A STUDY OF THE FIGURE OF THE ARTIST IN THE
NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the artists in five of Virginia Woolf's novels. It relates their characters to their individual qualities as artists and discusses their roles in the novels in which they appear, drawing particular attention to their importance in relation to the main preoccupations of the novels. It is suggested that a study of this relationship is particularly relevant to an understanding of the novels. The main themes which emerge are the relations between art and life, art and nature, art and the primitive and art and civilisation.

The relationship between art and life is seen as being particularly important and this relationship is examined on many different levels. The widespread, though often unacknowledged, assumption that Virginia Woolf was guilty of a refined and soulless aestheticism is challenged, and the introduction offers a comparison - for the sake of clearer definition - between E.M. Forster's and Virginia Woolf's ideas about the relations between art and life.

Virginia Woolf's rendering of the creative act is studied - especially in the chapter on To the Lighthouse - and is related to the central themes of the novels. The concept of creativity is seen as being particularly important for an understanding of To the Lighthouse and Between the Acts.

An assessment is often implicit of the extent to which Virginia Woolf's fictional artists represent a form of critical writing, and on occasion her artists are related to some contemporary artistic 'problems'.
Explanatory Note

Where it is clear which work I am quoting from page references follow the quotations in brackets. Where an unidentified page reference may cause confusion I have used the following abbreviations:

AH  E.M. Forster, Abinger Harvest (London, 1953)
AN  E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (London, 1949)
AWD Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary (London, 1953)
BA Virginia Woolf, Between the Acts (London, 1953)
L Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (London, 1930)
ND Virginia Woolf, Night and Day (London, 1930)
RV E.M. Forster, A Room with a View (London, 1947)
TC E.M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy (London, 1951)
VO Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out (London, 1915)
W Virginia Woolf, The Waves (London, 1943)
WAFT E.M. Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread (London, 1947)

Full details will be found in the Bibliography
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

But this is life; the talk is about literature.

We must try to disentangle the two ...

So far there has been little written about the figure of the artist in the novels of Virginia Woolf. This is somewhat surprising as there is a large number of writers, painters and musicians in her major novels: the portrayal of the qualities of the creative mind — its hesitancies and convictions, its vicissitudes and triumphs, the relation in which it stands to things outside itself — is an almost obsessive preoccupation. Their importance, though, is not an importance in isolation: often their characteristics as artists, their aesthetic theories and their particular creative processes cast emphatic lights and shadows on the rest of the novel. Miss La Trobe’s pageant, for instance, is an incisive commentary on life at Pointz Hall.

Much has, of course, been written about those major characters who are artists, but often their importance as artists is overlooked. This is pointed by the fact that James Naremore calls one chapter of his study of Virginia Woolf "The Artist as Lover" but says little in this chapter about the lover as artist. And then where the importance of the artist as artist is inescapable the vital connections between them as artists and the rest of the novel is often not recognised.
This gives rise to serious distortions not only in the view of the artists presented but, more importantly, in the view of the novel as a whole. Daiches and Schaefer, for instance, have pointed to the cultural milieu of Night and Day, and have noticed the abundance of literary allusions, but they have not related the characteristics of the artists to the implied criticism of their 'over-cultivated' environment. This failure entails an obliviousness to a central concern of the novel: the exploration of the values implicit in the cultured life. Again, much has been written about Lily Briscoe, but often vital connections between her and the rest of the novel have been overlooked. Frequently she is placed under the shadow of Mrs Ramsay — Hasley says the completion of her picture comes as "an exhausted afterthought" — and this produces a distorted view of the novel as a whole: a denial of her importance seems to me to make nonsense of the structure of To the Lighthouse. Little attempt has been made to look at her creative processes — which after all are described at length — in relation to other elements of the novel. In the case of Between the Acts — which has only recently been receiving the attention it demands — a failure to relate Miss La Trobe to the rest of the novel produces even graver distortions. If one overlooks the very deliberate and careful associations formed between life at Pointz Hall and the staging of the pageant the novel may well seem, as it did to F.R. Leavis, to exhibit an "extraordinary vacancy and pointlessness". 

My intention in this thesis is to examine the characters and roles of the artists (including Rachel Vinrace as interpretative artist) in five of Virginia Woolf's novels — The Voyage Out, Night and Day, To the Lighthouse, The Waves, and Between the Acts — referring to the other novels and to the non-fiction where they provide illuminating parallels. I shall discuss some important relationships implied: between the artist's personality and his qualities as artist, between art and nature, art and civilisation, art and the primitive, and art and life. I shall also examine Virginia Woolf's rendering of the creative act, and indicate how far her presentation of artists represents in itself a form of critical writing.
Clearly I have chosen a large subject; a degree of selectivity will be necessary to avoid repetition and tedium. Thus I will write at length about the use of literary allusion in *Night and Day* and only touch on it occasionally in discussing the other novels; and I shall say much about the artists' relation to the symbolic framework in some novels and little about it in others.

In tackling such a subject, a comparative perspective would be very useful, and one turns naturally for this to other members of the Bloomsbury Group—not only because their theories may have influenced Virginia Woolf, but also because some of her portraits of artists were clearly, though loosely, based on people she knew.

It is most often Roger Fry's ideas that are compared with Virginia Woolf's theories and practice: McLaurin, Johnstone, and Roberts, among others, have made interesting comparisons—McLaurin going so far as to talk about Fry's "cooperation with Virginia Woolf". But there are some difficulties in comparing these two which would seem almost insuperable. Most obviously there are the problems involved in relating a painter's ideas to a novelist's. Because the art forms are so different, a comparison of this order often entails either a culpable wrenching of the critical language, or an unhelpful lapse into a language so generalised that it expresses a comparison which is not specific to Virginia Woolf and Fry. For example, Allen McLaurin, referring to Charles Mauron as well as to Fry, makes a comparison between "psychological volume" in literature and volume in the spatial arts. This is an interesting comparison, theoretically, but it does not get us very far: too many questions are begged by this tying together of disparate concepts by the use of the word 'volume'. And then John Hawley Roberts—among others—relates Virginia Woolf's rejection of what she saw as "materialism" in the novel of the "Georgians" to Roger Fry's strictures against an excessive concern with the representational in painting; but when he comes to comment on the importance of form to Virginia Woolf—citing parallel occurrences in *Mrs Dalloway*—Roberts's language becomes so generalised (the reader begins "to see, as Fry would
say, how this line repeats, with a difference, that one ..." that one could make exactly the same comparison between Fry's theories and, say, the writings of Laurence Sterne, Thomas Mann, or Doris Lessing.

This order of difficulty is compounded by the complex of agreements and disagreements one finds in Virginia Woolf's and Fry's writings. Though often they agree about such elementary matters as the importance of form in art, some disagreements are fundamental. Where she writes about Fry and his opinions on literature and the relations between literature and art she disparages: "As a critic of literature, then, he was not what is called a safe guide. He looked at the carpet from the wrong side". One difference of opinion particularly relevant to my study of Virginia Woolf's artists is that about the degree of intimacy art has with life. Virginia Woolf said of Fry: "He wanted art to be art; literature to be literature; and life to be life" (CE IV 90); and Fry insists, in "Art and Life", on the separateness of the two: "if we consider this special spiritual activity of art we find it no doubt open at times to influences from life, but in the main self-contained". I shall show as I proceed the sorts of relationships Virginia Woolf sets up and suggests between life and art, but might quote this here: "if you must put books on one side and life on t'other, each is a poor and bloodless thing".

Fry and Virginia Woolf did of course have much in common; she felt that in some sense he had kept her "on the right path", and she said of one of Fry's criticisms of her style: "That was ... the best criticism I've had for a long time" (AWD 311: January, 1939), but still the problems of comparing the work of a painter and a writer remain. I would suggest that a comparison with another writer might provide a more revealing perspective, and so I shall compare Virginia Woolf with E.M. Forster. This, of course, can only be a comparison in outline — the relations between them are many and complex; I shall merely explore some common themes and attitudes that are relevant to my central concern. In passing, one might point out that Virginia Woolf's instinctive response to paintings was at least as close to
Forster's as it was to Fry's. Fry's influence is in the background of Forster's "On not Looking at Pictures" (TC) and Virginia Woolf's "Walter Sickert" (CEII), but it was not an influence either writer found easy to assimilate. Both had great difficulty in looking at paintings as Fry did, and both of these essays display an amused awe at those who look at paintings solely as combinations of line and colour.

Still, it may seem strange to link these two closely: they were never really intimate — Virginia Woolf had a much more affectionate relationship with Roger Fry — and, despite the great respect she felt for Forster (nobody's opinion of her novels was valued more highly than his), they seem not to have understood each other very well. They were always wary of each other, and their relationship seems to have been compact of tussles, misunderstandings and half-understood agreements. The affair of the London Library Committee may be typical of their personal relations: E.M. Forster met Virginia Woolf in the London Library and said that he and other committee members had been discussing whether to allow 'ladies' onto the committee; Virginia Woolf, prepared to refuse the expected, was furious when Forster added that the committee had decided against ladies. Then, six years later, the committee changed its mind; Forster did ask her to join it; and Virginia Woolf finally had the pleasure of turning down the invitation.

And then as novelists there are great differences between them. Most obviously, Forster stuck closely to the traditional methods of writing novels; Virginia Woolf experimented constantly. Connected with this is the fact that Forster had a didactic moral message fairly near the surface of his novels; the didactic moral tone is absent from Virginia Woolf's novels, and you have to dig deep to find a 'message'. Having said this, though, one can point to the themes of their novels, and indicate many similarities. Quentin Bell said of the two novelists: "His view of the world was not unlike hers. They loved and detested many of the same things" (QBII 133), and one can see many common preoccupations in their novels. Their essays too are often quite similar; apart from the obvious interest both had in literary figures,
they both liked writing essays — more stories than essays, really — half whimsical, half symbolic, about eccentric half-forgotten people. One might compare Forster's "Cardan" (AH) with Virginia Woolf's "Two Parsons" (CE III).

The themes which concern me are, naturally, those centred around the concept of art; and immediately one notices that in Forster's novels, as well as Virginia Woolf's, there are many characters who are artists, or who are largely defined by their attitudes towards art. Implied in the novels of both are ideas about the relations between life and art, nature and art, the past and art, society and art, and so on. The principle relationship, in which, perhaps the others are subsumed, is that between life and art, and I find in the novels of both a vital concern with this theme. This theme is not uncommon in twentieth-century literature, but I find a comparison of how these two novelists dealt with it particularly illuminating: each stands out more clearly against the background of the other. Before looking at Virginia Woolf's novels in detail, then, it is worth spending some time on comparing her perceptions and attitudes with Forster's.

It is the novels, of course, that are important, but it might be useful to begin by outlining the positions they took up in their essays. There is a difference, naturally, between writing essays upon life and art in relation to novel writing, and writing novels which indicate a 'view' on the relationship between life and art; definitions shift continually; but by considering some essays first it may be possible to present a basic orientation which will make a discussion of the novels easier.

In the essays they make statements about values which are relevant to the ways in which they deal with the themes in their novels. First of all, they wrote essays on each other which, despite the confusion entailed by a lack of critical vocabulary, reveal the stances they adopted towards each other's methods. Much of the argument between them revolves around the relation of art to life in novel writing, and before we go very far it will be apparent how slippery these words are. Virginia Woolf wrote: "the criticism of fiction is
in its infancy, and its language, though not all of one syllable, is baby language"
(CE II 124).

The debate begins with Forster's "The Early Novels of Virginia Woolf"
(AH 125-35)—in which he discusses only those novels written before To the Lighthouse—and we see a certain amount of comic bewilderment as Forster is confronted by Virginia Woolf's work. At the beginning of the essay there is the equivalent of 'stage business' as Forster sits down to write about Virginia Woolf: first his pen disappears; then, when he recovers it, it takes matters into its own hands, and writes a flow of rubbish (Forster's word) about Virginia Woolf's novels. Naturally, this is a part of Forster's constant comic whimsy, his undercutting of himself, but I think it does express a real feeling of discomfort. Chastening his pen, he knuckles down to criticism, and, conceding that she does give us "Life; London; this moment in June" (AH 126-7), he isolates the central problem which presents itself to him: "Do her own characters live?" (132). His verdict, though he does not really seem sure of it, is that they do—but not continuously: "the reader is in a state of constant approval" (132). We cannot sink into her characters as we can into Tolstoy's. We cannot "inhabit each character with Victorian thoroughness" (133).

There is much else to notice in this nimble essay, but this seems to be the central point, and he returns to it some years later in the Rede Lecture upon Virginia Woolf (TC 251-67): "Did she get her people to live?" (258). Here, and it may be a symptom of his continued discomposure, the answer is somewhat different. On the page they do live, they are real; but "she could seldom so portray a character that it was remembered on its own account" (258). It seems to me that what Forster is getting at, though he never says it, is that there is a lack of Victorian robustness about the novels, and especially the characters. Taken as we are into their minds, so that we experience the flow of their thoughts and feelings, it is hard to believe that it is a lack of intimacy which disturbs Forster. I think it is a feeling that she has not drawn the knots tightly enough; the characters are not solid; there is too much flow.
She deals, he says, with "airy drifting atoms" (AH 129), and works in "a storm of atoms and seconds" (133), and although he concedes that at the end of Jacob's Room "we see for a moment the airy drifting atoms piled into a colonnade" (129) we feel that the colonnade is less substantial than he would like. It is significant that the character that he singles out for praise in Mrs Dalloway is William Bradshaw. With him Virginia Woolf approaches the Tolstoyan mode (133), and Forster approves of him. He implies that she must somehow employ her new method so as to create characters as solid as Tolstoy's, and this indicates, I think, a basic lack of empathy with what Virginia Woolf was after. Though he praises her use of new methods he is not really comfortable with them. Bradshaw has the solidity and robustness that Forster misses in the other characters — a robustness similar to that which we find in Tolstoy or Thackeray. He is presented externally, so that while we move easily through the minds of the 'good' or 'neutral' characters, we are balked at the surface of the 'bad' — Holmes, Bradshaw, Miss Kilman. The flow of imagination ceases. If Bradshaw is to be singled out, I would say blame is more appropriate than praise.

The problem is, perhaps, that Forster habitually writes about fiction in terms of the traditional novel, which has definite aspects — story, plot, characters, and so on. This is the way he heads his chapters in Aspects of the Novel; the traditional novelist, supremely Tolstoy, is open to analysis in these terms. He does recognise that Virginia Woolf is trying something new; that the conventional categories appropriate to the traditional novel do not really apply to her work — "She is a poet, who wants to write something as near to a novel as possible" (TC 259) — but in asking for solid characters he is asking her to return to the traditional mode. Bradshaw, a character in the traditional mould, seems to me to be a lapse on Virginia Woolf's part; she cannot apply her methods to an evil character; he is a sewn up, buttoned down character, fully accounted for. Usually, from Jacob's Room onwards, we do not feel that the characters are solid objects, fully revealed and
accounted for; people are not like that. In *Jacob's Room* Virginia Woolf says:

"Nobody sees any one as he is .... They see a whole — they see all sorts of things — they see themselves .... It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done".  

In *Mrs Dalloway* Clarissa thinks: "She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that". With this view, the traditional character inhabited with "Victorian thoroughness" would be misplaced; Victorian thoroughness is appropriate for Victorian perceptions; when the novelist's view of character changes, so, usually, does his technique. To a large extent, then, Forster's criticism is not strictly relevant, and it is all the stranger when we read in "What I Believe" Forster's acceptance of the view that people are not solid, and that "We don't know what we are like. We can't know what other people are like" (TC 77) — a view close to Virginia Woolf's.

Based on his idea that characters should 'live', should have 'life' in a particular way, there is in Forster's writing about Virginia Woolf's novels, despite much admiration and praise, an underlying feeling that she has failed. Her techniques and her principles of selection are wrong: somehow she has failed life.

The culprit, as Forster sees it, is art. In "The Art of Fiction" — a discussion of Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* — Virginia Woolf sees Forster as riding to the rescue of life in thrall to art (CE II 51). In *Aspects of the Novel* Forster says — inevitably, one feels, raising Virginia Woolf's hackles — "the novel is not capable of as much artistic development as the drama" (AN 150), and he blames Henry James for creating only a few characters, and those "on very stingy lines" (147). His characters are "incapable of fun, of rapid motion, of carnality, and of nine-tenths of heroism" (147). Virginia Woolf comments, in "The Art of Fiction": "the pertinacious pupil may demand: 'What is this 'Life' that keeps cropping up so mysteriously and so complacently in books about fiction?' " (CE II 53).

Here we see the immense difficulties involved in discussing art and life in
relation to fiction; baby language is an inadequate medium. Forster's central point was that the characters in James's novels are clipped and curtailed of the whole range of human experience, which is something slightly different from saying his novels neglect life. This difficulty is amusingly mirrored in Virginia Woolf's echoing Forster's implied criticism of her— that she is too insubstantial, not 'firm' enough— when she says that his sayings about novels "sink airily enough into the mind to stay there and unfurl like those Japanese flowers which open up in the depths of the water... All we can do is to edge him into a position which is definite enough for us to see where he stands" (CE II 52).

There is a certain amount of confusion, then, in this essay - "The Art of Fiction" - but we can make out a basic difference between Forster and Virginia Woolf: crudely, he argues for a more vigorous presentation of a wider range of human experience than he finds in the novels of Henry James; Virginia Woolf replies: "Why is the pleasure that we get from the pattern in The Golden Bowl less valuable than the emotion which Trollope gives us when he describes a lady drinking tea in a parsonage?" (CE II 53). The equation seems simple: Forster is for 'life'; Virginia Woolf for 'art'. And the simplicity of the equation may seem all the more enticing as, in essence, it sums up a common view taken of these writers.

There is, for instance, F.R. Leavis's magisterial denunciation of Virginia Woolf in "After To the Lighthouse". He says that her writing gives the effect "of something closely akin to sophisticated aestheticism", and this criticism is repeated, often peevishly, by other critics who espouse the cause of muscular morality. Often Virginia Woolf is blamed for neglecting life: Philip Rahv, writing about her style in relation to her characters, says: "it becomes a means... of disengaging their ego from concrete situations in life". This order of criticism is taken furthest by Wyndham Lewis; in Men without Art he castigates her as a "pale" "peeper", and associates her with a collection of unnamed aesthetes who brought into being "an imaginary 'time', small enough and pale enough to accommodate their not very robust
talents". Lewis does make some intelligent criticisms, but the general picture of Virginia Woolf as a feeble, wilting aesthete fastidiously retiring from the burly of life is preposterous. A glance at Quentin Bell's biography or at her own diary would confirm this, and in "Life and the Novelist" she says: "to retire to one's study in fear of life is ... fatal" (CE II 136). It seems less than clear that she was for art and Forster for life; the matter is more complex than this. And the difficulty lies, of course, in the definition of life. If we turn to another essay, "Modern Fiction", we see that she is as interested in life as Forster or Leavis - it is just that the definitions, or perhaps the emphases, are different.

In this essay she makes her famous criticism of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy: they are "materialists"; they - oversimplifying Virginia Woolf - are too concerned with externals; she suggests Bennett's craftsmanship - "his magnificent apparatus for catching life" - comes down "just an inch or two on the wrong side. Life escapes" (CE II 105). It seems puzzling at first that this criticism is so close to Forster's criticism of James and the Scrutiny castigation of Virginia Woolf. Baby language does not clearly differentiate sounds. The source of the confusion lies in the definition of life: Bennett's characters "dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour" (CE II 106) "live abundantly" (104), but to what end? Their destiny, she suggests, is "an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton" (104). The essence of her criticism is that they are concerned with material trivialities. And is life like this? Virginia Woolf's answer is the renowned formulation:

> Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there .... Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown
and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (CE II 106)

It is ironic that this passage has been used as additional 'evidence' against Virginia Woolf by some authorities, notably Arnold Kettle, to support their criticisms of the way in which she writes about life in her novels. In An Introduction to the English Novel Kettle says that she conveys "a certain intimate quality of felt life" and implies that we are "made aware of the moment-by-moment texture of feeling, the intricate pattern of reaction," but that, after we have experienced all this, we feel that *To the Lighthouse* "is . . . not about anything very interesting or important". Though Kettle is kinder than Leavis, the substance of their criticisms is the same. Again we find that Virginia Woolf is being accused of the same fault with which she charged the "materialists": there is a great deal of detail, but it is trivial.

This is not altogether surprising, as the passage from "Modern Fiction" suggests perhaps that Virginia Woolf is arguing for the random presentation of passively received experience. Advocating a change of emphasis in fiction she perhaps overstates her case. In her novels she does not merely present superficial sense impressions: Kettle misses, I think, many important themes (some of which I shall deal with in the chapters which follow), and does not see what Virginia Woolf does beneath the surface texture. This surface, despite what she might seem to be saying in "Modern Fiction", is not the *raison d'etre* of her novels. In "Modern Fiction", she says that these "myriad impressions . . . shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday" (CE II 106); similarly, in her novels these impressions are not unregulated - they are not there just for themselves. They are selected, ordered and shaped, so that they reveal something of the nature of experience itself - experience in its widest sense, not just the experience of sense impressions. There is a clearer statement of what she is getting at, of how she is extending the definition of life, in "The Narrow Bridge of Art". Writing about the putative novel of the
future (and incidentally providing an admirable description of *The Waves*), she says:

> it will give the relation of the mind to general ideas and its soliloquy in solitude. For under the dominion of the novel we have scrutinized one part of the mind closely and left another unexplored. We have come to forget that a large and important part of life consists in our emotions toward such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset, life, death, and fate; we forget that we spend much time sleeping, dreaming, thinking, reading, alone. (CE II 225)

These seem to me to be important and interesting things; they are as much a part of life as anything else; and in her novels, as I hope to show later on, both Virginia Woolf and her creative artists are concerned with such matters. (It is interesting that in *The Waves* she returns to the argument with Bennett in the figure of Bernard; I shall discuss this in Chapter Five.)

The kind of detail Virginia Woolf brings from life to the novel carries its own dangers, as Bennett's kind of detail does, and she is naturally aware of this. The novelist, she says in "Life and the Novelist", is "terribly exposed to life .... He can no more cease to receive impressions than a fish in mid-ocean can cease to let the water rush through his gills" (CE II 131). Being so exposed, the necessity for artistic selection lies heavily upon the novelist; he must "take one thing and let it stand for twenty ... only so is the reader relieved of the swarm and confusion of life and branded effectively with the particular aspect which the writer wishes him to see" (CE II 135).

Life poses a threat to the novel in yet another way, and this threat is closely associated with the damage that Virginia Woolf and Forster, in their novels, indicate that art can do to life. In "Phases of Fiction" the closeness of the novel to life is seen as a danger. The novelist "copies the order of the day" (CE II 99), makes his novel as believable as possible, as much like life as possible. Novels "are about people, they excite in us the feelings that people excite in us in real life" (99). This being so, we approach a novel loaded with the emotions and prejudices of real life, and "vanities and emotions on the part of the reader are perpetually forcing the novelist to satisfy them" (100). "Phases of Fiction" was
written a few years after "The Art of Fiction" and we see that Virginia Woolf has
gone some way towards providing her answer to the question posed by the pertinacious
pupil in the earlier essay — "What is this 'Life' that keeps cropping up so mysteriously
and so complacently in books about fiction?" (CE II 53). She has defined it — in a
way different from that in which Forster would have defined it — and, having done
this, she can now answer the question Forster posed in reply to hers — "What of
the talk about art?", how does she define that? In "Phases of Fiction" she replies
that the novelist controls and manipulates the feelings that we bring to the novel
from life: "The barrier between us and the book is raised higher. We do not slip
so instinctively and so easily into a world that we know already. We feel that we
are being compelled to accept an order and to arrange the elements of the novel ... in
certain relations at the novelist's bidding" (CE II 100). In their novels Virginia
Woolf and Forster indicate the dangers that may flow in the opposite direction if
the barriers are too low; a too direct application of what people learn from art
may distort their lives.

It is interesting that now she has tried to answer these two questions — what
is art? what is life? — she takes a new look at Henry James, and the new view is
closer to Forster's than the one she presented in "The Art of Fiction". By "cutting
off the responses which are called out in actual life" James enables us to take
delight in "things in themselves" (CE II 82), and he creates a pattern which gives
pleasure akin to the pleasures of music and mathematics. But in order to do this
he has to "ignore and repress [his characters'] natural feelings" (82) to coerce
them into a pattern. He "diminishes the interest and importance of his subject in
order to bring about a symmetry which is dear to him" (82). This is precisely the
charge which Forster levelled at James and which Virginia Woolf combatted two
years earlier. There is still a difference between them, though. Virginia Woolf
still desires the pattern — desires it more than Forster does: if James had been
a writer of "greater depth or natural spirits" he "would have taken the risk which
his material imposes— that is, he would not have nipped and trimmed his characters so much — "and so, perhaps, achieved symmetry and pattern, in themselves so delightful, all the same" (82). She returns to the point at the end of "Phases of Fiction": "we desire synthesis" (102). Art and life must come together in the novel: "The most complete novelist must be the novelist who can balance the two powers so that the one enhances the other" (101). Forster, in Aspects of the Novel, agrees with Wells, who, according to Forster, would say that pattern cannot be combined with the full range of human experience, and that "life should be given the preference, and must not be whittled or distended for a pattern's sake" (AN 150). Virginia Woolf always insists that the distinction between life and art is fatal. In the chapters which follow I shall show some of the kinds of closeness between life and art which Virginia Woolf deals with in her novels.

So far, the discussion has revolved around questions of selection and technique — of what a novelist selects from life, and how he presents it. No precise definitions of art and life have emerged — perhaps they are not possible in relation to novel writing — but some things should be clear. Both novelists are consciously concerned about the relations between life and art — about getting the balance right. E.M. Forster is more suspicious of art than Virginia Woolf; Virginia Woolf sees a greater possibility of a creative union. This is in relation to the writing of novels; in their novels themselves they are also concerned with the relations between life and art. There is, as I have said, a difference between suggesting in essays theories about the relations between life and art in novel writing, and writing novels which themselves present more general 'views' about the relations between art and life, but it might be useful to bear in mind these essays as we turn to the novels.

The relation between art and life is a dominating theme in most of Virginia Woolf's and E.M. Forster's novels, and it sometimes seems as if, in their novels, they are murmuring over together the various points of a discussion. Art and society, art and the individual, art and civilisation, art and nature, art and tradition —
all these relationships appear in different combinations, forming different patterns, in the novels of both, and in trying to indicate relationships between their novels I am not arguing in support of an 'influence' or indebtedness. Most of E. M. Forster's novels had been written before Virginia Woolf's first novel was published, but to point out that she follows many of the same paths is not to detract from her achievement. She dealt with the problems in a different way, and often reached different conclusions.

It will be impossible to trace all the points of similarity and difference in their use of the art/life theme — the matter is too complex for that, and basically I am concerned with Virginia Woolf. I shall compare two novels — The Voyage Out and A Room with a View — which seem to illuminate most clearly the relationships between their writers' ideas, and then indicate some further stages in E. M. Forster's treatment of the theme. In this I shall only provide brief comparisons with Virginia Woolf, leaving a more detailed consideration of her novels for the chapters that follow.

There are, first of all, many striking general similarities between The Voyage Out and A Room with a View, which might indicate that 'influence' is not after all an inappropriate word. Both present the development of a sensitive young heroine through experience in exotic countries: there is a relationship between Forster's Italy and Virginia Woolf's South America. Their functions and, in some ways, their characteristics, are similar. England in both novels is seen as a place of sterility. English customs and conventions dull some vital pulse in life, and an alternative way of life — loosely, something which is more spiritual, liberating, enhancing — is offered by experience of more exotic environments. But in both, the trivialities, snobberies, sexual restrictions and suspicions of England follow the heroine abroad. The pettiness of the pension is echoed in life in the South American hotel. Indeed, Miss Allan in The Voyage Out is almost indistinguishable from Miss Alan in A Room with a View.
In some details too *The Voyage Out* recalls *A Room with a View*. Lesser expeditions are set inside the major voyages in both novels: the trip up the mountain in *The Voyage Out* is very like the expedition to Settignano in *A Room with a View*. Both parties scatter; and Terence comes to know Rachel, and George kisses Lucy, amid all the petty annoyances which outings of ill-assorted people entail. The kiss George bestows on Lucy is also echoed in *The Voyage Out*, in the kiss Dalloway inflicts on Rachel. (Dalloway's kiss may also recall the kiss Paul Wilcox gives Helen in *Howards End*: both kisses breed panic and emptiness, and both men afterwards become weakly furtive, avoiding the young women and pretending that they have not kissed them.) And then Rachel's determination to understand Dalloway's kiss is similar to George's determination to understand the murder of the Italian. For George and Rachel these incidents represent the beginning of an awakening to life. There are more of these general similarities—the teacher-pupil relationship the Embersons establish between themselves and Lucy is like the relationship St. John Hirst tries to establish with Rachel; and Mr. Beebe's theory about musicians knowing themselves and what they want less well than other artists (RV 216) could equally have been said in reference to Rachel: she knows far less than Terence, a novelist, what she is and what she wants—but the most important similarities are those between the heroines.

There is a strong resemblance between the characters and situations of the young women. Both are inexperienced and randomly educated; hemmed in and perplexed by conventional ideas about the woman's role in life; and they both know little about men. When they are kissed, both are thrown into muddle and confusion. And, of course, they are both pianists, and it is important for both novels that they are pianists. (I have said that the importance of Virginia Woolf's artists is often overlooked; the same is true of Forster's. Laurence Brander, for example, says of Lucy's musical ability: "In the story as it unfolds the gift is honorary, for nothing is made of it". 31)
For both, music represents an alternative world to the restrictive social setting in which they are placed, and their playing reflects in them qualities which they do not ordinarily express in life. Mr Beebe says of Lucy: "If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to liye as she plays, it will be very exciting — both for us and for her" (42), and the same could be said of Rachel. Similarly, others around them sense that their music expresses something in them which might prove, at the least, inconvenient — something which might disturb their normal conventions. Lucy’s musical preferences are suspect: at an entertainment at which the 'upper classes' entertain the 'lower', Lucy plays Beethoven's Sonata No. 32, and the vicar deprecates her choice: "Beethoven is so usually simple and direct in his appeal that it is sheer perversity to choose a thing like that, which, if anything, disturbs" (42). (Forster chose this piece precisely because it does disturb: in "The C Minor of life" he speaks of its "opening dive into the abyss" (TC 134).) There is a whole world of intellectually cosy provincialism in the vicar’s complaint: In a sense, his instincts are right: if one recoils from the disturbing and wishes life to behave, to obey the rules, then this music must be deplored. And for such an ordinary-seeming girl to play this strange, passionate music must seem a betrayal. As a member of the audience Mr Beebe had approved, but later, when Lucy desires to seek adventure beside the driver on a 'circular tram', Mr Beebe makes the same connection and objection that the other vicar had made: "I put it down to too much Beethoven" (51). As a musician, Rachel too is suspect: Mr Vinrace, obscurely irritated by her devotion to music, exclaims: "A little less of that would do her no harm" (97).

Within these general similarities, though, there are many differences between Rachel and Lucy. For one thing, Rachel, after she reaches South America is a sterner, more rigorous character. She has a toughness which Lucy lacks. Her desire to know the truth about things, and her courage in pursuit of it, clearly set her apart from Lucy. Lucy is a more brittle character with less independence. Truth, in a metaphysical sense, does not draw her as strongly as it draws Rachel. As
musicians too they are different, particularly in the way in which their art is related to their lives. Concentrating on Lucy for the moment (I shall naturally deal with Rachel in more detail in my chapter on The Voyage Out): she is "no dazzling executante" (40). Technique is more important to Rachel than it is to her, and this outlines a basic difference between them as musicians. Lucy is more 'romantic' than Rachel. Rachel builds up complex structures as she plays, and, one feels, approaches music in a more intellectual way. This is not to say that she plays without feeling; clearly when she plays at the hotel dance after the professional musicians have departed (194-6) she plays with intuition and sensitivity. Lucy, though, is more 'romantic'; she plays, with Forster's full approval, one guesses, "on the side of Victory" (40), and although Forster refuses to define the victory we infer that it has something to do with the victory of life over the forces which would tame it. So that when we hear Lucy's "hammer strokes of victory" (41) we recognise that there is something in her which sets her apart from most of the characters around her. Lucy, unlike Rachel, is in most respects a perfectly ordinary young woman, but when she sits down at the piano, she startles us by shooting "into the empyrean without effort" (40). Music brings her an ecstasy—"she was intoxicated by the mere feel of the notes" (41)—which most of the other characters would be incapable of feeling. This one characteristic is the one sign that there is something extraordinary in Lucy, and it is this sense that there is some disparity between the person that convention forces her to be and the person she is capable of becoming which prompts Mr Beebe's remark that if she "ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting" (42). With Rachel it is different; she is, after her arrival in South America, in no sense an ordinary woman; it is not only her music which sets her apart from most of those in the English colony. One is not startled to find that she plays the piano well, and there is no sudden leap to the empyrean in her case. Her music is more impersonal, and when she plays she goes into a dreamy entranced state, rather than an enraptured one.
There is a suggestion that for Lucy music is a compensation for some lack in life, but this seems to be more her view than Forster's. Recommending a hobby for George, she tells his father: "Why, I myself have worries, but I can generally forget them at the piano" (39) — but this is by no means the full picture; music gives her much more than merely oblivion. She finds daily life chaotic, and she "entered a more solid world when she opened the piano" (40), and it seems that she feels this world to be more solid because in it she finds acceptance, and the ability to be herself simply: "She was then no longer deferential or patronizing; no longer either a rebel or a slave" (40). Away from the restrictions and evasions of the social world she can let herself unfurl without constraint. But this is not all.

Re-entering life she takes back something from art: life can perhaps be enhanced and invigorated by art. She "never knew her desires so clearly as after music" (52), and music stirs her into wanting "something big" (52). Again, though, when Lucy stops playing and needs "something big", she is balked in her search for it by social conventions. Mr Beebe feels that she should not ride on an Italian tram — at night, beside an Italian driver — and puts her restlessness down to "too much Beethoven" (51), thus unconsciously hoping that she will never live as she plays. In life, then, the desires stirred by art come up against the resistance of convention.

This is an important strand in the novel; art and life touch each other in many contexts and with different results. Forster has little more to say about the capacity of art to stir the depths, but it becomes a central concept in Virginia Woolf's writings: in Between the Acts, for example, Mrs Swithin's "unacted part" is "stirred" by Miss La Trobe's pageant (179).

Although it is implied that for Lucy and Rachel music could represent a retreat from life, both characters suggest ways in which art can fruitfully enhance or interact with life. In Rachel's case, however, the connection between her life and art is much stronger and more dynamic; and the images associated with her as artist, as I shall show in my chapter on The Voyage Out, are tightly bound up
with the novel's symbolic framework. These images, water and silence for instance, lead us in the direction of a more spiritual life. This does not seem to be the case with Lucy: her being as an artist is not so firmly linked to basic harmonies in the novel, and, as artist, she does not have the support of a fellow artist as Rachel does. The case for art, as might be expected from the essays commented on earlier, is put less strongly by Forster than by Virginia Woolf. It is an important element in A Room with a View, though. We are often conscious of the greatness which might ensue from a union of life and art: Mr Beebe envisages a time when Lucy might be wonderful in both, and adds: "The water-tight compartments in her will break down, and music and life will mingle. Then we shall have her heroically good, heroically bad – too heroic, perhaps, to be good or bad" (113). Here Forster is very close to Virginia Woolf, but he is less sanguine than she about the possibility of a fruitful union: more often, and more strongly, he depicts the disastrous consequences of the wrong sort of closeness between life and art. The kind of perils he depicts in his novels are clearly associated with the ideas about the relations between life and art in novel writing which I discussed earlier.

The main danger, as Forster sees it, is Janus-faced: art may draw one too far from life, and may prevent one from becoming a fully functioning human being; or one may take to art as a retreat from the perplexities of life. In The Voyage Out this danger is stated, rather ineptly, by the Dalloways, and is embodied in the figures of St. John Hirst, Mr Ambrose and Mr Pepper; but the case for art is made so strongly by the central resonant characters of Rachel and Terence that one may overlook other characters who are somehow stunted. In A Room with a View the dangers are presented more powerfully and the reader is more likely to overlook the fruitful relations suggested between life and art.

The forced, exclusive culturalism which denies life is Forster's main target. The tourist who has gone to Florence "to study the tactile values of Giotto" may return "remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live
under it" (24). It is around this central juxtaposition — pretentious aestheticism versus the full, natural humanlife — that the figures of Mr. Eager, Miss Lavish and Cecil Vyse revolve.

In the first place, there is the deadening cultural snobbery of Mr. Eager. He praises the spiritual values of Giotto's "Ascension of St. John", yet is coarsely rude to the postcard seller (66-7). He feels that the murder in the Piazza Signoria is somehow a desecration of the Florence of Dante, Florence the Temple of Art (65), forgetting that the Florence of Dante was much more sordid and violent than Florence early in the twentieth century. He would desire the city to be a fortified museum, its doors firmly shut against the scruffiness of life; tea in a Renaissance villa is his offering, and he will not offer it to the profane (75).

Miss Eleanor Lavish, the rapacious lady novelist, professes to be different. She portrays herself as an unconventional Bohemian (Evelyn Murgatroyd in The Voyage Out is a rather similar figure) who loves life on the streets. She, the affected pseudo-romantic, vaunts the "too sweetly squalid" Prato (14), but as she takes Lucy to see her familiar Florence — without a Baedeker — they fall to discussing who owns what property in Surrey, and she promptly gets lost (26-7). In her writing too 'real' life is suppressed. Loving the 'real' natural life of the Italians, she will turn the murder into an incident in a vapid romance, abandoning the disreputable five lira (62). She falsifies life too in her description of the kiss George gives Lucy, turning it, with her "draggled prose" (196), into specious romanticism.

The case against art is made most strongly in the figure of Cecil Vyse, who, one feels, beneath his posing and affectation, is a sympathetic human being. He is deluded rather than malevolent. He has smothered himself in art — using it to bolster his sense of the social proprieties, and to create a personality for himself (much as Rodney does in Night and Day) — to such an extent that he can no longer respond to people as real people (again like Rodney). He is incapable of seeing and
accepting Lucy as she is. He sees her as "a woman of Leonardo da Vinci's, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us" (109), but the reader, having been acquainted with her for several chapters, knows quite well that she is not in the least like a woman of da Vinci's. (He may also wonder exactly what a woman of da Vinci's is, or was, like.) Cecil, like Mr. Eager, deplores the rough edges of life, and he wishes to see Lucy as a work of art—this is stressed by the heading of Chapter Nine: "Lucy as a Work of Art". He requires on one occasion a moment of contemplation before forbearing "to suppress the sources of youth" (122): he comes within an ace of committing what Forster would see as an unforgivable crime. His culture distorts his relations with others—his mode of life implicitly answers Mr. Beebe's question about whether literature can influence life (229)—and he subjects Lucy to a course of cultural grooming (one remembers that St. John tries to do this with Rachel). Culture has withered his personal sympathies, and, like Mr. Eager, he behaves abominably towards other people. So that we feel that George Emerson is right when he says: "He is the sort who are all right so long as they keep to things—books, pictures" (203), and we endorse Lucy's rejection of his attempt to swaddle her in books and music: "you wrap yourself up in art and books and music, and would try to wrap up me" (211). The opposition between culture and honest spontaneous living, then, is plain; art may be valuable and produce blessings for Lucy, but culture deadens Cecil. What he misses is indicated when Lucy indignantly rejects him: "From a Leonardo she had become a living woman, with mysteries and forces of her own, with qualities that even eluded art" (210).

Virginia Woolf had instincts similar to Forster's about the dangers of art, though they were expressed less forcibly. In The Voyage Out Hewet directs much the same charge against St. John as George and Lucy do against Cecil. He says to Rachel: "He's lived all his life in front of a looking-glass, so to speak, in a beautiful panelled room, hung with Japanese prints and lovely old chairs and
Her most trenchant examination of the perils of culture is, however, presented in *Night and Day*, and it is conducted in a manner similar to Forster's. I shall say more about this in Chapter Three.

Two other aspects of Cecil are worth mentioning in connection with Virginia Woolf's writing. His ideas about Lucy as work of art are associated with the medieval asceticism with which he is identified: "He was Medieval. Like the Gothic statue... he resembled those fastidious Saints who guard the portals of a French Cathedral... a Gothic statue implies celibacy" (93). Some other 'anti-life' characters in *A Room with a View* are also identified with Christianity - that is, Mr Eager and Mr Beebe and the man who objects to Lucy's Beethoven are all clergymen - and elsewhere in Forster there is a suspicion and distrust of priests. The same is true of Virginia Woolf's novels. In *The Voyage Out*, for instance, Rachel indignantly rejects Christianity during the appalling service in the chapel (275-83). This service - especially in its egregious peroration - is one of the many parodies of the creative act in Virginia Woolf's novels.

And then there is Cecil's attitude towards nature. It seems that his sterile brand of culture is intimately associated with his specious love of nature. He talks enthusiastically about pine woods, bracken, the country labourer and his "tacit sympathy with the workings of Nature" (123) - and also about "the perpetual green of the larch"! (122). He sees nature no more clearly than he sees people. Lucy admits that she associates him with a room without a view (130), and our experience of Cecil inclines us to endorse this association. At first it seems a simple matter of simple oppositions: a room, a view; art, nature; but we remember that the title of the novel suggests a union: a room with a view. There is a hint that at a deeper level there may be a fundamental connection between art and nature. The lovely hill covered with violets, on which George kisses Lucy, is the hill which afforded Baldovinetti the view which he incorporated into so many of his picture (64). The hint is a quiet one - given in the manner Forster often adopts when he is dealing with
fundamentals—but it tells. There is something a little more explicit in his
"Jodhpur" essay: "the distinction between Nature and Art, never strong in India,
had here become negligible" (AH 347).

Nature is, of course, a serious force in all of Forster's novels; and in most
it is seen in important relationships to art. It is not just that, as Virginia Woolf
says, nature is the remedy for "the disease, convention" (CE I 343); Forster uses
nature in a much more complex way. It is, for instance, not entirely benignant:
it is also mischievous, malevolent and cruel—we see this clearly in the figure of
Stephen Wonham in The Longest Journey. Nature is also important in the novels of
Virginia Woolf, and she too suggests that at a fundamental level there are vital
relationships between art and nature. I shall deal with this in detail later on, but
I could mention here Mrs Hilbery's bearing flowers and blossoms from "the heart
of the civilised world"—Shakespeare's birthplace (453, 508); the closeness of the
rhythms of art and nature suggested in To the Lighthouse; and the aid nature affords
Miss La Trobe in the staging of her pageant.

The relation between art and life is present as a theme in most of Forster's
novels, and the dominant concern—as I have shown in the case of A Room with a
View—is with the possibility that being too preoccupied with art may prevent one
from responding adequately to life. This concern had already been expressed in
Where Angels Fear to Tread, and, as in A Room with a View, the presentation of
of this peril is counterpointed by suggestions of how there can be a fruitful union of
life and art.

Philip Herriott, like Cecil Vyse, is highly cultured, and he is proud of
and snobbish about his attainments. Forster's subtly ironic description of the
development of his sense of beauty suggests that although his appreciation is real
enough, it springs from his weaknesses, not his strengths—and principally from
his desperate need to establish an image of himself (78-9). (In this he is similar
to William Rodney in Night and Day.) Despite his love of beauty, he seems to be
outside its world; he does not create, and the emphasis is not upon his appreciation; we are told: "All the energies and enthusiasms of a rather friendless life had passed into the championship of beauty" (79). The revealing word is "championship".

He is rather more complicated than this, though; Where Angels Fear to Tread is a more subtle novel than is often supposed. Philip worships his memory of Italy, but his attitude towards it is curiously mixed - 'muddled' one might say, in Forster's terminology. As Lilia departs for Italy he tells her: "don't ... go with that awful tourist idea that Italy's only a museum of antiquities and art. Love and understand the Italians, for the people are more marvellous than the land" (7). He has other feelings about Italy, though, and these emerge when we hear his motives for advising Lilia to go there. She has embarrassing social failings - she is alive and enthusiastic - which discountenance his family and mar their otherwise impeccable respectability; she is courted by a man who is "neither well-bred, nor well-connected, nor handsome, nor clever, nor rich" (11). The way out of this uncomfortable dilemma is to send her to Italy: "She is the school as well as the playground of the world" (12). She is to be groomed, to be made a social asset, by Italy; our belief in Philip's love of the Italian people begins to melt as we read this.

Later we see his attitude more clearly, and the weakness of his conviction that one ought to "love and understand the Italians" is laid bare. As he has built up for himself an image of himself as a cultivated aesthete, so he cherishes an image of Italy as a "fairyland" (32). It is the land of the Etruscan League, the Pax Romana, the Countess Matilda, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance (32), and, as the murder is a desecration to Mr Eager, a dentist in Monteriano, with all the unattractive appliances of dentistry, is a blasphemy to Philip. The daily life of the Italians impacts on his conception of Italy as a static aesthetic fairyland; the dentist disrupts his sense of "Romance". His real fear, though, is for himself: "He thought of Lilia no longer. He was anxious for himself: he feared that Romance might die"(32).

Forster, however, tells us that "Romance" cannot die, and that it is only Philip's
false "Romance" that is leaving him - the false "Romance" of his conception of Italy. And because this conception is so intimately connected with his image of himself for himself, what is really to be feared, though Forster does not directly state this, is that this identification of himself will be left in tatters. He will be naked. This is what explains the depth of his disillusion and despair when he returns to England. He has been 'using' art in the wrong way; ignoring life, retreating into his sense of beauty and his sense of humour, he seems to have lost contact with real life and has been living in a fantasy world. Consequently he cannot respond adequately to the situation when he rushes to Italy to rescue Lilia; and he leaves Italy in a disillusioned muddle.

Philip's muddle is only one aspect of the art-life theme in the novel: as in A Room with a View, there are suggestions of how art may help; of how there may be a fruitful relationship between art and life. The scene at the opera (132-7) presents what Forster sees as the Italian attitude towards art. It is not divorced from life; it springs naturally from it; there is chaos in the theatre, but no muddle in their minds. The Italians are not solemn about art, they receive it with joy. (This attitude, abundantly emotional, perhaps carries its own dangers, but Forster is not, for the moment, concerned with them.) And in this intoxicating celebration of the union between life and art, Gino and Philip are united in an ecstasy of friendship. It does not last, of course, but the point is clear: Philip's false view of life, conditioned by his view of art, separates; the Italian mode, art-with-life, unites.

Towards the end of the novel art again emerges naturally out of life. Gino kneels and watches Miss Abbott as she sits at the window "with twenty miles of view behind her" (157) drying his baby with her handkerchief. Forster comments: "Just such a baby Bellini sets languid on his mother's lap, or Signorelli flings wriggling on pavements of marble, or Lorenzo di Credi, more reverent but less divine, lays carefully among flowers, with his head upon a wisp of golden straw" (157). The quiet climax of the art references comes as Philip enters the room: "So they were
when Philip entered, and saw, to all intents and purposes, the Virgin and Child, with Donor" (157). Art is intimately related to life, as it is at the opera. (Something similar happens towards the end of Between the Acts, when Giles and Isa become identified with the characters in Miss La Trobe's next play.)

Another quiet association made in Forster's 'Donor scene' is one between the artistic and the natural: the baby and the view are important elements in the picture. What seems to happen is that art and nature join forces to prevent catastrophe. For Philip's view of nature, as well as culture, had been wrong, and the wrongness of his attitudes towards them are linked - just as Cecil's false sentiments about art and nature are linked. Earlier, when Miss Abbott told Philip that Gino was a dentist, they were in a carriage on their way to Monteriano, and as he felt his sense of "Romance" slipping from him, they were surrounded, insistently, by the physical beauty of Italy. As she began her revelations "the carriage entered a little wood, which lay brown and sombre across the cultivated hill. The trees of the wood were small and leafless, but noticeable for this - that their stems stood in violets as rocks stand in the summer sea" (30). Philip's eyes "registered the beauty", but, in agony as his false ideas about art and life are torn from him, he pays no attention.

Later, in the 'Donor scene', and in the passage in which Miss Abbott becomes a redeeming goddess (192), things come right; a proper relation is established between art and nature: Philip is saved. Forster is rather heavy-handed in his description of Miss Abbott as goddess: perhaps this is because the case against art is presented so strongly throughout the novel that the few occasions where we see the blessings of art are overloaded. Certainly Forster is more emphatic, more optimistic, and less subtle than in his later novels.

In The Longest Journey the art and life theme is handled with far greater complexity and subtlety. There is a deeper exploration of the relations between the central character's love of art and the rest of his being; and the larger issues which confront him - how to stand in relation to society, humanity, nature - are
connected more subtly with the art-life theme than they are in the novels I have discussed so far. And then the simple fact that Rickie is a more sympathetic character than Cecil Vyse or Philip Herrington elicits from us a more complex response.

We see Rickie, as a short story writer, in relation to many different attitudes towards art and books. Ansell, Mr Failing, the Elliots, the Pembrakes, Mr Jackson—all are involved in the art-life theme. Those who throw Richie's attitude to life and art most sharply into focus, though, are Mr Elliot and the Pembrakes. Rickie's father "had not one scrap of genius" (31-2), and he gathered his pictures and books mechanically, "not in any impulse of love" (32). His aridity is frightening; he sees neither himself nor others as real people. The Pembrakes have books and pictures, and a bust by Praxiteles of Hermes (we remember that Hermes conducted the souls of the dead to the underworld), and Agnes keeps them well dusted (41), but they too have no love for their good things. They are merely symbols of their social and cultural status; they suggest "a certain amount of money and a certain amount of taste"(41). These people are the representatives in the novel of bleak, exclusive and loveless culture—they inhabit "the smug fortress of culture" (138) in which Rickie is confined for a time. A comparison with Night and Day springs to mind: many of the short-comings for which Virginia Woolf implicitly criticises the Hilbery family are exhibited by the cultured in Forster's novel.

Rickie, the writer, who loves art, stands out clearly in relation to these people, but he is a tragic figure, and is shown with passion to be tragically misled by his love of art. Often he is seen to be talking out of a book, and good and bad comes of this: the picture is not black and white, but black-with-white. When Gerald tells her that Rickie has offered him money, Agnes says: "Why, he was only talking out of a book .... He muddles all day with poetry and old dead people, and then tries to bring it into life" (60). In miniature here we have Rickie's tragedy.
His reading— and it is true that he is talking out of a book— produces a good action, but the result is a muddle. His inexperience of life produces anger and humiliation. Again, when he discusses with Agnes what should happen to his aunt's money when she dies, Agnes accuses him: "'You talk like a person in poetry'" (215). She may be right, but again Rickie is prompted to a good action. In this he contrasts strongly with Mr Eager and Cecil Vyse: their allegiance to culture produces destructive behaviour.

In other ways, too, theories Rickie brings from his reading encourage generous actions and attitudes. He will not exclude people from the dell at Madingley (25)— in contrast to Mr Eager, who would exclude the profane from the realms of culture (RV 66); like Hewet in *The Voyage Out* he wishes to bring people together; and at first he agrees with the sentiment in Shelley's *Epipsychidion*:

I never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the world a mistress or a friend
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion,— though it is the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world,— and so
With one sad friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go. (LJ 146)

It is part of the tragic irony of Rickie's story that it is precisely his love of art which brings him later to reject, or suspend his belief in, these ideals. When he becomes a teacher at Sawston he begins to behave much more like Mr Eager— to the extent of cooperating to exclude the day boys (203). The connection between Sawston and this quotation from Shelley is made clear by the Pembroke's possession of the Hermes: they are "the dead" of Shelley's poem.
With so much initially in his favour, it is difficult to see immediately where Rickie goes wrong. Lionel Trilling makes the point that Rickie mistakes illusion for reality, but I think something more specific and complex is involved: Rickie's attitude to art is a vital element in his degeneration. The Pembroke failure to connect art and life clearly represents a spiritual sterility; perhaps the kind of closeness between the two which Rickie tries to achieve is also wrong. In "A Note on the Way" (AH 87-92) Forster considers how art may help our lives, and comes to the conclusion that it is no use trying to apply the good things we learn from art directly to life. "The arts," he says, "are not drugs. They are not guaranteed to act when taken"(AH 88). But they can help; they may "deposit a grain of strength in our minds"(89). In Howards End Leonard Bast clearly tries to apply art directly to life, and the result is an appalling confusion (52-58; 124-129). Forster says that writers are not to blame for Leonard's confusion: "They mean us to use them for sign-posts, and are not to blame if, in our weakness, we mistake the sign-post for the destination" (127). Rickie does not exactly mistake the sign-post for the destination, but he does, I think, try to apply his reading too directly to life. (Again, one can relate the implications of Rickie's mistakes to the ideas about the relationship between life and art in novel writing which I discussed earlier.

