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INTRODUCTION

In an essay entitled "Craftsmanship" from Virginia Woolf's The Death of the Moth and Other Essays¹, Virginia Woolf expresses her feelings about "words":

...We have been so often fooled in this day by words, they have so often proved that they hate being useful, that it is their nature not to express one simple statement but a thousand possibilities - they have done this so often that at last, happily, we are beginning to face the fact.

...If you start a Society for Pure English, they will show their resentment by starting another for impure English - hence the unnatural violence of much modern speech; it is a protest against the puritans. They are highly democratic, too; they believe that one word is as good as another, uneducated words are as good as educated words, uncultivated words as cultivated words, there are no ranks or titles in their Society. Nor do they like being lifted out on the point of a pen and examined separately. They hang together, in sentences, in paragraphs, sometimes for whole pages at a time. They hate being useful; they hate making money; they hate being lectured about in public. In short, they hate anything that stamps them with one meaning or confines them to one attitude, for it is their nature to change.

Perhaps that is their most striking peculiarity - their need of change. It is because the truth they try to catch is many-sided; and they convey it by being themselves many-sided, flashing this way then that. Thus they mean one thing to one person, another thing to another person; they are unintelligible to one generation, plain as a pikestaff to the next. And it is because of this complexity that they survive. Perhaps then one reason why we have no great poet, novelist or critic writing today is that we refuse words their liberty. We pin them down to one meaning, their useful meaning, the meaning which makes us catch the train, the meaning which makes us pass the examination. And when words are pinned down they fold their wings and die. Finally, and most emphatically, words, like ourselves, in order to live at their ease, need privacy. Undoubtedly they like us to think, and they like us to feel,

¹ Virginia Woolf, The Death of the Moth and Other Essays, (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), pp. 127, 131-132.

before we use them; but they also like us to pause; to become unconscious. Our unconsciousness is their privacy; our darkness is their light...That pause was made, that veil of darkness was dropped to tempt words to come together in one of those swift marriages which are perfect images and create everlasting beauty.

It is in this spirit that I approach this thesis on the ambivalent nature of reality as it manifests itself in the artistry of the five major novels of Virginia Woolf, the novels being Jacob's Room (1922), Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To The Lighthouse (1927), The Waves (1931) and Between The Acts (1941). Keeping this spirit of understanding and appreciating the fullness of "words" as the only artistic tool the literary craftsman possesses, the reader is more tolerant of the "sudden" shifts of time and space in the narrative flow, of the overall stream-of-consciousness and of the self-centred attitude of ego that grows more diffuse as it becomes more contracted by the polarity of meanings with which in Virginia Woolf's art, the very "word" itself is infused. It is my intention to analyze Virginia Woolf's understanding of reality as it is portrayed in all its subtlety and complexity in her five major novels. Virginia Woolf is quoted by Dorothy Brewster in her study entitled Virginia Woolf²: "Is not every work of art...born of an original imagination and ought not the critic to concern himself with the creative act, the birthpangs, the struggle of the artist to solve certain technical problems? The critic's duty is to communicate to the reader the particular vision of the artist, not to award good and bad conduct marks." I would thus like to concentrate on the achievement of this author's artistic vision while taking into consideration

²Dorothy Brewster, Virginia Woolf, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959), p. 77.

where the vision fails in the process of its unfolding.

Virginia Woolf is an author of the twentieth century. In Loss of the Self: In Modern Literature and Art³, Wylie Sypher describes the development of "self" up to the time of the modernist tradition in literature:

The self could no longer live at a romantic height of Being (Sein) but eventually found its more authentic existence at the humbler level of Dasein, of a man in his particular and personal situation, existing not absolutely but only contingently, moment by moment, in time, here and now, when each instant is a crisis. This existence forces us to come to terms with what is local, with history, and compels us to negotiate with the commonplace and conventional as Shelley's Prometheus never had to. The main post-romantic task is to identify the irreducible minimum of our experience that can be honestly identified as our own. Thus the question of our identity is the question of our authenticity; and the question of authenticity involves also the question to what extent we are "engaged" with others. If the romantic freedom was a mode of alienation from society, the existential freedom is a way of maintaining one's integrity in society.

And Irving Howe in Decline of the New⁴, makes this observation:

Subjectivity becomes the typical condition of the modernist outlook. In its early stages, when it does not trouble to disguise its filial dependence on the romantic poets, modernism declares itself as an inflation of the self, a transcendental and orgiastic aggrandizement of matter and event in behalf of personal vitality. In the middle stages, the self begins to recoil from externality and devotes itself, almost as if it were the world's body, to a minute examination of its inner dynamics: freedom, compulsion, caprice. In the late stages, there occurs an emptying-out of the self, a revulsion from the wearisomeness of both individuality and psychological gain. (The writers as exemplars of these stages: Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett.) Modernism thereby keeps approaching - sometimes even penetrating - the limits of solipsism, the view expressed by the German poet Gottfried Benn when he writes that "there is no

³Wylie Sypher, Loss of the Self: In Modern Literature And Art, (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 29-30.

⁴Irving Howe, Decline of the New, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1970), p. 5.

outer reality, there is only human consciousness, constantly building, modifying, rebuilding new worlds out of its own creativity."

Harvena Richter also reminds the reader in Virginia Woolf:

The Inward Voyage⁵:

Yet however Mrs. Woolf bends and curves her language to achieve the exact subjective tone she wants, it remains "a woman's sentence", as she calls that of Dorothy Richardson - "psychological sentence of the feminine gender...of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable...of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes." Miss Richardson invented it "consciously," Mrs. Woolf claims, to "descend to the depths and investigate the crannies of Miriam Henderson's consciousness." Virginia Woolf's sentence, on the other hand, with its swoops and dartings, its quick contradictions, its occasional chattering tone, seems to have been reproduced unconsciously, catching the spontaneity and constantly changing quality of feminine thought. It is perhaps this personal immediacy - as if the sentence were "thought out loud" - that gives Virginia Woolf's language "that curious sexual quality" which she feels "a woman's writing should possess."

Thus conditioned by the psychological and historical development of literature's traditions, by the growing consciousness of female artists and by her personal circumstances, Virginia Woolf is locked into her time. Her novels are a reflection of the fact. Her physical and social frame of reference is extremely narrow: upper middle class English respectable society of the late Victorian age in England. Although the psychological frame of reference partly compensates for this limitation by its diffuse and lyrical expansive quality it, too, betrays a confinement in that the five major novels under study seem in the end to repeat themselves. The boundaries between characters are not made "comfortably" distinct for the reader.

⁵ Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 147.

Instead, one character merges too often and too easily into the next, creating the illusion of one large consciousness whose "parts" unfortunately are rather poorly defined. What the reader does receive without a doubt is a very strong sense of character, of one total personality. But the most noticeable aspect involving the psychological frame of reference in the novels is an attitude of ambivalence which tends towards a nervous, or even a morbid sensibility. By "attitude of ambivalence" is meant the inherent tendency of the artist to permit the expression of an undercurrent of negativism. Virginia Woolf is well aware of the tradition (of literature and philosophy) into which she is born. The numerous critical essays she has written attest to this fact. She is particularly aware of the women writers who came before her. She is warned by her predecessors concerning the dangers of a probing sensitivity for as George Eliot writes in Middlemarch⁶ "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence." Virginia Woolf has heard "the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat" and she is unable to live with the sounds, a part of her secretly believing that to have heard these sounds at all means eventual death. Yet she still needs to try to communicate something of what she has heard "on the other side of silence." This attitude or "mood"

⁶ George Eliot, Middlemarch, (Boston: Riverside Press, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956) p. 144.

controls the novels completely by controlling the vision. In short, Virginia Woolf writes about the things she has experienced. She uses her own world and does not venture to include any experience she herself has not had, or at least has not known vicariously. Her sharp eye for detail comes to focus on domestic life and greatly reveals her sheltered existence just as the ambivalent attitude and the direction it finally takes mirrors her own painful existence.

The kind of analysis which forms the basis of this thesis, and the justification for such an analysis, has been brought to my attention by Susan Sontag, one of the more iconoclastic twentieth century critics, in her most stimulating study, Against Interpretation: And Other Essays⁷, where she claims:

Transparence is the highest, most liberating value in art - and in criticism - today. Transparence means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are.

Once upon a time (a time when high art was scarce), it must have been a revolutionary and creative move to interpret works of art. Now it is not. What we decidedly do not need now is further to assimilate Art into Thought, or (worse yet) Art into Culture.

Interpretation takes the sensory experience of the work of art for granted, and proceeds from there. This cannot be taken for granted, now. Think of the sheer multiplication of works of art available to every one of us, superadded to the conflicting tastes and odors and sights of the urban environment that bombard our senses. Ours is a culture based on excess, on overproduction; the result

7 Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation: And Other Essays, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), pp. 13-14.

is a steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience. All the conditions of modern life - its material plenitude, its sheer crowdedness - conjoin to dull our sensory faculties. And it is in the light of the condition of our senses, our capacities (rather than those of another age), that the task of the critic must be assessed.

What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more.

Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all.

The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art - and, by analogy, our own experience - more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is, even that it is what it is, rather than to show what it means.

It is hoped that something of this "transparence" has been captured in the detailed study which follows. It is also hoped that the ensuing analysis shows the way to a fuller appreciation of the achievement and the limitation of this particular artist's vision.

Chapter One of the thesis serves as an introduction to the method of criticism the thesis proposes by focusing on a short analysis of the theme of ambivalence as it appears in Jacob's Room (1922). The analysis focuses on the main events which make up the novel's plot structure in chronological order, but is chiefly concerned with the psychological drama. Chapter Two forms the central target of the thesis. It attempts a much more detailed analysis of the vision of ambivalence prevalent in Mrs. Dalloway (1925), with the intention of rendering something of the process of creation for which Virginia Woolf is as

often criticized as she is admired. The detailed descriptions are not to be understood as expressing sympathy towards the vision of reality that Virginia Woolf portrays in her five major novels. Instead, they are a means of understanding, even appreciating, the art that holds together and is at the same time inseparable from that vision. Mrs. Dalloway ends on a positive note. Nevertheless, the reader must ask himself finally whether "parties" are enough of an outlet for the healthy energies and meaningful activities of which Life is supposed to be made up, or whether the "parties" are made to carry a symbolic weight they do not, or cannot, naturally contain. In the same way the title of Jacob's Room seems to identify the protagonist through his living quarters and perhaps raises the question whether an ambulant young man can really be known through his living quarters. It is a skilful device but it is just a device. The result for this reader is that the burdened symbolic content creates an effect of effort. But for the largest part this effect is brought about by the sheer weight of the artist's vision with its intensely pressing and intensely neurotic need never to let a thing or person, an image, go unwritten lest it, and the resultant myriad associations go unnoticed or even ignored by the reader. The tension begins to mount with increasing "depression" in To The Lighthouse (1927) and especially in The Waves (1931) and

Between The Acts (1941). Chapter Three of the thesis discusses the three novels separately. Part One of Chapter Three looks at certain key images in To The Lighthouse and their function in the narrative whole in support of the theme of ambivalence. Part Two focuses on a detailed poetic analysis of the Prologue of the first chapter of The Waves and shows how this Prologue as well as the closing of the novel are a further extension of the theme of ambivalence. Finally, Part Three looks at the direction the theme of ambivalence has taken since it was first introduced in Jacob's Room by concentrating on the events and the overall attitude and response that Between The Acts (1941) encourages. The conclusion is a short comment on the possibilities that such a vision of reality allows. The reader must finally decide "To what does Virginia Woolf's vision of reality ultimately lead?" For this reader the answer must follow the analysis of her art, both its achievement and its limitations. The question is soon answered with a recognition of the process of ambivalence present in the five major novels of Virginia Woolf, for ironically, when the reader considers her self-imprisoning attitude, Virginia Woolf soon presses her audience with the responsibility of choice towards one, either the positive or the negative, where for the audience no middle-of-the-road philosophy becomes any longer possible to accept. As much as it is adhered to by Virginia Woolf

this "attitude of ambivalence" is threatened from the beginning. It is also fascinating, and Virginia Woolf adheres to it as only someone whose thought, whose whole being - possessed by such an attitude - is able to do.

CHAPTER ONE

Jacob's Room⁸ (1922) is Jacob's story, from his childhood to his early death. The story unfolds the expansiveness of Jacob's self in that the reader is made aware not only of Jacob's feelings and thoughts about himself and about the things and people around him but also of other people's thoughts about Jacob and of the sensory experiences which these thoughts evoke for them. To "know" Jacob in this way is to be made fully aware of the infinitely subtle ambivalences which make up the total experience of his reality in particular and reality in general as Virginia Woolf has chosen to express it in this novel. The expression of these ambivalences in the very artistry of Jacob's Room facilitates a mythopoeic interpretation of the novel which attempts to answer the questions "Who is Jacob?" and "What does 'knowing' Jacob mean?" This expansiveness of artistry can be appreciated more completely following detailed examination of sections from the novel taken in chronological order and beginning with the first five pages of Chapter One. The entrance of Jacob occurs with the shaping of an imagistic scene in which illusion and reality unite to create mythopoeic matter. There is the letter which Mrs. Flanders is in the process of writing, the experience of the bay quivering before her as her eyes fill with tears while she

⁸ Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1969). All following page references are included in the thesis text.

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writes this letter, and the shadow of her eldest son Archer who will be off in a moment to search for Jacob. Each one of these forms gains substance by receiving a little of her attention at once:

She winked quickly. Accidents were awful things. She winked again. The mast was straight; the waves were regular, the lighthouse was upright; but the blot had spread. "...nothing for it but to leave," she read. "Well if Jacob doesn't want to play" (the shadow of Archer, her eldest son, fell across the notepaper and looked blue on the sand, and she felt chilly - it was the third of September already), "if Jacob doesn't want to play" - what a horrid blot! It must be getting late. (7)

The letter, in turn, gives substance to Mrs. Flanders by revealing something of her sensitivity as well as something of her private life. At the same time, the artist, Charles Steele, is attempting to portray Jacob's mother on canvas: "Here was that woman moving - actually going to get up - confound her! He struck the canvas a hasty violet-black dab. For the landscape needed it" (8) and in doing so he also gives substance to Jacob:

"I saw your brother - I saw your brother," he said, nodding his head, as Archer lagged past him, trailing his spade, and scowling at the old gentleman in spectacles.

"Over there - by the rock," Steele muttered, with his brush between his teeth, squeezing out raw sienna, and keeping his eyes fixed on Betty Flanders' back.

Steele frowned; but was pleased by the effect of the black - it was just that note which brought the rest together. (8-9)

By occurring when it does the "effect of the black" (9) becomes the effect of the "cloud over the bay" (9) which becomes Mrs. Flanders and her black parasol which in turn extend themselves

into the "tremendously solid brown, or rather black" (9) rock on which Jacob is playing. The musical compositioning and counterpointing suggested by "that note" has begun long before Steele expresses it. It is "that note" which fuses the real and ever-moving world of Mrs. Flanders and the artificial stillness of the painting so that reality emerges as "reality", a subtle weaving of image and symbol, of emotion and idea as one. And it is "that note" which gives birth to Jacob.

The rock and its "hollow full of water" (9) are Jacob's mythopoeic beginnings. Here is his Eden. Here he wonders at the movement of life as it is shared by the water creatures and himself:

... and out pushes an opal-shelled crab -
 "Oh, a huge crab," Jacob murmured -
 and begins his journey on weakly legs on the
 sandy bottom. Now! Jacob plunged his hand.
 The crab was cool and very light. But the
 water was thick with sand, and so, scrambling
 down, Jacob was about to jump, holding his
 bucket in front of him, when he saw.... (9)

He articulates the identity of the crab, which has made itself known to Jacob through his senses, and in doing so he acknowledges the crab as a creature separate from himself. With these words, he is also acknowledging his own separateness. The knowledge, having been uttered, fills him with impulsive exploratory energy. He bridges the newly formed gap between the crab and himself by touching. His hand in the water and the crab crawling along the sandy bottom become reflections of each other. And yet an element of repulsion has been aroused with the utterance of Jacob's identity for the reflections are, after all, polar images: "But the water was thick with sand, and so..." (9). This repulsion continues its subtle expression in the prose:

...when he saw, stretched entirely rigid, side by side, their faces very red, an enormous man and woman.

An enormous man and woman (it was early-closing day) were stretched motionless, with their heads on pocket-handkerchiefs, side by side, within a few feet of the sea, while two or three gulls gracefully skirted the incoming waves, and settled near their boots.

The large red faces lying on the bandanna handkerchiefs stared up at Jacob. Jacob stared down at them. Holding his bucket very carefully, Jacob then jumped deliberately and trotted away very nonchalantly at first but faster and faster as the waves came creaming up to him and he had to swerve to avoid them, and the gulls rose in front of him and floated out and settled again a little farther on. A large black woman was sitting on the sand. He ran towards her.

"Nanny! Nanny!" he cried, sobbing the words out on the crest of each gasping breath.

The waves came round her. She was a rock. She was covered with seaweed which pops when it is pressed. He was lost.

There he stood. His face composed itself. He was about to roar when, lying among the black sticks and straw under the cliff, he saw a whole skull - perhaps a cow's skull, a skull, perhaps, with teeth in it. Sobbing, but absent-mindedly, he ran farther and farther away until he held the skull in his arms. (9-10)

The man and woman appear suddenly to Jacob just as he is about to jump off his rock, about to assert himself in his new-found knowledge. The timely appearance of the lovers presents Jacob with the embodiment of the ambivalent forces within nature, and more specifically human nature, which he is just beginning to experience and to confront with difficulty. Virginia Woolf fittingly chooses the sexual/sensual image of the couple. As Herbert Marder remarks of Virginia Woolf's creativity in Feminism and Art⁹:

⁹ Herbert Marder, Feminism and Art, (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1968), pages 105 and 125.

A marriage had to be consummated...within the mind itself of each individual, a union between the masculine and feminine principles. (105)

Virginia Woolf saw the universe as the scene of an eternal conflict between opposites, corresponding, roughly speaking, to masculine and feminine principles. Her main concern was to find ways of reconciling the warring opposites...As artist and mystic she sought inner harmony, the ideal state of androgyny, which would lead to the renewal of the individual. (125)

Jacob's increasing awareness no longer marks a rigid line between "a huge crab" (9) and "an enormous man and woman" (9) in terms of the sensory experience each evokes within him, although his ability to discriminate between self and non-self grows with each passing moment which takes him farther and farther away from that "tremendously solid" (9) rock. Thus Jacob's psyche is inevitably prepared for the appearance of the couple, as sudden as that appearance may seem. But he is not prepared to accept peacefully its impact. This time he does not need to touch before he turns away. It is enough simply to stare. He is overwhelmed by the couple's presence, their realness and what that realness unconsciously signifies to him. In the man and woman, "stretched motionless, with their heads on pocket-handkerchiefs, side by side, within a few feet of the sea" (9) are the seeds of the severance of self from non-self and the multiplicity within this same self, as projected by Jacob's psyche, as well as the possibility of transcending the absolute quality of finite self into an absolute experience of infinite self/non-self, the seeds of an awakening consciousness, that of Jacob. His energy has elevated him to almost panic proportions. He is now exiled from his rock.

Surprised, confused, overwhelmed, a little body all in conflict, with only his "freedom" of choice to guide him now, he runs as fast and as far as his confusion will take him. He must avoid the waves, the same waves which come within a few feet of the lovers, for it is these very waves which deposited their still bodies onto the seashore. In avoiding them he asserts himself once more but he has not for a moment forgotten his displeasure. He wants the refuge of his rock as it used to be before his eyes saw so that he sees "a large black woman" in a rock. As he runs toward it crying out "Nanny! Nanny!" (10) and "sobbing the words out on the crest of each gasping breath" (10) he becomes the very waves from which he is also running away and so quickly too, that he must gasp for air. He and these waves move round "her" who is a rock. At this point the subject/object diffusion is so complete that he is devastated: "He was lost" (10). The experience of the exile as well as the initial experience of happy merging with primitive nature before he felt pride of heroism, before he murmured and plunged his hand are reinforced in the very words "He was lost." This rock offers no refuge, no comfort. It is the skull at the foot of the cliff which draws him out of his inactivity and unnatural loss of self, giving him life and energy once more. Embracing this skull, that is to say, uniting with it, he is able to console himself and regain his self-identity. It is interesting to note how Jacob does this. He must become his own parent or Nanny who holds the skull, which is also Jacob, in his arms in order to

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give himself the comfort which he is not presently receiving from the real parent, Mrs. Flanders, or from any person external to him. Little Jacob has experienced the essence of ambivalence, of what is to remain with him forever, expanding infinitely within and around him to his death, the same ambivalence which much later in Greece brings him the gloom of his and others' utter aloneness and the pleasure that this aloneness also affords:

Jacob went to the window and stood with his hands in his pockets. There he saw 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.

Yet next day, as the train slowly rounded a hill on the way of Olympia, the Greek peasant women were out among the vines; the old Greek men were sitting at the stations, sipping sweet wine. And though Jacob remained gloomy he had never suspected how tremendously pleasant it is to be alone; out of England; on one's own; cut off from the whole thing. There are very sharp bare hills on the way to Olympia; and between them blue sea in triangular space. A little like the Cornish coast. Well now, to go walking by oneself all day - to get on to that track and follow it up between the bushes - or are they small trees? - to the top of that mountain from which one can see half the nations of antiquity - (141)

The difference is that after the initial experience the order of things is reversed. Every "rock" he comes to is a place for trying to reconcile the seemingly disparate emotions within himself. The emotions are there and he must make the best of the apparent contradictions. With maturity comes an "understanding" of himself, a sympathy with the dualities of gloom/pleasure, originating in that first embrace of the skull. The initial fright

which brought the cry of "Nanny! Nanny!" has composed itself to a more socially acceptable form: "'Yes,' said Jacob, for his carriage was empty, 'let's look at the map'" (141). But the ambivalence remains, now more concretely expressed, now more diffusely, germinating endlessly so that the effect of one experience is the very cause of the other. Previously he had identified with the crab. Now the skull and he become shadows of each other; the difference is that the skull is able to soothe what anxiety has been aroused by the experience of the crab. Both are magical in their very catalytic power to provoke strong response in him, and thus share aspects of Jacob's primal rock.

In Chapter Two, the reader finds Jacob, now a little older, collecting butterflies:

The upper wings of the moth which Jacob held were undoubtedly marked with kidney-shaped spots of a fulvous hue. But there was no crescent upon the underwing. The tree had fallen the night he caught it. There had been a volley of pistol-shots suddenly in the depths of the wood. And his mother had taken him for a burglar when he came home late. The only one of her sons who never obeyed her, she said.

The tree had fallen, though it was a windless night, and the lantern, stood upon the ground, had lit up the still green leaves and the dead beech leaves. It was a dry place. A toad was there. And the red underwing had circled round the light and flashed and gone. The red underwing had never come back, though Jacob had waited. It was after twelve when he crossed the lawn.... (23-24)

The butterfly is life and the spirit of life, of beauty and the infinite powers of the imagination, of transcendence. His child-like nature wishes to catch, to hold, to possess the moving body which of course will die in its imprisoned unnatural state. But Jacob is older now, an adolescent ready for Cambridge and able to

exercise parental restraint. And so he applies a scheme to his catching and it becomes the science of butterfly-collecting: "Morris called it 'an extremely local insect found in damp or marshy places.'" But Morris is sometimes wrong. Sometimes Jacob, choosing a very fine pen, made a correction in the margin (23)." By now Jacob has learned well to distinguish. He is searching for a particular butterfly, "the red underwing", which presents itself to Jacob in the very moment it eludes him. The fallen tree is sudden and inexplicable death ("though it was a windless night"). The second part of the passage quoted above crams together the living forces with the once-living-now-dead forces to create and project the sensory experience of Jacob's reality. Repeating the image of "the tree had fallen" reinforces the impact of the fall and the symbolic power this vertical fall has as well as reinforcing the stillness of the night. In apparent contrast, the butterfly's movement is bodiless like that of wind and light. It circles, it flashes, and then it is gone. But "the red underwing had never come back..." (23) making the tree and butterfly both share in the finality they create, with their actions held in the past perfect verbs describing them. Nevertheless Jacob does not go home empty-handed. The parallelism between the two parts quoted is the result of more than just the repetition of "the tree had fallen" or the extension of the same subject-matter, butterfly-catching. The group of words "the tree had fallen" acts as an anchor for the sensory experience of rising emotion of trying to catch the red underwing and of not having caught this specimen.

The paragraphs project sensorially and symbolically what occurs in Jacob's psychic reality, how, often in any sensitive being and especially in Jacob, an image becomes fact ("the tree had fallen") and how, often the mind returns to that fact and makes all kinds of movements around that fact. In this example the change of movements is slight, very like the trembling of the butterflies that symbolizes them. The intervening reality [Morris called it...in the margin. (23)] is related to the butterfly-catching and the memory of that night. The flashback effect of having Jacob hold his catch in the first paragraph and then go back to that night when the unsuccessful catch was made in the second paragraph creates a cyclical movement of its own. Moreover both paragraphs end on the same thematic note. For Jacob, not to obey his mother is to wait and wait in hope of the return of the red underwing. And to return himself, without it but with another, is also to disobey her. The very experience of the ambivalence which make up Jacob's reality is here most subtly expressed in the narrative flux.

In the first section of Chapter Three, Jacob, now nineteen, is on his way to Cambridge. The middle-aged woman, Mrs. Norman, who shares the same train compartment as Jacob, offers the reader her opinion of him:

Taking note of socks (loose), of tie (shabby), she once more reached his face. She dwelt upon his mouth. The lips were shut. The eyes were bent down, since he was reading. All was firm, yet youthful, indifferent, unconscious - as for knocking one down! No, no, no! She looked out of the window, smiling slightly now, and then back again, for he didn't notice her. Grave unconscious...now he looked up, past her...he seemed so out of place, somehow, alone with an elderly lady...then he fixed his eyes - which were blue - on the landscape. He had not realized her presence, she thought. (30)

This is the social view of Jacob, the externals. In the same way that Jacob faced the skull in his embrace and became the skull, this mirror-imaging of Jacob by Mrs. Norman fuses with the personal core of Jacob. At this moment the reader "knows" Jacob by his private thoughts (which are presently "concealed" from the reader) as well as by whatever his eyes are fixing on in the landscape and by the "blueness" of his eyes. The fusion of these various angles of vision is achieved even more thoroughly when the narrator remarks on the above description:

Nobody sees any one as he is, let alone an elderly lady sitting opposite a strange young man in a railway carriage. They see a whole - they see all sorts of things - they see themselves...Mrs. Norman now read three pages of one of Mr. Norris's novels. Should she say to the young man (and after all he was just the same age as her own boy): "If you want to smoke, don't mind me"? No: he seemed absolutely indifferent to her presence...she did not wish to interrupt.

But since, even at her age, she noted his indifference, presumably he was in some way or other - to her at least - nice, handsome, interesting, distinguished, well built, like her own boy? One must do the best one can with her report. Anyhow, this was Jacob Flanders, aged nineteen. It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done - for instance, when the train drew into the station, Mr. Flanders burst open the door, and put the lady's dressing-case out for her, saying, or rather mumbling: "Let me" very shyly; indeed he was rather clumsy about it. (30-31)

This passage reflects the rippling process that one person's comments on another effect. Virginia Woolf demonstrates this rippling process by interposing herself as author who in turn comments on Mrs. Norman's social view, reminding the reader, even confiding, in familiar tone: "it is no use..." (31), that allowances must always be made, that no final description of Jacob will ever be achieved and that the best thing to do in getting to know Jacob is to make the most of the bits and pieces at hand in any one moment. Here too, Virginia Woolf is, for this reader, indirectly mirroring a method or formula of interpretation as well as the very product of that interpretation in what is, nevertheless, a rather ordinary incident. For in the last sentence of the above-quoted passage the fusion of narrator, Jacob and Mrs. Norman is artistically complete. In this stream-of-consciousness style the narrator introduces the sentence referring to Jacob as "Mr. Flanders" and to Mrs. Norman as "the lady"; Jacob is present in the quotation of his own words "Let me"; and through the author comment Mrs. Norman ends the sentence with her remark on Jacob's social behaviour: "saying, or rather mumbling: 'Let me' very shyly; indeed he was rather clumsy about it" (31). There will always be a "Jacob", a "Mrs. Norman" and a "narrator" in the "knowing" of Jacob. When he leaves the train to go to his room he takes all these shadows with him.

The intimacy between narrator and reader to which I have already referred in the previous paragraph is evident once more in the introduction and description of Jacob's room:

Jacob's rooms, however, were in Neville's Court; at the top; so that reaching his door one went in a little out of breath; but he wasn't there. Dining in Hall, presumably. It will be quite dark in Neville's Court long before midnight, only the pillars opposite will always be white, and the fountains. A curious effect the gate has, like lace upon pale green.

Jacob's room had a round table and two low chairs. There were yellow flags in a jar on the mantelpiece; a photograph of his mother...There were books enough; very few French books; but then any one who's worth anything reads just what he likes as the mood takes him, with extravagant enthusiasm...His slippers were incredibly shabby, like boats burnt to the water's rim...There were books upon the Italian painters of the Renaissance, a Manual of the Diseases of the Horse, and all the usual textbooks. Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker arm-chair creaks, though no one sits there. (38-39)

The intimacy as it is suggested in the first line of the above-quoted passage is of such a degree that narrator and Jacob become interchangeable. Whereas the reader is informed from the very beginning that Jacob is not there, the narrator feels free to enter his room and to invite the reader in at the same time, even to add light asides as he describes the contents of the room. The intimacy thus evokes a mixed feeling of invasion and sharing, which feeling results from the extent to which details are related as well as from the "friendly" or "sympathetic" tone used to relate them.

This atmosphere prevails as the reader must now inevitably take into account these little "facts" about Jacob, while being

assured once again in the last line of the passage that Jacob is not there. The last two lines of the passage are lyrical in contrast to the rest of the passage. They suggest an omniscient and all-encompassing narrator. They also remind the reader that although Jacob may not be there in person, the room is space full of movement which does not cease even as the narrator turns the reader's attention away from Jacob's room. This latter event powerfully anticipates the empty room at the closing of the novel. In all probability the curtain will continue to swell, the flowers to shift and the chair to creak. But while the narrator is here the movements of this space and the silence of these movements are given substance and spirit and sound, i.e. are caught forever as the butterflies once were by Jacob, providing new insight into the person inhabiting this space. It is ironical that by not being there Jacob will never know about his uninvited guests.

At Cambridge Jacob makes friends with Timmy Durrant and Bonamy among others. These relationships reveal something of what "knowing" Jacob means as well as something of what is inherent in Jacob, just as later happens in his relationships with different women. One passage from the "Scilly Iles" section of Chapter Four mythopoeically expresses this double revelation through imagery of rebirth:

...and then Jacob began to unbutton his⁷ clothes and sat naked, save for his shirt, intending, apparently, to bathe.

The Scilly Iles were turning bluish; and suddenly the blue, purple, and green flushed the sea; left it gray; struck a stripe which vanished; but when Jacob had got his shirt over his head the whole floor of the

waves was blue and white, rippling and crisp, though now and again a broad purple mark appeared, like a bruise; or there floated an entire emerald tinged with yellow. He plunged. He gulped in water, spat it out, struck with his right arm, struck with his left, was towed by a rope, gasped, splashed, and was hauled on board. (48)

The very act of plunging marks Jacob's own solitude. But in doing so he also merges with the water in the way that the growing foetus moves with and is inseparable from the uterine fluid. The short active verbs of reflex, "gulped", "spat out", "struck" this way and "struck" that way, "gasped" and "splashed" juxtaposed with passive verbs suggesting the weight of the object being "towed" or "hauled" and rendering a distant and impersonal quality to the narrative, further reinforce the merging of Jacob's solitude with the solidarity shared between Durrant and himself. As umbilical cord the rope connects him to the external, social world. It draws him up from his depths lest he be submerged totally. And so the rebirth is simply a further manifestation in symbolical projection of the polarities of sensory experience already existing within Jacob and forming the crux of his reality up until now, for the seeds of death are also present and the life/death and self/non-self theme are mirrored in the patterning of imagery:

The seat in the boat was positively hot, and the sun warmed his back as he sat naked with a towel in his hand, looking at the Scilly Isles which - confound it! the sail flapped. Shakespeare was knocked overboard. There you could see him floating merrily away, with all his pages ruffling innumerable; and then he went under.

-Strangely enough, you could smell violets, or if violets...the white sand bays with the waves breaking unseen by any one, rose to heaven in a kind of ecstasy.

But imperceptibly the cottage smoke droops, has the look of a mourning emblem, a flag floating its caress over a grave. The gulls, making their broad flight and then riding at peace, seem to mark the grave...and somehow or other, loveliness is infernally sad. Yes, the chimneys and the coast-guard stations and the little bays with the waves breaking unseen by any one make one remember the overpowering sorrow. And what can this sorrow be?
(48)

Jacob does not speak about this gloom. As much as this mixed ecstasy and sorrow has been externalized into the very landscape, it is locked within Jacob, and Durrant and the narrator can only attempt an "interpretation": "...No matter. There are things that can't be said. Let's shake it off. Let's dry ourselves, and take up the first thing that comes handy... Timmy Durrant's notebook of scientific observations" (40). In this sentence narrator, Durrant and Jacob become diffuse and one, and they do so with the particular psychic causality expressed in the mythopoetic experience of Jacob's self. The water symbolizes memory and the sub-conscious imaginative powers into which he has plunged. As he surfaces so does a mood of gloom. It is an "overpowering sorrow" (49) to the extent that it has surfaced with Jacob. Having exposed itself to a social and geographical view as it does, it inevitably binds together narrator, Durrant, and Jacob, so that in this moment Durrant's "knowing" of Jacob and what makes up Jacob are one and the same despite the fact that each is ironically not aware of this marvellous bond which began with Jacob's being "hailed

on board" (48). This idea of the surfacing of emotion from the depth of one's being and of the surface and depth coming together in the sensory experience of an image is further expressed in the last part of the Scilly Iles section:

...and the drone of the tide in the caves came across the water, low, monotonous, like the voice of some one talking to himself.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee,"

sang Jacob.

