The willow as she saw it grew on the verge of a grey desert where no bird sang. The leaves shrivelled as she looked at them, tossed in agony as she passed them. The trams and omnibuses roared hoarse in the street, ran over rocks and sped foaming away'" (W, 179).[25] Jinny sees the tree with the body's imagination, and, like the worldly Queen Gertrude in Hamlet, she only sees what is: "'She made the willows dance, but not with illusion; for she saw nothing that was not there. It was a tree; there was the river; it was afternoon; here we were; I in my serge suit; she in green'" (W, 179). Bernard's intense sympathy with "the other" and his refusal to be bamboozled by the wiles of physical nature lead him to an intermediate version of the "out there" (a compromise which avoids both Rhoda's radical mysticism and Jinny's vivid this-worldliness): "'But I, pausing, looked at the tree, and as I looked in autumn at the fiery and yellow branches, some sediment formed; I formed; a drop fell; I fell--that is, from some completed experience I had emerged'" (W, 179-180).

The Bernard who is born from the autumnal vision of the willow-tree is an ambivalent self subject to contrasting patterns of identification. On the one hand is the father-hood influence of civilization, society, and the nuclear family which converge in the image of the city-as-mechanism. In this construct, the self is just another cog: "'Opening and shutting, shutting and opening, with increasing hum and sturdiness, the haste and fever of youth are drawn into service until the whole

being seems to expand in and out like the mainspring of a clock'" (W, 183). This is also the "central stability " (W, 82) of family life conceived as the cradle of civilization.[26] On the other hand such concerns stand off against the other-worldly identification of the poet's sublime conceived as an effluent stream: " a rushing stream of broken dreams, nursery rhymes, street cries, half-finished sentences and sights--elm trees, willow trees, gardeners sweeping, women writing--that rise and sink even as we hand a lady down to dinner " (W, 181).

In the period leading to Percival's death, Bernard recalls living under the influence of the "central stability" afforded by his marriage. Like the Richard Dalloway of The Voyage Out, Bernard allows himself to be sustained by his wife's illusionary powers: "'she inspired me with a desire to rise in the world; also she made me look with curiosity at the hitherto repulsive faces of new-born babies. And the little fierce beat--tick-tack, tick-tack--of the pulse of one's mind took on a more majestic rhythm. I roamed down Oxford Street. We are the continuers, we are the inheritors, I said, thinking of my sons and daughters'" (W, 133). Under this influence, the biographer-self flourishes, giving a substance to Bernard's life: "'Clapping my hat on my head, I strode into a world inhabited by vast numbers of men who had also clapped their hats on their heads, and as we jostled and encountered in trains and tubes we exchanged the knowing wink of competitors and comrades braced with a thousand snares and dodges to achieve the same

end--to earn a living'" (W, 185). In the "midst of [the] unconsciousness" (W, 185) afforded by the place of shelter, Bernard neglects his poetic powers. There is no need to retrieve life from formlessness with imaginative phrases: "'"Heaven be praised," I said, "we need not whip this prose into poetry. The little language is enough"'" (W, 186). His life seems at this point in his career, to have an unlimited prospect like a summer sky spreading out to "the flawless verge" (W, 186).

But all this is changed by the sudden death of Percival, coinciding with the birth of Bernard's son. Percival's death removes the veil of illusion, exposing the skeleton of the physical world: "'I saw the first morning he would never see--the sparrows were like toys dangled from a string by a child. 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!'" (W, 187). Bernard recollects seeking out places of shelter--a picture gallery where stillness and silence reign, and Jinny's flat. But the picture gallery, "still as on the first day of creation" (W, 187), and Jinny's room where Bernard and Jinny strew phrases over Percival like "lilies" (W, 188), both oppress Bernard with their symbolical consolations. Bernard watches "the first leaf fall on the grave"

(W, 188) of the hapless Percival, ushering in a winter of the imagination. In profound disillusionment and anger, he returns to the place of shelter wishing to destroy it once and for all: "'Was there no sword, nothing with which to batter down these walls, this protection, this begetting of children and living behind curtains, and becoming daily more involved and committed, with books and pictures?'" (W, 189) He visits Susan, who continues to live a life patterned on the hereditary model, and he is appalled at the senselessness of begetting children who will perpetuate the same monotonous cycle of physical life: "'I thought, "It goes on; but why?"'" (W, 190)

Nevertheless, Bernard recalls the life-rhythms going on inside his own body. He calls to himself to "Fight! Fight!":

> "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."
>
> (W, 191)

Through this effort of the will Bernard manages to recover his sense of reality and to renew his faith in the struggle of civilization against the inanity of nature. He will not let grief at Percival's death drive him to despair. But soon, Bernard, too, begins to experience those mystical feelings of the unreality of personal existence, and of the alien presence of nature that have haunted Rhoda all her life:

> "Then it happens that two figures standing with their backs to the window appear against the branches of a

> spreading tree. With a shock of emotion one feels 'There are figures without features robed in beauty.' In the pause that follows while the ripples spread, the girl to whom one should be talking says to herself, 'He is old.' But she is wrong. It is not age; it is that a drop has fallen; another drop. Time has given the arrangement another shake. Out we creep from the arch of the currant leaves, out into a wider world. The true order of things--this is our perpetual illusion --is now apparent. Thus in a moment, in a drawing-room, our life adjusts itself to the majestic march of day across the sky."
>
> (W, 192-193)

In the pause and suspension of the falling drop, Bernard discovers the orderly existence of selfhood--life in the body--to be indistinguishable from the rise and decline of the sun across the sky. However, to the imagination, this order is false; to the imagination, time is but a sequence of falling drops, an ever-changing pool of vision. But Bernard remains obdurate. He decides to pay visits to his friends to prove to himself that the "self" continues in others. He seeks "to prise open their locked caskets" (W, 189) in search of an impervious selfhood that he feels has disappeared from his own life.

Bernard's visits to his friends convince him that their lives have walled each of them off from the others. Neville's door opens to Bernard, but Neville still waits for the sound of one pair of footprints. Bernard, excluded, leaves Neville's rooms with a sudden longing for Percival: "'But he was not there. The place was empty'" (W, 194). When he knocks on the door of Louis and Rhoda, no one answers.

Jinny's door opens to admit "some new young man" (W, 195). Still refusing to admit his solitude, Bernard arranges a reunion: "'I am many people,'" he tells his silent dinner companion, "'I do not altogether know who I am--Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs'" (W, 196). But he qualifies this statement with a cryptic "'So I thought'" (W, 196). In fact, the reunion dinner is a test of Bernard's belief in a common selfhood. But the occasion is an epiphanic one in which Bernard discovers the deficiency of selfhood and its essential selfishness. His imaginative concept of the six-sided-flower becomes transformed, in his story, to that of a cake diminishing slice by slice as each child watches with greed and disappointment "their slice diminishing" (W, 196). He recollects, in addition, a period of Bacchanalian surrender, a moment of triumphal communion--six separate lives emblazoned against the background of a cedar tree, and a final dissipation and surrender to darkness and unconsciousness.

What remains of Bernard's story transpires following the reunion and, thus, lacks the twofold dimension of present/past that impresses the reader in what has been narrated before. The effect of this first telling is to bestow a solitude on Bernard's last phase; he now recalls the death of the self that has been quietly imposing itself on his summing-up. With an ironic playfulness he records in one and the same trope the experience of becoming a dying fertility figure and a victimized Samson-figure. He enters a hairdresser's shop to have his hair

cut: "'The hairdresser began to move his scissors to and fro. I felt myself powerless to stop the oscillations of the cold steel. So we are cut and laid in swaths, I said; so we lie side by side on the damp meadows, withered branches and flowering'" (W, 198-199). Despite the comic bathos of this tragic account, the incident carries a substantial thematic weight. A parallel is established between the cutting of Bernard's hair, the harvest season, and the approach of death. The reference to "flowering" branches recalls the death of Percival and aligns it with the cutting of Bernard's hair and the waning of Bernard's life-force, an association which is reinforced by the subtle allusion to Samson, the Biblical judge who lost his strength when his hair was cut. The judge-figure, as noted earlier, is identical with Bernard's sublimated opposite, the selfhood of Percival.

The moment passes as Bernard's curiosity about what is happening outside the shop takes him back into the stream of life. But out on the street, immersed in the danger of life, he now invokes a new figure to stand as his opposite--Rhoda, who has killed herself: "'"Wait," I said, putting my arm in imagination (thus we consort with our friends) through her arm. "Wait until these omnibuses have gone by. Do not cross so dangerously. These men are your brothers." In persuading her I was also persuading my own soul'" (W, 199). Joined to this projected and rejected death-wish is a recollection of Louis's bardic tyranny, and a rejection of it. Watching the variety of the burdened waifs and strays who wander into St.

Paul's, Bernard cannot help protesting against the illogical mysticism that would add to their burden a life-denying religion of proportion and conversion: "'How would Louis roof us all in? How would he confine us, make us one, with his red ink, with his very fine nib?'" (W, 200)

The sincerity of Bernard's protest is undermined, however, by the self-discovery which follows. Bernard's easy liberalism and his readiness to judge the judges of humanity are not as fine qualities as he would believe. As a happy phrase-maker, he still has the consolation of his phrase-making self and can still float easily on the stream that never fails him since Mrs. Constable squeezed the sponge over his young body. While others are being consumed by loneliness, Bernard can still address his inner companion. As Neville comments earlier, Bernard cannot express what others most feel because Bernard does not need others. But one day, he who refuses to judge himself has to face his day of judgment. The time of shirking his true poetic vocation as an imaginative Promethean bringer of light is at an end. This time, when the drop of time falls, no phrase-making self steps forward to excuse Bernard for his complacency and his easy optimism:

> "I said life had been imperfect, an unfinished phrase. It had been impossible for me, taking snuff as I do from any bagman met in a train, to keep coherency--that sense of the generations, of women carrying red pitchers to the Nile, of the nightingale who sings among conquests and migrations. It had been too vast an undertaking, I said, and how can I go on lifting my foot perpetually to climb the stair? I addressed myself as one would speak to a companion with whom one is voyaging to the North Pole. . . .

> This self now as I leant over the gate looking down over fields rolling in waves of colour beneath me made no answer. He threw up no opposition. He attempted no phrase. His fist did not form. I waited. I listened. Nothing came, nothing. I cried then with a sudden conviction of complete desertion. Now there is nothing. No fin breaks the waste of this immeasurable sea. Life has destroyed me. No echo comes when I speak, no varied words. This is more truly death than the death of friends, than the death of youth. I am the swathed figure in the hairdresser's shop taking up only so much space."
>
> (W, 201-202)

For the first time in his life, Bernard knows solitude. Left with only the "out there," he now needs "the other" as never before: "'I walked alone in a new world, never trodden; brushing new flowers, unable to speak save in a child's words of one syllable; without shelter from phrases--I who have made so many; unattended, I who have always had someone to share the empty grate, or the cupboard with its hanging loop of light'" (W, 203).[27] The moment passes, but it leaves behind a profound discovery. Bernard has stepped through the "gate" (W, 201) into the purely physical world described in the interludes of The Waves: "'for a moment I had sat on the turf somewhere high above the flow of the sea and the sound of the woods, had seen the house, the garden, and the waves breaking. The old nurse who turns the pages of the picture-book had stopped and had said, "Look. This is the truth"'" (W, 204).

The story of "the truth" is finished, but the "true story," now that the old nurse has closed the child's picture-book, is about to begin. Bernard's gesture in stopping a

relative stranger to sup with him on this particular evening is another unsuccessful attempt to achieve the other-worldly communion that he has not been able to establish in two previous dinner-parties with his friends. His companion becomes the prototype for his imagined audience. Relieved for a moment of the pressure of his own selfhood, Bernard exults in delusory omniscient perspective. He conceives of himself as a sympathetic anagoge, the complete human being he has hitherto been unable to become: "'Yes, ever since old Mrs. Constable lifted her sponge and pouring warm water over me covered me with flesh I have been sensitive, percipient. Here on my brow is the blow I got when Percival fell. Here on the nape of my neck is the kiss Jinny gave Louis. My eyes fill with Susan's tears. I see far away, quivering like a gold thread, the pillar Rhoda saw, and feel the rush of the wind of her flight when she leapt'" (W, 205). He conceives himself purified at last of his animal nature, "the old brute . . . the savage, the hairy man who dabbles his fingers in ropes of entrails; and gobbles and belches; whose speech is guttural, visceral" (W, 205). He transforms his body, in imagination, into a temple, his head into an august dome. He imagines an apocalyptic drying-up of the waters of annihilation: "'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'" (W, 207). Finally, he illogically attempts to fathom the ironic landscape seeking to discover the divine source located in the imaginative "central shadow."

However, Bernard has gone too far in his quest for what does not exist in any worldly sense. This is not apocalypse. Bernard's body does not absorb the bodies of his friends; his body is not a "perfect dwelling-place." He has merely beguiled himself once more with phrases; he has allowed his imagination to turn mystical and illogical. His humiliation--and ironically his salvation--ultimately comes from the eyes of his enemy-friend, his anonymous dinner companion. Bernard catches his eye and is reeled back into a sense of his own body. He is knocked over by the wave of this-worldliness and so saved from a delusion resembling insanity. He initially curses, but ultimately thanks his companion and bids him good-night.

Left to himself, Bernard begins to cherish the solitude he has reviled all his life. He resolves to "sit here for ever with bare things, this coffee-cup, this knife, this fork, things in themselves, myself being myself" (W, 210). He has now become an outsider in the midst of life who must be goaded by the pressure of an imaginative audience to accept the solitude he tries all his life to escape. With his pathetically beautiful ambivalence to life, however, Bernard can achieve the Promethean destiny which Rhoda and Louis, who have detested life, cannot. Only a man who loves life can be a worthy enemy of life.

In the end, Bernard becomes both a selfhood figure of pathos and a triumphant imaginative representative of the eternal poet. As a physical presence, he is merely "an elderly man"

looking up ironically at the dawn of a new day; a lonely man who is powerless to stop the involuntary life force that surges up, over and over again, in his own body; a doom-haunted consciousness who must deceive himself with the illusory consolation of his own stories. He stands absurdly pawing the pavement, making believe he is a triumphant hero on horseback in a contest with a death he is powerless to evade. But, as an imaginative representative of the eternal poet, Bernard is a resplendent and long-haired youth charging against the shore of this-worldliness; a continuer and inheritor of the unseizable force which is the imagination. This Bernard, who is not Bernard, has the power to fight what is death to the imagination--an illogical belief in the supremacy of this-worldliness. By this conquest, he also redeems the other-worldliness of Percival--not Percival, the judge, but Percival the long-haired youth--whose will it is to challenge death to try to subdue him, but who will not be subdued by the victimization of the body. This other-worldliness belongs neither to Bernard nor to Percival as individual "selves." No "body" can be a perfect dwelling-place. No "thing" lies beneath the semblance of the thing.[28] Imaginative identity dwells, rather, in the metaphorical "like" of Bernard's consummate trope; a metaphorical identity with all men:

> "And in me too the wave rises. It swells; it arches its back. I am aware once more of a new desire, something rising beneath me like the proud horse whose rider first spurs then pulls him back. What enemy do we now perceive advancing against us, you whom I

> ride now, as we stand pawing this stretch of pavement? It is death. Death is the enemy. It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man's, like Percival's, when he galloped in India. I strike spurs into my horse. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!"
>
> (W, 211; italics mine)

The sound of the waves breaking brings the novel to an end which is no end. Nature's waves continue to break on the shore and in the natural body. So, too, the waves of imaginative effort continue to break "unvanquished and unyielding" in the eternal Logos or spirit of the Word. The "absorbing pursuit" goes on forever. The magnanimous horseman is not fighting his own death; because he is other-worldly he can neither live nor die in any natural sense. On the contrary, he is fighting death on behalf of humanity--those waifs and strays whom life tyrannizes, and whom death attempts to cow into despair. The poet asks not for hero-worship as a reward for his struggle. He asks only for a share in the lives of those for whose freedom he fights. The reader's part is not to alienate his poetic spokesman by investing him with divine omniscience only to desert him for his failure to create a heaven on earth; but to accept him as a fellow creature, likewise engaged in the imaginative struggle against solitude and doom. The poet's imagination is inseparable from the reader's. Together, they constitute the "nobler powers" at the heart of the Word.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. See Frank Baldanza, "Orlando and the Sackvilles," PMLA, 70 (1955), 274-279; Avrom Fleishman, The English Historical Novel, Baltimore, 1971, 233-245; and Joanne Trautmann, The Jessamy Brides: The Friendship of Virginia Woolf and V. Sackville-West (Pennsylvania, 1973). Clearly, from a biographical perspective, Orlando is not so much "the longest and most charming love letter in literature" (Nigel Nicholson, Portrait of a Marriage: V. Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson [New York, 1973], 202) as the longest and most thought-provoking letter to a young poet in literature. Cf. Woolf's 1932 "A Letter to a Young Poet," CE, II, 182-195.