Apart from the examples already cited, in which good and bad effects are inextricably entwined, there are many indications that Rickie's love of art does him harm. The source of his obstinate misinterpretation of Agnes and Gerald is his reading. Gerald — despite all the evidence he experienced when they were at school together — Gerald he sees as a Greek hero figure. He compares him to the Greek athlete in The Clouds, training joyously with his friend, with a garland on his head, in all the glory and freshness of the spring; Forster comments acidly: "Mr. Dawes would not have bothered over the garland or noticed the spring, and would have complained that the friend ran too slowly or too fast" (57). Agnes too he misinterprets. Instead of a peevish, scheming young woman he sees: "A kindly Medea, a Cleopatra with a sense of duty ... a dark intelligent princess" (57). Later,
when Gerald is dead: "her sorrowful face moved over the stars and shattered their 
harmonies; last night he saw her with the eyes of Blake, a virgin widow, tall, veiled, 
consecrated, with her hands stretched out against an everlasting wind"(70). It is this 
preposterous idea — that the wonders of visionary art have become concrete in the real 
world — that ironically leads him to turn his back on art and journey into the darkness of 
Sawston. "Who wants visions" he cries; and then he reads one of his imaginative stories 
and rejects it as nonsense: "When real things are so wonderful, what is the point of 
pretending?" (71). Real things are tinged with wonder for him only because he has seen 
them through the lens of art; when he rejects art, and the humanities it implies, he is lost

I have suggested that Rickie is misled in his attempt to apply art directly to life. 
This, of course, does not represent a rejection on Forster's part of books and art. 
Ansell writes to Rickie: "I cannot afford to despise books, they are all I have to go by" 
(95), and the scene in the British Museum suggests that they are of value and may help: 
"It was worth while reading books, and writing a book or two which few would read, and 
no one, perhaps, endorse" (200). It seems that Ansell uses books in the manner Forster 
recommends: he lets them "deposit a grain of strength" in his mind (AH 89), and does not 
try to use them too directly. He watches for "the Spirit of Life" (204). So that it is he 
and Stephen — crudely, the nature figure — who almost save Rickie. And then the impulse 
itself which confuses books with life is basically a benevolent one; one may be preserved 
from such a confusion by one's unattractive qualities. In "Albergo Empedocle" Mildred 
Peaslake poses as a rather unconventional cultivated person, and Forster obliquely but 
bitingly gives us his opinion of her via her father's estimation: "when it came to action 
she could be trusted to behave in a thoroughly conventional manner. Thank heaven! she 
was seldom guilty of confusing books with life". 

Rickie's own writing is an important element in the novel, as Miss La Trobe's 
is in Between the Acts. To take just one example, the story about the dryad: it is 
associated with the ideals which are connected with the dell at Madingley (25-7) —
freedom, openness, friendliness are Rickie's watchwords then. The story is re-enacted with a tragic irony later, with Agnes as the dryad whom Rickie follows into the dell. In the story the girl cries "Freedom and Truth!" (84) as she flies into the dell, and we remember this as Rickie follows Agnes into the dell at Madingley. What Rickie flies to, though, is bondage and mendacity. The symbol of openness and freedom is replaced by the fortress.

In The Longest Journey, the relations between art and nature become a more explicit concern than in the novels already discussed. We feel that an important turning point has been reached when Rickie scorns the stories he wrote on the theme of "getting into touch with Nature" (85). It is true that, despite the fact that they are in essence Forster's own early stories, we feel that something is wrong with them. They are a little precious, perhaps. But when he comes to see them as trifling nonsense which should be abandoned, we feel Rickie is turning his back on something valuable.

As in the other novels, the relations between art and nature are subtle and complex. The negative aspect of this relationship is seen in Mrs Failing: "Mrs Failing's attitude towards Nature was severely aesthetic — an attitude more sterile than the severely practical. She applied the test of beauty to shadow and odour and sound; they never filled her with reverence or excitement" (119). Rickie's position is different: he feels strongly enough for nature to make Agnes jealous when he enthuses over Morthoe's "fangs of slate" (199). Yet there is something unsatisfactory in his use of nature in his stories. Perhaps he uses nature, as he uses art, in too direct and too abstract a way. Stephen's disgust when he sees Agnes's synopsis — "Allegory. Man=modern civilisation (in bad sense). Girl-getting into touch with nature" (139) — is understandable. It is all the more understandable — and here I may fall into the same trap as Agnes — as Stephen is naturally and unselfconsciously in "touch with Nature". His dealings with the shepherds, his Wiltshire rides, his pleasure in drying his wet body in the sun (138) demonstrate this contact.
As the Primitive, Stephen is clearly contrasted with the Pembrokes. Mr Failing—yet another character who fails to establish satisfactory relationships between art and life and nature—had seen Stephen on the roof at Cadover, and had written: "I see the respectable mansion. I see the smug fortress of culture. The doors are shut. The windows are shut. But on the roof the children go dancing for ever" (138). It is appropriate, then, that Stephen smashes the Pembrokes' bust of Hermes (277). But there is not a simple opposition between art and nature: often they come together. The painting of Demeter—which presides over Stephen's room and is constantly associated with him—operates simultaneously as work of art and as nature symbol.

In contrast to Stephen, we see Rickie's attitude to nature more clearly. Rickie disapproves of Stephen's appetites and crudities. He loves the beauties of nature in an abstract and selfconscious way, and he fears the earth—nature in a more basic, less benign sense. When he faints on Cadbury rings—after he has been told of his kinship with Stephen—he has a chance of acceptance and redemption: "He woke up. The earth he had dreaded lay close to his eyes, and seemed beautiful. He saw the structure of the clods. A tiny beetle swung on the grass blade .... there broke from him a cry, not of horror but of acceptance. For one short moment he understood" (151). Accepting Stephen for the moment, he also accepts the earth; but it is Agnes's business to destroy this acceptance. When Rickie finally, at her insistence, rejects Stephen, he has what seems a last chance of acceptance, and the mediator is the painting of Demeter. Looking for his manuscript, he goes up to Stephen's room: "It was a strange ghostly place, and Rickie was quite startled when a picture swung towards him, and he saw the Demeter of Cnidus, shimmering and grey" (161)—an opportunity and a valediction.

There are some other resonant contacts between art and nature. After Stephen and Ansell fight at Sawston they form an alliance to save Rickie—an alliance of the artistic and intellectual with the natural. And it is appropriate that Stephen should
have a share in Rickie's stories when he dies. At times Forster's handling of the art-nature theme is a little crude — as at the end where Stephen discusses Rickie's stories with Pembroke and then goes out to sleep on the hillside (313-20) — but that there is a vital relationship between the two is never in doubt. When this relationship goes wrong everything is soured; one important implication carried by the novel as a whole is that we must get this relationship right. I shall suggest later on that Virginia Woolf also wrote about this problem, and that in *Night and Day* she suggests conclusions similar to E.M. Forster's.

Forster's main preoccupations, then, are clear: there must be a sane relationship between life and art, and nature must somehow participate in this relationship. Most often — and this is perhaps inevitable in a writer so concerned with problems of behaviour and attitude — we see things going wrong. Wrong relationships are established between art and life: Philip Herrington deliberately uses culture as a scaffold for his personality; Rickie Eliot obstinately interprets people in terms of the images he brings from his reading; Cecil Vyse recoils from life and responds only to the aesthetic; Mr Eliot uses culture to restrict the possibilities of life. The precise features of the wrong relationship are Protean.

Books, culture, art, are all subjected to intense critical scrutiny in the novels. And in the short stories Forster is, if anything, more trenchant still. "Albergo Empedocle", "Other Kingdom", "The Point of It" and "A Helping Hand", among others, contain scathing comments on those who use culture wrongly. Indeed in "A Helping Hand" Forster talks of a "horrid slime of culture".

I should make it clear, though, that Forster does not attack art or culture in themselves. In demonstrating that he constantly depicts the dangers art may present I may have given the impression that he doubts their value — but I think it is precisely because he does believe passionately in their value that he abhors their misuse. His target is not art or culture, but, as one might expect from the essays I discussed earlier, the distortions they may impose on life. People who use art
to deceive, to restrict the possibilities of life, to effect their self-aggrandisement, and for other low purposes are severely taken to task. There are few clear instances in his fiction where he affirms the value of art — he does towards the end of *Howards End* and in "The Celestial Omnibus", though not convincingly — but in his non-fiction there are many.

"Does Culture Matter?", "Art for Art's Sake", "A Note on the Way", the third of "Three Anti-Nazi Broadcasts" and "The Raison d'Être of Criticism in the Arts" deliberately proclaim his faith in art and culture. Sometimes he is disconcertingly vague — clearly this is a faith which is very difficult to express or account for, it is the product of such a complexity of intuitions and thought — but a few quotations will indicate the kind of value Forster thought works of art had: "they [some lines of Davenport's] deposit a grain of strength in my mind" (AH 89); "For poetry is a spirit; and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth"; if one wants a bolder statement in more concrete terms there is one in "The Raison d'Être of Criticism in the Arts": "the artist helps to civilise the community builds up standards, forms theories, stimulates, dissects, encourages the individual to enjoy the world into which he has been born" (TC 123).

I think I have said enough to indicate some basic similarities and differences in Virginia Woolf's and E.M. Forster's approaches to the art-life theme. I shall discuss some of Forster's other writings in the chapters which follow — *Howards End* for instance will be relevant to my discussion of *Night and Day* and *The Voyage Out* — and I hope to bring out more clearly Virginia Woolf's ideas in relation to Forster's.
NOTES

1  CE II 157
   Schaefer, The Three-fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf
5  F.R. Leavis, "After To the Lighthouse", Scrutiny, X, 1942, p. 295.
6  Allen McLaurin, Virginia Woolf (Cambridge, 1973), p. 20 (the whole of Chapter
   2 consists of a discussion of the relations between Virginia Woolf's and Fry's
   writings); see also J.K. Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group (London, 1954),
   pp. 82-95; John Hawley Roberts, "'Vision and Design' in Virginia Woolf",
   PMLA, LXI, pp. 835-47; Nancy Topping Bazin, Virginia Woolf and the
7  McLaurin, p. 79.
8  Roberts, pp. 835-6, 839. Virginia Woolf's discussion of the "materialists"
   is in "Modern Fiction" (CE II).
9  Their belief in the importance of form in art is apparent in all of their critical
   writings. See, for example, Roger Fry, Vision and Design (London, 1928),
   passim, and Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", "The Art of Fiction", "On
   Re-reading Novels", all in CE II.
13 Monks House Papers (see Bibliography): Letter from Virginia Woolf to Roger
   Fry, 27 May 1927.
14 For the respect she felt for Forster see QB II pp. 28, 132-3; for the lack of
understanding in their relationship see QB II p. 133; for the closeness of her relationship with Fry see QB I and QB II passim.

15 See QB II pp. 191, 224.

16 It might be useful to give details of the original publication of the essays I discuss. They are as follows: E. M. Forster: "The Early Novels of Virginia Woolf" was first published as "The Novels of Virginia Woolf" in The New Criterion, April 1926, Vol. 4, pp. 277-86; "Virginia Woolf" was originally a lecture delivered in May 1941, and was first published in 1942 by Cambridge University Press. For convenience, my references for these essays are respectively to Abinger Harvest and Two Cheers for Democracy — the texts are as originally published. Virginia Woolf: "The Art of Fiction" was first published as "Is Fiction an Art?" in New York Herald Tribune, 16 October 1927, Section 7 Books, I, 5-6, and reprinted revised as "The Art of Fiction" in Nation and Athenaeum, 12 November 1927, pp. 247-8; "Modern Fiction" was first published as "Modern Novels" in The Times Literary Supplement, 10 April 1919, and reprinted, slightly revised, as "Modern Fiction" in The Common Reader, Series One; "The Narrow Bridge of Art" was originally published as "Poetry, Fiction and the Future" in New York Herald Tribune, 14 August 1927, Section 7, Books, I, 6-7, and 21 August 1927, Section 6, Books, I, 6, and reprinted as "The Narrow Bridge of Art" in Granite and Rainbow; "Life and the Novelist" was originally published in New York Herald Tribune, 7 November 1926, Section 7, Books, I, 6; "Phases of Fiction" was originally published in Bookman, N.Y., April 1929, 123-32, May 1929, 167-79, and June 1929, 402-12. For convenience, my references are to the essays as published in Collected Essays, Vols. I-IV. In most cases the texts in Collected Essays are the same as those of the originally published versions; where the essays were revised there are only occasional minor verbal differences in the passages I quote between the original version and the version in Collected Essays. The
exception is "The Art of Fiction", where I quote the Nation and Atheneum revision as published in Collected Essays.

17 Forster is quoting from Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (London, 1942), p.6.

18 This problem troubled Forster from his earliest encounter with Virginia Woolf's work. He expressed much the same doubt in his review of The Voyage Out in the Daily News and Leader, 8 April 1915, p.7.

19 The complexity of response, and the difficulty of finding the words to account for it, are further illustrated by comparing what Forster says here with what Lytton Strachey said. For him The Voyage Out had "such a wonderful solidity .... Something Tolstoyan, I thought." See Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey, Letters, ed. Leonard Woolf and James Strachey (London, 1956).


21 Virginia Woolf herself said: "I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel'. A new ——— by Virginia Woolf" (AWD 80: June 1925); and on a page of the second holograph draft of The Waves she wrote: "The author would be glad if the following pages were read not as a novel" — see Virginia Woolf, The Waves: The Two Holograph Drafts, transcribed and edited by J.W. Graham (London, 1976), p. 582 verso.


23 Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, p.10.


28 Ibid., p.104.
29 Monks House Papers: letter from E.M. Forster to Virginia Woolf, 13 November 1927. (Part of the letter is reproduced in QB II 134.)

30 Virginia Woolf's first novel, The Voyage Out, was published in 1915. By then Forster had published Where Angels Fear to Tread (1905), The Longest Journey (1907), A Room with a View (1908), and Howards End (1910).


32 It would not be appropriate to examine here Forster's and Virginia Woolf's attitudes to nature in great detail; I hope these attitudes will emerge as I go on.


35 "Other Kingdom" and "The Point of It" are in Collected Short Stories (London, 1948); "A Helping Hand" and "Albergo Empedocle" are in The Life to Come.


37 "The Celestial Omnibus" is in Collected Short Stories.

38 All are in Two Cheers for Democracy, except "A Note on the Way", which is in Abinger Harvest.

CHAPTER TWO

THE VOYAGE OUT

Words, after speech, reach

Into the silence . . .

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you

Which shall be the darkness of God.

The two central characters of The Voyage Out, Rachel Vinrace and Terence Hewet, are artists, and this is crucial for the novel as a whole. That they are artists is no mere contingency: their attitudes and their actions are for the most part directly related to their being artists and to the kinds of artists they are. Their concerns as artists are vital elements in the thematic nexus of the novel — their aesthetic problems, for instance, are intimately linked with the main themes: the difficulties of the emotional life, of human communications, and of living as intelligent and responsive human beings in an indifferent universe. As a corollary of this, the serious artists use, and are connected with, some of the main symbols of the novel — flames, darkness, water. Associated with Terence and Rachel are four other artists and two scholars, all with differing attitudes towards their arts and different ways of relating themselves and their arts to the world around them. These different attitudes cast further light on the relations between life and art, and throw Rachel’s and Terence’s assumptions into greater relief.

In all of her novels in which artists are central figures, Virginia Woolf provides
at least one character who comments directly or indirectly upon the aims and attitudes of the artists. In The Voyage Out this task rests on the shoulders of the Dalloways, and it will be useful to examine the Dalloway attitude to artists, because in a sense much of the rest of the novel reflects upon these attitudes. (This explains, I think, the seemingly disproportionate space taken up by this couple.) They put forward commonly held beliefs about the artist and about the relationship he establishes between life and art; in the course of the novel nearly all of these ideas are seen to be wrong—or at least inadequate. This aspect of the Dalloways seems to have been almost entirely overlooked. Bernard Blackstone, for instance, notes that "The Dalloways talk about the artist and his position in society", but he says little about their talk, and does not relate it to the rest of the novel.  

Mr Dalloway is a politician, and he has no time for what he sees as the artist's stance to life. At the Bar or in politics "All one's faculties have their play" (44) the practical man develops in all directions, while the artist restricts himself to art: "what I feel about poets and artists in general is this: on your own lines, you can't be beaten—granted; but off your own lines—puff— one has to make allowances" (44). The suggestions are that the artist does not use all his faculties, and that outside the sphere of art he is ineffectual. The first implication is clearly nonsense: Virginia Woolf would have agreed with E.M. Forster, who says "All a writer's faculties ... do conspire together ... for the creative act". The second is plainly refuted by Terence and St. John Hirst. Terence, after arranging the expedition up the mountain, tells Hirst: "About half the intellectual effort which is needed to review a book of modern poetry has enabled me to get together seven or eight people, of opposite sexes, at the same spot on the same hour on the same day. What else is generalship?" (146-7). St. John, while having a deep and discriminating love of literature, is studying for the Bar, and is quite capable of discussing South American politics with Mr Flushing (339-40).

Dalloway presents a variation of the view that one has to make allowances for
artists "off their own lines". Politicians "see both sides; we may be clumsy, but we do our best to get a grasp of things" (45). The implication that artists do not try to get a grasp of things is palpably absurd. All through the novel, Rachel and Terence are trying to understand things. Having got a grasp of things, Dalloway continues, the politician does something about what he has seen. On the other hand: "artists find things in a mess, shrug their shoulders, turn aside to their visions—which I grant may be very beautiful—and leave things in a mess" (45). Again, the division of roles is absurd, and the example of the artist—Shelley—is unfortunate for Dalloway's argument, because Shelley—despite the clichéd, stereotyped view Dalloway holds of him—certainly was not an artist who turned away to revel in his beautiful visions. Shelley was a passionately political person, and could in many respects be called a "man of the world" (45).

Virginia Woolf's view of Shelley was certainly nothing like Dalloway's. In "Not One of Us" she admits that he loved clouds and mountains and rivers, but adds:

at the foot of the mountain he always saw a ruined cottage; there were criminals in chains, hoeing up the weeds in the pavement of St. Peter's Square; there was an old woman shaking with ague on the banks of the lovely Thames. Then he would thrust aside his writing, dismiss his dreams, and trudge off to physic the poor with medicine or with soup. (CE IV 24)

She adds, perhaps less justly: "The most ethereal of poets was the most practical of men" (CE IV 24). Whatever view one takes of Shelley's success in practical affairs he certainly did not ignore the rigours of real life. Dalloway's ignorance informs his prejudice.

Dalloway's conception of the artist reflects, of course, the way in which the Dalloways use art. The truth is not that the artists make a divorce between their creative lives and the world of practical affairs; it is that the Dalloways use art as an antidote to the rigours of the practical life. Mrs Dalloway reads Persuasion to Richard to "take her husband's mind off the guns of Britain, and divert him in an
exquisite, quaint, sprightly, and slightly ridiculous world" (67). It is the Dalloways who set up barriers between life and art, and discriminate the perceptions proper to each. As he falls asleep Dalloway's professed admiration for Jane Austen evaporates, and we see that the choice of reading is double-edged: Sir Walter Elliot takes up the Baronetage to find "occupation for an idle hour and consolation in a distressed one", and this is precisely how the Dalloways use art. ⁵ (Perhaps we also recall the Elliot obsession with clothes as Rachel examines the apparel of the slumbering Dalloway (68).)

Dalloway sets politics against his conception of art, and his ideal, expressed to Rachel vaguely, and, it appears, with condescension, seems to be a parody of the ideal Terence is concerned with. Virginia Woolf often creates a character who not only comments directly on the artist but who also parodies him in his aims and ambitions. The parody is not as clear in The Voyage Out as it is in, say, Between the Acts, but it is an element in Dalloway—and perhaps in Vinrace (96)—and it adds an ironic twist to all he says. His ideal is: "In one word—Unity. Unity of aim, of dominion, of progress. The dispersion of the best ideas over the greatest area" (69). We sense that there is perhaps some half-formed idea lurking behind this verbiage, but, at least in his personal relations, Dalloway does not take this ideal seriously. His conversation about it with Rachel is full of evasions and dishonesties. He tries to avoid talking clearly about his ideas. There is a great contrast between the ways in which he and Terence talk to Rachel: Terence takes her seriously, and tries to tell her honestly what he thinks. Virginia Woolf noted in her diary:

It seems to me more & more clear that the only honest people are the artists, & that these social reformers & philanthropists get so out of hand & harbour so many discreditable desires under the disguise of loving their kind, that in the end there's more to find fault with in them than in us. ⁶

Rachel herself feels that there is something to find fault with in her conversation with
Dalloway—"You talk of unity .... You ought to make me understand" (70)—and although his kindness may be genuine she has to press him hard to get him to explain his rather vague ideas to her. When he does explain further, placing the image of the vast, thumping machine beside Rachel's image of the old widow (71–2), it is ironic, in view of his opinion of artists, that the image he uses to convey his idea about the dynamic cohesion of the state clearly echoes the image Menenius uses in Shakespeare's Coriolanus to expound the same concept:

Note me this, good friend;

Your most grave Belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered:
"True it is, my incorporate friends," quoth he,
"That I receive the general food at first,
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Because I am the storehouse and the shop
Of the whole body. But, if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court, the heart, to th' seat o' th' brain;
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural competency
Whereby they live ... (11)

Dalloway implicitly refutes his argument against artists: the only terms in which he can present his vision of politics are distortions of those already employed by artists. Again he appears as a parody of the artist; brief quotations and tags from the 'classics' are continually on his lips; he cannot think except in terms provided by those to whom he feels superior. The irony here is enriched by his alteration of Menenius's image. Menenius talks about the cohesion of the state using the human
body as image; there is a natural intimacy between the state and the human being.

Dalloway uses the image of the machine: "conceive the state as a complicated machine; we citizens are parts of the machine; some fulfil more important duties; others (perhaps I am one of them) serve only to connect some obscure parts of the mechanism, concealed from the public eye" (72). Dalloway's changing the image in this way is highly revealing. He is not really interested in the people he says he wants to help; he is interested in the machine, and in his "humble" part in it.

Rachel had previously had an intuition about him: "He seemed to come from the humming oily centre of the machine where the polished rods are sliding, and the pistons thumping" (48). So that it is not surprising that — in the manner of politicians — he avoids Rachel's question about the mind and the affections of the widow: "those," she says, "you leave untouched. But you waste your own" (71).

Rachel's question may be naive, but he seems not to understand its implications.

The Dalloway philosophy omits entirely any consideration of the emotional or spiritual life; it is wholly materialistic and mechanistic; it is Dalloway who does not use all his faculties. The life of active philanthropy — for this is what he wishes to convince Rachel politics is — appears now to be more a product of inner emptiness than an active and sympathetic concern for others.

A little later on Dalloway experiences the consequences of denying his emotional life; his feelings declare themselves with a vengeance when he kisses Rachel (84–5). He is taken by surprise, frightened and overwhelmed by his emotion; after he inflicts the kiss he becomes shifty and evasive, all his fine words and morality blown away. The kiss is in a way a symbol of the wrong-headedness of his philosophy; it lays bare its threadbare inadequacy. We are impelled to compare Dalloway's huddled half-attempt at intimacy with Terence's serious and honest courtship of Rachel. In retrospect it is clear that it is Terence who uses all his faculties — in life as well as in art.

Dalloway's kiss inevitably invites comparison with two kisses in Howards End —
the kiss Paul gives Helen and the kiss Mr. Wilcox gives Margaret. Neither are 'satisfactory', and, like Dalloway's hasty osculation, both are symptomatic of their perpetrators' inner muddle. The Wilcoxes stand in a similar relationship to the Schlegels as the Dalloways do to Rachel; the contrasts are what one might call, for the sake of brevity, the contrasts between the practical and the artistic. Howards End tests the values of the practical and artistic lives, and in the end the kind of practicality exhibited by the Wilcoxes is found to be inadequate. The male Wilcoxes devote all their energy and attention to the outer life, ignoring the inner life save for a few token nods in the direction of the arts. Their kind of heartless practicality produces the muddled catastrophe. More strongly than Forster's earlier novels, Howards End declares the value of the inner life and of the arts. The evasions with which the Wilcoxes meet emotions when they obtrude on their daily lives is very like Dalloway's continual evasiveness. In "Other Kingdom" there is a similar contrast between the practical and the artistic, and from Harcourt Worsters we hear a voice even more like Dalloway's: "For life is practically a battle. To all intents and purposes a battle. Except for a few lucky fellow who can read books, and so avoid the realities. But I—"; 7 "Let us cherish our dreams.... All day I've been fighting, haggling, bargaining. And to come out on to this lawn and see you all learning Latin, so happy, so passionless, so Arcadian—". 8

Mrs Dalloway, as Helen points out (92), is much sillier than her husband. Her continual flow of prattle reduces everything to the same level; stale perceptions, vague desires and verbal fluff mix themselves up with everything she talks about. Art is no exception. Being less frank than her husband, she professes a great love of literature: "Think of Shelley. I feel there's almost everything one wants in 'Adonais'"(45), but then she echoes Richard's sentiment about the artist ignoring life, and produces the naive cliché about the artist wrapped up in his world of culture, ignoring the miseries of the poor. We remember Helen's concern about the poor of London, and later we see St.John's concern for the way the hotel residents
get rid of the prostitute (376-7). Mrs Dalloway goes even further: "I should like to stop all the painting and writing and music until this kind of thing exists no longer" (45). Yet she pretends to a great love of art: Tristan is divine and thrilling. But then her mind is a jumble of half-formed ideas and random impulses. At one point she speaks self-congratulatingly about her sobbing over Parsifal, and in the next breath she says music is not good for one because it is "Too emotional, somehow" (49). She, like her husband, distrusts feelings, and whenever Rachel tries to talk to her seriously about her life, and about how she feels, she cuts her off with pat platitudes. This determination to avoid talking about feelings, or about anything one cares deeply about, produces exactly the kind of personal isolation for which the Dalloways blame artists. At the dinner table they engage in a conspiracy of bright chatter to keep others at a distance, to prevent anyone from saying anything awkward (42). In real terms, it is the Dalloways and not the artists who cut themselves off from life. They make it impossible for any fruitful communication to take place between themselves and other people. And this distrust of feeling is extended towards art: there is a nice ambiguity in "The people who really care about an art are always the least affected" (49). Reticence, for the Dalloways, is the norm: Helen's voice "had restraint in it, which she [Mrs Dalloway] held to be the sign of a lady" (42). Expression of feelings is affectation. Similarly, and here we begin to glimpse Clarissa's real contempt for artists, the social norms should be inviolate. The stockbroker is "really nobler than poets whom every one worships just because they're geniuses and die young" (62). Long hair is the sign of the bad artist (49). Mrs Dalloway is of the same mind as those "normal people" who Virginia Woolf said in "Not One of Us" noticed Shelley's abnormality, "and had done their best, following some obscure instinct of self-preservation; to make Shelley either toe the line or else quit the society of the respectable" (CE IV 21). Again, all would be reduced to a grey bleak conformity in the Dalloway world; it is clear that it is they and not the artists who are anti-life. That art for Clarissa is merely a social
asset becomes apparent; the contempt that lies behind the approving gestures is plain: "'I'm going to say it! — everything's at one's feet.' She glanced round as much as to say, 'not only a few stuffy books and Bach'" (63). Her attitude is not very different from that of the Pembroke in The Longest Journey.

The Dalloways' naive conception of the basic difference between the artist and the responsive human being living among his fellows is an important element in The Voyage Out. Virginia Woolf seriously 'discusses' this aspect of the relationship between art and life, and with Terence seems effectively to refute the Dalloway view. As I shall show in more detail later on, the perceptions and skills which Terence applies to the complex business of living with other people are precisely those skills and perceptions which he deploys as a novelist. All his faculties have their play.

The hazards and shortcomings of the Dalloway attitude are made plain, and it is evident that their contempt for art, their suspicion of feelings, and their desire to keep other people at a distance are all related. The common denominator of these attitudes is a neglect or suppression of the inner life. The dishonesties and evasions with which they meet Rachel's attempt at closeness are directly related to their vague, rather feeble arguments against art. Opposed to this are Terence's common aims in life and art, and the ease with which he lives in both worlds. The impulse which he feels towards the creation of unity in art is akin to his effort to find coherent structures and meaning in life. In Rachel's case the matter is less clear. She is at first more 'divorced from life' than Terence, but as we examine her development it will become apparent that the Dalloway philosophy is wrong even where she is concerned.

That Rachel is a musician is a central aspect of her character; the landscape of her perceptions, her modes of response — everything about her is related to this central fact. And in the first important analysis of her (30-5), her present character and her being as a musician are shown together as having evolved naturally from her earlier experience of life. Growing up with her two elderly aunts, having little
contact with the world apart from them, her attention was naturally directed
inwards. Her education did not help counteract this tendency:

she had been educated as the majority of well-to-do girls in the
last part of the nineteenth century were educated. Kindly doctors
and gentle old professors had taught her the rudiments of about ten
different branches of knowledge, but they would as soon have forced
her to go through one piece of drudgery thoroughly as they would
have told her that her hands were dirty. (31)

Her teachers demanded no effort from her, so that she has not even an intellectual
contact with external reality. She knows little or nothing about the world around her,
and her "one definite gift"—her flair for music—is "surrounded by dreams and
ideas of the most extravagant and foolish description" (32). Because of the
circumstances of her life, and not through deliberate choice, "All the energies
that might have gone into languages, science, or literature, that might have made
her friends, or shown her the world, poured straight into music" (32).

Her relations with her aunts increased her dependence on music as a way of
seeing the world. Sensing that what is important is communicating what one sees
and feels, she tried to come close to them. At one point she asked Aunt Lucy
whether she was fond of Aunt Eleanor, and she was put off with vapid sentimentalities

"I can't say I've ever thought 'how,'" said Miss Vinrace. "If
one cares one doesn't think 'how,' Rachel," which was aimed at the
niece who had never yet "come" to her aunts as cordially as they
wished.

"But you know I care for you, don't you, dear, because you're
your mother's daughter, if for no other reason, and there are
plenty of other reasons"—and she leant over and kissed her
with some emotion, and the argument was spilt irretrievably
about the place like a bucket of milk. (34)

This kiss is recalled when Dalloway kisses Rachel, and it is clear that Aunt Lucy
and the Dalloways are the same kind of people; and it is this sort of behaviour
which determines Rachel's absorption in music. Believing that talking about emotions merely hurts other people she abandons the attempt for a while and immerses herself in music — "It was far better to play the piano and forget all the rest .... It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked of a feeling they felt, but that was what music was for" (35).

In this first analysis she seems entirely dependent on music; she lives in a state of dreamy confusion about the world and about other people. Reality outside herself scarcely exists; she plays with "a queer remote impersonal expression of complete absorption" (61), and she allows people to be "featureless but dignified, symbols" (35). Being so terribly ignorant about people, she is taken in by the commonplace blandishments of the Dalloways. Music, on its purely emotional level — where it is unconnected with observable reality — becomes a symbol of the way Rachel experiences the world. Its emotional qualities seem to suggest the way in which Rachel, when we first meet her, drifts through life with only vague impulses towards understanding what she sees about her. This might seem a vindication of Dalloway's view of artists, but then it is people who behave like the Dalloways — using dishonest sentimentalities to ward off genuine feeling — who impel Rachel to become as she is when Helen first meets her. Again, it is the Dalloway philosophy which fragments life and ensures that one cannot use "All one's faculties" (44).

Rachel's investment of all her emotions in her art is an important aspect of the main theme of The Voyage Out: the problem of how one deals with one's feelings is a crucial topic. At one point in Night and Day the main theme of that novel is overtly stated: it is what it is like "To seek a true feeling among the chaos of the unfeelings or the half-feelings of life, to recognize it when found, and to accept the consequences of the discovery" (331). The difficulty of finding, discriminating, and expressing feelings is also a central concern of The Voyage Out. Rachel wants to know what people feel; she desires novelists to "write about the things they do feel" (364).
(In 1908 — with Melymbrosia well under way — Virginia Woolf wrote to Madge Vaughan: "it seems to me better to write of the things I do feel, than to dabble in things I frankly don't understand in the least". Terence wishes to write "a novel about Silence" (262), "about what people do not say, and throughout The Voyage Out it is demonstrable that what people do not say concerns their feelings. Virginia Woolf seems always to have upheld the necessity of talking about feelings: in 1904 — when she may have begun work on Melymbrosia — Virginia, with her half-brother George Duckworth, dined with the Dowager Countess of Carnarvon and Mrs Popham of Littlecote, and, in this unlikely company, she broached the perilous subject. She spoke about the need for expressing the emotions, and asked if Lady Carnarvon had read the dialogues of Plato; the outcome was discouraging: "once launched it was difficult to stop .... Suddenly a twitch, a shiver, a convulsion of amazing expressiveness, shook the Countess by my side ... and stopping, I saw George Duckworth blushing crimson on the other side of the table. I realised that I had committed some unspeakable impropriety". In an agitated whisper George explained: "They're not used to young women saying anything". In The Voyage Out there are continual examples of people refusing to express their feelings — a refusal which would earn the Dalloways' approval. Evelyn M. pounces on Terence and talks emotionally about her relations with men, but when he leaves her Terence is still wondering "What was she feeling left alone in the empty hall?" (229). Reticence about feelings is seen as the main barrier between people. On the day of the service in the hotel, Rachel, wanting to find out what people feel, wanders in and out of rooms, and is continually held at arm's length by the people she meets. All they can offer her is things: Miss Allan, who "showed no signs of breaking the reticence which had snowed her under for years" (312), proffers, characteristically, a piece of preserved ginger. Many other relationships in the novel demonstrate that people do not usually wish to talk about their feelings, and that when they do they experience almost insurmountable difficulties. Thus it is, as
Helen reflects, that "one never knows how far other people feel the things they might be supposed to feel" (107).

To return to Rachel: Dalloway's kiss, ironically, revives her desire to understand people and the world around her, and in her conversation with Helen about the kiss (88-95) she finds that it is possible to talk about feelings. When they talk to one, people can no longer by symbols (93). The kiss and the conversation with Helen awaken her to the possibilities of being herself (95), and to the need to understand other people — a need which the Dalloways do not feel. Helen wants her to think, and she prescribes conversation — a prized commodity among Virginia Woolf's circle of friends — and "offered books and discouraged too entire a dependence on Bach and Beethoven and Wagner" (144). Language, as an alternative to music, provides a different mode of perceiving and ordering experience. But Rachel has great difficulty with words. Early on, Helen had noticed in her "a tendency to use the wrong words" (14), and a little later we are told that "she did not naturally care for books" (32). So that she has great difficulty now in trying to use words and books to help her thinking. At times it seems that books may help; in the second important analysis of her (142-5) we see that she uses them well. She comes, with their aid, "to conclusions which had to be remodelled according to the adventures of the day"(144). But reading is an uncongenial mode: when she reads "her whole body was constrained by the working of her mind" (142). Written words are unfamiliar to her. In her reading she handles words "as though they were made of wood, separately of great importance, and possessed of shapes like tables or chairs" (144). But there has been a change. At the end of both these analyses Helen comes into her room: on the first occasion she find Rachel asleep; on the second, though she is in a trance-like state, Rachel is still awake. The suggestion is that she has to some extent emerged from the dreamy, completely self-absorbed condition in which we first saw her.

Some time later, we again see her reading; and we see her responding to words as though they were "separately of great importance": "Never had any words
been so vivid and so beautiful — Felix Arabja — Aethoopia. But those were not more noble than the others, hardy barbarians, forests, and morasses" (206). The words are a revelation, but they precipitate her not into rational thought but again into a state very close to trance. What seems to happen is that she responds to the sounds and emotional auras of words, not to their meanings. They seem to become for her music in another form. Words cannot order reality for her, nor help her to see more clearly, because she cannot cling to them. Music is her only means to order and unity.

Before she meets Terence, the only order she apprehends is that of music: music on the abstract, intellectual level. When she plays her "very difficult, very classical fugue in A .... an invisible line seemed to string the notes together, from which rose a shape, a building" (61). Later, when she plays Bach after the dance, her audience sits "as if they saw a building with spaces and columns succeeding each other rising in the empty space" (196). (This abstract sense of unity and structure is very similar to that of Rhoda in The Waves: "There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place" (116).)

As this is the kind of unity with which Rachel is associated, Terence, as Rachel points out, is only partly right when he suggests that in their different arts they both want to do much the same thing (266). Rachel replies: "music is different" (266). She does see what Terence means, but she senses a great difference between their arts, and has little sympathy with his: "Think of words compared with sounds!" (358). All for the abstract and emotional, she insists on her own art: "Why do you write novels? You ought to write music. Music, you see ... goes straight for things. It says all there is to say at once. With writing it seems to me there's so much ... scratching on the match-box" (251). It may be that the main difference between their arts is the difference between an internal and abstract art, and an art which takes account of life. In her art Rachel can take little note of the external world, or of
the world of rational thought. Terence's observations of the external world form the substance of his novels. He is right when he places Hirst and Rachel at the opposite poles of reason and emotion. (He himself stands between them.) She does not care for facts or for their logical ordering; Hirst emphatically does. (The grouping of characters is somewhat similar to that in To the Lighthouse: Mr Ramsay and Hirst are associated with ratiocination; Rachel and Mrs Ramsay with intuition and emotion; Lily Briscoe and Terence have, as Bernard expresses it in The Waves, "the double capacity to feel, to reason" (55).) It may not matter that Rachel is thus unbalanced. Her road to wisdom may be more direct than Terence's (357). And, as Terence says, "What would experience give her after all, except a kind of ridiculous formal balance, like that of a drilled dog in the street?" (367).

But even in saying this there is a hint that something is wrong. The dog image recalls his earlier one for Rachel's difficult music: "that kind of thing is merely like an unfortunate old dog going round on its hind legs in the rain" (357). The suggestion is that her skills as a musician are related only to themselves; this may merely reflect Terence's lack of understanding of her art, but a possibility of a connection between Rachel's state and her death is hinted at through the water images with which she is associated throughout the novel. (Terence's image of the dog in the rain is of course related to these images.) I shall suggest later on that there is a connection between these images and Rachel's music: that her emotional immersion in music is suggested by them. (This, of course, is not the only function of these images.) Rachel's illness is announced to the accompaniment of the invocation of Sabrina taken from Comus - "Under the glassy, cool translucent wave" - and during the illness many water images are used to describe its course: "she fell into a deep pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head" (416). So that her fever, and her death, may be seen as an intensification of her habitual emotional condition.

Terence is in no danger of this kind of immersion, because his art and his
life are inseparably linked. Partly this is a result of the nature of his art: a deep involvement in life is a condition of the novelist's being. In "Life and the Novelist" Virginia Woolf insists on this, and draws a distinction between novelists and other creators: "The novelist - it is his distinction and his danger - is terribly exposed to life. Other artists, partially at least, withdraw; they shut themselves up for weeks alone with a dish of apples and a paint-box, or a roll of music paper and a piano" (CE II 131). Terence is an early tentative example of the artist-unifier in Virginia Woolf's novels. He, unlike Rachel, has a continual, perceptive interest in what goes on around him, and he always sees connections between art and life. The context is trivial, but his comment on Mrs Paley and Hardy's poem about love (127) is an aspect of this perception. Again, Virginia Woolf insisted that a writer's life should not be divorced from his art. In "Sterne", written in 1909, she says: "A writer is a writer from his cradle; in his dealings with the world, in his affections, in his attitude to the thousand small things that happen between dawn and sunset, he shows the same point of view as that which he elaborates afterwards with a pen in his hand" (CE III 86). Hirst, Terence says, is at fault here: one has to "make allowances" for him - an echo of Dalloway's dictum about artists (44) - because he does shut himself up in art (183). Hirst has been so absorbed in culture that he has little experience of life. He does not know how to talk to a young woman. But Terence does: he never allows his love of art to impair his responses to life - unlike some of Forster's characters. His own writing is affected by the circumstances of his life: after his engagement "The book called Silence would not now be the same book that it would have been" (356). And this involvement in life gives him a sense of solidity, a firm sense of his own tangible existence. In this he is unlike Rachel, who feels that "we're nothing but patches of light" (358). 12

One aspect of this closeness to life is his unfeigned interest in and concern for people. Like Virginia Woolf, he is fascinated by the lives of others, and he questions them: "But Miss Umpleby - why did she grow roses?" (130). 13 And
there is no suggestion that he is merely gathering material, for though his observations of them will inform his art he does genuinely like people — "he liked them, he suspected, better than Rachel did" (356). When Evelyn M. corners him in her distress (222), he is concerned about her misery, and tries to help her understand what she feels towards the two men who wish to marry her. He tries to explain: "'We don't care for people because of their qualities .... It's just them that we care for' — he struck a match — 'just that,' he said, pointing to the flames" (227). Like Rachel, he is consciously concerned with the main theme: the difficulties of the emotional life. Here he echoes the image which he had used earlier in conversation with Hirst — "all we see of each other is a speck, like the wick in the middle of that flame. The flame goes about with us everywhere; it's not ourselves exactly, but what we feel" (125) — and the flames-sparks image becomes an emblem constantly associated with him.

Terence wants to bring people together — he arranges the expedition up the mountain in order to do this — and does not see the circles which Hirst maintains isolate people. It would be "an e-n-o-r-m-o-u-s world", he declares, if the bubbles which surround people, cutting them off from each other's inner worlds, should run together and burst (125). This desire to achieve a unity among people is related via an extension of the flame image to what he wishes to achieve in art. To Rachel he says: "We want to find out what's behind things, don't we? — Look at the lights down there ... scattered about anyhow. Things I feel come to me like lights .... I want to combine them .... Have you ever seen fireworks that make figures? .... I want to make figures" (266). The link between his objectives in life and art are further strengthened by this use of a common image to explain them. Art and life are not separate for him. There is a deliberate relationship between his wanting to bring people closer together and his desire for order and unity in his writing. Dalloway's ideas are clearly being refuted.

Terence is a serious artist. Like Virginia Woolf, he desires his novel to have shape, and he wishes it to have a relationship with other things; it will not be
an isolated fragment. Most readers do not care for this aspect, but he does:

All you read a novel for is to see what sort of person the writer is, and, if you know him, which of his friends he's put in. As for the novel itself, the whole conception, the way one's seen the thing, felt about it, made it stand in relation to other things, not one in a million cares for that. (262)

So his novel will have the ordered coherence that Virginia Woolf's have. And his use of the light image to express his desire for order suggests that his writing will be directly concerned with the sorts of relationships between people which he sees around him. He tells Rachel: "I want to write a novel about Silence ... the things people don't say" (262). We see, then, that Silence will have the same main theme as The Voyage Out: feelings - what people do not say. Some critics have said that Terence's Silence corresponds to The Waves, in that they are both about what people don't say, but I would suggest that The Voyage Out itself is the counterpart to Silence. As I shall show later silence is an important symbol in this novel.

Terence's intuitions about the people he meets have a direct bearing on his novel. He is very sensitive in his relations with others to what they don't say. During his conversation with Evelyn M. he realises "that Evelyn did not wish to say anything in particular, but to impress upon him an image of herself" (228). The conversation leaves him still ignorant of what she feels, and he wonders why relations between people "were so unsatisfactory, so fragmentary, so hazardous" (229). It is this kind of direct observation of and involvement in life that informs his art. One implication of his statement about combining lights is that he wishes to write about people's feelings, and what they don't say, in a complex pattern which will reveal what he sees to be the bases of how people are with one another.

It is interesting that some years later Virginia Woolf suggested that Jane Austen would have had an aim similar to Terence's had she lived to write more novels: "She would have devised a method, clear and composed as ever, but deeper and more suggestive, for conveying not only what people say, but what they leave unsaid" (CE I 152).
Terence's novel about the gentleman is connected with another aspect of the feelings theme. According to the Dalloways the gentleman must maintain a proper poise and establish a proper distance between himself and others. Reticence is the desired quality. When Helen asks Mrs Dalloway if Ridley looks like a gentleman, Mrs Dalloway thinks the question is "One of the things that can't be said" (50). One can implicitly demand that a gentleman wear "well-cut clothes" (50), but one cannot talk about it. The clothes image is taken up again when Dalloway falls asleep as his wife reads the beginning of Persuasion to him. Rachel looks at the slumberer and observes: "In sleep he looked like a coat hanging at the end of the bed; there were all the wrinkles, and the sleeves and trousers kept their shape though no longer filled out by arms and legs" (68). The protagonist in Terence's novel is obsessed by the idea of becoming a gentleman, and he suffers agonies in his attempt to establish himself as one. Terence echoes Virginia Woolf's use of the clothes image: the prospective gentleman has a coat, and while he is establishing himself "the coat becomes older and older, and he hardly dares to wear the trousers. Can't you imagine the wretched man ... hanging them over the end of the bed, arranging them now in full light, now in shade, and wondering whether they will survive him, or he will survive them?" (263). We see a similar situation in the figure of Mr Perrott. He struggles to be accepted as a gentleman, but Susan Warrington comments that he is still not "quite" (120). Neither Mr Perrott nor Terence's hero will ever be "quite" accepted as a gentleman, and their failure, and the essential futility of their ambition, is suggested by their obsession with clothes. Terence will also describe fashionable life: "I'm going to describe the kind of parties I once went to – the fashionable intellectuals, you know, who like to have the latest book on their tables" (263-4), and this life is precisely the kind of life lived by the Dalloways. What Terence essentially wants to do in this novel is "to show the gradual corruption of the soul" (263), and this corruption again is precisely what we have seen already in the Dalloways: in both, in Dalloway and Terence's gentleman, the corruption of soul is conveyed by
the clothes images.

The Dalloways are also connected with another aspect of Terence's concerns: the role of women. Terence, as we guess from the notes he reads to Rachel (356-7), will make this a major theme in Silence. The Dalloways take the traditional view of women's duties; the notion that they should be enfranchised horrifies them (44). The woman must be cosсетed and, so Dalloway says, her illusions must not be destroyed. She must be at hand to soothe the "battered martyr" when he returns home from the office (71). Virginia Woolf's attitude to this atavism is plain: in Three Guineas, for instance, she says that the insistence that "it is the nature of womanhood to heal the wounds of the fighter" is a characteristic of Nazism and Fascism. This may appear a little extreme, this association of Dalloway's ideas with those of Hitler and Mussolini, but the strict subordination of women does seem to be a common feature of right-wing totalitarianism.

The difficulties Rachel has in relating to the world around her originated in her upbringing — an upbringing considered to be suitable for a young lady. Her education, for instance, left her terribly ignorant, especially about the relations between men and women. So that when Helen talks to her about them she has a fresh vision of her life: "she saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled for ever" (91·2). This may be exaggerated, but truth is there, and it is this confinement of women that Terence and Rachel deplore. Terence thinks about the conditions of women's lives with sympathy and insight, and he will write about it in Silence. So, again, an important theme in The Voyage Out will also be a major concern of Silence. And Terence seems well qualified to tackle this theme, for, as Evelyn points out, "There's something of a woman in him" (302). (Terence is the first of the many androgynous artists in Virginia Woolf's novels.) In this respect too Terence seems to represent a mean between Rachel and Hirst. Rachel is entirely feminine; Hirst — "he wants a cosy, smokey, masculine place"
(183)—is entirely masculine. Terence has qualities characteristic of both sexes.

Again, the grouping is similar to that in *To the Lighthouse*: Lily Briscoe unites in herself the masculine and feminine qualities of Mr and Mrs Ramsay.

So far I have shown how Terence's and Rachel's different concerns as artists are connected to the major themes of the novel. Similarly, the symbols which convey their artistic natures are important elements in the novel's network of symbols.

Terence uses the spark-flame-light image to talk about people and about his novels. To Hirst he says: "all we see of each other is a speck, like the wick in the middle of that flame"(125); in conversation with Evelyn he uses a match to help him explain his ideas about people (227); and he tells Rachel: "things I feel come to me like lights .... I want to combine them (266). These images are related to other similar images which are used by the narrator to suggest ideas about character.

The dullness and apathy of the hotel residents is conveyed during a description of lunch: "The food served as an extinguisher upon any faint flame of the human spirit that might have survived the midday heat .... Towards four o' clock the human spirit again began to lick the body" (136); Evelyn's restless spirit is a spark (306); and Rachel, perceiving the reticence which had "snowed her under for years", desires to strike sparks out of Miss Allan (312). It is apparent, then, that Terence's image is related to many others which carry ideas about the emotional and spiritual life.

In *Night and Day* one aspect of the significance of the light-dark images in that novel is made plain: "Why, [Katherine] reflected, should there be this perpetual disparity between the thought and the action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night?" (358). It is suggested that the soul is active in darkness; active when the flurry of life is relieved by night. A similar suggestion is conveyed in *The Voyage Out*. The perpetual light of London is horrifying: as Helen and Rachel stroll on the deck of the *Euphrosyne* on the night of departure: 'London was a swarm of lights with a pale
canopy drooping above it ... It seemed dreadful that the town should blaze for ever in the same spot" (11-12). At this point, though not always throughout the novel, London is the city of spiritual sterility. Its swarm of lights — in contrast to Terence's flames — imply aimless febrile activity; any possibility of the inner or spiritual life is smothered. In South America the night is different: its darkness fosters a life lived at a deeper level than that permitted by the glare of London. The fertile and unrestrained social life of Santa Marina takes place in the sensuous loveliness of the night (112-13). The beauty and spiritual resonance of the dark South American night are often shown: "Looking out of the windows there was only darkness to be seen .... Until all people should awake again the houseless animals were abroad, the tigers and the stags, and the elephants [sic] coming down in the darkness to drink at pools .... For six hours this profound beauty existed" (127-8). In one sense the voyage out is a voyage out of perpetual brilliancy into pregnant darkness, a darkness in which the spirit may flourish.

The exploration of the inner life is taken further by the two expeditions — the trips up the mountain and up the river — and darkness accompanies both. As they descend from the mountain, from where they have seen the river, darkness falls; when they reach the river darkness has already fallen. One stage of the exploration follows another on the symbolic as well as on the narrative level. The exploration reaches furthest on the river expedition. As they begin the trip "They seemed to be driving into the heart of the night, for the trees closed in front of them, and they could hear all round them the rustling of leaves" (325). As his companions sleep Terence lies on deck still awake: "He was drawn on and on away from all he knew, slipping over barriers and past landmarks into unknown waters as the boat glided over the smooth surface of the river. In profound peace, enveloped in deeper unconsciousness than had been his for many nights ...." (326). The explicit reference to the unconscious here suggests, perhaps, one significance of the animal activity in the passage quoted earlier, and we remember the "white, hairless, blind monsters"
(17-18) of the dark depths of the sea which Mr Pepper held forth about during the voyage from England. Darkness allows the conscious mind to settle down: allows the unconscious mind to become active. It is against the background of this imagery that we see Terence's conversations about people and about his writing. The flame he talks of is only visible in the darkness. When he talks about the things people don't say, he talks about people's basic identities, below the shifts and evasions of the social life, things of which they themselves may be only dimly aware.

The silence which Terence wishes to write about also has its counterpart in the novel as a whole. There are two opposing aspects here: firstly there is the silence which falls between people as they fail to communicate. We are told, after Terence and Rachel begin to draw close to each other, that Terence might have found material for Silence up at the villa, because, with the secret of Rachel's growing love for Terence between them, Rachel and Helen no longer speak to each other with their earlier frankness (269). On other occasions silence falls among the guests at the hotel when the words they use to disguise their separateness falter and fail them.

The other kind of silence is the natural companion of darkness in descriptions of the South American night: "Between the extinction of Hewet's candle and the rising of a dusky Spanish boy . . . a few hours of silence intervened" (127)—and it is what Virginia Woolf might have called "a populous and teeming silence": "the houseless animals were abroad, the tigers and the stags, and the elephants coming down in the darkness to drink at pools" (128). When Terence and Rachel walk into the darkness of the forest "the silence was . . . profound" (331). It is in this milieu, silence and darkness, that Terence and Rachel reach out to each other, and the spiritual quality of the silence of the forest becomes clear as it is duplicated in them: "Long silences came between their words, which were no longer silences of struggle and confusion but refreshing silences, in which trivial thoughts moved easily. They began to speak naturally of ordinary things" (346). This also, then, is the silence which Terence wishes to write about; it is not only, as Bazin says, the silence of
the unconscious; \textsuperscript{20} it is the silence which Virginia Woolf wrote about in Orlando, again associating it with darkness: "The whole of her darkened and settled ... And she fell silent. For it is probable that when people talk aloud, the selves (of which there may be more than two thousand) are conscious of disseverment, and are trying to communicate, but when communication is established they fall silent". \textsuperscript{21} It is also the silence of the Buddhists and the mystics, and of Eliot's \textit{Four Quartets}.

Rachel, in strong contrast to Terence, is often associated with water. When she sees Ridley and Helen kiss on the Euphrosyne, she looks deep into the sea: "Down she looked into the depths of the sea. While it was slightly disturbed on the surface by the passage of the Euphrosyne, beneath it was green and dim, and it grew dimmer and dimmer until the sand at the bottom was only a pale blur" (23). Her eyes are said to be "as unreflecting as water" (16). When she demands "What is love", "each word as it came into being seemed to shove itself out into an unknown sea" (207).