Like the blunt tooth of some monster, a rock broke the surface; brown; overflowed with perpetual waterfalls.

"Rock of Ages,"

Jacob sang, lying on his back, looking up into the sky at midday, from which every shred of cloud had been withdrawn, so that it was like something permanently displayed with the cover off. (52)

The singing of the "Rock of Ages" hymn acknowledges the tensions created by the coalescence of surface and depth awareness and the need for psychic integration in the individual. It becomes noticeable at this point in the analysis that Virginia Woolf burdens her imagery, in this case a commonplace holiday episode, by forcing it to carry symbolic significance beyond its capacity within the overall framework of the novel. But the weight of meaning thus only further intensifies the weight of dramatic unfolding within Jacob.

The theme of the merging of surface and depth continues its expression into the rest of the chapter, where at the Durrant dinner-party: "Like oars rowing now this side, now that, were the sentences that came now here, now there, from either side of the

table" (57). Here Jacob is subject and object at once. The private world and the social view link in the narrative flow; people observe him, as fragments of conversations suggest:

"The silent young man," said Miss Eliot.
 "Yes, Jacob Flanders," said Mrs. Durrant. (59)

"Sit there," she said.

Jacob came out from the dark place by the window where he had hovered. The light poured over him, illuminating every cranny of his skin; but not a muscle of his face moved as he sat looking out into the garden.

"I want to hear about your voyage," said Mrs. Durrant.

"Yes," he said.

"Twenty years ago we did the same thing."

"Yes," he said. She looked at him sharply.

"He is extraordinarily awkward," she thought, noticing how he fingered his socks. "Yet so distinguished looking." (61)

"You're too good - too good," she thought, thinking of Jacob, thinking that he must not say that he loved her. No, no, no. (63)

The last quotation is Clara's and it reflects the ambivalence of attraction and repulsion in one body, one spirit. Jacob is apparently falling in love with Clara. Clara, however, is not simply an accessory to Jacob's emotional development. She is a separate character, a woman with feelings of her own. For although she is absorbed into his psyche as semi-transparency or beauty within nature, the dualities within herself which are to be seen as extensions of the polarities within Jacob's being do not encourage a physical commitment either in words or in sexual contact. The tension of "too good" and "no, no, no" with its resultant "spirituality" further enhances the "overpowering sorrow" of the first section of the chapter, and is reminiscent of the red underwing of Jacob's early adolescence. Clara blesses Jacob with all the limitless possibilities of the future:

"The leaves really want thinning," she considered, and one green one, spread like the palm of a hand, circled down past Jacob's head.

"I have more than I can eat already," he said, looking up.

"It does seem absurd..." Clara began, "going back to London..."

"Ridiculous," said Jacob, firmly.

"Then..." said Clara, "you must come next year, properly," she said, snipping another vine leaf, rather at random.

"if...if..."

(62)

At the same time she does not encourage the crystallization of emotion:

"I have enjoyed myself," said Jacob, looking down the greenhouse.

"Yes, it's been delightful" she said vaguely.

"Oh, Miss Durrant," he said, taking the basket of grapes; but she walked past him towards the door of the greenhouse.

(62-63)

The sensuality, sexuality, spirituality as they are aroused and merge within Jacob in this imagistic scene will have to seek other modes of expression and redefinition in other women.

In Chapter Five the social view of Jacob, a glimpse of which the reader has already had, is provided in the words of Bonamy, of Mrs. Durrant through Bonamy, and of Clara, and yet the narrator is always there to counteract their "summing up" of Jacob which inevitably reinforces it by further fixing the reader's attention on Jacob:

In short, the observer is choked with observations. Only to prevent us from being submerged by chaos, nature and society between them have arranged a system of classification which is simplicity itself; stalls, boxes, amphitheatre, gallery. The moulds are

filled nightly. There is no need to distinguish details. But the difficulty remains - one has to choose...But no - we must choose. Never was there a harsher necessity! or one which entails greater pain, more certain disaster; for wherever I seat myself, I die in exile; Whittaker in his lodging-house; Lady Charles at the Manor. (68-69)

"What about a walk on Saturday?"

("What is happening on Saturday?")

Then taking out his pocket-book, he assured himself that the night of the Durrants' party came next week.

But though all this may very well be true - so Jacob thought and spoke - so he crossed his legs - filled his pipe - sipped his whisky, and once looked at his pocket-book, rumping his hair as he did so, there remains over something which can never be conveyed to a second person save by Jacob himself. Moreover, part of this is not Jacob but Richard Bonamy - the room; the market carts; the hour; the very moment in history. 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. Even the exact words get the wrong accent on them. But something is always impelling one to him vibrating, like the hank moth, at the mouth of the cavern of mystery, endowing Jacob Flanders with all sorts of qualities he had not at all - for though, certainly, he sat talking to Bonamy, half of what he said was too dull to repeat; much unintelligible (about unknown people and Parliament); what remains is mostly a matter of guess work. Yet over him we hang vibrating. (72-73)

The narrator thus fragments the reader's own analytical processes. In these confessions Virginia Woolf, who is shadowed in the narrator, seems to be reminding the reader that interpretation like the artistry itself is not a linear equation but rather a kaleidoscopic patterning of linguistic vibrations and semantic energies with their own individual logic, the logic in this particular novel emanating from Jacob's experience of reality:

...destiny is chipping a dent in him. He has turned to go. As for following him back to his rooms, no that we won't do.

Yet that, of course, is precisely what one does. He let himself in and shut the door, though... The march that the mind keeps beneath the windows of others is queer enough. Now distracted by brown panelling; now by a fern in a pot; here improvising a few phrases to dance with the barrel-organ; again snatching a detached gaiety from a drunken man; then altogether absorbed by words the poor shout across the street at each other (so outright, so lusty) - yet all the while having for centre, for magnet, a young man alone in his room. (95)

Here, the narrator explicitly states what the narrative as a whole mythopoeically projects. The curious blending of intimacy with attraction towards Jacob and detachment with impersonal counter-comment: "Yet that, of course, is precisely what one does" or "yet all the while having for centre, for magnet, a young man alone in his room", creates the depersonalization of Jacob, which characteristic imparts to him a diffusiveness, a transitoriness, a repeated questioning of who really is Jacob, so that even as all the images move with centripetal force towards Jacob's "centre", upon reaching that "centre" they immediately absorb enough energy to escape with equal centrifugal force only to return again in different configuration.

After Clara comes Florinda. Clara never leaves Jacob completely. Only at present it is Florinda and her freedom of sexual vitality who occupies his energies. The relationship is a redefinition of whatever had begun to express itself between Jacob and Clara. There is the element of gloom ("I'm so frightfully unhappy!" (74, 75)) and the element of beauty ("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.'" (75) which converge in the couple's physical contact:

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. (75)

It is at this time, too, that Jacob verbalizes his love of Greek culture: "for the whole sentiment of Athens was entirely after his heart; free, venturesome, high-spirited...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" (76). The whole of Chapter Six is a slow reversal of this experience of beauty and sorrow. By the end of the chapter the reversal is complete:

The problem is insoluble. The body is harnessed to a brain. Beauty goes hand in hand with stupidity. There she sat staring at the fire as she had stared at the broken mustard-pot.

After all, it was none of her fault. But the thought saddened him.

But when she looked at him, 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. (82)

The attraction and repulsion symbolically expressed here in the male/female polarities recognize each other within Jacob with the result that the problem of reality as ambivalence is insoluble. Confrontation does not relieve the ambivalent experience

of reality but instead intensifies that experience all the more. The intensity reaches its culmination in Chapter Eight with the sexual union of Jacob and Florinda, which ambivalence of union is ironically portrayed in the "presence" of Mrs. Flanders by means of the "letter" image and by means of the unusual narrative technique:

Meanwhile, poor Betty Flanders's letter, having caught the second post, lay on the hall table - poor Betty Flanders writing her son's name, Jacob Alan Flanders, Esq., as mothers do, and the ink pale, profuse, suggesting how mothers down at Scarborough scribble over the fire with their feet on the fender, when tea's cleared away, and can never say, never say, whatever it may be - probably this - Don't go with bad women, do be a good boy; wear your thick shirts; and come back, come back, come back to me.

"The letter lay upon the hall table; Florinda coming in that night took it up with her, put it on the table as she kissed Jacob, and Jacob seeing the hand, left it there under the lamp, between the biscuit-tin and the tobacco-box. They shut the bedroom door behind them.

The sitting room neither knew nor cared. The door was shut, and to suppose that wood, when it creaks, transmits anything save that rats are busy and wood dry is childish. These old houses are only brick and wood, soaked in human sweat, grained with human dirt. But if the pale blue envelope lying by the biscuit-box had the feelings of another, the heart was torn by the little creak, the sudden stir. Behind the door was the obscene thing, the alarming presence, and terror would come over her as at death, or the birth of a child. Better, perhaps, burst in and face it than sit in the antechamber listening to the little creak, the sudden stir, for her heart was swollen, and pain threaded it. My son, my son - such would be her cry, uttered to hide her vision of him stretched with Florinda.... (90-92)

The image of the letter further reflects that part/whole theme already expressed in the character of Florinda: "By a trick of the firelight she seemed to have no body. The oval of the face

and hair hung beside the fire with a dark vacuum for background" (74); "But it did occur to Jacob, half-way through dinner, to wonder whether she had a mind" (79), and "The problem is insoluble. The body is harnessed to the brain"(81). The letter so vividly evokes the very presence of Mrs. Flanders (in the same way that little gestures and words of Jacob evoke his presence to others when he is not there), that for a moment Mrs. Flanders actually is in the sitting room. Jacob's room has now become an extension of that primal rock with its evocation of dualities except that here the manifestation of these polarities has reached a more mature expression. As much as Mrs. Flanders' "presence" is here, the reader is also reminded that she is not here in person. Her presence is a silent one paralleling the muteness of her letters in which she never really writes what she wants to, all emotion being suppressed and expressed symbolically in the very presence of the letter. This silent presence of Mrs. Flanders is nevertheless always here in part in the form of the letter for Jacob to feel. The point is that while Jacob's attention is drawn to one aspect of his confrontation with ambivalence, other aspects are for the time being set aside (i.e. do not receive equal weight of attention) but can never be discarded totally. For when Jacob writes to his mother ("That he had grown to be a man was a fact that Florinda knew, as she knew everything, by instinct. And Betty Flanders even now suspected it, as she read his letter, posted at Milan, 'Telling me,' she complained to Mrs. Jarvis,

'really nothing that I want to know'; but she brooded over it." (139)) he confronts another aspect of the ambivalence with its changing angle of vision which emanates from the shifting of attention within himself. The whole of Chapter Eight focuses on the image of "letters", which very image weaves together the narrative framework of the chapter by fusing medium and message, skilfully portraying Jacob's maturing experience of reality, an experience which brings to mind Henri Bergson's Mind Energy,¹⁰ with which Virginia Woolf was no doubt familiar:

Your life in the waking state is, then a life of toil, even when you suppose you are doing nothing, for at every moment you have to exclude. You choose among your sensations, since you reject from consciousness a host of "subjective" sensations which reappear when you sleep. You choose among your memories, since you reject every recollection which does not mould itself on your present state. This choice which you are continually accomplishing, this adaptation ceaselessly renewed, is the essential condition of what you call common sense. But such adaptation and choice keeps you in a state of uninterrupted tension. You have no account of it at the time, any more than you feel the weight of the atmosphere. But it fatigues you in the long run. Common sense is very fatiguing.

In the first section of Chapter Nine this expert handling of narrative wholeness is again brought about by the symbols of "horse" and of "violet roots", which are fused together in Jacob's experience of them, thus subtly fusing within him the experience of life and death at once:

A few moments before a horse jumps it slows, sidles, gathers itself together, goes up like a

¹⁰ Henri Bergson, Mind Energy, trans. H. Wildon Carr (N.Y.: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), p. 125.

monster wave, and pitches down on the further side. Hedges and sky swoop in a semicircle. Then as if your body ran into the horse's body and it was your own forelegs grown with his that sprang, rushing through the air you go, the ground resilient, bodies a mass of muscles, yet you have command too, upright stillness, eyes accurately judging...

So Jacob galloped over the fields of Essex, flopped in the mud, lost the hunt, and rode by himself eating sandwiches, looking over the hedges, noticing the colours as if new scraped, cursing his luck.

...There was old Jevons with one eye gone, and his clothes the colour of mud, his bag over his back, and his brains laid feet down in the earth among the violet roots and the nettle roots; Mary Sanders with her box of wood.... (101)

The movement of the horse is likened to "a monster wave" reminiscent of those first waves which chased him farther and farther from his safety on the rock. But like a wave, too, the horse imparts to Jacob, who moves gracefully and passionately with the motion as well as controls it, the experience of the essence of the ebb and flow of ambivalence within reality to which the narrator later refers in Chapter Twelve when Jacob is in Greece: "Indeed there never has been any explanation of the ebb and flow in our veins - of happiness and unhappiness" (139). Jacob sustains himself within that ebb and flow with habitual fall and rise. The mud into which he flops is the colour of old Jevons' clothes and is also the earth where old Jevons lies buried, earth from which the living violets spring forth. Reason and emotion, control and passion, are beautifully integrated in the narrative technique, firstly, in the detailed description of the horse's movements which arouse the reader's involvement and, secondly, in the distancing of tone, "So Jacob galloped...cursing

his luck" (101), and of factual accounting, "There was old Jevons" tinged with the emotional words "his brains laid feet down in earth". Moreover, this factual accounting takes the form of a list of names or bodies: Mrs. Horsefield and her friend Miss Dudding, Tom Dudding, old Jevons, Mary Sanders, Tom, massed together into the neuter of "all this...." The prose passage is only another configuration of the dualities which have been patterning themselves in Jacob's mind. And the same horse that affords him a means of escape from the powers of Florinda also leads him to the next woman he is about to meet.

The entrance of Fanny Elmer into the narrative parallels the effect of Mrs. Flanders' letter in Chapter Eight. It stirs the elements which hold the narrative together, suggesting the mysterious source of energy, of vitality working within Jacob's mind, in this case the focus being the very movements of the young girl's body:

...and the girl hesitates at the crossing and turns on him the bright yet vague glance of the young.

Bright yet vague. She is perhaps twenty-two. She is shabby. She crosses the road and looks at the daffodils and the red tulips in the florist's window. She hesitates, and makes off in the direction of Temple Bar. She walks fast, and yet anything distracts her. Now she seems to see, and now to notice nothing. (113)

Through the disused graveyard in the parish of St. Pancras, Fanny Elmer strayed between the white tombs which lean against the wall, crossing the grass to read a name, hurrying on when the grave-keeper approached, hurrying into the street, pausing now by a window with blue china, now quickly making up for lost time, abruptly entering a baker's shop, buying rolls, adding cakes, going on again so that any one wishing to follow must fairly, trot...She had the

ankles of a stag. Her face was hidden. Of course, in this dusk, rapid movements, quick glances, and soaring hopes came naturally enough. She passed right beneath Jacob's window. (114)

As much as there is death ("the disused graveyard", the "white tombs", the "red feather in her hat drooped, and the clasp of her bag was weak"), there is also life ("the ankles of a stag" and "rapid movements, quick glances, and soaring hopes"). Some of the images and phrases actually fuse life and death with one impact as in "the grave-keeper" and "this dusk" and even more cleverly so in "Madame Tussaud's programmes." The counterpointing of Fanny's and Jacob's private worlds which goes on for several pages (114-116) suggests not only the irony and coincidence of two people's crossing, that they ever cross at all, and the past history that crosses with them, but also more implicitly suggests that the preparation for the reception of Fanny Elmer by Jacob has been in the process of making itself ready long before the woman is actually introduced to Jacob. For as long as Fanny has been moving in Jacob's direction ("She passed right beneath Jacob's window (114)") he has been yielding to her ("Now Jacob walked over to the window and stood with his hands in his pockets...Jacob turned away. Two minutes later he opened the front door, and walked off in the direction of Holborn." (116). Jacob's sarcasm, upon being introduced to Fanny Elmer, is ironic for the reader who is by now aware of the affinity between Fanny and Jacob as it has evolved leading precisely to this introduction:

...so that Nick and Fanny were already leaning over the barrier in the promenade at the Empire when Jacob pushed through the swing doors and took his place beside them.

"Hullo, never noticed you," said Nick, five minutes later.

"Bloody rot," said Jacob.

"Miss Elmer," said Nick.

Jacob took his pipe out of his mouth very awkwardly. (116)

The counterpointing of actions effects a rhythm, the rate of which reflects the impelling force of the attraction. Jacob is now "Jacob and Fanny Elmer" plus the other people who interact with him during this relationship. But as the reader finishes the chapter, the feeling is one of disappointment, what had promised to be magnetic does not sustain itself, even when Fanny makes the effort:

She bought Tom Jones.

At ten o'clock in the morning, in a room she shared with a school teacher, Fanny Elmer read Tom Jones - that mystic book. For this dull stuff (Fanny thought) about people with odd names is what Jacob likes. Good people like it.

"I do like Tom Jones," said Fanny, at fifty-three that same day early in April when Jacob took out his pipe in the arm-chair opposite. (122)

The acknowledgement by Jacob and Fanny that there is nothing lasting between them is expressed in the narrative:

"In Paris?" said Fanny.

"On my way to Greece," he replied.

For, he said, there is nothing so detestable as London in May. He would forget her.

Fanny thought it all came from Tom Jones. He could go alone with a book in his pocket and watch the badgers...It all came from Tom Jones; and he would go to Greece with a book in his pocket and forget her. (123-24)

Neither of them will put up a struggle. And there is present in this acquiescence a feeling of overpowering destiny, fate - Jacob

is to go to Greece. He leaves London and Fanny with as much impelling energy as first drew him to her. He also takes with him an increasing gloom: "or words to that effect. For Jacob said nothing. Only he glared at the fire" (123).

The gloom is with him all through his travels in Greece: "This gloom, this surrender to the dark waters which lap us about, is a modern invention. Perhaps, as Cruttendon said, we do not believe enough. Our fathers at any rate had something to demolish...but what use are fine speeches and Parliament, once you surrender an inch to the black waters? Indeed there has never been an explanation of the ebb and flow in our veins - of happiness and unhappiness" (138-39). The "surrender", which has been happening very gradually up to now even as the tenuous balance within Jacob's reality maintains itself, reflects the loss of volition and control in Jacob which is symbolized in the passage of Jacob's horseback riding. The gloom is so profound that it metamorphoses into an object within Jacob's reality, firstly in the form of Mrs. Wentworth Williams, "'I am full of love for every one,' thought Mrs. Wentworth Williams, '- for the poor most of all - for the peasants coming back in the evening with their burdens. And everything is soft and vague and very sad. It is sad, it is sad. But everything has meaning,' thought Sandra Wentworth Williams, raising her head a little and looking very beautiful, tragic, and exalted. 'One must love everything.'"(141), and secondly in the image of the book which makes its appearance as Jacob experiences this love: "'I shall go to Athens all the same,' he resolved, looking

very set, with this hook dragging in his side "(147). and
 "'And the Greeks, like sensible men, never bothered to finish
 the backs of their statues," said Jacob, shading his eyes and
 observing that the side of the figure which is turned away
 from view is left in the rough...and he was beginning to
 think a great deal about the problems of civilization, which
 were solved, of course, 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 "(149-50).

This image becomes that of the knife in Chapter Thirteen:

"Bonamy paused, moved a pebble, then darted in with the rapi-
 dity and certainty of a lizard's tongue. 'You are in love!' he
 exclaimed. Jacob blushed. The sharpest of knives never
 cut so deep "(165). Up to now Jacob has been faithfully cor-
 responding with Bonamy. Bonamy is reason, analytical thought,
 self-restraint: "I like books whose virtue is all drawn together
 in a page or two. I like sentences that don't budge though
 armies cross them. I like words to be hard - such were Bonamy's
 view..."(140). That Jacob communicates with him at all means
 that there is a balance, a permission, an acceptance of mutual
 compromise between the emotion and the intellect within himself.
 But while his attention is increasingly taken up by his gloom,
 he severs the bond between Bonamy and himself: "When bedtime
 came the difficulty was to write to Bonamy, Jacob found...No,
 there was something queer about it. He could not write to

Bonamy" (147) and "...on Wednesday he wrote a telegram to Bonamy, telling him to come at once. And then he crumpled it in his hand and threw it in the gutter. 'For one thing he wouldn't come,' he thought. 'And then I daresay this sort of thing wears off.' "This sort of thing" being that uneasy, painful feeling, something like selfishness - one wishes almost that the thing would stop - it is getting more and more beyond what is possible - 'If it goes on much longer I shan't be able to cope with it - but if some one else were seeing it at the same time...' (149). This severance tugs like a hook at his side as well as grants the "freedom" or permission to pursue in love Sandra Wentworth Williams. In other words, this love is born of a fantastic compromise on Jacob's part. The character of Sandra Wentworth Williams, beautiful, cool though feeling "lady of fashion" (145) reinforces the sad fact:

Thus she was arranged on the terrace when Jacob came in. 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 notice how the hill changed from blue to black, seemed to discriminate between truth and falsehood, Jacob thought, and crossed his legs suddenly, observing the extreme shabbiness of his trousers. (145)

The first sentence of the quoted passage prepares for the merging of Jacob's and her being in the very narrative flow. The repetition of the word "seemed" as it qualifies the meaning of "she was arranged" further enhances this merging but at the same time suggests in the very semantic meaning of the verb "to seem" the

distance between these two beings as they are fused into one. The extent of qualification ("seemed" is used four times) reinforces the degree of distancing and evokes a sense of tragedy, of "somehow or other loveliness is infernally sad," (49), "of opposites being unable to reconcile themselves within the self and of everything threatening as a result to topple into minor key. Moreover, Sandra is married and incongruous as this coupling may appear, it is this very marriage which draws her to Jacob as well as emphasizes the distance between Jacob and herself:

The Williamses were going to Constantinople early next morning, they said.

"Before you are up," said Sandra.

They would leave Jacob alone, then. Turning very slightly, Evan ordered something - a bottle of wine - from which he helped Jacob, with a kind of solicitude, with a kind of paternal solicitude, if that were possible. To be left alone - that was good for a young fellow. Never was there a time when the country had more need of men. He sighed.

...

"Well, but how lovely - wouldn't it be? The Acropolis, Evan - or are you too tired?"

At that Evan looked at them, or since Jacob was staring ahead of him, at his wife, surlily, sullenly, yet with a kind of distress - not that she would pity him. Nor would the implacable spirit of love, for anything he could do, cease its tortures. They left him and he sat in the smoking-room, which looks out on to the Square of the Constitution.

...

"Evan is happier alone," said Sandra. "We have been separated from the newspapers. Well, it is better that people should have what they want... You have seen all these wonderful things since we met... What impression... I think that you are changed."

...

"When one is your age - when one is young. What will you do? You will fall in love - oh yes! But

don't be in too great a hurry. I am so much older."
She was brushed off the pavement by parading
men.

"Shall we go on?" Jacob asked.

"Let us go on." she insisted.

For she could not stop until she had told him -
or heard him say - or was it some action on his part
that she required? Far away on the horizon she dis-
cerned it and could not rest.

"You'd never get English people to sit out like
this," he said.

"Never - no. When you get back to England you
won't forget this - or come with us to Constantinople!"
she cried suddenly.

"But then..."

Sandra sighed.

"You must go to Delphi, of course," she said.

"But," she asked herself, "what do I want from him?
Perhaps it is something that I have missed..."

(157-59)

This oscillation between permission and interdiction, between
encouragement and dissuasion, forever shadows the love with
inactivity and death. Within Jacob the polarities are at war
with each other to the degree that "the problem is insoluble"
(82). Jacob has vowed himself through his "love" to this insolu-
bility, and making of himself a sacrificial victim of the love
("the sharpest of knives never cut so deep" (165)), he lives
death until fateful death seizes him absolutely.

Chapter Thirteen poignantly reveals the intensification of
warped energies that have swelled to such heights in the previous
chapter. In the section on Clara (and Mr. Bowley the silent cry
of "Jacob! Jacob!" (166, 167) repeated by Clara surfaces as:
"Gallop - gallop - gallop - a horse galloped past without a
rider. The stirrups swung; the pebbles spurted. 'Oh, stop!
Stop it, Mr. Bowley!' she cried, white, trembling, gripping his
arm, utterly unconscious, the tears coming" (167). The counter-
pointing of private thoughts and external "comedy of manners"

reflects the degree of internal strife or pain that must rise from the depths to the surface. It is once again subtly achieved in the following passage:

The colour was in her cheeks. To have spoken outright about her mother - still, it was only to Mr. Bowley, who loved her, as "everybody must; but to speak was unnatural to her, yet it was awful to feel, as she had done all day, that she must tell some one. (166)

This same surfacing of inner longing occurs later in the chapter when Clara thinks she sees Jacob in "the blazing windows" (174) when really "she saw no one" (174). The entire chapter with its jumps from one character's thoughts to another's moves around Jacob's presence, emphasizing the distance between all these characters and Jacob, as well as the speed at which Jacob is moving towards his fateful death: "Now I know that face - " said the Reverend Andrew Floyd... "I gave him Byron's works," Andrew Floyd mused, and started forward, as Jacob crossed the road; but hesitated, and let the moment pass, and lost the opportunity" (173). This garnering of private thoughts forms a memorial for Jacob in so far as these thoughts will remain forever for these characters. Jacob has gone away for the last time. With the explosion of the guns Jacob has ceased to be: "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" (175). The sound and its tunnelling mirrors the murmurings and tunnellings of thoughts made by the other characters as they focus on Jacob, yearning for him in body and spirit, in wholeness, to complement whatever

is within themselves. This sound is Jacob's response to their murmurings - acknowledging as well as denying each one. The darkness which follows masks all differences as well as defines them:

"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.. Was that some one moving downstairs? Rebecca with the toothache? No. The nocturnal women were beating great carpets... (175)

It is in the last chapter and last page of the novel that the reader is "shocked" with the death of Jacob. In this section are the seeds for another unfolding of reality like Jacob's:

"He left everything just as it was," Bonamy marvelled. "Nothing arranged. All his letters strewn about for any one to read. What did he expect? Did he think he would come back?" he mused standing in the middle of Jacob's room.

The eighteenth century has its distinction. These houses were built, say, a hundred and fifty years ago. The rooms are shapely, the ceilings high; over the doorways a rose or a ram's skull is carved in the wood. Even the panels painted in raspberry-coloured paint, have their distinction. (179)

Everything in the room speaks of Jacob, of his once being there, though he is no longer. Sandra's letters, the atmosphere of distinction, the ram's skull, even the window and finally something so personal as "a pair of Jacob's old shoes." All these things require the complement of Jacob's presence: to be read, shared with, noticed and especially to be filled out by him. The shoes dangling from Mrs. Flanders' hand, now like Jacob's skeleton, embody that absolute longing to be filled out which can only be achieved with Jacob's living presence.

Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker arm-chair breaks, though no one sits there.

With lyrical softness, the narrative gently and subtly evokes memories of another time and another visit to this very same room. The repetition of the words stresses the different expectations, then and now. For then, though the reader was reminded several times of the fact that Jacob was not there, he had every reason to imagine Jacob's return. Now, the reader is being "teased" into remembering that visit thereby reminding himself that the narrator had said all along that "no one sits there." But regardless of the fact, the air does swell the curtain, Bonamy does cry out "Jacob! Jacob!" and Mrs. Flanders does burst open the door bringing notice to the confusion everywhere and to a fact so "trifling" as Jacob's old shoes. In spite of the absolute quality of death, there does pervade a termulous energy.

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. (156)

In Jacob's Room Virginia Woolf does succeed to capture something of "this unseizable force" (156) as it makes itself apparent through Jacob's reality.

CHAPTER TWO

Mrs. Dalloway¹¹ (1925) is a novel in the stream-of-consciousness mode. Unlike Jacob's Room which has a plot structure covering several decades, this novel's time scheme is compressed into one day, a day which unfolds through memory jumps, multi-leveled sense experiences, and intricate narrative structuring, devices to show what it feels like to be and know Clarissa Dalloway. The entries for Tuesday, April 8th and Monday, April 27th of the year 1925 in A Writers's Diary, read as follows:

...More and more do I repeat my own version of Montaigne - "It's life that matters."

...My present reflection is that people have any number of states of consciousness: and I should like to investigate the party consciousness, the frock consciousness etc. The fashion world at the Becks - Mrs. Garland was there superintending a display - is certainly one; where people secrete an envelope which connects them and protects them from others, like myself, who am outside the envelope, foreign bodies. These states are very difficult (obviously I grope for words) but I'm always coming back to it.

Whereas in Jacob's Room the reader is often made aware of the third person use of narrator, creating a noticeable distance between Jacob and his audience, in Mrs. Dalloway the "zooming-in" technique of narration encourages a far greater degree of intimacy, the sensation of having been allowed to enter and share freely the heroine's most personal moments, as well as a far

¹¹ Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1969). All following page references are included in the thesis text.

greater measure of optimism, for the reader does not find in this novel the repeated use of comment and counter-comment on the part of the narrator to sustain the complete portrayal of the protagonist. The result is a refreshing experience of having touched the very essence of this woman, Clarissa, through an understanding of the novel's artistry. The mood is expressed on the first page of the novel: "What a lark! What a plunge!" (3) and this mood is upheld throughout the novel, even as the reader passes through the sections on Septimus Warren Smith. No doubt, there is ambivalence in Clarissa Dalloway which is how the reader comes at all to meet a man like Septimus Warren Smith, but the optimism, the upward swing, prevails:

Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps (drink their downfall) do the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life. In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jungle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (5)

It becomes an exercise in literary criticism to see where and how this ambivalence is revealed and how finally hope, love and life do triumph in the person of Clarissa Dalloway.

The story begins with a fact: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (3) and it is this fact which begins to unfold the workings of Clarissa's mind, for from this moment on a

decision has been made, one of self-assertion, one of confidence. This fact brings to the surface myriads of sensations - a kind of fission within nature has taken place. There is a disturbance in the elements of the artistry so that every image and character, the very movement of the narrative itself, becomes a reflecting surface for the workings of Clarissa's mind, at the same time creating out of all these elements an inextricable bond between message and medium so that there is unity within disunity and multiplicity within the oneness of Clarissa's being:

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning - fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air... (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen... (3)

Narrator and Clarissa Dalloway merge completely to effect the "plunge" (3), a plunge into consciousness and memory at once. The sensation of this morning when Clarissa actually sets out to buy flowers beings to her mind the description "fresh as if issued to children on a beach" (3) which in turn effects the dive into past memory "for a girl of eighteen as she then was" (3). Past and present are intricately woven around certain images: "children on a beach" (3), "What a lark! What a plunge!" (3), "the open air" (3), "the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave" (3)

and "a girl of eighteen" (3) which tumble forth with the anticipated sound of the doors to be taken off their hinges. The past is extremely vivid here and now in the present rendering to the present some of that vitality, that freshness which was so much a part of Clarissa's youth, even as she "stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass" (4) so that:

A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.

For having lived in Westminster - how many years now? over twenty, - one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. (4-5)

By means of the fluid narrative artistry, the reader is made aware of the multi-sensorial levels comprising Clarissa's reality. For here is fused the absolute kernel of past sensation, the remembering of that sensation which has been aroused by an event occurring within the present, and the mechanical actions which take place in the present while the mind floats freely through, though not completely unattached to, the present. Within the present, too, there is the social view of Clarissa, being in this case Clarissa as others see her, which is embodied in Scrope Purvis. Insofar as Clarissa's "never seeing him" (4) suggests to the reader that she is not aware of the social image she projects as she walks along the street, Virginia Woolf has made Clarissa ultimately inseparable from that social image by merging

Clarissa's private thoughts with those of Scrope Purvis. The parenthetical aside "(knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster)" (4) which fuses Clarissa, narrator and Scrope Purvis, facilitates the reader's experience of the inseparability of social and private self within Clarissa. Moreover, this fusion which expresses the expansive quality of Clarissa's being continues to surface from moment to moment through subtle use of parallelism and amplification. For example, the "indescribable pause" (4) brings to mind that "something awful which was about to happen" (3) of her youth. In the present moment the "pause" (4) is further amplified as "a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed!" (4-5). This amplification combines the private self of the parenthetical note with the social self which observes external time in the striking of Big Ben, merging the two as "There!" And the image which follows of the "leaden circles dissolved in the air" (5) only reinforces that merging. The merging continues in the narrative as it joins and parallels one thought and feeling to another, one paragraph to the next, so that "this moment of June" (5) becomes "the middle of June. The War was over" (5) which becomes "The King and Queen were at the palace" (6) becoming the "motor cars on errands of mystery" (6) becoming Clarissa's "loving it as she did...being a part of it, since her people were courtiers once in the time of the Georges" (6) becoming "her party" (6). In the meantime Clarissa has reached the Park and

is absorbing the scene, "the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming ducks; the pouched birds waddling" (6), all this now a part of herself and of the fact that "she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party" (6) when "who should be coming along...but Hugh Whitbread; her old friend Hugh - the admirable Hugh!" (7). As with the shilling she once threw into the Serpentine (12), the various selves rippling within Clarissa rise to the surface so that superficial, and yet essential social conversation concerning Evelyn Whitbread is mixed with self-conscious feelings which Hugh stirs as well as with the impression Hugh gives of himself and the feeling which that impression arouses within Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh, all in one smooth flow of the narrative:

Ah, yes, she did of course; what a nuisance; and felt very sisterly and oddly conscious at the same time of her hat. Not the right hat for the early morning, was that it? For Hugh always made her feel as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen and of course he was coming to her party to-night, Evelyn absolutely insisted...she always felt a little skimpy beside Hugh; school-girlish; but attached to him, partly from having known him always, but she did think him a good sort in his own way, though Richard was nearly driven mad by him, and as for Peter Walsh, he had never to this day forgiven her for liking him.