2. "Nature and letters seem to have a natural antipathy; bring them together and they tear each other to pieces" (O, 18).

3. Orlando's is a therapeutic sleep in the sense described, in a different context, in Woolf's "Reading "(CE, II, 25).

4. Cf. JR, 71-72: "Then consider the effect of sex--how between man and woman it hangs wavy, tremulous, so that here's a valley, there's a peak, when in truth, perhaps, all's flat as my hand."

5. That both the "male" role and the "female" role derive from the illogical imagination is discussed at length in AROO. The romantic vision of the Ideal Lady, which originates in myth-making and is not merely reflected in it, makes heroic action possible. But accompanying this is a vision, epitomized in the poetry of Milton, of the male as the lord of creation (AROO, 59), which, when translated illogically into practice, makes all violent action and all tyranny--"Supermen and Fingers of Destiny . . . . The Czar and the Kaiser" (AROO, 54)--historically possible. This theme is anticipated in The Voyage Out, where Terence's reading of Milton's "Comus" coincides with the onset of Rachel's illness. In this light, incidentally, Orlando's sex-transformation represents a strong revision of the Genesis account of the creation of woman which Milton adopts in Paradise Lost.

6. Woolf seems to be ambivalent about the visionary quality of the hostess role, but where the hostess comes into conflict with an artist in the novels, the latter usually receives a more sympathetic treatment.

7. O, 222. This speech echoes Adam's lament in Paradise Lost, VIII, 389 ff. The irony of its being spoken by a woman is obviously intentional.

8. This image anticipates the Siegfried motif in The Years, 70, 197, and 204; and also presents an interesting analogue to Blake's artist-blacksmith, Los.

9. Both Shel and Percival are not so much male heroes (which would be inconsistent with Woolf's suspicion of the egotistical-I) as symbols of the potential heroism in human nature. I would argue that Woolf's refraining from giving these characters the psychological dimension of her ironic heroes is an attempt to stress their symbolical roles. The same technique applies to the flat characters Holmes and Bradshaw who are explicit symbols of human nature as tyrant.

10. This episode seems to contradict Orlando's later devotion to the oak tree and her land in the last chapter. But Orlando's final decision to bury her poem, together with the ironic failure of the burial ceremony, suggests that this imaginative brainchild has suffered the mortal fate of all "children" who have nature for a mother.

11. "He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change" (G.M. Hopkins, "Pied Beauty," Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins, selected with an introduction and notes by W.H. Gardner (London, 1953), 30.

12. The "wild goose," like Mr. Ramsay's "Z" stands for that which is always unattainable so long as the self or personal "I" obstructs the freedom of the imagination. Paradoxically, Mr. Ramsay reaches "Z" precisely at the point when he decides "it didn't matter a damn who reached Z" (TTL, 184). In other words, when he loses his self-consciousness he finds his other-worldly identity. Likewise, Orlando possesses "the wild goose" precisely at the point when she stops thinking about herself chasing it.

13. This annihilation of the ancestral burden echoes the first scene in the novel where, though Orlando's body is stained various hues by the heraldic stained-glass window, his face is "lit solely by the sun itself" (O, 16).

14. I intend "prophecy" in its Blakean, not its occult, sense: the prophetic poet, as Frye puts it, "has insight, not second sight" (Fearful Symmetry, 59).

15. The adrogynous ending of Orlando leads Maud Bodkin to compare Woolf's fantasy with Dante's Comedy and Goethe's Faust, both which are concerned with an other-worldly identity. See Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination (London, 1963), 307.

16. Fleishman, Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading, 153.

17. J.W. Graham, for example, writes: "At the psychological level, the speakers are incarnations of various aspects of the individual soul of the narrating Consciousness, and the psychological traits they possess are called into play by the search which she conducts, through them, for the fragments of the perfect vessel hidden in time past" ("Point of View in The Waves: Some Services of the Style," University of Toronto Quarterly, 39[April, 1970], 206-207).

18. Cf. Woolf, MB, 72.

19. One solution to the question of giving is the reader's sublime, which provides the poetic consciousness with a focus of identification. But Rhoda later loses this insight.

20. The quicksilver symbol recurs in BTA, 220, where it refers to the collective imagination of Miss La Trobe's audience.

21. Clive Bell writes that, at times, Virginia Woolf "saw life and to some extent experienced it as a novel or rather as a series of novels, in which anyone of her friends might find his or herself cast, all unawares, for a part." See Recollections of Virginia Woolf by her Contemporaries, ed. by Joan Russell Noble (London, 1972), 70.

22. "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed" ("Ode to the West Wind," l. 54).

23. In Bernard's summing-up, the Reaper takes the ironic form of an urban hairdresser.

24. The image of Bernard holding firmly onto his ticket contrasts with that of Jacob Flanders tearing up his ticket in Hyde Park. Unlike Jacob, Bernard has not surrendered to the "black waters" of despair.

25. A possible allusion to Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" here contributes to the late autumnal mood of incipient death prefiguring Percival's destiny as a "pale warrior."

26. Mrs. Ramsay similarly uses the concept of the timepiece as symbol for the bodily will (TTL, 131).

27. In one sense, Bernard has become like Susan (beloved of Percival), who has always been tied down to single words and thus unable to escape the pressure of doom.

28. Bernard's final trope answers Rhoda's despair at not finding a "perfect dwelling-place" on earth. Rhoda's fear of life leads her to seek, in the imaginative centre, for "the thing which lies beneath the semblance of the thing" (W, 116). But she is unable to accept the imaginative community as an identity of semblances because she despises her fellows for their cruelty.

CHAPTER NINE

WE ARE THE WORDS: *THE YEARS* AND *BETWEEN THE ACTS*

In Woolf's last two novels, the apocalyptic quest progresses from the archetypal to the anagogic phase. Writing Orlando and The Waves convinced Woolf that the poetic archetypes are not the creations of individual poets but the products of the human imagination taken as a whole. The nature of this conviction can be illustrated by contrasting the characters of Augustus Carmichael and Bernard. The former is sublime and inscrutable; at the end of To the Lighthouse, Carmichael rises from the centre of emptiness like Neptune from the depths of the sea to sanctify Lily Briscoe's final vision. Hence, as Sublime Poet, he represents the Word. Bernard, by contrast, is an ironic hero whose consciousness is laid bare before the reader. In the conclusion of The Waves, Bernard discovers that he is not the "central shadow" hovering at the core of the ironic landscape. As it turns out, the Word is not the Sublime Poet. The Word is the collective Logos: "we are the words" (MB, 72). We are "the nobler powers [which] sleep beneath" (TTL, 208). Bernard comes to this conclusion when he flings himself against death (allowing his poetic selfhood to die), and so regenerates his poetic role ("unvanquished and unyielding") by achieving an imaginative immortality in the Word. He is, "like Percival," the perennial heroic fighter, an archetypal symbol of the collective Logos.

The collective Logos as anagogic hero is evident in The Years, which notably lacks a poet-hero. The novel presents the dual vision of this-worldliness versus other-worldliness

conspicuous in all Woolf's novels and applies it to the theme of collective Humanity. Mimetically, the Pargiters represent a biological family of individuals alienated from one another by selfhood limitations of the body including social sex roles and familial propinquity. Expressively, they represent the Great Family of Man. They are all children of the Word. Woolf's dual vision of Humanity is analogous to Blake's dual vision of Albion (or Mankind). When the "nobler powers sleep beneath," Humanity is fragmented into isolated egos: "They were two living people, driving across London; two sparks of life enclosed in two separate bodies" (Y, 360). When Albion sleeps, he falls into a state of disintegration, or disunity. Frye writes:

> When Albion or mankind fell, the unity of man fell too, and although our imagination tells us we belong to some larger organism even if we cannot see it as God, in the meantime we are locked up in separated opaque scattered bodies.
>
> (FS, 44)

The world of The Years represents life "in the meantime." Above all, the novel is about ourselves, "the words," the tragedy of our being trapped in a "little language" (W, 169) that cannot express the imaginative unity of mankind.

A somber hopelessness seems to brood over this novel. This perhaps accounts for the wide critical consensus that The Years is an imaginative failure.[1] More so than in any of her other novels, Woolf is dealing here with untransmuted facts. Measured against the militant spiritedness of The Waves, this novel is indeed uninspiring. However, I interpret it not so much as a successor to The Waves as a progenitor of Between the Acts.

In this respect, A.D. Moody's final estimate of the novel is illuminating:

> What may be said for it . . . is that in relation to Virginia Woolf's development as a novelist it had probably a considerable therapeutic value, in the sense that by confronting and shaping towards caricature a body of her experience which was otherwise intractable, her imagination achieved a kind of release from it. Whether such terms are appropriate or not, it seems likely that if she had not laboured at this "failure," Between the Acts would not have been the extraordinarily fine and mature achievement that it is.[2]

In The Years, Woolf exposes her readers to a strong sense of reality. Deformity and perversion, gross injustice and bigotry, painful solitude and the "death of the soul" are pervasive motifs. There is no guide through this inferno. The novel reads best as a dystopia, an ironic vision which demands a tacit agreement between the novelist and the reader that life should not be this terrible. However, the first reviews praised it for the wrong reasons, as Woolf notes in her diary: "And I can already hardly read through the reviews: but feel a little dazed, to think then it's not nonsense; it does make an effect. Yet of course not in the least the effect I meant" (AWD, 277). In an earlier diary entry, Woolf writes "that I myself know why it's a failure, and that it's failure is deliberate" (AWD, 277; italics mine). In view of the preponderance of scenes depicting life bereft of a redeeming vision in this novel, perhaps The Years attempts an artistic experiment in intensified mimesis requiring the imaginative participation of the reader. Granted this hypothesis, probably the "deliberate" failure of this novel is alluded to in Between the Acts where the failure of Miss La Trobe's artistic experiment with "present-time reality" provokes her to anathematize

her audience for their inability to comprehend her artistic intention:

> She wanted to expose them, as it were, to douche them, with present-time reality. But something was going wrong with the experiment. "Reality too strong," she muttered. "Curse 'em!" She felt everything they felt. Audiences were the devil.
>
> (BTA, 209-210)

Whatever the reasons for the dark vision of The Years--whether Woolf adopted the this-worldly belief that mimetic art can improve society solely by holding up the mirror to human nature, or whether she believed too optimistically in the capability of her readers to use their logical imagination to envision an apocalyptic alternative to the dystopian universe of this novel -- The Years offers no pat solutions to the pains of life in time. Instead, it proceeds from failure to failure. The family life dramatized in the dated sections is full of strife and tyranny; the great party that takes up most of "Present Day" is a discordant symphony of egos at cross-purposes.

The subject of the dated sections (1880-1918) is repression: the spectacle of Humanity asleep. A brief survey of these sections reveals that repression takes many forms, all variants of the "cripple in a cave" motif. Woolf explicitly uses this image both in this novel and in Three Guineas.[3] Significant analogues are Plato's allegory of the cave and Sophocles's portrayal of martyred innocence in Antigone. Blake's Albion is an analogue closer to our own time. In Woolf's view, the nobler powers sleep beneath, and are kept asleep by a tyrannical patriarchy.

The Abercorn Terrace scenes in "1880" have for a setting a Victorian family estate which is a "whited sepulcher," as indicated by the family name, "Pargiter" (pargeter: plasterer, whitewasher).[4] Colonel Abel Pargiter is an able pargeter. While his wife lies dying, he visits his mistress. At home, he is a tyrant. His daughters are virtually prisoners in their father's home. The effect of this stern patriarchy on two of them, Rose and Delia, is demonic. Young Rose has a latent fear of men and a shame of her own emerging sexuality. Her rebellious "escape" from her father's house to make a visit to the local store runs afoul when she is accosted by an exhibitionist "unbuttoning his clothes" (Y, 29) by the big lamppost. The symbolic cripple in the cave of The Voyage Out thus reappears in an explicitly sexual form. Rose subsequently has a nightmare about a sheep with this man's face: "It turned round and looked at her. Its long narrow face was grey; its lips moved; it was the face of the man at the pillar-box, and she was alone with it" (Y, 41). Through this strange admixture of the pastoral and the gothic, the perverted innocence (psychological crippling) of the wilful Rose is displaced onto the figure of the disobedient sheep (the sheep that "would not jump" [Y, 41]). Her expressed appeal for her father's protection--"Papa would kill him" (Y, 43) --is accompanied by a queer twitch. The only way she can relieve her anxiety is by communicating her trauma. But she never gets the chance. Delia, an older sister, dreams of escaping the horrors of family life. Delia's sympathies have been crippled too. She represses her love for her dying mother chiefly because

she does not want to become an "angel in the house"[5] like her mother. At her mother's funeral, Delia's one chance to feel her love for her mother is destroyed by the patent falsehoods of the Christian burial service:

> "We give thee hearty thanks," said the voice, "for that it has pleased thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world--"
> What a lie! she cried to herself. What a damnable lie! He had robbed her of the one feeling that was genuine; he had spoilt her one moment of understanding.
>
> (Y, 93)

The Oxford scenes in this section show other cripples in other caves. Edward Pargiter studying for a Greek exam resembles Jacob Flanders, a passive votive of the Alma Mater. Like Jacob, Edward severely sublimates his love so that it yields a vision of an ideal lady--his cousin Kitty as an English Antigone. Edward's love for Kitty, like Jacob's for Clara, is never allowed to realize itself. Instead, he acts out his frustrations by displacing them onto his lover, Ashley. Edward plays the role of coquette by feeding Ashley's jealousy of Hugh Gibbs. The scene culminates in Edward's locking his bedroom door against Ashley as he thinks "what a row there'll be tomorrow" (Y, 59). Kitty's world is similarly constricted. Her life consists of playing hostess along with her mother to the Oxford academics, squeezing her feet into tight satin shoes,[6] and daydreaming about a freer life. Although she likes Edward, she is determined not to become a don's wife. Instead she imagines a relationship with Jo Robson:

> He reminded her of Alf, the farm hand up at Carter's, who had kissed her under the shadow of the haystack when she was fifteen, and old Carter loomed up leading a bull with a ring through its nose and said "Stop that!"
>
> (Y, 75)

Years later, when Kitty has become a society matron escaping from one of her own parties to a brief holiday in the country, she dreams of another society matron, Margaret Marrable, "leading a bull with a ring through its nose" (Y, 293). The image aptly expresses a parallel between the domestication of spirited animals and the crippling of youthful revolutionaries by a tyrannical civilization.

In "1891" further development of the cave motif includes the sick-room of old Mrs. Potter, who resembles the Cumaean sibyl in being a victim of life without end, and the Law Courts where Morris Pargiter is presenting a case before Judge Curry. The latter scene introduces the theme of the spiritual cost of professional life that Woolf discusses in Three Guineas:

> . . . if people are highly successful in their professions they lose their senses. Sight goes. They have no time to look at pictures. Sound goes. They have no time to listen to music. Speech goes. They have no time for conversation. They lose their sense of proportion--the relations between one thing and another. Humanity goes. Money making becomes so important that they must work by night as well as by day. Health goes. And so competitive do they become that they will not share their work with others though they have more than they can do themselves. What then remains of a human being who has lost sight, and sound, and sense of proportion? Only a cripple in a cave.
>
> (TG, 131-132; italics mine)

As with family life, professional life moulds the individual until his humanitarian feelings become atrophied. Colonel Pargiter's eldest child, Eleanor, now a social worker, finds herself withdrawing from the agony of old Mrs. Potter as she lies slowly dying in one of Eleanor's charity houses:

> Mrs. Potter was asking her to feel her shoulder. She felt her shoulder. Her hand was still grasped. There was medicine on the table; Miriam Parrish came every week. Why do

> we do it? she asked herself as Mrs. Potter went on talking. Why do we force her to live? she asked, looking at the medicine on the table. She could stand it no longer. She withdrew her hand.
>
> (Y, 105-106)

This section ends by recounting the fate of Charles Stewart Parnell, destroyed by a society that blindly censures "illicit" love, especially in its public figures. The news of Parnell's death causes Eleanor to muse on the crippling moral tyranny that makes life in society a hell on earth: "He's dead, she said to herself, still conscious of the two worlds; one flowing in wide sweeps overhead, the other tip-tapping circumscribed upon the pavement" (Y, 121). The news also reaches Colonel Pargiter for whom the tragedy is a counterpart to his own immured life with his mistress, Mira: "But a man in public life can't afford to do these things, he thought. . . .She's lost all her looks, he was thinking; she had grown very stout" (Y, 124). His life is stifled by decaying materialism; he will take the secret of his illicit passion to his grave.