Part of the cumulative effect of these associations is to suggest Rachel's emotional undecided nature, and, in the same way as the images associated with Terence as an artist are a vital part of one symbolic system in the novel, so this image associated with Rachel is related to another major symbolic network: water -- as the sea, the river, rain, -- is a continual presence. More tentatively, I would suggest that, if the silence and darkness images in the novel are related to Terence's being as an artist, the water images are related to Rachel's. This is not as unlikely as it may sound at first: in her diary Virginia Woolf continually used water images to describe her creative processes. She wrote about "the creative power which bubbles so pleasantly in beginning a new book" (AWD 26: May 1920) and, as she was writing \textit{The Years}, she recorded: "the well is full, ideas are rising and if I can keep at it widely, freely, powerfully, I shall have two months of complete immersion" (AWD 220: July 1934). Water images are particularly appropriate for conveying intuitions about music: its emotional flow and superficial formlessness invite watery metaphors. In "The String Quartet" the experience of music is largely suggested by
the description of water in various states. In *The Voyage Out* the connections between the water images and Rachel's music are more tentative than those between *Silence* and silence; music is not often associated with water in the novel. But there is one decisive occasion when it is. As the music strikes up for the dance at the hotel "It was as though the room were instantly flooded with water. After a moment's hesitation first one couple, then another, leapt into mid-stream, and went round and round in the eddies. The rhythmical swish of the dancers sounded like a swirling pool" (177).

It appears, then, that for Rachel and Terence there are definite relationships between character, art and major symbol. And they seem to form distinct opposites—logical/intuitive, words/music, flame/water. There may be a deeper level, however, at which the differences vanish and the two sets of attributes become reconciled. This suggestion is implied through a union of the symbols associated with them. Often darkness is described in terms of water: "The dusk fell ... the hollows of the mountain on either side filling up with darkness" (172); "The darkness poured down profusely" (354). More pertinently perhaps, the storm after Rachel's death, with its lightning flashes and floods of rain, brings together their symbols: "a light flashed, and was instantly followed by a clap of thunder right over the hotel. The rain swished with it" (449). The two symbols unite to bring the exultation and peace with which the novel ends; perhaps all art does fundamentally the same thing. It may be, then, that Terence is nearer the truth than at first appears when he suggests to Rachel that their aims as artists are similar (266).

Terence and Rachel are serious and devoted artists, and although they are 'committed' to their arts they do not sever themselves from life in the way the Dalloways say that artists do. Their preoccupations in life are intimately related to their preoccupations as artists. That the images associated with their arts — darkness, flames, water — are integral units in the symbolic framework of the novel emphasises this point. Terence uses the same image in trying to help Evelyn
to understand her feelings (227) as he does in explaining his aesthetic ideals to Rachel (266). His attempt to understand Evelyn's feelings is akin to his desire to render in his novel the features of the uncommunicated emotions. In Rachel's case—naturally, as she is a musician—we cannot see such a clear relation between her life and her art, but we do see that both are a process of discovery. As Sammy Mountjoy says in Golding's *Free Fall*, "Art is partly communication but only partly. The rest is discovery." Playing the piano, Rachel is said to be "far in the pursuit of wisdom" (357), and on her journey from room to room in the hotel after the horror of the service (283-315) she is continually searching for something, although she is continually "tantalized and put off" (315).

Dalloway's central criticism of artists is clearly refuted. But there is a sense in which he is right, although he would appear to be unaware of it. The exploration of the inner life does entail for the artist a certain amount of isolation; some existence outside what Bernard in *The Waves* calls "the sequence"; some relief from the glare of everyday life. So as Terence lies awake on the boat that takes them upriver "He was drawn on and on away from all he knew, slipping over barriers and past landmarks into unknown waters" (326). A concomitant of this is the possible social ostracism rigorous artistic honesty may provoke. Hirst points this out when he tells Hewet that he cannot read his poem aloud in the dining room: "The merest whisper would be sufficient to incriminate me forever. God!... what's the use of attempting to write when the world's peopled by such damned fools?" (290). The opprobrium would come from people very like the Dalloways; they would treat the artist as the 'hotel residents treat the prostitute, Signora Lola Méndóza, who is "hoofed out" (376).

One of the immensely difficult tasks undertaken by the artist is the creation of unity, and, again, we see this in relation to life and art. There are two major occasions in *The Voyage Out* when we see Rachel and Terence attempting this labour, and both involve a certain amount of disillusionment. Terence, in response to
Hirst's insistence on people's separateness (124–6), organises the expedition up the mountain to attempt to bring people closer together. At the very moment at which his party seems most successful, when they lose their selfconsciousness and unite in noisy combat against the ants, he suddenly becomes "profoundly depressed". For a moment he sees his guests with appalling clarity, and thinks: "They are not satisfactory; they are ignoble" (156). Another attempt takes place on the night of the dance — another social event designed to bring people closer together. When Rachel plays the piano for the dancers they lose their selfconsciousness and, as a climax to the evening, they form a gigantic circle and dance together elatedly. This circle is an adaptation of the circle image Hirst had used to convey his sense of human isolation (123). The joy of the dancers is short-lived, however. The circle breaks under the strain, the sun rises, and again there is a moment of cruel clarity.

Daylight dispels illusions:

It was true; the untidy hair, and the green and yellow gems, which had seemed so festive half an hour ago, now looked cheap and slovenly. The complexions of the elder ladies suffered terribly, and, as if conscious that a cold eye had been turned upon them, they began to say good-night and to make their way up to bed. (196)

It seems that the unity wrought by art cannot endure under the complex of pressures encountered in the circumstances of life. But then, immediately, the power of art is reaffirmed: Rachel plays Bach, and the nerves of her audience are quietened: "Then they began to see themselves and their lives ... advancing very nobly under the direction of the music" (196).

The relationship between unity in life and in art, however, is not explored in great depth in The Voyage Out. It is taken up though in Virginia Woolf's more adept novels, and it becomes a major theme in To the Lighthouse.

There are other artists in the novel who throw into relief the two central characters and cast more light on what it is to be an artist. This technique of finely shaded comparisons becomes typical in Virginia Woolf's writings about artists. The creator is never as simple as the Dalloways would have us believe; a finer
understanding emerges from Virginia Woolf's presentation of subtle likenesses and differences. The minor artists seem to form contrasting pairs, Helen-St. John, Mrs Flushing-Mrs Eliot, Ridley-Miss Allan, and the pairs themselves are grouped to suggest further comparisons and contrasts. This kind of grouping is naturally not handled so well in The Voyage Out as it is in her later work: in Night and Day, for instance, which is in many respects a reworking of The Voyage Out, the patterns are more delicate.

Helen's art is embroidery, and she is the first of the women in Virginia Woolf's novels who fall into almost archetypal attitudes of female creativity. The image of the seated woman, bending over her sewing or knitting, occurs again in Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse. In Helen's case, the craft seems to be deliberately allied to the more obviously 'artistic' labours: "Thus time went on .... Superficially, three odes of Pindar were mended, Helen covered about five inches of her embroidery, and St. John completed the first two acts of a play" (273). It is also allied to them in that it is impersonal, and in that Helen takes it seriously: it is "a matter for thought, the design being difficult and the colours wanting consideration" (245). One of the effects of her embroidery, as Blackstone has noted, is to associate her closely with fate: as she sits in the garden sewing and talking to St. John: "her own figure possessed the sublimity of a woman's of the early world, spinning the thread of fate" (245-6). We see her sewing on two occasions when her suggestions have a decisive effect on other people's lives. She sews when she first suggests that Rachel should stay with her and Ridley in South America—she wishes to help Rachel become "a reasonable person" (94)—and the careful strategies she uses to draw Rachel out reinforces the association with fate. She also sews when she advises St. John to go to the bar rather than to return to Cambridge (246-8). She tries to help both of them live in a freer, less secluded way, and to develop more balanced personalities. That she is capable of doing this, and of helping people to explore some aspects of the inner life, is suggested by the scene which she embroiders. It shows a river in a
tropical forest, and is an adumbration of the trip upriver taken later on by Helen, St. John, Rachel and Terence. The connection between Helen's embroidery and the discoveries in the forest is confirmed by the subsequent description of the women in the native village. They are "squatting on the ground in triangular shapes, moving their hands, either plaiting straw or in kneading something in bowls" (348).

On numerous occasions too Helen thinks about fate, fortune, destiny (98,109, 269,350). It is not quite, as Blackstone suggests, that "She is a Fate, with the threads of life and death in her hands". Although these fate references do associate her with the supernatural and magical, we do not feel that the magic is in her, as we do with some of Virginia Woolf's other artists, and if we compare her with the fate figure in Conrad's Heart of Darkness — which might have suggested to Virginia Woolf the association of Helen with fate — we see a completely different emphasis. Charles Marlow visits the office of the company which appoints him skipper of a steamboat in Africa, and in the ante-room "Two women, one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs, knitting black wool". The elder of the two emerges as an ominous fate figure:

Two youths with cheery and foolish countenances were being piloted over, and she threw at them the same quick glance of unconcerned wisdom. She seemed to know all about them and about me, too. An eerie feeling came over me. She seemed uncanny and fateful. Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness ... Old knitter of black wool.

Conrad's woman is a more sombre figure than Helen; she stirs deeper reverberations. Helen never becomes a portentous symbol: she serves rather to localise on occasions — as in the forest (350) — the sense of forboding which pervades the novel.

Helen is a mature and balanced woman, perhaps already aware of much of what Rachel discovers in the forest. St. John, who does not even look at Helen's embroidery (244), is very different. He seems to embody elements of three other characters — Lytton Strachey, Ansell of The Longest Journey, and the Edward Gibbon of Virginia Woolf's essay "The Historian and 'The Gibbon'" and "Reflections."
at Sheffield Place" (CE I). (The relation with Gibbon is indicated not only by Hirst's advocacy of him (180), but also by his assumption of the same pedagogic role with Rachel as Gibbon assumed towards Maria Josepha Holroyd (CE I 125), by his analytical intelligence, his antipathy towards Christianity, and so on.) Like these three, too, he has great difficulties with emotions; he is awkward and angular when he is with other people. What we see of him as a cultured man and as an artist is related to the difficulties presented by emotions. Terence explains him to Rachel: "He's lived all his life in front of a looking-glass, so to speak, in a beautiful panelled room, hung with Japanese prints and lovely old chairs and tables" (183).

So that to some extent, as Terence implies, art is for him a bulwark, a barrier between himself and the stresses of the active world. (He is similar in this respect to Mr Hilbery of Night and Day.) His intellect, more mature than his emotions, sets him apart from others, and provides him with a defence. His poetry, as we may infer from hints we are given about his poem on God, is witty, irreverent, intellectual, and, maybe, a little sour. He is as unable to deal with emotions in art as he is in life: what impresses Rachel about his play is "the skill of his rhythms and the variety of his adjectives" (273). The emphasis is entirely upon technique, and we may compare Rachel's reception of his play with Katherine's reaction to William Rodney's play in Night and Day: Rodney's technique is also what impresses the reader (143). He also, as I shall show in the next chapter, has great problems with emotions.

Hewet says to Rachel: "you must make allowances for Hirst" (183), and he echoes one of Dalloway's criticisms of artists - "off [their] own lines - puff - one has to make allowances" (44) - but even Hirst does not fit snugly into the Dalloway picture of the artist. He is not so enveloped in the world of culture that he is ignorant of the world around him. He can more than hold his own in political discussions, he wants to do something about the hotel's expelling the prostitute (376), and he is sometimes perceptive about the people around him. Partially his retreat
from them is prompted by his observation of their petty meannesses (a perception he shares with Terence). He tells Terence that he cannot read his poem to him in the dining room, because the other diners would fling them out if they hear it. And this is the audience for which Terence writes: "God! [exclaims St. John] what's the use of attempting to write when the world's peopled by such damned fools? Seriously, Hewet, I advise you to give up literature. What's the good of it? There's your audience" (290). If part of Dalloway's criticism must be admitted in Hirst's case, it is people like the Dalloways who cause his exclusiveness. There is an interesting contrast to be made between St. John and Forster's Philip Herrington (WAFT) and Cecil Vyse (RV). St. John's dedication to art is not disabling, and does not engender malice or muddle. It is an honest if 'inadequate' response to what he sees around him; and although he is presented with some irony he does demand a respect which we cannot give Philip or Cecil. Virginia Woolf is much less pessimistic about the possible bad effects of culture, although, as I shall show in the next chapter, Night and Day offers some pretty stringent criticisms.

Some members of Hewet's audience are also artists. Mrs Eliot and Mrs Flushing both paint. They form a contrasting pair, but they have one thing in common: neither of them is serious about her painting. Mrs Eliot, it seems, paints because she has no children; she has only vague regrets about her lack of talent: "Women without children can do so much for the children of others," observed Mrs. Thornbury gently. 'I sketch a great deal,' said Mrs. Eliot, 'but that isn't really an occupation. It's so disconcerting to find girls just beginning doing better than one does oneself! And nature's difficult — very difficult!' "(134). And she dislikes the light in South America because it is too strong: "The light's so strong here. Some people admire it, I know, but I find it very fatiguing" (137). Her naive comments about art, and her lack of seriousness, are in strong contrast to the attitudes of Rachel and Terence.

It is hardly necessary, then, to apply Dalloway's comments about artists to her. Although 'compensation' may often have a lot to do with impelling the dedicated artist
to create, Mrs Eliot cannot be taken seriously as an artist.

Mrs Eliot is vapid and weak; Mrs Flushing is fiercely energetic. Painting for her is an outlet for energies. The paintings of both are entirely characteristic: one sketches insipidly, the other assaults the canvas with paint. Mrs Flushing's paintings are: "all perfectly untrained onslaughts of the brush upon some half-realised idea suggested by hill or tree" (285). Mrs Flushing does not even choose her own views: "Her husband strolled about to select an interest point of view for her" (329). Her energy is also directed into her neophilia: "Nothin' more than twenty years old interests me .... Mouldy old pictures, dirty old books, they stick 'em in museums when they're only fit for burning" (234). Her vigour is attractive, and it is good that she welcomes the new — Helen in a letter home accuses the English of neglecting living artists (109) — but really she displays a contempt for art similar to Mrs Dalloway's. There is not much difference between "Mouldy old pictures, dirty old books" and "not only a few stuffy books and Bach" (63).

Another contrasting pair is formed by Ridley Ambrose and Miss Allan. They are both scholars, though on different levels: Miss Allan is a teacher preparing a textbook Primer of English Literature; Mr Ambrose is a university don engaged in restoring the odes of Pindar. They are both isolated from people, and in both cases their isolation is related to their work. Miss Allan is less dedicated than Ridley to learning for its own sake, and she is allied to the less serious artists in the novel. She bewails the difficulties of her task in terms similar to those used by Mrs Eliot: "That's what I find so difficult, saying something different about everybody" (387). She writes her textbook for money, and she takes her work less seriously than Ridley takes his. Sometimes it seems a comic element in a habitual domestic ritual: "Her grey petticoats slipped to the ground, and, stooping, she folded her clothes with neat, if not loving fingers, screwed her hair into a plait, wound her father's great gold watch, and opened the complete works of Wordsworth" (118). Her work seems not to be distinguished from these other activities. In her
book, however, she will make distinctions: it is divided into different "ages", and
she says: "I'm glad there aren't many more ages" (309). Considerations which
would probably not occur to someone like Ridley affect her book: a concatenation of
'b's determines its title, and the publisher decides its length.

Ridley is a dedicated scholar, and is allied to the serious artists in the novel.
He immures himself in his study at the villa, and is "some thousand miles distant
from the nearest human being" (200): the circles which Hirst says separate people
from each other become concrete as Ridley works; "his chair became more and more
deeply encircled by books" (201). Even when he is with people, he is often unaware
of them because he continually recites poetry to himself—although he does sense
before Helen that a close relationship is developing between Rachel and "a young
gentleman" (231). He, much more than Hirst, is the kind of cultured person whom
Dalloway criticises for ignoring the world, but though his way of life and his
behaviour with other people are treated ironically, there is no suggestion that the
Dalloway critique is valid. Respect is accorded his learning; he does not use art
as a soporific. His culture, like Hirst's, is not disabling; he is not crippled as some
of Forster's cultivated characters are: although he does live at a distance from
other people this is not seen as a matter for moral judgement. In Night and Day
Virginia Woolf becomes much more critical of this kind of immersion in the aesthetic
life. Mr Hilbery, as I shall show in the next chapter, is a more extreme case than
Mr Ambrose, and he clearly does harm in life as a result of his preoccupation with
art.

Although The Voyage Out was Virginia Woolf's first novel, she employs already
many of the ideas and techniques which she used later in her more sophisticated
novels. We are presented with several artists who in congregation suggest various
reflections about the relations between life and art. They combine in much the
same way as Terence says he wishes to combine his intuitions in his novels (266).
Rachel and Terence—of whom Virginia Woolf clearly approves—are the two who
most consistently make efforts to achieve fruitful relationships between their lives
and arts. Their theories — more particularly Terence's — are very close to
Virginia Woolf's own: Terence's discovery of a new vein in literature, the possibilities
of silence, reflect Virginia Woolf's own search for new dimensions. Many of the
characteristics of the serious artists in The Voyage Out are fundamental to Virginia
Woolf's fictional writing about artists: the relations between their lives and arts,
their status as explorers, their social ostracism, their androgynity, and so on.
Some themes are introduced which are developed more rigorously in later novels:
the natural and the primitive are continually, though quietly, in the background —
there is constant reference to the forest and its animals, and Helen's figure is said
to possess "the sublimity of a woman's of the early world" (246) — and civilisation
is a concept never far from the surface.

Some techniques too are used in The Voyage Out which are taken up in the later
novels. The character who directly and indirectly comments on the artist is
introduced, and becomes almost a parody of the artist. And although there is no
presentation of an 'authentic' act of creation (we are told too little about Rachel's
playing for that to count), there is a description of a parody: the service in the
chapel (275-83), with its egregious peroration, is clearly such a parody. In the
novels which follow parody and imitation are used with great effectiveness to comment
on creativity.

One 'fault' one might find with The Voyage Out which is absent in the later
novels: a question is raised at the beginning about the value of art, and an answer
is given implicitly throughout, but the implied value is never tested. As the doubts
about art's value are presented at such length the balancing affirmation needs perhaps
to be more than stated to be convincing. One might refer to Howards End to
demonstrate the greater conviction carried by values which are tested, or, indeed,
to Night and Day, in which the civilised life is narrowly examined, tested and finally
endorsed.
NOTES


4. Much of the Dalloways' attitude towards Shelley is conditioned by Matthew Arnold's essay on him. Dalloway quotes from this essay - "What a set! " (VO 45) - and largely adopts Arnold's disapproval. Arnold's approval, and the intellectual muddle which sanctions simultaneous approval and disapproval - Shelley is rather like the curate's egg - is also apparent: one might compare Arnold's "He may talk nonsense about tyrants and priests, but what a high and noble ring in such a sentence as the following . . . . " with Mrs Dalloway's "How divine! - and yet what nonsense!" (62). The quotation from Arnold is from Essays in Criticism (London, 1964), p.349.


8. Ibid., p.62.

9. Virginia Woolf's indignation about the inadequacies of women's education is apparent in much of her non-fiction. See particularly A Room of One's Own (London, 1931), passim.


Virginia Woolf seems to have felt both: "Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world - this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves" (AWD 141: January 1929).

Many people commented on Virginia Woolf's asking others about their lives; see Gerald Brenan, quoted QB II 93-4, and Joan Russell Noble (ed.), *Recollections of Virginia Woolf* (London, 1972), pp. 30, 63, 78-9, 125, etc.

See the conversation pp. 122-7. The ideas and attitudes of this conversation are very similar to those discussed in the dell at Madingley in Forster's *The Longest Journey*.

It is interesting that in her diary Virginia Woolf uses a match image to illustrate her feelings about her own writing: "At last today ... after striking the match on the box despairingly, sterilely ... a little flame has come. This refers to the devilish difficulty of starting Part 7 again after the 'flu" (AWD 218: May 1934). We perhaps also remember the matches Ansell strikes in The *Longest Journey* as he discusses the "existence of objects" (LJ 7-10). The spark, coal or light image is of course commonly used in discussions of creation. See, for example, Shelley, *The Defence of Poetry* in Shelley's *Prose*, ed. D.L. Clark (Albuquerque, 1966), p. 294. For further examples see Rosamond Harding, *An Anatomy of Inspiration* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 106, 108, 110.


The phrase "a populous and teeming silence" comes from CE I 110.
One might compare the spiritual overtones of the forest setting here with an observation from "Joseph Conrad": "The human heart is more intricate than the forest... it has its storms; it has its creatures of the night" (CE I 306).


It is interesting that Forster too makes connections between water and darkness. In "The Curate's Friend" the narrator says: "the hour of darkness is really the hour of water"—see *Collected Short Stories*, p. 98.


Ibid., pp. 21-2.


Ibid., pp. 56-7.
CHAPTER THREE

NIGHT AND DAY

You're damned intelligent, of course, and cultured, and—emasculated by it.¹

As I implied in the previous chapter, in Night and Day Virginia Woolf reworks some of the material of The Voyage Out. There are resemblances between several of the characters in the two novels, and some relationships are similar. In both, a young heroine 'discovers' herself—achieves for herself some definition of her personality and places it, during the course of her development, in increasingly 'truer' relationships to other personalities. In the process they both fall in love with stern, serious young men. The rather dry researches of Mr Ambrose into Greek literature are echoed by Mr Hilbery's textual criticism of the Romantics, and both scholars isolate themselves from the world around them. The relationship William Rodney has with Cassandra Otway is similar to that which St John Hirst tries to establish with Rachel Vinrace. In both cases the young man sees himself as the guide and mentor of the young person in cultural matters.

More important than these correspondences, though, are correspondences of theme. In both novels the artist is an important figure, and it is around this figure that the main preoccupations—the nature and importance of feelings, the merits of the cultured world, the relationship between art and life—group
In Night and Day, as much as in The Voyage Out, the relationship between art and life is central, but in Night and Day the matter is treated very differently. It is not simply that the background is different — England instead of South America — or that the style and structure of Night and Day represent a return to the more traditional ways of novel writing. Rather it is that the emphasis in the treatment of the art-life theme (and so the treatment of the related themes) is entirely different. I hope to show that Night and Day tests some things that The Voyage Out takes for granted — one of the more important being the value of the artistic, cultural life.

This is reflected in the fact that the central characters in The Voyage Out are practising artists, and are set in an environment which gives little encouragement to serious artistic creation, while in Night and Day Katherine Hilbery and Ralph Denham are not strictly artists, and their environment is predominantly cultural. One result of this is that in The Voyage Out we see the relationships between life and art largely in terms of the individual artist's personality, with the value of the cultural life taken for granted, while in Night and Day the focus of attention is wider, and the worth of the cultural life is submitted to close scrutiny. (This analysis is, of course, a little too tidy. The differences in the handling of similar themes are more complex than it implies, but it does indicate a basic change in emphasis.) A reflection of this difference of focus is the fact that the working artists presented in Night and Day are all failures. In The Voyage Out there is little doubt that Rachel is a good musician and that Terence has the makings of a competent novelist, but in Night and Day there are no such certainties: William Rodney — the most important artist in the novel — is unmistakably an artist manqué; Henry Otway has only completed the score of half an opera; Mrs Hilbery's biography of the poet will undoubtedly never be
finished. There is no one in Night and Day who talks to us intelligently about his art, as Terence does. One suspects the artists of Night and Day of dilettantism. This is perhaps scarcely surprising when we consider the ethos in which they work, for Virginia Woolf seems deliberately to have created for them a rather mannered and almost affectedly cultural background, and there is a vital relationship between this background (in its cultural and social aspects) and the kind of artists they are.

Most of them are grouped around one centre – the Hilbery household – and with the Hilberys we are firmly in the world of the cultivated middle classes. Polite, urbane, conscious of their status, they enjoy a position in which the only duties they have are the duties they choose to recognise. Most of their time is devoted to refining their aesthetic sensibilities. To a large extent—despite the brief allusion to Mr Hilbery's editing a review—they are set apart from the 'normal' world. Even Mary Datchett's voluntary work at the suffrage office seems strange and alien to them. This, at least, is our initial impression of the Hilberys; it is the view which is stressed early on in the novel. Ralph Denham's first visit to the house in Cheyne Walk establishes immediately a spirit of criticism: he walks into a cultivated tea-party "With the omnibuses and cabs still running in his head" (2), entering a room which is softened by "A fine mist, the etherealized essence of the fog" (2), and interrupts, as he does so, a long complicated sentence which Mr Fortesque, the eminent novelist, is in the process of manufacturing. With the practised adroitness of the seasoned hostess, Mrs Hilbery "deftly joined the severed parts" (2), and the urbane, somewhat mannered conversation flows smoothly on. Learning Persian in Manchester, the Battle of Trafalgar, Ruskin; Mr Fortesque building up "another rounded structure of words"—it all seems unreal, and it prompts in Ralph, understandably, a desire "to say something abrupt and explosive" (6). This
kind of gathering, in which eminent novelists, eager diarists and cultivated aesthetes meet to exchange wry epigrams and rather rapid sentiments, is characteristic of one aspect of the Hilbery world.

A little later our view of the Hilbery world widens as we learn about the family background. For generations their forebears had been "conspicuous judges and admirals, lawyers and servants of the State" (30), and the family enjoys a privileged position, partly earned and partly inherited. By virtue of descent from the poet Richard Alardyce, the Hilberys are now spiritually the head of this family, and much of their time is spent remembering past glories, and recalling "the beautiful women and distinguished men" (31) they have known. At the Hilbery house "There were always visitors" (33)—members of this distinguished family, and distinguished friends. This, then, is the centre around which the artists and their world revolve.

Many of the characteristics of this cultured and distinguished family have their origins in Virginia Woolf's own background. For generations members of her family—particularly those on the Stephen side—had been distinguished figures, and there is no doubt that it was a highly cultivated family. Her father was a respected critic, and many of the family were writers or artists—her Aunt Julia Cameron was one of the best of the Victorian photographers, her cousin Herbert Fisher was an eminent historian. Leslie Stephen knew many of the most illustrious writers of his time, and Virginia's earliest memories include meeting some of these awesome personages. Her godfather, or 'sponsor', was James Russell Lowell, and her earliest surviving piece of writing is a letter to the poet. In general terms, there is no mistaking the similarities between the families Hilbery and Stephen, but the correspondences go further than this: some of the characters in Night and Day are based, however loosely, on people Virginia Woolf knew. Katherine combines characteristics of Virginia herself
and her sister Vanessa; Mrs Hilbery is based on Aunt Anny (Lady Ritchie); Henry James was probably the model for Mr Fortesque; Ralph is unmistakably Leonard Woolf; and the relationship between Katherine, William Rodney and Ralph is rather like that between Virginia, Walter Lamb and Leonard.\(^5\)

It is her own world, then, that Virginia Woolf examines in *Night and Day*, and her examination is far from uncritical: it is affectionate, but it is also clear-sighted and occasionally biting.

A similar kind of environment is created in Forster's *Howards End*: the situation, if not the characters, of the Schlegel family is similar to that of the Stephen family after Leslie's death. Two young, untried, cultivated, attractive sisters and their brother live more or less freely together and begin to discover the world. One might also find the origins of the meeting to discuss what to do about the poor in Forster's novel (HE 132-6), as well as the meeting to discuss Shakespeare's plays in *Night and Day* (46-59), in the "Thursday evenings" and the "Friday Club" of Bloomsbury.\(^6\) The plots of the two novels are of similar types — *Night and Day* is the closest Virginia Woolf came to writing a novel in the Forster manner — and the thematic preoccupations are closely related. Both examine the merits of the cultured life, and, as I will suggest later, both come to very much the same conclusions. (The same ground is also covered, though with much less perspicacity, by Leonard Woolf in *The Wise Virgins*. I shall say more about this later.)

To return to the Hilberys: Mrs Hilbery is the cynosure of her world; it is she who sets its tone, with her social facility — she is "rich in the gifts which make tea-parties of elderly distinguished people successful" (1) — and her partiality for the arts. The tea-parties are her creation. With Katherine at hand to control the cups and saucers, Mrs Hilbery can promote and enjoy the cultivated conversation. Yet she is not naively uncritical; after the participants
of the first communion have left she says to Ralph and Katherine: "The truth is, dear Mr. Fortesque has almost tired me out. He is so eloquent and so witty, so searching and so profound that, after half an hour or so, I feel inclined to turn out all the lights" (14). And she can be ironic about the artificially sustained conversation. Of Augustus Pelham she complains: "He tried to make epigrams all the time, and I got so nervous, expecting them, you know, that I spilt the tea—and he made an epigram about that!" (98). These moments of insight are rare, though, for much of her time is spent in dreaming of the great figures—usually the great artists—of the past: "Where are their successors? she would ask, and the absence of any poet or painter or novelist of the true calibre at the present day was a text upon which she liked to ruminate, in a sunset mood of benignant reminiscence" (32). She herself had known many of these eminent figures, for she was the daughter of Richard Alardyce and "had known all the poets, all the novelists, all the beautiful women and distinguished men of her time" (31).

But this cultured background is not presented simply: it has its good and its bad points. It may be responsible for the haze of unreality which fringes Mrs Hilbery's world, but it may also have fostered her good qualities—she is sagacious, trustful, hopeful, and so on. Moreover, she has not always lived immune from the sorrows of life: her parents' marriage ended unhappily, and when she talks to Katherine about marriage, "She cast a lightning glance into the depths of disillusionment which were, perhaps, not altogether unknown to her" (513). So that there are two views of her: she is the innocent child living in a cultured cocoon, and she is the sagacious women who has a "fine natural insight" and a "way of seeming the wisest person in the room" (39).

The clearest outward expression of her preoccupation with the past is her work on the biography of her father—as the writer of the biography Mrs Hilbery
is the first of the baffled artists in the novel. And, as in *The Voyage Out*, we see these artists' characteristics as artists in close relationship to their characteristics as people. Mrs Hilbery drifts vaguely in and out of rooms, only half knowing where she is, and her prose rambles from topic to topic, leaving behind a litter of glittering paragraphs. There can be no doubt that there are materials for a splendid biography (34), and it is clear that Mrs Hilbery can use words with a certain instinctive skill — the paragraphs which have been written are "so brilliant ... so nobly phrased, so lightning-like in their illumination, that the dead seemed to crowd the very room" (35). The trouble is that she has no sense of form; after a certain point "the book became a wild dance of will-o' the-wisps, without form or continuity, without coherence even, or any attempt to make a narrative" (37). The paragraphs remain a vertiginous chaos.

Another stumbling block is the conflict Mrs Hilbery feels between the necessity to tell the whole story and the desire to hide unpleasant truths. She cannot decide whether to reveal or conceal "various affairs of the heart" (37). To put it somewhat glibly, the clash is between artistic compulsions and social expedients: the relationship between artistic and social values becomes more and more important as the novel progresses.

But the main obstacle to the completion of the biography is Mrs Hilbery's inability to impose a rational order upon her perceptions. Her experience — of life and of art — comes to her through her feelings, and is not reducible to the kind of hierarchies of importance necessary to create coherent prose. This is why she cannot make an articulate whole of the brilliant paragraphs. When she talks about poetry it is clear that she appreciates it chiefly for its ability to communicate and arouse feelings, and she rambles into eulogies half mystical, half nonsensical. This attitude towards poetry is of course a reflection of the
way she lives: she lives wholly in the world of feelings without the discriminations of rational thought: "it's what we feel that's everything" (508).

Here it might be useful to make a distinction: 'feeling' as it is used in reference to her is not the same as 'passion': her feelings do not run that deeply. We are told "it was true that love - passion - whatever one chose to call it, had played far less part in Mrs. Hilbery's life than might have seemed likely, judging from her enthusiastic and imaginative temperament" (224).

This way of living - though it is often presented ironically and though we sometimes clearly see its limitations (for instance, in Mrs Hilbery's response to Mrs Milvain's report on Cyril's conduct (120-3)) - this way of living is largely seen as beneficent. It is her rightness of feeling that resolves the chaos which is caused by Mr Hilbery's conventional inflexibility. Her behaviour here, when she brings about a resolution of the conflicts which had produced the banishment of Rodney, Ralph and Cassandra, is an illustration of what is, perhaps, her most important role - that of the unifier. In life she can create unity as she cannot in art. Throughout the novel she continually brings people together physically - the tea-parties are examples of this - and discrete ideas and events come together in her speech. (She is in many respects an early adumbration of Mrs Swithin in Between the Acts.) Her most important act of unification occurs when she brings together the separated couples and reconciles Mr Hilbery to the new relationships, and this act is vital to the novel's examination of civilisation; I shall say more about it later when I discuss civilisation in more detail.

Mr Hilbery, though less obviously than Mrs Hilbery, plays an important part in establishing the cultural ambience of the Hilbery household. He is one of those "gentlemen of fifty who are highly cultivated" (111), and he is a man of fastidious taste (98). He edits a review; has aesthetic sensibilities; participates urbanely in cultivated conversations. He shares Mrs Hilbery's dislike of modern
literature (103-4). But he is fundamentally a separatist, not a unifier. He shares his wife's cultural interests, but rational, intellectual, factual—his attitude to art is very different from hers. Mrs Hilbery bathes in art, or, rather, lets it flow over her; Mr Hilbery is much more detached and scholarly. He researches into textual and autobiographical minutiae, and works by analysis rather than by synthesis. His contribution to the biography would clearly create an unpleasant stylistic dissonance (37). He is her complement—in much the same way as Ridley Ambrose is Helen's complement.

If Mrs Hilbery seems often detached from life in her vague synthesising dreaminess, Mr Hilbery is just as detached in his analytic rationality. This is made plain when Katherine interrupts his cogitations about the possible results to literature of a marriage between Coleridge and Dorothy Wordsworth (109). She tells him about Cyril and his 'wife', and is puzzled by his response: "What a distance he was from it all! ... He seemed to be looking through a telescope at little figures hundreds of miles in the distance" (111). Coleridge and Dorothy Wordsworth are more real to him: his attitude here is an adumbration of his behaviour when Katherine announces that she is no longer engaged to William Rodney. He is totally incapable of understanding this real situation involving real passion. In his lack of understanding he abdicates his human responsibilities, separating and banishing the lovers, and withdraws into Scott. He is the same kind of character as Ridley Ambrose, but The Voyage Out offers no criticism of this form of detachment. Night and Day quite emphatically does; one could compare the censures of Mr Hilbery's behaviour with Forster's criticisms of Philip Herrington's and Cecil Vyse's use of culture—Virginia Woolf's attitude in Night and Day is very close to Forster's.

William Rodney, to whom Katherine is intermittently engaged, is an inner member of the Hilbery circle, and, although he is said to be a clerk in a
government office, we see him entirely as a feature of this cultural environment.

His defining characteristic is his fastidious cultivation of his aesthetic sensibilities. His love of culture is genuine: he surrounds himself with art—in his room there are stacks of photographs of pictures and statues, books, a Venetian mirror, a small piano "with the score of 'Don Giovanni' open upon the bracket" (70)—and his talk is usually of art. (His room is reminiscent of St John Hirst's as described by Hewet (VO 183), although it is less severely masculine: the scholar has emerged from Cambridge.) He does more than just surround himself with these things, though. He puts much effort into learning more about, for instance, Flemish paintings (182), and he is something of an amateur scholar: Mr Hilbery has recourse to "the exact scholarship of William Rodney" when his wife asks the date of the first performance of Hamlet (528). Moreover, his love of art leads him into painful situations: the ordeal of reading his paper on the Elizabethans is severe, yet he endures it (47-51).

In this scene we also see that there is something comic in his eager devotion to culture: he is awkward, vain, and egotistical, and can hardly believe that "these sort of people care for literature" (49). In spite of this sense of his own superiority his paper seems confused and badly written, is crammed "with assertions that such-and-such passages ... are the supreme pearls of literature" (49), and is embellished with "cramped or out of place" metaphors. There is something comic, too, in his initiating Cassandra into the aesthetic delights of London: "William Rodney was fertile in suggestions. He knew of little galleries, and select concerts, and private performances" (387). We sense an over-fastidiousness bordering on preciosity about his love of culture. "Ah," he says to Ralph, "but I couldn't live with savages!" (69), and, as Ralph picks up one of his books: "'The Baskerville Congreve', said Rodney ... 'I couldn't read him in a cheap edition' " (70).

There is also something of the poseur about him. His concern for art
may be genuine, but he is too conscious of himself as being one of those who care for "this sort of thing" (72) - his reflex-phrase when he is talking about art. Sometimes his ardent devotion to culture appears to be a product of his overwhelming need to create a character for himself - as Forster's Philip Herrington establishes an image for himself by his championing beauty (WAFT 79). In preparation for Katherine's visit to his rooms he wonders how to appear before her: "Evidently she admired most the poet in him; and as this, on the whole, agreed with his own opinion, he decided to err, if anything, on the side of shabbiness" (139). His cultural equipment can also redeem him from his sense of failure in personal relations. When threatened with dissolution by his awareness that he cannot arouse passion in Katherine "he sought consolation ... by running over the list of his gifts and acquirements, his knowledge of Greek and Latin, his knowledge of art and literature, his skill in the management of metres, and his ancient west-country blood" (252). This consolation is not so very different from the inspiration he derives earlier from the "perfect fit of his evening dress" (212). At all events, remembering his acquirements and blood, he is no longer lost; he can see himself as a cultured and valuable person functioning in a civilised and comprehensible world.

It is his habit of seeing his acquirements in this way that makes his devotion to art seem somewhat flimsy and self-indulgent. He has none of the sternness and disinterestedness of Hewet, and none of the real dedication of Lily Briscoe. Although, like Orlando, he "was one of those martyred spirits to whom literature is at once a source of divine joy and of almost intolerable irritation" (52) - in short, he is compelled to write - his compulsion springs as much from negative social origins as from positive artistic ones. It is interesting to compare Rodney with what Roger Fry said about those who mocked the Post-Impressionist exhibition: "These people felt instinctively that their special culture was one of
There is a suggestion that Rodney needs to write partly in order to escape the pressure of feelings. When Katherine inconsiderately wishes to discuss the feelings she has for him, he tells her that she needs an occupation to get her out of this "morbid mood", and prescribes his own remedy: "I've often gone home from seeing you in such a state of nerves that I had to force myself to write a page or two before I could get you out of my head" (257). This attitude is connected with his belief that art and life are so related that success in one can compensate for failure in the other. His cultural pursuits seem at times to be masks or bulwarks, and their defensive action is often directed against the consequences of feelings. As in The Voyage Out, feelings are throughout the novel closely associated with the examination of culture, but in Night and Day they are dealt with more subtly - this novel does more than express a conviction that they should be acknowledged and expressed. As they are so intimately involved in the relationships shown between life and art, it is worth looking at Rodney's response to them a little more closely.

His attitude is supremely ambiguous, and this may be the result of the kind of social world he inhabits. For although much is said, principally by Mrs Hilbery, about feelings, it is clear that they are severely circumscribed by the social conventions. So much so that to Katherine passion is a traveller's story brought rarely from the depths of forests (226). And William himself, more bound by the conventions than anyone else in the novel, alternates between a desire to express emotions - "Why am I condemned for ever, Katherine, to feel what I can't express?" (62) - and a petulant rejection of them - "Now, for no reason whatever, you begin to fret about your feeling and about my feeling, with the usual result" (257). Despite his criticism of Katherine's supposed coldness, it is soon apparent that his love for her "existed in a much slighter
degree than she had suspected" (299). This judgement on Rodney is then extended to apply to the rest of the Hilbery circle: Katherine perceives that "some littleness of nature had a part in all the refinements, reserves, and subtleties of feeling for which her friends and family were so distinguished" (298). In the scene in which Katherine realises this we see the littleness in Rodney's behaviour (296-300). Here he uses the subterfuge of writing— in Katherine's presence— a letter to Cassandra about style, and there is an illuminating relationship between his writing about style and his using his act of writing as a mask. A little later, there are similar juxtapositions of inner and outer when Katherine is showing Mrs Vermont Bankes the relic room: Rodney conceals his inner agitation by his outward demeanour, and the outer, rather superficial devotion to the relics of the poet is counterpointed by Katherine's inner and spontaneous response to him as she gazes at the portrait. Taken together, we see in these scenes, in close relationships, Rodney's social mask— good form— which hides his inner confusion; his obsession with form in literature; his using his writing as a social mask; and an outer and inner response to the poet Alardyce. Rodney's failure as an artist is illuminated by these juxtapositions.

For, making an oversimplified distinction, the social mask which covers the personal confusion is paralleled in Rodney's play by the dominance of form over emotion. "His theory was that every mood has its metre" (143), so that one infers that he classifies emotions before he selects for them their appropriate metres. When he has finished the emotion is frozen, and the resulting play produces only a "sense of chill stupor" in his audience (143). That his sensibility even in regard to metre is not really highly developed is suggested by his reading: the lines were "always delivered with the same lilt of voice, which seemed to nail each line firmly on to the same spot in the hearer's brain" (143). What is left, then, is a rudimentary competence in handling metre, and as in his social
life we sense a central emptiness surrounded by social gestures, so in his writing we feel that a husk of barely adequate technique encloses a central emptiness. Again, his emphasis is on the outer, on the formal outside, and throughout the novel this is the aspect of things with which Rodney is continually preoccupied. He could not read Congreve in an edition cheaper than the Baskerville, he urges Cassandra to read Pope in preference to Dostoevski to improve her sense of form, and so on.

The reference to Pope is not merely contingent: Rodney is often associated with the eighteenth century. His rooms are in "a small court of eighteenth-century houses" (69); Mozart is his favourite composer; his letter to Cassandra, one feels, with its style suggestive of "bowing and curtsying, advancing and retreating" (336), will have a strong eighteenth-century flavour. Cassandra, with whom Rodney is eventually in love, has "a light angular figure" which, with some refurbishing, "might possess a likeness to a French lady of distinction in the eighteenth century" (364). Their relationship, light and whimsical, is in strong contrast to Ralph and Katherine's, which is deeper and more passionate.

To return to Rodney's play; there is another aspect of its form which indicates a lack of genuine creativity in Rodney's writing. As he is so interested in form, one might have expected him to be formally inventive, but his play is based on the Shakespearian pastoral play. This need not in itself indicate a sterile derivativeness, but there is no hint that Rodney uses the form for any specific purpose. In this he is very different from Terence Hewet, who is determined to present his own insights in his own way, and who thinks intelligently about his writing. There are some other indications of Rodney's qualities as a writer, but none of them is auspicious. He is a very self-consciously 'literary' writer; when he reads his paper on the Elizabethans we are told "he was fond of using metaphors which, compounded in the study, were apt to sound either
crammed or out of place" (49), and in his letter to Cassandra his anfractuous style almost strangles his meaning (457). His prospects as a dramatist are far from hopeful.

We have in William Rodney, then, a masterly portrait of an artist manqué: a fastidious, comically over-cultivated man who shyly retreats from the brusqueries of life into the formal pleasures of art. All this is conveyed unmistakably in the spirit of criticism: we see Rodney's shortcomings just as much as we see the shortcomings of speciously cultured characters in Forster's novels. Virginia Woolf's analysis of the roots of Rodney's inadequacies is similar to Forster's of Philip Herrington's. There is a certain babyishness about both of them— as there is in Mr Lawrence, the cultivated aesthete in Leonard Woolf's The Wise Virgins. Wyndham Lewis's estimate of the Bloomsbury group as a self-satisfied clique clearly does not stand up to investigation.

There are other characters on the fringes of the Hilbery world who contribute to our feeling that it is an absurdly cloistered cultural enclave. We only see Mrs Cosham once, but the outlines of her character are firmly impressed on us: she is a token of some aspects of the way in which the Hilberrys live. Continually talking about writers, she stresses the extent to which the Hilbery world is obsessed by art, but, perhaps more important than this, she deepens the tinge of unreality which colours it: the description of her visit deliberately draws out this unreality. The chapter begins with Ralph calling on the Hilberrys (149), and, as on his first visit, he has the sensation that "a thousand doors" closed, "softly excluding the world" (149). The sense of distance and unreality is heightened as he feels the room he enters to be "full of deep shadows, firelight, unwavering silver candle flames, and empty spaces to be crossed" (149). Then, when Katherine leaves him for a moment, he reflects upon the nature of his relationship with her— a relationship compounded of romantic dreams and a
few incoherent meetings. What happens when he actually meets her on this occasion is a little obscure, but it seems that she somehow surpasses the dream image he had of her, and yet, despite her real presence "the atmosphere was that of a dream" (151). The chairs and tables are solid "and yet they were unreal" (151). At this point, the unreality of the intensely cultured life of the Hilberys is being played off against Ralph's dreaming about Katherine. When she returns they talk a little about poetry, which Ralph relates to dreams, and just as they are about to discuss dreams they are interrupted by the entrance of Mrs Milvain and Mrs Cosham.

From the first, the aunts are seen as fabulous creatures; distanced, and not at all like fellow human beings: "Far off, they heard the rustle of skirts. Then the owner of the skirts appeared in the doorway .... Both ladies ... had that look of heightened, smoothed, incarnadined existence which is proper to elderly ladies paying calls in London" (152-3). To add to this, Mrs Cosham "was so appalled with hanging muff, chains, and swinging draperies that it was impossible to detect the shape of a human being" (153). Ralph's reaction to this apparition is to feel that no remark of his "would ever reach these fabulous and fantastic creatures" (153), and this impression of their distance and unreality is confirmed as we are told that Mrs Cosham uses the English language so that it "seemed no longer fit for common purposes" (153). This order of unreality, then, now mingle with what remains in our minds of the unreality of the Hilbery house and Ralph's dreams about Katherine, and as Mrs Cosham talks we begin to sense what might lie behind this strange distortion. She, perhaps even more than Mrs Hilbery, is obsessed by literature, so that everyday life and fictional representation are scarcely distinguished in her mind. She fancies Ralph as a "briefless barrister lodged in a garret, writing immortal novels by the light of a farthing dip" (156-7), so that "How far she saw Denham, and how far she
confused him with some hero of fiction, it would be hard to say" (157) — as it is
difficult to say how far Rickie Elliot ever sees individuals as they really are. The
confusion is compounded by the different drifts of Mrs Cosham's conversation—
literary and worldly — and again we see Virginia Woolf exploring the relations
between social and artistic life. The same Mrs Cosham who can hug to herself
the image of Ralph writing in an impoverished garret can endorse Mrs Milvain's
regret that "Uncle John" achieved only an Indian Judgeship, and add: "In those
days we thought an Indian Judgeship about equal to a county-court judgeship at
home. His honour — a pretty title, but still, not the top of the tree" (155). We
could see Mrs Cosham as a superbly grotesque embodiment of the twinned forces
which almost bring disaster towards the end of the novel.

The Otways, outriders, so to speak, of the Hilbery connection, furnish
yet more examples of unsuccessful artists. Their name itself has interesting
literary associations: there is, of course, Otway the dramatist; in Forster's
A Room with a View the local squire is Sir Harry Otway; and Virginia Woolf
used the name again in "Mr Conrad: A Conversation" (CE I) — a rather mannered
conversation between Penelope Otway and David Lowe. Henry Otway, the
sceptical and malicious, insists on practising the piano and the violin, with the
result that he is professionally proficient upon neither. All he has to show for
his thirty—two years is "the score of half an opera" (218). Unlike Rodney,
however, he is not easy in 'good society'. He is not conventional. Conventionality
does not necessarily produce bad art nor unconventionality good. If there is a
hint of dilettantism in Henry, it is a definite trait in Cassandra: "She had
worshipped architecture and music, natural history and humanity, literature and
art" (361); but she excels in none of these studies. Would-be artists proliferate.
Perhaps one may detect in this a dissatisfaction on Virginia Woolf's part with
some aspects of the Bloomsbury Group. Desmond MacCarthy and Saxon Sydney—
Turner, for example, were constantly disappointing their friends' expectations: they never produced the great works which were looked for. Euphemia is perhaps in a worse position than any of the Otway children. Her father has suffered a reverse in his career, and now, full of bitterness, he dictates to Euphemia "the memoirs which were to avenge his memory" (217) — a clear parallel with Katherine's obligation to help her mother with the biography. Not only are we shown several unsuccessful artists, but also people who are forced to write by others: art would seem to have much to answer for.

There is, however, another writer in the novel — Richard Alardyce — who goes some way towards redeeming art. There is no doubt that he is a great writer, no question that he is a splendid and valuable figure; he is "the rarest flower that any family can boast, a great writer, a poet eminent among the poets of England" (30).

Alardyce's most obvious role in the novel is to provide us with a standard against which to measure the other writers — compared to him Rodney is a child repeating the alphabet — but there is another function his posthumous presence fulfils: it shows us how some people react to artists. Our first contact with him is as an object of worship. The Hilberys keep a room full of relics and momentos of his life, and art-lovers make pilgrimages from as far away as America to adore his slippers. At times it seems that the objects that survive him are more important than his 'mind and art': when visitors are shown the shrine they do not say much about his poetry, or about him as a person. Katherine's stale incantation over the relics dulls her own appreciation of the spirit whose memory they are supposed to perpetuate, and she herself feels the ancestor-worship to be oppressive. And the objects accumulate; so much so that they threaten to smother what they are intended to keep alive: "the room was becoming crowded beyond the bounds of order. Only that morning a heavily insured proof-sheet
had reached them from a collector in Australia . . . . But was there room for it?
Must it be hung on the staircase, or should some other relic give place to do it
honour?" (337). Art is being stifled by culture, perhaps, and the memory of
Alardyce, like other manifestations of the past in the novel, deadens and constricts
life in the present. Much of Katherine's time is taken up by the biography, and,
as Ralph says to her, his fame restricts the possibilities of her own life (10).

Other people use the poet's fame to limit the possibilities of life: Mrs
Milvain uses his name as a weapon when she attacks Cyril Alardyce's behaviour,
and this is highly ironic in view of the kind of life the young Alardyce lived. Most
of his admirers seem tacitly to endorse Mrs Milvain's view of him as a standard
of respectability, and here again we see social values in conflict with artistic.
For when Alardyce was young he lived a reckless and dissolute life: Mrs Hilbery
sat on his knee in taverns, surrounded by drunken poets. He was vigorous,
energetic; often not in bed three nights out of seven (120). He was not conventional,
as Rodney is. But then the forces of conventional respectability triumphed: for
his daughter's sake he became "the irreproachable literary character that the
world knows" (102), and, more like Rodney, his inspiration deserted him. His
image is now in the hands of the living; writing his biography, Mrs Hilbery
cannot decide how much to reveal about his youthful "affairs of the heart" (37).

Much of what is preserved of Alardyce seems, then, to be false to his true
character: his poetry, which was not respectable or urbane, is smothered in the
cultural ambience of the Hilbery household. There is one moment in the novel,
however, when we do feel that someone achieves contact with the 'real' Richard
Alardyce. After she has shown the adoring American lady around the collection,
Katherine gazes at the portrait of her grandfather and perhaps for the first
time "she thought of him as a man" (338). She suddenly realises that all the
homage is misplaced, and that he would much prefer it if "instead of laying her
withered flowers upon his shrine, she brought him her own perplexities" (338).
The adoration and the withered flowers lead only to a sense of deadness; art
is alive, has faults, is not respectable. The dead "asked neither flowers nor
regrets, but a share in the life which they had given her, the life which they
had lived" (338). Katherine achieves this insight largely because she refuses
to see things in the way her parents do.

Rubbing shoulders with these fictional artists is a host of allusions to
real artists—Byron, Mozart, Tennyson, Ibsen, Dostoevski, Congreve, Browne,
De Quincey, Horace, Titian, Ruskin, Milton, Wordsworth, to mention but a
few. Pre-eminently, of course, there is Shakespeare; he broods over Night
and Day as Alardyce broods over the Hilbery family; and most of the critics
who have written about the allusions concentrate on Shakespeare. One important
function of the allusions is to press home the point that the Hilberys are a highly
cultivated family, and allusions to Shakespeare provide the most secure
warranty of their literary credentials. His work is the summation of what the
Hilberys see as valuable. Mrs Hilbery considers Stratford-on-Avon to be "the
heart of the civilised world" (453). Of course, some references to Shakespeare,
and to other artists, do more than this: the quotation from Measure for Measure
succinctly conveys Ralph's state of mind on hearing of Katherine's engagement
(159-60); Mozart is used to characterise the emotions Rodney and Cassandra
feel for each other (450); the references to Byron suggest the quality of Ralph's
and Katherine's love (447). However, I should like to concentrate on The
Princess and The Idiot, which stand as cogent commentaries on the Hilbery way
of life.