She could remember scene after scene at Bourton - Peter furious; Hugh not, of course, his match in any way... (7-8)

With that, Clarissa's mind returns to the character of Peter Walsh so that from where she now is he becomes "adorable to walk with on a morning like this" (8) despite the fact that within him, too, is the memory of "an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish; and then the horror of the moment...Never should she

forget all that. Cold, heartless, a prude he called her. Never could she understand how he cared." (10) The memory of the arrow bringing to the present so vividly the hurt along with the recognition of the failure of Peter's life in general stirs anger in Clarissa creating within her a sensation of being past everything and absolutely alone:

She had reached the Park gates. She stood for a moment, looking at the omnibuses in Picadilly.

She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that. She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on. She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. (11)

The arrow gives way to the knife revealing the ebb and flow within Clarissa of vulnerability and self-preservation, of solidarity and essential self. Thus it is possible to find simultaneously expressed within her "Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct" (11) or her philosophy that:

...she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being a part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of the people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (12)

and:

Nothing that would serve to amuse her and make that indescribably dried-up little woman look, as Clarissa came in, just for a moment cordial; before they settled down for the usual interminable talk of women's ailments. How much she wanted it - that people should look pleased as she came in, Clarissa thought... annoyed because it was silly to have other reasons for doing things...half the time she did things not simply

not for themselves; but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew...for no one was ever for a second taken in. (13-14)

The train of thought which she pursues from the moment she has set out to buy the flowers has brought her to the point where she begins to strike at the essential make-up of the tension of polarities within herself, which polarities, now having been touched, immediately trigger the preservative workings of her mind to rush to her defence:

Instead of which she had a narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's. That she held herself well was true; and had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little. But often now this body she wore (she stopped to look at a Dutch picture), this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing - nothing at all. She had the oddest sense 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. (14)

The bare social skeleton of "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" progressing up Bond Street is what at this moment saves Clarissa from becoming overwhelmed by her "oddest sense of being herself invisible" (14) and at the same time does not completely eradicate the presence of that sense of invisibility, of estrangement within social ritual, thus permitting the self to pursue its questionings but in a responsible or socially-acceptable manner. As delicate as it may seem, a sense of balance and proportion does prevail. The external distractions are always working to remind Clarissa of "this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (14) while at the same time she herself admits a love of these distractions: "Bond Street

fascinated her" (15) and "she had a passion for gloves" (15). These same gloves sheath her with individuality returning her to that essential core of private self. For the "passion" which the gloves can stimulate in her also reveals an inner disturbance that emerges as the disharmony between Clarissa and her daughter, Elizabeth, and is embodied in the figure of Miss Kilman:

Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter, her Elizabeth, cared not a straw for either of them.

Not a straw...Elizabeth really cared for her dog most of all...Still, better poor Grizzle than Miss Kilman...But why Miss Kilman? who had been badly treated of course...Anyhow they were inseparable, and Elizabeth, her own daughter, went to Communion; and how she dressed, how she treated people who came to lunch she did not care a bit, it being her experience that the religious ecstasy made people callous (so did causes); dulled their feelings, for Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russians, starved herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she...she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority...poor embittered-unfortunate creature! For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants; for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No.

(15-17)

As much as Clarissa denies any affinity with Miss Kilman, the idea of the latter has become a part of Clarissa's very fibre so that the passion of her denial, her repulsion "But not in this world. No" (17) expresses a fear of being overwhelmed by the experience of the very idea of Miss Kilman. The experience is her enemy. It attacks her being, holding up to her

an ugly mirror-image, weakening her in body and spirit to the extent that it converts her philosophy of life (12) into a selfish and irresponsible egotism:

It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster! to hear twigs cracking and feel hooves planted down in the depths of that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul; never to be content quite, or quite secure, for at any moment the brute would be stirring, this hatred, which especially since her illness, had power to make her feel scraped, hurt in her spine; gave her physical pain, and made 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!

(17)

It is precisely this experience that reflects the polarities of Clarissa's self, the dialectic of her reality which must be reconciled if she is to transcend the debilitating confinement of this hatred. In Clarissa's imagination Miss Kilman is metamorphosed into "this brutal monster" (17) which bears down on the "innocence" of this same imagination. The fact that thinking of this hatred gives Clarissa "physical pain" (17) reveals how vulnerable Clarissa is to the idea of this woman, how Miss Kilman has become assimilated into her own body, painfully reminding her of "self love! this hatred!" (17) and reminding her, too, that "half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves, but to make people think this or that" (13-14). It also reveals that although her defences have been weakened ("her illness" (17)) Clarissa, in her own way, does put up a struggle. Thus:

...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!

Nonsense, nonsense! she cried to herself, pushing through the swing doors of Mulberry's the florists.

She advanced, light, tall, very upright, to be greeted at once by button-faced Miss Pym...

There were flowers: delphiniums, sweet peas, bunches of lilac; and carnations, masses of carnations. There were roses; there were irises. Ah yes - so she breathed in the earthy garden sweet smell as she stood talking to Miss Pym...turning her head from side to side among the irises and roses and nodding tufts of lilac with her eyes half closed, snuffing in, after the street uproar, the delicious scent, the exquisite coolness. And then, opening her eyes, how fresh like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays the roses looked. (17-18)

Once more she is saved by the upward swing of distraction within her social reality. The distraction is not a thing separate from herself for she and the flowers are fused into one as the touching and smelling suggest. Moreover, the descriptive passage (17-18) imparts to Clarissa a virginal quality of beauty and innocence which gradually soothes the gnawing of hatred so that there is effort ("Nonsense, nonsense! she cried, to herself, pushing through the swing doors..." (17)) and there is also an attraction to and willingness for that effort ("There were flowers...with her eyes half closed, snuffing in, after the street uproar...(17-18)) making the transition between action and reaction in one easy flowing movement, with the result that Clarissa's dignity and her integrity remain intact:

And as she began to go with Miss Pym from jar to jar, choosing, nonsense, nonsense, she said to herself, more and more gently, as if this beauty,

this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up when - oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!

"Dear, those motor cars," said Miss Pym, going to the window to look, and coming back and smiling apologetically with her hands full of sweet peas, as if those motor cars, those tyres of motor cars, were all her fault.

The violent explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologise came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement precisely opposite Mulberry's shop window. Passers-by, who, of course stopped and stared...

(18-19)

The polarities are still present in the depth of Clarissa as is suggested by the image of the "wave" (19) which must rise to great heights to "surmount that monster" (19). Wave and monster unite, redefining Clarissa's being and bringing to the surface ("it lifted her up and up when - oh! a pistol shot in the street outside" (19)), of her consciousness the struggle between these opposites, at least as near to "surface" as possible without Clarissa's being overwhelmed by the "cleansing" waters of the wave itself. Thus the street from whose uproar she had escaped into Mulberry's flower shop is the same street whose "violent explosion" (19) jars her consciousness allowing her a moment to catch her breath, so to speak, and simultaneously reinforcing these private thoughts. The image of the "violent explosion" (19) unfolds the beginnings of Clarissa's self-revelation and her reality which are forever merging the psychological experience of polarities within the self with the social experience and social events. Furthermore, the image of "the

violent explosion" (19) fittingly suggests creation or birth and destruction or death at a superficial semantic level, which meaning extends to the projection of the seemingly contrary energies existing within Clarissa. Like the "plunge" (3) of the first page of the novel, this "violent explosion" (19) stirs up the elements of the narrative, creating the sensation of catalytic movement, of irresistible power, giving weight to the bond which brings about the explosion as well as to the fragments, effecting and coming out of the explosion:

Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass, heard him.

Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world had raised its whip; where will it descend?

Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside Mulberry's shop window; old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their black parasols; here a green, here a red parasol opened with a little pop. Mrs. Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry. Every one looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, 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, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (20-21)

The explosion brings into focus a new character who is really the embodiment of the mythopoeic spirit which dwells within Clarissa.

Ultimately he is her mirror-image for whereas she is sustained by the external social reality; he is utterly destroyed by it. Whereas Clarissa can spend her morning fetching flowers for her party, whereas she can give a party at all and thus create a harmonious centre converging private and social being, Septimus is at every moment threatened by an external centre of "horror" (21) which surfaces for him his own centre of apprehension, of a question of his life's purpose, for inherent in Septimus' reality is Clarissa's conviction that "it was very, very dangerous to live even one day" (11). The latter observation parallels the argument for duality in Virginia Woolf's art made by Ethel F. Cornwell in The Still Point: theme and variations in the writings of T.S. Eliot, Coleridge, Yeats, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence¹²:

At one moment Virginia Woolf sees man as a separate, distinct entity (from this view comes the sense of human aloneness that pervades all her work); at another moment, she sees him as an undefined, and undefinable, quantity, inseparable from the general stream of humanity from which he arises (from this view comes her theory that personal identity is an illusion). The first view is essential to one's existence; the second, to the development of one's understanding... The first view is necessary to one's sense of identity; the second, to the development of one's understanding. One view arises from Mrs. Woolf's sense of tradition, of continuity; the other, from her overwhelming sense of the transitoriness of human existence.

Thus Septimus is the spirit of self-question, of sense of purpose, in its raw form. Within him, too, are the capacities and

¹² Ethel F. Cornwell, The Still Point: theme and variations in the writings of T.S. Eliot, Coleridge, Yeats, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence, (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 172-73.

expressions of both the selfish and selfless "I" ("Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass...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, terrified him...It is I who am blocking the way, he thought... But for what purpose?" (20-21)) by means of a disturbing combination of continual active and passive experiencing of his reality, so that from the beginning a sense of acute stress and approaching breakdown is conveyed. The question "But for what purpose?" (21) is implicitly answered by the turn of the narrative itself, for in the next line Septimus's wife is introduced and she encourages him to take a step:

It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?

"Let us go on, Septimus," said his wife, a little woman, with large eyes in a sallow pointed face; an Italian girl.

But Lucrezia herself could not help looking at the motor car and the tree pattern on the blinds. Was it the Queen in there - the Queen going shopping.

"Come on," said Lucrezia.

But her husband, for they had been married four, five years now, jumped, started, and said, "All right!" angrily, as if she had interrupted him.

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. Suppose

they had heard him? She looked at the crowd. Help, help! she wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women. Help! Only last autumn she and Septimus had stood on the Embankment wrapped in the same cloak and Septimus reading a paper instead of talking, she had snatched it from him and laughed in the old man's face who saw them! But failure one conceals. She must take him away into some park.

"Now we will cross," she said.

She had a right to his arm, though it was without feeling. He would give her, who was so simple, so impulsive, only twenty-four, without friends in England, who had left Italy for his sake, a piece of bone. (21-23)

Immediately the narrative makes evident the bond between Septimus and Lucrezia as well as its intrinsic flaw. By introducing herself, by speaking when she does, Lucrezia defines Septimus' purpose as inseparable from herself. She also defines their marriage, for what describes them here in the interweaving of selves within the narrative is their marriage. From the beginning that definition is fixed. No change occurs within the bond; only a further strengthening of what is already defined here. Lucrezia motivates her husband by always encouraging a movement, which movement must take place within the social reality thereby acknowledging social existence. In doing so he becomes antagonistic towards her ("All right!" angrily, as if she had interrupted him. People must notice; people must see. People, she thought..." (22)) but at the same time she preserves the memory of "only last autumn" (22). He causes her unhappiness and feelings of isolation, of aloneness and unreality, and yet in the last paragraph of the passage quoted above (pp. 21-23) the two selves are completely fused in their

experiencing of this isolation to the point of allowing each one's aloneness to be touched by the other. The bond in death is already declared as inseparable from their living marriage.

The airplane skywriting is another image of distraction and focal point for it draws each person out of his world and brings each together in the act of looking on. Each person becomes a part of a collective as well as a separate consciousness within the whole social patterning. The letters reflect this dialectic, drawing out the individuality of each form as well as losing it:

...and whatever it did, wherever it went, out fluttered behind it a thick ruffled bar of white smoke which curled and wreathed upon the sky in letters. But what letters? A C was it? an E, then an L? only for a moment did they lie still; then they moved and melted and were rubbed out up in the sky, and the aeroplane shot further away and again, in a fresh space of sky, began writing a K, an E, a Y perhaps?

"Glaxo," said Mrs. Coates in a strained, awe-stricken voice, gazing straight up...

"Kreemo," murmured Mrs. Bletchley, like a sleep-walker. With his hat held out perfectly still in his hand, Mr. Bowley gazed straight up.

"That's an E," said Mrs. Bletchley - or a dancer -

"Its toffee," murmured Mr. Bowley -

(and the car went in at the gates and nobody looked at it)... (29-30)

The question "but what word was it writing?" (31) is answered once more in the narrative. The pattern or configuration falls on "Lucrezia Warren Smith sitting by her husband's side" (31).

The word acts as a motivator through Lucrezia who encourages Septimus to "take an interest in things outside himself" (31) and yet this "interest" (i.e. the letters forming and fading) inevitably emphasizes what already exists within himself, an inability to differentiate, to mark a clear outline around any person or thing:

So, thought Septimus, looking up, they are signalling to me. Not indeed in actual words; that is, he could not read the language yet; but it was plain enough this beauty, this exquisite beauty, and tears filled his eyes as he looked at the smoke words languishing and melting in the sky and bestowing upon him in their inexhaustible charity and laughing goodness one shape after another of unimaginable beauty and signalling their intention to provide him, for nothing, for ever, for looking merely, with beauty, more beauty! Tears ran down his cheeks.

It was toffee; they were advertising toffee, a nursemaid told Rezia. Together they began to spell t...o...f...

K...R... "said the nursemaid, and Septimus heard her say "Kay Arr" close to his ear, deeply, softly, like a mellow organ, but with a roughness in her voice like a grasshopper's, which rasped his spine deliciously and sent running up into his brain waves of sound which, concussing, broke. A marvellous discovery indeed - that the human voice in certain atmospheric conditions (for one must be scientific, above all scientific) can quicken trees into life! Happily Rezia put her hand with a tremendous weight on his knee so that he was weighted down, transfixed, or the excitement of the elm trees rising and falling, rising and falling with all their leaves alight and the colour thinning and thickening from blue to the green of a hollow wave, like plumes on horses' heads, feathers on ladies', so proudly they rose and fell, so superbly, would have sent him mad. But he would not go mad! He would shut his eyes; he would see no more.

But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged mountains were part of the pattern;

the white and blue, barred with black branches. Sound made harmonies with pre-meditation; the spaces between them were as significant as the sounds. A child cried. Rightly far away a horn sounded. All taken together meant the birth of a new religion: (31-33)

Here is Septimus the visionary merging happily and selflessly but dangerously with his reality, the world of the senses. The selfless power of his being permits him to focus as much on the spaces between sounds as on the sounds themselves. The reality takes on a new causality so that "Rightly far away a horn sounded" (33) and "Happily Rezia put her hand with a tremendous weight on his knee so that he was weighted down, transfixed, or the excitement... would have sent him mad" (32). This visionary experience, this very causality where "Sounds made harmonies with premeditation; the spaces between them were as significant as the sounds... All taken together meant the birth of a new religion" (33) permits the reader a far greater appreciation of the narrative's intricate construction. In Septimus' visionary experience Lucrezia shares in "the birth of a new religion" (33) by singling him out, by attempting to make Septimus recognize his own individuality, his self, and by offering him a sense of proportion, of balance to counteract the overwhelming diffusion of subject and object within his reality, and he is grateful for her reminder. Nevertheless, Lucrezia in her reality feels that Septimus obliterates her self along with his own, for she is not truly sharing the visionary experience with him but is only looking on, interacting with him from her own separate consciousness. She loves this man and yet for her he is still

a part of her painful experience of "Septimus!" (33) and "People must notice" (33). Moreover, she is a foreigner in England and the estrangement between husband and wife only marks out her sense of loneliness further, to the extent that "Far rather would she that he were dead! She could not sit beside him when he stared so and did not see her and made everything terrible..." (33). As much as she wants to share life with Septimus, Lucrezia acquiesces in his death even though the death foreshadows her own drop into further aloneness, a complexity which suggests to what extent the couple are fused:

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; when suddenly, as if a shelf were shot forth and she stood on it, she said how she was his wife, married years ago in Milan, his wife, and would never, never tell that he was mad! Turning the shelf fell; down, down, she dropped. For he was gone, she thought - gone, as he threatened, to kill himself - to throw himself under a cart! But no; there he was; still sitting alone on the seat, in his shabby overcoat, his legs crossed, staring, talking aloud. (35)

As the prose continues the reader is unsure whose consciousness, husband's or wife's, he has entered, a sensation which heightens the alienation between husband and wife as well as their inseparableness. The more Lucrezia bids him to "Look" (36,37), the more he does turn toward death. This knot of apparent antagonism is beautifully expressed in the following passage:

"Look," she implored him, for Dr. Holmes had told her to make him notice real things...

"Look," she repeated.

Look the unseen 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 unwanted, 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.

"Look," she repeated, for he must not talk aloud to himself out of doors.

"Oh look," she implored him. But what was there to look at? A few sheep. That was all. (37)

In this passage Lucrezia is defined partly in alliance with Dr. Holmes, who is ultimately and ironically the command within Septimus that moves him in the direction of suicide. Lucrezia is also the "unseen" (37), reflecting here the invisibility she herself feels when she is with her husband, as has already been expressed by her (35). And so the voice bidding him is also a communication of "that eternal suffering, that eternal loneliness" (37), hers and his together. In the last line Lucrezia admits that there is nothing really to look at and is thus in alliance with her husband who "moaned, putting from him with a wave of his hand" (37) the command to look. But for other people in the park, for Maisie Johnson who approaches, asking the way to Regent's Park Tube station, it is the couple who become the spectacle, the thing to look at "so that should she [Maisie Johnson] be very old she would still remember and make it jangle again among her memories how she had walked through Regent's Park

on a fine summer's morning fifty years ago" (38). Maisie Johnson brings to the surface, and to full view, the agony of the couple and freezes it forever in spite of Lucrezia's "'Not this way - over there!'...lest she should see Septimus" (38). As the reader is brought to the surface, he is once more made aware of the airplane which has been sky-writing all this time, which very plane returns the reader to Clarissa Dalloway:

"What are they looking at?" said Clarissa to the maid who opened her door.

The hall of the house was cool as a vault. Mrs. Dalloway raised her hand to her eyes, and, as the maid shut the door to, and she heard the swish of Lucy's skirts, she felt like a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils and the response to old devotions. (42)

The "surfacing" which occurs with the introduction of minor characters and with the skywriting allows for a rest from the intensity of the vision of reality. But just as the spaces between the sounds are as appreciable as the sounds themselves, Mrs. Dalloway merges with the Warren Smiths by taking up at her conscious level the subject of aloneness:

She began to go slowly upstairs, with her hand on the bannisters, as if she had left a party, where now this friend now that had flashed back her face, her voice; had shut the door and gone out and stood alone, a single figure against an appalling night, or rather, to be accurate, against the stare of this matter-of-fact June morning...feeling herself suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless...

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went upstairs...The sheets were clean, tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be...So the room was an attic; she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. (45-46)

For Clarissa the experience of aloneness is tinged with death as it is for the Warren Smiths, so that life and death merge as one. The bed becomes narrower and narrower like a coffin fitting snugly to her own body. Even her "virginity" which "clung to her like a sheet" (46) suggests the shroud of death. There are also the candle "half burnt down" (46) and "Baron Marbot's Memoirs" (46). Merging too, with her sense of her own virginity is the "moment of the androgenous being" (as is also earlier suggested in the very marriage of the Warren Smiths):

...yet she could not resist sometimes yeilding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident - like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores! Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; and inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over - the moment. Against such moments (with women too) there contrasted (as she laid her hat down) the bed and Baron Marbot and the candle half-burnt. (46-47)

Ralph Freedman explains Virginia Woolf's concept of the "moment" in The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf¹³:

¹³ Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel: Studies In Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press. 1966), pp. 192-93, 197, and 200-01.

The moment emerges as Virginia Woolf's key to her theory of apprehension as well as to her concepts of poetry and the novel. The moment is the artist's awareness of significant conjunctions between his private sensibility and appropriate facts in the outer world. As a mental act, the moment is indeed internal, but it does not reduce experience to private images alone. Rather, it consists of an analysis of the act of consciousness into its components, i.e., mental awareness and the objects of awareness. Thus, the moment also includes the mind's relations with a multitude of facts. The facts, however, do not belong to the moment due to haphazard accidents of time and space - described by that "appalling narrative business of the realist: getting from lunch to dinner" - but by virtue of an artist's significant apprehension. Pure poets select too severely: "The poets succeed by simplifying: practically everything is left out." But the novel includes all that is germane to the moment: "I want to put everything in; yet to saturate." "Transparency" or "saturation" are, of course, not definite terms, but they suggest that novelists must recreate their visions in peculiarly significant forms. The rendering of the "moment" as an act of awareness, and its distillation in poetry or fiction, solve the dilemma of solipsism by compelling the self to come to terms with the objects of its world. At the same time, as we shall see, it liberates the novelists from photographic realism by allowing him to fashion novels of facts and manners, as well as of inner experience, in a lyrical form.

In her search for a form in which the "inner" and "outer" can be combined, Virginia Woolf conceived of the moment as a contraction of the manifold elements of life into significant images or scenes. In addition to such a literary use, the moment also serves the epistemological function of clarifying the implications of consciousness for the artist's experience of life: a version of the imagination.

The moment involves the relationship of the self-conscious mind with its body (including its physical organs of perception) as well as with the world of objects it apprehends.

...While they unite present and past, image and experience in a "pure" aesthetic vision, these moments also include the recalcitrant facts of outward existence which retain their independence. They may be present in memory or be

converted into symbols intensely meaningful to an inner consciousness but they also represent that substance of factual life which belongs in the province of the conscientious novelist. This duality of imagination of fact defines the ambivalence Virginia Woolf discerned in Conrad's novels between the sea-captain enamored of "simple facts" and the brooding Marlow for whom the world was always at bottom symbolic. It suggests an ambiguity she found in all her poet-novelists, and, most deeply, in herself. But this distinction also became the source of her method, reconciling the novelist's need for a concrete world with the poet's heightened insights.

In this way the "moment of the androgenous being" is that "moment" of awareness within a character having a particular sensitivity when there is reconciliation of the "inner" and the "outer" in the fullest appreciation of these two abstracts. Thus, returning to Mrs. Dalloway and the passage quoted from pages 46 to 47, at the centre of the experience (this being the "moment of the androgenous being") is the partly sexual image of "some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin" (47) which expresses the essence of the experience itself, of meaning in its fullest sense, of unified idea and emotion, bursting forth to consciousness, unable any longer to be contained, in the same way that the Warren Smiths have externalized for Clarissa the pressure of agony of "beingness": "against the stare of this matter-of-fact June morning" (45). But the virginity and aloneness continue to appear in the image of "a diamond" (52), "one centre, one diamond" (55); "that diamond shape, that single person" (56) and in the image of the dress with the tear which she is to repair for her party:

Quiet descended on her, calm, content as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause,

collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall, and the whole world seem to be saying "that is all" more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall.

(58-59)

The "waves" are the vibrations and fluid spaces between things and people as all characters and scenes unite meaningfully within Clarissa's being. The waves balance and overbalance from moment to moment, now collecting, now falling as the relationship between the Warren Smiths has implicitly revealed, and what may be balance at one moment may be overbalance in the next; what may have previously soothed and sustained may presently overwhelm and threaten to destroy. Thus ambivalence is inherent in the "wave breaking" (59). A unique causality is born between people and things held together from moment to moment by the various rhythms of time which are marked out sometimes "sympathetically", sometimes "unsympathetically". The tender scene between Peter and Clarissa is such an example:

- actually had felt his face on hers before she could down the brandishing of silver flashing - plumes like pampas grass in a tropical gale in her breast, which, subsiding, left her holding his hand, patting his knee and, feeling as she sat back extraordinarily at her ease with him and light-hearted, all in a clap it came over her, If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day!

It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun. The door had shut, and there among the dust of fallen plaster and the litter of birds' nests

how distant the view had looked, and the sounds came thin and chill (once on Leith Hill, she remembered), and Richard, Richard! she cried, as a sleeper in the night starts and stretches a hand in the dark for help. Lunching with Lady Bruton, it came back to her. He has left me; I am alone for ever, she thought, folding her hands upon her knee.

The sound of Big Ben striking the half hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigour, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that. (69-71)

Here is felt the intensity of changing emotion within the compression and expansion of the moment so that "this gaiety would have been mine all day!" (70) is qualified in "It was all over for her" (70) by enlarging what could have been gaiety to experience. At the same time the thought that "it was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them and had run away, had lived with Peter, and it was now over" (70-71) suggests a relief in the feeling that "It was all over for her" (70), a balance rather than what at first seems to be an overbalance in the wave. It is Peter who is actually overwhelmed by Clarissa and leaves suddenly, with Clarissa calling after him to remind him about the party that evening. He leaves suddenly but nevertheless takes Clarissa with him into the street:

Remember my party, remember my party, said Peter Walsh as he stepped down the street, speaking to himself rhythmically, in time with the flow of the sound, the direct downright sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour. (The leaden circles dissolved in the air.) Oh these parties, he thought, Clarissa's parties. Why does she give these parties, he thought.

...and the sound of St. Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a tremor of delight, at rest - like Clarissa herself, thought Peter Walsh, coming down the stairs on the stroke of the hour in white. It is Clarissa herself, he thought, with a deep emotion, and an extraordinarily clear, yet puzzling, recollection of her, as if this bell had come into the room years ago, where they sat at some moment of great intimacy... Then as the sound of St. Margaret's languished, he thought, She has been ill, and the sound expressed langour and suffering. It was her heart, he remembered; and the sudden loudness of the final stroke tolled for death that surprised in the midst of life, Clarissa falling where she stood; in her drawing room. No! No! he cried. She is not dead! I am not old, he cried, and marched up Whitehall, as if there rolled down to him, vigorous, unending, his future. (72-75)

He makes her vulnerability a part of the pulsating rhythms of London's daily life. She never leaves his thoughts and his walk brings him and these thoughts to Regent's Park. He brings her out of the closed walls of her house and her privacy so that, without her even being aware, the reader is capable of seeing into the vulnerability a lot more freely than when the reader is "permitted" into her interior monologue. Here the monologue has extended itself symbolically for Peter links the reader to the depths of her being. In Regent's Park he slips into a sleep and has the vision of the solitary traveller. When he awakes he is thinking about Clarissa and touching something essential within her; "That was the devilish part of her - this coldness, this woodenness, something very profound in her, which he had felt again this morning talking to her; an impenetrability." (91) This description parallels Clarissa's own

image of herself as "a nun withdrawing" (45) or more explicitly, as a "diamond" centre:

How many million times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self - pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman... (55)

Ironically though, the "impenetrability" (90) or contraction about which Peter is thinking becomes more penetrable the longer he sits in Regent's Park:

He felt he was grinding against something physically hard; she was unyielding. She was like iron, like flint, rigid up the backbone.

It was awful, he cried, awful, awful!

Still, the sun was hot. Still, one got over things. Still, life had a way of adding day to day. Still, he thought, yawning and beginning to take notice - Regent's Park had changed very little since he was a boy...when little Elise Mitchell, who had been picking up pebbles...plumped her handful down on the nurse's knee and scudded off again full tilt into a lady's legs. Peter Walsh laughed out.

But Lucrezia was saying to herself; Its wicked, why should I suffer? she was asking, as she walked down the broad path. No; I can't stand it any longer, she was saying, having left Septimus, who wasn't Septimus any longer, to say hard, cruel, wicked things to talk to himself, to talk to a dead man, on the seat over there; when the child ran full tilt into her, fall flat, and burst out crying.

That was comforting rather. She stood her upright, dusted her frock, kissed her. (97-98)

Here Peter Walsh shows the reader to what extent he is able to look back and remember the pain, experiencing the pain through memory, and at the same time able to articulate it, unlike Septimus

Warren Smith who suffers in the present for having been unable to feel anything in the past. As emotional, as sentimental as Peter can be, he is still able to relate coherently and rationally to the present moment. He links the reader to the essence of Clarissa's most private self with the philosophy "Still, life had a way of adding day to day" (97) which creates distance between Peter's memory of his painful past and the actual experience of that pain and with his observation that "Regent's Park had changed very little since he was a boy." (97). This thought brings him to notice "Little Elise Mitchell" (97) who further expands the image of "adding day to day" in her pebble gathering, which very act leads to her collision with Lucrezia Warren Smith. The beautiful counterpointing of consciousness (Peter's and Lucrezia's) in the above-quoted passage facilitates the deeper drop into Clarissa's most intimate thoughts. The child bridges the gap between the two apparent strangers, Peter and Lucrezia, and at the same time reveals their shared intimacy: "Peter Walsh laughed out" (98) and "That was comforting rather" (98) appear in the one continuous stream of consciousness. The collision "when the child ran full tilt into her, fell flat, and burst out crying" (98) refreshingly breaks the surface allowing the depth to come forth with such fitting questions as "Why should she suffer?" (98) and "- but why should she be exposed? Why not left in Milan? Why tortured? Why?" (98). The pain that Lucrezia suffers is not simply a localized physical pain. It manifests itself in all parts of her

reality so that just as "the child ran full-tilt into her" (98), then too, "slightly waded by tears the broad path, the nurse, the man in grey, the perambulator, rose and fell before her eyes. To be rocked by this malignant torturer was her lot. But why? She was like a bird:..." (99). The pain fuses Lucrezia more vulnerably with the external world, and makes that world more threatening for her, so that she reacts by turning further inward as the expansion of the stream of consciousness demonstrates:

She frowned; she stamped her foot. She must go back again to Septimus since it was almost time for them to be going to Sir William Bradshaw. She must go back and tell him... Everyone gives up something when they marry...

Then when they got back he could hardly walk. He lay on the sofa and made her hold his hand to prevent him from falling down, down, he cried, into the flames! and saw faces laughing at him, calling him horrible disgusting names, and from the walls and hands pointing round the screen. Yet they were quite alone. But he began to talk aloud, answering people, arguing, laughing, crying, getting very excited and making her write things down. Perfect nonsense it was; about death; about Miss Isabel Pole. She could stand it no longer. She would go back.

She was close to him now...

Was it that she had taken off her wedding ring? "My hand has grown so thin," she said. "I have put it in my purse," she told him.

He dropped her hand. Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief. The rope was cut; he mounted; he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the lord of man, should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had left him), he, Septimus, was alone...

(99-101)

Husband and wife are so organically fused in the narrative unfolding that it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between one character's consciousness and expressed thoughts and another's until the moment when Septimus comes to his sense of aloneness, his visionary experience:

Heaven was divinely merciful, infinitely benignant. It spared him, pardoned his weakness. But what was the scientific explanation/ (for one must be scientific above all things)? Why could he see through bodies, see into the future, when dogs will become men? It was the heat wave presumably, operating upon a brain made sensitive by eons of evolution. Scientifically speaking, the flesh was melted off the world. His body was macerated until only the nerve fibres were left. It was spread like a veil upon a rock.

(102-103)

The intricate network of transference, of artistic sensibility in the visionary experience, reveals itself in the composition of the narrative. The image of "a veil upon a rock" (103) brings to mind Clarissa's "one centre, one diamond" (55) and the "green folds" (58) covering her as Peter suddenly enters her room. The latter quotation (102-105) artistically, imagistically, describes the process of revelation of characters which is the unfolding of psychic reality in a work of art such as a novel. The "rock" (103) is that undeniable fact of life. The "veil" (103) is the fragile attempt on the part of the artist to catch hold of life, with its momentariness, its mystery. The merging of active and passive voice in this passage intensifies the reader's awareness of the intricacy of these "nerve fibres" (103) and their delicate weaving. The allusion to music ("Music began clanging against the rocks up here. It is a motor horn down in the street, he muttered; but up here it cannoned from rock

to rock, divided, met in shocks of sound which rose in smooth columns (that music should be visible was a discovery) and became an anthem..." (103), with the musician's attention to sounds, i.e. measurable physical bodies having fixed markers or notes, and to the spaces between these notes as he creates the infinite possibilities of harmonies, parallels the writer's use of words, of characters and images, as he unravels the workings of the protagonist's mind. As Rezia brings her husband's attention to the time of day, the narrator describes the effect of this spoken word on Septimus Warren Smith:

The word "time" split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plant, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time.

I must tell the whole world, Septimus cried, raising his hand (as the dead man in the grey suit came nearer), raising his hand like some colossal figure who has lamented the fate of man for ages, in the desert alone, with his hands pressed to his forehead, furrows of despair on his cheeks, and now sees light on the desert's edge which broadens and strikes the iron-black figure (and Septimus half rose from his chair), and with legions of men prostrate behind him he, the giant mourner, receives for one moment on his face the whole -

"But I am so unhappy, Septimus," said Rezia trying to make him sit down.

The millions lamented; for ages they had sorrowed. He would turn round, he would tell them in a few moments, only a few moments more, of this relief, of this joy, of this astonishing revelation -

"The time, Septimus," Rezia repeated. "What is the time?"