The years continue to pass with no assurance that time renews the human spirit. If anything, the passing of time under the shadow of a tyrannical society perpetuates loathing, hatred, and despair from one generation to the next. "1907" introduces a new generation of Pargiters in the characters of Maggie and Sara, the daughters of Digby and Eugenie. Sara, crippled by a childhood accident, is shown reading a translation of Antigone by her cousin, Edward:

> The man's name was Creon. He buried her. It was a moonlight night. The blades of the cactuses were sharp silver. The man in the loincloth gave three sharp taps with his

> mallet on the brick. She was buried alive. The tomb was a brick mound. There was just room for her to lie straight out. Straight out in a brick tomb, she said. And that's the end, she yawned, shutting the book.
>
> (Y, 146)

The allusion to Antigone translated into English by Edward not only recalls the figure of Kitty Malone, now Lady Lasswade, but also evokes the figure of Maggie who is making her social début in the company of her parents while Sara is left at home. When Maggie returns from the party, her mother berates her for forgetting the name of the distinguished man sitting next to her at dinner and for spending most of the evening with her cousin, Martin, instead of mingling with the other guests. All the horror of the family life is brought into sharp focus when Digby summons his wife from the company of his daughters. Sara, still under the influence of Antigone, conceives of her father's peremptory voice as that of the tyrant, the patriarch, Creon: "'Pirouetting up and down with his sword between his legs; with his opera hat under his arm and his sword between his legs,' said Sara, pummelling her pillows viciously" (Y, 154). The phallic allusion in this passage recalls James Ramsay's hatred of his father with his "arid scimitar" (TTL, 63). The scene closes with an argument between husband and wife, all the more tragic because both will be dead before the year has passed.

The older generation of Pargiters is now reaching middle adulthood. Rose still carries the psychological scars of her childhood trauma. In "1908" she agrees with Martin that children live awful lives: "'Yes,' said Rose. 'And they can't tell anybody,' she said" (Y, 171). And in "1910" she makes an unsuccessful visit

to Maggie and Sara who are now living in a flat at Hyams Place:

> What is the use, she thought, of trying to tell people about one's past? What is one's past? She stared at the pot with the blue knot loosely tied in the yellow glaze. Why did I come, she thought, when they only laugh at me?
>
> (Y, 180)

She leaves, saddened by the belief that Maggie does not like her. This section depicts not only the fragmentariness of family life (as experienced by Rose) but also of life in the modern world. The sisters live in a rowdy district and are disturbed the evening of Rose's visit by the noise of a drunken man being ejected from the public house across the way. Sara, turning from the scene at the window, attains a wry and moving insight into the universal pathos of human limitation in a corrupt world:

> . . . her face in the mixed light looked cadaverous and worn, as if she were no longer a girl, but an old woman worn out by a life of childbirth, debauchery and crime. She stood there hunched up, with her hands clenched together.
>
> "In time to come," she said, looking at her sister, "people, looking into this room--this cave, this little antre, scooped out of mud and dung, will hold their fingers to their noses"--she held her fingers to her nose--"and say 'Pah! They stink!'"
>
> (Y, 203)

Sara's allusion here to the graveyard scene from Hamlet suggests that the corruption and vileness of modern life is all the more pathetic because life leads only to the greater ignominy of death.

The death of Colonel Pargiter and a visit by Eleanor to Morris and Celia Pargiter establish Eleanor as a homeless wanderer in "1911." The chief symbolic episode here shows Eleanor "stretched on the bed under the single sheet" (Y, 227)

in the guest room, reading Dante's Purgatorio. In the next room, William Whatney, who once praised the beauty of her eyes, is preparing for bed. Eleanor reads:

> For by so many more there are who say 'ours'
> So much the more of good doth each possess.
>
> (Y, 228)

This other-worldly dream of shared brotherhood, which is increased by sharing, fails to impress Eleanor because she will not relinquish the this-worldly possession of sweet solitude symbolized by the owl crying outside her window "as it looped from tree to tree with its liquid cry" (Y, 228). Instead, she compares herself favourably with the aging William Whatney in the next room: "Should she travel? Should she go to India at last? Sir William was getting into bed next door, his life was over; hers was beginning" (Y, 229). The scene, as a whole, depicts the solitude of human life and its selfishness--the very reverse of the Dantean message of the one life.

With Colonel Pargiter dead, the house at Abercorn Terrace is to be sold to new owners under the supervision of Martin, in "1913." It is Martin who once and for all denounces family life. The patriarchal household engenders strife and falsehood, in which sense it is a microcosm of a tyrannous society:

> Everybody lied, he thought. His father had lied--after his death they had found letters from a woman called Mira tied up in his table-drawer. And he had seen Mira--a stout respectable lady who wanted help with her roof. Why had his father lied? What was the harm of keeping a mistress? And he had lied himself; about the room off Fulham Road where he and

> Dodge and Erridge used to smoke cheap cigars and tell smutty stories. It was an abominable system, he thought, family life; Abercorn Terrace. No wonder the house would not let. It had one bathroom, and a basement; and there all those different people had lived, boxed up together, telling lies.
>
> (Y, 239)

This episode also dramatizes one of the numerous failures in communication depicted in this novel. Martin is visited by Crosby, the family servant. She always considers him her favourite, but he has nothing to say to her: "He hated talking to servants; it always made him feel insincere. Either one simpers, or one's hearty, he was thinking. In either case it's a lie" (Y, 238). Like his father before him, Martin is a pargeter, a whitewasher. Moreover, the snow falling on Abercorn Terrace creates anew the image of the "whited sepulchre."

In "1914," the cave motif acquires a psychological implication, reminiscent of Auden's "And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom" ("In Memory of W.B. Yeats"), which is sustained through to the air-raid scene in "1917." "1914" presents a series of vignettes as Martin and Sara walk through the Park. They encounter several people talking to themselves (Y, 255-258). The rest of the episode is devoted to a party given by Kitty Lasswade to which Martin has been invited. This party is no celebration of community. Martin is rebuffed by the young socialite who sits next him at table. Kitty anticipates escaping her own party to go to her country home. Like her earlier escapade in "1880," this journey makes Kitty feel "as

if she were a little girl who had run away from her nurse" (Y, 291). In a nostalgic reverie, she notes how the passing of the years has not relieved the burdens of life: "The years changed things; destroyed things; heaped things up--worries and bothers; here they were again" (Y, 292). Kitty seeks solace in nature. But, like Orlando whose human sympathies are destroyed by contact with society so that she must flee to nature for revitalization, Kitty's sympathy with nature only deepens her isolation because the land cannot return her sympathy. The chapter culminates in a vision of nature as a voice speaking to itself for itself:

> She threw herself over the ground and looked over the billowing land that went rising and falling, away and away, until somewhere far off it reached the sea. Uncultivated, uninhabited, existing by itself for itself, without towns or houses it looked from this height. . . . A deep murmur sang in her ears--the land itself, singing to itself, a chorus, alone. She lay there listening. She was happy, completely. Time had ceased.
>
> (Y, 300)

Could mankind achieve this harmony, itself speaking to itself in a timeless world, this vision would indeed be an affirmation. However, the expression "[t]ime had ceased" is undercut by the historical fact of humanity at the brink of war. In "1917" the land is disturbed by the drone of warplanes, a reminder that the human world is doomed forever to be excluded from the paradisaical peace of nature so long as humanity remains fragmented, each individual buried in a separate cave of selfhood.

Eleanor, Maggie and Renny, Sara and Nicholas Pomjalovsky take dinner in a bomb shelter in Renny's home during an air-

raid. Nicholas, the chief spokesman for the vision of community here, resembles the impotent, optimistic philosopher sometimes featured in Chekhov. His foreign background, broken accent, and homosexual orientation all contribute to the portrait of him as an ironic hero. He engages Eleanor in a discussion about the true nature of the human spirit:

> "The soul--the whole being," he explained. He hollowed his hands as if to enclose a circle. "It wishes to expand; to adventure; to form new combinations?"
>
> "Yes, yes," she said, as if to assure him that his words were right.
>
> "Whereas now,"--he drew himself together; put his feet together; he looked like an old lady who is afraid of mice--"this is how we live, screwed up into one hard little, tight little--knot?"
>
> "Knot, knot--yes, that's right," she nodded.
>
> "Each is his own little cubicle; each with his own cross or holy book each with his fire, his wife ..."
>
> (Y, 319)

Nicolas impresses Eleanor with his words. She asks herself when shall human beings "live adventurously, wholly, not like cripples in a cave" (Y, 320). Asking the question, however, does not provide a solution. Nicholas makes the same speech some twenty years later in "Present Day," and the repetition confirms in the reader a sense of the absurdity of talk about a better world in the future, and the futility of striving in this world for what is, after all, an ideal.

Following the ironic celebration of peace in "1918," the novel moves into its longest and most complex section, "Present Day." In her 1934 diary, Woolf states the thematic and structural significance of this final chapter: "This last

chapter must equal in length and importance and volume the first book: and must in fact give the other side, the submerged side of that" (AWD, 219). The submerged side of the dated chapters is the imaginative sleep of the "nobler powers," that is, the illogical imagination of the individuals presented in these chapters. The exact nature of this "sleep" is suggested in Three Guineas, where Woolf states that "the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other" (TG, 258). The social tyrannies and servilities portrayed in the dated sections of The Years--the family as a tension of separate egos, the professions as an escape from living, and an inflexible religion embodying a life-denying morality--all result from widespread individual tyranny and servility. The private world thus creates the public world; each individual participates in the responsibility for the unsatisfactory social structure. In "Present Day," the submerged (repressed) side of public life is displayed. This is the private world of crass egotism, possessiveness, selfishness, the fear of sharing, and materialism in its many forms. The vision of this final gathering of the Pargiters is as dark as that of the preceding chapters, perhaps darker.

The theme of this chapter is the failure of communication: not "we are the words" but "I am the word." The theme, a variation of the Babel myth, is conveyed in a number of motifs, but chiefly by a series of solicited formal "speeches" at Delia's

party. The irony implicit in this theme is articulated in Orlando: "For it is probable that when people talk aloud, the selves (of which there may be more than two thousand) are conscious of disseverment, and are trying to communicate" (O, 282). Thus, the attempt to communicate arouses each man's consciousness of his essential separation from others. This attempt turns this-worldly when the imagination is illogical. Like the workmen in the Tower of Babel, each individual speaker believes he speaks the true language. Thus talking-with disintegrates into talking-at.

This theme first appears in North's visit to Sara's flat prior to the party. They discuss Nicholas, who has for years been making the same speech about improving the human race. Sara is able to parrot Nicholas's speech, complete with his characteristic gestures, perfectly. Parodied thus, it is emptied of meaning. A further elaboration of the theme is the cacophony created by a man playing trombone and a woman practising scales in separate areas of the neighbourhood. The sounds merge through the open window while Sara and North await dinner:

> . . . now a trombone player had struck up in the street below, and as the voice of the woman practising her scales continued, they sounded like two people trying to express completely different views of the world in general at one and the same time. The voice ascended; the trombone wailed. They laughed.
>
> (Y, 340)

The dissonance here is merely figurative; the two musicians are not really trying to express "different views of the world in

general." But the chief function of the motif is to set the pattern for the theme of failed communication in what follows.

Delia's party, which features over forty tightly-woven scenes, is carried forward by disjointed dialogue, misunderstood speeches, interrupted conversations, and unintelligible utterances. It begins with Peggy's absurd conversation with her almost-deaf Uncle Patrick: "A grown woman, she thought, crosses London to talk to a deaf old man about the Hackets, whom she's never heard of, when she meant to ask after the gardener who cut his toe off with a hatchet. But does it matter? Hackets or hatchets? She laughed, happily in time with a joke, so that it seemed appropriate" (Y, 379). The split between the intention and the action, ironically highlighted by the absurd coincidence between Peggy's laughter and her uncle's joke, makes Peggy doubt whether people can share their thoughts and feelings: "This 'sharing,' then, is a bit of a farce" (Y, 380). Here is the demonic contrast to Woolf's definition of poetry in Orlando: "a voice answering a voice" (O, 292).

The theme is restated as Peggy watches Rose and Martin play the game of brother and sister: "It's like a kitten catching its tail, Peggy thought; round and round they go in a circle" (Y, 387), and in Peggy's own encounter with an egotistical poet:

> I, I, I--he went on. It was like a vulture's beak pecking, or a vacuum cleaner sucking, or a telephone bell ringing. I, I, I. But he couldn't help it, not with that nerve-drawn egotist's face, she thought, glancing at him. He

> could not free himself. He was bound on a wheel with tight iron hoops. He had to expose, had to exhibit.
>
> (Y, 389)

The image evoked by "expose himself" and "exhibit" echoes the silent body-language of Rose's childhood exhibitionist, and reveals that selfhood speech is the articulation of animal self-absorption (that is, the Word which has become absorbed in gross this-worldliness). North, watching the patter of Milly and Hugh who have both grown corpulent over the years, equates their speech with the sounds of domestic animals masticating: "That was what it came to--thirty years of being husband and wife --tut-tut-tut and chew-chew-chew. It sounded like the half-inarticulate munchings of animals in a stall. Tut-tut-tut and chew-chew-chew--as they trod out the soft steamy straw in the stable; as they wallowed in the primeval swamp, prolific, profuse, half-conscious" (Y, 404).

As noted earlier, The Years contains the rudiments of certain themes fully developed in Between the Acts. North's vision of the eternal primitive, quoted above, anticipates the thematic juxtaposition of prehistoric and modern times which permeates Woolf's final novel. Both novels demonstrate what North calls "a gap, a dislocation, between the word and the reality" (Y, 437). As will be seen later, Miss La Trobe abandons language altogether at the end of her pageant in Between the Acts, when she plays a wordless gramophone tune to inspire in her audience the vision of the one life. In "Present Day," such a vision of

wholeness is glimpsed here and there in the private intuitions of individual characters, yet when they attempt to express their intuitions in public speeches, the vision fails to transcend the personal. Instead, it gets broken into fragments at the threshold of speech.

The first to have an experience of wholeness is Eleanor. At one point in the party, she falls asleep and dreams of a "gap filled with the golden light of lolling candles, and some sensation she could not name" (Y, 410). Fire, in Woolf's novels, is often associated with the individual heroic spirit, which takes many forms, such as Promethean fire-wielder, Diogenic lantern-bearer or Apollonian lighthouse illuminating a path through the waves. Here, however, the manifold flames of the cathedral candles, in Eleanor's dream, imply a collective, communal spirit. Eleanor attempts to communicate her dream to Peggy by asking her professional evaluation of dream interpretation, but Peggy snubs her (Y, 415). Near the end of the party, Eleanor makes one further attempt to put into words her nameless sensation:

> There must be another life, she thought, sinking back into her chair, exasperated. Not in dreams; but here and now, in this room, with living people . . . . . This is too short, too broken. We know nothing, even about ourselves . . . . She held her hands hollowed; she felt that she wanted to enclose the present moment; to make it stay; to fill it fuller and fuller, with the past, the present and the future, until it shone, whole, bright, deep with understanding.
>
> (Y, 461-462)

This time she attempts to communicate her feeling to Edward: "[b]ut he was not listening to her" (Y, 462). In despair, she

is overwhelmed by a feeling of being enclosed in the darkness of "a very long tunnel" (Y, 462)--her own fragmented life, where past, present, and future are rounded with the sleep of death.

Peggy intuits a vision of wholeness in a mood of hilarity inspired by a caricature drawing jointly composed by Renny, Eleanor, Maggie, and North:

> Each of them had drawn a different part of a picture. On top there was a woman's head like Queen Alexandra, with a fuzz of little curls; then a bird's neck; the body of a tiger; and stout elephant's legs dressed in child's drawers completed the picture.
>
> (Y, 420)

Peggy's laughter temporarily frees her from the cave of selfhood: "It had relaxed her, enlarged her. She felt, or rather she saw, not a place, but a state of being, in which there was real laughter, real happiness, and this fractured world was whole and free" (Y, 420). Encouraged by her intuition of wholeness, Peggy makes a speech aimed at expressing the possibility of a shared life, freed of the tyrannies and servilities of life in society. But something goes wrong; her speech becomes a personal attack on her brother:

> "[H]ere you all are--talking about North--"He looked up at her in surprise. It was not what she meant to say, but she must go on now that she had begun. Their faces gaped at her like birds with their mouths open. "...How he's to live, where he's to live," she went on. "...But what's the use, what's the point of saying that?"
>
> She looked at her brother. A feeling of animosity possessed her. He was still smiling, but his smile smoothed itself out as she looked at him.