When she visits the Hilberys, Mrs Cosham talks about Tennyson's "The
Princess": "No, men are not the same as women. I fancy Alfred Tennyson
spoke the truth about that as about many other things. How I wish he'd lived
to write 'The Prince'-a sequel to 'The Princess'!" (156). There is a certain similarity between the themes of Night and Day and "The Princess". Tennyson's poem deals with the relationship between the sexes. Ida, resentful of the restrictions which sexual inequality places upon her personal development, revolts against the conventional mores and tries to establish an environment in which women can develop—intellectually, at least—more fully. The poem, or the early stages of it, would clearly appeal to Virginia Woolf, with her continual resentment of the assumption that men merit a better education than women. The usual relations of the sexes in marriage is also discussed in both Night and Day and "The Princess". When Lady Otway talks to her about the duties of marriage, Katherine has a despairing sense of the necessity of sacrificing herself in marriage to Rodney (220-4); Ida resents the secondary role women are expected to play, and wishes love lyrics banished:

Till all men grow to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills and sphered  
Whole in ourselves, and owed to none. (Section 4, 127-30)

"The Princess" also reflects upon Katherine's position in life—upon the restrictions placed upon her. Lilia, replying to the charge that there are no heroic women now, declares:

There are thousands now,  
Such women, but convention beats them down. (Prologue, 127-8)

Katherine feels unable to develop her talents openly; she must conceal her interest in mathematics and astronomy. Like Ida and Lilia she reacts against the fetters placed upon her by other people's expectations of her—both as a woman and as Richard Alardyce's grand-daughter. Perhaps even her secret interest in mathematics and astronomy was suggested by a passage in "The Princess": Gama reminds Ida of the pursuits she used to share with Psyche:
she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what. (Section 6, 237-40)

(It is interesting, too, that the moon and stars are mentioned often in "The Princess", as they are in Night and Day.) There is an aspect of Ralph, too, which is present in "The Princess". The prince is subject to 'weird seizures', which are similar to Ralph's dreams:

Myself, too, had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,
And felt myself the shadow of a dream. (Section 1, 14-18)

As Ralph fears that what he loves in Katherine may be merely a product of his dreams, so, in one seizure, the prince doubts the reality of his princess:

The princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
Her gay furred cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty masks. (Section 3, 169-171)

And then, as there is a relationship between the prince and Ralph, and between the princess and Katherine, so the courses of the couples' courtships is similar:

the prince and Ralph both have to labour to convince the women they love that they do love them, and not false imaginings of them.

Virginia Woolf wrote of Dostoevski: "It is directly obvious that he is the greatest writer ever born", and although she was probably deliberately exaggerating she certainly did greatly admire him. The allusions to him in Night and Day...
provide interesting parallels. His work is mentioned three times: Katherine quotes from *The Idiot*—"It's life that matters, nothing but life—the process of discovering—the everlasting and perpetual process, not the discovery at all" (132); Rodney attempts to encourage Cassandra "to read Pope in preference to Dostoevski, until her feeling for form was more highly developed" (295); and during Cassandra's first dinner at the Hilberys' there is a verbal skirmish about "the Russians" and *The Idiot* (368). Most obviously, these illusions obliquely illuminate their immediate contexts: Katherine's quotation, for example, expresses her feeling about life at that stage of *Night and Day*.

In more general terms, though, the mention of Dostoevski makes clearer, by contrast, the quality of life as it is lived at the Hilberys', and indicates ways in which Katherine and Ralph differ from most of the Hilberys. The characters in *The Idiot* confront experience much more directly than the Hilberys do, with a spiritual passion and intensity which most of the Hilbery circle would call madness—indeed, Rodney frequently calls the behaviour involved in switching the engagements "madness" and "insanity" (435, 445). Katherine and Ralph are set apart from the usual Hilbery mode; their behaviour is much more akin to that encountered in Dostoevski's novels. In Katherine's case this is related to the need she feels to escape from some of the constrictions of the Hilbery world—polite, urbane, and unruffled—into a freer and more fertile way of living. That seen in Russian novels seems to offer an alternative.

It is Ralph, though, who is closest in spirit to the characters of Dostoevski: there are some illuminating parallels between him and Rogozhin of *The Idiot*—a novel which is alluded to twice. A rather saturnine intensity sets both of them apart from the societies in which they live, and their eyes are used to signal this. In *The Idiot* attention is often focussed on a pair of burning eyes, which usually turn out to be Rogozhin's, and in *Night and Day* we occasionally encounter
a passionate expressiveness in Ralph's eyes: "Looking back from half-way up
the staircase, Katherine seemed to see Denham's eyes watching her steadily
and intently" (452). Earlier, Katherine had seen Ralph's eyes gazing out of
the night at her house—"It seemed to her that he was looking fixedly at her,
and was conscious of her gaze on him" (442)—and the whole episode in which
Ralph paces the streets, stares at her house, and encounters Rodney in the
darkness (407-23) is strongly reminiscent of Dostoevski's writing.

There are other parallels between the two novels—the river is used as
a powerful emotional symbol in both, the quartets of lovers are similar—but
the central effect of the allusions to Dostoevski is to set off his world against
that of the Hilberys—: we see more clearly the cultured littleness which Katherine
resents, and something of what is fundamentally wrong with the ethos they
create. The use of literary allusions as a technique to criticise the kind of
cultural life the Hilberys lead, however, subtly prevents us from responding
too simply: art and culture are not themselves disparaged—their misuse is.

Some hazards inherent in the Hilberys' preoccupations with art and with
the past are demonstrated by the ways in which they affect Katherine's life.
Being her mother's daughter, her life is inevitably much influenced by memories
of the past: she often suffers because of her mother's obsession. Katherine
herself has an ambiguous attitude towards the past—she is drawn towards it,
but also senses the dangers of being too preoccupied by it: "sometimes she felt
that it was necessary for her very existence that she should free herself from
the past; at others, that the past had completely displaced the present, which,
when one resumed life after a morning among the dead, proved to be of an
utterly thin and inferior composition" (38). Sometimes she seems to have little
contact with 'real' life, and lives in a twilight, half-imagined world where the
sounds of the modern world are muffled and indistinct. Ralph senses this and
tells her that she will "never know anything at first hand" (12). Her mother's
dependence on her help in preparing the biography only makes things worse — and
it is somewhat ironic that Mrs Hilbery depends on what she sees as the practical,
and hence unpoetic, side of Katherine's personality.

For Mrs Hilbery, and most of those who 'know' Katherine, believe that
she is a very practical person, unlike her mother. This, of course, is a
misjudgement which may stem from the fact that their observation of life is
clouded by their preoccupation with literature. Their mistakes about her begin
with their misinterpretation of her silences. Katherine, we are told, "did not
like phrases. She had even some natural antipathy to that process of self
examination, that perpetual effort to understand one's own feeling, and express
it beautifully, fitly, or energetically in language, which constituted so great a
part of her mother's existence" (38). To the extent that she has no relish for
phrases Katherine is unlike her mother, but the conclusions that her family and
friends draw from her inclination to be silent — that she had a "corresponding
capacity for action" and that practicality "was a ... natural endowment of hers" (38)—
are wrong. Its inaccuracy is seen more and more as the novel develops: Ralph,
for instance, comes to recognise that she can lose things (406). It becomes clear
that her efficiency is not real; it is a mask assumed in response to her
environment and fostered by the expectations others have of her — much as Vanessa
Stephen's practicality was. 13

One consequence of the misjudgement about her silence is the further
misjudgement that she is an unpoetic, unromantic, rather cold person. Thakur
seems to accept this view of her. He says that her love of mathematics and
astronomy symbolises her lack of love and faith, and that her later reading of
poetry is symbolic of her "overcoming her dry impersonality of figures, and of
her falling in love." 14 The implications of this view are that, until
brought to life by Ralph, Katherine is emotionally cold,
unromantic, and rather dry. This is a serious misreading of her character, for she appears to be like that only because of her circumstances and because she does not use words in the way her mother does. Her romance "was a desire, an echo, a sound; she could drape it in colour, see it in form, hear it in music, but not in words; no, never in words" (303).

Perhaps the clearest indication that she is not an imaginatively sterile person is given by her dreaming. We see more of the quality of Katherine's dreams than we see of Rachel Vinrace's—enough anyway to realise that they are highly imaginative and very romantic. She tames wild horses in the prairies, and conducts ships in a hurricane, (40); she loves some magnanimous hero "as they swept together among the leaf-hung trees of an unknown world" (145). When we see the points at which her dreams are described we see that they are partly a response to demands made on her by an environment which impedes the expression of her true personality (39-40, 144-5, 224-6). Paradoxically, there are the demands that she be more literary and more practical. She dreams when "she was rid of the pretence of paper and pen, phrase-making and biography" (40), and when "the perpetual demands upon her for good sense, self-control and accuracy" (303) are relaxed. The defensive mask of practicality hides the retreat into dreams, so that her true self is driven more and more inwards, and recedes further and further from the possibility of expression in the outside world. It is only when she finally shows Ralph her calculations that her imaginative life gets the airing it needs (521-2).

One feature of her dream world contradicts the view that Katherine is an unemotional person: it is a world where passion is free. In her dreams things seem more real to her than they do in the real world: "so direct, powerful, and unimpeded were her sensations there, compared with those called forth in actual life. There dwelt the things one might have felt, had there been cause" (145).
She contemplates marriage to Rodney because she feels that loveless marriage "is an inevitable step in a world where the existence of passion is only a traveller's story brought from the heart of deep forests" (226) – a clear reference to the landscape of some of her dreams. That she herself is a passionate person is clear from her responses when she meets passion in other people – for instance, she is deeply moved when Mary tells her of her love for Ralph (294).

It may seem strange that, living in an environment in which feelings are so continually a subject of discussion, Katherine can only find passion in dreams, but, as I pointed out earlier in reference to Mrs Hilbery, feeling is not the same as passion. Mrs Hilbery is not passionate, and Rodney, for all his professed concern for feeling, is not a passionate person. When Katherine rebukes him for talking about feelings it is the littleness he reveals which she really criticises: "Isn't it better not to talk so much, not to be worrying always about small things that don't really matter?" (253). Indeed it is the little feelings that interest him, for he is afraid of the more demanding ones, especially the more demanding ones that even he detects in Katherine: "Beneath her steady, exemplary surface ran a vein of passion which seemed to him now perverse, now completely irrational, for it never took the normal channel of glorification of him and his doings" (258). Rodney, like most of those who gather around the Hilbery family, is really rather self-consciously concerned with the "refinements, reserves, and subtleties of feeling" (298; Katherine is the one who holds true to the realities of the emotional life. She is determined to "seek a true feeling among the chaos of the unfeelings or half-feelings of life, to recognize it when found, and to accept the consequences of the discovery" (331).

Thakur's comments also imply that Katherine's study of mathematics and astronomy is entirely distinct from her family's and friends' love of art. Art and science seem superficially to have nothing in common, but this is only true
if one accepts the hackneyed model of the scientist as one who works exclusively and rationally upon empirical data, selecting, ordering and classifying. This is not the usual mode of the creative scientist, as one can see in, for instance, Henri Poincaré's description of the processes of the mathematician:

> It may be surprising to see emotional sensibility invoked à propos of mathematical demonstrations which, it would seem, can interest only the intellect. This would be to forget the feeling of mathematical beauty, of the harmony of numbers and forms, of geometric elegance. This is a true esthetic feeling that all real mathematicians know, and surely it belongs to emotional sensibility.¹⁵

A love of science does not necessarily imply coldness of personality, paucity of imagination, and lack of creativity, and in Katherine's case it certainly does not. It is true that she sees astronomy and mathematics, in their exactitude and impersonality, as being opposed to literature, but the emphases of the novel clearly equate her work with creative artistic work. In fact, the very conditions under which she works, in secrecy, always ready to slip her calculations into a dictionary should anyone interrupt her (40), suggest in themselves a relationship to the work of the artist. Several times in Virginia Woolf's non-fiction one encounters artists who conceal their work in similar ways— for example, Jane Austen, 'Judith Shakespeare', Virginia Woolf herself and Vanessa Bell.¹⁶

And then there are many passages in Night and Day in which the moon and stars are distinctly equated with art, or are seen in an imaginative romantic way. Ironically, when Rodney bemoans his inability to express in writing the emotions he feels, he invokes the moon: "Why am I condemned for ever, Katherine, to feel what I can't express? ... in the presence of beauty — look at the iridescence around the moon! — one feels — one feels — " (62). When Katherine is at Stogden, the stars and her study of them are deliberately related to the more literary pursuits of the rest of Katherine's circle: she is puzzled by her relationship
with Rodney, and: "Much as a literary person in like circumstances would begin, absentmindedly, pulling out volume after volume, so she stepped into the garden in order to have the stars at hand, even though she did not look at them" (201). When she does look at them, her response is imaginative — she sees them as a "procession of kings and wise men" (205). Then, after a succession of imaginative transformations, we see how her study of astronomy, far from being a cold exercise, is very closely related to her state of dream. The light of the stars overwhelms everything else, and suddenly her dream hero appears: "Somehow simultaneously, though incongruously, she was riding with the magnanimous hero upon the shore or under forest trees" (205). Her scientific work is as much a part of her imaginative life as her dreams are — and it too is associated with emotions. When Ralph talks of his love for her, she feels a rush of emotions, and "books of algebraic symbols, pages all speckled with dots and dashes and twisted bars, came before her eyes as they trod the Embankment" (317).

Katherine's mathematical studies, then, do not symbolise a lack of emotion or poetry in her makeup; they are partly a response to the demands of her family—demands on the literary, social and emotional levels — and are just as 'creative' as artistic activities. Thakur is right when he senses a changing drift in Katherine's mind, but it is not a change from being cold and mathematical to being passionate and poetic; it is that when it becomes plain that Ralph loves her, and she loves him, Katherine no longer feels the need to conceal her unbecoming studies. She works without fearing interruption, with "all the pages which they [the dictionaries] had concealed for so many years arranged in a pile .... She had somehow risen to be mistress in her own kingdom; assuming her sovereignty unconsciously" (507). And finally she can even allow Ralph to look at her calculations — she shows him her mathematics and he shows her his confused writing "with its mystical conclusion" (521). Art and science come together.
There are other subtle ways in which Katherine's astronomical studies interact with other aspects of the novel—in much the same way as the title of Hewet's novel, *Silence*, becomes part of the symbolic nexus of *The Voyage Out*.

People continually mention the moon and stars—often, as is apt, when they think or talk of love. Most of the important emotional, one might almost say spiritual, events take place outside at night, and the stars form symbolic clusters which often suggest the possibility of living life at a deeper level than that normally lived in daylight. *As Silence in The Voyage Out is associated with the spiritual, so the stars in Night and Day are associated with spiritual light.*

This is obviously related to Katherine's wish to bridge "this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul was active and in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night" (358). It is Ralph who enables Katherine to connect the inner and outer (in the process breaking down barriers in his own life) and Katherine comes to see Ralph as "a fire burning through its smoke, a source of life" (533). She sees him thus as they walk out into the night, and this image is related to the glimpse she has of the sky and to her feeling that "she was now secure of all that this lofty blue and its steadfast lights meant to her; reality, was it, figures, love, truth?" (533). These steadfast lights are connected with the spiritual light Katherine reverences: "She had believed in a spiritual light burning steadily and steadfastly behind the erratic disorder and incoherence of life" (398). Ralph has a similar vision of light being somehow symbolic of order and stability. When he leaves Mary's flat after he tells her that he loves Katherine, he walks out into a stormy night, and in the chaos of wind and darkness the moon shines in the sky as a kind of token. The flying clouds may cover her for a while, but "she issued forth indomitable" (416). Then, when the vagrant mumbles his habitual plaint, Ralph has a vision of a lighthouse as a still centre "besieged by the flying bodies of lost
birds" (417). The next stage—these stages succeed each other like the stages of Katherine's contemplation of the stars at Stogden—is that the lights of the Hilbery house become the lighthouse: "the justification for the welter of confusion surrounding it; the steady light which cast its beams...over the tractless waste" (418). Then, at length, when he allows himself to think of Katherine, he does not see her in the body: "he seemed curiously to see her as a shape of light, the light itself" (419). Katherine's preoccupation with the stars is related to all of these images. It does not symbolise coldness, lack of faith, lack of poetry; but rather a quality of creativity, vision, emotion, which is different from the normal Hilbery quality—much involved with art— but very closely akin to it.

In The Voyage Out artistic values are counterpointed by those of the world of work, and in Night and Day the suffragists act as a counterpart to the cultural environment of the Hiberys. There is a more effective contrast in Night and Day because Virginia Woolf presents the world of practical affairs in greater depth. In The Voyage Out we only hear about the practical world through Dalloway's evasive report, but in Night and Day we see an office at work—we see the committee meeting, the map with the coloured pins, the tea-breaks, the nine-to-five routine—the whole machine of which Dalloway speaks. Indeed, Dalloway's machine image is echoed: Mr Clacton's office is seen as a machine which turns out "its bi-monthly product, a committee meeting" (171), and Mr Clacton himself develops the image of his organisation as a telephone exchange (269). However, in Night and Day there is a greater complexity of approach: the worlds of cultural and practical affairs are not mutually exclusive.

The literary gathering at which Rodney stammers his paper takes place in Mary Datchett's rooms. Mr Clacton, with his French novel, tries to keep abreast of the latest developments in literature, and balances "his social work with an ardent culture of which he was secretly proud" (79). Like Rodney, he
plumes his literary vanity: "'The British public likes a pellet of reason in its jam of eloquence—a pill of reason in its pudding of sentiment,' he said, sharpening the phrase to a satisfactory degree of literary precision" (278). But, unlike Rodney, he believes that "although literature is delightful, it is not work" (89). Sally Seal also writes in support of her cause, and from the seclusion of her little room "issued sounds of enthusiastic, but obviously erratic, composition" (89). She is a little like Mrs Hilbery in her scatter-brained, spasmodic manner, and in her inarticulate eloquence. Like Mrs Hilbery, too, she is very conscious of being her father's daughter, and the newspaper cuttings with the ambiguous pencil marks may recall Mrs Hilbery at work on the biography. These two—Mr Clacton with his card index and map "dotted with little pins tufted with differently coloured plumes of hair" (269), and Mrs Seal with her somewhat vacuous enthusiasm—have the same kind of contrasting characteristics as Mr and Mrs Hilbery. One might also equate Mary's situation with Katherine's—both see more than their elders, and view them with sceptical, though affectionate objectivity.

These different worlds are alike too in that both are seen as strangely unreal. The frenetic bustle of the suffrage office and the cultivated leisure of the Hilbery household both strike newcomers to them as being in great contrast to the streets they have just left—there is a strange remoteness about both. Ralph, entering the Hilbery house, has the sense of a thousand padded doors closing behind him (2), and Katherine in the office feels that "After the confusion of her twilight walk, and her random thoughts, life in this small room appeared extremely concentrated and bright" (83). The glimpse she has of the office is like a dream to her; the workers in it are "aloof and unreal and apart from the normal world" (92). Both Katherine and Ralph use a spider's web image to express the strangeness of the worlds they encounter. Katherine "compared Mrs. Seal, and Mary Datchet, and Mr. Clacton to enchanted people in a bewitched tower, with the spiders'
webs looping across the corners of the room" (92); and to Ralph, escaping from the Hilbery house "was like tearing through a maze of diamond-glittering spiders' webs" (15).

There is another perhaps more important level on which the Hilbery world and the Suffrage world are connected: at times both are associated with the concept of civilisation — the immediate features of each become momentarily less precise and we are confronted by larger issues. The effort to secure a measure of political expression for women is deliberately equated with the progress of civilisation at least twice. Sally looks forward enthusiastically to the day when women will finally be enfranchised, and says it will be "A great day, not only for us, but for civilisation" (176); and when her movement suffers a setback, it is also "a setback to civilization" (268). The suffragists' concept of civilisation has to do with social justice and the onward, and 'upward', march of the human race. With the Hilberys the matter is a little more complex. There the focus is not on civilisation as represented by a concern for society and politics; the concept emerges from the kind of environment they create, and the word itself is used with increasing frequency towards the end of the novel — as will be apparent when I discuss the 'testing' of their civilisation.

Civilisation is, of course, a concept which has been much discussed this century: writers as different as Sigmund Freud and Clive Bell have written books on the subject. The difficulties of definition are, then, formidable: one becomes involved in so many subtleties when one looks at the different ways in which individual writers, Virginia Woolf included, use the word. And then there is the problem of the synonymous use of the words 'culture' and 'civilisation', and the fact that often no distinction is made between these two and 'art'. I shall not offer a definition: I hope that it will be clear from my discussion and quotations which areas of life I apply the word to, and the ways in which Virginia
Woolf's use of the word and concept are related to those of other writers I mention.

I have said that the concept of civilisation emerges from the environment the Hilberys create; in this environment the social and the artistic are inextricably entwined: the tea-parties and the visit of the aunts are events on the cultural plane— the main topic of conversation is literature— as much as on the social. And often this gives rise to serious muddles: social and artistic values are almost indistinguishable in the condemnation of Cyril's behaviour: it is all the worse because he is related to the poet. There are many other occasions when realities are obscured, masks assumed, and responsibilities evaded, and a muddle of social and artistic values is often involved in these equivocations.

For instance, we see the creative impotence of the Hilbery circle against the background of constrictions and obstructions in their personal lives. Social conventions are overwhelmingly important to Rodney: in the middle of the agitated scene he has with Katherine on the walk to Stogden, Rodney suddenly, despite his emotion, becomes aware of the unseemly picture they present, and, abandoning explanation, without trying to understand better what Katherine is thinking, he begins to fret about her dishevelled appearance, and he brushes the leaves from her dress: "Indeed, these trifles drew his attention strangely from his own doubtful and uneasy state of mind" (259). Rodney, perhaps more than the other members of the Hilbery circle, has his attention focussed continually on the external. Many of the obstructions we see in the life of the Hilbery circle prevent in a similar way spontaneous communication between people. Katherine, as I have said, adopts the mask of practicality to defend herself from her family's expectations of her; almost she is compelled to suppress her authentic personality.

Often too, their love of art is used to calm their agitated feelings and forestall emotional and painful scenes: they use the arts as drugs — in the way
which Forster condemns. Mr Hilbery tries to restore order and civilisation by reading Scott to Katherine (505); Ralph, Rodney and Katherine conceal their agitation by pretending to examine some architect's drawings (309); and, while he and Katherine are discussing matters vital to their happiness, Rodney, in his embarrassment, tries to beat a retreat into Gulliver's Travels. Reading Swift could have been as effective as brushing the leaves off Katherine's dress.

The implied criticisms of the Hilbery civilisation are fundamental: they are concerned with the bases of its way of life, and they are directed simultaneously towards its social and artistic values. The Hilbery circle is too enclosed, too cosy, and complacent. Their culture is solipsistic and uncreative; it is not the real culture, which Virginia Woolf believed is "muscular, adventurous, free". Their civilisation has not the fire at its heart which Forster tells us it should have: "Creation lies at the heart of civilisation like fire in the heart of the earth". What they lose is a certain vigour and authenticity; what they create is a muddle of thwarted needs and half-suppressed instincts. Freud had just such a picture of the effects of civilisation in general: civilisation, he says, must suppress sexual and aggressive instincts, and what results is a burden of frustration and unexpressed anger: "our civilisation", he says, "is largely responsible for our misery". At one point in Night and Day we see the explosion of these instincts, and it takes place expressly in the context of the civilised drawing-room. When Katherine tells her father—the urbane, civilised man par excellence—that she is engaged to Ralph Denham, he stalks out of the room: "leaving in the minds of the women a sense, half of awe, half of amusement, at the extravagant, inconsiderate, uncivilized male, outraged somehow and gone bellowing to his lair with a roar which still sometimes reverberates in the most polished of drawing-rooms" (530).

These are the drawbacks of civilisation; there are, of course, merits too; civilisation also implies such generalised ideals as stability in the face of chaos,
morality, the advance of human knowledge, and so on. This abstract and idealised aspect of civilisation is presented symbolically in *Night and Day*. When Ralph walks out into the night after Katherine's visit to his home he has a vision of the ideal. He sees the Hilbery house as a still centre in the flying chaos of the world, as an embodiment of civilisation itself:

Lights burnt in the three long windows of the drawing-room. The space of the room behind became, in Ralph's vision, the centre of the dark, flying wilderness of the world; the justification for the welter of confusion surrounding it; the steady light which cast its beams, like those of a lighthouse, with searching composure over the tractless waste. In this little sanctuary were gathered together several different people, but their identity was dissolved in a general glory of something that might, perhaps, be called civilization; at any rate, all dryness, all safety, all that stood up above the surge and preserved a consciousness of its own, was centred in the drawing-room of the Hilberys. (418-19)

Ralph's view here is very different from his first view of the Hilbery household.

The problem now is whether with all its faults and shortcomings this civilisation is of value. Some of its values may no longer apply; it may be too out of touch with the changing exigencies of life. Katherine feels that the book of traditional wisdom cannot help her, and the voices of conventional morality (which seem reinforced — at a tea-party — by the "approval of Mr. Augustus Pelham, Mrs. Vermont Bankes, William Rodney, and, possibly, Mrs. Hilbery herself" (334)) may no longer have any meaning. The "broad illumination shed by the eyes of all the people who are in agreement to see together" (330) — an illumination related to Ralph's lighthouse beam — she feels necessary to replace by "the truth of what she herself felt — a frail beam" (330). The final test of the value of the Hilbery civilisation comes as the young couples wish to alter the relationships between them which have been accepted by society.

The crisis is accompanied by the accelerated tempo of cultural life which the spring brings to London (386-7). This animation is described with a certain amount of detached irony — "William Rodney was fertile in suggestions. He knew
of little galleries, select concerts, and private performances" (387)—but no judgment is offered, yet. As the two couples explore the possibilities of new relationships, their outings mask their changing allegiances, and the normal tenor of civilised life at the Hilberys' conceals what is going on:

the common routine of household life— the maid waiting at table, Mrs. Hilbery writing a letter, the clock striking, and the door opening, and all the other signs of long-established civilization appeared suddenly to have no meaning save as they lulled Mr. and Mrs. Hilbery into the belief that nothing unusual had taken place. (441)

This less than exalted view of civilisation is in strong contrast to Ralph's splendid vision of the Hilbery household as a glorious beacon. Cassandra does her best to create an "atmosphere of unmixed beauty" (441), and this brings Katherine and Rodney "an enormous sense of relief at the licence which the music gave them to loosen their hold upon the mechanism of behaviour" (441). Hermetically sealed, almost, the elder Hilberys believe that life goes on in the normal unruffled fashion: their civilised way of life provides cover for the affair of the couples.

But then the current shifts slightly, and we see that the Hilbery world is not entirely an exclusive one. "Under cover of some exquisite run of melody" (442), Rodney asks Katherine to come downstairs, and downstairs, with the music of Mozart still audible ("The strains of Mozart reached them from the room above"), he tells her that Ralph is outside in the street. Opening the window to call to him, she admits the sounds of the street—"the sound of distant wheels, footsteps hurrying along the pavement, and the cries of sirens hooting down the river" (444). These sounds mingle with the strains of Mozart, and we remember Ralph's first visit to the Hilberys' when the thousand softly-padded doors cut him off from the street. It is true that Ralph has been in the house before, but this clandestine visit, at night, under the cloak of Mozart, does seem to represent an opening up of the Hilbery world—especially as he becomes so closely associated with the
tramp he meets: Rodney at first takes him for a beggar (417, 420). Ralph's scarcely articulate message of passion Katherine connects "with the sound of distant wheels, the footsteps hurrying along the pavement, the cries of sirens hooting down the river, the darkness and the wind" (446) — things normally excluded from the Hilbery world.

But this is still a forced entry, so to speak. It remains to be seen what will happen when the whole thing comes into the open.

Civilisation for a while continues to conceal the truth. The couples' outings — significantly, to a music hall, to Greenwich, and to Hampton Court — effectively keep from Mr Hilbery the fact that Katherine is in the process of becoming engaged to Ralph — until Mrs Milvain imposes her discoveries on him. Not really crediting her discoveries, he remains his normal, unruffled, civilised self:

"'It all sounds very black,' he remarked urbanely, continuing his examination of his finger-nails" (491), and, characteristically, he takes refuge in literature: "he applied himself, very philosophically on the whole, to a book" (492). But when he questions Katherine and Rodney about the matter, his urbanity and his normal assumptions about how people should behave fail him: he is at first at a loss as to how to deal with the situation. Remembering the book of wisdom, though, he banishes Rodney, Ralph and Cassandra from the house. He demands from Katherine self-control and obedience to the conventions, and these demands are irrelevant to this situation. When Katherine rounds on him indignantly, he says "For God's sake, Katherine, control yourself!"; for Katherine "looked for a moment like a wild animal caged in a civilised dwelling place. She glanced over the walls covered with books, as if for a second she had forgotten the position of the door" (505). For the moment, civilisation is a cage; books are the bars.

Mr Hilbery's reaction to Katherine's passion is typical of the way in which he sees life. He suggests that they leave the whole matter in abeyance for a while, and that they should "try to behave like civilized beings. Let us read Sir Walter
Scott. What d’you say to 'The Antiquary,' eh? Or 'The Bride of Lammermoor'?

(505). He chooses a novel, and Katherine "found herself being turned by the agency of Sir Walter Scott into a civilized human being" (505). He administers his drugs with a will, but even he doubts their efficacy on this occasion:

"Civilization had been very profoundly and unpleasantly overthrown that evening ... he had lost his temper ... and his own condition urgently required soothing and renovating at the hand of the classics .... was literature itself a specific against such disagreeables? A note of hollowness was in his voice as he read" (505).

This represents the nadir of civilization in the novel: using its own weapons to defend it, Mr Hilbery comes close to destroying it. Employing a Scott novel to banish the difficulties of personal relations, he not only rejects the personal life, he devalues Scott's writings. The social and artistic aspects of his civilization have failed: Ralph's vision seems terribly wrong. The Hilbery civilization appears petty, inflexible and destructive: a world compact of social gestures and spiritual sterility.

Mr Hilbery is now faced with an "interregnum of civilization" (506), until his wife returns to rescue him from the chaos he has caused. She returns from Stratford-on-Avon — which she considers to be "the heart of the civilized world" (453) — bearing leaves and blossoms from Shakespeare's tomb, and when she deposits her flowers at Katherine's feet civilization begins a faltering recovery.

It is difficult to say precisely what her act of benediction involves: casting flowers at Katherine's feet is a symbolic gesture — rather like Mr Carmichael's at the end of To the Lighthouse — which is not really open to logical analysis. It does seem to be, though, a gesture positively opposed to Mr Hilbery's retreat into Scott, and indicates that a closer relationship is necessary between art and nature — it is said that "Her sympathy with nature was exquisite" (223). (There are obvious parallels here with the role of Mrs Wilcox in Howards End.) This is
an idea which had been hinted at in *The Voyage Out*; in *Night and Day* it becomes much more explicit.

One can connect Mrs Hilbery's gesture with many other moments in the novel when the cultural and the natural are juxtaposed. The spring not only produces "little white and violet flowers in the more sheltered corners of woods and gardens" (321), but also prompts Mrs Hilbery to revel in words: "She gave herself up to a sensual delight in the combinations of words" (321). A little later the cultural is metaphorically equated with the spring:

> London, in the first days of spring, has buds that open and flowers that suddenly shake their petals—white, purple, or crimson—in competition with the display in the garden beds, although these city flowers are merely so many doors flung wide in Bond Street and the neighbourhood, inviting you to look at a picture, or hear a symphony, or merely crowd and crush yourself among all sorts of vocal, excitable, brightly coloured human beings. (386)

Richard Alardyce is the flower of the Hilbery family (30), and after producing him "nothing now remained possible but a steady growth of good, green stalk and leaf" (33), and there are many other moments when flowers are closely associated with aspects of cultural life. The suggestion seems to be that the Hilbery civilisation has moved too far from the natural. Mrs Hilbery's gesture acts in much the same way as the personality of Ruth Wilcox does in *Howards End*—both are a reminder that the springs of our vigour, in art as well as in life, lie in the natural. I showed in my introduction that the relationship between the natural and the artistic is an important element in Forster's novels; from *Night and Day* onwards it is also a vital theme in Virginia Woolf's.

The movement away from Ralph's splendid conception of the Hilbery civilisation is now reversed as Mrs Hilbery goes about her work of unifying. She rejects Mr Hilbery's attempt to gloss over the realities of the situation, and where he banishes the lovers and tries to restore order by reading Scott, she
rounds them up, brings them back to the Hilbery house, and restores harmony.

The restoration of civilisation is, like its collapse, far from simple: it is in many ways highly ambiguous, and there are many reservations implied. When Mr Hilbery finds the lost ring he delivers it to Cassandra with a courtly bow, and it may be that the bow itself— a civilised social gesture— "released automatically feelings of complaisance and urbanity" (528). The artistic then conspires with the social to re-establish civilisation: Mrs Hilbery asks the date of the first performance of Hamlet, and as Rodney gives his authorities he "felt himself admitted once more to the society of the civilized and sanctioned by the authority of no less a person than Shakespeare himself" (528). The power of literature, which had previously failed Mr Hilbery, now comes back to him, "pouring over the raw ugliness of human affairs its soothing balm, and providing a form into which such passions as he felt so painfully the night before could be moulded so that they fell roundly from the tongue in shapely phrases, hurting nobody" (528–9). This, though, is in itself ambiguous; the situation has been restored, but at the cost, it seems, of total honesty. Literature is still providing a convenient mask, and it seems that the mask itself is needed to maintain their civilisation. The situation is false, and we see that there are in Ralph qualities "which made such turns of speech as Mr. Hilbery had at command appear oddly irrelevant" (529). That the newly-restored civilisation is extremely precarious is demonstrated almost immediately. Katherine tells her father she is engaged to Ralph, and he reacts just like any other "uncivilized male" (530). The natural and the primitive, which the Hilbery world would ignore or suppress, unmistakably reassert themselves. After this caveat we are told that "good wine was passed round the dinner-table; before the meal was far advanced civilization had triumphed" (531), and the novel concludes with a final glimpse of the lights of the Hilbery house. But now the lights are subdued: the house no longer radiates the glory which Ralph saw earlier.
Civilisation is retrieved, then, only after a fashion. All kinds of reservations are suggested, and there is no simple faith finally expressed. At the end the criticisms remain; there is no indication that the Hilbery world has radically changed its nature, and the precise criticisms made of it are not finally 'answered'. Indeed, the inadequacies which almost brought disaster seem to be glossed over; the recovery of civilisation is more a symbolic process than anything else–it does not operate on the same level as the earlier collapse, and in no way takes account of the criticisms made. Perhaps the inadequacy of the conclusion is a product of Virginia Woolf's closeness to the world she criticises. She herself, of course, belonged to the civilised and cultured world, and shared many of its values. Her family and friends were cultivated and civilised, and naturally she continually affirms the value of culture. In Roger Fry she quotes with approval what Fry said of Watts: "he looked upon art as a necessary and culminating function of civilised life–as indeed the great refining and disinterested activity, without which civilisation would become a barbarous luxury". What is criticised in Night and Day is the lack of vigour and creativity, the restrictiveness, the self-indulgence, and the complacent cosiness which living the cultural life often entails–in fact, precisely those qualities which the Bloomsbury baiters have often ascribed, directly or obliquely, to Virginia Woolf.

The 'Bloomsbury Group' as a whole was, of course, a highly cultivated group, and many of its 'members' were deeply concerned with civilised values and the value of civilisation: 'civilisation' and 'civilised' are words that occur constantly in their writings. It may be that this concern is partly responsible for the irrational, and occasionally malicious, hostility accorded the Bloomsbury Group in some circles. To set Night and Day more firmly in its context, then, it is necessary briefly to compare the attitude to civilisation embodied in it with those of some other Bloomsbury books. This comparison is all the more pertinent because what Virginia Woolf saw as a 'member' of the Group undoubtedly
provoked some of the criticisms of the cultured life made in Night and Day.

In Howards End E. M. Forster made similar criticisms of the cultivated life, and was confronted by similar artistic problems. Tibby Schlegel exemplifies what can go wrong: "His was the Leisure without sympathy - an attitude as fatal as the strenuous: a little cold culture may be raised on it, but no art" (HE 327). Forster says of the Miss Schlegels: "the world would be a grey, bloodless place were it entirely composed of Miss Schlegels", but he adds immediately: "But the world being what it is, perhaps they shine out in it like stars" (HE 29). The second observation is as cogent as the first, and so it is that after all due deference is paid to the merits of the Wilcoxes, it is the Schlegel way of life - with the value it attaches to art and personal relations - which is finally endorsed. But one feels at the end of Forster's novel, as one feels at the end of Night and Day, that the endorsement is qualified by serious reservations. The resolution is, again, on the symbolic level, and the criticisms of the Schlegel way of life, which are quite precise, are not really answered. Again, it is perhaps a hope, not a firm conviction, which is expressed.

It is particularly interesting to compare Leonard Woolf's The Wise Virgins with Night and Day, because it too, though the plot is different, draws on Leonard's courtship of Virginia and makes criticisms of the cultivated milieu of the 'Bloomsbury Group'. Leonard's criticisms of self-indulgent culturalism are much more scathing than Virginia's or E.M. Forster's are.

The Lawrences are a highly cultivated family, whom Harry Davies, the fierce young Jew, denounces for being "epicures in the art of emotions and the emotions of art", and because they "never did anything". The two daughters, Katherine and Camilla - clearly portraits of Vanessa and Virginia Stephen - are implicated in this criticism, but of the Lawrence family it is Mr Lawrence who most embodies what Leonard sees as being wrong with a certain order of culture.
He is portrayed as an aging and languidly vacuous baby, and it is to him that Harry says: "You're damned intelligent, of course, and cultured, and — emasculated by it". Arthur Woodhouse, who was based on Clive Bell, is contemptuously dismissed as a fat round man with a fat round mind. Other members of the Lawrence circle fare little better.

Leonard Woolf also shows, somewhat in the Forster manner, what dangers may lurk in applying what one learns from one's reading too directly to life. Harry Davies insists that Gwen Garland read books which provide alternatives to the values by which she lives: as Night and Day offers Dostoevski as an alternative to the Hilbery world, Harry advocates Dostoevski as a corrective to Gwen's life in 'Richstead'. He also offers The Masterbuilder, and this proves his downfall. Gwen reads, and contracts the belief that she is Hilda and Harry is Solness; she comes to Harry's bedroom one night and obliges him to ruin her. Of course, Harry is obliged in return to marry her and banish all thoughts of Camilla, whom he really loves.

The Wise Virgins is far from being a successful novel, but it does demonstrate — and demonstrates more obviously than Virginia Woolf's or E.M. Forster's novels — that there was a critical spirit abroad in Bloomsbury, a spirit that did not accept that art was all and that life could look after itself. It acts as a forcible corrective to the idea that the Bloomsbury Group was a mutual admiration society, and demonstrates that some of its members were deeply critical of the values on which it was, and often is, supposed to be based.


It attempts to identify the distinctive features of civilisation, and one is left finally with the impression that one of the most important is the capacity
There is a breathtaking smugness about Bell's book: one essential, he says, if we are to create a civilisation, is the establishment of a class of willing slaves who will support the civilisers, enabling them to pursue, with their "delicate sensibilities", "the subtler manifestations of the spirit" — the civilisers being just the kind of sterile cossetted coterie that Virginia Woolf depicts in Night and Day. Even the creation of works of art is cheerfully redundant in Bell's civilisation: "the essential characteristic of a highly civilized society is not that it is creative, but that it is appreciative: savages create furiously". One remembers Katherine's feeling about the biography — "the book must be written. It was a duty they owed the world ... if they could not between them get this one book accomplished they had no right to their privileged position" (35)— and Tibby Schlegel's Leisure, which could raise a little cold culture, but no art (HE 327). Despite the gracious dedication to Virginia Woolf, she was caustic about Civilization: "he has great fun in the opening chapters but at the end it turns out that Civilization is a lunch party at no. 50 Gordon Square" (QB II 137).

In her writings about culture and civilisation Virginia Woolf is closer in spirit to Forster than she is to Leonard Woolf or Clive Bell. She is intelligently critical, but she also clings to those cultural values which are worthy of respect. In the next two novels I discuss the concept of civilisation is rather less important than it is in Night and Day, but in Between the Acts it is again a vital issue, and is again closely associated with the artistic: I shall deal with this in my penultimate chapter.
NOTES

3 See for example QB I 32.
5 These suggestions are not merely intuitions on my part. Virginia Woolf herself said that Katherine was based on Vanessa: see QB II 32; Virginia Woolf, The Question of Things Happening (London, 1976), Letter 1095, p. 400; and Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being (Sussex, 1976), p. 30, the latter suggesting some of the characteristics of Vanessa which found their way into Katherine.

For the origin of Mrs Hilbery see QB II 43.

For the relationship between James and Fortesque compare Virginia Woolf's account of her visit to James, The Flight of the Mind, p. 306, with the vignette of Fortesque, Night and Day, pp. 2, 4, 5.

Leonard Woolf brought a formidableness to the Stephen house similar to that which Ralph brings to the Hilbery home: see Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being, p. 166. Virginia's visit to the Woolf home undoubtedly supplied some of the horrors of Katherine's visit to the Denhams': see QB II 3.

For the Virginia Woolf-Walter Lamb-Leonard Woolf relationship see QB I 170-2, 179-87, and Virginia Woolf, The Flight of the Mind, pp. 469-71, 496. Virginia Woolf said that if there was anybody in Rodney it was Walter Headlam (The Question of Things Happening, Letter 1111, p. 414): I refer not to the character of Lamb but to the relation in which he stood to Leonard and Virginia outlined in the passages cited. Nevertheless,
I think it is clear from these passages that there was an element of Lamb in Rodney's character. Precise identification is, of course, not important; my point is not purely biographical.

6 See QB I, 97, 105, 120, et passim.


9 There is an account of Desmond MacCarthy in Leonard Woolf, Beginning Again (London, 1964), pp.134-43; Virginia Woolf wrote a piece about Sydney-Turner called "One of Our Great Men", expressing an amused sadness at his failure to live up to his friends' expectations — see Monks House Papers A 13c.


11 See, for example, Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London, 1931), passim, and Three Guineas (London, 1943), passim.


13 See Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being, p.30.


17 Compare their reactions pp.100 and 269-71.


22 Freud, p.86.


25 Ibid., pp.65-73 passim.

26 Ibid., p.319.

27 Ibid., p.123.

28 Ibid., p.106.

29 Clive Bell, pp.74-5.


31 Ibid., p.71.
Chapter Four

To the Lighthouse

Order in daily life and in history, order in the social and political category, is unattainable.... The work of art stands up by itself, and nothing else does. It achieves something which has often been promised by society, but always delusively.

Virginia Woolf concentrated in Night and Day primarily on what might be called the social aspects of the artist's being—the imaginative life was presented briefly and rather vaguely; with To the Lighthouse she takes her exploration of what it is to be an artist to a much deeper level. For the first time we have a detailed account of an artist in the process of creation, and this, as I hope to show later, is astonishingly convincing.

Most critical attention, perhaps inevitably, has been directed at the relationship between Mr and Mrs Ramsay, and although this has yielded fruitful insights into the novel, I think that this line of approach tends to bypass a central aspect of the novel's concerns. It seems to me that the concept of creativity—in different guises—is the governing concept, and that most aspects of the novel are directly related to it. Seen from this point of view, the principle relationships are between Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay, with Mr Carmichael a potent and mysterious figure in the wings. Mr Ramsay could, of course, be viewed unfavourably from this angle, but as my purpose is to examine the creators in
the novel, I shall say little about him.

The theme of creativity in *To the Lighthouse* is open to analysis on many different levels, and it is impossible to bring out all the implicit relationships between the different kinds of creativity it presents without obscuring what I see as the central area of focus. What I shall do, then, is to examine the relationships between the different orders of creativity shown by Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, and then to analyse Lily's creative process in detail. I hope that in what I write about Lily it will be implied that Mrs Ramsay's creative processes could be examined in the same way. Similarly, I hope that the preoccupations I traced in the earlier novels— the relations between life and art, for instance— though only rarely directly commented on in this chapter, will emerge as being just as important as in the earlier novels, although Virginia Woolf treated them in a very different way.

The most obvious point to make about Lily and Mrs Ramsay is that Lily is an unmarried woman keeping house for her father, and living, on the face of it, a rather spare life, with few of what are considered the 'normal' satisfactions, while Mrs Ramsay lives, surrounded by her family, a more immediately 'rewarded' life. Lily does perhaps seem a little "skimpy" (233); the fertility, or the welter, of family life are not hers. The lack of the intimacy a mother has with her children does seem a real loss for her, but the loss is compensated for by the gifts of independence, insight and honesty which Mrs Ramsay lacks or, perhaps more accurately, which she has to a lesser extent. The graces and gratifications of family life are inevitably attended by a certain loss of self; "there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by" (63). And Lily has something which Mrs Ramsay, though living a very different kind of life, can recognise and appreciate: "There was in Lily a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own which Mrs Ramsay liked very much indeed" (161-2).
A more important quality which Mrs Ramsay lacks and Lily possesses is honesty. The family and social life perhaps inevitably exacts a little dishonesty, or false compliance, as a lubricant, and we often see Mrs Ramsay being less than honest. Her reaction to Mr Ramsay's insistence that it will be too rough to go to the lighthouse reveals her attitude in general to honesty: "To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilisation so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage ..." (54). The "thin veils of civilisation" are what Mrs Ramsay would preserve, and for this a little dishonesty is perhaps allowable. A more serious consequence of Mrs Ramsay's attitude is seen during the dinner party: she constrains Lily to renounce her experiment and to "be nice" to Charles Tansley. Lily has to do "the usual trick" with the result that 'She would never know him. He would never know her" (144). The "thin veil of civilisation" implies dishonesty, and obscures the possibility of Lily ever really knowing Charles. Lily takes comfort from this depressing thought in plans for her picture; in her painting she can and will be totally honest. As an artist, nothing less than total honesty will do: "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" (34). When Lily paints she rises to a level of perception in which life is experienced as being "most vivid" (294), and it is this vividness and freshness which social smoothness would veil and obscure. And so it is merciful that

one need not say, very briskly, crossing the lawn to greet old Mrs Beckwith ... 'Oh good-morning, Mrs Beckwith! What a lovely day!' Are you going to be so bold as to sit in the sun? Jasper's hidden the chairs. Do let me find you one! ' and all the rest of the usual chatter.(294-5)

It is this degree of honesty which is smothered in the obsession with the domestic
and the social; as in *Night and Day*, 'civilisation' carries its penalties.

Mrs Ramsay is also not strictly honest with herself, particularly about the motives for some of her behaviour. She disarms her suspicion that her desire to give and to help is partly vanity, partly the desire for others to like and need her, by generalising about human relations (69), and by thinking about her appearance: "Shabby and worn out, and not presumably (her cheeks were hollow, her hair was white) any longer a sight that filled the eyes with joy" (69). (She is, of course, perfectly conscious of the fact that she is still beautiful.) A more damaging dishonesty comes a little later when she thinks about her relations with Minta and her parents. She remembers that a woman had once accused her of "robbing her of her daughter's affections" (92), and from this she reflects that the charge against her is that she wishes to dominate and interfere. But again she does not face these rather unpleasant features of her personality: "How could she help being 'like that' to look at? No one could accuse her of taking pains to impress" (92). This reply may be in itself honest, but it is not a reply to either of the charges against her: her beauty comes to the rescue again. And perhaps this dishonesty has disastrous consequences, for there is no doubt that she has a great deal to do with bringing about the marriage of Paul and Minta. Paul himself has an inkling of this: "he felt somehow that she was the person who had made him do it" (123). Lily is incapable of this kind of dishonesty: she thinks about herself and her relations with others with complete honesty.

Implicit in much of what I have been saying so far is the fact that Mrs Ramsay is an active personality, while Lily is contemplative. The conversations about art and politics in *The Voyage Out* began the debate about the relative merits of the active and contemplative lives, and it continues with increasing complexity through the mature novels to *Between the Acts*. Mrs Ramsay herself has some inkling of the expense her active life exacts: the sounds of the sea "warned her
whose day had slipped past in one quick doing after another that it was all as ephemeral as a rainbow" (30), and as these sounds bring her this warning they "made her look up with an impulse of terror" (30). Lily and Mr Carmichael are also disturbed by Mrs Ramsay's perpetual instinct to go: "Some notion was in both of them about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought" (301). But the novel does not simply imply the rejection of the active life— it is more complex than that— for, with all her bustle and activity, Mrs Ramsay can create 'moments', instances of wholeness and stasis, which do remain in a sense: "she brought together this and that and then this, and so made ... something ... which survived after all these years, complete ... and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art" (248-9). It is one of the paradoxes of Mrs Ramsay's character that she can do this even though much of her time passes in "one quick doing after another", and these complexities lend Mrs Ramsay an elusiveness which is continually fascinating.

A consequence of Mrs Ramsay's dedication to action is its effect on others: "Her going was a reproach to them, gave a different twist to the world, so that they were led to protest, seeing their own prepossessions disappear, and clutch at them vanishing. Charles Tansley did that too: it was part of the reason why one disliked him" (301). It is a little surprising at first to see Charles compared thus with Mrs Ramsay, but it is just, in that it brings out an inevitable consequence of Mrs Ramsay's allegiance to the active life: other people must be compelled; interference is inevitable. Just as Charles preaches brotherly love from a platform, Mrs Ramsay urges Lily to marry; she brings about the marriage of Paul and Minta; she would like to control people, to bend them to her will. Lily feels: "There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end" (157). What is more frightening is that she does not always understand; Lily sees this: "she had laid her head on Mrs Ramsay's lap and laughed and laughed and laughed, laughed almost hysterically
at the thought of Mrs Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand" (81). Caught up in the active life, and in the desire to convert, she does not understand Paul and Minta, and she brings about a disastrous marriage.

She makes other mistakes about people— for instance, she pitied William Bankes, and Lily sees this as a misjudgement: "it was not true, Lily thought; it was one of those misjudgments of hers that seemed to be instinctive and to arise from some need of her own rather than of other people's" (132). Lily does not make this kind of misjudgement; her perceptions are more searching and intelligent than Mrs Ramsay's are, and she knows herself better. She realises that her own harsh thoughts about Charles "served private purposes of [her] own" and that "He did for her instead of a whipping-boy" (303). And not only does she see more clearly than Mrs Ramsay, she sees much more intensely; talking with William Bankes:

the load of her accumulated impressions of him tilted up, and down poured in a ponderous avalanche all she felt about him. That was one sensation. Then up rose in a fume the essence of his being. That was another. She felt herself transfixed by the intensity of her perception. (42)

For all her sympathy, and at times acuteness, Mrs Ramsay never approaches this intensity of perception; Lily is the authentic artist.

These are some of the basic ways in which Lily and Mrs Ramsay differ; however, they are both creators, and much of the tension in the novel stems from the implied comparison of their different creative modes. Some critics, notably Bazin, have recognised that in a sense Mrs Ramsay is an artist, but have not shown how fully the concept of creativity is explored in the novel. It may be that the central relationship is that between Mr and Mrs Ramsay, but I feel that the relationship between Mrs Ramsay and Lily is of equal importance. In part one the relationship Mr Ramsay has with Mrs Ramsay is balanced by that which
Mr Bankes has with Lily; in part three Mrs Ramsay is dead, and so, to preserve the balance, Mr Bankes is absent. But Lily does not perform the same function in relation to Mr Ramsay as Mrs Ramsay did. That is, it is not simply a question of a contrast between intellect and its 'opposite', intuition. Lily, in important ways, unites in herself aspects of some of the qualities of Mr and Mrs Ramsay. It is not that she can think rationally on the one hand, and feel intuitively on the other; her experience involves an intimate union of these modes.

It is as creators that Lily and Mrs Ramsay are seen most clearly to be related, and some aspects of the novel's organisation emphasise this relationship. It is evident that the two central activities in part three—Lily's painting, Mr Ramsay's sailing—are intimately related. Lily continually walks from her easel to the cliff to mark the progress of the boat, and those in the boat continually gaze at the island and speculate about those upon it. Virginia Woolf herself suggests the closeness of the relation between the two: in her diary she says she wanted to write the end "So that one had the sense of reading the two things at the same time" (AWD 99: September 1926). But the relation between parts one and three is equally important. Some commentators have pointed out that there is a relationship—Schaefer alludes to the "design of the incidents that surround the central event in the two parts: the dinner party and the boat-trip to the lighthouse"; Holtby explains: "The two main parts are fitted like two mirrors, the second reflecting the first, fastened together by the hinge of passing time"—but I do not think that it has been demonstrated that there are precise parallels of detail.

The most obvious are those established between the dinner party, the trip to the lighthouse, and the progress of Lily's painting. In all three a unity is created. Schaefer, placing no stress on Lily's painting, observes that at the dinner and on the boat a group of people create a unity, but I would say that the unity Lily creates is as least as important as the other unities. This triple
scheme of parallels goes further than this, however, to include the process itself through which the unities are established.