"He was talking, he was starting, this man must notice him. He was looking at them."

"I will tell you the time," said Septimus, very slowly, very drowsily, smiling mysteriously. As he sat smiling at the dead man in the grey suit the quarter struck - the quarter to twelve.

And that is being young, Peter Walsh thought as he passed them. To be having an awful scene - the pool girl looked absolutely desperate - in the middle of the morning. (105-106)

The "immortal ode to Time" (105) is made manifest in the very flow of the narrative. Here "time" (105) unifies, diffusing all parts of the natural world into a mystical whole, as well as separates by drawing attention to the individual parts. Time encircles husband and wife in an invisible loop of intimacy even as it distinguishes each one's identity. The "astonishing revelation" (106) that explodes within Septimus is fittingly expressed in his "answer" to Lucrezia's "What is the time?" (106) for he never really answers the question himself. Rather, the question is answered by Time, thus successfully uniting visionary with vision, and simultaneously returning the reader to Peter Walsh, who is here playing the part of the onlooker, the social view, which fact only reveals more closely the unity and separation existing between all these sensitive beings, of the distance and compassion experienced by all these characters.

Peter unites the reader once more with Clarissa's social self:

But one must do Clarissa justice. She wasn't going to marry Hugh anyhow. She had a perfectly clear notion of what she wanted. Her emotions were all on the surface. Beneath, she was very shrewd - a far better judge of character than Sally, for instance, and with it all, purely feminine; with that extraordinary gift, that woman's gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be. She

came into a room; she stood, as he had often seen her, in a doorway with lots of people round her. But it was Clarissa one remembered. Not that she was striking; not beautiful at all; there was nothing picturesque about her; she never said anything specially clever; there she was, however; there she was.

The obvious thing to say of her was that she was worldly; cared too much for rank and society and getting on in the world - which was true in a sense; she had admitted it to him. (You could always get her to own up if you took the trouble; she was honest.) (114-115)

By maintaining a sense of continuity in the very narrative unfolding, the stream of consciousness is not altered when it surfaces to Peter Walsh. The extent of observation, of recounting of details, has not changed. Instead, the degree of "letting go" is far less critical, with the result that there is a definite sense of balance between emotion and experience:

And of course she enjoyed life immensely. It was her nature to enjoy (though goodness only knows, she had her reserves; it was a mere sketch, he often felt, that even he, after all these years, could make of Clarissa). Anyhow there was no bitterness in her; none of that sense of moral virtue which is so repulsive in good women. She enjoyed practically everything. If you walked with her in Hyde Park now it was a bed of tulips, now a child in a perambulator, now some absurd little drama she made up on the spur of the moment. (Very likely, she would have talked to those lovers, if she had thought them unhappy.) She had a sense of comedy that was really exquisite, but she needed people, always people, to bring it out, with the inevitable result that she frittered her time away, lunching, dining, giving these incessant parties of hers, talking nonsense, saying things she didn't mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing her discrimination. There she would sit at the head of the table, taking infinite pains with some old buffer who might be useful to Dalloway - they knew the most appalling bores in Europe - or in came Elizabeth and everything must give way to her. (118-119)

But then these astonishing accesses of emotion - bursting into tears this morning, what was all that about? What could Clarissa have thought of him? thought him a fool presumably, not for the first time... But women, he thought, shutting his pocket-knife, don't know what passion is. They don't know the meaning of it to men. Clarissa was as cold as an icicle. There she would sit on the sofa by his side, let him take her hand, give him one kiss - Here he was at the crossing. (121-122)

No matter how sharply Peter may criticize Clarissa Dalloway, he still cannot deny "these astonishing accesses of emotion" (121). In the present moment such an "access" makes him vulnerable and prepares him for the experience at the crossing just opposite Regent's Park Tube station. The song that pours forth from the old woman's body comes from the depths of Peter and touches the depths of Lucrezia Warren Smith. The sound is a focal point drawing these two characters together as each is eventually linked to Clarissa Dalloway and it is fitting that the "sound" be a universal song of love - "love which has lasted a million years... love which prevails" (122-123). This "ancient song" (123) is not sung by a woman who can be given any fixed dimensions. Rather, it is an energy, a spirit, a dynamic force issuing forth freely and becoming more of itself as it strikes other substances within its reality:

A sound interrupted him; a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, a vigour, beginning or end, running weakly and shrilly and with an absence of all human meaning into

ee um fa um so

foo swee too eem oo -

the voice of no age or sex, the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth; which issued, just opposite Regent's Park Tube station from a tall quivering

shape, like a funnel, like a rusty pump, like a
 wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves which
 lets the wind run up and down its branches singing
 ee um fah um so
 foo swee too eem oo
 and rocks and creaks and moans in the eternal breeze.
 (122)

As the ancient song bubbled up opposite Regent's
 Park Tube station still the earth seemed green and
 flowery; still, though it issued from so rude a mouth,
 a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root
 fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling
 burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of
 infinite ages, and skeletons and treasure, streamed
 away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the
 Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilising,
 leaving a damp stain.

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 into my eyes with thy sweet eyes intently,"
 she no longer saw brown eyes, black whiskers or sun-
 burnt face but only a looming shape, a shadow shape,
 to which with bird-like freshness of the very aged
 she still twittered "give me your hand and let me press
 it gently" (Peter Walsh couldn't help giving the poor
 creature a coin as he stepped into his taxi), and if
 some one should see, what matter they?" she demanded;
 and her fist clutched at her side, and she smiled,
 pocketing her shilling, and all peering inquisitive
 eyes seemed blotted out, and the passing generations -
 the pavement was crowded with bristling middle-class
 people - vanished, like leaves, to be trodden under,
 to be soaked and steeped and made mould of by that
 eternal spring -

ee um fah um so
 foo swee too eem oo

(122-124)

The old woman and her song as they are described in this long
 passage mirror the process of creation which is unfolding itself

in the artistry of the novel. "This combination [of both inner and outer experience in art,]" writes Ralph Freedman in his critical study The Lyrical Novel¹⁴, "extends from private awareness to external "facts" and ultimately to general ideas and values. In its formal action, poetry begins with the self but leads to its depersonalization. A similar process takes place in lyrical prose narrative. Worlds in time and space are not precisely reproduced but are rearranged in aesthetic designs which become universal and symbolic. " With mythopoeic concentration narrator, old woman, the unknown man who is the lover, Peter Walsh and Rezia Warren Smith all become one, a oneness which is never far from Mrs. Dalloway as she is brought to mind in the image of "the bird-like freshness of the very aged" (124). Past, present and future time unite into one moment of infinite time in which consciousnesses merge with each and with objects in their surroundings to recreate amongst themselves the fullness of this moment. In this way the woman's shape or rather her "shapelessness", her gestures, and the feelings she arouses in Peter and in Rezia, are all as much a part of the sound as the physical sound is of itself. The woman's whole form brings to mind a comment made by Michael Leaska in his book Virginia Woolf's Lighthouse: A Critical Study In Method¹⁵ "...from this rhythmic configuration of selected moments, emerges the shape within which the persona

¹⁴ Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel, (Princeton, 1966), p. 188

¹⁵ Michael Leaska, Virginia Woolf's Lighthouse: A Critical Study In Method, (London: Hogarth Press, 1970), p. 106.

comes to terms with the concrete world and, in dealing with it, comes to know the quality of his experience." All men, all women, are swept into that ancient song coming to life as man and woman who know that if each exists at all it is only through each other's existence. The reader is led to the origins of man and woman, of dynamic interacting life forces in the fantasy born out of the old woman's imagination as it reveals itself in the birth of sound - ee um fah um so/foe swee too eem oo "through all ages - when the pavement was grass, when it was swamp, through the age of tusk and mammoth, through the age of silent sunrise" (122) in "that eternal spring" (124) - sound that "issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth" (123). This masterpiece of artistry is introduced by Peter with the sound at the crossing and "ends" with the same sound bringing the reader to Rezia who is at the same crossing. Rezia reacts to the old woman's singing with all the unhappiness of her own soul:

Oh poor old wretch!

Suppose it was a wet night? Suppose one's father, or somebody who had known one in better days had happened to pass, and saw one standing there in the gutter? And where did she sleep at night?

(125)

It is as if in Rezia's imagination these two women have shared a bond of intimacy. Rezia now feels protective towards the old woman and wants to hide from all these gaping eyes what she herself has imagined to be this woman's private self - the same eyes that are no doubt noticing Septimus Warren Smith. The sound seems to hear her silent question and responds of its own accord:

Cheerfully, almost gaily, the invisible threat of sound wound up into the air like the smoke from a cottage chimney, winding up clear beech trees and issuing in a tuft of blue smoke among the topmost leaves. "And if some one should see, what matter they?" "...and this old woman singing in the street" if some one should see, what matter they?" made her suddenly quite sure that everything was going to be right. They were going to Sir William Bradshaw; she thought his name sounded nice; he would cure Septimus at once. And then there was a brewer's cart, and the grey horses had upright bristles of straw in their tails; there were newspaper placards. It was a silly, silly dream, being unhappy. (125-126)

The song has revived Lucrezia with hope and faith and confidence as well as with love for now she is bound to her husband more surely than ever. The "invisible thread of sound" (125) not only describes that mysterious quality of "sound", that is to say a thing, physical and measurable and yet in reality unseen by the naked eye, but also suggests the mystical quality of this particular sound as it joins Lucrezia to Peter Walsh, to this old woman, to her own husband and finally to herself in the reassurance of the happy ending love always promises. Ambivalence of emotion, of mood, one of depression and the other of grateful release, is reflected by the degree to which Lucrezia clutches at reassuring points of contact: the song, the old woman's words, the act of going to Sir William Bradshaw, the very sound of this doctor's name, the brewer's cart, the grey horses and the newspaper placards. The ambivalence is further expressed in the objectification of the married couple:

So they crossed, Mr. and Mrs. Septimus Warren Smith, and was there, after all, anything to draw attention to them, anything to make a passer-by suspect here is a young man who carries in him the greatest message in the world, and is, moreover, the happiest man in the world, and the most miserable.

(126)

The narrator is at a distance from the characters, both acknowledging and separating himself from their dilemma. Nevertheless, Lucrezia's thought "It was a silly, silly dream, being unhappy" (126) does change the mood and feeling between herself and her husband. In her reality the unhappiness has become an illusion which she will make every effort to dismiss as she opens herself to the possibility of sharing happiness with Septimus. The happiness which she remembers they once used to share. This change of heart prepares her for the role she is to fill now as Septimus' wife for she is to protect him from any threatening agent as well as grant his spirit freedom, taking seriously any request of his. The change of heart, coming from Lucrezia's largeness of love which has been touched and set free by the old woman and her song, causes not only herself but also the reader to question any possibility of danger to their marriage, to question whether all the pain and heartache previously described have actually taken place or have they perhaps been exaggerated somewhat in the narrating. This "question" is especially heightened by the narrator's change of mood which follows immediately after Lucrezia's:

Perhaps they walked more slowly than other people, and there was something hesitating, trailing, in the man's walk, but what more natural for a clerk, who has not been in the West End on a weekday at this hour for years, than to keep looking at the sky, looking at this, that, and the other, as if Portland Place were a room he had come into when the family are away, the chandeliers being hung in holland bags, and the caretaker, as she lets in long shafts of dusty light upon deserted, queer-looking armchairs, lifting one corner of the long blinds, explains to the visitors what a wonderful place it is; how wonderful, but at the same time, he thinks, as he looks at chairs and tables, how strange.

(126)

The narrator continues to describe Septimus in this detached manner as if the reader were meeting him for the first time:

To look at, he might have been a clerk, but of the better sort; for he wore brown boots; his hands were educated; so, too, his profile - his angular, big-nosed, intelligent, sensitive profile; but not his lips altogether, for they were loose; and his eyes (as eyes tend to be), eyes merely; hazel, large; so that he was, on the whole, a border case, neither one thing nor the other... (126-127)

The image of Septimus as "a border case" (127) is very much to the point for Septimus' imagination partakes of a spiritualism which renders to all existence a diffusion of outline and detail. By doing this he discriminates himself as different from all other people, "a young man who carries in him the greatest message in the world, and is, moreover, the happiest man in the world, and the most miserable" (126). As the narrator moves deeper into Septimus' being, as the subject matter becomes more and more sensitive, other consciousnesses are introduced to help reveal more fully this one being. There is Miss Isabel Pole:

Was he not like Keats? she asked; and reflected how she might give him a taste of Anthony and Cleopatra and the rest; lent him books; wrote him scraps of letters; and lit in him such a fire as burns only once in a lifetime, without heat, flickering a red gold flame infinitely ethereal and insubstantial over Miss Pole; Anthony and Cleopatra; and the Waterloo Road. (128)

There is also his boss, Mr. Brewer:

Something was up, Mr. Brewer knew...something was up, he thought, and, being paternal with his young men, and thinking very highly of Smith's abilities, and prophesying that he would, in ten or fifteen years, succeed to the leather arm-chair in the inner room under the skylight with the deed-boxes round him, "if he keeps his health," said Mr. Brewer, and that was the danger - he looked weakly; advised football, invited him to supper... (129)

is, too, the sensation that narrator is both "venturing forth" and "withdrawing" as he blends in with the various voices of consciousness, as for example in the following:

It was true that the family was of German origin; spelt the name Kiehlman in the eighteenth century; but her brother had been killed. They turned her out because she would not pretend that the Germans were all villains - when she had German friends, when the only happy days of her life had been spent in Germany!...Mr. Dalloway had come across her working for the Friends. He had allowed her (and that was really generous of him) to teach his daughter history. Also she did a little Extension lecturing and so on. Then Our Lord had come to her (and here she always bowed her head). She had seen the light two years and three months ago. Now she did not envy women like Clarissa Dalloway; she pitied them.

...So now, whenever the hot and painful feelings boiled within her, this hatred of Mrs. Dalloway, this grudge against the world, she thought of God... A sweet saviour filled her veins, her lips parted, and, standing formidable upon the landing in her mackintosh, she looked with steady and sinister serenity at Mrs. Dalloway, who came out with her daughter.

Elizabeth said she had forgotten her gloves. That was because Miss Kilman and her mother hated each other. She could not bear to see them together. She ran upstairs to find her gloves.

But Miss Kilman did not hate Mrs. Dalloway... But it was not the body; it was the soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue; make feel her mastery. If only she could make her weep; could ruin her; humiliate her; bring her to her knees crying, You are right! But this was God's will, not Miss Kilman's. It was to be a religious victory. So she glared; so she glowered.

Clarissa was really shocked. This a Christian - this woman! This woman had taken her daughter from her. She in touch with invisible presences! Heavy, ugly, commonplace, without kindness or grace, she know the meaning of life! (187-190)

In this quotation, too, is felt not only the merging and separation of consciousnesses but also the extent to which these

consciousnesses interact, penetrate each other's "boundaries" and come away closing deeper and deeper within each self. As Elizabeth leaves the room to fetch her gloves because she cannot bear to be a part of what passes between these two women, she brings Miss Kilman and her mother face to face, placing each one in a more vulnerable and defensive position: "Turning her large gooseberry-coloured eyes upon Clarissa, observing her small pink face, her delicate body, her air of freshness and fashion, Miss Kilman felt, Fool! Simpleton! You who have known neither sorrow nor pleasure; who have trifled your life away! And there rose in her an overmastering desire to overcome her; to unmask her" (189). And even as Miss Kilman is leaving with Elizabeth for the Army and Navy Stores and Clarissa is able to laugh "at this dwindling of the monster" (190), still the idea of Miss Kilman, of "love and religion!" plagues her:

...the cruelest things in the world, she thought, seeing them clumsy, hot, domineering, hypocritical, eavesdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous, dressed in a mackintosh coat, on the landing; love and religion. Had she ever tried to convert any one herself? Did she not wish everybody merely to be themselves? And she watched out of the window the old lady opposite climbing upstairs. Let her climb upstairs if she wanted to; let her stop; then let her, as Clarissa had often seen her, gain her bedroom, part her curtains, and disappear again into the background. 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.

...Why creeds and prayers and mackintoshes? when, thought Clarissa, that's the miracle, that's the

mystery; that old lady, she meant, whom she could see going from chest of drawers to dressing-table. She could still see her. And the supreme mystery which Kilman might say she had solved, or Peter might say he had solved, but Clarissa didn't believe either of them had the ghost of an idea of solving, was simply that: here was one room; there another. Did religion solve that, or love?

Love - but here the other clock, the clock which always struck two minutes after Big Ben....

(191-193)

The passion of these overwhelming emotions, which is the excitement from which her husband wants to protect her ("An hour's complete rest after luncheon," he said. And he went." (181) and "Richard merely thought it foolish of her to like excitement when she knew it was bad for her heart. It was childish, he thought." (183) is wisely interrupted with the stroke of the clock, reminding her of the little routine tasks that must be attended to if her party is to be the success she desires it to be and if "the odious Kilman" (192) is not to come near and destroy it. The old lady in the above quotation reveals along with Clarissa's silent argument against Kilman the ambivalence of emotions as they surface within Clarissa at one and the same moment. She is a part of Clarissa's ebb and flow of mood. The old lady as seen from Clarissa's window is Clarissa's reflection of her ideal, of quiet peace and dignity and integrity, the privacy of her own soul: "(they had been neighbours ever so many years)...Down, down into the midst of ordinary things the finger fell making the moment solemn...Clarissa tried to follow her..."(192-193). In this passage Clarissa is experiencing a "moment of vision" -

a term used by Virginia Woolf in A Writer's Diary¹⁶, to describe certain moments "in Hardy's works - a recognition of Truth: "...that's the miracle, that's the mystery; that old lady...She could still see her...here was one room; there another. Did religion solve that, or love?" (193). It is necessary that the old lady "move away from the window, as if she were attached to that sound, that string. Gigantic as it was, it had something to do with her...She was forced, so Clarissa imagined by that sound, to move, to go - but where? Clarissa tried to follow her as she turned and disappeared, and could still just see her white cap moving at the back of the bedroom" (192-193). It is necessary in order that Clarissa pursue her into the recesses of her own dark depths of solitude and solidarity where the old woman has retired, and necessary, too, in order that the presently superficial excitement of the sight of this old woman at her window in this particular moment does not ultimately take away from Clarissa: "Yet it was a sight that made her want to cry" (192). In other words, ambivalence vibrates even within this one old woman who is nevertheless the symbol of benevolent capacities within Clarissa Dalloway.) Twice the clocks interject with saving grace, filling Clarissa's being with reserves of energy, with inner strength and calm. They mark the transcendence of her integrity, as well as her coming forth out of solitude and into social ritual. Moreover, this same Time continues to mirror

¹⁶ Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 98.

the linking of consciousnesses as is symbolically expressed in the narrative:

Love - but here the other clock, the clock which always struck two minutes after Big Ben, came shuffling in with its lap full of odds and ends, which it dumped down as if Big Ben were all very well with his majesty laying down the law, so solemn, so just, but she must remember all sorts of little things besides - Mrs. Marsham, Ellie Henderson, glasses for ices - all sorts of little things came flooding and lapping and dancing in on the wake of that solemn stroke which lay flat like a bar of gold on the sea. Mrs. Marsham, Ellie Henderson, glasses for ices. She must telephone now at once.

Volubly, troublously, the late clock sounded, coming on the wake of Big Ben, with its lap full of trifles. Beaten up, broken up by the assault of carriages, the brutality of vans, the eager advance of myriads of angular men, of flaunting women, the domes and spires of offices and hospitals, the last relics of this lap full of odds and ends seemed to break, like the spray of an exhausted wave, upon the body of Miss Kilman standing still in the street for a moment to mutter "It is the flesh."

It was the flesh that she must control. Clarissa Dalloway had insulted her. That she expected. But she had not triumphed; she had not mastered the flesh. Ugly, clumsy, Clarissa Dalloway had laughed at her for being that; and had revived the fleshly desires, for she minded looking as she did beside Clarissa. Nor could she talk as she did. But why wish to resemble her? Why? She despised Mrs. Dalloway from the bottom of her heart. She was not serious. She was not good. Her life was a tissue of vanity and deceit. Yet Doris Kilman had been overcome. She had, as a matter of fact, very nearly burst into tears when Clarissa Dalloway laughed at her. (193-195)

The second paragraph in the above quotation is a bridge, a "neutral" link between Mrs. Dalloway of the first paragraph and Miss Kilman of the third. In the second paragraph, too, lie the beginnings of the artistic counterpointing between Mrs. Dalloway and Miss Kilman as if Virginia Woolf had dropped a pebble into a quiet pool - circles radiate outwardly and converge back towards that

one centre from which they emanate. Just as Mrs. Dalloway is overwhelmed by the idea of Doris Kilman, reaching almost climactic expression in those few minutes after Miss Kilman and Elizabeth leave the house, as the clock strikes a few minutes after Big Ben, so Doris Kilman takes this same stroke as her cue and gives forth the mirror image of Clarissa's intense emotions. This example of counterpointing is thus one of contrariness, not mutualism, and although the processes of expression are very similar, the outcome is not:

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.

...

...They must have their tea, said Miss Kilman, rousing, collecting herself. They had their tea.

Elizabeth rather wondered whether Miss Kilman could be hungry. It was her way of eating, eating with intensity, then looking, again and again, at a plate of sugared cakes on the table next them; then, when a lady and a child sat down and the child took the cake, could Miss Kilman really mind it? Yes, Miss Kilman did mind it. She had wanted that cake - the pink one. The pleasure of eating was almost the only pure pleasure left her, and then to be battled even in that!

When people are happy, they have a reserve, she had told Elizabeth, upon which to draw, whereas she was like a wheel without a tyre (she was fond of such metaphors), jolted by every pebble....

...

Miss Kilman took another cup of tea. Elizabeth, with her oriental bearing, her inscrutable mystery, sat perfectly upright; no, she did not want anything more. She looked for her gloves - her white gloves. They were under the table. Ah, but she must not go! Miss Kilman

could not let her go! this youth, that was so beautiful, this girl, whom she genuinely loved! Her large hand opened and shut on the table.

But perhaps it was a little flat somehow, Elizabeth felt. And really she would like to go.

But said Miss Kilman, "I've not quite finished yet." Of course, then, Elizabeth would wait. But it was rather stuffy in here.

"Are you going to the party to-night?" Miss Kilman said. Elizabeth supposed she was going; her mother wanted her to go. She must not let parties absorb her, Miss Kilman said, fingering the last two inches of a chocolate éclair.

She did not much like parties, Elizabeth said. Miss Kilman opened her mouth, slightly projected her chin, and swallowed down the last two inches of the chocolate éclair, then wiped her fingers, and washed the tea round in her cup.

She was about to split asunder, she felt. The agony was so terrific. If she could grasp her, if she could clasp her, if she could make her hers absolutely and forever and then die; that was all she wanted. But to sit here unable to think of anything to say; to see Elizabeth turning against her; to be felt repulsive even by her - it was too much; she could not stand it. The thick fingers curled inwards.

"I never go to parties," said Miss Kilman, just to keep Elizabeth from going. "People don't ask her to parties" - and she knew as she said it that it was this egotism that was her undoing.

Like some dumb creature who has been brought up to a gate for an unknown purpose, and stands there longing to gallop away, Elizabeth Dalloway sat silent. Was Miss Kilman going to say anything more?

"Don't quite forget me," said Doris Kilman; her voice quivered. Right away to the end of the field the dumb creature galloped in terror.

The great hand opened and shut.

Elizabeth turned her head. The waitress came. One had to pay at the desk, Elizabeth said, and went off, drawing out, so Miss Kilman felt, the very entrails

of her body, stretching them as she crossed the room, and then, with a final twist, bowing her head very politely; she went.

She had gone. Miss Kilman sat at the marble table among the éclairs, stricken once, twice, thrice by shocks of suffering. She had gone. Mrs. Dalloway had triumphed. Elizabeth had gone. Beauty had gone, youth had gone. (195-201)

In Miss Kilman the outcome is an experience of all-consuming lovelessness and of agony. This sense of deprivation finds an outlet in her attitude towards food - a pleasure that has turned into a kind of perversion, for it has its source in her ego to the extent that she covets a child's innocent enjoyment of sweets:

"...could Miss Kilman really mind it? Yes, Miss Kilman did mind it. She had wanted that cake - the pink one. The pleasure of eating was almost the only pure pleasure left her, and then to be baffled even in that!" (197). Here the technique of stream-of-consciousness narration reveals both Doris Kilman's own hysterical thoughts and Elizabeth's absorption of these thoughts as well as the narrator's subtle commenting on these thoughts, with all this happening at once. The lovelessness expresses itself in the atmosphere that generally surrounds Miss Kilman. The atmosphere is created by Miss Kilman's simultaneously aggressive-defensive attitude to life. She separates herself from other people ("When people are happy, they have a reserve...whereas she was like a wheel...(197)") clutching the difference until it grows and swells and overflows:

How nice it must be, she said, in the country, struggling, as Mr. Whittaker had told her, with that violent grudge against the world which had scorned her, sneered at her, cast her off, beginning with this indignity - the infliction of her unlovable body which people could not bear to see. Do her hair as

she might, her forehead remained like an egg, bald, white. No clothes suited her. She might buy anything. And for a woman, of course, that meant never meeting the opposite sex. Never would she come first with any one. (195)

Her religion is not belief in a Greater Being who can help her to transcend the pettiness of her concerns. Her religion is precisely the kind of thinking which has surfaced in the above quotation and is revealed more expansively in the longer previous passage. Miss Kilman's "lovingkindness" is a selfish love as in "'I never go to parties,' said Miss Kilman, just to keep Elizabeth from going. 'People don't ask me to parties' - and she knew as she said it..." (200) and "'Don't quite forget me," said Doris. Kilman; her voice quivered. Right away to the end of the field the dumb creature galloped in terror. The great hand opened and shut" (201). It is virtually a lovelessness, a reflection of her own emptiness. However hard she tries to appease the gnawing with religion as she understands it or with cakes and tea in the company of Elizabeth as for example in "She prayed to God. She could not help being ugly; she could not afford to buy pretty clothes. Clarissa Dalloway had laughed - but she would concentrate her mind upon something else until she reached the pillar-box. At any rate she had got Elizabeth" (195), it can never be satisfied because all of her energies convert themselves into an all-pervading bad attitude which is lust at its extreme. Moreover, as according to the laws of Nature, she is returned in kind. The "terror" (201) which is aroused in Elizabeth is but the reflection of Miss Kilman's own imposing self-centred fears. It echoes finality in Elizabeth's departure:

"...and then, with a final twist, bowing her head very politely, she went. She had gone...stricken once, twice, thrice by shocks of suffering. She had gone. Mrs. Dalloway had triumphed. Elizabeth had gone. Beauty had gone. Youth had gone" (201). These are but the reverberations of her own emptiness. The agony is expressed in vivid descriptions of torture, always self-inflicted: "...she was like a wheel without a tyre...jolted by every pebble" (197), "...to sit here, unable to think of anything to say; to see Elizabeth turning against her; to be felt repulsive even by her - it was too much. she could not stand it. The thick fingers curled inwards" (200), "One had to pay at the desk, Elizabeth said, and went off, drawing out, so Miss Kilman felt, the very entrails in her body, stretching them as she crossed the room, and then, with a final twist, bowing her head very politely, she went" (201), and "...now sweet, now sour she lurched; saw herself thus lurching with her hat askew, very red in the fact, full length in a looking-glass..." (202). The agony is also expressed in certain noted utterances: "It is the flesh, it is the flesh" and "I've not quite finished yet." These words only imprison Doris Kilman further within her "stillpoint" of egotism. The word "stillpoint" as it is used contrarily here is borrowed from Ethel F. Cornwell's study The "Still Point"¹⁷, in which she gives the following explanation:

...in its final form, the "stillpoint" becomes the source of all energy, pattern and movement, the

¹⁷ Ethel F. Cornwell, The "Still Point", (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1962), pp: 5, 6, 607, 11, and 208.

spiritual center where all opposites are reconciled, the complete vision perceived, complete reality experienced, and complete being attained. One may experience temporary union with the still point in moments of acute mental and emotional awareness, such as the moment of ecstasy. Ultimate, final union with the still point, however, may be obtained only by a lifetime of conscious effort, a Christian way of life, for union with the still point is equivalent to union with God.

The still point is Eliot's concept; one cannot expect to find exact parallels. What one does find in the writers under discussion - Coleridge, Yeats, James, Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf - is the attempt to define and to unify themselves with a similar center, or to achieve the kind of values and the state of being which the still point embodies. For it seems that when conventional religious beliefs have been threatened, conventional concepts of Deity invalidated or destroyed, the writer who is religiously or philosophically inclined will seek an abstract ideal or center which can serve as a redefinition of, or as spiritual substitute for, a conventional God.

As finally presented, Eliot's still point involves four characteristic features: the concept of certain absolutes - such as complete reality, complete being, the complete vision - all of which involve a reconciliation of opposites; the concept of an abstract, spiritual center outside oneself, from which emanates all movement, pattern, and meaning, and with which one must identify himself to maintain his spiritual development and achieve such absolutes as "real" being, the whole vision; emphasis upon the timeless moment - of ecstasy, of reality, of illumination - a moment of acute mental and emotional awareness, independent of time past or time future, that enables one to experience temporary union with the still point (the moment itself being a kind of still point, a "time of tension", such as the pause between two waves of the sea, but not to be confused with what Eliot terms the still point, the outside center); emphasis upon a conscious way of life, a definite set of requirements as the only means of attaining permanent union with the center and final realization of the absolutes one seeks. In each of the writers to be examined one finds some of the features characteristic of Eliot's concept - and many of the ideas and attitudes that led to its development.

James's preoccupation with form is derived from his aesthetic ideal; Mrs. Woolf's, from her concern for "reality". Nevertheless, Virginia Woolf's moment of reality provides a link between James's moment of experience and Eliot's moment of ecstasy, and it is perhaps because she benefited from the ripening ideas and techniques that James and his generation meta-physically advanced, and is therefore closer to Eliot's ecstatic moment. Where James seeks full, personal consciousness, Mrs. Woolf seeks an absolute, impersonal "reality", which, like Eliot's still point, includes and reconciles the opposing forces or truths that confront one in everyday living. But reality can be grasped or understood only by revelation and intuition, by the flashes of vision that one receives in moments of acute mental and emotional awareness; these are one's moments of reality. The lesser ones offer minor revelations. The greater ones signify one's momentary union with impersonal, total reality, then, as in Eliot's moment of union with the still point, one perceives the whole vision.

The ecstasy one feels in Mrs. Woolf's moment of reality is a sense of triumph over the chaos, fluidity, and transitoriness of life; the peace one feels is the sense of security that comes from the reassurance of solidity and permanence and from the momentary union with the one indestructable quality in life - impersonal, total, reality.

On the other hand, as Jean Guiguet points out in Virginia Woolf:

And Her Works,¹⁸ :

If we consider the "here and now," the moment apprehended with intensity and sharpness of Virginia Woolf's "vision" - where we are concerned with Clarissa, Mrs. Ramsay, Lily Briscoe, and of the characters in The Waves, or Eleanor Pargiter, we realise that it means a sense of peace and plenitude. It is thus because, in it, life and the feeling of life attain perfect harmony. Everything is included and understood. Totality, union, communion, possession, this moment satisfies the demands of the whole being, who has mastered his life, who lives it, and contemplates it in a single act, which is existing, feeling and thinking at once. But this moment is an

¹⁸ Jean Guiguet, Virginia Woolf: And Her Works, (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), p. 395.

ephemeral victory, a precarious integrity. On the reverse side of its unity, its cohesion and certitude, it carries all the germs of its own destruction.

And it is in this state that the reader finds Doris Kilman. The self-consumption, the lovelessness and the agony are organically fused, each parasitically and artistically part of the cause and effect of the other and, finally, of Miss Kilman, just as "volubly, troublously, the late clock sounded; coming in on the wake of Big Ben, with its lap full of trifles...the last relics of this lap full of odds and ends seemed to break, like the spray of an exhausted wave, upon the body of Miss Kilman" (194). It is thus natural that "Miss Kilman made one feel so small" (198) as she herself feels small, and natural, too, that "Elizabeth, with her oriental bearing, her inscrutable mystery...did not want anything more" (199). Elizabeth, with her love of nature, of animals and the countryside (as is later revealed on her busride through London) becomes a "dumb creature" (200) in that very moment of feeling herself threatened. The spontaneous reaction of an animal works at one level inside herself yet on the surface she is "bowing her head very politely" (201). It is natural that Elizabeth "did not want anything more" (199) because in Miss Kilman's world there is nothing for anyone to want since no other ego can possibly exist or survive except Miss Kilman's whose very name resounds the death-of-life within her. For what purpose, therefore, does Elizabeth come this far with Doris Kilman? Mythopoeically, the one-sided relationship between Miss Kilman and Elizabeth exists in order that a part of Mrs. Dalloway's ambivalent feelings be more fully exposed. This

does not mean that Miss Kilman is equal to or an extension of Mrs. Dalloway, for she is not. She is a separate character in her own right. Nevertheless she also symbolically manifests certain feelings within Clarissa which when carried to their extreme find their mirror image in a character such as Miss Kilman. In the same way Elizabeth draws Miss Kilman out of (and away from) her mother. She indirectly helps to bring about the experience of potential birth and rebirth within her mother. She is also a separate person with her own "privacy of the soul" (192) to be respected. The ride on the omnibus permits the reader to appreciate the invisible line drawn around Elizabeth, her aura, which distinguishes her from all the other characters and simultaneously binds her to her parents and to the tradition of her inheritance:

It was so nice to be out of doors. She thought perhaps she need not go home just yet. It was so nice to be out in the air. So she would get on to an omnibus. And already even as she stood there, in her very well cut clothes, it was beginning... People were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies; and it made her 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.