> "What's the use?" she said, facing him. "You'll marry. You'll have children. What'll you do then? Make money. Write little books to make money...."
>
> She had got it wrong. She had meant to say something impersonal, but she was being personal. It was done now however; she must flounder on now.
>
> "You'll write one little book, and then another little book," she said viciously, "instead of living ...living differently, differently."
>
> (Y, 421)

The image of faces gaping "like birds with their mouths open" is a reminder of the perennial human hunger for words of wisdom, a hunger which is pathetic because it is never satisfied by what it receives. Many of the guests are solicited to make speeches, but either no one listens or no one understands. Nicholas's attempt to propose a toast is ruthlessly interrupted. No sooner does he begin, than a girl stumbles on the floor cushions, pitching "head foremost" (Y, 448). Then, Rose upstages Nicholas by her dramatic call to silence which dissolves into some brother-sister banter with Martin. Nicholas, encouraged by Eleanor and Rose, essays anew but is cut short by Delia, the hostess, "brushing past them with an empty jug" (Y, 452); then Renny throws in a sarcastic sally: "'What for?'" (Y, 452). Nicholas tries a third time, only to be dramatically interrupted by Sara, who sweeps a fistful of flower petals into the air over the stout figure of old Rose: "'Red Rose, thorny Rose, brave Rose, tawny Rose!'" (Y, 453). Inspired by this litany, the group drinks a round of healths to the aggressive, militant heroism of the Pargiter strain. Since Nicholas is now balking and won't

speak to the guests, Kitty urges Peggy to make a speech "for the younger generation" (Y, 455). But Peggy has already made a speech, so Eleanor importunes North to speak. North, who has been sleeping, wakes with a start at this challenge. He now intuits the meaning behind Peggy's earlier outburst, a meaning revealed in her face more than in her words: "This is what needs courage," he thinks, "to speak the truth" (Y, 456). He makes a private speech heard by Peggy alone: "'What you said was true,' he blurted out, '. . . quite true'" (Y, 456). Embarrassed, and frustrated by the poverty of communication, North now lapses into silence and sleep. His sleep is disturbed by someone (Maggie) arranging flowers above him in the room. The dream scene takes on sublime dimensions as the hand arranging flowers becomes the hand of dumb nature presiding over the life and death of the individual: "Pink, yellow, white with violet shadows, the petals fall. They fall and fall and cover all, he murmured" (Y, 458). This crisis of inundation is cut short by the insistent voice of Kitty: "'Wake up North . . . we want your speech!'" (Y, 458). Waking, North sees that the sublime flower-gatherer is only the maternal Maggie. Now Renny solicits Maggie to make a speech, but she only shakes her head and laughs. North rightly interprets her laughter to mean that the sublime mother is only a dream figure, and that the idolization of real mothers is the erroneous action of the illogical imagination:

> "Speak, speak!" Renny urged her.
> But she shook her head. Laughter took her and shook her. She laughed, throwing her head back as if she were possessed by some genial spirit outside herself that made her bend and rise, as a tree, North thought, is tossed

> and bent by the wind. No idols, no idols, no idols, her laughter seemed to chime as if the tree were hung with innumerable bells, and he laughed too.
>
> (Y, 458)

This passage recalls North's earlier meditation on the mother-figure as idol and seems to confirm his intuition that matriarchal worship is misdirected:

> We cannot help each other, he thought, we are all deformed. Yet, disagreeable as it was to him to remove Maggie from the eminence upon which he placed her, perhaps she was right, he thought, and we who make idols of other people, who endow this man, that woman, with the power to lead us, only add to the deformity, and stoop ourselves.
>
> (Y, 409-410)

Maggie's involuntary utterance is certainly not quite the final speech in the novel. The final speech is that of the caretaker's two children who have come up from the cellar to have some cake just as the party is breaking up at dawn. The symbolic role of this episode is suggested in a juxtaposition of Nicholas's belated toast to humanity with the sudden appearance in the room of the children. Nicholas toasts humanity:

> "First I was going to have thanked our host and hostess. Then I was going to have thanked this house--" he waved his hand round the room hung with placards of the house agent, "--which has sheltered the lovers, the creators, the men and women of goodwill. And finally--" he took his glass in his hand, "I was going to drink to the human race. The human race," he continued, raising his glass to his lips, "which is now in its infancy, may it grow to maturity! Ladies and gentlemen!" he exclaimed, half rising and expanding his waistcoat, "I drink to that!"
>
> He brought his glass down with a thump on the table. It broke.
>
> (Y, 459-460)

The broken glass undercuts the effect of his peroration and awakens Eleanor, who laments that life is "too short, too broken" (Y, 461). For the older generation, represented by Eleanor, the present is merely the prelude to "the endless night; the endless dark" (Y, 462).[7] The cycle of birth and death, of light and darkness continues to thwart such hopes of imaginative evolution as expressed in Nicholas's speech. Thus, when the caretaker's children suddenly appear in the room, they seem not so much a symbol of rebirth as a caricature of humanity, "which is in its infancy." These children are by no means Wordsworthian sages of innocence. They have come up for cake; they swindle Martin out of a sixpence by singing only rhythmic prattle instead of the song he requests:

> Etho passo tanno hai,
> Fai donk to du do,
> Mai to, kai to, lai to see
> Toh dom to tuh do--
>
> (Y, 464)

and so on. The effect of this eerie babble is to present to the assembled guests an exaggerated image of their own human condition. Humanity, so beautiful and full of promise, is nevertheless maimed by a confusion of tongues. The Word is broken into fragments--our dialects, our languages, ourselves:

> "But it was . . ." Eleanor began. She stopped. What was it? As they stood there they had looked so dignified; yet they had made this hideous noise. The contrast between their faces and their voices was astonishing; it was impossible to find one word for the whole. "Beautiful?" she said, with a note of interrogation, turning to Maggie.

> "Extraordinarily," said Maggie.
> But Eleanor was not sure that they were thinking of the same thing.
>
> (Y, 465)

Between the Acts achieves a satisfactory formal solution to the problem of symbolizing the anagogic human identity. This problem first arises during the composition of The Waves, which Woolf originally considered ending with "a gigantic conversation" (AWD, 152). Her final decision to "merge all the interjected passages into Bernard's final speech . . . thus making him absorb all those scenes" (AWD, 162) brings the conclusion of the novel dangerously close to the subjective lyricism that Woolf constantly mistrusted in modern literature. The theme of anagogy is subtly suggested in the closing image of the waves (i.e. the generations of humanity), but the effect desired is vitiated because ambiguous. In other words, the last sentence of the novel could be read as an admission of the triumph of nature (i.e. the eternal sea) over the human spirit. A similar problem besets the conclusion of The Years. Here, Eleanor turns to the window to watch a couple emerging from a taxi, a symbolic picture echoing the theme of the androgynous mind suggested in A Room of One's Own (AROO, 144). Again, however, the tenor of this symbol is ambiguous: Eleanor's vision is private, and she is too much a mimetic fictional character to suddenly represent the anagogic "great mind" conceived in the apocalyptic vision. In Between the Acts, Woolf abandons the attempt to absorb the anagogic vision into the consciousness

of a single visionary character. Instead, she creates a this-worldly/ other-worldly "character" in the collective but singular audience of Miss La Trobe's pageant. This modern analogue to the Greek chorus, at the heart of Between the Acts, is a successful incarnation of the anagogic symbol and a fine example of the conceptual ingenuity of the logical imagination.

By thus situating the total human community in the art-related context of audience, Woolf thematically moves art to the central place in her narrative. The three-part structure of Between the Acts, two slices of life interrupted by a village pageant, compels an ironic interpretation of the novel's title, implying that "real" life is only a scripted, deterministic continuum, and that the imaginative activity of art is an entr'acte through which free thought and action become possible. Such a view of art-in-the-midst-of-life suggests the inter-penetration of imagination and reality, and accords art the ambivalent power both to doom human society to act out pre-conceived patterns of behaviour, and to free it to reassess and improve these patterns. This view of the role of imagination in civilization is intensely restrictive, yet it prescribes what might be the only solution to the problem of free will and free action. Put simply, the only impediment to the attainment of real imaginative freedom in society is the illogical misuse of the imagination, exemplified in the dogmatizing and institutionalizing of myths. If all individuals could regard myths as fictions, then civilization could attain the status

of "culture" as Woolf defines it in Three Guineas: "the disinterested pursuit of reading and writing the English language" (TG, 164)--which certainly includes the study of other languages and literatures through the mediation of translation. In such a world, language would free humanity not only from bondage to nature but also from bondage to the Word. In the thematic structure of Between the Acts, Woolf explores the very processes by which art-in-the-midst-of-life perpetuates hopeless cycles of myth-worship and role-playing. Simultaneously, however, she challenges readers to stop deifying the figure of Fate, the Divine Author, and instead, to accept the necessary burden of imaginative freedom, without which each individual can never become other than a passive spectator at the pageant of life.

The novel opens in an atmosphere of suppressed tension. The future is threatened by war, the imminent last "act" of a race of beings that has never mastered the art of survival. Christianity, the legacy of the first "act" of man's imaginative evolution, seems to have failed its followers. Between the acts of belief and annihilation is a failure of the will symbolized in the disturbed marriage of Giles and Isa Oliver. In Giles Oliver, the "unseizable force" has been crippled into barely-suppressed hostility toward the "other"; in Isa, it has turned into a pathetic death-wish as the only escape from bondage. The marriage also seems doomed by sexual infidelity and verbal incommunicativeness. The prologue shows Isa attracted to the

gentleman farmer, Rupert Haines, while his wife looks menacingly on:

> Isa raised her head. The words [from Byron's poetry] made two rings, perfect rings, that floated them, herself and Haines, like two swans down stream. But his snow-white breast was circled with a tangle of dirty duckweed; and she too, in her webbed feet was entangled, by her husband, the stockbroker.
>
> (BTA, 9-10)

The "swan" (a conventional symbol of the poet) in the passage indicates how a possessive marriage impedes the progress of the imaginative self. (The concept is later developed with reference to Isa's poetry which she must hide in an account book in case her husband discovers it.) A further animal image, demonstrating that the Haineses act as foils to Giles and Isa, depicts Mrs. Haines as an egotistical bird of prey who will destroy the emotion generated between Isa and Mr. Haines "as a thrush pecks the wings off a butterfly" (BTA, 10). This is a world where the veneer of civilization only thinly conceals cruel and primitive instincts.

This alignment of the modern and the primitive expands into a metaphorical comparison between, on the one hand, the time spanned by the novel, and, on the other hand, the vast panorama of human evolution from prehistoric time to the dawn of civilization. This congruence of microcosmic and macrocosmic time is introduced on the morning of the following day. Old Lucy Swithin, having been awakened by the birds in the middle of the night, has whiled away the early morning hours reading in an Outline of History how the whole continent of

Europe was once a prehistoric forest populated by monstrous creatures "from whom presumably . . . we descend" (BTA, 13). This theory of origins becomes a symbol of human selfhood in two scenes which follow. The first describes Grace, the maid, bringing Mrs. Swithin her breakfast:

> It took her five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-covered grunting monster who was about, as the door opened, to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest. Naturally, she jumped, as Grace put the tray down and said: "Good morning, Ma'am." "Batty," Grace called her, as she felt on her face the divided glance that was half meant for a beast in a swamp, half for a maid in a print frock and white apron.
>
> (BTA, 13-14)

The second scene depicts little George grubbing in the grass:

> George grubbed. The flower blazed between the angles of the roots. Membrane after membrane was torn. It blazed a soft yellow, a lambent light under a film of velvet; it filled the caverns behind the eyes with light. All that inner darkness became a hall, leaf smelling, earth smelling of yellow light. And the tree was beyond the flower: the grass, the flower and the tree were entire. Down on his knees grubbing he held the flower complete. Then there was a roar and a hot breath and a stream of coarse grey hair rushed between him and the flower. Up he leapt, toppling in his fright, and saw coming towards him a terrible peaked eyeless monster moving on legs, brandishing arms.
>
> (BTA, 17)

The image structure here, suggesting a contrast between the ideal world in "the caverns behind the eyes" and the terrible prospect of the "out there," is echoed in the following scene where Isa sits before the mirror at her dressing-table. She distinguishes between an "inner" love for the romanticized

Rupert Haines as reflected in her eyes in the mirror, and the "outer," a merely conventional love for "the father of my children" (BTA, 19), a love mixed with hatred and fear. However, because her "ideal" world is autistic, it is less an infinity within than a cave of selfhood, a shelter from the "out there." Isa resorts to selfconscious escapist poetry, featuring images of flying, to express her desire for freedom. Yet she seems inescapably bound to the selfhood world. She lacks the creative will to bring her ideal world into being: "'Abortive,' was the word that expressed her" (BTA, 21). "Thick of waist, large of limb" (BTA, 22), her body is her accuser, for it reminds her of her descent, through her Celtic ancestry, from nature.

In the description of the Pointz Hall library in the next section, the mirror image conveys the "abortive" nature of mimetic literature. If books are "the mirrors of the soul" (BTA, 22), the scraps and fragments represented by the ill-assorted collection in the library reflect a soul that is also scraps and fragments of the "one life": "Nobody could pretend, as they looked at the shuffle of shilling shockers, that the looking-glass always reflected the anguish of a Queen or the heroism of King Harry" (BTA, 23). For Isa's generation, the literary heritage is as inaccessible and inscrutable as "green bottles with gilt scrolls" (BTA, 26) in a chemist's shop. She scans the row of books in search of a magic formula that will cure her pain. But, as she is book-shy, the search is vain: "For her generation the newspaper was a book" (BTA, 26).

Yet, what the newspaper offers Isa is a deadly reflection of the horrors of real life. She reads about the rape of a young woman by a group of soldiers: "That was real" (BTA, 27).

The rape story becomes humourously blended in Isa's mind with the figure of Mrs. Swithin who enters the library with a hammer in hand. This incongruous juxtaposition provides a basis for a symbolic representation of the relation between tyranny and the illogical imagination. The victim in the newspaper story is lured into the barracks by a fantastic story of a horse with a green tail; both the colour image and the theme of a magic object recall Isa's image of "green bottles" for the inscrutable books in the library. Like the barrack-room, which is the soldiers' domain, the library is the domain of Bart Oliver. Mrs. Swithin, by taking Bart's hammer and nails, has broken the taboo of the male prerogative, for which her brother chastises her. Mrs. Swithin's fearlessness in the face of "the old brute" (BTA, 26) inspires Isa to mentally revise the details of the rape story in such a way as to cast Mrs. Swithin in the role of a victim who is no longer powerless. Beneath the habitual dialogue of brother and sister--the annual dispute about hammer and nails, about the weather for the pageant--Isa hears a new note: "The same chime followed the same chime, only this year beneath the chime she heard: 'The girl screamed and hit him about the face with a hammer'" (BTA, 29).

Of course, Isa's vision of female power is misplaced, in that Mrs. Swithin has been wielding the hammer to help prepare

for the annual pageant for the benefit of the church. In fact, Woolf's sympathetic portrayal of this Christian lady suggests that the humanitarian aspect of Christianity is a constructive alternative to the tyrannical reason of smug agnostics like Bart Oliver. Bart cannot reconcile his scientific view of human nature with his sister's faith: "it was not in books the answer to his question--why, in Lucy's skull, shaped so much like his own, there existed a prayable being?" (BTA, 32) He resorts to a deterministic theory of a universal life force to explain her faith: "She didn't, he supposed, invest it with hair, teeth or toenails. It was, he supposed more of a force or a radiance, controlling the thrush and the worm; the tulip and the hound; and himself, too, an old man with swollen veins" (BTA, 32-33). This, like all the theories the characters make to explain Lucy's faith (cf. BTA, 140, 204), is purely conjectural. On the contrary, a careful examination of Mrs. Swithin's character reveals a woman in the midst of a crisis of faith. Her reading in history presents her with a theory of human origin very different from the Biblical account. She informs Isa that England was once part of the continent inhabited by mammoths (BTA, 138). Similarly, she has doubts about the validity of Christian eschatology, as evidenced in a dialogue she has with William Dodge while sitting on the side of the bed in which she was born (BTA, 36). Mrs. Swithin's Christian ethos is not in question; what she needs is a vision of imaginative community that is neither susceptible to the erosive influence of the real world nor condemnatory of its beauty.