In all three cases the beginnings are inauspicious. An undefined bewilderment, a sense of aridity, a feeling of disorientation, predominate at the beginning of the dinner and the beginning of part three. As she takes her place at the table, Mrs Ramsay asks: "What have I done with my life?" (129), and she cannot feel anything for her husband; indeed, "She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or any affection for him" (130). She feels that she has no relation to what is happening around her: 'She had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything" (130). All seems disunited: "Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate" (130). At the beginning of part three Lily asks: "What does it mean then, what can it all mean?" (225), and she can feel nothing about all that has happened: "For really, what did she feel" (225); "Mrs Ramsay dead; Andrew killed; Prue dead too—repeat it as she might, it roused no feeling in her" (227); "Why be always trying to bring up some feeling she had not got? ... It was all dry: all withered: all spent" (232). Like Mrs Ramsay too, she feels divorced from her surroundings: "The house, the place, the morning, all seemed strangers to her. She had no attachment here, she felt, no relations with it" (227). Everything else too seems disconnected and chaotic: "as if the link that usually bound things together had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off, anyhow" (227). The parallels with the beginning of the boat trip are less clear, but they are there: it too begins badly, with no wind—so that Macalister's boy has to row—and the air is full of the chaotic jangle of the children's emotions.

The connections between the boat trip, the dinner party, and the progress of Lily's painting are strengthened by the use of sea images at the table and the easel; Mrs Ramsay and Lily are both launched on a voyage. After the calm in the boat "the sails slowly swung round, the boat quickened itself, flattened itself,
and shot off" (252); when Mrs Ramsay begins her effort of merging "she began all this business, as a sailor not without weariness sees the wind fill his sail and yet hardly wants to be off again" (131), and when she turns to Mr Bankes "it was as if the ship had turned and the sun had struck its sails again" (132). When Lily begins to paint sea images are also used: "All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs and foaming crests" (244). As she progresses deeper into her painting: "It was an odd road to be walking, this of painting. Out and out one went, further and further, until at last one seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea" (265). All three of these activities— the dinner party, the trip to the lighthouse, the painting— are presented as parallel events by means of the sea images.

All three progress in the same way, as well. Periods of disunity and dissension are followed by moments of calm and stasis, and these moments closely resemble each other.

When the candles are lit during the dinner party "the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candle light, and composed, as they had not been in the twilight, into a party round a table" (151). A greater degree of unity is now felt by the whole party. Soon after, Paul, Minta, and the Boezen Daube enter, and as they are tasted the harmony grows surer, until Mrs Ramsay feels:

Everything seemed right .... just now she had reached security; she hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy ... it arose, she thought, looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; all of which rising in this profound stillness ... seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together. (162-3)

Such moments cannot last, however. The harmony is a little disturbed by Charles
Tansley's "I-I-I" (165) and then further by the hand that spoils the composition of the fruit in the bowl (169). Then, of course, it all ends: "it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past" (173).

Whether it will last in a different sense is another matter, and I shall return to this a little later.

As she paints, Lily too is presented with a moment of stasis. The morning is fine and still: "A steamer far out at sea had drawn in the air a great scroll of smoke which stayed there curving and circling decoratively, as if the air were a fine gauze which held things and kept them softly in its mesh, only gently swaying them this way and that" (280). Unlike Mrs Ramsay's moment at the dinner, however, Lily experiences the power of distance, not nearness: "For sometimes quite close to the shore, the Lighthouse looked this morning in the haze an enormous distance away" (280). Again, the quality of the stillness is conveyed by the smoke-fume-flag images: "The steamer itself had vanished, but the great scroll of smoke still hung in the air and drooped like a flag mournfully in valediction" (289). Lily's moment of stasis does not last either: "But the wind had freshened, and, as the sky changed slightly and the sea changed slightly and the boats altered their positions, the view, which a moment before had seemed miraculously fixed, was now unsatisfactory" (296).

Set within Lily's first apprehension of stasis and its final deliquescence is a similar moment of stasis observed from the boat: "Everything in the whole world seemed to stand still . . . . The sun grew hotter and everybody seemed to come very close together and to feel each other's presence" (282)—as the diners are drawn together by the lit candles. This fixity, however, is different from that at the dinner in that it does not resolve all into harmony; while it remains James meditates upon the grievances he owes his father. It is clearly a strained stasis: when it is over "The relief was extraordinary" (288).

The correspondences are, then, closest between the progress of Lily's
painting and the dinner party—Lily and Mrs Ramsay are more closely associated because they are both creators. Without agreeing with those who see Mr Ramsay as a destructive force and a menacing tyranny, it does seem to me that he is not a creative person in the way that Mrs Ramsay and Lily are, and although one has the feeling that in a sense all three are on the same journey, he is somewhat set apart from Lily and Mrs Ramsay.

Mrs Ramsay's creativity is, of course, largely in the domestic sphere: that is where she gives and receives. Not the least of her creations is her periodic rejuvenation of her husband, and one instance of this is described in terms which make clear its connection with Lily's painting. Both of these creative acts are related to natural images in an earlier passage: their different forms are related to natural rhythms. When her husband comes to her for sympathy, Mrs Ramsay pours "erect into the air a rain of energy, a column of spray . . . and into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself" (61-2)—the woman gives the man, as Virginia Woolf says elsewhere, a "renewal of creative power". This image of fecundity and renewal repeats the image which occurred when Lily and Mr Bankes walked up to the gap between the red hot pokers: "They came there regularly every evening drawn by some need" (36), as Mr Ramsay comes to his wife, and this sight of the sea brings them renewal and release:

"It was as if the water floated off and set sailing thoughts which had grown stagnant on dry land . . . . First, the pulse of colour flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam, only the next instant to be checked and chilled by the prickly blackness on the ruffled waves. Then, up behind the great black rock, almost every evening spurted irregularly, so that one had to watch for it and it was a delight when it came, a fountain of white water." (36)

The connections between this passage and the different kinds of creativity exhibited by Lily and Mrs Ramsay are complex: the fountain which Mrs Ramsay pours
aloft—a "fountain of creative energy"—is clearly related to this from the earlier passage, both bringing refreshment to the parched, and the image is repeated as Lily begins to paint. There is first of all a feeling of staleness and dessication; then: "as if some juice necessary for the lubrication of her faculties were spontaneously squirted, she began precariously dipping among the blues and umbers.... her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting" (246). Mrs Ramsay's and Lily's creativities are brought together by a common relation to a natural revivification.

The pulsing rhythm of the sea in the earlier passage is also echoed in Mrs Ramsay's and Lily's creative experience. After Mr Ramsay has dropped off, satisfied, "there throbbed through her, like the pulse in a spring which has expanded to its full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation" (64). When Lily begins to paint, her canvas "spread through her mind first a peace, as her disorderly sensations... trooped off the field; and then emptiness" (242); and then her brush strokes fall into a rhythm: "and so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all were related" (244).

(To the Lighthouse is not the first novel in which Virginia Woolf used the pulse image to convey the process of creation. In Night and Day Ralph writes a poem:

"By degrees, a pulse or stress began to beat at regular intervals in his mind, heaping his thoughts into waves to which words fitted themselves, and without much consciousness of what he was doing, he began to write on a sheet of draft paper what had the appearance of a poem lacking several words in each line" (ND 514-5).)

To return to Mrs Ramsay: when Mr Ramsay comes to her demanding sympathy, he really needs more than that. His wife allays his doubts about his work:
But he must have more than that. It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all, and then to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his senses restored to him, his barrenness made fertile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life ... they must be furnished, they must be filled with life. (62)

Not only does she shore up his self-confidence in his academic prowess, in a sense she creates the fabric of his world, and assures him of its reality: "it was real; the house was full; the garden blowing" (63)—and by doing this she also creates the reality of his self. All this is at the cost of her own self: 'So boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent" (63). Her creative act, then, goes far beyond the provision of providential sympathy: her exhaustion, like Lily's, is understandable.

Mrs Ramsay's major creation is the dinner party, and, as a creative event, it too is connected to the moment when Lily and Mr Bankes look at the sea. The pulse image is repeated: "Again she felt ... the sterility of men ... and so, giving herself the little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating" (131). Again, too, the creative pulse beats in the woman in the context of the sterility of the male.

The creation of the unity at the dinner party is no easy matter. The mere calling together of people from their different rooms and pursuits (129)— bringing them from their separate solitudes— in itself achieves nothing. Indeed, Mr Bankes and Mr Tansley resent the call of the gong. They would both, for different reasons, prefer to be working. As I said before, at its beginning the dinner does not seem likely to produce a harmony. Not only can Mrs Ramsay feel nothing for her husband; Mr Bankes feels nothing for her, and Mr Tansley itches with resentment at being expected to, "talk the sort of rot these people wanted him to talk" (133). No one but Mrs Ramsay feels the urge to create something: "the
whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested upon her" (131).

In the face of the chaos of feelings that threaten the creation of her event, Mrs Ramsay applies her own technique, and this inevitably infuses a flavour of falsity:

'How you must detest dining in this bear garden,' she said, making use, as she did when she was distracted, of her social manner. So, when there is a strife of tongues at some meeting, the chairman, to obtain unity, suggests that every one shall speak in French... speaking French imposes some order, some uniformity. (140)

What is emphasised at this point is a unity which is entirely superficial; the social manner is used to conceal the resentments and tensions the diners feel. Mr Tansley and Lily both react against the insincerity this assumption of a smooth style implies, and Lily, responding to Mrs Ramsay's appeal to be nice to Mr Tansley, realises the deeper consequences of this falsity: "She would never know him. He would never know her" (144). One feels that the peace and harmony which is experienced briefly towards the end of the dinner has its roots in this insincerity, and its value is consequently diminished.

The occasion does have value, however, and the kind of value it has is closely associated with Mrs Ramsay's fear of time and change. A moment of community is experienced in which flux is momentarily denied, but even the description of this moment seems to imply reservations about its ultimate value.

When the candles are lit the faces round the table are drawn closer together: "for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily" (151). The party of people "had their common cause against that fluidity out there" (152). They seem to be united in resisting fluidity, change, flux; yet the conditional "far from giving any accurate view of the outside" certainly detracts from this achievement. Again, it is based
on a falsity.

Other reservations are embodied in the bowl of fruit and Mr Carmichael. Just before the candles were lit, Mr and Mrs Ramsay were arguing silently up and down the table about Mr Carmichael's extra bowl of soup, and Mr Carmichael himself seemed unaffected by Mr Ramsay's fury: "looking at him, drinking soup, very large and calm in the failing light, and monumental, and contemplative,

[Mrs Ramsay] wondered what he did feel then, and why he was always content and dignified" (150). As once before, Mr Carmichael's monumental calm stands somehow as a rebuke to the flurry of emotions the others are feeling. The bowl of fruit is presented as a provisional work of art, and so is related to Mr Carmichael as a poet; it is also related to him via references to Neptune: the bowl of fruit made Mrs Ramsay "think of a trophy fetched up from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet" (151), and as Lily completes her picture "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" (319). This bowl of fruit, as a work of art— even as only a temporary one— seems to rebuke Mrs Ramsay in a way similar to that in which Mr Carmichael's dignified stillness does, and it does so partly on her own terms. The arrangement in the bowl unites the colours associated mainly in the novel with Mr Carmichael and Mrs Ramsay— yellow and purple— and in simply being looked at too it unites them: "That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them" (151). The destruction of the arrangement in the bowl— which is after all not completely a work of art— foreshadows the eventual failure of Mrs Ramsay's attempt. Perhaps here is the first of the suggestions that what Mrs Ramsay attempts to do is only really appropriate in art.

The quiet climax of the dinner party comes when there is that moment of stability which I commented on earlier. How far the others at the dinner feel
this still harmony is difficult to say; it is presented entirely through Mrs Ramsay's consciousness. She feels that she "hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy" (162), and feels that "Nothing need be said; nothing could be said. There it was, all round them. It partook ... of eternity" (163), and then this apprehension of equanimity is rudely broken by Charles Tansley's "I-I-I" (165) before Mrs Ramsay again feels the power of her own perceptions—"her eyes were so clear that they seemed to go round the table unveiling each of these people, and their thoughts and feelings" (165). She feels that the moment is still and entire; "the whole is held together; for whereas in active life she would be netting and separating one thing from another ... now she said nothing. For the moment she hung suspended" (165-6). Nobody else seems to experience this moment in the same way, though they all do seem to be implicated in the tribute that Mr Carmichael pays her at the end of the dinner.

It is clear that not only does Mrs Ramsay feel that she has created a valuable sort of unity during the dinner, she also feels she has created something that "partook of eternity", something that would endure:

there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby .... Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain,(163)

The reference in parenthesis to the window and the ripple of reflected lights associates this passage with the earlier suggestion, just after the candles have been lit, that the diners inside in the realm of order are making common cause against the fluidity outside: this social sense of community is opposed to the random passage of time, and strikes out of the fleeting a moment that will endure for ever. It resists change and the passage of time. This is Mrs Ramsay's vision; she has not the clear-sightedness with which Bernard and the other characters think about their dinner party in _The Waves_: "We have come together ... to make
one thing, not enduring— for what endures? — but seen by many eyes simultaneously" (W91). Throughout the rest of To the Lighthouse, Mrs Ramsay's vision of her achievement is tested, especially in relation to the achievements of the artists Lily Briscoe and Augustus Carmichael.

There are some suggestions towards the end of the dinner that Mrs Ramsay's attempt to create an enduring unity has not been entirely successful. Her reflections about the unity she has created are broken into by someone who asks "Ah, but how long do you think it'll last?" (166), and although the question is unattached, impersonal, and not immediately directed at Mrs Ramsay, coming as it does just after "now she said nothing. For the moment she hung suspended" it obviously questions the survival of Mrs Ramsay's creation. It is a question which is repeated more insistently in "Time Passes", and its reiteration there certainly reflects on the events of "The Window". Placed in direct relationship to the questioning of Mrs Ramsay's achievement is the affirmation that literature— Scott, Tolstoi, Shakespeare— "lasted" (167), so that as soon as Mrs Ramsay has completed her labour, its product is explicitly compared with— and perhaps already contrasted with— works of art.

Then the occasion moves towards its dignified summation: the diners' words "came to [Mrs Ramsay] very strangely, as if they were voices at a service in a cathedral" (171), and again the transient nature of Mrs Ramsay's enduring moment is implied by a work of art: the poem recited by Mr Ramsay and Mr Carmichael suggests the inevitability of change:

And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be

Are full of trees and changing leaves. (171)

Mrs Ramsay feels that they are saying "what had been in her mind the whole evening while she said different things" (171). Whether this feeling implies that really she knows that her creation cannot endure is not certain; but the poem
does add weight to our impression that it may not endure; and the survival of
art is affirmed, even though it sings "Of what is past, or passing, or to come". 

The dinner ends with Mrs Ramsay's going; it becomes "already the past"
as Mrs Ramsay goes upstairs to see her children (173). As she goes we see the
event already becoming something else; whereas before she "hung suspended"
(166) and was not "netting and separating one thing from another" (165-6), now
she feels inclined "to pick out one particular thing; the thing that mattered; to
detach it; separate it off; clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things"
(174). Already the event is changing its shape: she things of it "cleared of chatter
and emotion" (175). The event created such a short time ago is worked on and
reshaped in her mind as a writer might polish an untidy paragraph, or a painter
strengthens the lines of his picture. And receiving this attention the event; "seemed
always to have been, only was shown now, and so being shown struck everything
into stability" (175). As the event remains in her mind, so, she believes it
will remain in the minds of the other participants: "They would ... however long
they lived, come back to this night; this moon; this wind; this house; and to
her too" (175).

This mention of the wind forms a connection between Mrs Ramsay's thoughts
and what she observes, and what she observes seems to form a quite complex
image which carries more ideas about the nature of permanence and impermanence.
Mrs Ramsay uses what she sees - the branches of the elm tree - "to help her to
stabilise her position. Her world was changing; they were still" (174). But
there is also a wind which moves the branches; she is: "insensibly approving of
the dignity of the trees' stillness, and now again of the superb upward rise (like
the beak of a ship up a wave) of the elm branches as the wind raised them" (174-5).
The image is one of continuity in some form despite change; the tree may be
essentially still although the branches rise in the wind. The effect is similar to
the lines of the poem by Elton:
And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be
Are full of trees and changing leaves

—the tree is the same though the leaves change. There is the further complication
too that the wind is a harbinger of the questioning airs and storms of "Time Passes".
In this concatenation of images we can see perhaps how Mrs Ramsay's attitude
differs from Mr Carmichael's and Lily's. Mrs Ramsay apprehends only the
fact of immediate, surface change, while Mr Carmichael (as I shall show later)
feels a basic unity and permanence at a deeper level. Mrs Ramsay attempts to
halt the flux of surface change, which is impossible; Mr Carmichael works at
a deeper level, and Lily, as I shall show later, engages in a creative fluctuation
between different levels.

Mrs Ramsay, though, continues to foster her sense of unity and stability:
she felt, with her hand on the nursery door, that community of
feeling with other people which emotion gives as if the walls of
partition had become so thin that practically (the feeling was one
of relief and happiness) it was all one stream, and chairs, tables,
maps, were hers, were theirs, it did not matter whose, and Paul
and Minta would carry it on when she was dead. (175-6)

This passage marks the climax of Mrs Ramsay's feeling of unity and seems to
emerge triumphant from the fluctuations of the intimations of unity and disunity;
but as soon as she turns the handle the mood changes abruptly. She opens the
doors softly: "But directly she came in she saw, with annoyance, that the precaution
was not needed. The children were not asleep. It was most annoying" (176). And
the cause: "It was that horrid skull again" (176). Mrs Ramsay's convinced feeling
of the unity and the persistence of things is confronted by the bleak skull. There
could be no clearer symbol of change and transitoriness. Mrs Ramsay, naturally,
covers the skull, and for a time it is forgotten. It emerges again, though, slowly,
as the folds of the shawl fall from it in "Time Passes"; its testimony to the failure
of Mrs Ramsay's attempt is unanswerable.
When Mrs Ramsay goes into the sitting room to read and to be with her husband there are some other hints that her achievements are perhaps not permanent, and again art is implicated in these suggestions. They both read—Mrs Ramsay Shakespeare's sonnet "From You I have been absent in the Spring", and Mr Ramsay The Antiquary—and loss and absence are the dominant themes in what they read. Scott and Shakespeare are already associated with ideas about the permanence of fame, and now, with the death of Steenie Mucklebackit, the idea of death, the permanent impermanence, is introduced. The suggestion is, perhaps, that only art can overcome the passage of time and death. The poem and the novel, after all, survive. Contrasted with this, one feels, is the engagement of Paul and Minta, and although Mrs Ramsay does have some doubt about the marriage, it is seen as one of her main achievements in "The Window". Its failure has implications for Mrs Ramsay's other achievements.

There is another way in which Mrs Ramsay creates unity, and this other way is the one that is remembered in "The Lighthouse". Lily does not think about the dinner at all; what she remembers is Mrs Ramsay's creation of unity merely through her 'being', not through her 'doing'. Lily's memory is worth quoting at length because it indicates how close this aspect of Mrs Ramsay's creativity is to the artistic:

That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite (she and Charles squabbling, sparring, had been silly and spiteful) something—this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking—which survived, after all these years, complete, so that she dipped into it to re-fashion her memory of him, and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art. (248-9)

Her simple being unites. This unconscious creation of unity is more successful than the fretful, active creation of the dinner party. It is still a social unity, but it does not depend on elaboration and insincerity. In its simplicity it is allied
to what we can gather of Lily's painting methods: all painters, of course, must simplify, but simplification was a particular and conscious aim of most of the Post-Impressionists — Roger Fry writes of "the ideas of simplification of form as existing in the general tradition of Post-Impressionist movement". Lily too simplifies: with no irreverence she 'reduces' the mother and the child to a purple triangle. Simplicity, almost paradoxically one feels at times, is a governing trait in Mrs Ramsay, and her simplicity embraces a wisdom different from that of the 'clever' people: "She was silent always. She knew then—she knew without having learnt. Her simplicity fathomed what clever people falsified" (49). Virginia Woolf saw this quality as being peculiarly artistic: she said of E.M. Forster: "Morgan has the artist's mind; he says the simple things that clever people don't say".

With this simplicity, then, Mrs Ramsay can create a unity which "was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing ... was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs Ramsay said" (249-50). Lily owes this revelation to Mrs Ramsay, and the revelation is valuable. Again, though, as after the dinner party, there are suggestions of reservations about Mrs Ramsay's achievement. When Lily returns a little later to the scene on the beach, she reflects: "The moment at least seemed extraordinarily fertile. She rammed a little hole in the sand and covered it up, by way of burying in it the perfection of the moment" (265). The suggestion seems to be that something vital is taken out of life and somehow smothered, and a little later there is another image which implies that life loses something by this abstraction: thinking about Mrs Ramsay's beauty, Lily protests: "But beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty — it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life — froze it!" (273). It is true that here Lily is thinking about Mrs Ramsay's physical beauty, not of what she does with life, but it seems to me that one could apply this criticism to what she does: although she can create unity, and provide
revelations, she does try to make life itself something that it cannot be, and in the process something precious is lost. Her creations, being themselves 'in life', perhaps dull the pulse of life.

Mrs Ramsay fears time and change, and life presents itself to her as an opponent:

A sort of transaction went on between them, in which she was on one side, and life was on another, and she was always trying to get the better of it, as it was of her ... for the most part, oddly enough, she must admit that she felt this thing that she called life terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce on you if you gave it a chance. (95-6)

Her calm simplicity, her ability to place things side by side, are accompanied by a fear of life rising at times to terror; at one moment she hears the waves, and to her "like a ghostly roll of drums [they] remorselessly beat the measure of life" (30), and thinking of life she immediately thinks of death and destruction. She is afraid of change: when Mr Bankes tells her that the Mannings have added a billiard room to their house she is shocked (137). The image she has of them is now perhaps spoiled; the conception "life ... was sealed up there, and lay, like a lake, placidly between its banks" (145) is now less tenable. Similarly, she fears her children's growing up (93-4), and although the accent of her thought is upon their losing what she sees as the untroubled joys of childhood, one suspects that this is a reflection of Mrs Ramsay's fear of change, just as her thought of the Mannings' new billiard room is.

One might say that these fears supply the impetus for Mrs Ramsay's active creation of unity, and the attempt to strike out a stable, enduring moment. There are strong suggestions, however, that although some of her attempts - the dinner party - might have immediate value, they do not really endure.

The marriage she brings about between Paul and Minta may be seen as an attempt at unity and stability - and it is a failure: "For things had worked loose after the first year or so; the marriage had turned out rather badly" (266-7).
The word 'loose' here links this failure with another: Mrs Ramsay covers up the skull with her shawl, and although the immediate purpose is to still Cam's fear, the gesture does lay bare Mrs Ramsay's attitude to time and death. This attempt fails too; time passes, and "one fold of the shawl loosened" (202), "another fold of the shawl loosened" (206). Mrs Ramsay's created unities break loose and fragment, as those of the artists cannot.

In a sense, Mrs Ramsay is a parody of the artist, though a more complex one than, for instance, Mr Bax in The Voyage Out. His sermon (280-3) is a relatively simple parody of a work of art, and raises few questions about the relationships between art and life. Mrs Ramsay's attempt at art is far more complex, and goes beyond the parodic: this is indicated by the very closeness with which her activities are compared to Lily's painting— even the 'phases' of her creative work, especially the dinner party, follow Lily's. Despite her ceaseless activity, Mrs Ramsay is afraid of life, and in trying to make art of it, she freezes it— rather as Cecil Vyse would in A Room with a View. Paradoxically, it is the artist, Lily, who is fundamentally loyal to life.

Mr Carmichael, the poet, sees things from an entirely different perspective. When he first appears in the novel we immediately sense how different he is from Mrs Ramsay: she passes him as he "was basking with his yellow cat's eyes ajar, so that like a cat's they seemed to reflect the branches moving or the clouds passing, but to give no inkling of any inner thoughts or emotion whatsoever" (21) - these branches, of course, we connect with the branches Mrs Ramsay sees after the dinner, and with the tree of Lily's picture. The strange remoteness of this introduction is typical of the way in which he is presented; we, with Lily, know him in outline only; we are never admitted directly to his thoughts. He is silent and remote. Only once do we hear him in direct speech. We can never really be sure of him. This feeling is accentuated by the fact that he is the only character
in the novel who is presented entirely externally. We feel at times that he is
more a part of some eternal process than a separate and individual character.
In this quotation, where his eyes "seemed to reflect the branches moving or
the clouds passing", he seems to be in direct communion with the processes
and rhythms of the natural world, and in the contemplation of these processes he
is equable and imperturbable. The fret and the hurry which inform Mrs Ramsay's
active life are unknown to him. He is always the same: "Whether people laughed
at him or were angry with him he was the same" (150). He is unfailingly content
and calm; Mrs Ramsay sees him: "very large and calm in the failing light, and
monumental, and contemplative, she wondered what did he feel then, and why
he was always content and dignified" (150).

In this monumental imperturbability, with all his wants satisfied (276),
gorged with existence (274), he is like some inscrutable and sapient Buddha.
There are other hints too of an Eastern influence: he has been to India; he can
speak Persian and Hindostanee; he takes opium (22). The descriptions of him,
large, calm, basking in the sun, are redolent of corpulent statuettes of the Buddha;
one feels that the different perspective he has on time and change is supplied by
Eastern philosophy.

Unlike Mrs Ramsay, he is not afraid of the passing of things. Almost
ironically, the poem he recites with Mr Ramsay in tribute to Mrs Ramsay at the
end of the dinner seems to be mainly about change (171). What is stressed, though,
is the continuity which lies below the change: the trees survive, the spirit lives.
It is probably this frame of reference which makes his reaction to the ten years of
"Time Passes" so different from everyone else's. Mr Ramsay embarrasses his
family and guests with his designedly sepulchral "You find us much changed" (229);
but when Mr Carmichael returns to the island he feels "it all looked ... much as
it used to look years ago" (220). On one level, the changes are not really so
great. This does not mean that Mr Carmichael is wholly beyond the distresses
of being human. He was fond of Andrew Ramsay, and "somebody had said" that when Andrew had died he had "lost all interest in life" (298). This is somewhat exaggerated, but it does indicate a basic benevolence and warmth in Mr Carmichael; he is not merely an aloof savant.

Though he accepts that everything passes and changes, he, like Lily, does have faith in the endurance of art: Lily imagines: "That would have been his answer, presumably—how 'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (276). Mrs Ramsay creates with the stuff of life itself; she establishes the dinner party as a bulwark against the outside world which was "a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily" (151); but Mr Carmichael accepts change and he writes poetry. The dinner party is forgotten in part three; Mr Carmichael becomes a valued poet.

Mr Carmichael, with his calm and acceptance, acts as a foil to Mrs Ramsay and her fret and anxiety. (Also, of course, to Mr Ramsay and his forebodings about how long his fame will last.) As Lily reflects, both she and Mr Carmichael sense something amiss in Mrs Ramsay's bustle: "Some notion was in both of them about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought" (301). And, being so different from Mr Carmichael, Mrs Ramsay is often wrong about him; she pities him, is disturbed and resentful that he does not respond to her need to give, and she cannot understand his distrust of her. As he shuffles inexorably past her, she feels "that she was suspected; and that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity" (68). These doubts about herself are well founded: Mrs Ramsay needs to give sympathy as much as Mr Ramsay needs to receive it of her. Ironically, it is when Mrs Ramsay approaches nearest to the characteristic qualities of Mr Carmichael that she accomplishes her most enduring creation. On the beach she is simple, and she simplifies; it is this scene that Lily remembers in part three; the dinner party is forgotten.

Mr Carmichael is a more complex character than I have suggested so far.
A certain disreputable grotesqueness is combined with his imperial equanimity. His beard is stained yellow with opium (66); he drops things on his coat (67). His form and movements are bizarre: "Mr Carmichael suddenly grunted . . . . He clawed his hook up from the grass. He settled into his chair again puffing and blowing like some sea monster" (294). This vision of him effectively counteracts any portentousness which the single vision of him as the placid philosopher might hold.

Yet another facet is his presiding function as a poet, which twice rises almost to the sacerdotal, sanctioning and blessing the activities and existence of the others. Towards the end of the dinner he takes over from Mr Ramsay the recitation of "Luriana": "Augustus Carmichael had risen and, holding his table napkin so that it looked like a long white robe he stood chanting . . . and bowed to her [Mrs Ramsay] as if he did her homage" (172). The white robe, the chant, and the bow all add to the impression of Mr Carmichael as the presiding priest; and we remember, perhaps, that the earliest function of poetry may have been religious, magical. Arthur Koestler says that the earliest literati were "priests, prophets, rhapsodes, bards". A similar moment occurs as Mr Ramsay reaches the lighthouse and as Lily finishes her picture – the similarity, of course, emphasises the relationship between Mrs Ramsay and Lily as creators. Lily says that Mr Ramsay has landed: "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" (319). At this point there is again a humorous touch: but this soon gives way to something grander as he makes his sublime gesture:

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. (319)
There is in this something of the awe and reverence which the makers of poetry used to receive in more primitive societies; something of the numinousness which used to encircle the creator. Herbert Read suggests that "the artist, in virtue of his creative faculty, gradually assumed the rank and power of magician". The idea is also present in other of Virginia Woolf's works. The hero-heroin of Orlando believes that to be a writer is to be a member of a "sacred race".

The image of the falling flowers is a little more complex than this: it is an image often associated in Virginia Woolf's writings with artistic creation: in Night and Day Mrs Hilbery's scattering flowers and blessings at Katherine's feet seems to initiate a rebirth of creativity, and in her diary Virginia Woolf writes about a line of Shakespeare's: "'Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd.' (That is pure accident. I happen to light on it.) Evidently the pliancy of his mind was so complete that he could furbish out any train of thought; and, relaxing, let fall a shower of such unregarded flowers" (AWD 157: April 1930). However, the image is also associated with death: the flowers form a wreath, and the asphodel—a genus, incidentally, of the lily family—was particularly associated with death and the underworld in Greek legend. I shall say more about death images later on.

Another suggestion of Mr Carmichael's radical importance as a poet comes at the beginning of "Time Passes". After the resonant speech about the sea and the land, and light and darkness, this comes: "One by one the lamps were all extinguished, except that Mr Carmichael, who liked to lie awake a little reading Virgil, kept his candle burning rather longer than the rest" (195). Mr Carmichael's candle burning into the "down-pouring of immense darkness" suggests something of the enduring value of art in the face of the dark ages of "Time Passes". Jean Love suggests that the candle is "artistic vision", and implies that Mr Carmichael's putting it out represents the eclipse of artistic vision. I would say that what is emphasised is not that his candle is extinguished; but that it goes on burning longer
than the others. Artistic vision is clearly not eclipsed. During the war, in the exact middle of "Time Passes", after "the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship" (207), when things seem at their worst, "Mr Carmichael brought out a volume of poems" (208); a ray of hope in the enveloping darkness. Amid the images of destruction and decay the only spark of creativity and life is generated by Mr Carmichael.

This is another element to place beside his languid benevolence. He is continually associated with the colour yellow: he has yellow eyes (21); his beard is stained yellow (22); he wears yellow slippers (66). In Virginia Woolf's novels yellow is often the colour of vitality and life. In The Waves the ebullient Jinny is is constantly associated with yellow; and in Between the Acts yellow is the colour of the vigour of nature—Sohrab has yellow eyes (25); the cat is yellow (41); a yellow flower blazes into George's eyes (16). For other artists too yellow is the colour of life; we see this splendidly in Van Gogh's glowing Sunflowers series of paintings.

Mr Carmichael's philosophy of acceptance is coupled, then, with suggestions of vigour and endurance. The combination is somewhat similar to that found in Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat, and Mr Carmichael's poetry (as far as Lily guesses its nature) is akin to Omar Khayyam's:

She thought that she knew how it went though, slowly and sonorously. It was seasoned and mellow. It was about the desert and the camel. It was about the palm tree and the sunset. It was extremely impersonal; it said something about death; it said very little about love. (299)

Lily Briscoe is a painter, and it may seem at first a little strange that Virginia Woolf chose to make her a painter rather than a writer, her attitude to painting being so ambiguous. As Quentin Bell says, "all her life she was intrigued, mystified, and perplexed by her sister's art; it was something odd and alien" (QB II 64). At times she was caustic about paintings and painters: "I hear a great
deal about pictures. I don't think them so good as books"; "artists are an abominable race. The furious excitement of these people all the winter over their pieces of canvas coloured green and blue, is odious." On the other hand, she was continually fascinated by painting, as is indicated by, for instance, the letters she wrote to Jacques Raverat about painting. Often, too, she writes about painting in terms of writing—for instance in "Walter Sickert" (CE II 238)—and about her own work in terms of painting: of The Waves she says: "never, in my life, did I attack such a vague yet elaborate design; whenever I make a mark I have to think of its relation to a dozen others" (AWD 146: October 1929). Correcting The Waves was like "sweeping over an entire canvas with a wet brush" (AWD 171: May 1931). And then she had a highly developed visual sense; Clive Bell wrote about her "pure, almost painterlike vision", and sometimes she writes deliberately as if she were a painter: in "A Sketch of the Past" she says: "If I were a painter I should paint these first impressions in pale yellow, silver, and green", and goes on to detail how she would paint. Her novels, too, of course, are strikingly visual, and none more so than To the Lighthouse. However, I would suggest that the main reason for Lily's being a painter is that Virginia Woolf wanted to show the creative process itself: this would have been a much more difficult task had Lily been a writer. This is the aspect of Lily that I shall concentrate on—rather than, for instance, the relationship between Lily's painting and Roger Fry's aesthetic theories. It is the process of creation rather than the work of art itself which is important in To the Lighthouse.

Lily is a more complex character than is generally recognised. At first she may seem a very unartistlike figure: a skimpy old maid, living off the Brompton Road; an outsider; not really taken seriously by most of the other characters, although Mr Bankes has an enduring if diluted affection for her; she is a little odd, with her "little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face" (31). Like Mr Carmichael she is associated with the Orient. (Mrs Ramsay too has a trace
of the exotic: there runs in her veins a dash of "the blood of that very noble, if slightly mythical, Italian house, whose daughters, scattered about English drawing-rooms in the nineteenth century, had lisped so charmingly, had stormed so wildly" (19-20).)

As a social outsider, one who does not want the things people normally want—marriage, a house, children—Lily is clearly set apart from most of the other characters, and Mrs Ramsay treats her with some condescension. Lily has to "confront Mrs. Ramsay's simple certainty ... that her dear Lily, her little Brisk, was a fool" (81). And, naturally, Mrs Ramsay cannot take Lily's painting seriously: "Lily's picture! Mrs. Ramsay smiled. With her Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously" (31). We should not accept uncritically Mrs Ramsay's denigration of Lily's painting—especially when we remember her grounds for believing that her son James may blossom into a successful artist: "What a delight it would be to her should he turn out a great artist; and why should he not? He had a splendid forehead" (52).

Some critics have endorsed Mrs Ramsay's view of Lily's painting; Schaefer, for example, says: "Unfortunately Virginia Woolf in linking Lily's action on the shore with the action of the boat on the water, must make rather detailed reference to her 'artistic' activities. Since the reader cannot take these activities seriously, Lily Briscoe on the shore is the one real weak spot in the novel". Schaefer also, inexplicably, declares: "her actions in front of the canvas suggest that Lily is not seriously interested in painting". The latter may be a matter of subjective judgement, but when we consider the passion and intensity Lily brings to her work (32), her resentment at Mr Ramsay's making her play at painting (232), the agony she feels when it is going badly (78), and her determination not to take the easy way, but to struggle to express her peculiar vision (78)—when we consider these things I do not believe that we can really
doubt that Lily takes her painting seriously. And she does, after all, carry the
problems of her picture in her mind for the ten years of "Time Passes".
Returning to Schaefer's main point, if 'references' to Lily's painting are
'unfortunate'- if we cannot take these 'activities' seriously—then there could
have been no purpose in making Lily an artist in the first place; the extended
description of Lily painting becomes a casual whim. It would not be, as Schaefer
suggests, a minor flaw, a 'weak spot'—it would be a structural disaster, so
much of part three being taken up by Lily's painting.

Part of the problem may be that Schaefer makes too rigid a distinction
between Lily's thought and her artistic activities: she says that although the
painting is not serious "the thoughts that accompany the attempts to paint have a
value and significance the reader can take seriously".\(^\text{23}\) I do not think that the
two are separable in this way; the thought and the painting are not discrete
activities. Her creativity does not consist of distinct artistic activities divorced
entirely from the matter of her life: art is never thus divorced from life—a point
Virginia Woolf makes again and again, in her fiction and non-fiction. There are
many indications that Lily puts her whole experience and perceptions into her
creative work—all her thoughts. This is partly why she is so sensitive about
anybody looking at her picture: "But that any other eyes should see the residue of
her thirty-three years, the deposit of each day's living, mixed with something
more secret than she had ever spoken or shown in the course of all those days
was agony" (84). This comes from part one, but it is equally clear in part three
that there is a dynamic relationship between Lily's reflections and her painting.
As she begins her rhythmical brush strokes "her mind kept throwing up from its
depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a
fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she
modelled it with greens and blues" (246). Later, the connection is made more
explicit: "as she dipped into the blue paint, she dipped too into the past there"(265):
"She went on tunnelling her way into her picture, into the past" (267). The two things are not separable: the thought and the painting are elements of one dynamic creative process, and if the act of painting is without value, then so must the thoughts be which accompany it.

These memories are not the only things that go into Lily's painting. She is very sensitive to her immediate surroundings. At times the intimacy is so close that it is impossible to say where they are divided. At the beginning of part three everything is loose, disconnected and unreal; Lily is open to experience and her environment, asking questions and wondering. This is an artificial distinction though; Lily's perception and 'external reality' are part of the same process; the dynamic interaction between Lily and her surroundings. This process is not lost when Lily begins to paint; what she sees and experiences at the moment of painting goes into her picture, as well as her memories. She is continually moving between her canvas and the edge of the lawn, from where she can observe the progress of the boat across the bay; as she paints her brush moves: "as if it had fallen in with some rhythm which was dictated to her (she kept looking at the hedge, at the canvas) by what she saw" (246). There is an explicit connection between her thoughts and perceptions a little later: "The faint thought she was thinking of Mrs Ramsay seemed in consonance with this quiet house" (250). At the moment of painting, then, her immediate surroundings and her memories are fused and become elements of her picture. There is a union of inner and outer vision.

This way of expressing the relationship may be misleading, though, because it perhaps suggests that the problems presented by 'objective reality' are apprehended, thought about, 'solved', and then organised into Lily's painting; the relationship is more dynamic than that. The painting is itself an exploration. One could apply what Gertrude Stein said about writing to painting, and perhaps
to most of the arts: "You will write ... if you will write without thinking of the result in terms of a result, but think of the writing in terms of discovery, which is to say that creation must take place between the pen and the paper, not before in a thought or afterwards in a recasting." The initial 'problem' is perhaps explicitly stated at the beginning of part three: "But what does one send to the Lighthouse? Perished. Alone. The grey-green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together?" (228).

The different elements of the disparate experience are to achieve some measure of unity and 'meaning' through the creative production of a painting, but this does not mean that the problem is solved before the painting begins. Towards the end of part three: "She smiled ironically; for had she not thought, when she began, that she had solved her problem?" (296). Lily's exploration continues until the final brushstroke; there is a constant two-way flow between her and her painting. Nothing could be more different from the conventional elegancies of Mr Paunceforte's pictures. He, perhaps, could be accused of not taking his painting seriously; but Lily grapples the whole of her experience with the whole of her personality, seeking an embodiment of her vision in her painting.

This order of creation, involving the whole of the personality in the interpretation of experience, requires the greatest determination, courage and honesty — qualities Lily undoubtedly possesses. She will not tamper with the colours of the wall and the jacmanna (34), easier though it would be to paint like Mr Pauncefort. Original creative work often exacts the consecration of the entire personality, and so is difficult and dangerous. Many writers have commented explicitly on this. One of Dick Diver's patients is a casualty of the artist's need to explore "the frontiers of consciousness", and Scott Fitzgerald says of her: "The frontiers that artists must explore were not for her ....

Exploration was for those with a measure of peasant blood, those with big thighs
and thick ankles who could take punishment as they took bread and salt, on every inch of flesh and spirit". 25 A capacity (and perhaps a taste) for taking risks is now widely recognised as a vital element in the creator's make up. 26 Lily certainly has big thighs and thick ankles—metaphorically. Her work entails rebuffs, frustration, and fear: "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" (34); it imposes frequent disappointment and agonies: "She could have wept. It was bad, it was bad, it was infinitely bad!" (78); yet she must go on painting in her own way: "She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it" (78). Lily cannot take the easy path; she has to paint the way she sees: "She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral" (78). It must be light and bright on the surface, "but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron" (264).

(These images, suggesting the firm control of the surface appearance, recall Mrs Ramsay's conception of the masculine intelligence: "she let it uphold her and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric" (164). It may be a little glib to say that the two elements which Lily habitually thinks of as composing her painting—the fluid and light surface, and the firm, strong construction—correspond in some way to the qualities of female intuition and masculine intelligence of Mrs and Mr Ramsay, but it seems to me that this painting will somehow unite these different qualities. The basic androgyny of the creative act, is an idea that runs through all Virginia Woolf's novels, and is explicitly stated in her non-fiction—for instance, in A Room of One's Own. 27)
Lily senses that what she attempts in her painting is somehow similar to what Mrs Ramsay tries to do in life; she thinks of Mrs Ramsay "saying 'Life stand still here'; Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)" (249). The difference is, though, that Mrs Ramsay works with the stuff of life itself; with something that cannot be fixed permanently. Lily pays tribute to her capacity to bestow apprehensions of unity that may stay "in the mind almost like a work of art" (249), but these intimations cannot be permanent in the sense that Lily's painting can be permanent.

As I have said, Mrs Ramsay feels life to be a hostile antagonist, and she tries to disarm it by imposing beauty on it. But, as Lily thinks: "Beauty had this penalty— it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life— froze it" (273).

The antagonist for Lily is not life; in her art she is "drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers" (244-5), and her attempt is not to control or freeze life itself. Confronted with "this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention" (245), her aim is to get hold of "that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything" (297). Lily makes no attempt to still life itself, as Mrs Ramsay does. In fact, the movement of her mind is in the opposite direction from that of Mrs Ramsay's. She discovers that life is "startling, unexpected, unknown" (277), that even ordinary experience is an ecstasy (309-10), and she accepts this and incorporates it into her picture. Her creation of unity and wholeness is in her picture, and this will remain. As Lily surmises of Mr Carmichael's thought: "nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (276). Lily herself believes that what her picture attempts will endure: "One might say, even of this scrawl, not of that actual picture, perhaps,
but of what it attempted, that it 'remained for ever' " (276).

Lily's conception of the structure of her painting has a close relationship with Roger Fry's theories about form in art. At one point Lily seems almost to paraphrase him. In his Last Lectures Fry said of the intellectual pleasure of looking at paintings: "We say, why is that colour in this place and the answer comes, Oh, because of that other colour in that place". Explaining to Mr Bankes why she introduced the purple triangle into her painting, Lily replies: "Why indeed? – except that if there, in that corner, it was bright, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness .... A light here required a shadow there" (85).

Lily also talks of disposing the lines to create a "unity of the whole" (86), and this too echoes the way in which Roger Fry wrote about paintings. Lily continually searches for a means of avoiding the "vacancy in the foreground" (86) – a vacancy which is transformed into a dynamic space in part three – and uniting her picture. She finds the solution in her very last brush stroke: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre" (320). Fry, in his "An Essay in Aesthetics", said: "In a picture .... unity is due to a balancing of the attractions of the eye about the central line of the picture". Hence Lily's need to avoid a vacancy in the foreground, and to connect the mass on the left with the mass on the right.

However, Lily's picture is not merely a creation of abstract pure form: as I have indicated, she is intensely aware of her surroundings, and her observations are incorporated into her painting. More important, perhaps, is the part played by the unconscious processes of her mind. This is an aspect of creativity which Fry, with many others, was reluctant to admit. In Vision and Design he says:

It is one of the curiosities of the psychology of the artist that he is generally trying very hard to do something which has nothing to do with what he actually accomplishes; that the fundamental quality of his work seems to come out unconsciously as a by-product of his conscious activity.
Even here, where he admits that the unconscious may contribute, the admission is somewhat rueful. A few years later, in a rather muddled essay, he argues that good art is independent of the unconscious; he says that it is "concerned with the contemplation of formal relations", and adds: "I believe this ... to be as much detached from the instinctive life as any human activity that we know". 

By implication, the creation of form is a conscious process. Elsewhere, Fry revises his opinion and again admits the participation of the unconscious, but he always seems unhappy about it.

E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf both accepted and trusted the unconscious. 

Forster said:

In [the creative state] a man is taken out of himself. He lets down as it were a bucket into his subconscious, and draws up something which is normally beyond his reach. He mixes this thing with his normal experiences, and out of the mixture he makes a work of art. (TC 123)

He welcomes the unconscious, and, unlike Fry, sees a cooperation between it and the conscious mind. Virginia Woolf stresses again and again the importance of the unconscious in creation. In "The Leaning Tower" she says: "After a hard day's work, trudging round, seeing all he can, feeling all he can, taking in the book of his mind innumerable notes, the writer becomes - if he can - unconscious. In fact, his under-mind works at top speed while his upper-mind drowses" (CE II 166).

It is no surprise to find then that in the description of Lily at work the unconscious processes are indicated. Occasionally this takes the form of explicit statement: after Lily begins her brush strokes they suddenly assume a different rhythm; her brush:

was now heavier and went slower, as if it had fallen in with some rhythm which was dictated to her (she kept looking at the hedge, at the canvas) by what she saw, so that while her hand quivered with life, this rhythm was strong enough to bear her along with it on its current. (246)

As I said earlier, this unconscious awareness works in conjunction with the
partially unconscious flow of her memories, so that her under-mind is working on two levels, so to speak.

There is another explicit reference to her unconscious mind later on, and it echoes what Virginia Woolf said in "The Leaning Tower". Lily stands back "as if to look at her picture, which she was not touching, however, with all her faculties in a trance, frozen over superficially but moving underneath with extreme speed" (308). These moments when the unconscious element in Lily's work are brought to the surface are rare; naturally, as unconscious processes cannot really be presented directly, and only indirectly with great difficulty. This is what Virginia Woolf does in her description of Lily's painting, though, and to understand how well she presents the creative process one must take into account the activity of Lily's unconscious mind. Analysis is difficult, because so little is known about the nature of the unconscious mind; however, some investigators have examined the creative process itself, and it may be useful to look at Lily's creative patterns in terms of what some of these investigators have surmised about the nature of artistic activity.

There is, naturally, no consensus of opinion on the nature of the creative process; each writer starts from his own peculiar experience and point of view; but it is true that most writers on the creative process do seem to conclude that at the heart of the matter is a mutually enriching intercourse between the conscious and the unconscious mind. The emphases are different — one placing more stress than another on certain points — and the models constructed of the relationships between the conscious and the unconscious are different; but most of those who have written on this subject are agreed on the importance of this interaction.

Anton Ehrenzweig is one of those who place the primary stress upon the unconscious, and I would like to use some of his conclusions as a lens through
which to look at Lily's painting. Of course the value of Virginia Woolf's portrayal of creativity does not depend on how closely it matches his, or anyone else's model, so that I shall not try to summarise his whole theory in order to compare it with the process of Lily's painting. I do not believe that it is possible to reduce all creative activity to a simple formula. But he advances some ideas about creativity which do quite closely parallel what happens when Lily paints, and I shall select only the relevant ideas from his theory.

The basic tenet is: "Creativity is always linked with the happy moment when all conscious control can be forgotten", \(^{33}\) and to show how and what the unconscious contributes, he first of all makes a distinction between two different kinds of perception: the syncretistic and the analytic. He says that the growth of new images in art and new concepts in science is "nourished by the conflict between two opposing structural principles. The analysis of abstract gestalt elements is pitted against the syncretistic grasp of the total object, focusing on detail against complex scanning, fragmentation against wholeness, differentiation against dedifferentiation". \(^{34}\) Gestalt vision is that which concentrates upon the selection of a satisfactory abstract unity from the perceptual field; syncretistic vision takes in the whole of the field in all its aspects without concerning itself with detail. This syncretistic vision is related to the way in which Lily knows Mr Carmichael (which is different from the way in which she knows Mrs Ramsay). She thinks: "But this was one way of knowing people ... to know the outline, not the detail, to sit in one's garden and look at the slopes of a hill running purple down into the distant heather. She knew him in that way" (299).

Gestalt vision is focused; syncretistic vision is scattered. And these two kinds of vision are allied to the conscious and the unconscious minds. The creation of what Ehrenzweig calls "the unconscious substructure of art" is dependent upon allowing unfocused vision to play its part; and he says:
How often have we not observed how an artist suddenly stops in his tracks without apparent reason, steps back from his canvas and looks at it with a curiously vacant stare? ... During this absence of mind an unconscious scanning seems to go on. Suddenly as from nowhere some offending detail hitherto ignored will come into view. It had somehow upset the balance of the picture, but had gone undetected. 35

Unconscious scanning clearly takes place as Lily paints; she stands back "as if to look at her picture, which she was not touching, however, with all her faculties in a trance, frozen over superficially but moving underneath with extreme speed" (308). Lily's trance and frozen conscious mind correspond closely to the "curiously vacant stare" Ehrenzweig describes. Lily alternates, then, while she paints, between differentiated and dedifferentiated states, and this is what Ehrenzweig sees as the basic creative rhythm.

Having established the idea of oscillation between these different types of vision, he continues: "Fundamentally the shift between differentiated and dedifferentiated modes of perception is inherent in an ego rhythm that underlies all creative work". 36 (I apologise at this point for the intrusion of psychological jargon; but it is not possible to present Ehrenzweig's views in other terms without distorting them.) He describes his conception of this ego rhythm: "I will distinguish a first phase of fragmented projection, 'schizoid' in character. It is followed by a 'manic' phase of unconscious scanning and integration when art's unconscious substructure is formed. The secondary revision [that is, the revision by the conscious mind of unconscious experience and structures] occurs in the ultimate 'depressive' feedback and re-introjection of the work into the surface ego." 37 One more lengthy quotation is necessary before I can relate these ideas to the different states of mind Lily inhabits. Elaborating on the third stage, Ehrenzweig says:

Because the undifferentiated substructure necessarily appears chaotic to conscious analysis, the third stage too is beset with
often severe anxiety. But if all goes well, anxiety is no longer persecutory (paranoid-schizoid) as it was in the first stage of fragmented projection. It tends to be depressive, mixed with a sober acceptance of imperfection and hope for future integration .... [reverting to the second, manic, stage, he continues] creative dedifferentiation tends towards a 'manic' oceanic limit where all differentiation ceases. The inside and outside world begin to merge .... In this 'manic' stage all accidents seem to come right; all fragmentation is resolved. Because of the manic quality of the second stage, the following 'depressive' stage is all the more difficult to bear.\(^{38}\)

(\text{Others who have written on creativity provide analyses similar to Ehrenzweig's: Wallas, for example, distinguishes four phases, the second and third being equivalent to Ehrenzweig's second, and his phases, though he writes in different terms, display the same progression as Ehrenzweig's do.}^{39})

This abstract scheme may seem at first to have little to do with Lily's painting, but I think that a creative rhythm similar to that which Ehrenzweig describes is discernible as she paints. This is not to say that there is first of all a fragmented stage, then an undifferentiated stage, and finally a stage of reintrojection, just like that. This is too simple a model. Rather I think it is a case of the different states merging into each other - there is a continual modulated fluctuation between them. Wallas makes this point clear in relation to his stages:

"In the daily stream of thought these four different stages constantly overlap each other as we explore different problems."^{40}

The first stage Ehrenzweig describes is quite clear at the beginning of part three. Lily experiences everything as chaotic, fragmented, unreal and meaningless. Nothing coheres; everything is dispersed. The first sentence is a random and unrelated question "What does it mean then, what can it all mean? Lily Briscoe asked herself" (225). And more questions follow: "What does it mean? .... what did she feel, come back after all these years and Mrs Ramsay dead?" (225) ; "What's the use of going now? ... What does one send to the Lighthouse? ... What does one send? What does one do? Why is one sitting here after all?" (226). The reiterated questions stress Lily's fragmented state, and she projects
it into the outside world:

Sitting alone . . . . She had no attachment here, she felt, no relations
with it, anything might happen, and whatever did happen . .
was a question, as if the link that usually bound things together
had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off,
anyhow. How aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal it was,
she thought. (226-7)

The normal patterns are broken, and in this chaos anything can happen. Mr
Ramsay's words "Perished . . . . Alone" can write themselves all over the grey-
green walls (228). All is parts, and the problem is to make a whole: "Such were
some of the parts, but how bring them together? she asked" (228). All this leads
to an overpowering sense of unreality, which is dangerous as well as stimulating:
"The extraordinary unreality was frightening; but it was also exciting" (228). It
is exciting because the normal paradigms have been superseded; it is frightening
for the same reason.