Buses swooped, settled, were off - garish caravans, glistening with red and yellow varnish. But which should she get on to? She had no preferences. Of course, she would not push her way. She inclined to be passive. It was expression she needed, but her eyes were fine, Chinese, oriental; and, as her mother said, with such nice shoulders and holding herself so straight, interested, for she never seemed excited, she looks almost beautiful, very stately, very serene. What could she be thinking? Every man fell in love with her, and she was really awfully bored. For it was beginning. Her mother could see that - the compliments were beginning. That

she did not care more about it; - for instance for her clothes - sometimes worried Clarissa, but perhaps it was as well with all those puppies and guinea pigs about having distemper, and it gave her a charm. (204-205)

There is a mutual blending of social and private self and of child and parent which is artistically emphasized by the stream-of-consciousness narrative, although polarity seems to be expressed in the mother's feelings concerning the daughter's attitude towards social etiquette. The lines "Of course she would not push her way. She inclined to be passive. It was expression she needed..." (204) seem both a compliment and a criticism. With this knowledge of Elizabeth the reader looks back over the tea incident to realize that Elizabeth's courtesy, passiveness and expressionlessness are necessary qualities which encourage Doris Kilman to expose the essence of her being in the manner that she does. When the reader first meets Miss Kilman, he is uncertain as to what extent she is reacting out of a legitimate dislike of particular qualities within Clarissa. Later the reader is made to understand directly through Elizabeth's "inscrutable mystery" (199) that the "dislike" has its source within Miss Kilman. Whereas Clarissa's physical presence (it is thought) may "impede" Miss Kilman's "normal" self-expression, Elizabeth's impassiveness and expressionlessness of bearing as well as the "tense" atmosphere of discomfort within the narrative flow create the illusion that the reader is being taken into confidence. As Elizabeth rides high on the omnibus venturing forth alone into London "for no Dalloways came down the Strand daily; she was a pioneer" (208), she expresses her

loyalty: "She must go home. She must dress for dinner. But what was the time? (208)...But it was later than she thought. Her mother would not like her to be wandering off alone like this. She turned back down the Strand" (210). The bus ride creates by means of the narrative technique an atmosphere of diffusion between private and social self within the one healthy body of Elizabeth:

...and to each movement of the omnibus the beautiful body in the fawn-coloured coat responded freely like a rudder, like the figurehead of a ship, for the breeze slightly disarrayed her; the heat gave her cheeks the apallor of white painted wood; and her fine eyes; having no eyes to meet, gazed ahead, blank, bright, with the staring incredible innocence of sculpture.

It was always talking about her own sufferings that made Miss Kilman so difficult. And was she right? ...but it was so difficult to say. Oh, she would like to go a little further. Another penny was it to the Strand? Here was another penny then. She would go up to the Strand.

She liked people who were ill. And every profession is open to the women of her generation, said Miss Kilman. So she might be a doctor. She might be a farmer. Animals are often ill...And she liked the feeling of people working...It was quite different here from Westminster. She thought, getting off at Chancery Lane. It was so serious; it was so busy. In short she would like to have a profession: She would become a doctor, a farmer, possibly go into Parliament, if she found it necessary, all because of the Strand.

The feet of those people busy about their activities, hands putting stone to stone, minds eternally occupied not with trivial chatterings (comparing women to poplars - which was rather exciting, of course, but very silly), but with thoughts of ships, of business, of law, of administration.... (206-207)

...She penetrated a little further in the direction of St. Paul's. She liked the geniality, sisterhood, motherhood, brotherhood of this uproar. It seemed to her good. The noise was tremendous; and suddenly there

were trumpets (the unemployed) blaring, rattling about in the uproar; military music, as if people were marching; yet had they been dying - had some woman breathed her last....

...but this voice, pouring endlessly, year in year out, would take whatever it might be; this vow; this van; this life; this procession, would wrap them all about and carry them, as in the rough stream of a glacier the ice holds a splinter of bone, a blue petal, some oak trees, and rolls them on.

(209-210)

In these passages the reader is made aware of Elizabeth's sanity and integrity. Her vision, which still has very much to grow, shows reciprocity between "the privacy of the soul" (192) and the social surroundings, each in some way leaving its influence on the other, as is symbolized in the actual movement of the narrative. The stream-of-consciousness technique blends so finely the narrative voice with Elizabeth's that the reader is never sure exactly when the third person voice of the narrator has shifted into the personal voice of the character and is thus only conscious of a voice of nuances continually speaking to him. This artistic "happening" is thematically referred to in the very last part of the above quotation, a fact which demonstrates how linguistic process and message are integrated within the one artistic whole. Another example of this integration is the passage which precedes and follows Elizabeth's mounting the Westminster omnibus and gracefully returns the reader to Septimus Warren Smith:

A puff of wind (in spite of the heat, there was quite a wind) blew a thin black veil over the sun and over the Strand. The faces faded; the omnibuses suddenly lost their glow. For although the clouds were of mountainous white so that one could fancy hacking hard chips off with a hatchet; with broad golden slopes, lawns of celestial pleasure gardens, on their flanks, and had all the appearance

of settled habitations assembled for the conference of gods above the world, there was a perpetual movement among them. Signs were interchanged, when, as if to fulfil some scheme arranged already, now a summit dwindled, now a whole block of pyramidal size which had kept its station inalterably advanced into the midst or gravely led the procession to fresh anchorage. Fixed though they seemed at their posts, at rest in perfect unanimity, nothing could be fresher, freer, more sensitive superficially than the snow-white or gold-kindled surface; to change, to go, to dismantle the solemn assemblage was immediately possible; and in spite of the grave fixity, the accumulated robustness and solidity, now they struck light to the earth, now darkness.

Calmly and competently, Elizabeth Dalloway mounted the Westminster omnibus.

Going and coming, beckoning, signalling, so the light and shadow which now made the wall grey, now the bananas bright yellow, now made the Strand grey, now made the omnibuses bright yellow, seemed to Septimus Warren Smith lying on the sofa in the sitting-room; watching the watery gold glow and fade with the astonishing sensibility of some live creature on the roses, on the wall-paper. Outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room and through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room and through the waves came the voices of birds singing. Every power poured its treasures on his head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen his hand lie when he was bathing, floating, on the top of the waves, while far away on the shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away. Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more. (210-211)

The first part of the quotation describes poetically how the characters of this novel merge, differentiate and change from moment to moment creating along with each move a change of mood and atmosphere, a change of aspiration, now making fixed equations of happy spirit, now trembling humbly in their experience and expression (in the fullest sense of the words) of the seemingly opposite forces or energies within themselves. The novel in its entirety focuses on a few gestures, a few words and from these the reader

is to have a feeling of one human entity; the writer is to project the illusion of one human life: "For although the clouds were of mountainous white so that one could fancy hacking hard chips off with a hatchet, with broad golden slopes, lawns of celestial pleasure gardens, on their flanks, and had all the appearance of settled habitations..." (210). The one factual sentence, "Calmly, competently, Elizabeth Dalloway mounted the Westminster omnibus" (211), returns the reader more firmly to the reality of these characters' lives from the poetic philosophy and imagism of the previous paragraph. In doing so it strengthens artistically the bond between form and content. The sentence, too, crystallizes the fact that the bus ride back to Mrs. Dalloway is contrapuntally a return to Septimus Warren Smith, for as preparation for Clarissa's offering heightens so does preparation for Septimus'. The image of the bright yellow omnibus acts as a focal point which radiates the powerful energies - mysterious ever-changing shapes that fill the spaces all around it, now Elizabeth, now clouds, now Septimus, now light, now water. And Septimus, too, reflects back the poet's philosophy of the previous passage except that in this passage the reader is conscious of the voice of Septimus' sensitive soul, at once echoing the past and extending forward and outward into future: "watching the watery, gold glow and fade with the astonishing sensibility of some live creature on the roses, on the wall-paper" (211). and "Every power poured its treasures on his head..." (211). The images of water and light and space and sound ("Outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the

sound of water was in the room and through the waves came the voices of birds singing" (211) mirror the idea of fission and fusion/diffusion dynamically contained within the one vision of reality. The image of the "wave" is a popular one with Virginia Woolf, and characters are often introduced into the text with the description of themselves being carried "bathing, floating on top of the waves, while far away on the shore..." (211) to emphasize the surfacing of a consciousness as well as the breaking forth of the private or concealed self into the social or external reality, to show how the consciousness reveals at the same time as it conceals and vice versa. The water also serves as a creative medium: "Every power poured its treasures on his head..." (211). In both passages the poetic philosophy of "Nature" (211) and total creative unity has a relaxing and regenerative effect on the consciousness: "Calmly and competently, Elizabeth Dalloway mounted the Westminster omnibus" (211) and "Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more" (211).

Once more the reader shares in the intimacy between Septimus and Lucrezia Warren Smith. It is introduced as "Nature" and it marks the basic bond between this husband and wife:

He was not afraid. 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.

Rezia, sitting at the table twisting a hat in her hands, watched him; saw him smiling. He was happy then. (211-212)

The merging of Nature "standing close up to breathe through her hollowed hands Shakespeare's words, her meaning" (212) and "Rezia, sitting at the table..." (212) expresses Septimus' growing trust in his wife. And although Rezia "could not bear to see him smiling. It was not marriage; it was not being one's husband to look strange like that, always to be starting, laughing, sitting hour after hour silent, clutching her and telling her to write" (212), she has grown in sympathy from "But she heard nothing" (213) to:

And he would lie listening until suddenly he would cry that he was falling down, down into the flames! Actually she would look for flames, it was so vivid. But there was nothing. They were alone in the room. It was a dream, she would tell him and so quiet him at last, but sometimes she was frightened too. She sighed as she sat sewing. (213-214)

Now their closeness is so intense that the couple is able to share in one consciousness of pain and of terror, Rezia feeling in this moment what her eyes do not actually see. As she turns to do her sewing, she influences the direction of the mood between husband and wife. She offers Septimus stability, a means of grasping external reality. She also offers the assurance his sensibility craves. The long passage extending pages 214 to 225 demonstrates this fact. In incident after incident Lucrezia weaves the bond between husband and wife, a weaving which is symbolized in the images describing herself. These images stir deep within the imagination of her husband: a "kettle on the hob" (218) and a "bird falling from branch to branch, and always alighting, quite rightly" (222). The weaving is also symbolized in Lucrezia's actions: the way in which she makes the hats, piece by piece, ribbon by ribbon and stitch by stitch, with

concentrated effort, the idea of "hat" slowly metamorphosing into the actual creation, and always inviting Septimus to partake in the creative unfolding; the way in which Lucrezia plays with Mrs. Filmer's grandchild, echoing the news with song and dance; the way in which Lucrezia bursts into the room, into Septimus' existence, interrupting the fearful direction his thoughts have taken to spill out the news from Brighton; and finally the way in which Lucrezia collects her husband's letters and drawings and ties them together with silk ribbon neatly, confidently, reassuringly promising faithful love to her husband. Lucrezia's actions themselves symbolize the process of organic fusion in art, (this fusion being expressed in the entire section on husband and wife. The tumbling forth effect of the prose as person merges with person and one paragraph with the next is exemplified in the following:

Then she got up to go to the bedroom to pack their things, but hearing voices downstairs and thinking that Dr. Holmes had perhaps called, ran down to prevent him coming up.

Septimus could hear her talking to Holmes on the staircase.

"My dear lady, I have come as a friend," Holmes was saying.

"No. . . I will not allow you to see my husband," she said.

He could see her, like a little hen, with her wings spread barring his passage. But Holmes persevered.

"My dear lady, allow me..." Holmes said, putting her aside (Holmes was a powerfully built man).

Holmes was coming upstairs. Holmes would burst open the door. Holmes would say "In a funk, eh?" Holmes would get him. But no; not Holmes; not Bradshaw. Getting up rather unsteadily, hopping indeed from foot

to foot, he considered Mrs. Filmer's nice clean bread knife with "Bread" carved on the handle. Ah, but one mustn't spoil that. The gas fire? But it was too late now. Holmes was coming. Razors he might have got, but Rezia, who always did that sort of thing, had packed them. There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury-lodging house window, the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw like 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 - what did they want? 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.

"The coward!" cried Dr. Holmes, bursting the door open. Rezia ran to the window, she saw; she understood...She must be brave and drink something, he said (What was it? Something sweet), for her husband was horribly mangled, would not recover consciousness, she must not see him, must be spared as much as possible, would have the inquest to go through, poor young woman. Who could have foretold it? A sudden impulse, no one was in the least to blame (he told Mrs. Filmer). And why the devil he did it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive. (225-227)

Septimus had taken the initiative to define how far Dr. Holmes is to penetrate their lives. And yet this freedom comes ultimately at the cost of Septimus' life and of the physical separation of husband and wife. The violence of Septimus' actions are equal to the psychic violence Dr. Holmes has imposed on Septimus. In this way the two react mutually to each other, each speaking truth of the other through himself. "Who could have foretold it? A sudden impulse, no one was in the least to blame (he told Mrs. Filmer) And why the devil he did it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive." (227), is true as felt from Dr. Holmes' perspective.

The narrative technique allows the reader to feel these lines from Dr. Holmes' point of view while equally feeling the distance, infinitely magnified and constrained, between Dr. Holmes and Septimus, thus reflecting the impact of the words on Lucrezia's mind and on Septimus' were he still alive. The lines "Rezia ran to the window, she saw; she understood. Dr. Holmes and Mrs. Filmer collided with each other. Mrs. Filmer flapped her apron and made her hide her eyes in the bedroom. There was a great deal of running up and down stairs. Dr. Holmes came in - white as a sheet, shaking all over, with a glass in his hand" (226-227) show the melodrama in process with its fragmentation of smooth narrative flow as each gesture becomes exaggerated. Rezia is no longer in this world. Neither is she the "poor young woman" (227) Dr. Holmes visualizes. The "something sweet" (227) which Dr. Holmes administers to calm her, to help her forget the present moment, sends her into the past and further away from Holmes to the happy, peaceful realization of her husband's death and of their eternal marriage:

It seemed to her as she drank the sweet stuff that she was opening long windows, stepping out into some garden. But where? The clock was striking - one, two, three: how sensible the sound was; compared with all this thumping and whispering; like Septimus himself. She was falling asleep. But the clock went on striking, four, five, six and Mrs. Filmer waving her apron (they wouldn't bring the body in here, would they?) seemed part of that garden; or a flag. She had once seen a flag slowly rippling out from a mast when she stayed with her aunt at Venice. Men killed in battle were thus saluted, and Septimus had been through the War. Of her memories, most were happy.

She put on her hat and ran through cornfields - where could it have been? on to some hill, somewhere near the sea, for there were ships, gulls, butterflies;

they sat on a cliff. In London too, there they sat, and half dreaming, came to her through the bedroom door, rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea, as it seemed to her, hollowing them in its arched shell and murmuring to her laid on shore, strewn she felt, like flying flowers over some tomb.

"He is dead," she said, smiling at the poor old woman who guarded her with her honest light-blue eyes fixed on the door. (227-228).

Rezia's mind is moving freely through time, as freely as "the clock which went on striking, four, five, six..." (227), as freely as Septimus' spirit now moves, uniting past, present and future into one happening. The quiet romantic slow-motion images of Lucrezia running through cornfields "somewhere near the sea" (228) and of "rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea" (228) extend out of the new-found liberty of Septimus' soul. Rezia now projects physically what has occurred spiritually within Septimus' being. The "sweet stuff" (227) has thus accentuated the bond between husband and wife. At the same time the "sweet stuff" (227) has the calming, alienating effect which is reflected in the stream-of-consciousness narration: "But the clock went on striking, four, five, six and Mrs. Filmer waving her apron (they wouldn't bring the body in here, would they?) seemed part of that garden; or a flag. She had once seen a flag slowly rippling out from a mast when she stayed with her aunt at Venice. Men killed in battle were thus saluted, and Septimus had been through the War. Of her memories, most were happy" (228). The last two sentences especially create the sensation of echoes within echoes with the result that the reader is ever-aware of the distance between

Rezia and the others in her physical world. She is there in form alone thinking of herself in the third person and passively as if she were no longer a part of this physical world: "...as it seemed to her, hollowing them in its arched shell and murmuring to her laid on shore, strewn she felt, like flying flowers over some tomb" (228), and yet always aware of the statement of death within this physical world. The image of the "flowers" (228) brings to mind Septimus' previous description of his wife, "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" (216), which further expresses the fusion of spirit between husband and wife. Moreover, the fusion of past and present becomes absolute: "In London too, there they sat, and, half dreaming, came to her through the bedroom door, rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea, as it seemed to her, hollowing them in its arched shell and murmuring to her laid on shore, strewn she felt, like flying flowers over some tomb" (228). Here Rezia and Septimus fill [an "event" which actually occurred in the past] the hollowed space, which image projects the tomb of her dead husband. Rezia is also the flowers that are strewn over "some tomb" (228) which she imagines in her present dream state. The distance is ever-increasing between herself and the others; "But they must do as the doctor said" and "Let her sleep," said Dr. Holmes, feeling her pulse" (228). Her relation to the physical world is passive. Even Dr. Holmes associates her with

sleep, a sleep which he has ironically helped to bring about but which dream state he cannot ultimately control. The lines "She saw the large outline of his body standing dark against the window. So that was Dr. Holmes" (228) as much define Dr. Holmes as they do Lucrezia for the words reflect the mirror image of "'Let her sleep,' said Dr. Holmes, feeling her pulse" (228) in that they reflect the "dehumanizing" of one character as experienced by another who is the recipient. The realization "So that was Dr. Holmes" (228) unites Lucrezia finally with Septimus for this is the last thought the reader is to hear her express.

The "depersonalization" of Dr. Holmes marks the entrance of Peter Walsh and the onlooker's experience of the suicide drama:

"Let her sleep," said Dr. Holmes, feeling her pulse. She saw the large outline of his body standing dark against the window. So that was Dr. Holmes.

One of the triumphs of civilisation, Peter Walsh thought. It is one of the triumphs of civilisation, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded. Swiftly, cleanly the ambulance sped to the hospital, having picked up instantly, humanely, some poor devil; some one hit on the head, struck down by disease, knocked over perhaps a minute or so ago at one of these crossings, as might happen to oneself. That was civilisation. It struck him coming back from the east - the efficiency, the organisation, the communal spirit of London. 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 - Ah, but thinking became morbid, sentimental, directly one began conjuring up doctors, dead bodies; a little glow of pleasure, a sort of lust too over the visual impression warned one not to go on with that sort of thing any more - fatal to art, fatal to friendship.

True. And yet, thought Peter Walsh, as the ambulance turned the corner though the light high bell could be heard down the next street and still farther as it crossed the Tottenham Court Road, chiming constantly, it is the privilege of loneliness; in privacy one may do as one chooses. One might weep if no one saw. It had been his undoing - this susceptibility - in Anglo-Indian society; not weeping at the right time, or laughing either. I have that in me, he thought standing by the pillar-box, which could dissolve in tears. Why, Heaven knows. Beauty of some sort probably, and the weight of the day, which beginning with that visit to Clarissa's had exhausted him with its heat, its intensity, and the drip, drip of one impression after another down into that cellar where they stood, deep, dark, and no one would ever know. Partly for that reason, its secrecy, complete and inviolable, he had found life like an unknown garden, full of turns and corners, surprising, yes; 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 white shell-sprinkled beach, left bare. It had been his undoing in Anglo-Indian society - this susceptibility.

Clarissa once, going on top of an omnibus with him somewhere, Clarissa superficially at least, so easily moved, now in despair, now in the best of spirits, all aquiver in those days and such good company, spotting queer little scenes, names, people from the top of a bus, for they used to explore London and bring back bags full of treasures from the Caledonian market - Clarissa had a theory in those days - they had heaps of theories, always theories, as young people have. It was to explain the feeling they had of dissatisfaction; not knowing people; not being known. For how could they know each other? You met every day; then not for six months, or years. It was unsatisfactory, they agreed, how little one knew people. But she said, sitting on the bus going up Shaftesbury Avenue, she felt herself everywhere; not "here, here, here"; and she tapped the back of the seat; but everywhere. She waved her hand, going up Shaftesbury Avenue. She was all that. So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter - even trees, or barns. It ended in 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... perhaps - perhaps. (228-232)

The line "One of the triumphs of civilisation" (229) as it immediately follows "So that was Dr. Holmes" (228) partly expresses the irony of the onlooker's experience of the ambulance and of the ego's "little glow of pleasure, a sort of lust ~~for~~ over the visual impression..." (229) and partly acts as catalyst for entering into the "susceptibility" (230) of Peter Walsh. The speeding ambulance carries the reader away from the tragic scene and further into Peter Walsh who eventually brings the reader to Clarissa Dalloway. The above quotation is another excellent example of artistic manipulation, for with the introduction of Rezia's drugged sleep the reader is brought to the impassive Peter Walsh who becomes more and more emotional, more and more subjective in his response as he stands there watching the ambulance drive away and listening to the sound carry its message all around. Thus passion bursts through the cool exterior and manifests itself in the flash of Clarissa and himself on the omnibus: "For how could they know each other? You met every day; then not for six months, or years. It was unsatisfactory they agreed, how little one knew people. But...she felt herself everywhere; not "here, here, here"; and she tapped the back of the seat; but everywhere" (231). His "susceptibility" (230) creates unity in the narrative flow from the scene he is witnessing to the party he will be attending later that same day for unwittingly he lives the very philosophy to which he gives mention superficially, the "transcendental theory" (231). The

passage is a reflection of the author's attempt at balance within the artistic framework as this framework symbolically projects the contrary and complementary forces within reality, more specifically psychological reality. Clarissa's transcendental theory articulates within a philosophical formula what permits and permeates as organic fusion within the work of art:

Looking back over that long friendship of almost thirty years her theory worked to this extent. Brief, broken, often painful as their actual meeting had been what with his absences and interruptions (this morning, for instance, in came Elizabeth, like a long-legged colt, handsome, dumb, just as he was beginning to talk to Clarissa) the effect of them on his life was immeasurable. There was a mystery about it. You were given a sharp, acute, uncomfortable grain - the actual meeting; horribly painful as often as not; yet in absence, in the most unlikely places, it would flower out, open, shed its scent, let you touch, taste, look about you, get the whole feel of it and understanding, after years of lying lost. Thus she had come to him...She had influenced him more than any person he had ever known...One scene after another at Bourton....

He had reached his hotel.

(232-233)

In this way the transcendental theory maintains integrity within the work of art even through seemingly dissimilar parts, seemingly opposite characters and seemingly mundane preoccupations, the "grain" (232) symbolizing the germ of unfoldment or creative flux. The impact of such a "sharp, acute, uncomfortable grain - the actual meeting; horribly painful as often as not; yet..." (232) is symbolically mirrored in the receiving and opening of Clarissa's letter:

Oh it was a letter from her! This blue envelope; that was her hand. And he would have to read it. Here was another of those meetings, bound to be painful! To read her letter needed the devil of an effort. "How heavenly it was to see him. She must tell him that." That was all.

(234).

Peter Walsh has so completely responded to the letter that it becomes translated in the reading: "How heavenly it was to see him. She must tell him that" (234). The "devil of an effort" is manifested in the extent to which the letter plagues him and penetrates his being:

But 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.

These hotels are not consoling places. Far from it. Any number of people had hung up their hats on those pegs. Even the flies, if you thought of it, had settled on other people's noses. As for the cleanliness which hit him in the face, it wasn't cleanliness, so much as bareness, frigidity; a thing that had to be... (235)

At the same time this very penetration "would flower out, open, shed its scent, let you touch, taste, look about you, get the whole feel of it and understanding, after years of lying lost" (232):

And it was Clarissa's letter that made him see all this. "Heavenly to see you. She must say so!" He folded the paper; pushed it away; nothing would induce him to read it again!

To get that letter to him by six o'clock she must have sat down and written it directly he left her; stamped it; sent somebody to the post. It was, as people say, very like her; stamped it, sent somebody to the post. She had felt a great deal; had for a moment, when she kissed his hand, regretted, envied him even, remembered possibly (for he saw her look it) something he had said - how they would change the world if she married him perhaps; whereas, it was this; it was middle age; it was mediocrity; then forced herself with her indomitable vitality to put all that aside, there being in her a thread of life which for toughness, endurance, power to overcome obstacles, and carry her triumphantly through he had never known the like of. Yes; but there would come a reaction directly he left the room. She would be frightfully sorry for him;

she would think what in the world she could do to give him pleasure (short always of the one thing) and he could see her with the tears running down her cheeks going to her writing-table and dashing off that one line which he was to find greeting him..."Heavenly to see you!" And she meant it.

Peter Walsh had now unlaced his boots.
(235-236)

He unveils a little more of the mystery of Clarissa's being, (Clarissa had sapped something in him permanently)" (241) and "Clarissa's letter which he would not read again but liked to think of..." (241), this "mystery" being symbolically expressed once more in Peter's theory of "our soul" (244):

He would go to Clarissa's party. (The Morrises moved off; but they would meet again.) He would go to Clarissa's party, because he wanted to ask Richard what they were doing in India - the conservative duffers. And what's being acted? And music...Oh yes, and mere gossip.

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. What did the Government mean - Richard Dalloway would know - to do about India? (244)

The letter which "causes" his mind to dwell on Clarissa also "causes" him to move in the direction of Clarissa where "our soul" is discovered, the soul in which all characters are effortlessly fused, in which individuality shines through even as collectivity is effected, in which each being emerges and withdraws only to merge more fully through the medium of Mrs. Dalloway. As Peter Walsh is seen on his way to the party the reader is given in the description a faint hint of Septimus Warren Smith: "His

light overcoat blew open, he stepped with indescribable idiosyncrasy, lent a little forward, tripped, with his hands behind his back and his eyes still a little hawklike: he tripped through London, through Westminster, observing" (248-249). This is the Septimus who is to return to life ghostlike at the party and more specifically in Clarissa's final moment of vision! As Peter Walsh nears the Dalloways, the reader is more conscious of the powerful pull of the party, a pull which has surfaced to the external world, "But it was her street, this, Clarissa's; cabs were rushing round the corner, like water round the piers of a bridge, drawn together, it seemed to him because they bore people going to her party, Clarissa's party". (250); and which reflects that "thread of life" (236) to which Peter Walsh has already referred. Moreover, it is a pull which in turn puts stress on the person to command social behavior even as the idiosyncracies are also surfacing:

The cold stream of visual impressions failed him now as if the eye were a cup that overflowed and let the rest run down its china walls unrecorded. The brain must wake now. The body must contract now, entering the house, the lighted house, where the door stood open, where the motor cars were standing, and bright women descending: the soul must brave itself to endure. He opened the big blade of his pocket-knife. (250) -

At the party the mood of self-question is visible from the start:

"How delightful to see you!" said Clarissa. She said it to every one. How delightful to see you! She was at her worst - effusive, insincere. It was a great mistake to have come. He should have stayed home and read his book, thought Peter Walsh; should have gone to a music hall; he should have stayed at home, for he knew no one.

Oh dear, it was going to be a failure; a complete failure, Clarissa felt it in her bones as dear old Lord Lexham stood there apologising for his wife who had caught cold at the Buckingham Palace garden party. She could see Peter out of the tail of her eye, criticising her, there, in that corner. Why, after all, did she do these things? Why seek pinnacles and stand drenched in fire? Might it consume her anyhow! Burn her to cinders! Better anything, better brandish one's torch and hurl it to earth than taper and dwindle away like some Ellie Henderson! It was extraordinary how Peter put her into these states just by coming and standing in a corner. He made her see herself; exaggerate. It was idiotic. But why did he come, then, merely to criticise? Why always take, never give? Why not risk one's one little point of view? There he was wandering off, and she must speak to him. But she would not get the chance. Life was that - humiliation, renunciation. What Lord Lexham was saying was that his wife would not wear her furs at the garden party because "my dear, you ladies are all alike" - Lady Lexham being seventy-five at least! It was delicious, how they petted each other, that old couple. She did like old Lord Lexham. She did think it mattered, her party, and it made her feel quite sick to know that it was all going wrong, all falling flat. Anything, any explosion, any horror was better than people wandering aimlessly, standing in a bunch at a corner like Ellie Henderson, not even caring to hold themselves upright. (254-255)

Even when the preoccupation is with seemingly trivial matters, ("that his wife would not wear her furs" (255)), the effusion of energies, of appreciation for another being and gratitude that these energies and this being are a part of the party is always evident: "It was delicious, how they petted each other, that old couple. She did like old Lord Lexham. She did think it mattered, per party..." (255). Clarissa's general attitude to life as well as her final moment of vision is foreshadowed in: "Anything, any explosion, any horror was better than people wandering aimlessly, standing in a bunch at a corner like Ellie Henderson, not even caring to hold themselves upright" (255).

Ellie Henderson, like Doris Kilman, is that uncomfortable grain of sand which sets Clarissa's whole self to rush to the rescue of "her parties". In recognizing Ellie Henderson as a generally negative or at best "neutral" being, Clarissa instills in Ellie Henderson cleansing properties, creating motion within the narrative and magnifying the revitalizing qualities inherent in Clarissa. Ellie Henderson symbolizes that part of Clarissa which would like to give up and give in. Clarissa's confidence, being the stronger of the two and symbolized in her party, is able to overcome one sole Ellie Henderson, or one sole Doris Kilman:

Indeed, Clarissa felt, the Prime Minister had been good to come. And, walking down the room with him, with Sally there and Peter there and Richard very pleased, with all those people rather inclined, perhaps, to envy, she had felt that intoxication of the moment, that dilation of the nerves of the heart itself till it seemed to quiver, steeped, upright; - yes, but after all it was what other people felt, that; for, though she loved it and felt it tingle and sting, still these semblances, these triumphs (dear old Peter, for example, thinking her so brilliant), 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; and suddenly, as she saw the Prime Minister go down the stairs, the gilt rim of the Sir Joshua picture of the little girl with a muff brought back Kilman with a rush; 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 - not Mrs. Durrant and Clara, Sir William and Lady Bradshaw, Miss Truelock and Eleanor Gibson (whom she saw coming upstairs). They must find her if they wanted her. She was for the party!

There was her old friend Sir Harry. (265-266)

This latter quotation shows how the thought of Doris Kilman stirs up a flux within the narrative causing Clarissa's party self to

surface. The "enemies" (266) offer opportunities for reviving the self, increasing self-confidence, and regaining faith and assurance. In the latter quotation the reader is able to see how duality reveals itself: "...still 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; and suddenly...the gilt rim of the Sir Joshua picture of the little girl with a muff brought back Kilman with a rush; Kilman her enemy" (265).

Clarissa begins to feel a "hollowness", an emptiness of vision, which is immediately reflected for her in the painting as the thought of Kilman. This thought, Kilman's image, soon dissolves any waning desire, any feeling of aging or depression, and instead rekindles within her that much more warmly the spirit of party self and of friendship and the glow of human contact:

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.

(259-260).

It is with the Bradshaws ironically enough, that the chance offers itself for her to "go much deeper" (260). The Bradshaws link Septimus Warren Smith to Clarissa by informing her of this "very sad case" (279). Her reaction is immediate. The splendour of the party fades from view as Clarissa reasons with this shock of horror:

Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought.

She went on, into the little room where the Prime Minister had gone with Lady Bruton...

What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party - the Bradshaws, talked of death. He had killed himself - but how? Always her body went through it first when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it? And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!

(279-280)

What happens as "always her body went through it first" (280) is that Clarissa brings to life Septimus' own being through her body and imagination. Not only is the reader visualizing through Clarissa's compassion what has no doubt occurred just prior to Septimus' death but also the reader witnesses the complete merging of these two consciousnesses. The question "But why had he done it?" (280) is ironically answered by "And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!" (280) for the Bradshaws are the link that allows Clarissa to be able to even ask the question at all, thus allowing Septimus Warren Smith to penetrate her being; they are the link that allows her to have this moment of vision at the party. At the same time the sentence "And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!" (280) suggests Clarissa's personal feelings about the Bradshaws' presence as well as about their having "talked of it" (280) at all:

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.

Clarissa looked at Sir William, talking to Richard. He did not look like a boy - not in the least like a boy. She had once gone with some one to ask his advice. He had been perfectly right; extremely sensible. But Heavens - what a relief to get out to the street again! There was some poor wretch sobbing, she remembered, in the waiting-room. But she did not know what it was - about Sir William; what exactly she disliked. Only Richard agreed with her, "didn't like his smell."
(278-279)

It truly pains Clarissa to have to place side-by-side (even in thought) the dead man and this doctor. And yet ironically the very fact that "the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!" (280) draws her further into her role as protector and defender of Septimus. The analogy between herself and the dead man continues in her thinking:

She had once thrown a shilling into the Serpentine, never anything more. But he had flung it away. They went on living (she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming). 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.

But this young man who had killed himself - had he plunged holding his treasure? "If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy," she had said to herself once, coming down in white.

Or there were the poets and thinkers. Suppose he had had that passion, and had gone to Sir William Bradshaw, a great doctor yet to her obscurely evil without sex or lust, extremely polite to women, but capable of some indescribable outrage - forcing your soul, that was it - 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? (280-281)

Clarissa's understanding of Septimus' death brings her to the centre of his being and points out that much more forcefully the dialectic of reality as it has been expressed throughout the novel and more specifically of Septimus' death. When Septimus plunges to his death, daring to meet head on with his aloneness, the plunge can only happen once. The "embrace" (281) of Death is final and although it does defy such antagonists as Dr. Holmes and Sir William who "make life intolerable" (281), it nevertheless leaves them to continue their effect on other lives, as Clarissa is indirectly manifesting in the present moment. Having so compassionately understood the "indescribable outrage - forcing your soul" (281) that Bradshaw must have committed against Septimus, Clarissa is brought very close to her own centre of fear. She becomes infinitely more aware of the meaning of "responsibility" towards others and towards oneself:

Then (she had felt it only this morning) there was the terror; the overwhelming incapacity, one's parents giving it into one's hands, this life, to be lived to the end, to be walked with serenely; there was in the depths of her heart an awful fear. 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. But that young man had killed himself.