Mrs. Swithin's search for meaning, however, has very little impact on Isa's world. Isa's generation seems doomed by a death-instinct rapidly materializing in the form of a global war. At the heart of this death-instinct is an aggressive form of sexuality that polarizes the sexes into tyrants and slaves. Bart Oliver, who condemns his grandson for being a "coward" (BTA, 25), is a spokesman for the masculine ethos of aggression. His female counterpart is the "wild child of nature" (BTA, 52), Mrs. Manresa ("man-raiser?"), who drops in for lunch on the afternoon of the pageant. A creature of irresistible vitality, Mrs. Manresa is nevertheless a slave to the sexual instincts, who seeks to enslave men. In "Thoughts of Peace in an Air Raid," Woolf alludes to the aggressive femme fatale epitomized by Mrs. Manresa: "We can see shop windows blazing; and women gazing; painted women; dressed-up women; women with crimson lips and crimson fingernails. They are slaves who are trying to enslave. If we could free ourselves from slavery we should free men from tyranny. Hitlers are bred by slaves."[8] Mrs. Manresa holds a powerful attraction for old Oliver: "He bowed deep over her hand; a century ago he would have kissed it" (BTA, 43). Isa, who is less susceptible to her charms, forms a more objective opinion of the "wild child of nature." She intuits how Mrs. Manresa employs the feminine arts to trap the male sex: "Or what are your rings for, and your nails, and that really adorable little straw hat?" (BTA, 49-50)

Mrs. Manresa's threat to the marriage of Giles and Isa is subtly introduced through the legend of the drowned lady.

A Pointz Hall legend, conceived and perpetuated by the servants, is that many years ago a melancholic lady drowned herself for love in the "black heart" (BTA, 55) of the fish-pond. The servants believe the ghost of the woman inhabits the fish-pond at night. Bart dismisses this superstition, but Mrs. Manresa approves it. The legend also has direct bearing on Isa because, as the novel progresses, Isa increasingly reveals, through her poetry, a death-wish resembling that of the drowned lady. In this context, Mrs. Manresa assumes the role of the third figure in a love triangle. Not surprisingly, she holds a fatal attraction for Giles Oliver.

Giles Oliver's inner conflict can be seen as a painful impasse of will caused by the opposite demands of his social role and his ethical values. In part, he is a fictional descendant of the pacifist, Renny, in The Years. Both characters loathe the inhumanity represented by the growth of Fascism in Europe; both are angry at the apparent complacency of their friends and family at home. Unlike Renny, however, Giles is emotionally crippled by a socially-conditioned masculine role that undermines his essentially sympathetic nature. In this respect, Giles reenacts the emotional struggle that leads the sensitive Septimus Warren Smith to madness. Both characters struggle with the "coward" label which a warlike society attaches to men who refuse to hate the enemy. The centre of this influence, for both characters, is the rich and powerful elite of British society. Early in Mrs. Dalloway, Septimus intuits the emblematic power

immanent in the mysterious grey automobile with interlocking initials embossed on the side panel. A similar emblem appears in the scene introducing Giles Oliver. He returns from a business venture in London to encounter the formidable motor-car of Ralph Manresa:

> Giles had come. He had seen the great silver-plated car at the door with the initials R.M. twisted so as to look at a distance like a coronet. Visitors, he had concluded, as he drew up behind; and had gone to his room to change. The ghost of convention rose to the surface, as a blush or a tear rises to the surface at the pressure of emotion; so the car touched his training. He must change.
>
> (BTA, 58)

Giles projects his frustration onto his Aunt Lucy "as one hangs a coat on a hook, instinctively" (BTA, 58-59) because the tyrant he must fight is too nebulous a target. It is not his Aunt Lucy but the way of the world that has made Giles Oliver an acquiescent victim of destiny: "Given his choice, he would have chosen to farm. But he was not given his choice. So one thing led to another; and the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water. So he came for the week-end, and changed" (BTA, 59).

One further similarity between Septimus and Giles explains, perhaps, the thematic role of sexual inversion in the two novels. Although Woolf has often been considered an apologist for a number of social causes, the roles she conceives for herself as novelist do not include propagandist. She seeks, rather, to explore the underlying illogical myths that foster

prejudice. In Mrs. Dalloway, the relationship between Septimus and his military superior, Evans, demonstrates both a natural sympathy between men extending to sexual attraction, and the demonic thwarting of this natural sympathy by a social structure which damns the sexual aspect of the relationship. In Between the Acts, Giles effects an immediate dislike for the homosexual William Dodge. Imaginatively, this hatred stems from Giles's implicit belief in the myth of the masculine role. He projects his shame at being a "coward" onto William Dodge just as he does with his Aunt Lucy:

> His expression . . . gave Giles another peg on which to hang his rage as one hangs a coat on a peg, conveniently. A toady; a lickspittle; not a downright plain man of his senses; but a teaser and twitcher; a fingerer of sensations; picking and choosing; dillying and dallying; not a man to have a straightforward love for a woman--his head was close to Isa's head--but simply a--At this word, which he could not speak in public, he pursed his lips; and the signet-ring on his little finger looked redder, for the flesh next it whitened as he gripped the arm of his chair.
>
> (BTA, 75)

Self-hatred, however disguised, is sterile and unproductive. Here, Giles is condemning William Dodge for a number of traits he possesses himself. He toadies to a tyrannical patriarchy, dallies when he should be exercising his common sense, and dissipates his emotional potential, which should be developed in his marriage, in a series of casual sexual affairs.

This emotional dissipation is graphically illustrated in the strong flirtation which develops between Giles and the "wild child of nature," Mrs. Manresa. Oddly he "exempts" both

his father and Mrs. Manresa from the censure he inwardly lodges against his Aunt Lucy and William Dodge. He refers to her as "a good sort" (BTA, 61) and chivalrously lights her cigarette (BTA, 67). All the same, Mrs. Manresa exudes a lustiness that Giles finds faintly disquieting. She is determined to make a conquest of him. She "drinks" Giles in with her eyes as she sips her coffee:

> She looked before she drank. Looking was part of drinking. Why waste sensation, she seemed to say, why waste a single drop that can be pressed out of this ripe, this melting, this adorable world? Then she drank. And the air round her became threaded with sensation. Bartholomew felt it; Giles felt it. Had he been a horse, the thin brown skin would have twitched, as if a fly had settled.
>
> (BTA, 70)

Even though the "fly" image upstages the sensuality of Mrs. Manresa's stare, the sex-game she initiates with Giles provides him with opportunity to externalize his conflicts and, hence, with the opportunity to act.

As the richly-ambiguous title of this novel indicates, "to act" has more than one implication. Giles epitomizes the ironic hero in that the life-force within him is in a state of uneasy passivity. This state of passivity was not always Giles's condition. Isa remembers her first meeting with her husband in which she watched him catch a salmon while the powerful river raced between his legs. Now, however, Giles conceives of himself as a fish held motionless by the current (BTA, 59). This is the "current" of civilization, not the life-force. In another metaphor, Giles conceives of himself as a victim bound

to a rock. This time his frustration is a response to a remark made about the pageant by old Oliver--"Our part . . . is to be the audience" (BTA, 73):

> "We remain seated"--"We are the audience." Words this afternoon ceased to lie flat in the sentence. They rose, became menacing and shook their fists at you. This afternoon he wasn't Giles Oliver come to see the villagers act their annual pageant; manacled to a rock he was, and forced passively to behold indescribable horror.
>
> (BTA, 74)

The "scene" is set for war in Europe, while Britons stand passively looking on. This is an appropriate conceit for the sense of doom one must feel at being positioned outside a whole order of existence and, thus, powerless to act or to change a single action in the drama.[9] Powerlessness to act and powerlessness to speak indicate a demonic form of the reader's sublime. The "drama" Giles is forced to witness is "eyeless, and thus terrible" (TTL, 209).

The annual pageant, by contrast, is a form of action which is other-worldly (because fictive), and the audience of this drama is drawn into the action as they coalesce into a chorus that becomes part of the play. The author of the pageant, Miss La Trobe, introduced in naval or military terms, is an imaginative counterpart to the generals and admirals who script the real-life drama commencing on the Western Front:

> Miss La Trobe was pacing to and fro between the leaning birch trees. One hand was deep stuck in her jacket pocket; the other held a foolscap sheet. She was reading what was written there. She had the look of a commander pacing his deck . . . .
>
> Wet would it be, or fine? Out came the sun; and, shading her eyes in the attitude proper to an Admiral on his quarter-deck, she decided to risk the engagement out of doors. Doubts were over.
>
> (BTA, 77)

Woolf's sketch of Miss La Trobe criticizes audiences who expect this-worldly leadership from their artists: "No one liked to be ordered about singly. But in little troops they appealed to her. Someone must lead. Then too they could put the blame on her. Suppose it poured?" (BTA, 78-79). The role of meteorological deity, recalling Mr. Ramsay's stern decision-making, implies the burden of leadership imposed on people of action. Much of humanity, it seems, cannot face uncertainty. Instead, people create tyrants and make them play the dual role of god and scapegoat. Miss La Trobe is weary of the burden of leadership. What is important to her is the imaginative "one life" beneath the superficial criss-cross of conventions: "She splashed into the fine mesh like a great stone into the lily pool. The criss-cross was shattered. Only the roots beneath the water were of use to her" (BTA, 80).

Nevertheless, the audience-to-be is nettled by being excluded from the act of preparing for the pageant. The waiting period places them in an uncomfortable no-man's-land between individuality and community: "Their minds and bodies were too close, yet not close enough. We aren't free, each one of them felt separately to feel or think separately, nor yet to fall asleep. We're too close; but not close enough. So they fidgeted" (BTA, 81). Old Oliver begins to nod off; Giles forms himself into a knot; Isa feels imprisoned; Mrs. Manresa takes refuge in a picture-book; William Dodge and Mrs. Swithin contemplate the view, united by a common aesthetic bond with

the world of nature. Yet, Mrs. Swithin is uncomfortable enough to break the spell and suggest a tour of the house. William follows her.

What they experience together symbolically is a tour through the individual life under nature's law. Lucy recapitulates her own autobiography going far beyond the present to her imminent death. William Dodge interprets their odyssey symbolically. They ascend the staircase as though viewing a procession heading down the corridors of history. The books on the landing represent "the poets from whom we descend by way of the mind" (BTA, 85); a phalanx of paintings along the walls indicates familial ancestors. Then, they come to the room where Lucy Swithin was born. Her melancholy at this point surfaces in a fervent plea for belief in the survival of the spirit beyond death. Though she does not find grounds for such a belief, she does have one moment of communication, as the eyes of the young man, reflected in the looking-glass, smile at her own: "Cut off from their bodies, their eyes smiled, their bodiless eyes, at their eyes in the glass" (BTA, 87). Finally, she takes him to the empty nursery: "'The nursery,' said Mrs. Swithin. Words raised themselves and became symbolical. 'The cradle of our race,' she seemed to say" (BTA, 88). In this gesture, Lucy seems to bequeath her own unrealized hopes to the younger generation.

The scene at the top of the house also provides a structural transition to the second part of the novel, the

pageant. Looking down from her heightened perspective, Lucy watches the audience assemble. The pageant is introduced as a parodic apocalypse that descends into comic realism. Mrs. Swithin exclaims "It is time . . . to go and join--" (BTA, 91), but leaves her sentence unfinished. With her gleaming cross on her breast, she might well be thinking it is time to join the assembled multitude for the Great Reckoning. This illusion is built up by the sober historical perspective from which Woolf introduces the audience of the pageant: "had Figgis [the historian] been there in person and called a roll call, half the ladies and gentlemen present would have said: 'Adsum; I'm here, in place of my grandfather or great- grandfather,' as the case might be" (BTA, 92). The solemn tone is diminished, however, when the company is summoned to silence not by the silver trumpets of the Apocalypse but the "chuff, chuff, chuff" of a gramophone; to behold not the face of God but the body of "a small girl, like a rosebud in pink" (BTA, 94). The little girl is the child, England; the pageant has begun.

This fiction-within-a-fiction constituting the heart of Between the Acts is the most remarkable medley of perspectives in the Woolfian canon. The principal characters in the novel assume the complex role of ordinary people, audience, and contributing actors. In the latter role they sometimes verbally encourage the actors, and in one instance, Mrs. Manresa fills in for a Queen Elizabeth who has forgotten her lines. The actors themselves have dual roles as representative villagers

and fictional personages. The author, Miss La Trobe, is portrayed as a concerned artist extremely sensitive to the reaction of her audience, a prompter, and an anonymous omniscient voice speaking directly to the audience. The procession of villagers in the stage-background represents unchanging humanity responding to the rhythms of nature. Even nature assumes a role in bridging gaps in the action, providing a symbolic commentary on the action, and establishing a fictional background. Between the acts of the pageant the audience continues the action, picking up the rhythms of the speeches and adapting the themes to their personal actions.

Initially, the pageant attempts to inspire imaginative community. England is portrayed as a little girl, who proclaims that the pageant about to take place is drawn from British history. But the audience is not inspired by such an imaginative vision of national unity, and becomes particularly uncomfortable when "England" forgets her lines. Miss La Trobe, behind her tree, silently curses the audience for its imaginative passivity. The procession of choristers that begins to weave between the trees does little to augment the sense of community. Mrs. Manresa, for example, feels "a vast vacancy between her, the singing villagers and the piping child" (BTA, 95). Nature is partly responsible for the failure of vision here; the wind blows half the words of the chorus away. More significant is the resistance put up by the damnable egotism of human beings. Under the influence of the illogical imagination, the reader's

sublime turns demonic. The impersonal vision offered by art is undermined by the personal demand of its patrons for a flattering mirror-vision of the selfhood. For example, the audience appreciates the "pompous popular tune" (BTA, 96) with its jingoistic praise of the "valiant Rhoderick," and Mrs. Manresa exploits the emotion to the full by singing a bawdy song which makes her "Queen of the festival" (BTA, 97).

Mrs. Manresa consolidates her role as "Queen" at the same time as "England" grows into a mature young woman in the pageant. Thus, the "wild child of nature" is made to parallel, in growth, the development of Britain as Motherland. Mrs. Manresa assimilates the role of Queen Elizabeth, a usurpation which has direct bearing on the love triangle that begins to develop during the intermissions among Mrs. Manresa, Isa, and Giles. At the beginning of the first act, Isa recites her formulaic escapist poetry, only to be arrested by the sight of Eliza Clark dressed up as the Queen. At the same time, Mrs. Manresa responds with a lusty laugh when the Queen's headdress is nearly toppled by the rising wind. In response, Giles echoes Hamlet's melancholic confession of madness: "I fear I am not in my perfect mind" (BTA, 103), an allusion which signals his incipient relationship with Mrs. Manresa as symbolic son/lover. However, Giles's ironic attitude to the pageant temporarily frees him from the illogical imagination: "Exiled from its festival, the music turned ironical" (BTA, 104). Like Hamlet, Giles assumes the role of wise fool, inspired perhaps by the appearance of Albert, the village idiot, on stage:

> He came ambling across the grass, mopping and mowing.
> I know where the tit nests, he began
> In the hedgerow, I know, I know--
> What don't I know?
> All your secrets, ladies,
> And yours too, gentlemen . . .
>
> (BTA, 104)

Giles, like the wise fool, later guesses the secret of Mrs. Manresa when he sees her as the embodiment of lust (BTA, 118). (Her association with the homosexual Dodge furthermore implies that she shuns the sexual act.)[10]

But Giles again falls victim to the illogical imagination before the first act of the pageant is over. The first "play," concerning the recovered birthright of a young prince saved from infanticide by an old beldame, subtly introduces a theme of fatalism signaled by the conventional birthmark that assures the hero's triumph. Isa identifies with the old beldame (she echoes the character's line on page 109). Mrs. Manresa remains the Queen for whom the play is performed, and she casts Giles in the role of "the surly hero" (BTA, 112). Giles does not respond to the play but is discomfited by Mrs. Manresa's enthusiasm: "'Bravo! Bravo!' she cried, and her enthusiasm made the surly hero squirm on his seat" (BTA, 112). He divulges his reaction during the interval of the pageant. As the audience disperses, Giles remains "like a stake in the tide of the flowing company" (BTA, 116). Miss La Trobe, catching sight of him, concludes that he has not understood her vision: "She saw Giles Oliver with his back to the audience. Also Cobbet of Cobbs Corner. She hadn't made them see. It was a failure,

another damned failure! As usual. Her vision escaped her" (BTA, 117-118). Giles, however, proceeds on an adventure which shows that he has understood Miss La Trobe's vision, but in the wrong sense. On the way to lunch in the Barn, he plays a game of kicking a stone to a goal. The game turns serious; a vent for his aggressive feelings. He seems to have assumed the role of the "valiant Rhoderick" armed against fate: "The gate was a goal; to be reached in ten. The first kick was Manresa (lust). The second, Dodge (perversion). The third himself (coward). And the fourth and the fifth and all the others were the same" (BTA, 118).