Lily's state at this point is clearly schizoid, in that her experience of
herself and of the world is split and unrelated. It is interesting that some of
her thoughts closely parallel what R. D. Laing and others have said of the
schizophrenic state: Laing talks of the sense of unreality, the lack of feeling,
the aridity, the feeling of isolation, and of the scattering and fragmentation of
experience which are parts of the schizophrenic's condition. 41 This is the
condition of Septimus Warren Smith, the madman-poet of Mrs Dalloway. His
perception of the world is split, fragmented, and shot through with fantasies; his
drawings and writings are a chaotic jumble. 42 Just before his suicide, his world
and his perceptions come to order— he designs the decoration of Mrs Peters's
hat 43— but mostly he inhabits the desperate world of the schizophrenic. As
Ehrenzweig says of the psychotic, he is "only capable of the first phase of
creative thought; schizoid fragmentation . . . . he cannot melt the fragments down
into undifferentiated and more malleable material". 44 Lily's condition, of course,
is not psychotic; she is capable of the second phase.
Her movement into the second phase is signalled by a sea image: as she begins to paint the difficulties crowd in on her, and "All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests" (244). As Lily's perceptions become less differentiated the waves lose their symmetry, and she begins to move towards what Ehrenzweig calls the oceanic limit of dedifferentiation, "where all differentiation ceases". That this process is not consciously willed or manipulated by her rational mind is indicated by Lily's reaction as she moves into a different sphere: "Here she was again . . . drawn out of gossip, out of living . . . She was half unwilling, half reluctant. Why always be drawn out and haled away?" (244-5).

As the less differentiated levels of her mind take control it was "as if she were caught up in one of those habitual currents which after a certain time forms experience in the mind" (246); and she drifts deeper; "her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas" (246), all mixed up in one fountain. Mingled with this too is her awareness of where she is physically—she continually moves back and forth between her canvas and the edge of the lawn—and her feeling that she is back in the past beside Mrs Ramsay on the beach (246-7). Things are no longer separate; they are all becoming mixed. As Ehrenzweig says: "While the search for unification of the incompatible is still on, the thinker has to hold on to the incompatible entities in a single comprehensive view".46

This, it seems to me, is what is involved as Lily drifts towards the "oceanic limit": "scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas" are all together in her mind as she paints, and at different moments her thoughts are incompatible. At different times, for example, she has incompatible thoughts of Mrs Ramsay; at one moment she considers with joy what Mrs Ramsay gave others: "Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent . . . this was
of the nature of a revelation" (249); at another she triumphs over her; after
she has thought of the failure of the Rayleys' marriage Lily reverts to Mrs
Ramsay: "Mockingly she seemed to see her there at the end of the corridor of
years saying, of all incongruous things, 'Marry, marry!' " (269); at yet another
her grief for Mrs Ramsay's death and her longing for her return break through
all other feelings: "'Mrs Ramsay!' Lily cried, 'Mrs Ramsay!' But nothing
happened. The pain increased" (278).

Mixed up with these impressions of Mrs Ramsay are a host of impressions
of other people—Mr Ramsay, Mr Bankes, Mr Tansley— and of events; and
there are as well reflections about herself and about the nature of things—"What
is the meaning of life?" (249). Lily progresses towards the oceanic limit. Not,
of course, in a straight line; there are fluctuations—there are different degrees
of differentiation; sometimes she is near the surface, as when she thinks about
herself painting: "It was an odd road to be walking, this of painting. Out and out
one went" (265). But in general movement is towards the moment of stasis which
is a token of the attainment of the oceanic. Ehrenzweig says of the oceanic state:

It is now widely realized that any— not only religious—creative
experience can produce an oceanic state. In my view this state
need not be due to a 'regression', to an infantile state, but could
be the product of the extreme dedifferentiation in lower levels
of the ego which occurs during creative work. Dedifferentiation
suspects many kinds of boundaries and distinctions; at an extreme
limit it may remove the boundaries of the individual existence and
so produce a mystic oceanic feeling that is distinctively manic in
quality. 47

Lily reaches her extreme limit when she feels the unity of what she looks at:

So fine was the morning except for a streak of wind here and
there that the sea and the sky looked all one fabric, as if sails
were stuck high up in the sky, or the clouds had dropped down
into the sea .... the cliffs looked as if they were conscious of
the ships, and the ships looked as if they were conscious of the
cliffs. (280)

At this point there is no explicit statement that Lily feels herself to be a part of
this unity, but one senses that she is only a hair's breadth away. Then the feeling intensifies as she feels the unreality of the morning, and feels herself to be a part of it:

One gazed, one shook one's sails (there was a great deal of movement in the bay, boats were starting off) between things, beyond things. Empty it was not, but full to the brim. She seemed to be standing up to the lips in some substance, to move and float and sink it it, yes, for these waters were unfathomably deep. (295)

And Lily feels that into this substance many lives had spilled, and that she is a part of all this: "The Ramsays'; the children's; and all sorts of waifs and strays of things besides. A washerwoman with her basket; a rook; a red-hot poker; the purples and grey-greens of flowers; some common feeling which held the whole together" (295). But then the wind disturbs the scene, and "The disproportion there seemed to upset some harmony in her own mind" (296), and now, out of the oceanic phase, she enters the depressive, and sees something wrong with her picture. But she also sees possible ways of correcting it (as Ehrenzweig says that in the depressive phase the creator does not feel threatened, but hopes for final integration), and she reacts with irony, not anxiety: "Was it, she wondered, that the line of the wall wanted breaking, was it that the mass of the trees was too heavy? She smiled ironically" (296).

Ehrenzweig says: "Creative man awakens from his oceanic experience to find that the result of his work does not match his initial inspiration" — which seems to be what happens to Lily — and he adds: "The depressive anxieties may lead to renewed immersion of the result into the unconscious matrix in order to create further linkages." This too is paralleled in Lily's experience: she looks at her picture "with all her faculties in a trance, frozen over superficially but moving underneath with extreme speed" (308), and a little later she feels "Her mood was coming back to her" (309). And in order to recapture her mood, to re-establish the unconscious process, she seems to use the technique which
Arthur Koestler calls "thinking aside". He says that when a situation has become blocked, when one can go no further along the habitual routes of thought, "straight thinking must be superseded by 'thinking aside' " and he quotes advice from an old Alchemist's Rosarium for finding the philosopher's stone: "Thou seekest hard and findest not. Seek not and thou wiltst find." Lily feels that she needs to get hold of something that evades her (296), and she cannot, because "one got nothing by soliciting urgently. One got only a glare in the eye from looking at the line of the wall, or from thinking—she wore a grey hat .... Let it come, she thought" (297). As Koestler says, using an image close to Lily's: "If one attempts to hold fast to a mental image or concept— to hold it immobile and isolated, in the focus of awareness, it will disintegrate, like the static, visual image on the fovea." And so Lily stops painting for a while, sits down, examines a colony of plantains, and thinks about Mr Carmichael, Mr Tansley, Mrs Ramsay, gradually sinking deeper into her trance-like state.

Related, as Koestler sees it, to "thinking aside" is the element of chance; he quotes Lloyd Morgan: "Chance only favours invention for minds which are prepared for discoveries by patient study and persevering efforts." The role chance may play in the creative process is also written about by Ehrenzweig, and he says, in the passage I quoted earlier: "in [the] 'manic' stage all accidents seem to come right". It is possible that Lily's final resolution of the 'problem' of her picture is provided by chance. It is usually assumed that the final stroke she makes moves the tree to the middle, but it could equally well be that she makes use of the accident of somebody coming into the room:

Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it .... whoever it was ... had settled by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture a little. It was interesting. It might be useful. (309)

A little later: "Some wave of white went over the window pane" (310). Perhaps
it is these accidents which are incorporated finally into her picture by the last
brush stroke: "she drew a line there, in the centre" (320).

I have already mentioned the space which appears in Lily's picture as
she paints, and I think that in part three this space is not merely the absence of
paint—black canvas. Ehrenzweig writes about what he calls "pictorial space":
"As a conscious signal of unconscious integration a strong pictorial space
emerges"; and he says that the very first brush stroke may aid its emergence:

The first brush stroke on a white piece of paper sends a shudder
right across the pictorial plane contained by the four edges of
the paper.... Its pulse contributes to the gradual emergence of
a dynamic 'pictorial space'.... the picture plane has its own
life; its elements keep heaving in and out with little regard to
illusionistic realism.55

The kind of space modern art exhibits is different from that of more traditional
art. Ehrenzweig says: "Today's pictorial space bulges towards the spectator
and almost envelops him in its embrace."56

I suggested earlier that the space Lily is concerned with in part one seems
to be different from the space she is concerned with in part three. In the first
part the space is passive; something to be filled. In the third part it is dynamic.
When she begins painting in part three Lily is quite aware of the effects of her
first brush stroke: "One line placed on the canvas committed her to innumerable
risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions" (244), and it is interesting that she
uses the same kind of image as Ehrenzweig to describe the effects of the initial
brush stroke; he uses "shudder" and "ripple";57 Lily uses waves: "All that in
idea seemed simple, became in practice immediately complex; as the waves
shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among
them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests. Still the risk must be
run; the mark made" (244). As she attains her flickering rhythm, the space
emerges, and it is clearly not a passive, 'empty' space: the "brown running
nervous lines... no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space" (244). The space is mass, it is not blankness: "the mass loomed before her; it protruded; she felt it pressing on her eyeballs" (246), and she "modelled it with greens and blues" (247). If this space-mass which Lily models is the same thing as Ehrenzweig's "pictorial space", the difference between the passive space in part one and the bulging dynamic space in part three indicates that in the third part deeper levels of Lily's mind are operating. In general, one does have the impression that Lily operates at a deeper level in part three. The feeling of unreality, the absorbed and remote reflections, the strange emotional upheavals, all contribute to this impression. Lily rarely thinks about the surface structure of her painting in "The Lighthouse"; she does continually in "The Window". This, I think, sets the basic oscillation between the "differentiated" and "dedifferentiated" states in the context of the structure of the novel as a whole, for the rhythms of Lily's creative process mirror the larger rhythms of the novel.

Where commentators have recognised the importance of Lily's painting, and have related it to the novel as a whole, it is the importance of the painting as product, not as process, which is stressed. Often, then, parallels are drawn between this novel and a painting. Arnold Kettle says Virginia Woolf "composes her novel very much as a painter—Lily Briscoe, for that matter—composes a picture". McLaurin identifies some ways in which Virginia Woolf "attempts... in the novel to simulate certain spatial aspects of visual art". This approach is certainly valid: there are distinct painterly qualities in the novel— one might also point to the use of physical gesture. Very often arms are raised or lowered— we see Mr Ramsay "raising his hand half-way to his face" (44); a man digging in a drain "let his arm fall down" (28); Mr Ramsay "raised his right hand mysteriously high in the air, and let it fall upon his knee again" (288)— and these gestures are self-contained: they do not 'mean' anything.
They may be seen as purely formal visual repetitions, linked chains of images. In this they could be compared to the echoes of lines and curves in a painting—in Raphael's "The Nymph Galatea", for instance. But they are also echoes of the movements Lily makes while painting: they are as important in relation to the act of painting as they are in relation to a picture painted. Similarly, the process of Lily's painting is as important in relation to the novel as a whole as the painting as object is.

To return to my point about the rhythms of her painting: these rhythms, successive phases, mirror the rhythms of the novel as a whole. It may be going too far to say that the three parts of To the Lighthouse match the three phases of Lily's creative act, but certainly one can see in the novel a continual oscillation between the differentiated and the undifferentiated. To show this a little more clearly, Ehrenzweig's concept of the "poemagogic" may be useful.

He says: "It seems that once greater depths are reached in the image making of art, the structure of the work of art must reflect this perilous descent" (220), and the images which hold this reflection he calls "poemagogic". These images symbolize the mind's creative rhythms. He elaborates upon the connection between this order of images and his analysis of the creative process: "Poemagogic images, in their enormous variety, reflect the various phases and aspects of creativity in a very direct manner, though the central theme of death and rebirth, of trapping and liberation, seems to overshadow the others. Death and rebirth mirror the ego's dedifferentiation and re-differentiation" (190).

This is, I think, the kind of rhythm we see in To the Lighthouse as a whole, with the undifferentiated, fluid rhythm of "Time Passes" mirroring the creative descent into the less differentiated processes of the unconscious mind, and the other two parts being related to the more conscious phases of the creative search. The impersonal chaos of "Time Passes" is a kind of death, and Lily's deliberately dramatic awakening at the end of it signals the rebirth of "The Lighthouse".
Mrs Ramsay dies in "Time Passes" and undergoes a species of rebirth in "The Lighthouse" when she returns to her station by the window (310). It is not quite that simple, however, because death is present in "The Lighthouse", too.

Death is a continual preoccupation of those on the boat, and Mr Ramsay suffers a kind of quasi-death. Watching the boat disappear, Lily reflects: "Distance had an extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it, she felt, they were gone for ever, they had become part of the nature of things" (289). (One could make a connection, perhaps, between this disappearance and the feeling Lily—embraced by the unreality of her experience—has that she shakes her sails "between things, beyond things" (295).) The feeling that Mr Ramsay's disappearance is a species of death seems confirmed by Lily's thought as she sees Mr Carmichael spreading his hands out as Mr Ramsay reaches the lighthouse: "she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny" (319). Mr Carmichael then crowns the occasion by letting fall "a wreath of violets and asphodels", and this seems to be a response not only to Mr Ramsay's arrival, but to the rhythms of birth and extinction inherent in all life. It is this response, seemingly, which provides some of the inspiration for Lily's last brush stroke; the intimacy of death and creativity—all creativity involving self destruction of some sort—is affirmed. (E.M. Forster had similar thoughts about the relationship between creation and death: he says, with apparent approval, that "Creation and death are closely connected for Claudel"(TC 124).) To complicate matters still further, Mr Ramsay's disappearance represents not only a quasi-death; from the perspective of those in the boat it represents a quasi-rebirth: the children "both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock" (318).

It is not only in "Time Passes", then, that the poemagogic images reflecting the descent into the unconscious can be traced, but they are most prominent in that section. Arthur Koestler writes in rather different terms from
those employed by Ehrenzweig, but he writes about the same descent— he calls it a journey—and points out that it is often represented in myth and literature: "the journey always represents a plunge downward and backward to the sources and tragic undercurrents of existence, into the fluid magma." 62 This is what we see in "Time Passes"—the basic elements of experience—until the moment Mrs McNab arrives to prepare the house for its owners. There is a descent towards complete undifferentiation, with the house being taken over by the impersonal chaos of nature; everything flows, becomes more and more fluid; then Mrs McNab arrives, and "there was a force working; something not highly conscious" (215). "Not highly conscious", but conscious. Previously there was impersonality, unconsciousness; and this unconsciousness reflects the second stage of Lily's creative process.

It reflects too part of the creative process which produced To the Lighthouse itself, for we see that in Virginia Woolf's writing about her own creativity the two basic phases Ehrenzweig describes interact. There is the highly conscious, articulate phase—seen, for instance in her deliberations about her search for a style to match her perceptions (AWD 23: January 1920)—and the unconscious trance-like state in which she finished The Waves:

I wrote the words O Death fifteen minutes ago, having reeled across the last ten pages with some moments of such intensity and intoxication that I seemed only to stumble after my own voice, or almost, after some sort of speaker (as when I was mad) I was almost afraid, remembering the voices that used to fly ahead. (AWD 169: February 1931)

There is yet another level on which Lily's creative rhythms are related to something basic. In the previous chapters I commented on the relations the earlier novels suggested between the natural and the artistic; this relationship is a vital element in To the Lighthouse, with an important change of emphasis. In The Voyage Out and Night and Day the emphasis was on the relationship between the natural and art: in To the Lighthouse the emphasis is upon connections between
the processes of nature and the processes of creation. It is significant that Virginia Woolf said of completing *To the Lighthouse* that it was "like some prolonged rather painful and yet exciting process of nature" (AWD 100: September 1926).

Before going any further it may be as well to point out that nature is not seen simply in *To the Lighthouse*. We see its beauty and its malignancy, its participation in human life and its indifference. A comparison of two passages concerning the walker on the beach would show the complexity of approach (204-5, 207-8).

*It is the rhythms of nature and art that are related in *To the Lighthouse*. I mentioned earlier the passage in which Lily and William Bankes look down across the sea, and pointed out that its images are repeated in the description of Lily's painting; another look at that passage will show how it is connected to the phases of Lily's creative process:*

> It was as if the water floated off and set sailing thoughts which had grown stagnant on dry land, and gave to their bodies even some sort of physical relief. First, the pulse of colour flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam, only the next instant to be checked and chilled by the prickly blackness on the ruffled waves. Then up behind the great black rock, almost every evening spurted irregularly, so that one had to watch for it and it was a delight when it came, a fountain of white water; and then, while one waited for that, one watched, on the pale semicircular beach, wave after wave shedding again and again smoothly a film of mother-of-pearl.

> They both smiled, standing there. They both felt a common hilarity, excited by the moving waves; and then by the swift cutting race of a sailing boat, which, having sliced a curve in the bay, stopped; shivered; let its sail drop down; and then, with a natural instinct to complete the picture, after this swift movement, both of them looked at the dunes far away, and instead of merriment felt come over them some sadness. (36)

During the first phase thoughts are floated off and set sailing—the unattached is emphasised; this corresponds to Lily's first phase, in which she feels that "the link that usually bound things together had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off, anyhow" (227). Then the pulse begins, the fountain appears, and
Lily and William feel a common hilarity; this reflects Lily's movement into the second phase, when she loses consciousness as her fountain of memories takes over (246). Later she has an elated sense of the harmony of things as she reaches her oceanic limit. Finally, looking at the sea, Lily and William feel a sadness which is related to the depressive phase of the creative act. The parallels between this passage and the description of Lily's painting are deliberate, though delicate: it is no coincidence that William and Lily feel a desire to "complete the picture".

What is implied is that there is a vital connection between the processes of artistic creation and the processes of nature. This is not to say that there is a simple-minded equation of the two: the connections are made subtly and at a profound level. One might compare the oscillations inherent in Lily's creative state with what some scientists have said about fundamental natural processes. J. Z. Young, the biologist, says "there appears to us to be two general laws of the universe: first, that of association, of binding, the tendency for randomly distributed processes to become linked together to form larger units; second is the law that such unity is not permanent, but sooner or later dissolves, providing fresh randomness". Arthur Koestler suggests: "every member of a living organism or social body has the dual attributes of 'wholeness' and 'partness' .... In other words it displays both self-assertive and participatory tendencies". There are clear parallels here with the fluctuation between the differentiated and undifferentiated phases Lily experiences while painting: art and life are related on the deepest possible level.
NOTES

2 Virginia Woolf struck a similar critical note writing about her mother, who was the model for Mrs Ramsay: she was "too much inclined to insist that all feeling has an equivalent in action or is worthless". — *Moments of Being* (Sussex, 1976), p. 32.
6 Schaefer, p. 128.
7 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London, 1931), p. 120.
8 Ibid., p. 141.
9 William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium".
18 See, for instance, those quoted QB I 105-7.
21 Schaefer, pp.133-4.
22 Ibid., p.134
23 Ibid., p.134.
30 Ibid., pp.188-9.
34 Ibid., p.19.
35 Ibid., pp.24-5.
36 Ibid., p.79.
37 Ibid., pp.79-80.
38 Ibid., p.103.
40 Ibid., p.81.
43 Ibid., p.158.
44 Ehrenzweig, p.123.
45 Ibid., p.103.
46 Ibid., p.132.
48 Ibid., p.193.
49 Koestler, p.163.
50 Ibid., p.145.
51 Ibid., p.159.
52 Ibid., p.145.
53 Ehrenzweig, p.103.
54 Ibid., p.171.
55 Ibid., p.58.
56 Ibid., p.59.
57 Ibid., pp.58,59.
60 Ehrenzweig, p.208.
61 Ibid., pp.176-7.
62 Koestler, p.358.
64 Koestler, pp.286-7.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE WAVES

A mountainous music always seemed
To be falling and to be passing away.

The Waves is in some respects a more complex novel than To the Lighthouse. It presents the experience of six characters, and renders apprehensions and qualities which lie far below the level of conscious thought. It exposes the roots of their personalities, attitudes, motives, and behaviour, and shows how these roots cross each other, intertwine, and strike off in all directions. More intently than in her other novels Virginia Woolf depicts what goes on "behind the eyes" (BA 68), suggesting the vagaries, inconsistencies, and, almost paradoxically, the curious wholeness of human experience.

I have stressed in earlier chapters Virginia Woolf's concern with the relationships between the artist's life and the order of art he creates, and in The Waves these relationships are explored at a deeper level—behind the eyes. In her portrayal of Bernard, Louis and Neville we have her most profound exploration of different orders of motivation. We see barely conscious promptings, and their conscious issue; we see how the fundamental needs of their beings are related to the ways in which they deploy their artistic capacities. We see how their different aesthetic preoccupations spring from their internal organisations and the ways in which these are aligned with the outside world.
Having used the word 'character' one immediately barks one's shins against what Virginia Woolf said in her diary in response to an anonymous review in The Times Literary Supplement: "Odd, that they (The Times) should praise my characters when I meant to have none" (AWD 175: October 1931). Perhaps her original intention was to have no characters: on the title page of the first holograph draft she wrote:

The Moths?

one

or the life of anybody.

life in general.

—and perhaps at first she intended to render the essence of experience, of being alive, without using characters at all. As the first draft proceeded, though, the six people became more and more like characters in her other novels, and I would say that although they are not like characters in Victorian novels or in Bennett's they are not so different from her other characters that we need a new name for them. Perhaps what she was really reacting against in the review was the stress laid on personality, and the absence of a recognition that in a sense the six characters are one. In a letter to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson she emphasised this aspect of the novel—and uses herself the word 'character': "I did mean that in some vague way we are the same person, and not separate people. The six characters were supposed to be one".

Bernard is the most interesting and the most complex of the characters. Superficially he seems to possess qualities which would make him an ideal novelist. His personality appears flexible, porous, open to the experience of others: during the train journey he makes with Louis and Neville he says: 'An elderly and apparently prosperous man, a traveller, now gets in. And I at once wish to approach him; I instinctively dislike the sense of his presence, cold,
unassimilated, among us" (49). Bernard talks to the man, and his attitude is defined in contrast to Neville's: Neville says: "He talked as easily to the horse-breeder or to the plumber as to us .... But I cannot read in the presence of horse-dealers and plumbers. I have no power of ingratiating myself" (50-1).

Bernard is curious about people; he has a sympathetic feeling for their emotional states. When Susan runs in anguish past the tool-shed door Neville ignores her, but Bernard feels a curiosity and a sympathetic impulse: "I shall go gently behind her, to be at hand, with my curiosity, to comfort her when she bursts out in a rage and thinks, 'I am alone' " (10). He is observant too: he watches Dr Crane when he has finished his sermon: "Now he lurches back to his seat like a drunken sailor. It is an action that all the other masters will try to imitate; but, being flimsy, being floppy, wearing grey trousers, they will only succeed in making themselves ridiculous" (26). He is also more abundantly imaginative than Louis and Neville. The reactions of all three to the personality of Dr Crane neatly demonstrate the different bases from which their different perceptions of the world are projected. Louis rejoices in Dr Crane's authority, in his power to impose order (24-5); Neville resents and fears his authority, and ridicules his Christianity (25-6); Bernard responds with his imagination: "Old Crane, the Headmaster, has a nose like a mountain at sunset, and a little blue cleft in his chin, like a wooded ravine, which some tripper has fired" (23).

These qualities, together with his verbal fertility — "More and more bubbles into my mind as I talk" (61) — his relish of the profusion of life — "Pouring down the walls of my mind, running together, the day falls copious, resplendent" (19) — and his closeness to his own sensual life — "Water pours down the runnel of my spine. Bright arrows of sensation shoot on either side. I am covered with warm flesh" (19) — all these qualities bode well for his future as an instinctive, though not perhaps a profound, novelist.

When we begin to look a little deeper, though, reservations become
imperative. As I have said, superficially Bernard appears to be close to people—closer anyway than Louis and Neville. Deeper analysis begins to show a barrier. Two passages I have cited as indications of his apparent community with others hint at the nature of this barrier. When Susan runs past the tool-shed, his sympathetic impulse is mixed with something else: "I shall go gently behind her, to be at hand, with my curiosity, to comfort her" (10). The sympathy is real, but the curiosity implies a certain detachment. It is the curiosity of the budding novelist in search of material. Here is the first limited appearance of a paradox which is fundamental to Bernard's being as an artist. He needs to observe people in order to write, but the observation itself is associated with a detachment which impairs sympathetic understanding. And this order of detachment is supplemented by his habit of immediately coining his experience into words. Or, to put it more drastically, his view of reality is blurred by the haze of words through which he experiences. Susan has inklings of the true situation: "Now you trail away ... making phrases. Now you mount like an air-ball's string, higher and higher through the layers of the leaves, out of reach" (13). The detachment becomes manifest.

We come closer to the barrier in the other episode already mentioned: that of Bernard's encounter with the man on the train. His instinctive impulse to approach the man appears to be a purely spontaneous wish for direct human contact, but an additional motive obtrudes: "Also I wish to add to my collection of valuable observations upon the true nature of human life" (49). Detachment begins, and abstraction. The result of this soon appears: "As we exchange these few but amiable remarks about country houses, I furbish him up and make him concrete. He is indulgent as a husband but not faithful; a small builder who employs a few men ..." (49). As he became detached from Susan he now becomes detached from the man in the train, as Neville, with characteristic asperity, points out:
The plumber accepted him with devotion ... But what did Bernard feel for the plumber? Did he not only wish to continue the sequence of the story which he never stops telling himself? He began it when he rolled his bread into pellets as a child. One pellet was a man, one was a woman. We are all pellets. We are all phrases in Bernard's story, things he writes down in his notebook under A or under B. He tells our story with extraordinary understanding, except of what we most feel. (50)

What is involved is a detachment from reality and a confusion of art with life: Bernard's furnishing of the man is realer to him than the man himself. The continual semblances Bernard makes —Neville says "The camel is a vulture; the vulture a camel; for Bernard is a dangling wire" (27)— are not a means of apprehending reality with greater clarity: they effectively keep reality at bay. Virginia Woolf's apprehension of this danger was shared by E.M. Forster: I showed earlier that Rickie Elliot's tragedy is largely based on a similar confusion.

If we turn to the few moments in the novel when we see Bernard creating we can gauge the consequences of the muddle for him as a novelist. At school, Bernard tells his friends the story of Dr Crane, and he manages it fairly well until he reaches the stage when it becomes indispensable for him to enter the mind of the doctor; to make his narrative and descriptive detail focus on and illuminate the doctor's character. He gets a little way into Dr Crane's thoughts, but then can go no further:

What vast forces of good and evil have brought me here? he asks, and sees with sorrow that his chair has worn a little hole in the pile of the purple carpet. So there he sits, swinging his braces. But stories that follow people into their private rooms are difficult. I cannot go on with this story. (36)

Similarly, when Bernard tells himself the story of staying at Restover he can get no further than the circumstantial details. He can describe the house, its furnishings, the accoutrements of distinguished poverty— "I can sketch the surroundings up to a point with extraordinary ease" (57-8)— but he himself sees what he lacks: "But can I make it work? Can I hear her voice— the precise tone
with which, when we are alone, she says 'Bernard'? And then what next?' (58).

He cannot get beyond the external; and thus cannot make the external work. (In the first holograph draft Bernard recognised this: "I am much too interested in actual facts." His knowledge of people, which at first seemed more than adequate, fails him. He can render the facts - as he could render the facts about Dr Crane - but he misses what these facts should contain and embody. This lack is similar to the lack Virginia Woolf saw in Arnold Bennett's writings. In "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" she examines Hilda Lessays, and says that Bennett creates the detail of the manner and of the house in which Hilda lives, but that he does not create Hilda herself: "he is trying to hypnotize us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there" (CE I 330).

Bennett and Bernard can render the facts and semblances, but they fail to capture what Rhoda calls "the thing beneath the semblance of the thing" (116). The connection between Bernard and Bennett is pointed by Bernard's demonstration later of his ability to render the facts (103), which looks very like a parody of Bennett, and by the similarity between what Bernard sees as his inadequacy - "can I hear her voice?" - and what Virginia Woolf saw as Bennett's: she said of Hilda Lessays: "we cannot hear her mother's voice, or Hilda's voice" (CE I 330).

A difference, of course, is that Virginia Woolf's Bernard recognises a deficiency: in a sense, as I will show more fully later, one could see Bernard as being lost between the certainties implied by the Bennett method, and the explorations of the nature of reality implied by Virginia Woolf's.

Another moment of creation demonstrates a related aspect of Bernard's nature as a novelist, and provides, perhaps, another reason for his implied failure. When he attempts a letter to a girl, he tries very deliberately to write it as another would have written it: he wants to be Byron. He writes it with deliberate carelessness - "Look how unformed the letters are - there is a careless blot" (56) - and obvious calculation. But he cannot finish the letter with a rush,
and if he rewrites it "she will feel 'Bernard is posing as a literary man; Bernard is thinking of his biographer' (which is true)" (57). Not only does he pose here specifically as Byron, he is posing continually as a literary man. This does not necessarily mean that he does not or that he cannot write; simply that he exaggerates certain aspects of his being a writer so that he can easily draw over himself an identity. A similar psychological phenomenon was commented on by Sartre:

Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes towards the patrons with a step a little too quick ... All his behaviour seems to us a game .... He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café.6

William Rodney, as I showed earlier, also creates for himself the 'artist' persona, but in Night and Day the matter is less complicated: William Rodney does it less wholeheartedly; Bernard is continually at it. There is his exaggerated note-taking (26); his references to his biographer (55); his continual posing (177). All this clearly has effects on his writing: because he is so self-consciously 'a writer' he cannot achieve that unconsciousness which is essential for creation. When he writes Bernard is always looking at himself, or over his shoulder.

I suggested earlier that there is some sort of barrier between Bernard and others, and now we see a little more of its nature; and how intimately it is bound up with his being as an artist. The reason for its existence is not difficult to find. Bernard's first great ordeal comes when he leaves home for his boarding school, and this is how he reacts: "I must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of housemaids, the stare of clocks, staring faces, indifferent faces, or I shall cry" (21-2). Similarly, he protects himself from the impact of Neville's disapproval by telling him the story of pulling Percival out of bed: "I feel your [Neville's] disapproval, I feel your force .... I feel your distress acutely. Inspired by it and anxious to
regain your good opinion, I proceed to tell you how I have just pulled Percival out of bed" (60). It becomes clear that Bernard's use of words, and of his status as a writer, are part of his strategy for living; they define his stance to the rest of the world, and protect him; they are not contingent, they are central and essential parts of him.

So far I have emphasised those aspects of Bernard as an artist which face outwards, towards other people; a more important aspect faces inwards. It is implied that an important motive for his writing is the need to sustain the structures of his personality, or, more fundamentally, to create himself. Making observations for a story about a crane (a story presumably connected in some way with the story about Dr Crane) he says: "And, striking off these observations spontaneously, I elaborate myself; differentiate myself" (83). A little later he becomes more specific: "When I cannot see words curling like rings of smoke round me I am in darkness — I am nothing" (95). He needs to write in order to feel his existence and give it a structure; to create himself for himself.

Writing in slightly different terms, Anthony Storr says something similar about artists in general, and he quotes Aaron Copland:

It appears that at least some creative people spend their lives trying to discover and consolidate their own sense of identity, and that this provides the motive force for their creative endeavours. The composer Aaron Copland has put this very well in his Charles Eliot Norton lectures of 1951-1952, Music and Imagination.

"The serious composer who thinks about his art will sooner or later have occasion to ask himself: why is it so important to my own psyche that I compose music? What makes it seem so absolutely necessary, so that every other activity, by comparison, is of lesser significance? And why is the creative impulse never satisfied; why must one always begin anew? To the first question — the need to create — the answer is always the same — self-expression; the basic need to make evident one's deepest feelings about life. But why is the job never done? Why must one always begin again? The reason for the compulsion to renewed creativity, it seems to me, is that each added work brings with it an element of self-discovery. I must create in order to know myself, and since self-knowledge is a never ending search, each new work is only a part-answer
Bernard's case is slightly different; I would say that, as he creates a persona for others, so he creates his own self for himself. In other words, what is involved is self-creation rather than self-discovery.

This may well be a common motive in artists, and need not, of course, produce bad art: Virginia Woolf was intermittently aware of how her writing structured her being. Two years after she finished *The Waves* she wrote in her diary: "I thought, driving through Richmond last night, something very profound about the synthesis of my being: how only writing composes it: how nothing makes a whole unless I am writing" (AWD 208: May 1933). At another point in her diary she comes very close to saying what Bernard says. She has been writing about how she should write *The Waves*, and she comments: "Well all this is of course the 'real' life; and nothingness only comes in the absence of this" (AWD 144: June 1929).

Closely associated with Bernard's need to use words is his intense awareness of the different selves which compose his being. He says: "I am not one and simple, but complex and many" (55), and his continual awareness of his multiplicity of selves leads naturally to a tenuous sense of identity: "which of these people am I? It depends so much upon the room. When I say to myself, 'Bernard,' who comes?" (58). In a sense the possession of a self capable of taking on different guises is an essential part of the artist's equipment: he needs a self adaptable enough to identify with other people, with places, and with situations. As Keats said: "the poetical Character itself . . . is not itself— it has no self— it is everything and nothing— It has no character— it enjoys light and shade". However, when an artist is in the process of creation there comes a point when the selves, the different levels of the mind, the different identities, must work together; consciousness must dissolve. Virginia Woolf says of American writers and women writers: "all kinds of consciousness - consciousness of self, of race, of sex, of
civilization—which have nothing to do with art, have got between them and the paper, with results that are ... unfortunate" (CE II 113).

Bernard's problem is that he cannot 'integrate' his selves and banish the conscious watching self. His selves "darken the air and enrich [him]", but they also "cloud the fine simplicity of [his] moment of emotion" (64). For him there is always "some observant fellow who points" (176), something always "remains floating, unattached" (56). Again, to a certain extent, the artist needs "something floating"; as I showed in the previous chapter, the sense of floating detachment is an essential stage in Lily's creative process; but Bernard cannot get to the next stage, in which differences are merged; something "remains floating".

Bernard may be contrasted with what Virginia Woolf said in 1923 of Conrad:

Conrad is not one and simple; no he is many and complex. That is a common case among modern writers .... And it is when they bring these selves into relation—when they simplify, when they reconcile their opposites—that they bring off (generally late in life) those complete books which for that reason we call their masterpieces. (CE I 310)

The first sentence she repeats almost word for word in Bernard's analysis of himself (55), and the rest demonstrates where Bernard fails: in yet another way Bernard embodies what Virginia Woolf saw as being wrong with contemporary writers.

Another need compounds the complexity of Bernard's problems: he needs words to be, but he also needs other people: "But soliloquies in back streets soon pall. I need an audience .... To be myself (I note) I need the illumination of other people's eyes, and therefore cannot be entirely sure what is myself" (83).

And he sees that this dissipates his writing:

I need an audience. That is my downfall. That always ruffles the edge of the final statement and prevents it from forming .... I make my phrase and run off with it to some furnished room where it will be lit by dozens of candles. I need eyes on me to draw out these frills and furbelows. (83)
His conversation is brilliant, but he recognises that in the face of his need for the stimulus of other people the excellence he desires in his writing will always escape him: "A good phrase ... seems to me to have an independent existence. Yet I think it likely that the best are made in solitude. They require some final refrigeration which I cannot give them" (50). As Virginia Woolf says in "Life and the Novelist", the novelist "must expose himself to life ... But at a certain moment he must leave the company and withdraw" (CE II 136).

Leonard Woolf suggests that "There is something of Desmond MacCarthy in Bernard in The Waves", and he draws a parallel between Bernard's need for Mrs Moffat to sweep up his ashes (W 58) and MacCarthy's moments of ineffectual melancholia. I would suggest that MacCarthy also provided hints for the contrast between Bernard's brilliant talk and his failure as a novelist— as well as for his inability to complete any serious writing, his dishevelled habits, his unreliable vagueness, his wasted talents, and his incurable amiability. One could say of Bernard what Virginia Woolf said of MacCarthy: "he has the floating elements of something brilliant, beautiful .... But why did he never do anything?" This is not, of course, to imply that Bernard is MacCarthy— any more than he is Bennett.

The need to create and structure himself with words has a parallel need— at first, anyway. Neville says of Bernard: "Let him describe what we have all seen so that it becomes a sequence. Bernard says there is always a story. I am a story. Louis is a story" (27). There is a slight linguistic difficulty here: at first "story" means just that: a chronological narrative of sequential events. Throughout the novel, though, it comes more and more to mean 'design', 'pattern' — and even the writer's interpretive philosophy. This is, of course, perfectly apt, and demonstrates the increasing subtlety of Virginia Woolf's handling of the art-life theme. The genre an artist chooses reflects not only his capacities, but also his way of looking at life. His choice of genre, and the use to which he puts it, inevitably are outward manifestations of his inner feelings about the nature and
realities of life.

Bernard sees things in sequence; he speaks of himself as "finding sequences everywhere" (95), and later says with pleasure: "Listen. There is a sound like the knocking of railway trucks in a siding. That is the happy concatenation of one event following another in our lives" (166). His view of life is couched in the terms of the traditional chronology: the overriding quality is its sequentiality. It is an immense relief for Bernard to be able to see things thus happily in sequence, and he needs to embody this sequence in his art, in order to make sense of existence: "I must open the little trap-door and let out these linked phrases in which I run together whatever happens, so that instead of incoherence there is perceived a wandering thread, lightly joining one thing to another" (35). The novel, then, with what Forster called the "wriggling and interminable, the naked worm of time" (AN 29) — the story element — is naturally the genre he chooses to work in: the choice is dictated by his internal structure, by his basic way of seeing life, or his need to see life in this way.

Once again, this need not have bad effects on his art. In most artists the urge to make sense of experience, to shape it, is probably an important motive for their work, even if it is not a conscious compulsion. Virginia Woolf certainly felt that her creative acts ordered the world for her: in her diary she says: "only creating can bring about proportion" (AWD 232: November 1934); "Odd how the creative power at once brings the whole universe to order" (AWD 220: July 1934). It seems that Bernard's need, though, betrays him into too early an attempt at integrating his work. When the Restover story falters he comments: "The real novelist, the perfectly simple human being, could go on, indefinitely, imagining. He would not integrate, as I do" (58). Of course, the real novelist does integrate; it is only, as Forster says, the simple story-teller who "profits by ragged ends" (AN 34). The point is that Bernard integrates too soon: his need for order will
not let him endure for long the early stages of creation which Anton Ehrenzweig, in passages I quoted in Chapter Four called the schizoid phase.

One of the tribulations most frequently referred to by the creative in accounts of their work (such as those presented in Ghiselin's The Creative Process) is the immense burden of anxiety and tension often endured in the early stages. To withstand this one needs what Keats called "Negative Capability". Bernard it seems, though the language is difficult to follow, cannot endure this tension. It is likely that this anxiety is a product of the tension between the necessity for a fragmented stage, and the basic impulse to create— which, as Storr suggests, is the need "to integrate and reorganise our inner experience". In face of the necessities imposed by his multiplicity of selves and his need to see and render life in a structured way, Bernard attempts to integrate too soon, and is immediately beset by the appalling frustration of 'writer's block': "Some blind flaps in my eyes. Everything becomes impervious. I cease to invent" (58). Under the pressure of premature integration his "wandering thread" (35) becomes a "dangling wire" (13).

It is probably, then, that fear plays a large part in Bernard's disabilities. The figure of the woman writing at Elvedon (12) is, as Lehmann suggests, an image of the artist at her work, and I would add that the whole exploration of Elvedon which Bernard and Susan undertake is a symbol of the exploration art exacts, and that the fear associated with it represents a deep-seated fear on Bernard's part of the risk-taking art demands. (John Lehmann, curiously, implies that the skirmish at Elvedon is imaginary. There is no evidence for this in the published version, and early drafts quite definitely indicate that Elvedon was a 'real' place. Havena Richter goes further and calls Elvedon an "imaginary country"; it is quite clear, however, that "Elvedon" is the name of a country house.)

These are the problems and paradoxes which beset Bernard in the first half of the novel, and they contribute to his implied failure as a novelist. As he
develops, his maturing view of life presents him with new problems, and it is apparent that these are the same problems which Virginia Woolf had been concerned with some years earlier in relation to her own work and the work of her contemporaries. What is particularly interesting is that she shows us Bernard at an impasse: he does not find his way through to a new way of writing.

One aspect of his aesthetic development is a tentative revision of his attitude to words and phrases, and this compounds his difficulties. Early on he has great confidence in his ability to do certain things with these basic units; he believes that words can resolve inner tensions and bring relief. When Susan puts down her handkerchief, "screwed up, with its rage, with its hate, knotted in it" (11), he says to her: "words, moving darkly, in the depths of your mind will break up this knot of hardness, screwed in your pocket handkerchief" (11). Almost as a corollary of this, he also believes that words can establish an intimate community between people: "we melt into each other with phrases" (11). We remember, though, that Susan cuts right across Bernard's statement and presents the opposite view: "you wander off; you slip away; you rise up higher, with words and words in phrases" (11). As I have already suggested, the way in which Bernard uses words opens up spaces between himself and other people - he is far from melting into them with phrases.

And then there is his view of where words stand in the relationship between himself and the outside world. Declaring "I draw the veil off things with words" (61), he discloses his assumption that there is a constant, objective reality, waiting demurely to be laid bare by the observer; a reality which does not depend on the observer's habits of perception; a fixed reality which is matched by the traditional forms of expression and by the established techniques of art.

Soon after this, Bernard begins to think more deeply about the materials of his art. At the farewell dinner for Percival, he says: "But observe how
meretricious the phrase is—made up of what evasions and old lies" (95). Here is the beginning of a more mature awareness of the relations between life and our modes of expression—an awareness of the fact that our thoughts and perceptions are to a measure guided by the structures of language which we inherit. Later the point becomes more explicit. He remembers himself thinking about time: "as I buttoned on my coat to go home I said more dramatically, 'I have lost my youth' " (131). 'Now', a week later, he rejects this handy commonplace: this is his comment: "It is curious how, at every crisis, some phrase which does not fit insists upon coming to the rescue—the penalty of living in an old civilisation with a notebook" (131). Bernard now sees how much the language he inherited structures his thoughts, and this insight is related to a profounder awareness of the conditions of life.

Previously Bernard had considered life solely in terms of superficial appearances and neat sequences: he had been born "finding sequences" (95), and later rejoices in "the happy concatenation of one event following another in our lives" (166). Alongside this view, for it does not entirely disappear, there is another, arrived at from outside the usual sequence, of life as something other than a "series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged" (CE II 106). It involves a changed view of time, and a recognition of the existence and importance of the unconscious, and these new apprehensions have profound effects on his attitude towards his art. The handy commonplace—"I have lost my youth"—which he rejects is rejected because it does not match his new view of time. His earlier sequential clockwork model of time is replaced by time measured by intensities—time influenced by the life of values:

This drop falling has nothing to do with losing my youth. This drop falling is time tapering to a point. Time, which is a sunny pasture covered with a dancing light, time, which is wide-spread as a field at midday, becomes pendant. Time tapers to a point. As a drop falls from a glass heavy with some sediment, time falls. These are the true cycles, these are the true events. (131)
The second excursion outside the sequence involves the unconscious, which also disrupts the surface sequence:

But it is a mistake, this extreme precision, this orderly and military progress; a convenience, a lie. There is always deep below it, even when we arrive punctually at the appointed time with our white waistcoats and polite formalities, a rushing stream of broken dreams, nursery rhymes, street cries, half-finished sentences and sights ... that rise and sink even as we hand a lady down to dinner. While one straightens the fork so precisely on the table-cloth, a thousand faces mop and mow. (181)

Bernard's earlier view of story implies, of course, a certain metaphysic. It is founded, like his belief in facts, on a view of life as something capable of being expressed simply: one thing follows another always, like "railway trucks in a siding" (166), and in one dimension only. Life is linear; only one level is involved.

With his subtler attitude towards time and human experience this conception of story becomes, inevitably, wholly inadequate. He comes, indeed, to doubt that there are stories. Thinking in a restaurant about the unknown people around him, he says: "I could make a dozen stories of what he said, of what she said— I can see a dozen pictures. But what are stories? Toys I twist, bubbles I blow, one ring passing through another" (103). At this point stories are clearly the things he makes up about people (and here we have the development of an awareness that stories are not life, that they are artistic constructs), but the connotations of story spread wider as he continues his thought:

And sometimes I begin to doubt if there are stories. What is my story? What is Rhoda's? What is Neville's? There are facts, as, for example: "The handsome young man in the grey suit, whose reserve contrasted so strangely with the loquacity of the others, now brushed the crumbs from his waistcoat and, with a characteristic gesture at once commanding and benign, made a sign to the waiter, who came instantly and returned a moment later with the bill discreetly folded upon a plate." That is the truth; that is the fact, but beyond it all is darkness and conjecture. (103)

By the time we reach the conclusion of this thought it is difficult to distinguish
between 'story' in its usual meaning, and 'story' meaning an interpretation on
the part of the observer of life as it unfolds itself around him. What Bernard
points to is the inadequacy of his own earlier reliance on the factual and sequential;
he suggests that life is not like this on any but a superficial level; but he finds
no way of getting at what is behind the fact—he leaves it as "darkness and con-
jecture", seeing no difference between literal and artistic truth.

The problem his maturing view of life poses for him as an artist is the
very problem many twentieth-century writers have faced since the necessity of
rendering life as experience pressed itself upon them. The beginning of the
century saw an extraordinary efflorescence of technical experimentation, and one
may see much of it as being a response to changing philosophies. The influences
of such thinkers as Darwin, Bergson and Freud had to be accommodated, if they
were not ignored, and a loosening of the traditional structures of fiction was
necessary. In her essays on the contemporary situation Virginia Woolf identified
what she saw as the problems to be faced. One need not take too literally her
declaration that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed" (CE I 320)
it was the perception that changed, but then changing perceptions alter what is
perceived— but it succinctly states the problem. If life can no longer be seen
as "a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged" (CE II 106) then new aesthetic
structures are necessary. Her argument was that "life, or spirit, truth or reality,
this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on" and that such a writer as Bennett
had consequently "come down with his magnificent apparatus for catching life
just an inch or two on the wrong side" (CE II 105). 19 Bernard's early aesthetic
theories and strategies can be related to Bennett's, and his changing view of life
to the ideas abroad early this century: where he fails is that he sees no way of
accommodating his changed views in his writing.

Indeed, Bernard begins to doubt not only the value of telling life in simple
stories as he previously did, but the value of all art—because it falsifies what he sees outside the sequence and imposes designs on something which now appears to be entirely unstructured. He looks down on a bustling scene in Rome and says:

I could break off any detail in all that prospect—say the mule-cart—and describe it with the greatest ease. But why describe a man in trouble with his mule? Again, I could invent stories about that girl coming up the steps. "She met him under the dark archway.... 'It is over,' he said, turning from the cage where the china parrot hangs." Or simply, "That was all." But why impose my arbitrary design? Why stress this and shape that and twist up little figures like the toys men sell in trays in the street? Why select this, out of all that—one detail? (133-4)

Here Bernard questions the strategies of all art.

At the beginning of his last speech Bernard goes some way towards answering his questions, but the partial answer is overwhelmed by a restatement of the questions. He wishes to 'give' his life to the stranger he has met in the restaurant: "I would say, 'Take it. This is my life.'" (169). The difficulty is that though the stranger can observe Bernard externally he cannot see through Bernard's eyes: "But unfortunately, what I see (this globe, full of figures) you do not see" (169). The stranger cannot experience Bernard's experience. And so the only way he can give his life to the stranger, to make him see what he sees, is to tell him stories, to invent aesthetic structures which will communicate. But Bernard is still rasped by the fact that the stories he has to tell are in a sense false—"none of them are true"—and that he needs to structure his experience in order to communicate it: "How tired I am of stories, how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground! Also, how I distrust neat designs of life that are drawn upon half-sheets of note-paper" (169). He distrusts these designs because when he looks at life he does not see order: "Of story, of design, I do not see a trace" (169). This is an extension of the problem I discussed earlier: he had seen that neat, factual stories did not meet his new
view of life, and he is now bothered by the fact that any design would be false. It
is in essence the same problem that B.S. Johnson never satisfactorily solved
for himself: a problem he states vehemently in *Albert Angelo*: "- OH, FUCK ALL
THIS LYING!"20

Bernard is clearly at an impasse, and some critics have inferred from
this that Virginia Woolf herself was becoming fundamentally disillusioned with
art. Nancy Topping Bazin says that Bernard's failure to translate his vision
into art indicates an increasingly pessimistic view of life on Virginia Woolf's part.
I would dispute this. It is a matter of individual judgment whether the book conveys
dissillusionment, but Virginia Woolf did not intend it to; in a letter to Goldsworthy
Lowes Dickinson she said: "Many people say that it is hopelessly sad— but I
didn't mean that".22 And then the interpretation of Bernard's failure in terms
of a developing pessimism in Virginia Woolf is an oversimplification of Bernard's
problem, and of the relationship between him and Virginia Woolf.

To take first of all his problem with story: even here the impasse is
passable. Virginia Woolf deliberately limits Bernard's view of story: she
herself did not believe that story can only take the form Bernard apprehends.
Indeed, writing about Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, she would quarrel with his
view that "a story is the lowest of literary organisms" (CE II 52). Stories do
not have to be presented in the way Bernard appears to think inevitable: they do
not have to be entirely linear, nor single-stranded. This, of course, is obvious:
only a few story-tellers—Scott, perhaps, and Defoe—approach this condition, for
although story is the basis of most novels even those novels written before
philosophies such as Freud's and Bergson's discredited the linear railway-trucks
story as a way of telling the truth about life stories were chopped up, combined
and distributed in novels so as to create the nodal points Bernard's view of time
makes necessary. There is clearly no necessity to limit the story in the way
Bernard does. Virginia Woolf's novels themselves indicate this: all of them are or contain stories; her experiments did not abolish stories, they created an original and personal way of disposing them. The experimental form of The Waves itself implicitly demonstrates that Bernard's difficulty with story can be overcome: it tells stories despite the fact that it is far from being linear. In a sense it is sequential, but it accommodates the non-sequential, the irrational, the nodes and lacunae of time, and, indeed, is circular rather than linear in form. Aesthetically Bernard can get no further than a rejection of simple story: he cannot see how story can be used to serve more complicated purposes than he originally envisages for it.

It seems a little strange at first that Virginia Woolf should restrict Bernard's view of story in this way, but if we relate it to his ideas about design as a whole it becomes apparent that this restriction enabled her to suggest considerations even more basic to art.

Perhaps the roots of Bernard's dilemma lie in his implicit assumption that art should mirror exactly in its techniques the artist's beliefs about the nature of the reality he seeks to convey. If this reality is sequential, factual, objective, one tells factual stories; if it is chaotic, unstructured and random — what does one do then? Art by definition is designed; how can it convey the undesigned? The dilemma is not wholly a technical one; it involves Bernard's attitude to illusion in art, though this is not expressly stated. Art must use illusion; it tells the truth through lies. Even the truth which B.S. Johnson insists he is telling in Albert Angelo after "— OH, FUCK ALL THIS LYING" is supported by illusion. We, as readers, create him as 'person', or as something halfway between 'person' and 'character', just as much after the outburst as before. At a more fundamental level, black marks on a white page 'stand for' the Russia of the Bolkonskis, the Rostovs and the Bezukhovs. Art cannot do without illusion, without the necessity of one thing standing for another, any more than any other form of human
communication can. This is a point which is taken up with great subtlety in 
Between the Acts, where the illusions of art are related to the untruthful illusions 
of life.

Bernard is not as simple as I may have made him appear, for throughout his 
last long speech he oscillates erratically between an extreme discomfort at 
contradictions he cannot reconcile (169) — contradictions which involve the 
element of illusion in art — and a continual belief in art on another level: "The 
trees, scattered, put on order; the thick green of the leaves thinned itself to 
a dancing light. I netted them under with a sudden phrase. I retrieved them from 
formlessness with words" (191). But essentially he is stuck; he sticks at "Life 
is not susceptible perhaps to the treatment we give it when we try to tell it" (189). 
His problem with illusion expresses itself on the surface by the obsession with 
design. Earlier he had believed that life itself was structured, and he now seems 
unable to think about art except in terms of structure — perhaps because he is 
unwilling to stay outside the sequence for long: "I never wish to prolong these 
states of detachment; I dislike them; I also despise them" (132). (Bernard's 
attitude is, of course, not consistent; a moment later he says: "These moments 
of escape are not to be despised. They come too seldom. Tahiti becomes possible" 
(134).)