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 here in her evening dress. She had schemed; she had pilfered. She was never wholly admirable. She had wanted success. Lady Bexborough and the rest of it. And once she had walked on the terrace at Bourton.

It was due to Richard; she had never been so happy. Nothing could be slow enough; nothing last too long. No pleasure could equal, she thought, straightening the chairs, pushing in one book on the shelf, this having done with the triumphs of youth, lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank. Many a time she had gone, at Bourton when they were all talking, to look at the sky; or seen it between people's shoulders at dinner; seen it in London when she could not sleep. She walked to the window.

It held, foolish as the idea was, something of her own in it, this country sky, this sky above Westminster. She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising! - in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! She was going to bed. And the sky. It will be a solemn sky, she had thought, it will be a dusky sky, turning away its cheek in beauty. But there it was - ashen pale, raced over quickly by tapering vast clouds. It was new to her. The wind must have risen. She was going to bed, in the room opposite. It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady, crossing the room, coming to the window. Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed. She pulled the blind now. The clock striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him, with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him - the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room. (281-284)

Responsibility exists in Life not in Death: "Somchow it was her disaster - her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman..." (282). The "responsibility" is life, "one's parents giving it into one's hands, this life, to be lived to the end..." (281), and with it comes "in the depths

of her heart an awful fear" (281). This is the fear of choice since the responsibility of life involves endless moments of choice and decision. Even the more subtle and unconscious choices of which sensations to follow, which to perceive, and to which to give depth tax the energies of Clarissa's extremely sensitive and spiritual imagination. Her imagination is ever-aware of their vibrations and their demands to be noticed:

"...so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing to another..." (281-282). Clarissa's sympathy allows her to move more deeply within herself towards her centre through her youth to the present, for it is in the present that she had "lost herself to the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank" (282). It is because of Richard that this "process of living" (282) can slow itself down enough, and last long enough to be recognized "with a shock of delight" (282) as the "process of living" (282). The window towards which she walks is a physical symbol of the reflecting surface within her mind where she sees "that young man" (282) who is her polar image. At the same time the window is a symbol of the proximity of "the old lady" (283), of the aliveness within Clarissa of the "virgin protecting chastity" (50) and of the "nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower" (45) even as Clarissa is having her party. The "sky" and the "clock" striking both unifying symbols that remind the reader of the oneness of past and present, of time and atmosphere, which bind Septimus Warren Smith and Clarissa.

(Virginia Woolf's entry for Thursday, August 30th, 1923, in A Writer's Diary,¹⁹ reads: "...how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters: I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect and each comes to daylight at the present moment." In this respect she succeeds beautifully here. The fact that Clarissa rejoices at Septimus having "thrown it away" (283) is the expression of ambivalence within herself. His death is a defiance and a victory over the smothering forces that have surrounded him. At the same time his death permits Clarissa to experience the defiance and the victory imaginatively and, as a result, to liberate herself spiritually in her world without having to pay the price of death's finality, at least not yet. What is resurrected within Clarissa of this young man is his sensitivity and his artistic imagination and not the sensitivity stretched out to insane proportions, not his illness, not the unhealthy, unnatural aspects of his marriage. These seeds of possibilities as the reader has witnessed throughout the novel surface to express the ambivalence within Clarissa but they are never allowed to emerge so fully as to threaten the person who is "Clarissa Dalloway:" This is why the young man, Septimus, dies and why Clarissa is able to stand at the window at one moment feeling "glad that he had done it" (283), able to let her spirit merge with his in the "leaden circles" which "dissolved in the air" (283-284) and at the next moment feeling "But she must go back. She must assemble" (284) to finally come "in from the little

¹⁹ Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, (London: Hogarth Press), p. 60.

room" (284) into the party which is almost over, into the presence of those who are fond of and supportive towards her:

When one was young, said Peter, one was too much excited to know people. Now that one was old, fifty-two to be precise (Sally was fifty-five, in body, she said, but her heart was like a girl's of twenty); 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. No, that is true, said Sally. She felt more deeply, more passionately, every year. It increased, he said, alas, perhaps, but one should be glad of it - it went on increasing in his experience...

There's Elizabeth, he said, she feels not half what we feel, not yet. But, said Sally, watching Elizabeth go to her father, one can see they are devoted to each other. She could feel it by the way Elizabeth went to her father.

For her father had been looking at her, as he stood talking to the Bradshaws, and he thought to himself, Who is that lovely girl? And suddenly he realised that it was his Elizabeth, and he had not recognized her, she looked so lovely in the pink frock. Elizabeth had felt him looking at her... And Richard and Elizabeth were rather glad it was over, but Richard was proud of his daughter. And he had not meant to tell her, but he could not help telling her....

"Richard has improved. You are right," said Sally. "I shall go and talk to him. I shall say good-night. What does the brain matter," said Lady Rossetter, getting up, "compared with the heart?"

"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 excitement?

It is Clarissa, he said.

For there she was.

(294-296)

These people who are so closely wound up in Clarissa's past are the ones who at the end of the party radiate through their words and actions the Clarissa who has come "in from the little room" (284) even though they do not speak for her sake or in her presence

until the very last moment when Clarissa appears before Peter Walsh. It is inevitable that the Clarissa who has had the kind of vision she has had in her silent moment in "the little room" (284) should also have a husband and daughter like Richard and Elizabeth who are "devoted to each other" (295), and have, too, an old friend like Sally who witnesses this devotion. It is natural that the devotion between father and daughter be transparent in the narrative flow, "For her father had been looking at her, as he stood talking to the Bradshaws, and he had thought to himself, Who is that lovely girl? And suddenly he realised that it was his Elizabeth..." (295), as the two persons' consciousnesses seem to merge and fuse completely and yet in comic fashion: "He had looked at her, he said, and he had wondered, Who is that lovely girl? and it was her daughter! That did make her happy. But her poor dog was howling" (296). The merging is linguistically expressed in similar fashion in the old friendship between Sally and Peter: "...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. No, that is true, said Sally. She felt more deeply, more passionately, every year. It increased, he said, alas, perhaps, but one should be glad of it - it went on increasing in his experience" (294-295). It is also, then, natural that there be an attraction between these four people who are the closest to Clarissa, that they be together at the end of the party to symbolically express the completion of Clarissa just before she appears in front of them after her experience in "the little

room" (284), for these four characters project qualities that exist harmoniously and yet independently within Clarissa. The "extraordinary excitement" (296) which fills Peter, now "terror" (296), now "ecstasy" (296), is the harmonious integration and mutual independence of these forces which triumph within Clarissa, the party truly being the celebration of this triumph so that any one may stand back and say "It is Clarissa" (296) and know (as Peter does) without a doubt "For there she was" (296).

CHAPTER THREE. - PART ONE

To The Lighthouse²⁰ (1927) is generally considered by critics to be Virginia Woolf's best work. It is easy enough to see why. Here the critic finds a fine example of the author's stream-of-consciousness style with neither the extreme narrative diffusion nor the extreme concentration of time/ space axes that occur respectively in the two earlier novels (Jacob's Room (1922), Mrs. Dalloway (1925)) and with neither the diffusion of characters nor the extremely fluid time/space dimensions that occur in The Waves (1931), which is to follow. Here, too, is unmistakable intensity of feeling and psychic unfolding which is in this novel particularly due to the less obtrusive voice of the narrator. The "supposedly" necessary self-conscious reflection of the ego which is quite noticeable in the other novels does not occur here. The characters are vividly portrayed with the least amount of self-consciousness while still keeping within the stream-of-consciousness style which at least in Virginia Woolf's art has usually effected the sensation of an ego being observed at the same time as it is closely observing others. James Hafley makes this point in The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf As Novelist²¹,

²⁰ Virginia Woolf, To The Lighthouse, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969). All following page references are included in the thesis text.

²¹ James Hafley, The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf As Novelist, (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963), p. 90.

The role of the narrator or central intelligence is both more important and less noticeable in To The Lighthouse than in Mrs. Dalloway. As in the earlier novel, the narrator is a means by which the reader attains a unity of response to the diverse personalities within whose consciousnesses he has the illusion of being; he is objectively unconscious of a narrator, but the narrator makes possible both the artistic validity of the novel's statement and his acceptance of it. Far from being a stream-of-consciousness novel, To The Lighthouse is the objective account of a central intelligence that approaches and assumes the characters' consciousness (just as Clarissa and Mrs. Ramsay enjoin themselves vicariously to all life) but does not become completely identified with any one consciousness. This central intelligence is thus free to comment upon the whole in what seems a completely impersonal manner....

Moreover, the reader finds a comprehensive plot, (although in the most part comprised of memory jumps), which does not overly confine characters or psychic movement. And the narrative possesses that rare quality of diaphanousness which gives to each character a truth of being, an unquestionable integrity, an unself-conscious self-assertion even in its apparently self-conscious moments as if a light were radiating their identities for the reader rather than the characters' own self-expression. Through organic fusion the patterns of imagery participate immensely in the creation of this tangibility in the characters. In her critical study Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage²² Harvena Richter points out that "G.E. Moore's principle of organic fusion...widened, especially for Virginia Woolf, and to some extent for E.M. Forster and Roger Fry, into a recognition of the unity between the self and the perceptual world...Virginia

²² Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 18

Woolf fused it into a literary gestalt in which feeling and form, theme and content, and aspects of self, time, and reality form a reciprocal and interdependent whole." Always there is the illusion of effortless creativity on the part of the author, of intimacy and sharing. The theme is one of creativity, of what goes into the making of a work of art, of attempt at balance and harmony, of happy reconciliation, and of the encompassing ambivalences thereof. All these techniques render a symmetry of handling which makes To The Lighthouse a unique novel. Rather than do a lengthy detailed analysis of the entire process of creation in To The Lighthouse as it unfolds to reflect Virginia Woolf's view of the seemingly opposite energies at work within man's internal and external reality, I would like instead to demonstrate the actual presence of this theme in short study of several key "moments of vision." Once more I quote from Harvena Richter's Virginia Woolf²³:

The multiplicity of stimuli and responses within the moment of being suggests that the moment itself is not a single state of consciousness but rather an organization of many simultaneous states which interpenetrate and extend vertically from a surface layer we cognize to the deep levels of which we are scarcely aware. The moment, then, is a microcosm of being, for it includes the entire world of consciousness and organic response, and the experience to be found within that miniature world is even more complex than the simple categories of seeing, feeling, thinking, and experiencing time would suggest.

...Mrs. Woolf differs most perhaps from Joyce in this, for Joyce's "epiphanies" - moments of insight or

²³ Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf, (Princeton, 1970), pp. 40 and 49.

vision - reflect perfect stillness (a working out of his aesthetic theories) whereas hers are merely the climax of the moving moment and in themselves seem to constitute perceptions of eternal motion...

The first section of To The Lighthouse is entitled "The Window" and it begins with Mrs. Ramsay's answer to her youngest son's question "'Are we going to the Lighthouse?'" (72), a question which sets in motion the current of ambivalence that runs throughout the novel. Already it has risen to the surface in the first few paragraphs (pages 5 to 7 of the text) as child and parents are introduced into the story. James' "private code, his secret language" (5) permeates a large part of the novel; it is a language in which "any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallize and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests..." (5). It creates a flux of mood and unfolding within the narrative between one character and another, between one character and objects in his reality, or between one character and his memories, a flux that can be likened to the motion of the waves. For this very reason alone the image of the wave is of most importance to a fuller understanding and expression of the process of the tensions manifested in this novel. It is not only in the extremes of emotion (as the ebb and flow of the wave) that this essential mood is being expressed nor in the contrasting descriptions of characters and of traits within the same character; it is also in the subtle narrative closing of one person's thoughts and introduction of another's (as the crest and trough of the wave and the eternal flow of one wave into another and another and yet another).

The window captures these family members into one of the Ramsay household's dramatic moments. The window also lays bare the "parts" comprising the "whole" drama to the relentless eye of the Lighthouse beam. At the same time the beam of light unites the drama to the mythopoeic "explanation" of ambivalence by uniting it to the ceaseless motion of the waves and to the awesome cycles of nature, that hold together the universe and define the island as it is known by the Ramsays. This knowing is at once intimately revealed in the narrating of domestic events and in the extent to which familiar details are disclosed to the reader. It is also delicately, even mystically, veiled in the very titling of the first section as "The Window" and in the constant presence of Lighthouse beam, a thing diffuse and almost insubstantial as it simultaneously gives outline to objects and people and a measure to darkness and silence. The lengthy passage from pages 71 to 76 ("She turned the page; there were only a few lines more...For he wished, she knew, to protect her ") is a good example of this effect. Here the subtle use of counterpoint is magnified. As Mrs. Ramsay is reading the fairy-tale to James, external control does not betray inner anxiety and inner thoughts do not intrude on outer actions. The words of the fairy-tale surface just as the stroke of the Lighthouse does to arrest and reveal the thought which precedes and follows. They connect, amplify, express relationship and unity while at the same time they delineate fragments on which the eyes may focus. Mrs. Ramsay's need "to be silent; to be alone" (72) leads to her meeting with the beam of light, a meeting which identifies her as it identifies the light:

...and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, 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. (73)

This is "That great clan's" (5) sensitivity expressing itself through a "secret language" (5), the language of organic fusion. She is alone, yet she attaches herself and the significance and largeness of life not only to the stroke of the light but also to the specific time of day, to the stocking in her hand ("she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles") (73) and to the very act itself of looking. At the same time the "core of darkness" (73), "wedge of darkness" (73), "all spreading, it is unfathomably deep..." (73) exists through the light, each infinitely echoing the other. The counterpoint is further magnified as Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts echo the repetitive movement of light: "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..." (73-74). Her thoughts also vibrate around the earlier idea that "children never forget" (72). In the next moment contrariety rushes forward creating disturbance in the narrative with the "triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity" (73), manifesting once more the wave-like flow of duality:

...when suddenly she added, We are in the hands of the Lord.

But instantly she was annoyed with herself for saying that. Who had said it? not she; she had been trapped into saying something she did not mean. She looked up over her knitting and met the third stroke and it seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes, searching as she alone could search into her mind and her heart, purifying out of existence that lie, any lie. (74)

The counterpoint augments as the images of "wave" and "Lighthouse beam" weave the warp and weft (the knitting reinforces this event) of mood in the descriptive stream of consciousness as in "Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by" (73):

...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, exquisite 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! (75-76)

The light and waves continue to have such striking effect on Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts that it seems the thoughts will no longer be able to contain themselves as in the waves which "curved and swelled and broke upon the beach" (76) and in the sharp face-to-face contact of the lightbeam. Above all, this counterpoint is made manifest in the unfolding of the narrative, now trance-like incantation, now annoyance, now release and selfless interrogation with recognition of her own beauty "like that light" (74),

and once again a return to the thought which has created the annoyance. This reflection envelopes Mrs. Ramsay in an atmosphere:

...No happiness lasted; she knew that. She knitted with firm composure, slightly pursing her lips and, without being aware of it, so stiffened and composed the lines of her face in a habit of sternness that when her husband passed....her remoteness pained him, and he felt, as he passed, that he could not protect her, and, when he reached the hedge, he was sad...He looked into the hedge, into its intricacy, its darkness.
(74-75)

It is an atmosphere that inevitably affects Mr. Ramsay. Ironically, Mrs. Ramsay continues her train of thought which, surfacing as it does, appears to be both a comment on her husband's act of looking at the hedge, with seeming obliviousness as to the course of his present mood, and a recognition of the solidarity, of the bond, which she has happily come upon and made part of her act of "purifying out of existence that lie" (74) just as she makes her mood and energy a part of the stocking she knits:

Always, Mrs. Ramsay felt, one helped oneself out of solitude reluctantly by laying hold of some little odd or end, some sound, some sight. She listened but it was all very still; cricket was over; the children were in their baths; there was only the sound of the sea.
(75)

Mrs. Ramsay's solitude and its previous association with the third stroke of the Lighthouse, as well as her experience of organic fusion, have made her suddenly aware of the sea whose sound and movement is always present from the beginning in actuality and in spiritual form at once. The counterpoint and the organic fusion that is so much a part of this counterpoint reveals itself finally as a statement of marriage at both a particular and a universal level:

...And again he would have passed her without a word had she not, at that very moment, given him of her own free will what she knew he would never ask, and called to him and taken the green shawl off the picture frame, and gone to him. For he wished, she knew, to protect her. (76)

In the same way that the fusion of Lighthouse and wave has been effected so, too, has the coming together of this man and this woman. And although their fusion will always as an expression of the "silent" tension show its parts, the hope and anticipation of fusion and reconciliation nevertheless prevail. Thus for the onlooker Lily it is a question of "the relations of masses, of lights and shadows...how to connect this mass on the right 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" (62-63). For the reader is never allowed to forget the presence of the Artist, Lily, through whose eyes the vision achieves concrete form. For Lily, as disturbing as the sight of the Ramsays is, it is always haloed in love as if these people have been seized by the very essence of that "secret language" (5). Lily heralds the "hope and anticipation of fusion and reconciliation" (mentioned above) within this couple:

Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called 'being in love' flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them. And, what was even more exciting... how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach. (54-55)

and:

...when they turned and saw the Ramsays. So that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball. That is what Mrs. Ramsay tried to tell me the other night, she thought. For she was wearing a green shawl, and they were standing close together watching Prue and Jasper throwing catches. And suddenly the meaning which, for no reason at all, as perhaps they are stepping out of the Tube or ringing a doorbell, descends on people, making them symbolical, making them representative, came upon them, and made them in the dusk standing looking, the symbols of marriage, husband and wife. (84-85)

In the latter quotation the reader has before him the quite literal expression of "marriage", its universal and particular meaning through the Ramsays and their present state of harmony.

In Virginia Woolf,²⁴ Harvena Richter mentions the fact that "time for Virginia Woolf was not measured by the clock but experienced emotionally - hence her phrase "moment of being". By the clock, the span of the moment of being might be merely five minutes or five seconds. Experienced emotionally/mentally, it is seen to be composed, as is her moment of a summer's night, of a multiplicity of states of consciousness, a succession of awarenesses which take place not in five minutes - which posits a past, present, and future - but in the all-inclusive now." The same point is made by Erich Auerbach in Mimesis,²⁵ "...a sharp contrast results between the brief span of time occupied by the external event and the dreamlike wealth of a process of consciousness which traverses a whole subjective universe." Moreover,

²⁴ Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf, (Princeton, 1970), p. 38

²⁵ Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: 1953), p. 538

the presence of ambivalence continues its "conscious" expression in the image of the ball ("...there was a sense of things having been blown apart, of space, of irresponsibility as the ball soared high..." (84)) and in the way that as the light fails the outlines of the bodies become "sharp-edged" (85) and yet "ethereal" (85), so that the "great distance" (85) and the "vast space" (85) which mark the "failing light" (84-85) can hardly be distinguished from the bodies themselves, thus creating a haunting effect which elevates the domestic scene to universal heights. But the ambivalence is more subtly (and it seems unwittingly) expressed by Lily herself. For as onlooker, she stands apart and comments on "the symbols of marriage, husband and wife" (84) and on the after-effect of this moment of vision when "the symbolical outline which transcended the real figures sank down again" (84). She informs the reader that "Mrs. Ramsay greeted them with her usual smile (oh, she's thinking we're going to get married, Lily thought) and said, 'I have triumphed tonight,' meaning that for once Mr. Bankes had agreed to dine with them..." (84) as if she herself were able to read Mrs. Ramsay's mind. Although these are Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts as earlier passages point out ("She focused her short-sighted eyes upon the backs of a retreating couple. Yes, indeed it was. Did that not mean that they would marry? Yes, it must! What an admirable idea! They must marry!" (83) and "Smiling, for an admirable idea had flashed upon her this very second - William and Lily should marry..." (30)), Lily, from the position of commentator, is as dissatisfied with an "easy" definition of the Ramsays, and especially of Mrs. Ramsay, as

she is filled with a curious mixture of contrary feelings that prevail right up to the finish of her painting, which for this reason has taken so long to complete. As much as Lily is a part of the integrity of the vision, she is so as she symbolizes the third person view of the marriage which at its very best becomes the painting, so that the "artist" is the focus of attention as much as the "marriage" is. The marriage essentially involves the fusion of a male and a female so that each partner takes on new meaning, becoming "wife" or "husband" to and through the other partner. In To The Lighthouse there are repeated hints that the marriage or fusion has been reconciled but with some reservations; the husband appears to embody the "masculine" principle of being more rational and intellectually objective; the wife appears to embody the "feminine" principle of being more imaginatively expansive and subjective. The attraction between the two appears to be quite understood, and yet the reader witnesses:

'Poor little place,' he murmured with a sigh. She heard him. 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.

It annoyed her, this phrase-making, and she said to him, in a matter-of-fact way, that it was a perfectly lovely evening. And what was he groaning about, she asked, half laughing, half complaining, for she guessed what he was thinking - he would have written better books if he had not married.

He was not complaining, he said. She knew that he did not complain. She knew that he had nothing whatever to complain of. And he seized her

hand and raised it to his lips and kissed it with an intensity that brought the tears to her eyes, and quickly he dropped it. (80-81)

and earlier in the novel:

Every throb of this pulse seemed, as he walked away, to enclose her and her husband, and to give to each that solace which two different notes, one high, one low, struck together, seem to give each other as they combine. Yet, as the resonance died, and she turned to the Fairy Tale again, Mrs. Ramsay felt not only exhausted in body (afterwards, not at the time, she always felt this) but also there tinged her physical fatigue some faintly disagreeable sensation with another origin. Not that, as she read aloud the story of the Fisherman's Wife, she knew precisely what it came from; nor did she let herself put into words her dissatisfaction when she realized, at the turn of the page when she stopped and heard dully, ominously, a wave fall, how it came from this: she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband; and further, could not bear not being entirely sure, when she spoke to him, of the truth of what she said. Universities and people wanting him, lectures and books and their being of the highest importance - all that she did not doubt for a moment; but it was their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that anyone could see, that discomposed her; for then people said he depended on her, when they must know that of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible. But then again, it was the other thing too - not being able to tell him the truth, being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be, fifty pounds perhaps, to mend it; and then about his books, to be afraid that he might guess, what she a little suspected, that his last book was not quite his best book (she gathered that from William Bankes); and then to hide small daily things, and the children seeing it, and the burden it laid on them - 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. (46-47)

This "mysterious" fusion is further projected in the children of this union, for out of them issues forth not only the multiplicity

of oneness but also the possibility of antagonism between the separate selves which comprise their oneness. This idea of "fission whilst fusion" is symbolically reflected in certain images. The image of the "shot" (30) (followed by the sharp "Jasper!" (31)) that sends the "flock of starlings" (30) to flight only to later settle "on the tops of the elm trees" (31) and the description of Cam as "a bird, bullet, or arrow, impelled by what desire, shot by whom, at what directed, who could say?" (63) only to later be "the projectile dropped in mid career" (63) suggest the "rebellious" energies that long to burst forth but that do tame themselves in time and in doing so ultimately reflect the "natural" state (by the decision and the direction) of that person. The reader becomes aware that as the children are the product of "fission whilst fusion", they are also the catalyst of that same ambivalent oneness; which idea is contained in Mrs. Ramsay's sensitive reflection as she dresses for dinner (pages 92 to 94). For just as Mrs. Ramsay turns to Rose in the hope of finding a more clear description of the emotion that the "movement of the wings, beating out, out, out..." (93) arouses in her, so, too, Rose attaches "great importance to this choosing what her mother was to wear" (93). This very passion in turn arouses in Mrs. Ramsay the certainty that "Rose would suffer" (94), an inevitability that is already "secretly" projected and reinforced through the mother's personal belief and her actions towards the child: "and what else? oh, yes, it might be cold: a shawl. Choose me a shawl, she said, for that would please Rose, who was bound to suffer so" (94).

The playful animism which has lulled the children into the fairy-tale world of "poor old Joseph and Mary" (94) the reader witnesses again lulling at bedtime the frightened Cam:

'But think, Cam, it's only an old pig,' said Mrs. Ramsay, 'a nice black pig like the pigs at the farm.' But Cam thought it was a horrid thing, branching at her all over the room.

'Well then,' said Mrs. Ramsay, 'we will cover it up,' and they all watched her go to the chest of drawers, and open the little drawers quickly one after another, and not seeing anything that would do, she quickly took her own shawl off and wound it round the skull, round and round and round, and then 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 the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; 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 would 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.
(132)

It lulls the child through an ingenious metamorphosis of "that horrid skull" (131) and "that horrid thing branching at her all over the room" (132), into "how lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a beautiful mountain..." (132), until finally "Cam was asleep" (132). It is facilitated by the slow, magical rhythms of graceful dance, music and poetry, the child within Mrs. Ramsay coming to life and controlling the situation even as she is mother. This same playful animism, so

powerfully effective because of the very organic fusion which marks its essence and which permits the delicate blurring and merging of outlines and thus the illusive conversion of one state of reality into another, this same animism has cast Rose's fate and has subtly lulled the reader into accepting it. (The latter impression creates for this reader the feeling that Virginia Woolf is once again testing her characters' credibility.)

The dinner demonstrates the author's use of the expansive quality of language to mirror her vision. The "dinner" functions as image of focal point, providing a communal setting in which the reader is able to view simultaneously the private thought and social behavior of the Ramsay family. The dinner table draws together the individual members and friends, people who have temporarily made this house their home. While it unites it catches each one forever in his or her private moment of isolation, of recognition of personal vulnerability. At the same time as this painful recognition is accented, never being allowed to pass unnoticed, as if to do so would be a trick or a lie, in any event a camouflaging of the truth of reality, the dinner sitting penetrates the aloneness of each person and unites them physiologically, in their initial discomfort and in their common need for food as well as spiritually, poetically, in the glow of the candle flames. It is not simply that many finite selves sit down together and thus become one in a focal centre, but that in this one sitting the many shapes of "self" within a single person and between single

people who meet and greet each other, change, unfold, reveal, retreat only to reveal once more, and finally, without really understanding how or why, give of themselves much more than is initially their intention. Although the merging of selves appears to be so gracefully brought about (having been so graciously urged by Mrs. Ramsay), there is always present a sense of the fragility of this merging, as if each person is vaguely conscious of having been pressured into having "been nice" (107), and comes with relief to the end of the meal, partly relief that the meal has closed successfully and partly relief that he or she no longer has to submit to a role and is now free to move in whatever direction he or she pleases. All this is being subtly "masked" (and therefore unveiled) in the soft, melancholy lull of "Luriana, Lurilee" (127, 128):

It was necessary now to carry everything a step further. With her foot on the threshold she waited a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked, and then, as she moved and took Minta's arm and left the room, it changed, it shaped itself differently; it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past.

As usual, Lily thought. There was always something that had to be done at that precise moment, something that Mrs. Ramsay had decided for reasons of her own to do instantly... Then one saw Mrs. Ramsay in the midst of this hubbub standing there with Minta's arm in hers, bethink her 'Yes, it is time for that now, and so make off at once with an air of secrecy to do something alone.' And directly she went a sort of disintegration set in; they wavered about, went different ways... thus giving a turn to the whole poise of the evening, making the weight fall in a different direction... while the others stood looking at Mrs. Ramsay going upstairs in the lamplight alone. Where, Lily wondered, was she going so quickly? (128-129)

The lull is very like the lulling which the reader has seen Mrs. Ramsay share with her children. Its effect is magnified by the

previously described, glow of the candlelight which renders a pleasant diffusion to whatever outlines exist. Yet the narrative technique betrays the undercurrent of ambivalence for as Chapter 17 closes with Mrs. Ramsay's recognition of the dinner as "already in the past", Chapter 18 begins with Lily's private comment on Mrs. Ramsay's actions. And although the end of the opening paragraph does reveal Lily's fascination and outright curiosity, the first sentence, "As usual, Lily thought" (129), follows on the heels of Mrs. Ramsay's stream-of-consciousness and betrays a note of slight mockery, perhaps even annoying distrust (i.e. annoying for Lily to have to reconcile) of the beautiful Mrs. Ramsay. It is as if the very lull, "the words (she was looking at the window) sounded as if they were floating like flowers or water out there, cut off from them all, as if no one had said them, but they had come into existence of themselves...like music, the words seemed to be spoken by her own voice, outside her self, saying quite easily and naturally what had been in her mind the whole evening while she said different things" (127), had suddenly sent back reverberations of dissonance.

The dinner also offers the reader an opportunity to study organic fusion at work as it proves the existence of tension. Organic fusion has already been made evident in the function of the "candlelight" (112). The reader now finds it in the response to the dish of fruit. "Rose's arrangement" (112) draws Mrs. Ramsay out of herself, mythopoeically inviting her to participate in the birth of imagination and consciousness and especially

of art. She willingly shares in the fantasy with her whole being. The bond, and thus the complete participation, is magnified as the candle flames enhance the desirableness of this trophy: "...Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed possessed of great size and depth, was like a world in which one could take one's staff and climb up hills, she thought, and go down into valleys..." (112) The "horny pink-lined shell...a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea" (112) parallels "...they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; had their common cause against that fluidity out there" (112), a parallel which extends the organic fusion further and thus strengthens the language flexibility and reveals the quite powerful narrative control that is actually present throughout the dinner scene. Just as the island later yields to decay (as is so forcefully described in the middle section entitled "Time Passes" (pages 145-158)) so, too, the dish of fruit contains within itself the seeds of this ambivalence:

No, she said, she did not want a pear. Indeed she had been keeping guard over the dish of fruit (without realizing it) jealously, hoping that nobody would touch it. Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes, then over the horny ridge of the shell, putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape, without knowing why she did it, or why, every time she did it, she felt more and more serene; until, oh, what a pity that they should do it - a hand reached out, took a pear, and spoilt the whole thing. In sympathy she looked at Rose. She looked at Rose sitting between Jasper and Prue. How odd that one's child should do that! (125)

The dinner places what passes between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay before everyone else's eyes. It suggests their vulnerability as

well as the strength of this silent union (see to what extent the voices of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay have merged in the compact narrative technique - a witness to their lasting though somewhat melodramatic marriage). The dinner magnifies the ambivalence of "sympathy momentarily" (112) that has become thematically the expression of apparent opposites, in this case the mysterious vibrating polarities of male and female. It also permits the marriage to undergo social scrutiny (as though once more there is the need to test its credibility) - the quiet moment of poetry reading and knitting which follows later in the evening creates the illusion that the reader is now receiving something real, something private and special and mysteriously complex which cannot be denied. This moment in which husband and wife are alone is very like that moment in which Mrs. Ramsay reads to James while Mr. Ramsay stands apologetically to one side, wanting, needing, to be noticed and soothed by the mother of his child (pages 42 to 46). In that moment Mrs. Ramsay gives magnificently of all her vibrant energies as only she seems to know how. It is a giving that is sublime in experience and it achieves its purpose, and yet it is a giving that does possess its counter-reaction. Nowhere in this novel is the sexual aspect of the husband and wife relationship so explicitly described. The images are overflowing with allusions, and James' feeling that his father's presence is displeasingly intrusive is unmistakably obvious and is emphasized so by these exact sexual allusions. The organic fusion which accentuates these allusions as they lead to the experience of "exquisite

abandonement to exhaustion" (145) also assures that this moment will doubtless leave a lasting impression on James, a fact which later proves itself in the final section of the novel. The remarkable merging of voices, mother's, father's, son's and narrator's, the highly effective narrative accomplished by compressing person and person, person and thought, and thought and spoken word which together evoke the sensation of the immediacy of the moment, all these techniques impress the author's vision on the reader's mind. Moreover, a reversal occurs in this passage, for as intrusive as James feels his father's presence to be, the closing of the quotation does actually suggest that it is the son who does not belong "standing between her knees, very stiff..." (44), a suggestion which the reader finds further reinforced in the extent to which the son is silently frustrated, almost nullified (with respect to his own child-centred demands), the son's feeling being completely opposite to the mother's (also silent) measure of fulfilling release. Mrs. Ramsay's "exquisite abandonement to exhaustion" (45) is somewhat betrayed by the position of the son and by his silent hatred. Contrarily, as the later moment is shared only between husband and wife, it allows each partner a far greater degree of distance without the earlier immediacy and urgency, and does not evoke sexual feelings so much as spiritual ones. This time the husband and wife become encircled in an aura of childlike and ageless companionship. In A Writer's Diary,²⁶ Virginia Woolf notes the following:

²⁶ Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 98.

The Married Relation.

Arnold Bennett says that the horror of marriage lies in its "dailiness." All acuteness of relationship is rubbed away by this. The truth is more like this: life - say 4 days out of 7 - becomes automatic but on the 5th day a bead of sensation (between husband and wife) forms which is all the fuller and more sensitive because of the automatic customary unconscious days on either side. That is to say the year is marked by moments of great intensity. Hardy's "moments of vision." How can a relationship endure for any length of time except under these conditions?

The sweet and relaxing experience of organic fusion in the last four pages of the "The Window" section affirms a momentary reconciliation of the inherent polarity that emanates from within this household. The moment is not tinged with the slight allusion to incestuousness that appeared in the earlier scene. Consciousness seeks quiet as it welcomes the restorative comfort and peace of another night's sleep. Yet even in this tranquil moment there rises to the surface one bare male beside one bare female with their ceaseless tremor of "needing", "seeking", "advancing", "receding", "knowing", "giving", "receiving" and "fulfilling" that constitutes the marriage, that binds creation and creativity and renders the latter its full identity.