The last kick brings him unexpectedly onto a demonic spectacle of the life-force paralysed by suffering without end: a symbolic representation of Giles's own emotional state:

> There, couched in the grass, curled in an olive green ring, was a snake. Dead? No, choked with a toad in its mouth. The snake was unable to swallow; the toad was unable to die. A spasm made the ribs contract; blood oozed. It was birth the wrong way round--a monstrous inversion. So, raising his foot, he stamped on them. The mass crunched and slithered. The white canvas on his tennis shoes was bloodstained and sticky. But it was action. Action relieved him. He strode to the Barn,with blood on his shoes.
>
> (BTA, 119)

This demonic rite of passage provides an emotional catharsis but the nature of this catharsis is also demonic. The source of Giles's frustration is his guilt about being a "coward," a guilt which subverts the humanitarian feeling associated with his political pacifism. What rouses him to "act" is not pity for suffering but moral indignation at the obscenity of such a

naked display of impotence. Giles exorcises the "sin" of cowardice; but the price of his victory is a baptism of blood, in a special sense. His bloodstained shoes are an ironic birthright indicating both his descent from nature and his godlike power of free-will. The irony is that Giles's victory over "cowardice" is misplaced. The snake and toad are creatures without reason; hence, the helplessness of their dilemma. Giles discovers that he is a creature of free will and reason. Literal action, as a means of resolving his self-conflict, can only take the form of literal suicide. But imaginative action--the opening of a gap between his consciousness and his selfhood--can conceivably free his power to act in the human world. This second alternative becomes the responsibility of Miss La Trobe as the pageant progresses.

The immediate result of Giles's "adventure" is that it makes him the personification of the "valiant Rhoderick" in the eyes of others. William Dodge explicitly identifies Giles with the hero of the song: "Armed and valiant, bold and blatant, firm elatant" (BTA, 132). Mrs. Manresa, conceiving of herself as Queen, thinks of Giles as a courtly lover who has passed a test of courageous chivalry: "And what--she looked down--had he done with his shoes? They were bloodstained. Vaguely some sense that he had proved his valour for her admiration flattered her. If vague it was sweet. Taking him in tow, she felt: I am the Queen, he's my hero, my sulky hero" (BTA, 128). This fantasy, however, is ironically undercut by Cobbett of Cobbs

Corner who interprets Mrs. Manresa's seductive nature as animal instinct: "Cobbett in his corner saw through her little game. He had known human nature in the East. It was the same in the West. Plants remained--the carnation, the zinnia, and the geranium. Automatically he consulted his watch; noted time to water at seven; and observed the little game of the woman following the man to the table in the West as in the East" (BTA, 131-132). This worldly insight is symbolically augmented by Lucy Swithin's ecstatic reference to the return of the swallows, another instance of natural instinct. Her enthusiasm depresses Giles whose recent experience has done nothing to increase his admiration for the marvels of nature's wisdom: "Lucy clapped her hands. Giles turned away. She was mocking him as usual, laughing" (BTA, 131). Only Isa rejects Giles's apparent heroism:

> "No," said Isa, as plainly as words could say it. "I don't admire you," and looked, not at his face, but at his feet. "Silly little boy, with blood on his boots."
>
> (BTA, 133).

Isa's ability to communicate her own sense of doom while sitting with William Dodge in the greenhouse (BTA, 134-136) provides a contrast to her inability to communicate with her husband; the scene points out both the potential for growth in her marriage and the tragedy of this potential's being thwarted. As long as Giles exercises the role of sulky tyrant and patriarchal hero, no genuine communication can be possible between husband and wife.

Bart Oliver senses his son's unhappiness without understanding its causes. Bart is sure that Giles only needs the polarizing influence of a sensible woman to regain his emotional balance. He believes that Lucy Swithin is too flighty to stabilize her nephew's emotional state: "There was nothing in her to weight a man like Giles to the earth" (BTA, 139). Bart's criticism of Lucy, however, is a displacement of his own potential guilt about his son's state of mind. He quotes the opening lines of Swinburne's Itylus--"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow" (BTA, 131)--but continues the allusion by casting himself in the role of Procne, who feeds her son to her husband to revenge herself for his infidelity: "How can my heart be full of the spring?" (BTA, 138; italics mine). The tragedy of a younger generation sacrificed heartlessly to the anger of the older, reintroduces the theme of the war as a mindless sacrifice of youth for the conflicts of the older, passing generation. Bart articulates the guilt of an older generation which has escaped its own doom and refuses to mourn the doom of its descendants. Bart also projects his guilt onto the poets of the past, who have apparently failed to insure the freedom and happiness of the present generation: "A great harvest the mind had reaped; but for all this, compared with his son, he did not care a damn" (BTA, 138). Thus, Bart strikes the pose of a man who loves his kind; but this pose conceals a certain self-pity at the heart of his meditation. He fears his death and deplores the loss of his youth; hence, the fatalistic poetry that runs through his head as he sits in the library

with his old Afghan (BTA, 140-141). Bart's tendency to usurp his son's role of sulky youth (cp. Mr. Ramsay) is dramatized in his own attraction to Mrs. Manresa: "goddess-like, buoyant, abundant, her cornucopia running over" (BTA, 142). He puts his faith in this earth-goddess: "Bartholomew, following, blessed the power of the human body to make the earth fruitful. Giles would keep his orbit so long as she weighted him to the earth" (BTA, 142). Ironically, Bart overlooks this very power of fertility in his daughter-in-law. His reason has been enchanted by the "wild child of nature" and, thus, has lost some of its ability to discriminate.

The intermission, as a whole, demonstrates the fatalism of humanity trapped in the natural cycle "between the acts" of imaginative activity. This fatalism is expressed, and its solution suggested, in the choral "speech" that accompanies the assembly of the audience for the second part of the pageant. The theme is the "one life," and is marked by a motif of waking and sleeping:

> Feet crunched the gravel. Voices chattered. The inner voice, the other voice was saying: How can we deny that this brave music, wafted from the bushes, is expressive of some inner harmony? "When we wake" (some were thinking) "the day breaks us with its hard mallet blows." "The office" (some were thinking) "compels disparity. Scattered, shattered, hither thither summoned by the bell. 'Ping-ping-ping' that's the phone. 'Forward!' 'Serving!'--that's the shop." So we answer to the infernal, agelong and eternal order issued from on high. And obey. "Working, serving, pushing, striving, earning wages--to be spent here? Oh dear no. Now? No, by and by. When the ears are deaf and the heart is dry."
>
> (BTA, 142-143)

This lament on the theme of fragmentation, featuring modern civilization as a demonic mechanism enslaving the life-force, restates (on a communal scale) Giles Oliver's personal dilemma between his need for natural happiness and society's demand for conformity. However eloquent this "inner voice," its feelings are incommunicable except through the mediation of art. Trapped in separated bodies, the "inner voice" is broken into fragments: "Scraps and fragments reached Miss La Trobe where she stood, script in hand, behind the tree" (BTA, 143). So she signals for music to compose her audience into a comprehensive whole. The second part of the pageant begins.

The personified England has now reached the age of Reason; nature has been tamed and domesticated; the passions of man have been tempered by sense. Yet, in the very authority of that taming and tempering, the repressed passions turn demonic and the human will becomes worldly and possessive. These developments are not merely historical. Psychologically, the age of reason marks that point in the development of the individual when the ego effects an identification with the patriarchal model. Miss La Trobe allegorizes these developments in a play, modelled on restoration comedy, called "Where there's a Will there's a Way." The title of the play contains a double entendre on the word "will" which is developed in the plot. A worldly sailor has died leaving his daughter, Flavinda, to the wardship of her aunt, Lady Harpy Harridan. In his will, he has bequeathed his earthly belongings to his daughter, provided that

she marry according to her aunt's wishes, in default of which his estate will be spent on a shrine in which holy virgins will sing perpetual hymns for the repose of his soul. Lady Harpy contrives to marry Flavinda to an old man, Sir Spaniel Lilyliver, provided that he share the estate with Lady Harpy. Flavinda is in love with young Valentine, and the couple choose to ignore the will and run off together. Thus, the second sense of "will" implies freedom of action based on the spirit of reason enlightened by true love. The play provides an ethical formula for human action which resembles the other-worldly ethics of Christianity. It requires courage to defy materialism and pursue the path of true love.

The play bears directly on the frame story in that it provides an imaginative model for Giles Oliver, whose own will is paralyzed by the demonic forces inherent in society: "the conglomeration of things [that] pressed you flat" (BTA, 59). The burden of the past, a theme Woolf usually presents with some sobriety, acquires a comic tone in Miss La Trobe's play, ranging from the expiatory clause in brother Bob's will to the "Cupid's darts" (BTA, 169) that torment Sir Spaniel for his profligate life. However, the moral of the play seems to be that the sins of the fathers need not be visited on the next generation if it rejects the patriarchal legacy in favour of the "unseizable force" through which human nature renews itself every generation. The demonic authority of the patriarchal will is dramatized in the first scene where Lady Harpy

and Sir Spaniel arrange the fate of Flavinda. Old Bart, enlightened by the author's imaginative portrayal of tyranny, silently invokes Giles to shed his emotional passivity and "be a man, Sir" (BTA, 157). The "unseizable force" of true love is expounded in the interval following this scene, where the gramophone plays a tune on the theme of marital fidelity and bliss. The second scene presents the mutual fidelity of Flavinda and Valentine, tested by a suspenseful delay in which both lovers are subjected to doubt and temporary despair. In the pause which follows this scene, nature plays the part of a "primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment" (BTA, 165). This voice triumphs over patriarchal tyranny, effecting an anagnorisis of the human will. In the recognition scene, the burden of the past is annihilated when Valentine rescues Flavinda from the hands of her aunt and Sir Spaniel. Significantly, Valentine conceals himself by extracting the workings from a grandfather clock. The past (grandfather time) is thus not merely halted; it is annihilated. Giles's response to the play is active and courageous:

> A moral. What? Giles supposed it was: Where there's a Will there's a Way. The words rose and pointed a finger of scorn at him. Off to Gretna Green with his girl; the deed done. Damn the consequences.
>
> (BTA, 174-175)

No longer a passive slave to the "wild child of nature," Giles has been released from his autistic captivity by Miss La Trobe's art.

The freedom of recovered action provided by the play nevertheless has an ironic aspect. Insofar as the resolution highlights the heroism of the romantic lover, it perpetuates the cult of selfhood. In one sense, Giles misreads Miss La Trobe's meaning when he rendezvous with Mrs. Manresa. Though he has transcended his autistic state, he consolidates Isa's autism. She continues to bear the burden of the past, adopting the image of the unending caravan Woolf employs in The Years:

> "This is the burden that the past laid on me, last little donkey in the long caravanserai crossing the desert. 'Kneel down,' said the past. 'Fill your pannier from our tree. Rise up, donkey. Go your way till your heels blister and your hoofs crack.'"
>
> (BTA, 182)

She rouses herself by invoking the eternal voice of the life-force which alone is "free from the old vibrations" (BTA, 183):

> "On little donkey, patiently stumble. Hear not the frantic cries of the leaders who in that they seek to lead desert us. Nor the chatter of china faces glazed and hard. Hear rather the shepherd coughing by the farmyard wall; the withered tree that sighs when the Rider gallops; the brawl in the barrack room when they stripped her naked; or the cry which in London when I thrust the window open someone cries . . ."
>
> (BTA, 183)

The interruption of Isa's monologue, by Giles and Mrs. Manresa bursting out of the greenhouse, creates a juxtaposition of thought and action that aligns Giles's tryst with the earlier story of the barrack-room rape. The violent unintelligible voice of the life-force (the cry of the raped girl) is Isa's only salvation at this point. However terrible it is, this voice is at least real.

Isa's plight casts Miss La Trobe's role as author in a somewhat ironic light. The question arises how far the voice of the author is the cry of a leader who, by leading, deserts the human vision. Lucy Swithin, for example, congratulates Miss La Trobe for eliciting her "unacted part" (BTA, 179): "'What a small part I've had to play! But you've made me feel I could have played . . . Cleopatra!'" (BTA, 179) Miss La Trobe is momentarily glorified by the authority Lucy Swithin bestows upon her:

> "You've twitched the invisible strings," was what the old lady meant; and revealed--of all people--Cleopatra! Glory possessed her. Ah, but she was not merely a twitcher of individual strings; she was one who seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a recreated world. Her moment was on her--her glory.
>
> (BTA, 179-180)

However, Miss La Trobe's "glory" does not transcend the personal; it is the glory of the illogical imagination attempting, in solitude, to achieve the "recreated world" that is only made possible by the collective Logos. The other-worldly nature of Miss La Trobe's role has not yet been fully revealed because the pageant is not yet finished.

The next part of the pageant, recreating the Victorian era, shows that the closer the mimesis comes to the present moment, the stronger becomes the illogical imagination. The characters presented in this part of the pageant stand for people whose memories are still alive in the minds of the older audience members. At the same time, the scene shows how unchanging and

eternal is the voice of authority. In the Victorian era it takes the forms of law enforcement, Empire, and muscular Christianity; all these forms meet in "the white man's burden" (BTA, 191) as illustrated by the "policeman" at Hyde Park Corner. The theme of the burden of the past thus acquires an international, political tenor by commenting on the threat of global war overshadowing the lives of the audience.

The audience is distanced enough from the Victorian period to intuit that Miss La Trobe, by emphasizing the righteousness of the policeman, is criticizing the intolerance and tyranny of the Victorian patriarchs. Mrs. Lynn-Jones, for example, feels insulted: "'There were grand men among them . . .' Why she did not know, yet somehow she felt that a sneer had been aimed at her father; therefore at herself" (BTA, 192). Elly Springett, uncomfortable with irony, is literally baffled: "How difficult to come to any conclusion! She wished they would hurry on with the next scene. She liked to leave a theatre knowing exactly what was meant" (BTA, 192). This feeling of inconclusiveness turns into a reaction against the older generation during the performance of the one-act play that follows. The villain-of-the-piece is the Victorian family presided over by patriarch and matriarch. In contrast to earlier plays in the pageant, this one does not present a conflict between revolutionary youth and reactionary elders. The lovers here are themselves reactionary tyrants concluding a marriage contract in the service of "the white man's burden." The play concludes with a triad of

ironic tributes to "the desire of the spirit" (BTA, 198). The first is a song sung by two daughters of Mrs. Hardcastle in obedience to their mother's command. The second is a rendition of the patriotic "Rule Britannia." The third is a prayer, led by Mr. Hardcastle, giving thanks to God for the gifts of bounty, reason, and peace. The irony of this prayer does not escape an audience poised on the brink of a second international war. The Victorian period ends with an invocation to the "home," followed by a playing of "Home, Sweet Home."

In the interval that follows, Mrs. Lynn-Jones considers the passing of the Victorian home in light of the inevitability of change. Miss La Trobe has provided a real basis for this consideration by means of the relentless narrative movement of her pageant. Even now, the gramophone marks the reality of time's passage:

> Time went on and on like the hands of the kitchen clock. (The machine chuffed in the bushes.) If they had met with no resistance, she mused, nothing wrong, they'd still be going round and round and round. The Home would have remained; and Papa's beard, she thought, would have grown and grown; and Mama's knitting--what did she do with all her knitting?--Change had to come, she said to herself, or there'd have been yards and yards of Papa's beard, of Mama's knitting. Nowadays her son-in-law was clean shaven. Her daughter had a refrigerator . . . . Dear, how my mind wanders, she checked herself. What she meant was, change had to come, unless things were perfect; in which case she supposed they resisted Time. Heaven was changeless.
>
> (BTA, 202-203)

This passage subtly reintroduces the myth of progress through evolution with which the novel begins. Lucy Swithin's inner conflict between the need to believe in a Christian version of human identity

and belief in the Darwinian theory of origins is restated here in Mrs. Lynn-Jones's observations on progress. Her measure of social progress is the fact that her daughter has a refrigerator; her unreflective belief in "Heaven" is similarly platitudinous. Isa, taking an essentially agnostic point of view, comforts herself with the illusion that her generation is an improvement over Mrs. Swithin's:

> "Were they like that?" Isa asked abruptly. She looked at Mrs. Swithin as if she had been a dinosaur or a very diminutive mammoth. Extinct she must be, since she had lived in the reign of Queen Victoria.
>
> (BTA, 203)

Mrs. Swithin, in a moment of insight, argues that history is a myth; that humanity is essentially changeless though the roles men play change from age to age. But neither Isa nor Lucy have gained any real insight. Under the pressure of the present moment that now begins to build up, Mrs. Swithin regresses to her superstitious ritual: "Mrs. Swithin caressed her cross" (BTA, 204); and Isa resumes her martyrish role of bearing the burden of the past: "'On, little donkey' Isa murmured, 'crossing the desert . . . bearing your burden . . .'" (BTA, 205).