Being unable to maintain himself outside the sequence, finding it difficult 
to think about art unless in terms of sequential structures, he seems to forget 
that it is not the story or design that is important, but what lies below the design, 
or what the design is supposed to elicit. Just what this is is impossible to define 
clearly; can only be suggested by indirection; but there are some indications 
of its nature.

After Percival's death, Bernard rejects words as a means of expressing 
his pain:
But for pain words are lacking. There should be cries, cracks, fissures, whiteness passing over chintz covers, interference with the sense of time, of space; the sense also of extreme fixity in passing objects; and sounds very remote and then very close; flesh being gashed and blood spurting, a joint suddenly twisted—beneath all of which appears something very important, yet refnote, to be just held in solitude. (187)

This "something" he is also directed to by his "observant fellow who points" (176), and its connection with art is made almost explicit: "Thus he directed me to that which is beyond and outside our own predicament; to that which is symbolic, and thus perhaps permanent, if there is any permanence in our sleeping, eating, breathing, so animal, so spiritual and tumultuous lives" (176). It emerges more clearly when he goes to a picture gallery to assuage the pain of Percival's death. He goes to submit himself to "the influence of minds like [his] outside the sequence" (111). What they bestow is some value, truth, reality which comes from their being outside the sequence: "Let them [the pictures] lay to rest the incessant activity of the mind's eye ... so that I may find something unvisual beneath" (111). Disengaged from the sequence, Bernard is in a condition to accept what the pictures offer; they give him a greater knowledge of Percival: "Mercifully these pictures make no reference; they do not nudge; they do not point. Thus they expand my consciousness of him and bring him back to me differently. I remember his beauty. 'Look, where he comes,' I said" (111). (The important point is not the specific one that the pictures give Percival back to him, which is an 'example', but the more general one that they expand his consciousness. Virginia Woolf is in movement from To the Lighthouse, where emphasis is placed on Lily's art restoring Mrs Ramsay to her, to Between the Acts, where the emphasis is almost entirely upon the ability of art to stir the inner depths.)

Another attempt at indirect definition comes a little later, as Bernard feels the grip of the pictures loosening: "Yet something is added to my interpretation.
Something lies deeply buried. For one moment I thought to grasp it. But bury it, bury it; let it breed, hidden in the depths of my mind some day to fructify" (112). Perhaps this something – the "something unvisual beneath" – is the true story Bernard seeks (154); some 'resolution' outside the sequence; a 'reason'.

These are rough paraphrases, of course, because the 'something' itself eludes definition. It emerges partially on another occasion when Rhoda, also after Percival's death, goes to a concert. Listening to the music, she says:

"Like" and "like" and "like"– but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing? Now that lightning has gashed the tree and the flowering branch has fallen and Percival, by his death, has made me this gift, let me see the thing. There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place. Very little is left outside. The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation. (116)

Despite "structure" here, this passage is not about the structure of works of art, and is certainly not, as Naremore believes, an ironic sneer at the forms of art.

The "structure" is the structure of the thing which lies "beneath the semblance of the thing": something, perhaps related to the Platonic Idea, which one glimpses out of the corner of one's eye when one encounters great art. Perhaps it may also be related to the element which the narrator of Henry James's The Figure in the Carpet searches for so desperately in the works of Vereker. Obsessed with sequences, semblances and designs, Bernard is rarely aware of this level of art.

Bernard is one of the most complex of the artists Virginia Woolf created. Like William Rodney he is an artist manqué, but the relationships between his failure as an artist and his personality are far more complex and illuminating. He is a less clear-cut figure: he is more contradictory, more 'alive' in a sense, and the very ambiguities of his position as an artist suggest more about the obscure promptings the artist feels than the relatively more definite features
Virginia Woolf presents us with in William Rodney. The perplexities he faces in his art are similarly illuminating. His problem with facts and stories was a problem faced by many writers early this century (and which is still not 'resolved'), and in a sense he could be regarded as an apologia for Virginia Woolf's methods. Her methods bypass Bernard's sticking point. More specifically, his glimpse of a way out of his problem—"I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement. I begin to seek some design more in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably" (169)—may be regarded as an adumbration of the techniques Virginia Woolf used in *Between the Acts*. It is interesting in this connection that he is often aware of the surviving primitive elements in his personality: "There is the old brute, too, the savage, the hairy man who dabbles his fingers in ropes of entrails; and gobbles and belches; whose speech is guttural, visceral—well, he is here. He squats in me" (205). There may be a connection here with his obsession with story. Story is an ancient primitive form—Forster says "It is immensely old—goes back to neolithic times, perhaps to palaeolithic" (AN 28). In *Between the Acts*, however, in which the primitive is a vitally important element, the central art form—drama—is even more ancient.

As far as one can make such judgements about the characters in *The Waves*, Louis reveals himself far less than Bernard does. To some extent this can be accounted for by the fact that the long summing-up falls to the latter, but even in earlier passages Bernard is a more imaginatively convincing character. Perhaps the main reason for Louis's relative opacity lies in his being so closely based on a 'real life' person. McLaurin, among others, has pointed out in general terms the extent to which Eliot influenced the creation and preoccupations of Louis, and he insisted cogently that he is not a mere copy,\(^{25}\) but I think that this influence did
result in the creation of a character who is thinner and who imposes himself with
less authority on the imagination of the reader than the other characters in the
novel do.

However, we do see enough of Louis to realise that his being as an artist,
as well as Bernard's, is deeply rooted in his internal organisation and his personal
relations. Analysis is rather simpler in his case because he is a less complex,
more static character — indeed he fits with remarkable ease into a type which
emerges from Anthony Storr's *The Dynamics of Creation*. Drawing on a wide
variety of sources, and employing the theories of many distinguished psychologists,
Storr presents surprisingly convincing paradigms of different types of artists,
and discusses the motives which impel people to adopt the lonely and often
frustrating life of the artist. His theories are not, perhaps, strikingly original,
but *The Dynamics of Creation* is very useful because it presents coherent and
and intelligent syntheses of much work done on the psychology of the artist. His
analyses of the 'schizoid' and 'obsessive' creators are strikingly relevant to Louis
and Neville.

One fundamental condition of Louis's being is that he sees himself as
alienated, as an outsider, and although this is true of other of Virginia Woolf's
artists — Lily Briscoe and Miss La Trobe, for instance — in Louis's case this
sense is more absolute and compelling. His nationality and his accent are outward
emblems of his sense of estrangement: speaking of Rhoda — the extreme outsider —
he says: "And I, who speak with an Australian accent, whose father is a banker
in Brisbane, do not fear her as I fear the others" (16). This feeling of separateness
inevitably affects his social development; it debars him from participation in
some normal phases: "Boasting begins. And I cannot boast, for my father is a
banker in Brisbane, and I speak with an Australian accent" (22). From the
beginning we see that, in Storr's terms, Louis fails "to develop any realistic
sense of [his] position in the human hierarchy, because at a very early stage,
[he ceases] to interact genuinely with [his] peers. Detachment and emotional isolation, the primary features of the schizoid temperament, essentially characterise Louis's emotional life, and this is related to the kind of art he wishes to create; he desires to forge a poetry which will "connect the gulls and the women with bad teeth" (92).

As a natural accompaniment to his sense of estrangement Louis sees the world as disordered and chaotic. Sitting in a café, he observes: "People go on passing; they go on passing against the spires of the church and the plates of ham sandwiches. The streamers of my consciousness waver out and are perpetually torn and distressed by their disorder .... I am conscious of flux, of disorder; of annihilation and despair" (67). Unlike Bernard, who begins by seeing sequences, Louis apprehends total disorder; his desire for order is consequently the greater, and his attempt to forge in art the significance and meaning he misses in life is more rigorous: "I coerce my brain to form in my forehead; I force myself to state, if only in one line of unwritten poetry, this moment" (48). Again, this search for a significance is a feature Storr points to in the schizoid creator.

Louis’s need for order and meaning is intensified by radical disjunctures in his personality. He recognises that he is not "single and entire" (91) and we see continual contradictions in him. The central dichotomy is his sense of himself as being simultaneously a part of a massive and monumental continuity, and a separate, frail individual susceptible to the vagaries of being a boy and an adult in a random 'real' world:

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. (8)

Storr's schizoid creator displays a similar paradoxical sense of omnipotence and
vulnerability. Branching off from this major fissure are smaller cracks:

Louis is simultaneously the weakest, the youngest, and the strongest, the oldest of them all: "I am the weakest, the youngest" (69); "I am fiercer and stronger than you are" (92), "I seem already to have lived many thousand years" (48).

With these discrepancies go others: his dreams of omnipotence are brought sharply up against the stubborn realities of his condition: "when darkness comes I put off this unenviable body ... and inhabit space. I am then Virgil's companion, and Plato's. I am then the last scion of one of the great houses of France" (38); "I am now a boy only with a colonial accent" (38).

It may be that the creative personality is habitually divided. Storr suggests that this is so—"There is good reason to suppose that creative people are distinguished by an exceptionable degree of division between opposites, and also by an exceptional awareness of this division"—and in her essays on writers Virginia Woolf frequently discerns contrasting characteristics in their personalities and in their work. Her essays on Hazlitt (CE I), Carroll (CE I), Harvey (CE III) and Conrad (CE I 302-8), among many others, detect fundamental contradictions in the personalities of their subjects. (Bernard's sense of inner multiplicity is different in quality from the radical oppositions of Louis's inner world; he has no such fundamental disjunctures.)

And so it is that Louis accepts with rapture the order imposed externally at school: "Now we march, two by two ... orderly, processional, into chapel .... I like the orderly progress. We file in; we seat ourselves" (24); and, unlike Bernard and Neville, he celebrates the ample authority of Dr Crane: "I rejoice; my heart expands in his bulk, in his authority. He lays the whirling dust clouds in my tremulous, my ignominiously agitated mind ... I recover my continuity, as he reads. I become a figure in the procession" (25).

Here, the order and equanimity he desires is imposed from outside; as he begins to write he builds his own order—impelled by the same necessity.
Bernard tried the same in his early writing, but Louis's attempt, because of his greater need, is more strenuous; in place of Bernard's "wandering thread", Louis will spend his energy in forging a ring of steel, "in efforts to make a steel ring of clear poetry that shall connect the gulls and the women with bad teeth, the church spire and the bobbing billycock hats" (92). His awareness of disorder is more acute and distressing than Bernard's, and so he needs a tighter ritual to control it. He has a far from casual approach to his artistic materials; he will dominate them; he says, after a fleeting apprehension of a unity: "This I see for a second, and shall try to-night to fix in words, to forge in a ring of steel" (28). This seems to preclude the mutual commerce between the artist and his materials which I suggested in the previous chapter is necessary for creation.

This aspect of order refers to the outer; a more important motive is provided by his inner life. In the attempt at art the cohesion of his personality is at stake; his own unity and continuity is involved, as well as the continuity of the outer world. He recognises the extreme fragmentation of his inner life which I described earlier, and he will try to heal himself: "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" (38). E.M. Forster's famous exhortation springs to mind: "Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die" (HE 197). If Louis fails in the attempt, he fears his own non-existence: "I should be transient as the shadow on the meadow, soon fading, soon darkening and dying there where it meets the wood, were it not that I coerce my brain to form in my forehead; I force myself to state, if only in one line of unwritten poetry, this moment" (48). The same continuity of being is involved in his art as that which Crane gives him.

Storr suggests that one of the most valuable things art does for us is to harmonise our inner life: "It seems likely that when we either create something ourselves, or contemplate the creations of others, we are attempting to integrate
and reorganise our own inner experience". Here is the motive force of Louis's creativity, and its value to him: it may make possible an integration of his inner life. Hence also his commitment to the circle, the ancient symbol of integrated wholeness. It is likely that Virginia Woolf was conscious of the particular value to Louis of his creativity. As I pointed out earlier, she was aware of the extent to which her own creative experience composed her being: "I thought ... something very profound about the synthesis of my being: how only writing composes it: how nothing makes a whole unless I am writing" (AWD 208: May 1933). The Waves is basically concerned with the value of art to the artist; in my last quotation from Storr, however, he suggests that art has a similar value to the audience; in Between the Acts Virginia Woolf shows ways in which art may help integrate the inner life of the audience.

In his work too Louis pursues order: "I have helped by my assiduity and decision to score those lines on the map there by which the different parts of the world are laced together" (119); his work, as he sees it, consists of "from chaos making order" (119). In his work, as in his art, his sense of being is deeply implicated: "now upright standing in sun or rain, I must drop heavy as a hatchet and cut the oak with my sheer weight, for if I deviate, glancing this way, or that way, I shall fall like snow and be wasted" (119) — another instance of Virginia Woolf's continual insistence that artistic creation is not an independent activity, to be divorced from other aspects of life. There are continual interactions between Louis's art and his life; between his inner and outer semblances.

As Bernard searches for "the true story" (133, 154), so Louis is always alert for a superior "order":

Now grass and trees, the travelling air ... and our ring here, sitting, with our arms binding our knees, hint at some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly. This I see for a
second, and shall try tonight to fix in words, to forge in a ring of steel. (28)

But his attempt seems destined to be always inadequate. Because of the fears and reticences imposed by his psychic condition and the smoothing out inherent in the effort to forge a ring of beaten steel, too much will be left out. Bernard often feels Louis's eye on them: "adding us up like insignificant items in some grand total which he is forever pursuing in his office. And one day, taking a fine nib and dipping it in red ink, the addition will be complete; our total will be known; but it will not be enough" (66). A little later Louis's own words illustrate Bernard's point. Twice—and prominently, at the end of successive paragraphs—he declares: "I will reduce you to order" (68-9). The emphasis upon "reduce" is not casual: unable fully to participate in life, he limits the possibilities of his art. There is generally a meagreness about Louis: he is prim, careful, precise, and prefers a scrannel view across chimney-pots (156). His mind, however, also displays an opposing tendency: "I luxuriate in gold and purple vestments" (156) he says, and curiously there is a desire for copiousness implied in his compulsion to "plait into one cable the many threads, the thin, the thick, the broken, the enduring of our long history, of our tumultuous and varied day" (144). We have Bernard's testimony, though, that, despite "his success, finally" (173), the total will not be enough. It would appear that the very qualities which prompt Louis's dedication to creation will finally limit what he is capable of. (This strange paradox, the mixture of copiousness and paucity, is perhaps similar to what we find in T.S. Eliot's earlier poetry. There is undoubtedly an amplitude, a richness of reference, a feeling that the fate of civilisations is at hand, but, curiously, there is a meagreness—perhaps 'spareness' would be fairer—about this poetry.)

There are, as I have indicated, severe reservations implied about the extent of Louis's success as a poet, and again the qualities of his failure can be related to Virginia Woolf's theories about the condition of contemporary life and literature.
She believed that contemporary life was cursed by a greater degree of fragment-
ariness than earlier times - "Feelings which used to come single and separate do so no longer. Beauty is part ugliness; amusement part disgust; pleasure part pain. Emotions which used to enter the mind whole are now broken up on the threshold" (CE II 222) - and that where its literature was concerned it was "an age of fragments" (CE II 156). Eliot's poetry, she implies, consists of fragments of beauty - "I think that Mr. Eliot has written some of the loveliest single lines in modern poetry" (CE I 335) - and one may relate this to Louis's concentration on small units - "I shall assemble a few words" (120), "I force myself to state, if only in one line of unwritten poetry, this moment" (48). With hindsight, we may quarrel with her estimate of the achievement of Eliot, Joyce, Forster and others, but there still remains a large element of truth in her observations. Ehrenzweig writes about "the near-schizoid character of the excessive fragmentation found in so much modern art", and although he writes in terms completely different from those Virginia Woolf used, his conclusions are not so very different from hers. He is writing primarily of course about the visual arts, but the fragmentation he detects is just as evident in the literary arts. The recurrent 'crises' of confidence in the novel form, for instance, may well be related to the fragmentation in art and life which Virginia Woolf and Ehrenzweig wrote about.

(My emphasis, I should point out, on the short-comings Virginia Woolf indicated in her contemporaries' writings is not intended to imply that Virginia Woolf had lost faith in art - as some critics have suggested. "A Letter to a Young Poet" (CE II) and "How It Strikes a Contemporary" (CE II), among other essays, demonstrate a self-confident optimism, and this is the advice she gives at the end of "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown": "Tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure. Your help is invoked in a good cause. For I will make one final and surpassingly rash prediction - we are trembling on the
verge of one of the great ages of English literature" (CE I 337).)

Like St. John Hirst of The Voyage Out, Neville is primarily a scholar, and although we see little of him as an artist he is an interesting refinement of Virginia Woolf's detached scholar-artist figure. (Hirst and Neville were both based on Lytton Strachey.) Like Bernard, at first he seems simple: he is the glittering intellect who dislikes the messiness of life, who will retreat into a university burdened by his own gracelessness. From the first, he is analytically intelligent, and, unlike Louis, sees a satisfactory order in the world: "Each tense ... means differently. There is an order in this world; there are distinctions, there are differences in this world" (15). He will have no truck with Bernard's image-making: "But Bernard goes on talking. Up they bubble—images. 'Like a camel,' ... 'a vulture.' The camel is a vulture; the vulture a camel; for Bernard is a dangling wire, loose, but seductive" (27). Rejecting Bernard's "wandering thread", he will "explore the exactitude of the Latin language, and step firmly upon the well-laid sentences" (22). Associated with this distaste for imprecision, for the mingling of things, is the acute distress he feels at manifestations of messiness in life. Bernard's sloppy habits are anathema to him (60), and the conjunction of pert shop-girls and noble buildings offends and disgusts him (62).

At the same time, true to the 'type', his physical deficiencies debar him from participations and urge him towards the cloisters: "Since I am supposed ... to be too delicate to go with them, since I get so easily tired and them am sick ..." (17); "tell me whether I am doomed always to cause repulsion in those I love?" (63). Life with others is difficult; he cannot endure untidiness and triviality, and he cannot make himself amenable:

I cannot read in the presence of horse-dealers and plumbers. I have no power of ingratiating myself .... Let me denounce this piffling, trifling, self-satisfied world .... I could shriek aloud
at the smug self-satisfaction, at the mediocrity of this world, which breeds horse-dealers with coral ornaments hanging from their watch-chains . . . . They will drive me in October to take refuge in one of the universities, where I shall become a don. (51)

The picture becomes clear: he is an intellectual, who cannot 'cope' with the flurry of life; a passionless devotee of perfection: "Let us read writers of Roman severity and virtue; let us seek perfection through the sand" (128); a clinger "to the outsides of words" (34). The only glimpse we have of him creating seems to confirm this view: he cannot ride his inspiration, his emotions:

words that have lain dormant now lift, now toss their crests, and fall and rise, and fall and rise again . . . . I see it all. I feel it all. I am inspired . . . . Yet even as I feel this, I lash my frenzy higher and higher. It foams. It becomes artificial, insincere. Words and words and words, how they gallop—how they lash their long manes and tails, but for some fault in me I cannot give myself to their backs; I cannot fly with them, scattering women and string bags. (59-60)

These qualities are exactly what we find in Storr's analysis of the obsessive creative personality. The obsessional, he says, is "controlled, inhibited, and rigid in his ideas", and distrusts dirt, disorder and spontaneity; accordingly, he manifests a "meticulous concern with exactness". A reluctance to let go is a natural companion to these qualities. Neville displays all these characteristics, and this aspect of his personality is the one which has received most critical attention. In a way this is a pity, because if he were just thus he would be of far less interest than in fact he is. What is neglected often in studies of The Waves is an aspect of Neville which is diametrically opposed to those qualities I have described so far, and which, curiously, can also be related to theories about the obsessive individual.

Neville is far from being merely a thinking machine. He is capable of moments of greater passion and intensity than Bernard or Louis can rise to. Bernard has emotion; Neville has passion (the distinction is similar to the one I made between Mrs Hilbery's feeling, and her daughter's passion). And Neville's
passion cuts right across his demand for distinctions and order; indeed, almost abolishes it: "I cannot expose my violent and absurd passion to [Bernard's] sympathetic understanding .... I need someone whose mind falls like a chopper on a block; to whom the pitch of absurdity is sublime, and a shoe-string adorable" (37). So that, although he can say "There is an order in this world; there are distinctions, there are differences" (15), he also asks: "In a world which contains the present moment ... why discriminate? Nothing should be named lest by so doing we change it" (58-9). After this point he oscillates continually between the rational and the passionate; the ordered and, eventually, the entirely random. At university he declares: "That would be a glorious life, to addict oneself to perfection" (63); running alongside this though is its opposite: "It would be better to breed horses and live in one of those red villas than to run in and out of the skulls of Sophocles and Euripides like a maggot" (51). Clearly he is not simply "a disinterested seeker, like Louis, after perfection through the sand" (128); his passionate apprehension of his surroundings distracts his gaze: "Colours always stain the page; clouds pass over it. And the poem, I think, is only your voice speaking" (128-9).

These moments of passion and rebellion may be related to Storr's implied suggestion that the obsessive individual often resents his own rigidities, and often feels a need "to emancipate himself from the restrictions of his own personality". Neville is often preoccupied by the notion of personal freedom. We see this clearly in Neville's reaction to Dr Crane. Unlike Louis, he hates the authority of the headmaster: "The brute menaces my liberty ... when he prays .... his words fall cold on my head like paving-stones .... The words of authority are corrupted by those who speak them. I gibe and mock at this sad religion" (25). I would suggest that the hatred and fear here are deflections of a disgust at his own rigidities and chosen way of life, a disgust which is baldly expressed on occasion,
as in the outburst against the scholastic life.

Unlike Louis, then, who has one conscious aim, Neville oscillates between the rational and the passionate, the perfection of art and the ragged randomness of life. At one point, though, he attempts a synthesis: he tries to look at life as if it were art. (We may compare this with the relation Louis tries to establish between life and art.) He says: "It is better to look at a rose, or to read Shakespeare as I read him here in Shaftesbury Avenue. Here's the fool, here's the villain, here in a car comes Cleopatra, burning on her barge .... This is poetry if we do not write it. They act their parts infallibly" (140).

What he tries to do is to bring as much intelligence, intensity, and sensitivity to life as he would expend in his search for perfection: "I am marvellously on the alert. Certainly, one cannot read this poem without effort. The page is often corrupt and mud-stained, and torn and stuck together with faded leaves, with scraps of verbena or geranium. To read this poem one must have myriad eyes" (141). It is an uneasy attempt, though; it requires a detachment from life which is neither desirable, nor (for Neville at least) possible. His detachment is soon broken as he hears a footstep on his staircase: "Swept away by the old hallucination, I cry, 'Come closer, closer' " (142).

The last time we see Neville he rejoices, strangely for one who seemed the detached, ordered intellect, in the randomness of life, and emphasises his freedom from the habitual:

There are no repetitions for me. Each day is dangerous .... Suppose we read The Times; suppose we argue. It is an experience. Suppose it is winter .... The pipes have burst. We stand a yellow tin bath in the middle of the room. We rush helter-skelter for basins. Look there — it has burst again over the bookcase. We shout with laughter at the sight of ruin. (151)

There is no real indication, though, that he will not return to his other mode: that he will not rescue the books from the ruined bookcase and pursue his search for perfection.
Virginia Woolf often provides in her novels a character who implicitly comments upon her artists: as I showed in the previous chapter, Mrs Ramsay's philosophy and behaviour provide an illuminating commentary on Lily Briscoe's art; in The Waves, Rhoda fulfils much the same function in relation to Bernard, Louis and Neville. She is an indispensable part of the presentation of 'the artist'. However, one must be careful not to exaggerate her significance — as the Havard-Williamses have done, for instance. In a usually astute and intelligent essay — "Perceptive Contemplation in the Work of Virginia Woolf" — they recognise Rhoda's function in relation to the artists, but they also say that she is "the character who conveys Mrs Woolf's artistic thought most completely", and that "in Rhoda we find the culmination of her views on the nature of artistic creation". I would say that neither of these comments is true of Rhoda; she possesses one capacity essential to the artist — an ability to dream — but she cannot use it to create a work of art.

Rhoda's putative aesthetic capability has its roots in the depths of her personality; like Neville's, Louis's and Bernard's, it is an integral part of her being. She fears the cruelty of life: "A million arrows pierce me. Scorn and ridicule pierce me" (76); she is easily bereft of her sense of her own identity: "But here I am nobody, I have no face" (24); and, unlike Bernard, she finds no continuity in life: "One moment does not lead to another" (93). Distressed at the conditions of life, she retreats into her dreams — as Neville 'takes refuge' in a university. (Jinny, the character most adept at life, eschews dreaming — "I do not dream" (30).) We see the way she uses her dreaming in a moving passage in which, at a party, she tries desperately to interpose it between herself and those who might impinge upon her (as Bernard interposes phrases between himself and the stare of housemaids):

The door opens, the tiger leaps. The door opens; terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me. Let me visit furtively
the treasures I have laid apart. Pools lie on the other side of
the world reflecting marble columns. The swallow dips her
wing in dark pools. But here the door opens and people come;
they come towards me. Throwing faint smiles to mask their
cruelty, their indifference, they seize me. The swallow dips
her wings. (75-6)

Her only reality, then, lies in dreaming—only in dreams can she escape the
cruelty of life and neutralise the problem of identity. Cut off from ordinary
participations, she feels thin, empty, almost non-existent; and again, only dreams
can momentarily alleviate the terrible sense of emptiness: to one of her dreams
she goes "to replenish my emptiness, to stretch my nights and fill them fuller and
fuller with dreams" (99). The ambiguity of "replenish my emptiness" economically
suggests the real situation: her dreams produce unsatisfactory consolations, and
in the end only reinforce the sense of flimsy emptiness: "But this is a thin dream.
This is a papery tree. Miss Lambert blows it down. Even the sight of her
vanishing down the corridor blows it to atoms. It is not solid; it gives me no
satisfaction—this Empress dream" (41).

Rhoda is clearly related to Louis: he is one "in whose mind dreams have
power" (48), and he faces similar problems of identity and continuity. A diffuse
sense of fear surrounds him too. The difference is, however, that Rhoda has
less room in which to exercise free choice; she displays in a much more extreme
form those characteristics Storr describes as schizoid. Her detachment from life
is radical; Louis's is not. Dreams have far more power in her mind than they
have in Louis's—"Oh, to awake from dreaming" (20) she says at one point—and
the nature of her dreams approaches more nearly the pathological. Her dreams
and semblances at Hampton Court (158), for instance, are much closer to
Septimus Warren Smith's (in Mrs Dalloway) than they are to Louis's. Rhoda's
detachment from reality (which extends at times to the physical, so that she has
to touch something hard to return to herself) is not quite as extreme as Septimus's,
but it is perilously close to the pathological.
It is her ability to dream which associates her with the artists: frequently we see Virginia Woolf's artists in a state of detachment from the immediate physical world, and know that some inner agency is shaping and guiding the creative work which seems for the moment in suspension. As I showed in the previous chapter, this state is an essential stage in the evolution of Lily's painting: when she begins to paint, she feels that 'She had no attachment here ... and whatever did happen ... was a question, as if the link that usually bound things together had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off, anyhow' (L 227). This state of detachment, and this experience of disjunction, are necessary for a new act of creativity; and Rhoda's moments of dreamy detachment are very similar to it. Indeed, on one occasion there is a close verbal echo: Rhoda says: "I ... flutter unattached, without anchorage anywhere, unconsolidated" (87). The difference between floating and fluttering, though, points the difference between Lily and Rhoda. 'Flutter' suggests no control at all, whereas Lily's floating is not entirely unguided. Rhoda does not have the artist's capacity to use her dreams; to order and shape them; and thus produce a work of art. Charles Lamb said, in "Sanity of True Genius", "the true poet dreams being awake"; Rhoda dreams being asleep. And so she does not reach the position where she can say, with Lily, "Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together?" (L228). Her inner disjunction is so extreme that she cannot bring things together. The rest of her sentence illustrates the point: "I ... flutter unattached, without anchorage anywhere, unconsolidated, incapable of composing any blankness or continuity or wall against which these bodies move" (87). And again, in a more specifically artistic context, she says: "But I am not composed enough, standing on tiptoe on the verge of fire, still scorched by the hot breath, afraid of the door opening and the leap of the tiger, to make even one sentence" (77). Given this, I do not see how it can be said that Rhoda is "the character who conveys Virginia Woolf's
artistic thought most completely".

Rhoda's dreaming, then, takes place in a 'neurotic' vacuum. She is always looking away from the immediate situation—"Yes, between your shoulders, over your heads, to a landscape ... to a hollow where the many-backed steep hills come down like birds' wings folded" (99). We see here a clear example of a failure of integration: the inner and the outer do not come together. When Lily paints there is a continual dynamic interaction between her inner world and her immediate surroundings. Her observation of Mr Ramsay's voyage is an essential part of her painting. With Rhoda there is no interaction between inner and outer. We sometimes see them in uneasy juxtaposition— as when she imagines the mule on which she ascends the Spanish mountain to be her deathbed (145-7)— but the two never coalesce, never create something new.

This strange business of one thing in the real phenomenal world becoming transformed by the imagination is an important element in Virginia Woolf's developing ideas about the artist, and about the relations between life and art.

Rhoda often transforms one thing in the real world into something else. She does it ascending the Spanish mountain, and again at Hampton Court: "I see the side of a cup like a mountain" (158). But she, unlike Bernard with his description of Dr Crane's face, cannot make anything of these transformations. Her imaginative world is entirely private and inaccessible to others. We may compare Rhoda with Isa in Between the Acts, who also fails to make anything of her transformations; and contrast her with Miss La Trobe, who succeeds. The contrast between Rhoda's artistic barrenness and Miss La Trobe's fertility is underlined by Virginia Woolf's use of a common image for mental events which are superficially similar. Rhoda says: "I also see the railings of the square, and two people without faces, leaning like statues against the sky" (77). Her two figures do not speak (we remember Bernard's inability to hear the voice of the girl at Restover (58); Miss La Trobe's do: "There was the high ground at
midnight; there the rock; and two scarcely perceptible figures. Suddenly the tree was pelted with starlings. She set down her glass. She heard the first words" (BA 248). As I shall show later, these first words are specifically born out of a continual, fruitful, though never easy, communion between Miss La Trobe's inner world and her immediate surroundings, and the illusions and transformations she effects are in the service of a closer approach to reality; Rhoda's emphatically are not.

Bernard, Louis and Neville represent Virginia Woolf's deepest exploration into the motivation of artists: we see their arts in intimate relationships with the whole fabric of their lives. Their childhoods, their physical characteristics, their psychological conditions and their modes of perception all play decisive parts in determining what kinds of artists they become. The whole landscape of their experience, and the ways in which they think and feel about such things as time, love, and existence itself, condition their qualities as artists. Of course these things had been important in Virginia Woolf's previous novels — in all of her writings about artists she relates their art to their lives — but in The Waves they are handled in a more complex and coherent way and on a deeper — one might almost say metaphysical — level. In the next novel I discuss, the emphasis shifts from the artist himself to his relation with his audience.
NOTES

1. Wallace Stevens, "The Man with the Blue Guitar".


15 Loc. cit.
19 The two essays I have just quoted from were first published in 1919 and 1924.
22 Monks House Papers: Letter from Virginia Woolf to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 27 October 1931.
24 Henry James, The Figure in the Carpet, in Embarrassments (London, 1896).
26 Storr, p.52.
27 Ibid., p.50.
28 Ibid., Chapter Five, passim.
29 Ibid., pp.51-2.
30 Ibid., p.196.
31 Ibid., p.151.
33 Storr, p.92.
34 Loc. cit.
35 Ibid., p.93.
36 Ibid., p.94.
37 Ibid., p.103.
38 Peter and Margaret Havard-Williams, "Perceptive Contemplation in the


*Between the Acts represents the climax of Virginia Woolf's writings about artistry.*

Although Miss Le Thote is not a central character in the novel, her role is no less central. Her presence is expressed and imperative, a comment on the order of life at Poole's Hall, and in the relationship between the two we may discern more fully and coherently than in the earlier novels Virginia Woolf's feelings about the relation between life and art. I say 'feelings' because one cannot be sure that all the orders of relationship indicated in the novel were unconditionally held ideas which Virginia Woolf deliberately wished to convey. For although *Between the Acts* is in many ways a simpler and more approachable novel than *The Waves*, much of what it communicates it communicates indirectly—by means of symbolic juxtapositions, for example. Nevertheless, many of the relationships I have dealt with in the earlier novels—between art and society, art and nature, art and the artist, for instance—are more clearly articulated and refined in *Between the Acts*. For example, the clearest juxtaposition indicated between art on the one hand and nature and the primitive on the other becomes insistently apparent as nature voice comes to Miss Le Thote's aid during the presentation of the account, and the consequences
Neither the actor, nor the spectator, he was that most miserable of human beings, the artist.  

Between the Acts represents the climax of Virginia Woolf's writings about artists. Although Miss La Trobe is not a central character in the sense that Lily Briscoe is in To the Lighthouse and Bernard is in The Waves, her role is no less crucial. Her pageant is expressly, and in precise ways, a comment on the order of life at Pointz Hall, and in the relationship between the two we may discern more fully and coherently than in the earlier novels Virginia Woolf's feelings about the relations between life and art. I say 'feelings' because one cannot be sure that all the orders of relationship indicated in the novel were consciously held ideas which Virginia Woolf deliberately wished to convey. For although Between the Acts is in many ways a simpler and more approachable novel than The Waves, much of what it communicates it communicates indirectly - by means of symbolic juxtapositions, for example. Nevertheless, many of the relationships I have traced in the earlier novels - between art and society, art and nature, art and the artist, for instance - are more clearly articulated and defined in Between the Acts. For example, the closeness previously indicated between art on the one hand and nature and the primitive on the other becomes insistently apparent as nature twice comes to Miss La Trobe's aid during the presentation of the pageant, and the consequences
of this closeness are very nearly expressly stated.

Part of the reason, I believe, for the greater clarity of Between the Acts lies in the choice of a dramatist, rather than a novelist or a painter, as the artist figure. Not only can we come closer to experiencing her work of art, we can also see the audience's reactions and feel the interplay between artist and audience. The decision to use a local pageant as the focus of the art-life theme was a stroke of genius. Not only are the materials of the art those of real life—words, gestures, clothes (as in a theatre)—but the pageant is seen to be rooted in the life of the local community.

Virginia Woolf had always been interested in drama and the dramatic form: dramatic performances were often a feature of Bloomsbury gatherings, and Virginia Woolf wrote Freshwater for performance by her friends. It may, however, have been Forster's pageant England's Pleasant Land (published by the Hogarth Press) which prompted Virginia Woolf to use a pageant in Between the Acts. There are many fascinating parallels between Forster's and Miss La Trobe's pageants, and although I cannot discuss these at length it is worth pointing out that the details of the physical setting—the terrace, the trees, the slope up to the trees—are similar, and that Forster too insisted on the importance of the actors playing more than one part. (It would appear that Virginia Woolf was not present at the performance of Forster's pageant—it is not mentioned in her diary or Leonard's—but she did know more about it than she would naturally have known as publisher. Before it was performed Forster discussed it with her, asking for advice and suggestions, on at least one occasion.)

The pivot of Between the Acts is the relationship between those at Pointz Hall and the presentation of the pageant—as the relationship between Lily's painting and the Ramsay household is the focal point of To the Lighthouse—and so before one can gauge the significance of Miss La Trobe and her pageant one needs to have a look at life at Pointz Hall. Much of what we see there is rather depressing,
and some have deduced from this an increasing pessimism on Virginia Woolf's part—Philip Rahv, for example, has called Between the Acts her "last and most unhappy book .... a requiem for a lost art." This is to isolate one aspect of the novel and give it an absolute preponderance it does not have. Much of the horror of life at Pointz Hall is presented with a subtle yet sturdy comedy which is far from being despairing, and the grounds for optimism are often apparent—most obviously in the performance of the pageant.

Life at Pointz Hall is compact of frustration and sterility. The calm surface is deceptive; it is not the calmness of poised fulfilment, but a placidity which masks frustration. The evening before the pageant reveals some of the barely controlled pressures which work beneath the surface. Isa has feelings for Rupert Haines, the gentleman farmer, and she conceives of herself and him floating downstream borne on circles of romantic words; 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" (10). Throughout she is tugged by the desire for one and checked by the possession of the other. She sees herself as "abortive" (21), and, like the donkey who could not choose between hay and turnips "and so starved" (74), she cannot choose between inner and outer love. She merely repeats the cliché "The father of my children" (19), and continues to oscillate emotionally between her family and the ravaged attractions of the gentleman farmer. She bitterly resents the domesticity which is, with her own tacit consent, imposed upon her. Mr Oliver tells her that George is a cry-baby, and "'Oh,' she sighed, pegged down on a chair arm, like a captive balloon, by a myriad of hair-thin ties into domesticity" (25). A little later: "And she loathed the domestic, the possessive; the maternal" (25-6). But—unlike Sohrab who "never admitted the ties of domesticity" (25)—she almost paradoxically accepts her frustration, and this leads to a sense of imprisonment (82). Dodge also sees her incarcerated. When Giles approaches them in the barn Dodge notes a change
in her: "Then again she changed her dress. This time, from the expression in
her eyes it was apparently something in the nature of a strait waistcoat" (126).
And it is an imprisonment which increases her yearning. The yearning is allied
later to the wasteland waiting for water as Isa sits with the others on the terrace:
"'A beaker of cold water, a beaker of cold water,' she repeated, and saw water
surrounded by walls of shining glass" (82).

Giles's frustration is a counterpart of Isa's. Like hers, its roots can be
found in his dissatisfaction with the whole shape of his life. A problem "had
afflicted him for ten years. Given his choice, he would have chosen to farm. But
he was not given his choice. So one thing led to another; and the conglomeration
of things pressed you flat" (59). Beneath the immediate vexations of the afternoon,
we are continually aware of this radical frustration. Giles's suppressed fury
is immediately evoked by his sense of the terrible violence taking place in Europe:
"he was enraged. Had he not read, in the morning paper, in the train, that
sixteen men had been shot, others imprisoned, just over there, across the gulf,
in the flat land which divided them from the continent" (58). Violence is never far
from the surface in Between the Acts. Giles feels "manacled to a rock" (74), and
his baffled rage, his feelings of frustrated impotence, are compounded by the
twitter of small social necessities which the afternoon inflicts upon him:

Giles nicked his chair into position with a jerk. Thus only could
he show his irritation, his rage with old fogies who sat and looked
at views over coffee and cream when the whole of Europe — over
there — was bristling like .... He had no command of metaphor.
Only the ineffective word "hedgehog" illustrated his vision of Europe,
bristling with guns, poised with planes. (66)

His frustration is intensified by his inability to find the word.

Giles's rage achieves only one moment of expression — when he stamps on
the toad and snake:

There, couched in the grass, curled in an olive green ring, was a
snake. Dead? No, choked with a toad in its mouth. The snake was
unable to swallow; the toad was unable to die. A spasm made the ribs contract; blood oozed. It was birth the wrong way round— a monstrous inversion. So, raising his foot, he stamped on them. The mass crushed and slithered. The white canvas on his tennis shoes was bloodstained and sticky. But it was action. Action relieved him. (119)

This gruesomely vivid image, intensely realised in the movement of the prose, suggests first the gagging frustrations of Giles and Isa, and, indeed, of most of the other characters: they too are trapped in a situation they cannot escape. ("Birth the wrong way round" recalls Isa's word for herself— "abortive" (21).)

It also conveys something about the pageant; its stumbling, spasmodic presentation and the agony of frustration which Miss La Trobe feels when things go wrong. There is a direct reference to this image when illusion fails in the "Time Present" section of the pageant: Miss La Trobe quivers with panic and "Blood seemed to pour from her shoes" (210).

The frustration is not confined to Giles and Isa. Mrs Swithin, surprisingly, exhibits symptoms. She is always meaning to "set up a house of her own" (12), but, being unable to decide between Kensington and Kew (32)— as Isa and the donkey cannot decide between this and that— she never does. Her brother suffers the frustration of increasing old age and dreams of himself as a young man in India; he sees the hills, and himself as "a young man helmeted" (24). Again, frustration is pointed by a lack of water— "But no water" (24)— and we remember that at the beginning of the novel "they were talking" about the council's failure to bring water to the village (7). The aridity of their lives is perhaps inescapable.

The frustrations of life at Pointz Hall extend to the servants and the guests. Mrs Sands resents the conditions of her life; making sandwiches with Mrs Swithin she registers "a grudge she mustn't speak against people making work in the kitchen while they had a high old time hanging paper roses in the barn" (44); and as she ponders on whether Giles will catch his train we are told: "but what it meant to Mrs. Sands, when people missed their trains, and she, whatever she
might want to do, must wait, by the oven, keeping meat hot, no one knew" (45).

William Dodge perpetually reins himself in; accused of being an artist he "shook his head. 'I like that picture.' That was all he could bring himself to say" (62).

Clearly these reticences and failures in communication are related to the presentation of the pageant. (Another link is formed by the puppet-like behaviour of Dodge; when Mrs Swithin says she will show him the house "He rose with a jerk, like a toy suddenly pulled straight by a string" (83); Miss La Trobe uses the actors like a puppet-master, and she "twitched the invisible strings" (179) of the audience.)

Finally, the house itself is pressed into service as an emblem of frustration. It should have been built on the terrace, but it was built in the hollow (15-16); and the single wall, all that materialised of the intention to build another wing, stands as an apt symbol of the fragmented, curtailed lives of those at Pointz Hall.

The stifling pressures of frustration are attended by a pervasive sense of repetitiveness— a sense of things gone stale and repeated mechanically. Mrs Swithin's indecision about where she wants to live — Kensington or Kew? — presents her with "one recurring question" (32); posed yearly, there seems no likelihood of its ever being answered. Isa repeats, "The father of my children" to elicit in herself the appropriate response to her husband (19, 60). These formulaic repetitions banish the possibility of joy and spontaneity.

The pageant itself is, audaciously, caught up in the patterns of repetition. Part of the burden of Mr Streatfield's life is that he is "perpetually repairing the perpetually falling steeple, by means of placards nailed to Barns" (33). Miss La Trobe's pageant provides the cash to maintain the endless task of preservation. Its place in a series of repetitions is stressed by the exchange between Mrs Swithin and Mr Oliver when the former returns from the barn after nailing up the placard announcing the pageant. She tells Bart what she has been doing, and
The words were like the first peal of a chime of bells. As the first peals, you hear the second; as the second peals, you hear the third. So when Isa heard Mrs. Swithin say: "I've been nailing the placard to the Barn," she knew she would say next: "For the pageant."
And he would say:
"Today? By Jupiter! I'd forgotten!"
"If it's fine," Mrs. Swithin continued, "they'll act on the terrace ...."
"And if it's wet," Bartholomew continued, in the Barn."
"And which will it be?" Mrs. Swithin continued. "Wet or fine?"

Then, for the seventh time in succession, they both looked out of the window. (29)

The repetition of "continued" neatly reinforces our sense of endless and monotonous repetition. But there is a suggestion – conveyed with a vivid comic grotesqueness similar to the description of Giles squashing the toad/snake – that things may be different this afternoon. Before Mrs Swithin entered, Isa had been reading in The Times the story of a girl raped by troopers, and her reading concludes with "Then one of the troopers removed part of her clothing, and she screamed and hit him about the face" (27). When Lucy enters and the chimes begin, her hammer is incorporated in the newspaper report, and the chimes are accompanied by a new motif: "The same chime followed the same chime, only this time beneath the chime [Isa] heard: 'The girl screamed and hit him about the face with a hammer' " (29). The significance of this new conjunction is difficult to assess, but it may be that Isa's addition of the hammer is a bizarre parody of the creative act. Arthur Koestler, among others, suggests that a creative act takes place when two hitherto separate ideas, thoughts, images, and so on, are brought together; something new emerges from the conjunction. 7 Towards the end of the novel, Miss La Trobe performs such a creative act, bringing two things
together; the difference is, of course, that the coupling which occurs in Isa's mind has no issue; the union Miss La Trobe achieves produces the seed of her next play.

There are other subdued hints that things may be different today, but the accent is on sameness, and Giles feels that: "the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water" (59).

Here we encounter another major symbol which sustains the account of life at Pointz Hall. "Held you fast, like a fish in water" recalls the description of the lily pool and the fish (54-5), and one function of this passage is to emphasise the rigidity and unresponsiveness of those at Pointz Hall. They are like their fish, "glazed in their self-centred world" (55); they are held fast like fish in water.

I mentioned earlier the use of water images to stress the frustration of Isa and Mr Oliver, and such images are frequently used throughout. It is symptomatic that the house is far from the sea — a fact that is continually stressed (37-8, for example) — and that in the pageant the successive scenes take place further and further from the sea.

Throughout the novel the lily pool becomes established as an image of the individual mind, and it is probable that this was a conscious intention, for Virginia Woolf frequently uses water images to convey the workings of the mind. The clearest example is perhaps "The Pool", an unpublished short story. The narrator sits by the pool and gazes:

beneath [the surface] went on some profound under-water life like the brooding, the ruminating of a mind. Many, many people must have come there alone ... dropping their thoughts into the water .... it held in its waters all kinds of ideas, fancies, complaints, confidences, not printed or spoken aloud, but in a liquid state, floating one on top of another, almost disembodied.

Stephen Fox has recognised this aspect of the pool image in Between the Acts, saying that it becomes an image of the individual mind, and that many other elements of the novel are related to it, but I think he misses some important points
about the symbol. It does not only represent individual minds; it represents
in its early appearances the whole quality of life at Pointz Hall, the restrictedness
and unresponsive stagnation; and then it develops throughout as an emblem of the
revivifying qualities Mrs Manresa and Miss La Trobe bring to Pointz Hall, until
finally it becomes an emblem of the creative mind (247–8). In other words, the
emblem undergoes a complete transformation in the course of the novel.

(I might point out here that the importance of the image is also stressed
by the fleet of references to fish in the novel: there are the puns on sole/soul
(21, 59); Mrs Swithin's unpleasant memory of fishing with Mr Oliver (28); Isa's
memory of fishing with Giles (60); Mrs Sands preparing the fish for lunch (41-2);
and many other similar references.)

Implied in much of what I have been saying so far is that relationships at
Pointz Hall are sterile and distorted; there is little fruitful communication between
the people living there. This is shown clearly in the conversations, but it is
occasionally indicated in other ways. Mr Oliver's trick with the paper beak (17)—
another eerily grotesque incident—indicates how little he understands George;
Mrs Manresa behaves easily with men, but she veils her eyes with other women
(52). In conversation the lack of communication is plain, but often people are
merely silent. Haines says nothing during the opening scene—indeed he says
nothing throughout; Isa is silent as she observes Dodge when he first arrives (48);
Giles, too, is silent as he contemplates Dodge (62)—and although "his silence
made its contribution to talk" (62) it is not a creative contribution. Again, when
they are sitting outside waiting for the pageant to begin the whole group is silent,
and the silence is a clear symptom of something wrong in their relationships:
"They stared at the view, as if something might happen in one of those fields to
relieve them of the intolerable burden of sitting silent, doing nothing, in company.
Their minds and bodies were too close, yet not close enough .... We're too close;
but not close enough" (81). The silence of boredom, irritation, and frustration.
The central image of the lily pool is related to this aspect of their lives too. The shut in, silent world of the fish is an effective analogue: "Silently they manoeuvred in their water world, poised in the blue patch made by the sky, or shot silently to the edge where the grass, trembling, made a fringe of nodding shadow" (55).

As there are two aspects of the water images in the novel, so there are two aspects of the silence image: immediately after we are told about Giles's silence, they look at the painting of the lady in the dining room, and "she led them down green glades into the heart of silence" (62). (Mrs Manresa, naturally, soon drags them away.) This is a fruitful spiritual silence; it stands in the same relation to the reticent silence of the people at Pointz Hall as the silence of the South American night does to the reticence of the guests at the hotel in *The Voyage Out*.

Even when people are actually speaking at Pointz Hall there are lapses, lacunae, failures to cross the vast spaces which sometimes seem to separate them. In the first scene, the conversation consists of a series of barely connected utterances interspersed with Mrs Haines's "What a subject to talk about on a night like this!" (7-8). Sentences are begun and broken off: " 'But you don't remember ...' Mrs. Haines began" (8); " 'I remember,' the old man interrupted, 'my mother ...' " (9); and the scene ends with Mrs Haines silently gobbling: "Please, Mrs. Giles Oliver, do me the kindness to recognize my existence" (10). Elsewhere there are verbal cul-de-sacs: Isa, listening to the story of Mrs Manresa's grandfather, was told he was "exported" for some misdeed: "But the story got no further the only time Isabella heard it than 'exported', for the husband of the communicative lady ... took exception, pedantically, to 'exported', said 'expatriated' was more like it, but not the right word, which he had on the tip of his tongue, but couldn't get at. And so the story dwindled away" (50-1).

There seems to be a complete inability to hold a reasonably connected and
logical conversation; this would not matter if there was something being
communicated somehow, but there does not seem to be. Typical conversations
are those in the library and in the dining room. In the former the conversation
consists mostly of barely connected statements, and twice when there seems a
chance of coherence the conversation lurches and flounders. Lucy says that they
ought to pray for good weather: "'And provide umbrellas,' said her brother.
Lucy flushed. He had struck her faith. When she said 'pray,' he added 'umbrellas'"
(31). And so that discussion is curtailed. A little later Lucy asks what is the
origin of "touch wood," and her brother replies "superstition"; Lucy's reaction to
this is similar to her reaction to "umbrellas": "She flushed, and the little breath
too was audible that she drew in as once more he struck a blow at her faith" (33).
Again, words are the problem. It may be that they always are, but the
conversations at Pointz Hall are often truncated when someone asks for a definition
or the origin of something. When the conversation is taken up again, after the
description of the barn, there is a skillful presentation of a rambling, inchoate
discourse. The sea, fish, their past, mammoths, savages, dentists, marriages
with cousins, the Swithins — all these topics are casually wandered over in the
space of three pages (36-9), and Virginia Woolf neatly underlines the nature of
the conversation by having Lucy conclude: "'How did we begin this talk?' She
counted on her fingers. 'The Pharaohs. Dentists. Fish ... Oh yes, you were
saying, Isa, you'd ordered fish; and you were afraid it wouldn't be fresh. And I
said 'That's the problem ....' " (40). The horror takes shape of an endlessly
rambling, eternally cyclic and inconsequential conversation. Their failure to
communicate, and the crazy medley of topics of converse, is evidently related to
the presentation of Miss La Trobe's pageant.

I mentioned earlier that conversation often breaks down because of failures
to find the right word. Isa does not hear the story about Mrs Manresa's
grandfather because 'transported' is mislaid (50-1); Giles cannot find the metaphor
to express his conception of Europe as an embattled fortress (66); and later he
cannot use the word which would exactly define what he feels about William Dodge
(75). The infuriatingly elusive nature of words is indicated; we are not so much
in control of them as we think. The verbal is an important concern in *Between
the Acts* as the visual is in *To the Lighthouse*—which is appropriate, their
respective artists being a writer and a painter. In earlier novels, particularly
in *The Waves*, words and phrases are mentioned and speculated about, but in
*Between the Acts* the concern with words goes much deeper. It permeates the
entire novel; we are continually conscious of the principal medium through which
we communicate.

Giles feels that: "Words this afternoon ceased to lie flat in the sentence.
They rose, became menacing and shook their fists at you" (74); words in this
novel do assume an almost palpable presence. As a writer Virginia Woolf was
naturally fascinated by words: she broadcast a talk on words, 10 and, in "The Art
of Fiction", she regrets that in Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* "Almost nothing is
said about words" (CE II 54). They are often mentioned in her essays and in
her diary, and among the many feelings and ideas she communicates about them
is her sense of their 'concreteness'; a feeling for their physical presence. The
metaphors she uses to describe her involvement with them are often vigorous
and active: "But my mind is very bare to words — English words — at the moment;
they hit me, hard, I watch them bounce and spring" (AWD 127: April 1928). Here
it is the words that are active; at other times she is the active partner: "I feel
in my fingers the weight of every word, even of a review" (AWD 358: November 1940
Her attitudes towards words are many and various; sometimes they seem to
horrify her: she was downcast by the final preliminaries to the publication of
*Orlando*, and wrote: "I have corrected the proofs in a week; and cannot spin
another phrase. I detest my own volubility. Why be always spouting words?"
(AWD 129: June 1928). At other times she is proud of her control over them; about writing To the Lighthouse she says: "I rush at it and at once scatter out two pages. Is it nonsense, is it brilliance? Why am I so flown with words and apparently free to do exactly what I like?" (AWD 89: April 1926). With these complex, often contradictory attitudes, one would not expect to find a 'theory' about words enshrined in her novels; what we have are many hints and suggestions: about how people use words; about how they respond to them; about how words may establish their own particular tyranny, and so on.

The relationships between characters and the words they use to express themselves are naturally important elements in most novels; in Between the Acts it is an explicit concern. This is a highly complex matter, but a few examples will show what I mean. In passages I quoted earlier, Mr Oliver uses "superstition" and "umbrellas" as weapons in his campaign against Mrs Swithin's Christianity, and in both cases she reacts as if she had been physically threatened. He also uses her name as a weapon; when he assumes his authoritarian, bullying role he calls her 'Cindy': "'Cindy — Cindy,' he growled, as she shut the cupboard door" (28); "'Cindy,' he growled. And the quarrel was over" (34).