The closing of "The Window" echoes "that solace which two different notes, one high, one low, struck together, seem to give each other as they combine...the resonance...the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together..." (46-47) as reader is led gracefully into "Time Passes". This interval of twenty pages is generally considered to be a Woolfian feat of genius, for these twenty pages do not simply mark the passing of time - ten years to be exact - as if the reader were

travelling down a very long tunnel and must be patient for a while before he once more faces the outside world. Rather, these twenty pages gives the novel its spirit of dynamism, its breath or "anima", so to speak, as has been symbolically achieved with the aura which surrounds Mrs. Ramsay and with the degree to which she participates in "the techniques of organic fusion. These techniques take the reader to the novel's very source of mythopoeic unfolding by revealing its cosmic dimension, its recognition of a universe and of a virtually overwhelming tradition of the "word", art and literature as well as its recognition of the "flood" (143) of imagination, of "that hesitation when dawn trembles and night pauses" (158) and of "the quivering thing, the living thing" (35) within the act of conception which is followed by the nourishing of creativity, even at the price of disintegration, loss and negative withdrawal along the way, or so it seems for Virginia Woolf. The positive note "For she had triumphed again" (142) on which the first section ends and which is itself a product of an ambivalent interaction is fittingly "answered to" in the opening remark of "Time Passes" and in the litany style conversation which has been aroused:

'Well, we must wait for the future to show,' said Mr. Banks, coming in from the terrace.

'It's almost too dark to see,' said Andrew, coming up from the beach.

'One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land,' said Prue.

'Do we leave that light burning?' said Lily as they took their coats off indoors. (143)

The impact "Time Passes" has on the reader is undeniable for the interval succeeds in elevating the "moment" to an even higher realm than has previously been reached. With this larger understanding of its meaning the reader then moves into the final section of the novel. The interval is much more than a quick relating of events or a pretty link rendering symmetry to the total structure of the novel. Instead it mysteriously unveils some thing, some barely tangible thing that hopes to reflect the seemingly opposite energies at work, in the imagination of the sensitive soul (who is Artist) when inception occurs of an idea or impression powerful enough to summon up an entire vision and needing very much to be realized in the physical world. "The Window" provides the image upon which the creation of the work of art is based, that is, the idea or impression, the template or model. It also provides the inspiring aura with which this idea is graced and which attracts the Artist's attention and thus allows the possibility of inception. Ralph Freedman describes the process further in The Lyrical Novel²⁷:

This process of telescoping self and world is based in the main on the idealistic epistemology of the time. The artist represents himself in an object. He portrays his inner experience and by this act transmutes the object that expresses him into a manifestation of his "infinite self" - the visible work of art. The perceived object becomes part of the poet's experience while rendering his private sensibility public, but, in mirroring the poet's inner state, it loses its separate, independent character. In this way, perceived objects

²⁷ Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel, (Princeton, 1966), p. 20.

become manifestations of the poet's spirit - features of his self-portrait - as they are portrayed symbolically in the form of art. The "object" is the catalyst through which a finite, individual self is transmuted into an infinite, aesthetic self.

In this way "Time Passes" also provides the necessary sleep - the long sleep of gestation that magnifies each "moment" (or reinforcement) of the initial idea of the previous section, this idea being the impelling vision: "But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave. Night, however, succeeds to night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers" (145). Although the first two parts of the interval do reflect the author's vision in the imagery, prose structuring and tone, they nevertheless do not prepare the reader for the direction the narrative takes in its qualification of "one night" (145) which continues from Part Three through Part Ten. There is a parenthetical statement which closes the Third Part of "Time Passes"; "Almost it would appear that it is useless in such confusion to ask the night those questions as to what, and why, and wherefore, which tempt the sleeper from his bed to seek an answer. [Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.] (146-147). This jars the reader's consciousness with its simplicity of logical patterning and its stoic adherence to naked truth, and rises in

sharp contrast to the parenthetical statement which closes the second part and encases the "comfortable" domestic detail "[Here Mr. Carmichael, who was reading Virgil, blew out his candle. It was past midnight.]" (145). Because they encase an economy of time, detail and emotion, these parenthetical statements (there are about a half a dozen scattered throughout the interval), bring to mind the line "The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers" (145). They also reflect the extent of emotion that stirs within the Artist's imagination and breast and must be reconciled before the completion of a work of art can be accomplished. As these statements rise to the surface of the narrative and then recede into the flow of its movement, they constitute a large part of the impact of "Time Passes, an interval which ultimately forces the reader to look back and reconsider the worth of the "The Windows". These statements are thus a device for measuring at a distance, and so "objectively", what has been previously perceived by the senses. These same statements inevitably lead to "The Lighthouse" which has been for the characters in "The Window" the far-away object of vision, of awe and inspiration, of larger understanding. "Time Passes" is Virginia Woolf's delicate description of what it is like for an Artist when the physical object of fascination (and therefore of vision) has left the real world forever and in ceasing to be tangible threatens the vision with absurdity. But if there be at all a sense of absurdity it is only because the seeds of such an attitude have long been maturing. The experience parallels Lily's foreshadowing observation: "And

directly she [Mrs. Ramsay] went a sort of disintegration set in; they wavered about, went different ways...making the weight fall in a different direction, as if, Lily thought...they had gone up on to the bridge of the ship and were taking their bearings..." (129). It also parallels an even earlier moment for Lily, this time one of stress:

The jacmanna was bright violet; the wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr. Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semi-transparent. Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself - struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: 'But this is what I see, this is what I see', and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. (23)

It appears necessary to the vision that the object leave such an almost agonizing impression and at the same time that it depart from the physical reality, that is to say, the "departure" is a means of measuring the extent to which the Artist has been impressed, even teased, into translating memory of the physical object to imaginative expression. Furthermore, "Time Passes" contains that "eyeless" (154) knowledge always cloaked in mystery, that cross-sectional and transcendent perspective, which is the essence of the relationship between Artist, vision and work of art, between artistic patterning and subtle unfolding of the Artist's apprehension of reality, so that all these coalesce into the Journey of vision which has been titled To The Lighthouse.

Thus "The Lighthouse" allows the reader to witness in the completion of Lily's painting a symbolic realization of the reconciliation of disparate forces that have made themselves felt throughout the "journey", a journey which begins on the first page of the novel. But it is a reconciliation whose inherent fragility it is impossible to deny:

They both wanted to say, Ask us anything and we will give it you. But he did not ask them anything. He sat and looked at the island and he might be thinking. We perished, each alone, or he might be thinking, I have reached it. I have found it, but he said nothing.

...The parcels for the Lighthouse men', he said. 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, to the rock.

13

'He must have reached it,' said Lily Briscoe aloud, feeling suddenly completely tired out. For the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into a blue haze, and the effort of looking at it and the effort of thinking of him landing there, which both seemed to be one and the same effort, had stretched her body and mind to the utmost. Ah, but she was relieved. Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last.

'He has landed,' she said aloud. 'It is finished.' Then, surging up, puffing slightly, old Mr. Carmichael stood beside her, looking like an old pagan God, shaggy, with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand. He stood by her on the edge of the lawn, swaying a little in his bulk, and said, shading his eyes with his hand: 'They will have landed,' and she felt that she had been right. They had not needed to speak. They had been thinking the same things and he had answered her without her asking him anything. He stood there spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of

mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny. Now he has crowned the occasion, she thought, when his hand slowly fell, as if she had seen him let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth.

Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was - her picture. Yes, with all its green and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision. (236-237)

That final "line there, in the centre" (237) recalls "For now had come that moment, that hesitation when dawn trembles and night pauses, when if a feather alight in the scale it will be weighted down." One feather and the house, sinking, falling, would have turned and pitched downwards to the depths of darkness" (158). This latter quotation makes the reader aware of the extent to which the line is burdened with the almost alien responsibility of maintaining harmony, even sanity; alien because there seems to exist an initial assumption that the harmony is a transitory, and therefore unreal, state of being. Similarly the parenthetical state "[Macalister's boy took one of the fish and cut a square out of its side to bait this hook with. The mutilated body (it was still alive) was thrown back into the sea]" (205) which stands out on its own taking up the entire Part 6 of "The Lighthouse" brilliantly surfaces somewhere along the course of the journey to the Lighthouse and also contrapuntally

in Lily's very moving moment of being (Parts 5 and 7, page 205). In coming up out of the waves that fill the distance between and unite the apparently opposite perspectives of Lighthouse and window, of one island and another, this one parenthetical statement with its subtle merging of subjective and objective is a magnificent foreshadowing of as well as an "explanation" for Lily's final vision, in so far as the critic acknowledges the "logic" which creates the artistic process of this novel. Together, these two quotations (p. 158 and p. 205) help the reader to understand why that "line there in the centre" (237) is so obsessively sought after. The tangible line symbolically validates Lily's "vision" (237) for it "defines" the process which causes the visions to be at all. At the same time, and this is what creates the sense of obsessive urgency, even frenzy, the line is just that - only a line - warding off the never-ending threat of a vision which may at any moment collapse into absurdity.

CHAPTER THREE - PART TWO

The Waves (1931)²⁸ is for this reader Virginia Woolf's most difficult novel, and also her most beautiful, for it is in this novel that she seems to achieve a selfless expression of the "I" in the highly lyrical prose that brings to mind the parallel structure of Old Testament verse. As critic, the reader is faced with the seemingly impossible task of extracting a line here, a phrase there, a paragraph, page, or entire chapter, and then of attempting to explain how these are mythopoeic projections of Virginia Woolf's vision, a task very like trying to chase not butterflies but the shadows of butterflies. The critic approaches a little shamefully the thought of this need to extract any parts at all, to have to choose one part over another, to have to break the "circle" that has been so symmetrically set into motion in this work of art. But if so, it is only in awe of what he witnesses there, for there is just so much, coming all at once, and always achieving a grace of expression, even as this expression is in the very act of revealing the inherent duality.

The "Prologue" (each of the nine "Chapters", which remains unnumbered, has its prologue) is the best place to begin a study of The Waves, not only because of its chronological appearance in the text, but also because it is in and through Prologue I and

²⁸ Virginia Woolf, The Waves, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1969). All following page references are included in the thesis text.

into the first few pages of Chapter One that the vision symbolically comes into being and reveals itself for what it is. Whereas "In the beginning God." (Genesis I:1), here in The Waves the beginning so breathes ambivalence that an ending of death is inevitable. Elements of contrariness rise to the surface with "the sun [which] had not yet risen" (179) for the sun has already come into being before its time. The opening paragraph is full of ideas evoking duality as for example in "the sea was indistinguishable from the sky" (179), "except that" (179), "slightly creased" (179), "as if" (179), "gradually" (179), "the sky whitened" (179), "a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky" (179), "grey" (179), "became barred" (179), "thick strokes" (179), and "one after another... perpetually" (179). These ideas prevail, hovering over the ensuing words as the latter move across the page one into the next, and the next, like the waves that have just been described, shadowing these waves with fatal meaning. In Prologue I reference is made to the "thin veil of white water across the sand" (179) where earth and water meet, each being its own identity at the same time as earth and water mix together into a new form. Here is introduced the concept of "nuance" which continues to develop throughout The Waves. I quote from Ralph Freedman's The Lyrical Novel²⁹:

Virginia Woolf's comprehension of poetry as
a symbolic relationship between person and life

²⁹ Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel, (Princeton, 1966), p. 206.

makes the self a crucial term in her concept of the lyrical novel. The relationship between the individual self, and its range of experience, and the omniscient self of the poet-novelist is the core of her poetic method. As she gradually refines an impersonal image of the self, individual monologues become more and more absorbed into the omniscient point of view whose vision is rendered in a formal perspective. This is Virginia Woolf's approach to poetry: the evolution of the self toward a depersonalized image. Its development culminates in The Waves, but its beginning is clearly reflected in Jacob's Room (1923).

The motion of the waves is thus likened to the "sighing" (179) of "a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously" (179): human life merging with the basic elements, earth, air, fire, and water and their various forms before this same "sleeper" (179) rises with the sun. The "sleeper" (179) is protagonist, and with the awakening of its consciousness, a multi-faceted crystal of being forms refracting the ever-vibrant, ever-changing, ever-one (through Bernard) selves which the reader is to know as Bernard, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, Louis, and Percival. With the recognition of these different elements which surround and penetrate the sleeper's being and with the assimilation of more and more shapes (i.e. more and more sensory cues to which are given more and more names), the experience of separateness and aloneness has been effected. The "garden" (179) of Prologue I is the first sign of community, of civilization, a mark of hope, of strength for the living, in general, and certainly a measure of comfort and blessing for those persons presently enclosed within its house. But notice how the "light" (179) which enters this garden is at once light of higher vision and light of tainted truth. For "the light struck upon the trees... making one leaf transparent and then another" (179). The leaves

come together as tree, and at the same time in this light are singled out, now "one" (179), now "another" (179), being made in turn almost invisible and yet in this transparence having as much of their secret parts revealed to the eye as is possible. The same applies to the birds chirping: "one bird chirped high up; there was a pause; another chirped lower down" (179). The parallel structuring of these two images, "leaf" (179) and "bird" (179), as light calls each into existence and then extinguishes them, so to speak, passing over them and through them to other natural objects, reflects the expansive quality of the language; the second line mirrors the meaning held within the first line and simultaneously extends it just a little further by arousing the senses and thus evoking sensations and distinctions which the first line has not yet managed to evoke. Yet the second line cannot replace the first, as the awakening consciousness is becoming infinitely aware. Instead, these two lines, in the order in which they appear, take on fresh and exciting meaning and create a new "entity" that hails the separation between words and the enduring spirit of words as well as the diffusion of boundaries with their mystical and often mysterious veil of "nuance". The sunlight now focuses on "house" (180) and more specifically on "bedroom window" (180): "The blind stirred slightly, but all within was dim and unsubstantial. The birds sang their blank melody outside" (180). Here, too, the reader is presented with a powerful lyrical parallel. The "blind" (180) will soon be raised to let in light. The "unsubstantial" (180) will soon be given

form. And the "birds" (180) are witness to that fact. "Their blank melody outside" (180) is both a reflection of the "dim and unsubstantial" (180) within, that has managed to reach only this level of symbolic expression of consciousness, and a counterpart to the melody of consciousness which bursts forth. The line echoes the opening lines of Chapter One, as it, too, in its parallel between form and idea, reflects back upon the Prologue which has smoothly introduced the chapter into the narrative unfolding. Moreover, the "melody" (180) as it foreshadows the chorus which follows creates the illusion that these six selves have come out of the same "house" (180). This illusion reflects the composite expression of consciousness and the fullness of "I", which has now as a result of the illusion been enlarged to mythopoeic proportions. But the entire Prologue I as backdrop has been a part of this happening.

The six characters, Bernard, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, and Louis, are supposedly very young, pre-school-aged children in the opening "stanza" and they are slowly, rhythmically, experiencing their reality. The internal world, "said Bernard" (180) or "said Rhoda" (180), begins to assimilate and even parallel the external world, "a ring" (180) or "a sound" (180), through the senses of "sight" and "hearing". The senses are stirred as they qualify the external reality: "...hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light" (180) and "cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down" (180). The lyrical movement of the "melody" (180) with its steady rhythmic flow, is likened to the movement of the waves "sighing like a

sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously" (179), and in actuality the Prologue has suggested that the waves continue to rise and fall "perpetually" (179), lulling the sleeper further into sleep even as these infants awaken from sleep and grow wider-eyed and wider-eared at all that greets them and awaits their greeting. According to Aileen Pippett's The Moth and the Star: A Biography Of Virginia Woolf³⁰, Virginia Woolf is quoted to have made the following comment:

"Now this is very profound what rhythm is, and goes far deeper than words: A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to get it; and in writing (such is my belief) one has to recapture this, and set this working (which has nothing apparently to do with words) and, when, as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it."

At the centre of the experience of knowledge is organic fusion as well as an increasing awareness of self. The technique of "paralleling" is inherent to an unfolding of the acquisition of knowledge and to the ever-widening sense of ego. It is firstly expressed in the melodic form. The first stanza of six voices is echoed again in rhythmic measure in the second and third stanzas. The fourth and fifth stanzas contain five voices which change between stanzas. The same voice rhythm is maintained but minus one member. Finally, there is a return to the six voices in the sixth stanza. What is much more interesting though is the development of ego. The first stanza introduces each person but at his earliest state of consciousness which may be equalled to the pre-conscious expression manifested in

³⁰ Aileen Pippett, The Moth and the Star: A Biography Of Virginia Woolf, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 225.

the words. The focus is on the pattern of subject and verb which repeats itself through the six voices. The second stanza shows the more extensive observations of the outside world. The organic fusion is in the animate descriptions of inanimate objects. "'The leaves are gathered round the window like pointed ears,' said Susan" (180) or "'A shadow falls on the path,' said Louis, 'like an elbow bent'" (180) reflects how knowledge is a curious mixture of observation and projection. The diffused quality of mind at this level of consciousness is able to visualize tangibility in seeming transparency and to then fill apparent emptiness with form: "'Islands of light are swimming on the grass,' said Rhoda. 'They have fallen through the trees'" (180), and "'The birds' eyes are bright in the tunnels between the leaves.' said Neville" (180). The third stanza shows even more elaborate observations of the outside world, for this time the observations merge fully with the self in the heightening of sensory cues which coalesce into "feeling", a feeling that ultimately culminates in the separation between "self" and "other" as in "'Stones are cold to my feet,' said Neville. 'I feel each one, round or pointed, separately'" (181). The vision becomes scientific in minute detail: "'A caterpillar is curled in a green ring,' said Susan, 'notched with blunt feet'" (180). This "scientific" approach never loses sight of the artistic. The vision is filled with the dynamism of life: "'Now the cock crows like a spurt of hard, red water in the white tide,' said Bernard" (181). But even here the vivid and forceful allusion to blood, and therefore death, reveals the

undercurrent of "inevitable" negativism. The melody continues into the fourth, fifth, and sixth stanzas where the reader finds several precious imagistic descriptions that gently call forth nostalgia:

"Now Mrs. Constable pulls up her thick, black stockings," said Susan.

"When the smoke rises, sleep curls off the roof like a mist," said Louis. (181)

In their parallel order and parallel ideas these lines mark the bond of identity, not only between Susan and Louis specifically but also between all the characters in their identity with "self and other." The reader also finds disturbing images as in "'The beast stamps; the elephant with its foot chained; the great brute on the beach stamps,' said Louis" (181), disturbing no doubt because this line repeats Louis' earliest recollection: "'I hear something stamping,' said Louis. 'A great beast's foot is chained. It stamps and stamps and stamps'" (180). The ever-present fixation on negativism which becomes the "credo" for the characters within this novel is later expressed through Louis in:

"...I will achieve in my life - 'Heaven grant that it be not long - some gigantic amalgamation between the two discrepancies so hideously apparent to me. Out of my suffering I will do it. I will know. I will enter.'" (210-211)

and in:

"...yet after all, the problem remains. The differences are not yet solved. Flowers toss their heads outside the window. I see wild birds, and impulses wilder than the wildest birds strike from my wild heart. My eyes are wild; my lips tight pressed. The bird flies; the flower dances; but I hear always the sullen thud of the waves; and the chained beast stamps on the beach. It stamps on the beach. It stamps and stamps." (214-215)

and once again in:

"But now disembodied, passing over fields without lodgment - (there is a river; a man fishes; there is a spire, there is the village street with its bow-windowed inn) - all is dream-like and dim to me. These hard thoughts, this envy, this bitterness, make no lodgment in me. I am the ghost of Louis, an ephemeral passer-by, in whose mind dreams have power, and garden sounds when in the early morning petals float on fathomless depths, and the birds sing. I wash and sprinkle myself with the bright waters of childhood. Its thin veil quivers. But the chained beast stamps and stamps on the shore." (220-221)

Moreover, the three above quotations are all from Chapter Two, a fact which measures the strength of this "credo". The reader notices in the fourth, fifth, and sixth stanzas that the voices are becoming more drawn out as if they are physically embodying the increasing involvement of the performers:

"The birds sang in chorus first," said Rhoda. "Now the scullery door is unbarred. Off they fly. Off they fly like a fling of seed. But one sings by the bedroom window alone." (181)

As if in recoil from the long stretch of expressiveness, as if in mirror-image to the "aloneness" (181), and in contracted anticipation of the plunge that is about to follow, the last line of the sixth stanza ends: "'I burn I shiver,' said Jinny, 'out of this sun, into this shadow'" (182). This line symmetrically joins itself to Bernard's first words "'I see a ring,' said Bernard, 'hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light'" (180), thus creating the illusion of "circle", the idea being further emphasized in the image of the "ring" (180) and of the "loop of light" (181). This image of "circle" brings to

mind the "waves" which act as a leitmotif for the overall vision as has been shown in Prologue I and in the soliloquys of Louis. The "circle" also reminds the reader of the latent need within the total unfolding of consciousness to turn upon itself through its adherence to such a "credo". The symmetry of this image only fixes the idea of something turning upon itself more securely in the novel as a whole. The light, too, which has rendered to each character his first quiver of consciousness, is inevitably fused with the psychic tension which prevails, now "sun" (182), now "shadow" (182), as the body becomes imbued with this knowledge: "'I burn, I shiver...'" (182). In her detailed study, Virginia Woolf³¹, Harvena Richter mentions how "the variation in the images - all based on a single primary shape - make each repetition trigger in the reader's mind a multiple response. It is not merely a single scene or emotion that is revived, but a synthesis of the characters' different feelings toward a single idea or emotion. Seen metaphorically, it symbolizes the changing attitudes toward a particular memory of our own which...involves not only that individual memory but a related series. We might term this a matrix of memory, an extremely complicated nesting of schema which, lifted to consciousness, can revive forgotten complexities of feeling." The ambivalence is never lacking in grace, a grace which delicately veils the inherent duality as the latter permeates

³¹ Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf, (Princeton, 1970), p. 167.

every part of the narrative by manipulating the attitude behind the ceaseless organic fusion. This fusion exists between subject and subject, subject and object, and object and object and underlies the parallel which ends Jinny's remark with "shadow" (182) and begins Louis' soliloquy (the first of the longer soliloquys) with "'Now they have all gone,' said Louis. 'I am alone...'" (182). The thought is still at preconscious level (the children have not yet entered school:

"...I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre. All tremors shake me, and the weight of the earth is pressed to my ribs. Up here my eyes are green leaves, unseeing. I am a boy in grey flannels with a belt fastened by a brass snake up here. Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans. I hear tramlings, tremblings, stirrings round me..." (182)

The characters are expressing at the preconscious level what has penetrated their subconscious level and what later develops into and is expressed at the conscious level. The levels are linked in the complex (and yet seemingly effortless) narrative unfolding and form a chain like the chain which holds fast the foot of "the great brute on the beach" (181). The above quotation (page 182) is a part of the mythopoeic explanation of the origin of man that has revealed itself since the opening of The Waves. The "roots" (182) are important to the origin for they decide what the prevailing attitude is to be. These "roots" (182) are inseparable from man's understanding of his relationship with the world, his assimilation of the active and the passive moods:

"I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk" (182). The two lines are extensions of each other, that is to say they mirror each other, and yet in doing so they also present man with the concept of "polarity" - of complementariness and of opposition. The "roots" (182) imply tradition which suggests the spiritual capacities within man. The reader finds in Louis a quite solid sense of tradition in which past, present, and indirectly future are fused into an ever-present consciousness. There is also the experience of severance which is fixed within the real world as the "tramplings, tremblings, stirrings round me" (182) become the other children at play: "Up here Bernard, Neville, Jinny and Susan (but not Rhoda) skim the flower-beds..." (182) and so the little boy prays, "But let me be unseen." (182)

Jinny partakes of this severance by making contact with Louis at this point in the narrative, "I [Louis] am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered" (183), and by her own question as to the source of being:

"...What moved the leaves? What moves my heart, my legs? And I dashed in here, seeing you green as a bush, like a branch, very still, Louis, with your eyes fixed. 'Is he dead?' I thought, and kissed you, with my heart jumping under my pink frock like the leaves, which go on moving, though there is nothing to move them..." (183)

Jinny's question "What moved the leaves?" (183) becomes answered by Jinny herself in "'Is he dead?' I thought" (183) with her solution pointing to death and non-existence.

Susan partakes of the severance by witnessing the kiss: "I saw them, Jinny and Louis, kissing" (183), and she hopes to

assuage the "agony" (183) by seeking after her origins and making her image anew at the source of her being: "I will take my anguish and lay it upon the roots under the beech trees. I will examine it and take it between my fingers. They will not find me. I shall eat nuts and peer for eggs through the brambles and my hair will be matted and I shall sleep under hedges and drink water from ditches and die there" (183).

Bernard has seen Susan pass the toolhouse door, "with her handkerchief screwed into a ball. She was not crying, but her eyes, which are so beautiful, were narrow as cats' eyes before they spring" (183-184). He followed her to bring comfort when it will be needed. With his curiosity he watches and guards her; his sympathy puts what he sees into words:

"...But she is blind after the light and trips and flings herself down on the roots under the trees, where the light seems to pant in and out, in and out. The branches heave up and down. There is agitation and trouble here. There is gloom. The light is fitful. There is anguish here. The roots make a skeleton on the ground, with dead leaves heaped in the angles. Susan has spread her anguish out. Her pocket-handkerchief is laid on the roots of the beech trees and she sobs, sitting crumpled where she has fallen." (184)

He seems to understand, for Susan, without hesitation, confides:

"I saw her kiss him...And I am squat, Bernard, I am short. I have eyes that look close to the ground..." (184). He shares with her; he attempts to console her once more with words. But Susan will not be consoled: "'I love,' said Susan, 'and I hate. I desire one thing only'" (185). Bernard continues in his efforts and still Susan is not consoled. Rather, she focuses on

their differences, Susan's and Bernard's: "...I am tied down with single words. But you wander off; you slip away; you rise up higher, with words and words in phrases" (185). Bernard will not be put off. He cannot let go of his need for and belief in the power of words to surpass obstacles and has actually touched something of the truth of Susan when he says "We make an unsubstantial territory" (185); there is a bond between Susan and Bernard, unsubstantial as the bond may be, and "words" (185) comprise this bond, measuring both its weakest and its strongest point. With his "words" (185) and "phrases" (185) Bernard succeeds in carrying Susan to the primeval scene she was initially seeking. Like the roots of the trees, "Elvedon" (185) offers an explanation, a consolation, as to the origin of man and it is through Bernard, the artist, that the tradition is passed on. But the story distracts Susan only so far until she becomes that much more aware of the differences between Bernard and herself. And in turning away from "Bernard" (185) her concentration falls on "Rhoda" (185). Bernard, ironically, has returned to the same place in his story from which he began. "I hear nothing. That is only the murmur of the waves in the air" (185) parallels "We shall sink like swimmers just touching the ground with the tips of our toes. We shall sink through the green wair of the leaves, Susan. We sink as we run. The waves close over us, the beech leaves meet above our heads" (184). The cyclical movement further intensifies the lulling power of those earlier "waves". This movement is also reinforced by Susan's

response as her thoughts settle on Rhoda whose element is water and who in the end commits suicide by drowning herself. Here, as Rhoda is introduced into the chain which the characters have begun to form, the attitude which will direct the suicide is already evident in one of the many rehearsals, so to speak, that the reader comes to witness:

"All my ships are white," said Rhoda. "I do not want red petals of hollyhocks or geranium. I want white petals that float when I tip the basin up. I have a fleet now swimming from shore to shore. I will drop a twig in as a raft for a drowning sailor. I will drop a stone in and see bubbles rise from the depths of the sea. Neville has gone and Susan has gone; Jinny is in the kitchen garden picking currants with Louis perhaps. I have a short time alone...I have a short space of freedom. I have picked all the fallen petals and made them swim. I have put raindrops in some. I will plant a lighthouse here, a head of Sweet Alice. And I will now rock the brown basin from side to side so that my ships may ride the waves. Some will founder. Some will dash themselves against the cliffs. One sails alone. That is my ship. It sails into icy caverns where the sea-bear barks and stalactites swing green chains. The waves rise; their crests curl; look at the lights on the mastheads. They have scattered, they have foundered, all except my ship which mounts the wave and sweeps before the gale and reaches the islands where the parrots chatter and the creepers..." (186-187)

Neville, who hates "dangling things...dampish things...wandering and mixing things together," (187) interrupts this flow of fantasy, causing it, ironically, to dangle in mid-air: "'Where is Bernard?' said Neville. 'He has my knife. We were in the tool-shop making boats, and...Bernard dropped his boat and went after her taking my knife, the sharp one that cuts the keel..." (187). At the same time Neville is bound to Rhoda with his boat-making. In this way the reader has seen each character come forward and define his place in the chain. "Roots" (182,

live that life which is sincere to his most private feelings however agonizing these feelings may be. Jinny truly lives in London as a woman of society entertaining younger male friends. Susan leaves the city to live on a farm - the same life her parents lived. She marries there and has children there, devoting all her energies to maintaining only this way of life. Rhoda finds her solitude in London. She and Louis always remain special friends. Finally, she commits suicide - the reader is almost indirectly informed. Louis works in an office in London, always conscious of the difference between himself and others. Neville and Bernard also settle in London. Bernard marries and has a son who is born on the same day that he receives news of Percival's accidental death in India. Each has pursued his own life by choice. At first the awareness of choice concentrates more on the aspect of freedom, of the wide-open excitement and possibilities of life ahead. As time passes and each one settles to the consequences of his choice, each becomes more aware of the limitations of his being, of the failure, while also becoming increasingly aware of the necessity to simply "be". As the novel progresses the characters are no longer seen together as often as they were in their childhood. Their distinct lives have caused them to scatter as each seeks out what best fulfills his personal needs. At this "factual" level of the narrative, the characters are very real people, each marked by a set of gestures, words, feelings, and ideas which urge the

reader to accept the characters separately as well as symbolically. An example is Bernard's description of Jinny in the final chapter of the novel:

"...Jinny - entertaining, no doubt, some new young man. They reached the crisis of the usual conversation. The room would be darkened; chairs arranged. For she still sought the moment. Without illusions, hard and clear as crystal, she rode at the day with her breast bared. She let its spikes pierce her. When the lock whitened on her forehead she twisted it fearlessly among the rest. So when they come to bury her nothing will be out of order. Bits of ribbons will be found curled up. But still the door opens. Who is coming in? she asks, and rises to meet him, prepared, as on those first spring nights when the tree under the big London houses where respectable citizens were going soberly to bed scarcely sheltered her love; and the squeak of trams mixed with her cry of delight and the rippling of leaves had to shade her languor, her delicious lassitude as she sank down cooled by all the sweetness of nature satisfied. Our friends, how seldom visited, how little known - it is true; and yet, when I meet an unknown person, and try to break off, here at this table, what I call 'my life,' it is not one life that I look back upon; I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am - Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs. (368)

Jinny is here described as an unmistakable presence if only in the one vivid sentence, "When the lock whitened on her forehead she twisted it fearlessly among the rest". (368). And yet as clearly as she stands before the reader, Bernard by his need to bring together, sum up and make whole, cannot sever himself from her and from the others when the time comes to make a statement about himself. The "inevitable" closing of the above description reflects this latter point. It is for this very reason of polarization amidst unity or vice versa that the reunion dinners function so dynamically to bond the symbolical and "factual" levels

of interpretation. In these and such scenes the powerful impact of the prose is achieved by the pattern of convolutions between polarization and fusion of the seven, and later six, characters in the novel. Symbolically speaking, within the one human psyche, within the one universal mind of man, there is infinite variety but at any one moment even as the variety is in expression, attitudes or facets of being continually move toward each other, reacting - one to the other - as the psyche recreates itself in the unfolding of Life. The six characters come together briefly and then come apart. In the last chapter Bernard stands alone just as he is later to face his death alone. But because of the person he is, because his self-knowledge has throughout the novel been inseparable from his merging with the others, he seems in his last moments to be accompanied by all the other characters. In actual fact this is only the projection of the artist Bernard who cannot rest from seeking unity, integrity, and the recreation of self from moment to moment in his awareness of Life - elements which every artist seeks. The scene between Jinny and Bernard as they share their feelings about Percival's sudden death, keenly foreshadows the aloneness of Bernard's death:

"...Then comes the terrible pounce of memory, not to be foretold, not to be warded off - that I did not go with him to Hampton Court. That claw scratched; that fang tore; I did not go. In spite of his impatiently protesting that it did not matter; why interrupt, why spoil our moment of uninterrupted community? - Still, I repeated sullenly, I did not go, and so, driven out of the sanctuary by these officious devils, went to Jinny because she had a room; a room with little tables, with little ornaments scattered on little tables.

There I confessed with tears - I had not gone to Hampton Court. And she, remembering other things, to me trifles but torturing to her, showed me how life withers when there are things we cannot share. Soon, too, a maid came in with a note and as she turned to answer it and I felt my own curiosity to know what she was writing and to whom, I saw the first leaf fall on his grave. I saw us push beyond this moment, and leave it behind us for ever. (360)

The waves break on the shore to echo, to capture forever, the final complete expression of Bernard's consciousness which is for Bernard indistinguishable from the sum of all the characters' consciousnesses. But even as the waves break, other waves are in the process of forming. Dispersed throughout London and its surrounding countryside, the remaining characters offer other fragments to Life's pattern. The waves break forth to shed the physical body of Bernard. In doing so they set free the spirit of Bernard that continues to exist eternally as the waves do in the living bodies and spirits of the other characters. Their path is a disturbing one. Nevertheless in the breaking forth of these waves there is at least the attempt to pay tribute to Life through one physical body and one symbolic consciousness.