Miss La Trobe attempts an experiment before presenting the final act of her pageant. If she is to inspire the logical imagination in her audience, she must put them through the endurance test of reality. No real enlightenment can come about unless the audience is strong enough to resist the comfort of

illusion. The experiment is not succeeding; under the anxiety of the present moment, the members of the audience take refuge in their anonymity and place the burden of meaning upon the author of the pageant:

> "Ourselves . . . ." They returned to the programme. But what could she know about ourselves? The Elizabethans yes; the Victorians, perhaps; but ourselves; sitting here on a June day in 1939--it was ridiculous. "Myself" --it was impossible. Other people, perhaps . . . Cobbet of Cobbs Corner; the Major; old Bartholomew; Mrs. Swithin--them, perhaps. But she won't get me--no, not me. The audience fidgeted. Sounds of laughter came from the bushes. But nothing whatsoever appeared on the stage.
>
> (BTA, 208-209)

Miss La Trobe, spotted behind the tree, curses her audience. Ironically, she suffers from the same egotism as they. Because she is the author, invested with authority by her audience, Miss La Trobe suffers a crisis of identity now that her authority is threatened:

> Grating her fingers in the bark, she damned the audience. Panic seized her. Blood seemed to pour from her shoes. This is death, death, death, she noted in the margin of her mind; when illusion fails. Unable to lift her hand, she stood facing the audience.
>
> (BTA, 210)

The "illusion" Miss La Trobe refers to is not that which she provides her audience, but the illusion of authority her audience now threatens to take away from her.

In Woolf's vision of the "one life," not even the artist who reviles the selfhood is immune from the limitations of her own selfhood. Miss La Trobe is as much an ironic hero as any character in the novel. Even the artist cannot survive

without nature, his enemy and friend. In the midst of Miss La Trobe's great agony, nature takes a part. A sudden shower of rain fills the awful vacancy and restores the only identity that has any human permanence:

> "That's done it," sighed Miss La Trobe, wiping away the drops on her cheeks. Nature once more had taken her part. The risk she had run acting in the open air was justified. She brandished her script. Music began--A.B.C.--A.B.C. The tune was as simple as could be. But now that the shower had fallen, it was the other voice speaking, the voice that was no one's voice.
>
> (BTA, 211)

The audience is now ready, as Miss La Trobe is ready, to face "Ourselves," but only "Ourselves" as an abstract idea, not as a gathering of limited selfhoods.

Miss La Trobe's audience sits waiting for the author to expose herself through her work, and because the audience is invisible, in that it is not part of the play, it escapes responsibility for the burden of imaginative vision. Furthermore, the audience protects itself from the instructive aspect of the pageant by expressing a token faith in the Church. The purpose of the pageant, it rationalizes, is only to raise funds to install an electric light in the Church. It chronically represses the fact that all that divides the Word and the world is the split that people demand to exist in each one between the community they would like to be and the selfhoods they refuse to relinquish.

In The Waves, Bernard closes the gap between the Word and the world when the eyes of his dinner companion force him to see that he is only an individual man. The individual alone

cannot possibly be a transcendent being. In The Years Woolf shows how a transcendent humanity is a creation of all men thinking together. In Between the Acts, Miss La Trobe acts like Bernard's dinner companion in that she forces her audience to accept individually the reality of the selfhood. She does this by holding the mirror up to human nature. The final act of the pageant begins with a symbolic mime. Actors are engaged in attempting to rebuild the wall of civilization, which Miss La Trobe identifies with the League of Nations. At this point, Miss La Trobe is deliberately flattering the illogical imagination in preparation for its destruction, although the audience is scarcely aware of her intent: "A burst of applause greeted this flattering tribute to ourselves. Crude of course. But then she had to keep expenses down" (BTA, 212). This tribute to the egotism of the audience is continued in the waltz that now plays, and as the swallows perch on the "wall," the audience confirms its belief, in the triumph of man over his animal origins by means of technology: "Yes, perched on the wall, they seemed to foretell what after all the Times was saying yesterday. Homes will be built. Each flat with its refrigerator, in the crannied wall. Each of us a free man; plates washed by machinery; not an aeroplane to vex us; all liberated; made whole . . ." (BTA, 213). Now the voice on the gramophone changes to suggest the passion of youth, an irresistible force that refuses to be imprisoned in geometrical patterns. In defence, the audience condemns the younger generation for being upstarts who break

traditions to pieces without offering any patterns to replace them. However, the irresistible force also speaks through the voice of revolutionary art, and the revolutionary artist is no mere upstart obeying the cycle of generation. Such an artist exercises the power of regeneration. Miss La Trobe confronts the members of her audience with a mimesis of their indisputable selfhoods. When the actors leap on the stage brandishing mirrors, the spectators suddenly find themselves actors in the very play they are watching. Moreover, the illusion of a distinction between "godlike" man and "brute" nature gets destroyed:

> Mopping, mowing, whisking, frisking, the looking glasses darted, flashed, exposed. People in the back rows stood up to see the fun. Down they sat, caught themselves . . . What an awful show-up! Even for the old who, one might suppose, hadn't any longer any care about their faces . . . . And Lord! the jangle and the din! The very cows joined in. Walloping, tail lashing, the reticence of nature was undone, and the barriers which should divide Man the Master from the Brute were dissolved.
>
> (BTA, 214-215)

Complementing this accusation of the body is an accusation of the Word. The principals of the pageant now gather to recite a medley of speeches, a mimesis of this-wordly speech--fragmented, discordant, and meaningless.

The destructiveness of Miss La Trobe's prank is shown by the hostility that is established against her by her exposed victims. Nevertheless, this is the necessary apocalypse, the destruction of the Word into its basic fragments, a seething of "wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron" (BTA, 180).

Such a mimesis is also dangerous because, inspiring anarchy, it could possibly start the whole apocalyptic process all over again at the stage of nature-worship. Such a danger is suggested by Bart Oliver's reaction to the "wild child of nature" who alone seems immune to the accusing mirrors. Mrs. Manresa, like Jinny in The Waves, uses the cosmetic arts to arm herself against the "eyes of others." She calmly faces the mirrors and repairs her face and lips with make-up. Old Bartholomew is awed: "Alone she preserved unashamed her identity, and faced without blinking herself. Calmly she reddened her lips" (BTA, 217).[11] At this crucial point in the action, as the audience is preparing to depart in anger, an anonymous voice begins speaking over a megaphone behind the bushes. The message is that man's animal nature is indisputable but not sufficiently evident to earn him the label, "inhuman." The voice suggests that comforting illusions of art be put aside temporarily:" . . . let's talk in words of one syllable, without larding, stuffing or cant. Let's break the rhythm and forget the rhyme. And calmly consider ourselves" (BTA, 218). The voice systematically exposes the fictiveness of some of man's most sacred beliefs: the blessedness of the poor, the insight of the educated, the innocence of childhood, the faithfulness of love, the wisdom of age, and the common sense of ordinary people. Regarding this latter fiction, the voice says that the evil of leaders is really a projection of the evil of followers: "A tyrant, remember, is half a slave" (BTA, 218-219). Even the authority of artists is questioned:

"Take myself now. Do I escape my own reprobation, simulating indignation, in the bush, among the leaves?" (BTA, 219)[12]

Having advised the audience of its inescapable ties with the world of nature, nature being by no means the Great Teacher she is alleged to be, the voice reveals man's spiritual identity, which comes from the logical imagination--the triumphant order of other-worldliness: "All you can see of yourselves is scraps, orts and fragments? Well then listen to the gramophone affirming . . ." (BTA, 220). The sublime pressure that has been building up is partly relieved by another hitch in the pageant, as the person in charge of the gramophone fishes for the right record. Then a traditional tune by one of the masters replaces the "anonymous bray of the megaphone" (BTA, 220). The triumphant voice of "ourselves" speaks:

> Like quicksilver sliding, filings magnetized, the distracted united. The tune began; the first note meant a second; the second a third. Then down beneath a force was born in opposition; then another. On different levels ourselves went forward; flower gathering some on the surface; others descending to wrestle with meaning; but all comprehending; all enlisted. The whole population of the mind's immeasurable profundity came flocking; from the unprotected, the unskinned; and dawn rose; and azure; from chaos and cacophony measure; but not the melody of surface sound alone controlled it; but also the warring battle-plumed warriors straining asunder: To part? No. Compelled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united. And some relaxed their fingers; and others uncrossed their legs.
>
> Was that voice ourselves? Scraps, orts and fragments, are we, also, that? The voice died away.
>
> (BTA, 220-221)

This remarkable passage aligns the "surface sound" of the musical composition with the invisible mental conflict going

on in the individual minds of the audience as they search for meaning. The individuals, like the separate notes of the composition, are both fragments of the whole and the sum which is greater than the parts. Here then is Woolf's most eloquent fictional expression of the apocalyptic "philosophy" she espouses in "A Sketch of the Past":

> . . . it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we--I mean all human beings--are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.
>
> (MB, 72)

In the midst of this apocalyptic revelation there emerges the image of the anagogic mind, an other-worldly symbol signifying the imaginative community. Between the real "voice" of the tune and the imaginative "voice" of "the mind" in thought, no distinction exists whatsoever. The inaudible voice of "ourselves" is an unheard melody, perfect because it is not of this world.

The effect of the logical imagination on the "wild child of nature" is profound: "for an instant tears ravaged her powder" (BTA, 221). She has experienced an anagnorisis which shows her that nature is not her mother at all. The archetypal patriarch, too, disappears along with the illogical imagination. As the Reverend G. Streatfield ascends the soapbox to deliver his traditional post-pageant sermon, the audience rejects his

authoritative role: "What an intolerable constriction, contraction, and reduction to simplified absurdity he was to be sure! Of all incongruous sights a clergyman in the livery of his servitude to the summing up was the most grotesque and entire" (BTA, 221). Nevertheless the very incongruity of a man speaking to men, under the guise of a spokesman for the divine, is a necessary reminder of man's dual nature:

> There he stood their representative spokesman; their symbol; themselves; a butt, a clod, laughed at by the looking-glasses; ignored by the cows, condemned by the clouds which continued their majestic re-arrangement of the celestial landscape; an irrelevant forked stake in the flow and majesty of the summer silent world.
>
> (BTA, 222)

The allusion to King Lear ("such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art" [III, iv, 111-112]) points out the irony of raising man's status above the natural and shows the illogical nature of displaced values. Man only seems irrelevant when he fails to live up to an illogical standard of relevance. Divested of his sublime role, Reverend G. Streatfield is just a man; as a man he is relevant. His admission that his reflection was caught in his own mirror evokes sympathetic laughter. Later, one of the spectators comments: "'What amused me was old Streatfield, feeling for his pouch. I like a man to be natural, not always on the perch'" (BTA, 231). His authoritative role, on the other hand, is ironically undercut. That "heaven" which represents his faith in a divine order is populated by changing clouds and

menacing war planes. His appeal for monetary contributions contrasts pitifully with the pageant's appeal for the spiritual contributions of courage and effort. His interpretation of the pageant is a redundancy, a reduction into words of a vision that words cannot express. Finally, his thanks to Miss La Trobe reveal a misunderstanding of the pageant because Miss La Trobe's intention was to show that the imagination is a shared power, the voice of "ourselves" speaking through the artist to "ourselves." Significantly, she refuses to accept the minister's tribute. To do so would be to taint the vision by making it personal. The playing of the national anthem to end the pageant is, thus, merely a necessary concession to the conventions.

The dispersion of the audience following the pageant invites a mixed emotional response. While the experience will not be lost altogether, it is already being defiled by this-worldliness. Streatfield's interpretation has strongly influenced the participants, and it seems inevitable that, in part, the pageant will be enlisted to entrench the less desirable features of institutional religion. Yet, the termination of this performance is an exhilarating experience. Its very impermanence discourages the imagination from becoming illogical. As the church bell interrupts the final speeches of the departing guests, the stage is being dismantled. The church remains, but the effort of imaginative creation must be continually broken and remade. The humanity of the Word is located precisely in the Word's ability to die.

The imaginative significance of the pageant is its power to clear a space in the network of habits that make life intolerable. In that space, the power of speech renews itself, the power of the will renews itself, and hope is rekindled. Hope lies not in habits reformed but in freedom reborn. In the individual lives of the characters, this rebirth does not take place. Old Bart has lost his admiration for Mrs. Manresa, but in the act of parting, he discovers the spiritual hollowness that has resulted from a selfish life: "What word expressed the sag at his heart, the effusion in his veins, as the retreating Manresa, with Giles attendant, admirable woman, all sensation, ripped the rag doll and let the sawdust stream from his heart?" (BTA, 236). He also envies Miss La Trobe for her spiritual fertility, and chides Mrs. Swithin for wishing to thank the playwright. Mrs. Swithin remains in a liminal state between the desire to believe and the desire to understand: "Above the air rushed; beneath was water. She stood between two fluidities, caressing her cross" (BTA, 239). She laments how her stern faith forces her to surrender her love for the beauty of the real world. Yet, she cannot face life without illusion. Fearful of loneliness which leads into the dark cave of the self, she jealously guards her illusion and the privacy that is her emotional tomb: "For herself, every morning, kneeling, she protected her vision" (BTA, 240). William Dodge continues to make Mrs. Swithin his protectress. He thanks her before leaving. Isa persists in her impossible search for a

romantic hero, in the person of Rupert Haines. She refuses to see in Giles, "the father of my children" (BTA, 242), a semblance of the spirit of humanity glimpsed in the final act of the pageant. Likewise, Giles follows in the wake of the departing Manresa and ignores his own wife.

Even Miss La Trobe, divested of her authoritative role, is a figure of ironic pathos. She is convinced that her pageant would not have been a "failure" had she been able to produce a more professional work with unlimited funds. Nature seems to mock her barrenness as a flock of starlings pelts the tree behind which she has hidden during the performance. This extravagant and sumptuous chorus singing "life, life, life" (BTA, 245) is interrupted by old Mrs. Chalmers carrying flowers to her husband's grave. The contrast between natural exuberance and human mourning elicits a sense of the tragic nature of human life: the visionary is powerless to console the individual man for the sad knowledge that he must die. This tragic sense, perhaps, inspires Miss La Trobe to renewed effort. A new play begins to form, but the first words escape her. Miss La Trobe's dilemma is, in fact, the most poignant of all. As an artist, she must divest herself of what is personal in order to create; yet she is more aware than most people of the inescapable reality of the selfhood. Ironically, the visionary has found no consolation, no panacea in vision, for the troubles in her own life. From the selfhood perspective, Miss La Trobe's art seems a

sublimation of frustrated eros. She has fought with her lover, and her lover has left her. So she finds escape in drinking. She is also a figure of scorn in the village because of her homosexual orientation. Mrs. Chalmers snubs her on the path coming from her husband's grave. The people in the Inn gossip about her behind her back. In drink alone she finds release and privacy sufficient to create:

> She raised her glass to her lips. And drank. And listened. Words of one syllable sank down into the mud. She drowsed; she nodded. The mud became fertile. Words rose above the intolerably laden dumb oxen plodding through the mud. Words without meaning--wonderful words.
>
> The cheap clock ticked; smoke obscured the pictures. Smoke became tart on the roof of her mouth. Smoke obscured the earth-coloured jackets. She no longer saw them, yet they upheld her, sitting arms akimbo with her glass before her. There was the high ground at midnight; there the rock; and two scarcely perceptible figures. Suddenly the tree was pelted with starlings. She set down her glass. She heard the first words.
>
> (BTA, 247-248)

This beautiful narrative of poetic creation is nevertheless sad. Alone in a crowded room which sustains her yet alienates her, Miss La Trobe submerges her selfhood, only for a moment, with a glass of liquor.

This poignant cycle of creation and dissolution is not the end, however. The pageant contains within itself a profound truth too large for a Mrs. Swithin, a Giles or Isa, or even a Miss La Trobe to convey individually. The tragic dimension, though inevitable and real, is a function of minds thinking in solitude and of eyes looking on in isolation. Nevertheless,

what no man can experience individually in his one life, all men can experience collectively through the milieu of art: one world, one life; a unified world, a unified life. Some anonymous voice, following the pageant, expresses the hope that "perhaps one day, thinking differently, we shall think the same" (BTA, 233). This does not need to be a hope; the gramophone has affirmed it as an imaginative truth, here and now. It might just be, Woolf is suggesting, that thinking differently, we are thinking together. The brain may be an entity which can be located, measured, and examined by the scientists, but the anagogic mind is not. The possibility arises that, in continuing to believe in separate, caged-off egos, humanity is needlessly suffering under a long-standing delusion. Woolf implies such a possibility in the profound conclusion to Between the Acts.

The concluding scene (the third part of the novel) shows the family after dinner at Pointz Hall just as the night is beginning to settle in. The play continues to be the topic of conversation as each one tries to puzzle out its meaning: "Each of course saw something different. In another moment it would be beneath the horizon, gone to join the other plays" (BTA, 249). The pressure of time passing is unendurable, and each feels that something valuable might escape forever. In their discomfort, they take refuge in old habits. Isa refuses Giles's offer of a banana and he responds with a frustrated gesture. In a moment of vacancy, Mrs. Swithin, the evening sun reflected in her glasses, gazes at the great picture of

Venice; then finds comfort in the myth of progress as she places the pageant in a long line of pageants, some yet to come. Isa, aware that there may be no future, mutters disagreeably: "This year, last year, next year, never . . ." (BTA, 251). She feels powerless to interrupt the cycle or to escape the doom of the body. She silently berates Miss La Trobe for failing to deliver her from her bondage: "Love and hate--how they tore one asunder! Surely it was time someone invented a new plot, or that the author came out from the bushes . . ." (BTA, 252). Her demand that art provide either escape or revelation points out the frailty of the reader's sublime when the imagination is thwarted by the fact of the body. Inevitably, Isa's view of literature is shared by the others. Before retiring, they pass the last minutes of the evening reading. They are compared to fish in a pond rising to the surface to nibble at biscuits. Lucy opens her Outline of History and reads about England's history up to the evolution of man: "'Prehistoric man,' she read, 'half-human, half-ape, roused himself from his semi-crouching position and raised great stones'" (BTA, 255). She closes the book at the end of the chapter and leaves Giles and Isa alone in the room.

Now the perspective changes. Though Giles and Isa remain individual characters, a husband and wife faced with speaking to one another for the first time in the novel, the point of view becomes multidimensional. The narrative seems to absorb the consciousness of four distinct minds thinking as one.

The first is the collective consciousness of Giles and Isa:

> Left alone together for the first time that day, they were silent. Alone enmity was bared; also love.
>
> (BTA, 255)

The second is a neutral omniscient consciousness which places husband and wife in the context of nature:

> Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.
>
> (BTA, 255-256)

This consciousness, free to move in time, affirms the renewal of the species; that is, nature's power over death, in animal and man. The third consciousness is Mrs. Swithin's, mediated through the doctrine of evolution expounded in the Outline of History. This consciousness recounts the separation of man from natural instinct and the development of human reason which gives to man a heroic stature:

> Isa let her sewing drop. The great hooded chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa too against the window. The window was all sky without colour. The house had lost its shelter. It was night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among rocks.
>
> (BTA, 256)

Here, at the threshold of civilization, the end and beginning of man's history,[13] a fourth consciousness is invoked--Miss La Trobe creating her next play. Now Giles and Isa become fictive characters in an anagogic drama:

Then the curtain rose. They spoke.

(BTA, 256)

Between the acts of conscious speech by individual men and the imaginative voice of unity-in-diversity falls the shadow of man struggling with a twofold nature. This shadow, this dream of conscious isolation and painful, failed communication, characterizes the "whole population of the mind's immeasurable profundity" (BTA, 220). Though life in time is real, and though speech must follow speech, the logical imagination conceives a silence beyond speech and a unity beyond diversity, an unconscious peace resembling "the flow and majesty of the summer silent world" (BTA, 222). The world's peace is a "complete emptiness" which contains all; so, too, the Word's peace is a complete silence that expresses everything.

Notes to Chapter Nine

1. See, for example, A.D. Moody, Virginia Woolf, 71; E.M. Forster, "Virginia Woolf," Two Cheers for Democracy, 248; and Josephine O'Brien Schaefer, The Three-fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf (The Hague, 1965),167-185. But, see James Hafley, The Glass Roof, 132.

2. Virginia Woolf, 81.

3. See TG, 131-132.

4. A shrewd analysis of the relation between "Pargiter" and "pargeter" in the context of the theme of moral hypocrisy is found in The Pargiters, by Virginia Woolf, The Novel-Essay Portion of "The Years", ed. with an introduction by Mitchell A. Leaska (London, 1978),xiii-xix.

5. The death of the mother is thus an echo of Mrs. Ramsay's death in To the Lighthouse. In The Years, the image of the "angel in the house" appears in the girlhood portrait of Mrs. Pargiter (flanked almost like a shrine by candles) over the mantelpiece at Abercorn Terrace. On page 47, the girl in the picture seems to look down menacingly upon Delia.

6. Cf. Richard Bonamy's observation in Jacob's Room: "Bonamy kept on gently returning answers and accumulating amazement at an existence squeezed and emasculated within a white satin shoe" (JR, 151).

7. The dawn which marks the close of the novel resembles the new day at the close of The Waves, as described by Bernard: "There is a sense of the break of day. I will not call it dawn. What is dawn in the city to an elderly man standing in the street looking up rather dizzily at the sky? Dawn is some sort of whitening of the sky" (W, 210). In other words, the renewal of nature is a thing apart from the course of human life. Thus, in The Years, Eleanor is "baffled" (Y, 462) but not enlightened by the growing light outside.

8. Woolf, "Thoughts on Peace in an Air-Raid" (CE, IV, 174). This analysis of nature-worship employed by the illogical imagination to foster tyranny is sufficient answer to critics who opine that Woolf is a devotee of matriarchy. In Woolf's ethics, a patriarchy is always, a priori, a matriarchy.

9. Cf. Bernard's experience of looking on helplessly while gardeners at "Elvedon" sweep with great brooms while the "woman" writes (W, 170-171). In both passages, doom is associated with the feeling of being a passive spectator at an inexorable performance.

10. Mrs. Manresa, in this respect, resembles the tantalizing but frustrating Blakean "female will."

11. This incident is frequently cited by critics as evidence of Mrs. Manresa's constructive role in the novel. But such a reading of her character misses the defeat of Mrs. Manresa's powers in the peroration over the megaphone where she is identified with the slaves who foster tyranny. See BTA, 218-219.

12. This rhetorical confession offers an interesting ironic analogue to the voice of the Divine Author speaking to Moses from the heart of the "bush that burned and was not consumed" (Exodus, 3:2).

13. Cf. Northrop Frye's comment on the epiphanic vision of history in this novel: "The history is conceived not only as a progression but as a cycle of which the audience is the end, and, as the last page indicates, the beginning as well" (AoC, 203). However, the image of the rising curtain that follows, apocalyptically transcends the cycle. History becomes a fictive drama, and in the midst of darkness rises the light--not of the sun--but of the stage.

CONCLUSION

Virginia Woolf's biographer, Quentin Bell, points out that, like her father, she was a confirmed agnostic: "Her views never changed; after a momentary conversion in childhood she lost all faith in revealed religion and, while never committing herself to any positive declaration, she maintained an attitude sometimes of mild, sometimes of aggressive agnosticism."[1] Bell's reference here to a "momentary conversion" is possibly related to a childhood experience that Woolf recounts in her 1929 diary, where she writes that, at the age of fifteen or sixteen "I was . . . writing a long picturesque essay upon the Christian religion, I think; called Religio Laici, I believe, proving that man has need of a God; but the God was described in process of change" (AWD, 151). Whether Woolf remained an agnostic throughout her adult life is less clear. Her treatment of Christianity in The Voyage Out, where Rachel Vinrace loses her religious faith before succumbing to an infernal fever, suggests a spiritual conflict between a belief that the Christian doctrine can atrophy the soul, and a conviction that life (and death) viewed without some kind of vision of wholeness becomes an existential nightmare. In this first novel, Rachel suddenly revolts against her childhood religion when she experiences, in chapel, a demonic vision of the devout Nurse McInnis at prayer: "a limpet, with the sensitive side of her stuck to a rock, for ever dead to the rush of fresh and beautiful things past her" (VO, 279). Woolf continues to explore this

revulsion in the portrayal of the spiritually tormented Doris Kilman (the pun on "kill" echoes the word "dead" in the previous quotation). It seems, then, that what Professor Bell calls "aggressive agnosticism" is rather Woolf's rebellion against a religion that isolates and alienates the sensitive consciousness from the ecstasy of life in the senses.

As an artist, moreover, Woolf had a further grievance against religious doctrine. As she points out in her writings on G.M. Hopkins and Christina Rossetti, poets obviously dedicated to a Christian view of life, doctrinal religion can destroy the imaginative self of the artist and can demand, more powerfully than either the individual life of thought and feeling or the historical life of social action, to be made the circumference of the artist's vision. With regard to Hopkins Woolf writes: "the poor man became a Jesuit, and they discouraged him, and he became melancholy and died" (LVW, II, 379). Of Christina Rossetti she comments: "She would set herself to do the psalms into verse; and to make all her poetry subservient to the Christian doctrines. Consequently, as I think, she starved into austere emaciation a very fine original gift" (AWD, 1).[2]

But by 1930, Woolf seems to have overcome her aggressive anti-religious feelings. In an essay called "I am Christina Rossetti," Woolf asserts that a unifying faith actually gives solidity and form to Rossetti's poetry: "The pressure of a tremendous faith circles and clamps together these little songs.

Perhaps they owe to it their solidity. Certainly they owe to it their sadness" (CE, IV, 59). In 1935, Woolf records reading the Epistles of St. Paul and planning to read the Old Testament and Renan's Vie de Jésus, projects conceived in the spirit of the Christina Rossetti essay: "At last I am illuminating that dark spot in my reading" (AWD, 236). In her fiction of this period, the harsh criticism of religious faith that is expressed in The Voyage Out and Mrs. Dalloway gives way to the tolerance of religious faith expressed by Eleanor in The Years and by Lucy Swithin in Between the Acts. In the latter novel, Christianity is worked into the design with imaginative sympathy. More significantly, Miss La Trobe's pageant, in this novel, contributes its profits toward improved lighting for the village church.

From this brief survey of the changing role of religion in Woolf's thought, it might be posited that Woolf's vision is not necessarily antipathetic to religious faith, only to religious doctrine. Perhaps, then, Professor Bell is not correct in asserting that Woolf's childhood conversion was only temporary. Woolf's "Religio Laici" was intended to prove that man has need of a God who is in process of change. In the context of Woolf's poetic vision, the concept of God is reformulated as a concept of the imaginative "we." For Woolf, then, the highest poetic faith and the highest religious faith are one and the same. As Northrop Frye repeatedly stresses in his writings on mythopoeic writers, the apocalyptic vision is the undisplaced,

imaginative form from which religious doctrine descends. The cultural imagination at its zenith conceives of a symbolic God; at its nadir, it forgets that God is purely symbolic. Put in Woolfian terms, the logical imagination supplies a needed image of a God in process of change; the illogical imagination believes that this God is real and, when it does so, God becomes a tyrannical patriarch, and human civilization becomes enslaved in patriarchal systems.

Undeniably, Woolf's novels must be read as imaginative structures conceived so as to give back to the common reader the imaginative power of the logical imagination. Although her vocation as a visionary English writer follows that of the mythopoeic writers, such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Blake, her imaginative achievement is somewhat different from that of the great poetic forefathers becuase the myth of Christianity had, by her time, become reduced to historical dogmatism and been cast aside by the scientific and philosophical thinkers of the nineteenth century. So, she attempted to de-emphasize the archetypes--to "break the rhythm and forget the rhyme" (BTA, 218)--and to replace them with intellectual structures of the imagination; whence her reputation for being a supreme experimentalist in form. Nevertheless, her literary experiments had an ethical aim: to show the necessary limits of imaginative activity and to inspire in her readers the courage to have faith in a vision without having to believe in its reality. She attempted, without recourse to esoteric systems,

to rejoin the Word and the world. Out of life-in-the-midst she fashioned an art-in-the-midst. Therefore, if Woolf has few formal disciples among contemporary writers, it is because she deliberately broke her moulds between novels, to discourage the repetition of the terrible burden of the past, insofar as she might have added to this burden. Her fictional structures demand a critical and ironic response. They seek to rouse the imagination of the reader to "mental fight." Each is an image of humanity in quest of wholeness in the midst of change. For Woolf, this quest culminates with the apprehension of a Logos that is truly and sublimely divine while remaining compellingly human:

> A Word that breathes distinctly
> Has not the power to die
> Cohesive as the Spirit
> It may expire if He--
> "Made flesh and dwelt among us"
> Could condescension be
> Like this consent of Language
> This loved Philology.[3]

Emily Dickinson's fervent poetic prayer to the Word anticipates the courageous humility of Woolf's devotion to the logical imagination. The Word that consents to die (the fiction that draws attention to its fictiveness) assures us our imaginative freedom. Until we can ourselves become poets of the logical imagination, true religion (which is identical with true imaginative vision) cannot be possible. Imaginative truths, or what Woolf calls "unwritten laws," do not descend from a divine patriarch on a mountain:

> That such laws exist, and are observed by civilized people, is fairly generally allowed; but it is beginning to be agreed that they were not laid down by "God," who is now very generally held to be a conception, of patriarchal origin, valid only for certain races, at certain stages and times; nor by nature, who is now known to vary greatly in her commands and to be largely under control; but have to be discovered afresh by successive generations, largely by their own efforts of reason and imagination.
>
> (TG, 324)

If by "vision," then, is meant the androgynous other-worldly dialogue of reason and imagination, a dialogue which is holy and sublime, perhaps Virginia Woolf has recaptured in our time a portion of the eternal which, over the past twenty centuries, the Christian myth has lost.

Notes to Conclusion

1. Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography, II, 135-136.

2. Another poet whose religious orthodoxy roused Virginia Woolf's mild condemnation is T.S. Eliot. See Ibid., 135, and Woolf, LVW, III, 457-458.

3. Emily Dickinson, Poem no. 1651: "A Word made Flesh is seldom," ll. 9-16; The Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed., Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 1129.

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Part I is an abbreviation key to works by Virginia Woolf cited in the dissertation. Unless indicated otherwise, all references are to recent impressions of the Uniform Editions published in London by the Hogarth Press. Date of first publication is given for each novel. Part II is a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of secondary sources. II (A) lists writings which informed the theoretical basis of the text. II (B) lists general works which specifically discuss Woolf's novels in the context of twentieth-century literature. II (C) lists works dealing with Woolf, her family and friends. II (D) lists full-length studies of Woolf either in English or in translation. The manuscript transcriptions by John Graham, and by Mitchell Leaska are included here because they contain interpretive material. II (E) lists articles on Woolf and her work. Also, B.J. Kirkpatrick's A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957) has been an indispensable resource. Wherever possible, the recent complete Diaries have been quoted in the text. However, A Writer's Diary is quoted for material not available at the time this dissertation was entering its final stage of composition.

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AWD -- A Writer's Diary. Being extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf. Edited by Leonard Woolf, 1953.

BTA -- Between the Acts, 1941.

CE -- Collected Essays. 4 volumes. London: Chatto & Windus, 1966-1967.

CW -- Contemporary Writers. New York: Harvest Books, 1967.

DVW -- The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell. Volumes I (1977), and II (1978).

HH -- A Haunted House and Other Stories, 1944.

JR -- Jacob's Room, 1922.

LVW -- The Letters of Virginia Woolf. Edited by Nigel Nicholson. Assisted by Joanne Trautmann. Volumes I (1975), II (1976), III (1977), and IV (1978).

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MD* -- Mrs. Dalloway, 1925.

ND -- Night and Day. London: Duckworth, 1919.

O -- Orlando: A Biography, 1928.

TG -- Three Guineas, 1938.

TTL** -- To the Lighthouse, 1927.

VO -- The Voyage Out. London: Duckworth, 1915.

W -- The Waves, 1931.

Y -- The Years, 1937.

* Mrs. Dalloway. With an Introduction by Virginia Woolf. New York: The Modern Library, 1928 (cited for textual variant).

** To the Lighthouse. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927 (cited for textual variant).

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