CHAPTER THREE - PART THREE

Between The Acts (1941)³² is Virginia Woolf's last novel and although the manuscript was completed before her suicide it still remained to have revisions made and was thus published posthumously in 1941, the year of her death. Coming ten years after The Waves, it shows a definite sophistication of style in her novel form. There is a sense of distance between the subject matter and reader, a focusing of time, the events taking place within twenty-four hours, and a fluid three-dimensional setting all coming together in the stream-of-consciousness narrative. With these various techniques the theme of the ambivalent nature of reality also reaches a sophisticated level of expression. Virginia Woolf confronts the reader with a disturbing vision of disintegration that is disguised under as well as barely avoided by a veneer of social manners which itself embodies the tension of hostility. On the one hand, these social manners are a reflection of the actual stunted growth within each character and on the other hand they are a reflection of the imprisonment of the self that longs to rise up out of these chains. The result for this reader is a most uncomfortable recognition of the aborted energies, talents and aspirations that make up these characters, of their always conscious and doomed or failing attempts at life,

³² Virginia Woolf, Between The Acts, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1969). All following page references are included in the thesis text.

an attempt that has inherent not an attitude imbued with life's vitality and faith to endure, but rather an attitude that reiterates antagonism and, at its worst, the morbid state of a hopeless, all-consuming death-in-life. But it would be an injustice not to acknowledge how firmly Virginia Woolf grounds the subjective experience in the diurnal. Once again, she achieves her projection of vision by counterpointing the two possible views of experience, the mondial and the mythopoeitical. The "mondial" comes forth in the extensive descriptions - often intimately domestic - which help to create a recognizable human community. It is with this acknowledgement that the reader is made aware how heavily indebted the projection of such a vision is to the novel of manners. There are frequent references to the location and architecture of the house, "Pointz Hall", which is the setting, and to the barn as it is being prepared for the afternoon activities as well as to the setting for the pageant out of doors, for example:

Rows of chairs, deck chairs, gilt chairs, hired cane chairs, and indigenous garden seats had been drawn up on the terrace. There were plenty of seats for everybody. But some preferred to sit on the ground. Certainly Miss La Trobe had spoken the truth when she said: "The very place for a pageant!" The lawn was as flat as the floor of a theatre. The terrace, rising made a natural stage. The trees barred the stage like pillars. And the human figure was seen to great advantage against a background of sky...

(93)

The tour of Pointz Hall which Lucy Swithin gives William Dodge is a further example of "the human figure...seen to great advantage against a background..." (93):

"The nursery," said Mrs. Swithin.

Words raised themselves and became symbolical. "The cradle of our race," she seemed to say.

Dodge crossed to the fireplace and looked at the Newfoundland Dog in the Christmas Annual that was pinned to the wall. The room smelt warm and sweet; of clothes drying; of milk; of biscuits and warm water. "Good Friends" the picture was called. A rushing sound came in through the open door. He turned. The old woman had wandered out into the passage and leant against the window.

...The audience was assembling. But they, looking down from the window, were truants, detached. Together they leant half out of the window.

(88-89)

The "mondial" is created by what at first appear to be countless trivial details. But image upon image, detail upon detail, a physical being very soon comes to life in a particular place and time. There is far greater economy of expression here than is at first seen in Jacob's Room or even in To The Lighthouse. And it is always a physical being, who, however small his part, lets the reader know that he does actually exist. Each character is aided by the details of place and time. At least in his physical description, the character stands with two feet firmly planted on the ground. Like human beings, these characters do predictable things, and the reader is left with the impression that they will continue to do these things consistently in some future time, a fact which further adds to the credibility of the characters by creating the illusion of time having passed and still passing as the characters are in the process of being observed. For example when "old Oliver struck a blow at her Lucy Swithin's faith" (33) or when Isa [Mrs. Giles Oliver]

orders "Soles... Filleted. In time for lunch please," (21), and again when the little group has settled itself in the garden to enjoy the view and have coffee out of doors: "she [Mrs. Manresa] took the little silver cream jug and let the smooth fluid curl luxuriously into coffee, to which she added a shovel full of brown sugar candy. Sensuously rhythmically, she stirred the mixture round and round" (69). Even the ending of the novel makes reference to the predictable things that make up the flesh and blood substance of these characters. But it is the pageant that truly offers an opportunity to appreciate this recognizable human community. Throughout the pageant Virginia Woolf is true to the individuality she has chosen for each character, whether it is created by physical description, gesture, manner, verbal expression, or by occasional fragments of "biographical facts" as the portrayal of Miss La Trobe exemplifies:

She was always all agog to get things up. But where did she spring from? With that name she wasn't presumably pure English. From the Channel Islands perhaps? Only her eyes and something about her always made Mrs. Bingham suspect that she had Russian blood in her. "Those deep-set eyes; that very square jaw" reminded her - not that she had been to Russia - of the Tartars. Rumour said that she had kept a tea shop at Winchester; that had failed. She had been an actress. That had failed. She had bought a four-roomed cottage and shared it with an actress. They had quarrelled. Very little was actually known about her. Outwardly she was swarthy, sturdy and thick set; strode about the fields in a smock frock; sometimes with a cigarette in her mouth; often with a whip in her hand; and used rather strong language - perhaps, then, she wasn't altogether a lady? At any rate, she had a passion for getting things up.
(71-72)

No reader can now deny the presence of Miss La Trobe. This is because of the very power of Miss La Trobe's physical being which is itself largely due to the subtle demands she makes on her audience by way of her own keyed up "energies". This fact of "presence" applies to all the characters including the minor ones. As for the brilliant satire on village theatricals and on Elizabethan and Restoration drama, it creates a tone of amused indulgence and sympathetic identification which is central to the successful projection of the vision of subjective experience as vision of ambivalence and ordeal. The satire permits the audience to grasp the manifold caricatures of the human body: "a small girl, like a rosebud in pink, advanced...England am I..." (194), "For a moment she stood there, eminent, dominant, on the soap box with the blue and sailing clouds behind her... 'The Queen of this great land...'" (102), "Now the priest, whose cotton wool moustache confused his utterance, stepped forward and pronounced benedicton" (111), and after the first interval: "Reason held the centre of the stage alone. Her arms extended, her robes flowing, holding orb and sceptre, Mable Hopkins stood sublimely looking over the heads of the audience. The audience gazed at her. She ignored the audience. Then while she gazed, helpers from the bushes arranged round her what appeared to be the three sides of a room" (148-149). The caricatures do not end with an imitation of the costume and tradition of English theatrical history, but rather they extend to encompass certain recognizable people who are actually members of the village community. And each does his best to fit the part assigned to him. Furthermore, the

satire on village theatricals is made more lively with the mention of personal rivalry that exists within the village:

Where was Mr. Streatfield? No Clergyman was visible. Perhaps he's in the Barn? "Tommy, cut along and fetch him." Beryl then..." The mothers disputed: One child had been chosen; another not. Fair hair was unjustly preferred to dark. Mrs. Ebury had forbidden Fanny to act because of the nettle-rash. There was another name in the village for nettle-rash.

Mrs. Ball's cottage was not what you might call clean. In the last war Mrs. Ball lived with another man while her husband was in the trenches. All this Miss La Trobe knew, but refused to be mixed up in it. She splashed into the fine mesh like a great stone into the lily pool. The criss-cross was shattered. Only the roots beneath water were of use to her. Vanity, for example, made them all malleable. The boys wanted the big parts; the girls wanted the fine clothes. Expenses had to be kept down. Ten pounds was the limit. The conventions were outraged. Swathed in conventions, they couldn't see, as she could, that a dish cloth wound round a head in the open looked much richer than real silk. So they squabbled; but she kept out of it.

(79-80)

Virginia Woolf seems to have such a wonderful capacity for telling a story, for creating setting and plot and enough involvement in daily living to hold the attention of the reader. For this gift, she ought to be truly respected. To be able to render simultaneously a tone of amused indulgence and sympathetic identification at one level of the vision's projection and one of hopeless, all-consuming death-in-life at another equally valid level of "happening" necessitates an extremely sensitive use of craftsmanship. One tone does not necessarily contradict the other. In Virginia Woolf, the two levels work together to further intensify the vision of ambivalence, of polarization and aloneness as well as of involvement and unity.

What happens, though, as the reader moves through the mondial or physical level of understanding to the mythopoetical or spiritual (meaning here the essence of spirit which renders living the bodily forms) is that the extent of amused indulgence and sympathetic identification begins to be questionable. In so far as the words used describe particular objects and persons, the physical world of Between The Acts could survive with all the lightness of spirit that is usually given a Wildean comedy. But according to Virginia Woolf "it is because of their complexity that they words survive" ("The Death of the Moth and Other Essays³³") and this how the mythopoetical comes to life in a novel such as this one. The reader must naturally take into account the physical reality of the novel even as he concentrates on the symbolical. No image or event exists solely at one level without calling forth the other levels into being. What happens for this reader is that in an attempt at balance between these two moods the one of disillusionment far outweighs the lighter mood. The result is that even normal physical actions are subtly influenced by a spirit of ambivalence. The initial spirit of lightness in the pageant becomes spotted and slightly worn-out as it gives way to self-criticism and self-mockery. It is with this understanding of the symbolical expression of subjective reality as it is revealed through the physical reality that Virginia Woolf succeeds to call

³³ Virginia Woolf, The Death of the Moth and Other Essays, (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), pp. 131-132.

forth what is ultimately for her man's subjective experience.

Pointz Hall provides the setting for this drama. Already in its description there are allusions to the inherent mood which are partly evoked by the actual images and partly by the narrative voice, a cool, almost flippant, non-committal, comment/counter-comment voice of detachment and involvement at once. Where there is light there is also shadow and where there is introduction of a character's consciousness apology is soon to follow. In this setting a painfully undignified metamorphosis takes place; people become bodies, even as the fish in the lily pond are turned into a "fleet of boat-shaped bodies" (55). People become bodies excusing themselves at every turn, at every move, at every gesture whether spoken or in silence, excusing the very breath of their being. The struggle with "ego" (the self-centred part of the "self" that must assert itself possibly in order to feel some sense of control in what has been essentially understood as an indifferent if not cruel world, the "nature" (12) of which Bart speaks) is overwhelming and surfaces in all its complexity with the entrance of certain single characters such as old Oliver (pages 16 to 18). The teasing, which old Oliver refers to as "his little game" (18), necessitates the distortion of his natural shape. The metamorphosis (the "beak of paper" (17) which is meant to be a "snout" (17) and the old man springing upon the child from his hiding-place behind a tree (17)) is more fully effected when he bawls his command ("as if he were commanding a regiment" (18)) "Heel! ...heel, you brute!" (17) to a harmless Afghan hound that has

been "bounding and bouncing among the flowers" (17), and now "sidling, apologetic" (17) cringes at his master's feet. The old man becomes the "wild beast...bad beast" (18) he grumblingly accuses his faithful hound to be. Implicitly the command is aimed at the nurses, and especially at the grandson, George, to react, to notice, to be impressed, a game to which the nurses respond as desired but not the child. For the little boy had been "grubbing". Mythopoeically he had been seeking knowledge and acquiring it - the knowledge of the nature of reality around him, of the apparently opposite forces which seem forever in conflict and yet in their very conflict appear to be reconciled to each other. This acquisition of knowledge had been occurring at the foot of the trees: "The flower blazed between the angles of the roots" (16). These "roots" (16) are the same roots that have earlier been described as "bones" (16). So already the mythopoeic tradition, that merges death with life to the extent that the latter is forever shadowed by the former, has begun to be consciously absorbed by the child. The grandfather has entered the scene at a most crucial moment for the little boy and he definitely succeeds, though unwittingly, to impress this "tradition of duality" on his grandson. The "tearing" ("Membrane after membrane was torn" (16)) measures the grandson's earliest search after the knowledge and especially the sensitive awareness of this reality. But what seems at first a sweet and special experience turns into anguish with the unpleasant and frightening intrusion of the dog followed by its master. Their intrusion forms a part of the knowledge of reality that he is

assimilating: "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" (17). The child's knowledge of ego is inseparable from his subconscious understanding (or acquisition) of his grandfather's ego, which has now resorted to another "game" whose rules are infinitely more subtle, the game of namecalling or ego-categorizing: "'A cry-baby - a cry-baby'" (18). In his fright the child cries out. His cry is also a measure of his helplessness, even hopelessness in the face of such "knowledge" which will surely in time shape his being.

The child's mother, Mrs. Giles Oliver, is seen alone in her bedroom (pages 19 to 21). The "three separate versions" (19) of herself are revealed in the narrative as "inner love" (20) for a Mr. Haines which is mirrored "in the eyes" (20), "outer love" (20) which conceals itself "on the dressing-table" (20) of her bedroom, and a "feeling...that stirred in her now... [for] her little boy George" (20). These three separate selves converge as "she tapped on the window with her embossed hairbrush" (30) into her own sense of aloneness for "they were too far off to hear" (20). The island which she envisions floating "under her window" (20) is the island of her being. At the same time it is an "innocent island", which symbolically

suggests that there is "really no harm or seriousness intended" by the merging of separate selves into one entity of aloneness, and furthermore, marks the irony of her previous thought: "The drone of the trees was in their ears; the chirp of birds; other incidents of garden life, inaudible, invisible to her in the bedroom absorbed them" (20). For the island is anything but "innocent" as the earlier incident between grandson and grandfather has shown. Her sense of aloneness does not cease with this scene. It continues as "She returned to her eyes in the looking-glass" (20) only to find herself groping "in the depths of the looking-glass, for a word to fit..." (21). The reader is left with the fact that "the words weren't worth writing in the book bound like an account book in case Giles suspected. "Abortive", was the word that expressed her. She never..." (21). So even "in love" (20) Isa is never free of the "abortive" (21) undercurrent which betrays her as it unveils the truth of her being.

Mrs. Swithin also demonstrates this ambivalent attitude of ego, though in her case more self-effacingly than in either that of her brother or her niece (pages 12 to 15). Here, the birds "attacked the dawn" (13) and, "forced to listen" (13), she turns to her reading, which subject explains for her the birth of man: "...the leather-covered grunting monster who was about...to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest" (14). Moreover, "her favorite reading" of a time "when the entire continent, not then, she understood, divided by a channel, was all one..." (13) has become

very much a part of her present. It defines for her the origin of her being and thus possibly gives her a reason for living as her faith marked by "a cross gleaming gold on her breast" (15) also succeeds in doing. But her reading replaces the immediate present moment with an extremely vivid phantasm of a "beast in a swamp" and thus distorts the reality of the present, a fact which has been understated as her needing "five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself..." (13) and as her being "given to increasing the bounds of the moment by flights into past or future; or sidelong down corridors and alleys..." (14).

These three characters come together in the library which has been given an introduction of its own which overflows with understatement and irony (pages 22 to 23). The conditional clause with its "beat, beat, beat; repeating that if no human being ever came, never, never, never,..." (23) speaks of the attitude which fills the acts behind each character and the spaces between these acts which bind the characters to each other. The attitude justifies the acts of life symbolized in the "beat, beat, beat," (23) with the threat of death and annihilation following immediately; "ever...never, never, never..." (23). The hysteria of the threat is somewhat relieved by a minor detail "and the tortoiseshell butterfly beat on the lower pane of the window" (23) and by the childish repetitions of words and rhythm especially in "if no human being ever came, never, never, never, the books would be mouldy..." (23). These childlike details render to the whole last paragraph of this passage an absurd

fairy-tale setting. The same effect occurs in the conversation between Mrs. Swithin and her brother (the whole of page 29). Here, the repetition of the words "every summer, for seven summers now..." (29) reflects the power of ritual, in this case "the pageant" (29), to control and to dictate, a power which becomes more fully realized later in the afternoon during the actual pageant. In the present moment its control apparently excuses the two speakers from having to think and in so far as it does it places before Isa a fragment of a play which absorbs her attention even as its "same words" (29) reflect, too, an underlying boredom. Within this fragment of duality which has endured now "for the seventh time in succession" (29) the three characters and narrator are united only to be more severely isolated in the very last line of the quotation. Moreover, the "chime of bells" (29), "as the first peals, you hear the second; as the second peals, you hear the third. So when..." (29), suggests this concept of spatial relations, that the space "between the acts" is as significant as, if not the determinant of, the acts which ensue, a concept which is also painfully inherent in the production of the pageant. So when "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'" (29) echoes forth for all to hear, it brings with it ripples of counter-comment, of the extent of smooth social and psychic merging that has at all taken place in this library. This measure "secretly" betrays the lack of grace and dignity and of anything approaching spiritual compassion or love and

instead upholds the harsh if not morbid philosophy of "'Books are the mirrors of the soul' In this case a tarnished soul, a spotted sou," (22). In the narrative unfolding this philosophy evolves as "But the master was not dead; only dreaming... The dream hand clenched; the real hand lay on the chair arm, the veins swollen but only with a brownish fluid now" (24) and as "Either he cringed or he bit" (25) and "'Oh,' she sighed, pegged down on a chair arm, like a captive balloon, by a myriad of hair thin ties into domesticity. 'What's been happening?'" (25) and again as "She advanced, sidling, as if the floor were fluid under her shabby garden shoes, and, advancing, pursed her lips and smiled, sidelong, at her brother" (27). The examples are endless and equally disturbing.

The characters are next seen in social gathering at lunch (pages 53 to 57) where the narrative breaks as a reminder of and in deference to death. It is Mrs. Manresa, that "wild child of nature" (52), who effects the break. The conversation that has centred around the "lily pool" (55) and a lady "who had drowned for love" (55) parallels the previous evening's social gathering and its conversation "about the cesspool" (7) which eventually led to the formation of "two rings, two 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" (9-10). This is Isa's realization of her being "in love" (20). Sandwiched tightly as it is between Mrs. Manresa's vibrations, "that deep centre" (55),

"that black heart" (55), "the heart of silence" (55) (which is the painful, pressing recognition of one's aloneness, of one's ego, and at its worst the kind of death to which such a recognition can lead), it reflects the weight of silence. Although "in actual time" (13) it is the lapse between "...a flash of white in the garden. Someone passing - (The scullery maid... the gentry still sat at the table) - The flower petal sank..." (54-56), possibly only fifteen seconds or so, "in mind time [it is] ever so much longer..." (13). Mrs. Manresa promises "in her wake" (63) an escape and a refuge from the seriousness, the danger even, of the silence which confronts them all with a question as to the necessity of their being together or simply of their being at all. She offers them the closest they ever arrive to vitality though granted it is tinged with vulgarity. Into this atmosphere Giles enters. He adds his part to what has long since begun without him, arousing and recreating the sensations that have collected themselves to this point. In this way the characters move towards the pageant, unsuspecting that whatever emotions, whatever tremors of existence have secretly stirred within them will now be mirrored throughout the pageant and especially in the closing scene where all these "secrets" will be refracted as "audience" in bits and pieces of shiny reflective surfaces. The characters wear their infatuations and affections, their pride, their mixed feelings "of love; and of hate" (60), their flushes, their sensuous whirls and their twitchings to the pageant. As they sit somewhat apprehensive about themselves and anxious as to the "meaning of the

action raised before them, somewhat paralyzed by the demand to sit still, watch, absorb, and furthermore think and feel concerning the effort that is being displayed so openly before them, these "secrets" are stilled only to thrust themselves forward, the first chance they receive:

"What a view!" she exclaimed, pretending to dust the ashes of her cigarette, but in truth concealing her yawn. Then she sighed, pretending to express not her own drowsiness, but something connected with what she felt about views. (82-83)

and:

"Tosh," Giles muttered.

Nothing whatever appeared on the stage.

Darts of red and green light flashed from the rings on Mrs. Manresa's fingers. He looked from them at Aunt Lucy. From her to William Dodge. From him to Isa. She refused to meet his eyes. And he looked down at his bloodstained tennis shoes.

He said (without words) "I'm damnably unhappy."

"So am I," Dodge echoed.

"And I too," Isa thought.

They were all caught and caged; prisoners; watching a spectacle. Nothing happened. The tick of the machine was maddening.

"On, little donkey" Isa murmured, "crossing the desert...bearing your burden..."

She felt Dodge's eye upon her as her lips moved. Always some cold eye crawled over the surface like a winter blue-bottle! She flicked him off.

"What a time they take!" she exclaimed irritably. "Another interval," Dodge read out, looking at the programme.

"And after that, what?" asked Lucy.

"Present time. Ourselves," he read.

"Let's hope to God that's the end," said Giles gruffly.

"Now you're being naughty," Mrs. Manresa reproved her little boy, her surly hero.

No one moved. There they sat, facing the empty stage, the cows, the meadows and the view, while the machine ticked in the bushes.

(205-206)

The silent antagonism expressed earlier at lunch now begins to surface along with each character's vulnerability. The senses rebel in infinite expressions, gestures, moves of unpleasantness and discomfort. It is not that an "eye" (205) or "lips" (205) or the "tick of a machine" (205) are bad in themselves but that the attitude commanding the focus of observation instills them with self-centredness, the characters' vulnerability thus seeming particularly exposed. In this way the antagonism fringes on the morbid. Already there is evidence of a stifling, if not aborted, creativity as is particularly revealed in Miss La Trobe who directs the pageant:

And the stage was empty. Miss La Trobe leant against the tree, paralyzed. Her power had left her. Beads of perspiration broke on her forehead. Illusion had failed. "This is death," she murmured, "death."

Then suddenly, as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden. One had lost her calf. In the very nick of time she lifted her great moon-eyed head and bellowed. All the great moon-eyed heads laid themselves back. From cow after cow came the same yearning bellow. The whole world was filled with dumb yearning. It was the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment. Then the whole herd caught the infection. Lashing their tails, blobbed like poker, they tossed their heads high, plunged and bellowed, as if Eros had planted his dart in their flanks and goaded them to fury. The cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion.

Miss La Trobe waved her hand ecstatically at the cows.

"Thank Heaven." she exclaimed. (165-166)

and further on in the pageant:

O to write a play without an audience - the play. But here she was fronting her audience. Every second they were slipping the noose. Her little game had gone wrong. If only she'd a back-cloth to hang between the trees - to shut out cows, swallows, present time! But she had nothing. She had forbidden music. 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. (210)

These scenes of Miss La Trobe's painful paralysis counterpoint the audience's discomfort. But although "she felt everything they felt" (209), she does not cease with her vision, her "noose" (210). As their counterpart she does provide a hint of solidarity, but there is always present the sense of disparity, of contradiction, of opposition and unpleasant, almost hysterical self-encounter. Similarly, the narrator, splits away from all the characters including Miss La Trobe and the actors of the pageant in their very stream-of-consciousness or their few bits of conversation and exposes their fragility and their self-mockery:

From behind the bushes issued Queen Elizabeth - Eliza Clark, licensed to seel tobacco. Could she be Mrs. Clark of the village shop? She was splendidly made up. Her head, pearl-hung, rose from a vast ruff...She looked the age in person! (101)

"Laughter, loud laughter," Giles muttered. The tune on the gramophone reeled from side to side as if drunk with merriment. Mrs. Manresa began beating her foot and humming in time to it.

"Bravo! Bravo!" she cried. "There's life in the old dog yet!" (103)

And off he skipped, as if his turn was over.

"Glad that's over," said Mrs. Elmhurst, uncovering her face, "Now what comes next? A tableau...?" (106)

"Curse! Blast! Damn 'em!" Miss La Trobe in her rage stubbed her toe against a root. Here was her downfall; here was the Interval. (113)

The music chanted: Dispersed are we. It moaned: Dispersed are we. It lamented: Dispersed are we, as they streamed, spotting the grass with colour, across the lawns, and down the paths: Dispersed are we. (115)

The eye is merciless and every detail is related objectively, almost coldly, and without stop as if the narrator has no involvement in human life. Yet ironically this same narrator will not allow "merciful" silence, every space being filled with the narrator's voice to the very end as if this voice feels the responsibility of warding off actual death from settling in the midst of these characters. The result is a never-ending confrontation of polarities which in their complementariness share distrust, doubt, and duality. The confrontation is finally and mythopoetically symbolized in the marriage between Giles and Isa, and especially in the novel's closing scene:

Left alone together for the first time that day, they were silent. Alone, enmity was bared; also love. 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 with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.

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.

Then the curtain rose. They spoke.

(255-256)

Isa and Giles are projected onto a universal screen: "The great hooded chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa too against the window. The window was all, sky..." (256). The vision ends with them. It is as if all that has happened thus far is only a rehearsal of what is to come; as if every character, including the actors, every image, every word has been but a symbol of the internal preparation toward the moves this couple are about to make, moves that are left to the reader's imagination and moves that are inseparable from the vision of opposition that the reader has already witnessed. It is ironic that the last line offers both an open ending, a possibility, a hope of life as the reader anticipates the rising curtain and what is to follow, and an ending of finality in the couple's nakedness which is Man's (i.e. One Being's, One Psyche's) as if this couple are boxed in by the limits of the curtain and by a backward look at what the "stage" has revealed thus far. The matter-of-fact style "Then the curtain rose. They spoke" (256) lays bare the soul's nakedness. Even here the narrator seems to split away from the protagonists and by doing so implies a question as to their seriousness, as to their ever having "breathed" at all. This impression is for the most part due to the stream-of-consciousness narrative as it runs over into "The curtain rose. They spoke" (256). In this way the

characters' nakedness becomes enormous like the "great hooded chairs" (256). The novel's closing calls to mind an earlier thought of Miss La Trobe's: "A vision imparted was relief from agony" (17). Here is relief, but only temporarily as its "parts" begin to betray. Here, too, is the price the artist pays for any vision so centred on an attitude of ambivalence.

CONCLUSION

An author pays a price for such a vision of ambivalence. According to David Daiches' The Novel and the Modern World³⁴ "Virginia Woolf once remarked of Jane Austen, almost in envy; 'To believe that your impressions hold good for others is to be released from the cramp and confinement of personality.' One of the marks of the modern novelist is that he is unable to hold that belief." It is precisely "that belief", the author's inherent attitude, that saves any ambivalence in Jane Austen's novels from tending to become morbid in the manner that has been shown to happen in the five major Virginia Woolf novels. Whereas Jane Austen's vision of reality, even as it permits the expression of ambivalence, is able to contain not only pleasure but also joy and refreshing vitality, these five novels do not enable the reader to find anywhere a mood that may be said to equal joy. For wherever any expression approaches such sublime feeling, or thought, the atmosphere that the reader hopefully anticipates is soon undercut by the forward movement of the narrative as the countless examples quoted in this thesis have shown. The "cramp and confinement of personality" happens when an artist is given to a particular kind of attitude which, having its beginning and ending in ego, permeates and controls the entire structure of the work of art and thus

³⁴ David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 3.

becomes its very essence. This does not mean that love and beauty do not exist in the five chosen novels of Virginia Woolf. Love and beauty do exist, or try to exist, and they do leave their effect on the characters, influencing their behaviour and the outcome of events, creating motion within their psychic reality. But love and beauty do this in the face of a very real and constant threat of psychic collapse. Inherent to the psychic reality is ambivalence, the struggle within and surrounding an ego which is not at peace with itself, or at peace with all the things that allow for peace and harmony, such as faith, confidence, trust, hope, and the imagined realization of these blessings. Instead, the ego focuses on an imagined enemy which has no definite shape. So the virtues of love, beauty, and grace are forever bordering on despair and downfall. As the first example of Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness style Jacob's Room (1922) is for this reader, a most disturbing novel. It is not so much the story that is upsetting. This story of an attractive young British male who goes to fight in a war never to return again has been told many times. It is rather the impression of the suffocating weight of civilization that presses on the young man and is carried within his being as an ache in his side. In the process of reading the novel, the reader becomes aware that the tug in Jacob's side increases proportionately with the increasing sense of the burden of a particular tradition. This does not mean to say that the former causes the latter or vice versa but that instead each sustains the other and emanates from a negative attitude or "set" about

reality as a whole. Together they cause the vision of reality to spell out threat and ambivalence or undecidedness, uncertainty, and finally at its extreme, lack of faith in the living and a mesmerizing fantasy of death as the ultimate saviour. Strangely enough, although tragic death (as a "forced" suicide), does occur in Mrs. Dalloway (1925), the novel is for this reader by far the most optimistic, the one that comes the closest to approaching any atmosphere of joy and of peace. The focus on "party" outweighs any sad preoccupations, any shadow of death, and the song of love that pours forth out of the old woman standing by Regent's Park Tube Station marks the very thin line that separates life and death, art and reality, the ambivalence of reality as Virginia Woolf understands it, to mean. Moreover, in the fullness of her being this same old woman elevates to mythopoeic grandeur the novel's action. As she focuses on the hope of eternal love, sweeping every new-found love into her song, she also brings attention to the ambivalence as a philosophy of life, an attitude which is itself raised to mythopoeic heights veiling every part of the novel with its nuances and its intent. In the final analysis, though, the philosophy bends in the direction of life-supporting energies. The novel does finally resemble a comedy of manners. Expression is sensitive and lyrical and ends with an undeniable burst of recognition: Life. To The Lighthouse (1927) picks up this mood and continues its expression but always there lurks in the background an austere and haunting sensation of death keeping a close watch. The reader cannot help but feel the isolation of the little summer

house, occupied by a most peculiar family, as it faces the ocean alone, although it is true that the house is always full of guests. The very short section "Time Passes" is more disturbing in its intensity of expression than the whole of Jacob's Room. And yet To The Lighthouse does end on a note of resolution although the analysis of this particular novel shows that this resolution already betrays hints of despair. The hysteria that has first made its appearance in Jacob's Room has become increasingly evident as the expression of "life" in Virginia Woolf's vision. Lily's fine "line there, in the centre" (To The Lighthouse, 237) is the symbolic mark of a most tenuous balance between life and death, male and female, and indirectly sanity and insanity as it measures the mounting hysteria. Moreover, it symbolically marks, as has the entire artistic process, the intensely personal relationship between the artist and the work of art from its conception to its complete creation in reality. In The Waves (1931) the hysteria becomes suicidal as the inherent fear and lack of faith and relatedness to one's self and one's surroundings are expressed in their extremes in the character of Rhoda. Here the reader is made aware of rational thought with no outlet in intelligent action as the negative attitude toward death and despair takes over. Characters exist, and never cease to give voice to their sensitive awareness, but at a tremendous price for the awareness drowns itself in the all-pervading antagonism that is by now bent on death and despair without any longer being able to help itself to another more healthy attitude and approach to life.

The ambivalence is for this reader most artistically expressed, as the recognition of the beautiful and moving lyrical and particularly poetic quality of the prose continues even through the last pages where the attitude of death and despair is at every moment magnified. Between The Acts (1941), on the other hand, an equally lyrical novel though not in the poetic style of The Waves, returns the reader to the comedy-of-manners style that was evident in Mrs. Dalloway but with a bitter and satiric twist. The nervous hysteria, the utter despair and loss of faith determine the overall atmosphere and the final resolution. Male and female standing naked before each other at the novel's closing as artistic projection of the polarities that make up reality, as saviour symbols of "love" that knows only too well how to hate, ironically offer to their audience a perpetuation of this very attitude of ambivalence, "of love; and of hate" (Between The Acts, 60) in the child they are able to conceive. Virginia Woolf's vision opts for the numbing and dreary "dailiness" of family life and society or the "energizing" erratic flights into fantasy or for the fusion of the two where possible while the individual awaits his all-too-certain death, a death which as it approaches becomes uglier and at the same time more desirable by virtue of the self-centred attitude that has come to have "life". It is partly this fact and partly the fact of her narrow world, the upper middle class English society and sensibility of the early twentieth century, that will prevent the novels from ever becoming classics within the major tradition of English literature. They will always be respected as artistic.

experiments in the stream-of-consciousness style and as manifestations of the very special artistic sensitivity and vision of a twentieth century English authoress, yet the style turns upon itself in its unfolding. Its achievement inevitably magnifies its limitations, even while the achievement is nonetheless valid. The purpose of this thesis has been to focus on the full artistic expression of the vision as it mirrors at once both achievement and failure, both coming together in the complex expression of the theme of ambivalence. In conclusion, the reader has to ask himself the question "What finally becomes of such a vision of reality - a vision which is so confined by personality?" Here is the opinion of one highly qualified reader who was a friend and contemporary³⁵:

It is true that there was much which she lacked, much which was outside the scope of her powers. She was not equipped for a broad grasp of humanity, she had not the kind of richness and sanity, the rooted quality which comes from a completely fulfilled life as a woman and author. She had a romantic view of charwomen and prostitutes; and her conception of the ruling classes, of rank, fashion, titles, society - all that, was perhaps a shade glamorous and reverential. Then, as regards her technique; she had two styles, one clear, logical and concise, an admirable instrument for her admirable critical prose; the other for her imaginative work, a poetic style, full of light, flexible, expanded rhythms; and this, in spite of its brilliance and beauty, has moments when it irritates, when one detects tricks, when it seems too airy, giddy almost; a trifle archly hesitant. In spite of the extraordinary loveliness of her images, there are moments when the quivering antennae of her senses seem too receptive, and almost stifle one with minute impressions. Blinds sway, brooms tap, chairs creak too

³⁵ Rosamund Lehman, Recollections of Virginia Woolf ed. by Joan Russel Noble, (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 65-66.

frequently. Also there are moments, particularly in The Waves, when her I - gives one an uneasy feeling of a neurotic split in personality. This split has penetrated deeper far into her last novel Between The Acts...

The modern reader can still admire the novels and feel even more remote from the specialized style that is born of these novels. He is perhaps titillated rather than satisfied.

Finally, it becomes all too clear that the painful vision is but the extension of a fragile and suffering mind unable to transcend the confinement of its being and so free its imagination except as the vision of ambivalence.

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