Mr Oliver uses words with meaning; the nurses employ them differently, enjoying the feel of them and establishing emotional community between themselves: "as they trundled they were talking — not shaping pellets of information or handing ideas from one to another, but rolling words, like sweets on their tongues; which, as they thinned to transparency, gave off pink, green, and sweetness" (15).

Uttering words with no meaning or motive can be soothing.

Words can also lull in other ways: they may relieve pressures caused by conflicting emotions. Isa, strung between inner and outer love, shelves her problem: "'The father of my children,' she added, slipping into the cliché conveniently provided by fiction" (19-20). "'In love,' she must be; since the presence of his body in the room last night could so affect her" (20). The inverted commas
economically suggest that her feelings for Haines also are conditioned by fiction, and that this is perhaps her only means of understanding herself. (One is reminded of how Rickie in *The Longest Journey* blunders because he applies art too directly to life.)

At this moment one might say that Isa is not fully in control of her words: the words are directing her. Something similar happens as Mrs Swithin shows Dodge the nursery: "'The nursery,' said Mrs. Swithin. Words raised themselves and became symbolical. 'The cradle of our race,' she seemed to say" (88). The original impulse comes from Mrs Swithin, but in raising themselves words are perhaps achieving a measure of autonomy: "The cradle of our race" emerges unbidden. Often in the novel we have the sense that words are active and alive, not passively waiting to perform their duties. Isa feels that she must be 'in love' with Haines partly because the words he said "could so attach themselves to a certain spot in her; and thus lie between them like a wire, tingling, tangling, vibrating" (20). Words seem part of a conspiracy drawing Isa towards Haines.

The image "like a wire" is apt, because at other times, too, characters seem to respond to words like puppets; like Miss La Trobe, words can dominate and control people. The clearest example of this occurs when Mrs Swithin says that she has been nailing the placard to the barn: "The words were like the first peal of a chime of bells. As the first peals, you hear the second; as the second peals, you hear the third" (29). The characters seem unable to prevent themselves uttering the peals that follow Mrs Swithin's announcement. And their helplessness is emphasised when they go through it all again when Mrs Manresa asks about the pageant (57). As I have said before, there is often in Virginia Woolf's novels a sense that art is a dangerous activity; in *Between the Acts* words themselves are sometimes seen as menacing and dangerous. There is Giles's apprehension of their menacing qualities (74), and Mrs Swithin's sense of the danger of playing on people's names (43).
Names too are continually important. One of the most persistent ways in which our attention is drawn to names is the frequent provision of alternatives. To mention a few: Mrs Swithin is called "Batty" by Grace (14), and there is a further comic play on "Batty" later when Isa talks about her dentists Batty and Bates (39); she is also called "Old Flimsy" (35) by the villagers and "Cindy" by her brother. The emphasis on the alternative names is given added weight as we are told: "The name Cindy, or Sindy, for it could be spelt either way, was short for Lucy" (28). The cat is called "Sung-Yen" in the drawing room and "Sunny" in the kitchen (41); as Mr Oliver is called "The Master" in the drawing room and "Bartie" in the kitchen (41). Miss La Trobe is called "Bossy", and when we are told this the emphasis on names is again reinforced, this time by a linkage: "'Bossy' they called her privately, just as they called Mrs. Swithin 'Flimsy'" (78). And not only human beings have alternative names: "There was another name in the village for nettle-rash" (79).

Just why there is this plethora of alternative names is an interesting study. One point is that different names confirm people in different roles for others. Mrs Swithin behaves differently with, and is treated differently by, Grace and Bart: "Batty" and "Cindy" signal these differences. One could link this aspect of the alternative names with Mrs Manresa's demonstrative use of William Dodge's christian name: "she called [him] 'Bill' publicly – a sign perhaps that he knew more than they did" (50). Playing the role of intimate she thus displays for others the closeness of her relations with Bill. In different roles people bear different names. Something a little obscure – I mean difficult to grasp and express – is suggested about the nature of relationships.

That Virginia Woolf thought names very important is indicated by the great care she took in choosing her character's names. Several letters demonstrate her concern to find the right name for Rachel Vinrace of The Voyage Out.
the names of the central characters of *Between the Acts* give off curious resonances. It may be a coincidence that most of them are associated with saints—there being so many saints—but the aptness of the associations suggests otherwise. Lucy Swithiq recalls two saints: the symbol of one is a lamp, and the other is associated with the superstition about forty day's rain. St Bartholomew's day is, I believe, connected with a similar superstition, and what the narrator says about Bart is related to St Lucy's lamp: "He would carry the torch of reason till it went out in the darkness of the cave" (240). Mrs Manresa's name relates her ironically to the ascetic St Ignatius Loyola (the cave in which he is reputed to have begun his *Spiritual Exercises* was at Manresa in Spain), and the cave is of course associated with Bart's cave, and with the eerie way in which the large room becomes a cave at the end of the novel. One could make many other such connections—Oliver and Rupert recall the antagonists of the Civil War—but I shall mention just two more: Isa's name ironically associates her with Isabell the She-wolf of France, an adulteress who did dispense with her husband, and Miss La Trobe is perhaps connected with Christian Ignatius Latrobe, a nineteenth-century composer who took orders in the Church of the United Brethren. The pun on Wolf and the associations of Latrobe's Christian names are probably not coincidental.

The most important manifestation of the power of words in *Between the Acts* is, naturally, the pageant, and in the description of it the preoccupation with words and names is continued. (This is one of the many ways in which the pageant is linked with life at Pointz Hall.) The difficulties those at Pointz Hall have with words is mirrored by the difficulty some of the actors have in remembering their lines ("great Eliza had forgotten her lines" (103)), and the trouble the audience has in hearing them ("The villagers were singing, but half their words were blown away" (96)). Similarly, different members of the audience have linguistic problems akin to those I have already mentioned: one asks "What's the
origin ... of the expression 'with a flea in his ear'?" (145), and Mrs Lynn Jones, responding to the Victorian scene, grapples with semantics: "Was there ... something - not impure, that wasn't the word - but perhaps 'unhygienic' about the home?" (202). She has the same problem in miniature that afflicts all writers: finding the right word. The stressed presence of many examples of the written word also focuses attention on words: there is Mr Page (apt name), the reporter, scribbling in his notebook (176, 211-12); Miss La Trobe referring to her script (209); the audience reading the programme (149); and in the eighteenth-century scene of the pageant itself there is the will - the whole plot of this play turns on the fact that Flavinda was interrupted before she could read the part of the will compelling her to marry according to her aunt's liking (161). Names too are important. The names of the actors are often given; and there are also specific comments on names. Mrs Elmhurst reads out from her programme the extraordinary names of the characters in the eighteenth-century play, and observes: "What names for real people! " (149). In the play itself, Lady Harridan says: "Here am I, Asphodilla - but my plain name Sue. No matter what my name is. Asphodilla or Sue - here am I" (170). Local names, of people and places, are also used with incantatory power (91, 65), and great resonant names are conjured with (164-5).

Freud wrote, in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, of the "truly magical power of words", and the importance of words and names in Between the Acts has something of the quality of primitive beliefs about the power of words and names - for instance, the belief that one acquires power over another by the possession of his name. This is most strongly felt when Mrs Swithin takes William Dodge on a conducted tour of the house. He has obscure reverential feelings for her but she forgets his name, and so he wonders: "Could he say 'I'm William'? He wished to" (87). One feels that there is a weight of significance
behind this greater than that normally involved when one casually 'gives' another one's name. When he does give his name, the release of emotion is unusual, but, because of what we feel about their growing intimacy, entirely apt: "'Mr . . . .' she began. 'I'm William,' he interrupted. At that she smiled a ravishing girl's smile, as if the wind had warmed the wintry blue in her eyes to amber" (89). There is an emotion tugging away beneath the surface which is impossible to define, but its importance is stressed when William reminds her of his name after the pageant (241).

Despite this aura, there are times when words either do not matter or are positively damaging, threatening. When Carinthia cries "My Love! My Lord!" (110) as the lover Prince approaches, Isa says: "It was enough . . . . All else was verbiage, repetition" (110); during the medley which ends the Elizabethan scene we are told: "It didn't matter what the words were; or who sang what" (113); and as Mr Streatfield rises to deliver his oration there is this prayer: "O Lord, protect and preserve us from words the defilers, from words the impure! What need have we of words to remind us? Must I be Thomas, you Jane?" (221-2). The extremity of the reaction to Streatfield's summing up is not merely conditional on the grotesqueness of his presence — or on his inept use of words; it is the words themselves which cause the dismay.

The attitude to words is, then, somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand we see all the hesitations and failures in people's use of words, and on the other we see the haze of mystery, of magical power which surrounds them. This ambivalence mirrors the contradictory questions I quoted earlier which Virginia Woolf asked about her relations with words.

One explanation of the unacted parts I mentioned earlier is that some of the characters are, willingly and unwillingly, constricted by the roles they are playing. As I have said, Giles has to be the city gent and play the host, and Isa must take the wife role. Mrs Manresa energetically plays the part of the "wild
child of nature" (52), and the whole group has a temporary collective role: "Our part," said Bartholomew, "is to be the audience. And a very important part too"
(73). This afternoon, the bushes beyond the lily pool play the part of the dressing room, and the terrace plays the stage (70-1). This is one of the ways in which the pageant illuminates the kind of life lived at Pointz Hall.

Closely related to the assumption of roles is the provision for many of the characters of fantasy worlds, and often one thing in the real world becomes something else under the pressure of these fantasy worlds. Mrs Swithin is much given to associating with dinosaurs, and this precipitates a comic encounter with Grace. Mrs Swithin is dreaming, with considerable zoological inexactitude, about "elephant-bodied, seal-necked, heaving, surging, slowly writhing, and, she supposed, barking monsters; the iguanodon, the mammoth, and the mastodon" (13), and when Grace enters

It took her [Mrs Swithin] five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer, to separate Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-covered grunting monster who was just about, as the door opened, to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest. (13-14)

Two worlds impinge. The same happens as Isa reads a newspaper report about a girl being raped by troopers; the troopers have told the girl that they have a horse with a green tail—"which was fantastic" (27)—and they drag her into the barrack room:

That was real [thinks Isa] ; so real that on the mahogany door panels she saw the Arch in Whitehall; through the Arch the barrack room; in the barrack room the bed, and on the bed the girl was screaming and hitting him about the face, when the door (for in fact it was a door) opened and in came Mrs. Swithin carrying a hammer. (27)

Again a door links two worlds.

At other times too imagined worlds hover mistily in the background. Mrs Swithin remembers one morning from her childhood, when she was fishing with Mr Oliver and he made her take the fish off the hook: "The ghost of that morning
in the meadow was in her mind as she replaced the hammer where it belonged on
the shelf" (28). Mr Oliver dreams of his young days in India, and again the 'real'
world comically punctures the imagined. He sees:

the hills, like grey stuff pleated; and in the sand a hoop of ribs;
a bullock maggot-eaten in the sun; and in the shadow of a rock,
savages; and in his hand a gun. The dream hand clenched; the
real hand lay on the chair arm, the veins swollen but only with
a brownish fluid now. The door opened. "Am I," Isa apologised,
"interrupting?" Of course she was — destroying youth and India. (24)

I suggested earlier that Isa's bringing together of two matrices of thought and
experience may be a strange parody of the creative act, and this business of one
thing becoming another in the context of illusion may be a similar parody. In art
one thing must often stand for something else — the sun for a king, bare boards for
Bohemia, different pigments on a flat surface for a water-seller — it is in the
intercourse of the real phenomenal world and the world of fantasy and imagination
that art is conceived. The illusion involved in the presentation of Miss La Trobe's
pageant is continually stressed, and thus another link is formed between the pageant
and life at Pointz Hall. The essential difference between Miss La Trobe and those
at Pointz Hall is, however, that she uses consciously the conjunction of inner and
outer: in the presentation of the pageant something in her mind is bodied forth
in the real world. Where inner and outer meet at Pointz Hall — Mrs Swithin's
hammer, the door, and the newspaper report, for instance — there is no fruitful
communion: there is only comic rupture. They are not so far removed from
reality as Septimus Warren Smith — who sees a dog turning into a man — but the
unreality of their world is continually stressed by this lack of connection between
inner and outer.

The arrival of Mrs Manresa relieves somewhat the rigidity of Pointz Hall,
but she too continually plays roles — she is such a mixture of authenticity and
affectation that all the edges are blurred. She is in a sense a revivifying agent;
this is indicated by referring her and those at Pointz Hall to the defining image
of the lily pool: "A spring of feeling bubbled up through her mud. They had laid theirs with blocks of marble" (57). Mr Oliver particularly responds to her blandishments: "She stirred the stagnant pool of his old heart even—where bones lay buried" (142). (These bones are, of course, related to those of the real pool (55).) She brings to Pointz Hall a certain order of liveliness and vitality which a little loosens their rigid postures:

Vulgar she was in her gestures, in her whole person, over-sexed, over-dressed for a picnic. But what a desirable, at least valuable, quality it was— for everybody felt, directly she spoke, "She's said it, she's done it, not I," and could take advantage of the breach of decorum, of the fresh air that blew in, to follow like leaping dolphins in the wake of an ice-breaking vessel. (51-2)

This is a desirable, or valuable, quality, in view of the state of life at Pointz Hall, but her continual role-playing—which is appropriate in art but not in life—will not allow our estimate of her to rest there.

During the presentation of the pageant she is a queen and Giles is to be her hero: "Somehow she was the Queen; and he (Giles) was the surly hero" (112). She uses Giles to feed her fantasy, and the blood on his shoes comes as an opportune stage prop: "Vaguely some sense that he had proved his valour for her admiration flattered her .... Taking him in tow, she felt: I am the Queen, he my hero, my sulky hero" (128). And so all afternoon she plays an arch affected game with him, which Cobbet sees through: "Cobbet in his corner saw through her little game" (131) ("The man under the monkey Puzzle without illusions" Virginia Woolf significantly called him in an early notebook. 14)

She also acts out the part of the wild child of nature: "with blow after blow, with champagne and ogling, she staked out her claim to be a wild child of nature, blowing into this—she did give one secret smile—sheltered harbour" (52). It is not only her affected consciousness of her ice-breaking role which will not let us accept her at face value; there is hypocrisy too. Mr Oliver says that the servants must have their ghosts, and Mrs Manresa, playing the wild child, says
that she must too, and "She became, of a sudden, solemn as an owl" (56). Then, vaunting her humanity, which can respond to "all flesh and blood" (49), she claims kinship with the lower orders— but only in the specific context of their absence: "'You see I'm on a level with . . . ' she waited till Candish had retired, 'the servants'" (56). There is another dash of insincerity as she pretends to assert the democratic principle, holding back at the door of the barn to let the villagers enter first: "It was for her, moved by the beauty of the Barn, to stand still; to draw aside; to gaze; to let other people come first" (121). Her essential nature proclaims itself a little later: "'Well, I'm dying for my tea!' she said in her public voice; and strode forward" (123). She is intimately a public person— unlike Isa, who is withdrawn. Miss La Trobe is also a public person, in the sense that she communicates her vision, though in a much more fruitful way. The concept of the public and private seems to have been consciously used by Virginia Woolf. An early manuscript note on Between the Acts suggests this: "the private feeling: the public". Throughout the novel there is a tension maintained between what is private and undisclosed, and what is public.

We cannot accept Mrs Manresa as the simple wild child she pretends to be, then— yet when she tells Isa about removing her stays and rolling in the grass, Isa thinks: "That's genuine . . . Quite genuine. And her love of the country too" (54).

Her mixture of genuineness and affectation is at first puzzling, but it can be accounted for. She may genuinely be a lover of the country and at the same time be playing a role of a lover of the country. The passage I quoted from Sartre's Being and Nothingness in the previous chapter again provides an illuminating parallel:

Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes towards the patrons with a step a little too quick . . . . All his behaviour seems to us a game . . . . He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter.
in a café. 

The same may be true of Mrs Manresa—she genuinely loves the country, yet she is playing at being a wild child of nature. This is what accounts for the air of affectation which surrounds her; her fervid exaggerated behaviour; her oglings, her sudden solemnities, and her wholehearted earnestness. There is a hint of this after the pageant: "But alas, sunset light was unsympathetic to her make-up; plated it looked, not deeply interfused" (236). We may take "make-up" to be a pun, and refer "plated" back to the description of the fish: "Under the thick plate of green water, glazed in their self-centred world, fish swam" (55).

I have suggested before that Virginia Woolf often implies that there is somehow a close relation between art and nature. In Between the Acts the theme is dealt with more explicitly than in any of her other books, and, as in Forster's The Longest Journey Rickie’s story about the Dryad unites the art and nature themes, so in Between the Acts Miss La Trobe’s pageant is the door between the natural and the artistic. Leaving the pageant for the moment, though, it is necessary to see what kind of relationship those at Pointz Hall have with the natural.

It is continually stressed that the house was built in the wrong place: it lies "unfortunately low on the meadow" (11), and when Mrs Swithin asks her brother why they built it in a hollow, facing north, he replies: "Obviously to escape from nature" (12). Later we see that he is right: "It was a pity that the man who had built Pointz Hall had pitched the house in a hollow .... Nature had provided a site for the house; man had built his house in a hollow" (15). The siting of the house is an emblem of the retreat from nature; an image of disjuncture. Complete escape is, of course, impossible, and this is pressed home by a wealth of natural images.

In the first scene birds and cows are plainly audible, and most of the characters are described in terms of natural images. That the family has not
escaped nature entirely is emphasised by the animal activity in the barn — the place where the pageant was to take place if the weather broke: "A hen strayed in; a file of cows passed the door; then a sheep dog; then the cowman, Bond" (36). Later there is a more insistent description of the undomesticated animal life of the barn, emphasising the point: "Mice slid in and out of holes or stood upright, nibbling. Swallows were busy with straw in pockets of earth in the rafters. Countless beetles and insects of various sorts burrowed in the dry wood" (119-20).

The description continues relentlessly. The brief sketch of Bond the cowman which follows the first description of the barn suggests his closeness to nature: "he was like a withered willow, bent over a stream, all its leaves shed, and in his eyes the whimsical flow of the waters. 'Hi—Huh!' he cried suddenly. It was cow language presumably" (36) — and this closeness to nature seems to be connected with his greater responsiveness to art. Later on, as the audience awaits the beginning of the pageant: "They glared as if they were exposed to a frost that nipped them and fixed them all at the same level. Only Bond the cowman looked fluid and natural" (94). Throughout the novel fluidity is close to naturalness, and both are related to art: rain saves the pageant at one point.

Not everybody at Pointz Hall has cut himself off from nature, then. George, Isa's young son, certainly has not, and one incident involving him neatly establishes Pointz Hall's attitude to nature. The nurses are trundling the perambulator up and down the terrace — the natural site for the house — and George discovers a yellow flower. (Yellow is an important natural colour throughout the novel; Sohrab has yellow eyes (25); Sung-Yen is yellow (41); there is a yellow rose in the dining room (45).) A sort of epiphany of the natural takes place:

The flower blazed between the angles of the roots. Membrane after membrane was torn. It blazed a soft yellow, a lambent light under a film of velvet; it filled the caverns behind the eyes with light. All that inner darkness became a hall, leaf smelling, earth smelling of yellow light. And the tree was beyond the flower; the grass, the flower and the tree were entire. Down
on his knees grubbing he held the flower complete. (16-17)

(This incident had its origin in an experience of Virginia Woolf's childhood; it is recounted in Moments of Being. 17) The splendid vision George has is then unnaturally and brutally broken by his grandfather: "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) — a terrible perversion of the natural, similar to, and in as violent a context as, the horse with the green tail which Isa reads about (27). Oliver is far from being a tree god avenging the violation of the flower and does not teach the boy "the terror of Pan", as Gay maintains. 18 Once more, one thing is standing for another: Mr Oliver is impersonating a bird. The complex of images does not end there— Mr Oliver bawls to his dog "bounding and bouncing among the flowers" (17), and hectors and coerces until:

as he cringed at the old man's feet, a string was slipped over his collar; the noose that old Oliver always carried with him ....

George looked at the dog only. The hairy flanks were sucked in and out; there was a blob of foam on its nostrils. He burst out crying. (18)

It is when George sees the distress of the noosed dog that he cries, not, as old Oliver thinks, when he was frightened by the peaked monster: the bounding, bouncing dog reduced to cringing submission.

There is a further extension of the nature images as nature makes a vain attempt to call attention to itself: Mr Oliver strolls off uncrumpling his newspaper:

"But the breeze blew the great sheet out; and over the edge he surveyed the landscape— flowing fields, heath and woods. Framed, they became a picture. Had he been a painter, he would have fixed his easel here"— as Miss La Trobe fixes her stage here — "where the country, barred by trees, looked like a picture.

Then the breeze fell. 'M. Daladier,' he read finding his place in the column, 'has
been successful in pegging down the franc. . . . " (18-19). The call of The Times is stronger than the call of nature or art.

Another aspect worth mentioning—particularly because it directly relates the family's attitude towards nature to the staging of the pageant—is the frequent references to weather forecasts. The breeze that blows out Mr Oliver's newspaper was "foretold by the weather expert" (23), and when Mr Oliver reads out the weather forecast a little later "they all looked at the sky to see whether the sky obeyed the meteorologist" (30). This is of a piece with their general attitude to nature. As Sohrab is coerced, they would coerce the weather; nature must be controlled and circumscribed. Later, however, we see that it is bad weather—rain—which saves the illusion at one moment during the pageant.

Miss La Trobe's attitude towards nature is very different from that of the adults at Pointz Hall: she selects the bushes which are vibrant with butterfly life as the site of the dressing room—"It was the very place for a dressing-room"—"just as, obviously, the terrace was the very place for the stage" (71). The appropriateness of her choice of stage is confirmed later: "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). Her choice is also ratified as nature—in the unpromising persons of cows and rain—saves the pageant at crucial moments.

The quality of life at Pointz Hall is further displayed by the attitudes of the family to the works of art it possesses. There are many references to these works of art and substitute works of art—references to encyclopaedias, guide books, histories, volumes of poetry, paintings, porcelain and so on. Mrs Swithin uses The Outline of History as fuel for "increasing the bounds of the moment by flights into past or future" (14). She does not use her imagination creatively, as Miss La Trobe does; she seems more to wallow in the pictures conjured up by the Outline. The library itself—"the heart of the house" (22)—stands as a
distressing symbol of their condition: "Books are the mirrors of the soul" (22) says the foolish flattering lady, and in this case it is "a tarnished, a spotted soul ... the mirror that reflected the soul sublime, reflected also the soul bored. Nobody could pretend ... that the looking-glass always reflected the anguish of a Queen or the heroism of a King Harry" (22-3). This vision of the soul bored may explain the kind of fantasy worlds which inhabit Pointz Hall; there is a hint that there is a relationship between the books and Mr Oliver's dreaming: "But the master was not dead; only dreaming; drowsily, seeing as in a glass, its lustre spotted, himself, a young man helmeted" (24). The constant references to mirrors anticipate, of course, Miss La Trobe's use of reflecting surfaces at the end of the pageant.

As many critics have noted, there are continual allusions to many different periods of English literature throughout the novel. I shall not discuss these in detail, but will touch on their general effect. What is important, I feel, is the attitude of those at Pointz Hall to art in relation to the presentation of the pageant.

Izida meditates about books as reflectors of the soul—"There they were, reflecting. What?" (26)—and she finds no cure in them for her spiritual toothache:

What remedy was there for her, at her age ... in books?
Book-shy she was, like the rest of her generation .... Yet as a person with a raging tooth runs her eye in a chemist shop over green bottles with gilt scrolls on them lest one of them may contain a cure, she considered: Keats and Shelley; Yeats and Donne .... None of them stopped her toothache. For her generation the newspaper was a book. (26)

Hence the newspaper report of the rape; the constant references to The Times; and the ironic presence at the pageant of Mr Page the reporter "representing the local paper" (92)

For Bart too there is no help in books. Distressed by Giles's unhappiness, he goes into the library: "Books: the treasured life-blood of immortal spirits. Poets: the legislators of mankind. Doubtless, it was so. But Giles was unhappy...
A great harvest the mind had reaped; but for all this, compared with his son, he did not care one damn" (138). One is reminded, particularly in Isa's search for a "cure" of the quotation from Forster that I cited in the introduction: "The arts are not drugs. They are not guaranteed to act when taken" (AH 86). Isa and Bart see this perhaps, but they see no other use for art. Art is valuable, though; as Forster says in the same essay, it can help; in ways that perhaps we cannot specify. One suggestion of what art can bestow comes as the family and guests look at the painting of the lady in the dining room: "They all looked at the lady. But she looked over their heads, looking at nothing. She led them down green glades into the heart of silence" (62)—the same spiritual silence which is connected with art in The Voyage Out. Other suggestions about the ways in which art is valuable are implicit in the presentation of the pageant and the audience's reactions to it.

Isa's poetry is another symptom of the malaise at Pointz Hall. It is essentially private—unlike Miss La Trobe's pageant—and expresses covertly a vague recognition and nerveless resentment of her situation at Pointz Hall. Thus it is concerned with some of the main themes of the novel, and employs some of its major symbols. Doubtless it is not good poetry, but it should not entirely be dismissed—even if only because it elicits a fairly complex response. One feels sympathy for Isa's position and annoyance that she accepts it; and also amusement at the way it is presented.

There is a shadowy consciousness of her position in her poetry; continually the urge for escape is implied: "Where we know not, where we go not, neither know nor care ... flying mounting through the air .... there to lose what binds us here" (21). The ultimate escape is death, and a desire for death surfaces occasionally: "But what wish should I drop into the well? ... That the waters should cover me ... of the wishing well" (124). The reason for the desire for escape is hinted at, and it suggests an awareness on Isa's part of the nature of
life at Pointz Hall: "Let me turn away ... from the array ... of china faces, glazed and hard" (123-4); "Do we know each other? Not here, not now" (76).

We cannot entirely sympathise with Isa, though, because her poetry suffers continual comic interruptions:

"Flying, rushing through the ambient, incandescent, summer silent ..." The rhyme was "air". She put down her brush. She took up the telephone. "Three, four, eight, Pycombe," she said. "Mrs. Oliver speaking .... What fish have you this morning? Cod? Halibut? Sole? Plaice? There to lose what binds us here," she murmured. "Soles. Filleted. In time for lunch please," she said aloud. (21)

The comedy of the juxtaposition of this kind of poetry with ordering fish is underpinned by the puns inevitably suggested by 'air' (as she puts down her 'airbrush'), and by 'soles'. (Apart from the subject of her poetry, the pun on soul is suggested by "Books are the mirrors of the soul" which appears on the next page.)

Basically her poetry consists of a private and silent monody — "Didn't she write her poetry in a book bound like an account book lest Giles might suspect?" (62) — which is a feeble response to her life. In this she is the direct antithesis of Miss La Trobe; the irony of Mrs Manresa's suggestion that she wrote the pageant is extreme (75).

Miss La Trobe, like Mr Carmichael of To the Lighthouse, is a mysterious and somewhat inaccessible character. The audience knows little about her; her origins are obscure: "But where did she spring from? With that name she wasn't presumably pure English. From the Channel Islands perhaps? ... Very little was actually known about her" (71-2) — just as little is known about Mrs Manresa; her life history "was only scraps and fragments to all of them" (50). The little we know about Miss La Trobe's past consists of a string of failures: "Rumour said that she had kept a tea shop in Winchester; that had failed. She had been an actress. That had failed" (72). She is, however, a compelling and potent figure. Striding about 'backstage', directing the actors, and, occasionally, execrating
the audience, she is intensely realised. That she is different from those around her is unmistakable.

She is clearly set apart from those at Pointz Hall—more so than Lily is from the Ramsay household. She is not perhaps "altogether a lady" (72). She is energetic, domineering, emotional, and, like Lily and Orlando, she is androgynous: "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" (72)—Virginia Woolf, of course, believed that "if you can forget your sex altogether ... so much the better; a writer has none" (CE II 151). Miss La Trobe visits pubs alone; what she wants is "a whisky and soda ... and coarse words descending like maggots through the waters" (238). Naturally she is cut by "the women in the cottages with the red geraniums" (247). She is the artist alone; perhaps even something of a scapegoat figure: "She was an outcast. Nature had somehow set her apart from her kind" (247). As an outsider, she is very like Virginia Woolf's conception of herself: "I'm fundamentally, I think, an outsider. I do my best work and feel most braced with my back to the wall" (AWD 308: November 1938). And so Miss La Trobe more than accepts her isolation. Mr Streatfield recognises that she wishes "to remain anonymous" (227), and when the pageant is over she takes pains "to avoid attention" (244). Isolation is perhaps a condition of being an artist; Virginia Woolf certainly thought it was: "The artist after all is a solitary being" (CE I 122).

With her vigour, emotion, and commitment, Miss La Trobe brings something alive and real into the sterile atmosphere of Pointz Hall. She is creative and can stir other people to be creative. She can loosen the frozen sensibilities of Pointz Hall. When we are told that she refuses to be mixed up in local politics, and that she "splashed into the fine mesh like a great stone into the lily pool" (79) we refer this not only to village life, but to the symbolic pool at Pointz Hall.

Mrs Manresa— to whom she stands oddly in close relation— had earlier
that afternoon been her forerunner; with Mrs Manresa's arrival one could "take advantage of the breach of decorum, of the fresh air that blew in, to follow like leaping dolphins in the wake of an ice-breaking vessel" (52). The ice-breaking image is repeated later as the pageant gets under way: "Muscles loosened; ice cracked" (96), and the surface similarity between Miss La Trobe and Mrs Manresa is stressed by Mr Oliver as he thinks that Mrs Manresa made him "feel less of an audience, more of an actor" (129). On the other hand, when Mrs Manresa leaves she "ripped the rag doll and let the sawdust stream from his heart" (236). Ultimately she has taken, not given; Miss La Trobe gives. Mrs Manresa may be seen as yet another parody of the artist.

There is another connection in which a superficial similarity is undercut by a deeper difference: their relation to nature. As I have said, Mrs Manresa deliberately plays the role of one close to nature; Miss La Trobe makes no such claims, yet there is an indication that she is genuinely and simply what Mrs Manresa makes such efforts to appear to be — closely in touch with nature. Mrs Bingham suspects "that she [Miss La Trobe] had Russian blood in her" (72). Later, as Miss La Trobe prepares for the beginning of the pageant, there are swallows around her "dancing, like the Russians, not only to music, but to the unheard rhythm of their own wild hearts" (80). Miss La Trobe is more authentically in "touch with Nature", as Rickie expresses it in The Longest Journey (85), and nature helps in the performance of the pageant: "Nature once more had taken her part" (211). (The ambiguity of "taken her part" is deliberate, I think.) As Lily Briscoe's painting is related to the rhythms of nature, so Miss La Trobe's pageant is. It is interesting in this connection that Virginia Woolf wrote of nature as a dramatist in "Ellen Terry": "But there is, after all, a greater dramatist than Shakespeare, Ibsen, or Shaw. There is Nature" (CE IV 72).

There is no doubt that Miss La Trobe is a serious and committed artist. Throughout the pageant she is in the bushes observing everything, responding to
everything, and controlling as much as she can. The extremities of her emotions reveal the depths of her involvement: when things go well she "glowed with glory" (163); and when they go badly: "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'" (210). Swinging incontinently between these extremes, she is, as Mrs Bingham suggests, very Russian (72). Russian too is her crude vigour and her absolute commitment to one obsessive concern — her pageant. Comedy is combined in a very Russian manner with this passion: the very extremes of her emotions — "Blood seemed to pour from her shoes" (210) — though in themselves essential to her achievement, are comic. So too are the gestures with which she becomes a naval commander: "She had the look of a commander pacing his deck .... Out came the sun; and, shading her eyes in the attitude proper to an Admiral on his quarter-deck, she decided to risk the engagement out of doors" (77). The intentness with which she marshals her forces for a little village pageant is slightly absurd. But there is a serious side to the superimposed image of battle: as I have pointed out before, Virginia Woolf had the feeling that the artistic life was a dangerous one. Lily Briscoe is also exposed to obscure dangers.

With these characteristics Miss La Trobe is a type of the romantic artist. She is also something of a visionary. Not quite in the Blakean sense, of course; in the sense that she, like Virginia Woolf, has a vision of life that she needs to impart. W.H. Mellers and Jean O. Love have both suggested that Miss La Trobe does not know what her pageant means, but there are definite indications that she does. Apart from the continual watchfulness over the effects of her pageant — bringing in music to bridge gaps, despairing when the emotion she has brewed is spilt by the interval (113) — there is her initial conception of figures "Winding in and out between trees" (71); her joy when someone sees: "the voice had seen; the voice had heard. For a moment Miss La Trobe behind her tree glowed with glory" (163); and her despair when she thinks they haven't seen: "She hadn't made
them see. It was a failure, another damned failure! As usual. Her vision escaped her" (117-18). She is a romantic, then, driven by an inner spur to communicate her vision: "Hadn't she, for twenty-five minutes, made them see? A vision imparted was relief from agony ... for one moment ... one moment"(117).

Her desire for others to share her vision, and the doubts she has about whether she succeeds, illustrate the perpetually ambivalent relationship the artist has with his audience: she is an outcast (247), yet she organises the pageant to raise funds to repair the church steeple (33); she is "a slave to her audience" (113), but she also has power over them—she twitches "invisble strings" (179); she oscillates violently between belief and disbelief in her success, until she arrives at the impossible impasse: "Audiences were the devil. O to write a play without an audience— the play" (209-10). This is hardly practical, and she is immediately recalled to the realities of the situation: "But here she was fronting her audience. Every second they were slipping the noose" (210). The artist must have an audience, and the relationship between him and his audience is rarely satisfactory. Only to a very limited extent can he know whether he has succeeded in imparting his vision— or whatever we call it that an artist seeks to impart. Thus Miss La Trobe is continually on tenterhooks.

I said that although she is "a slave to her audience" Miss La Trobe also has power over them: she twitches "invisble strings" (179); to some extent she can make them feel what she wishes them to feel. In this she is, like Mr Carmichael in To the Lighthouse, something of a magical figure. Her 'power' is frequently referred to—most often when it leaves her: "Her power had left her" (165)—and she seems possessed of uncanny abilities: "Many eyes, Miss La Trobe knew, for every cell in her body was absorbent, looked at the view" (178). As in To the Lighthouse, the artist is seen as priest, witchdoctor, magician, and at one point Miss La Trobe expresses her "desire for immolation" (219). The setting for the pageant is quasi-religious: Miss La Trobe "paced between the birch trees. The
other trees were magnificently straight. They were not too regular; but regular enough to suggest columns in a church; in a church without a roof; in an open-air cathedral" (80). The alternative venue for the pageant—the Barn—is also enveloped in a religious aura: "It was as old as the church, and built of the same stone, but it had no steeple.... Those who had been to Greece always said it reminded them of a temple" (34). The religious and the quasi-religious are ever-present elements in the novel—Mr Oliver's abrupt "superstition" (33), the egregious figure of Mr Streatfield (221-7), the prospective missionaries in the Victorian scene of the pageant (194), and so on. And it may not be too fanciful to see the fish dinner eaten before the pageant as a preparatory sacramental event—especially in view of the pun on "soles".

What lies behind these references is probably the durable conception of the artist as priest or as creating god. Orlando thinks of writers as a "sacred race"; poetry is her religion; and her sin a superfluity of sibilants in her writing. And then John Fowles says: "The novelist is still a god, since he creates". It is interesting in this context that drama has a more direct line back to primitive religious beliefs than other art forms, and was originally associated with man's relationship with nature. Koestler, in The Act of Creation, says: "Dramatic art has its origins in ceremonial rites—dances, songs and mime—which enacted important past or desired future events: rain, a successful hunt, an abundant harvest". It may even be—remembering the spiritual aridity of Pointz Hall, and Isa's desire for water—that we may see Miss La Trobe in some ways as being the tribal shaman who brings water, and the pageant as being what Huizinga calls a "mehetic" ritual. Another link with the primitive is provided by the myth of the waste land and the fisher king which moves in the background of the novel.

Miss La Trobe is unquestionably an abundantly creative person. The conditions of the pageant in themselves suggest to her a fresh play—as Virginia Woolf often saw a new novel swimming up beyond the one she was immediately
engaged on, so Miss La Trobe sees a new play impending: "Miss La Trobe stopped her pacing and surveyed the scene. 'It has the makings ...' she murmured. For another play always lay behind the play she had just written" (78). Perhaps the most valuable aspect of her creativity, though, is that she can stir others to be creative. Mrs Swithin says: "People are gifted—very. The question is—how to bring it out? That's where she's so clever—Miss La Trobe" (73), and she thanks Miss La Trobe for the pageant and tries to express what it has given her. Miss La Trobe interprets her attempt to say what she feels: "'You've stirred in me my unacted part,' she meant ... 'You've twitched the invisible strings,' was what the old lady meant" (179-80). This is one of the most valuable things art can do for us: it can reveal and stimulate parts of ourselves which had been neglected, and, in view of the nature of life at Pointz Hall, her gift is vital. It surpasses Mrs Manresa's gift; it gets to "the roots beneath water" (80).

Her creativity is shown, at one point, to be conditional on the differences between her and the villagers—and by implication those at Pointz Hall. About the squabbling actors it is said: "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" (80). It is the conventions assumed by those at Pointz Hall which prevent them from leading creative lives, and this is pointed by the fact that it is the least conventional of them—Mrs Swithin—who attempts a communication with Miss La Trobe. Miss La Trobe, being free of the atmosphere of Pointz Hall, can use illusion creatively; those at Pointz Hall, as I showed earlier, use illusion in a sterile and uncreative way. There are also suggestions that there is a connection between Miss La Trobe's closeness to nature and her ability to use illusion. Nature twice helps when illusion fails during the pageant (165, 210), and some sort of relation between illusion and nature is suggested by Miss La Trobe's choice of the site nature had provided for the house as the stage for her pageant, and by the activity of the butterflies in the dressing room: "Red Admirals
gluttonously absorbed richness from dish cloths, cabbage whites drank icy
coolness from silver paper" (78).

Love says, in Worlds in Consciousness, that Miss La Trobe's identity and
significance as symbolic image are as obscure as the pageant (implying that
both are obscure); I would disagree with both prongs of this criticism. Miss La
Trobe's identity is only obscure in that we know little about her past life; her
personality and presence are strongly impressed on us, although only in outline.
She is a somewhat mysterious figure, yet the main lines are clear. Her significance,
as I have said, lies in her relation, and in the relation of her pageant, to the kind
of life lived by the people at Pointz Hall. There are many different links between
her and them—them collectively and as individuals. Isa as poet is clearly seen in
relation to Miss La Trobe as dramatist; the one producing private art which is
hidden in a book bound like an account book (21), the other producing public art,
in which even the audience is finally involved. An alignment exists too between
Miss La Trobe and Mrs Manresa: both bring qualities to Pointz Hall which stir
the fixed surface of life—Miss La Trobe's being the most fruitful. Interestingly,
Mrs Manresa is in many ways Isa's opposite—particularly in the fact that she is
a public person. Isa's energies—with the possible exception of her vague longing
for Haines—are directed inwards; Mrs Manresa's are directed outwards, are
continually absorbed in creating for others an image of herself. Miss La Trobe
in her art achieves a strange fusion of the private and the public: the initial
creation is a private process (though it is affected by outer life), and the
realisation of the pageant is public. In her case there is a passage between the
private and the public, the inner and the outer, as there is between the conscious
and unconscious levels of her mind.

Miss La Trobe's significance is also suggested on a symbolic level, and
although this order of significance cannot be clear—as opposed to obscure—it
is a vital element in the novel. I have mentioned the central, locating image of the lily pool (54-5) and the suggestion that Miss La Trobe's function is to disturb its complacent placidity; the lily pool image is also used later to convey some ideas about the effects of the pageant. Lucy, still preoccupied by the pageant, sees in the lily pool "the great carp himself, who came to the surface so very seldom" (239), and clearly this conveys something about the effect the pageant had on her. Towards the end of the novel the pool symbol is transformed from one suggesting a stilted, glazed existence, to one that conveys something about the creative process. Conceiving the idea for her next play, Miss La Trobe "Put down her case and stood looking at the land. Then something rose to the surface" (246)—as the carp rose to the surface for Lucy. Later, making the connection with the lily pool clearer, Miss La Trobe listens, and "Words of one syllable sank down into the mud .... The mud became fertile. Words rose above the intolerably laden dumb oxen plodding through the mud. Words without meaning—wonderful words" (247-8). Other images, or symbols—stone, tree, snake/toad—also play their part in relating Miss La Trobe to life at Pointz Hall, and the individuals who live there; and although the significance of these relations is perhaps impossible to analyse clearly, it is not obscure. On a symbolic level they are precise and decisive. The relation between Miss La Trobe and the rest of the novel is the most important element in Between the Acts. Much is missed if this essential relationship is not recognised.

In many ways Miss La Trobe's pageant is the nub of Between the Acts—at one time the novel was to be called The Pageant (AWD 359: November 1940)—and the problem of its meaning is obviously an important one. It is also supremely difficult, as the variety of critical responses to it indicates, and I think it is deliberately difficult. Not only the nature of the problem, but the fact that there is a problem is a basic part of the novel. This is stressed by the way in which the reader is continually faced by the question of meaning.
Partly this is done through the reactions and comments of the audience: they continually wonder about the meaning— with little help from Miss La Trobe:

"'When Mr. Streatfield asked her to explain, she wouldn't,' said Mrs. Swithin" (249). Cobbet of Cobb's Corner mutters: "What was in her mind, eh? What idea lay behind, eh? What made her indulge the antique with this glamour—this sham lure, and set 'em climbing, climbing, climbing up the monkey puzzle tree?" (116). One anonymous voice asks: "Did you understand the meaning?" (230), and another says: "Take the idiot. Did she mean, so to speak, something hidden, the unconscious as they call it? But why always drag in sex ..." (232-3). Some rudimentary solutions likewise concentrate our minds on the problem of meaning. During the confused bawling of the Elizabethan play Isa wonders: "Did the plot matter? ... The plot was only there to beget emotion. There were only two emotions: love; and hate. There was no need to puzzle out the plot. Perhaps Miss La Trobe meant that when she cut this knot in the centre" (109). An anonymous voice grasps the significance (correctly, according to Miss La Trobe) of Flavinda's long rambling lovespeech: "'All that fuss about nothing!' a voice exclaimed .... the voice had seen; the voice had heard. For a moment Miss La Trobe behind her tree glowed with glory" (163). Here we may feel safe in echoing the voice, but at other times it seems unwise to accept a preferred, or implied, interpretation. During the eighteenth-century play, whose prologue is spoken by Reason, Sir Spaniel and Lady Harridan plot a mercenary marriage and seal their compact with a kiss. "Pah! She stinks!" (157) exclaims Sir Spaniel, and old Bartholomew's immediate reaction is: "Reason, begad! Reason!" and he "looked at his son as if exhorting him to give over these womanish vapours and be a man, Sir" (157). His reaction here is clearly based on his personal reverence for reason, and his annoyance with his son for being unhappy with his wife and life, and, equally clearly, we would be foolish to accept his reaction. Lady Harridan's and Sir Spaniel's actions are no more guided by reason than is Giles's behaviour. Similarly, Giles's
reaction to the same play is entirely conditioned by his personal circumstances:

"A moral. What? Giles supposed it was: Where there's a Will there's a Way. The words rose and pointed a finger of scorn at him. Off to Gretna Green with his girl; the deed done. Damn the consequences" (174-5). He interprets the moral as a rebuke to his will-less inaction, but deserting with Mrs Manresa to Gretna Green would be no more reasonable than remaining with Isa, and in view of the swarm of puns surrounding "Where there's a Will there's a Way" we cannot simply accept his interpretation. However, the pageant does more than act "as a reflector of the self", as Richter suggests, and its significance does not lie in its representation of "a certain attitude or emotion discernible in the thoughts or actions of those who watch it." The reactions of the audience help to stress that there is a problem of meaning; perhaps something is implied about the nature of meaning in art.

Miss La Trobe and Mr Streatfield also direct our attention to the problem of meaning.

In an effort, presumably, to convey more of her 'meaning' than there is in the plays, Miss La Trobe delivers a speech at the end of the pageant. She is careful to retain her authorial anonymity, however: the speech "came from the bushes - a megaphonic, anonymous loudspeaking affirmation" (218). The speech does not quite represent the author coming forward in her own person to give an authoritative interpretation of her work; but one feels that, although at first the comments seem somewhat tangential, they are relevant to the matter of the plays, and give hints towards interpretation.

In endowing Miss La Trobe with this reticence, and apparent unhelpfulness, Virginia Woolf remains close to the realities of life - or art; authors - such as Conrad - are notoriously unhelpful as commentators on their own work. Some modern parallels are interesting; the emergence of the interpreting voice at the end is much like the 'devices' used by some modern novelists: John Fowles, for
instance, is constantly and complexly present as interpreter, guide and mystifier in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. He raises in his novels—as Virginia Woolf does, particularly in *Between the Acts*—fundamental questions about the nature of art, about novel writing, and about the relationship between the artist and his audience.

To return to Miss La Trobe's speech: it is not an interpretation, but it does suggest ways in which one may consider the pageant. First of all she makes it clear that it has a direct relevance to ourselves: "Let's break the rhythm and forget the rhyme. And calmly consider ourselves. Ourselves" (218). What follows are examples of our defects, culminating in: "Look at ourselves, ladies and gentlemen! Then look at the wall; and ask how's this wall, the great wall, which we call, perhaps miscall, civilization, to be built by (here the mirrors flicked and flashed) orts, scraps and fragments like ourselves?" (219). Here we remember the lone wall that stands as a reminder of a previous generation's desire to add a wing to Pointz Hall, and also that the progression in the pageant is a paradigm of the progression of civilisation. There remains Mr Streatfield's 'interpretation': "'What message,' it seemed he was asking, 'was our pageant meant to convey?" (223).

Streatfield is a splendidly grotesque character—"a tramp's old boot" (221), "an intolerable constriction" (221), "a rook" (222). He is also "their representative spokesman; their symbol; themselves" (222)—perhaps mostly their representative "As one of the audience" (223), for his halting, awkward address aptly stands as a sample of the stumbling efforts of the audience to grasp a meaning: "Speaking merely as one of the audience, I confess I was puzzled. For what reason, I asked, were we shown these scenes?" (223). He offers an interpretation which Bart later feels is a travesty—"La Trobe had been excruciated by the Rector's interpretation" (237). It is not entirely that his interpretation is wrong; it is that it is partial, inadequate, and couched, inevitably and
offensively, in terms dictated by his profession: "To me at least it was indicated that we are members one of another .... Dare we, I asked myself, limit life to ourselves?" (224). He does, however, suggest some of the main centres of meaning in the plays (and in the novel): "We act different parts; but are the same .... I thought I perceived nature takes her part .... Scraps, orts and fragments! Surely, we should unite?" (224-5). The latter suggestion is borne out by Miss La Trobe's comments, and by the effect of the music played immediately after her speech (220-1). Generally though the impression his speech gives us is of inadequacy; he is an incongruous figure, presented with withering irony. Perhaps he may stand as the critic who stumbles without much guidance in pursuit of the author's meaning. His disclaimer itself encourages this speculation: "I will offer, very humbly, for I am not a critic ...my interpretation" (223); and this might account for the trace of venom in the irony.

A sizable portion of the novel, then, impels us to think about meaning in art, and this reflects Virginia Woolf's continual, if often prickly and ambivalent, preoccupation with criticism. Her first published writings were reviews (in the Guardian and The Times Literary Supplement) and it is interesting that before and during the writing of Between the Acts she was contemplating a new criticism. In 1937, when she was wondering whether a new novel would "swim up", she wrote: "I don't want to write more fiction. I want to explore a new criticism" (AWD 285-6: August 1937). And while she was writing Between the Acts her comments on it in her diary are often coupled with adumbrations of a critical work:

Two things I mean to do ... to write ... lots of little poems to go into P.H. [Pointz Hall] ... to collect, even bind together, my innumerable T.L.S. notes: to consider them as material for some kind of critical book: quotations? comments? ranging all through English literature as I've read and noted it during the past 20 years. (AWD 305: October 1938)
She wrote only a few chapters of the "critical work" but these things ("quotations", "comments", "ranging all through English literature") are there in Between the Acts. (This was not her first attempt to combine the forms: in 1909 she had written "Memoirs of a Novelist", a piece of criticism about a novelist she had invented.) The pageant itself represents a critical history of English literature; it does not merely depict the "history of England" as Forster, for one, believed (TC 257). To be more explicit, in the presentation of the Elizabethan play many of the points made in "Notes on an Elizabethan Play" (CE I) are either encapsulated or commented on. Isa's comments about the plot, for instance, reflect what Virginia Woolf said about plots in this essay (CE I 56-7); the yelling mellay in her Elizabethan play reflects "the intermittent bawling vigour" which she sees as a characteristic of the real Elizabethan play (CE I 56); and the differences between her Elizabethan and Victorian plays echo the contrast she made in this essay (CE I 55-6). She has written her critical book, then, into Between the Acts, and thus added an unusual dimension to the novel: a discussion of art in general. For most of the arts (painting, music, dancing, writing, architecture) are somehow represented — sometimes even compared: Bart asks: "Since you're so interested in pictures ... why, tell me, are we, as a race, so incurious, so irresponsible and insensitive ... to that noble art, whereas, Mrs. Manresa ... has her Shakespeare by heart?" (67). (We may detect Roger Fry's influence here: he was always complaining about the insensitiveness of the English to the visual arts.) Occasionally too she calls our attention to the fact that we are reading fiction: Isa, repeating "The father of my children", slips into "the cliché conveniently provided by fiction" (20). Similarly, Miss La Trobe in her pageant calls attention to the fact that the audience is watching a play: the first two scenes present plays within plays, and Sir Spaniel says of Flavinda and Valentine: "I caught 'em at the play together" (153). And the host of references to works of art maintains our awareness that art itself is a 'subject' in Between the Acts. This does not mean that 'life' is
neglected; art is part of life. It may be more accurate to say that the relations between life and art, a perennial concern of Virginia Woolf’s, are a subject.

To return to the question of meaning: the main accent is on the immense difficulty the artist has in imparting one. Viewing the problem from the opposite direction, Etty Springett laments: "How difficult to come to any conclusion" (192). Part of the difficulty is rooted in the very conditions of art: what is needed is a collaboration between artist and audience. In "How should One Read a Book?" Virginia Woolf says: "Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice" (CE II 2). But an audience is heterogeneous, composed of many people with different backgrounds and personal situations. Inevitably, then, the audience will glean different meanings from a work of art: "They all looked at the play; Isa, Giles and Mr. Oliver. Each of course saw something different" (249). I have already shown that Giles’s and Bart’s reactions are simple compounds of their situations and what they see before them on the stage. Similarly, the audience’s reaction to the Victorian play is different from its reactions to the earlier ones, because some members of it have memories of the Victorian period, and their different attitudes to their memories condition their response to what Miss La Trobe shows them.

Another difficulty arises from the audience’s different attitudes to meaning itself. Mrs Swithin asks Isa if she got the meaning, and when Isa shakes her head Mrs Swithin continues: "But you may say the same of Shakespeare" (204). She rests content with her uncertainty; she does not need an easily expressed meaning. On the other hand, another member of the audience, commenting on Mr Streatfield’s interpretation, says: "He said she meant we all act. Yes, but whose play? Ah, that’s the question! And if we’re left asking questions, isn’t it a failure, as a play?" (233). These differences increase the complexities of the relation between the artist and his audience, and there are some indications that Miss La Trobe, like Virginia Woolf, is alive to the problems involved in conveying meaning, and is
also trying to say something about it in her pageant. The last quoted member of
the audience continues: "I must say I like to feel sure if I go to the theatre, that
I've grasped the meaning ... Or was that, perhaps, what she meant?" (233).
During the incomprehensible bawling in the Elizabethan play, Isa feels that Miss
La Trobe is saying something about how an audience should react to plays: "Did
the plot matter? ... There was no need to puzzle out the plot. Perhaps Miss La
Trobe meant that when she cut this knot in the centre?" (109).

In all this we can see, perhaps, a parody of the different views critics hold
of meaning — just as we can see Mr Streatfield as a caricature of the critic. One
inference might be that Virginia Woolf was becoming disillusioned with criticism;
if all is conditional upon our subjective lives, then what is the point of writing
criticism? — what counts is what a work of art means to the individual. This is
no doubt to some extent true, but I don't think this is what Virginia Woolf had in
mind. There is no dogma in the novel, and the fact that she chose to write about
audience reaction and criticism in a novel, and contemplated a new book of criticism,
suggests that she still thought writing criticism a valuable activity. After all,
even Streatfield's interpretations are useful, and a comparison of them with
Miss La Trobe's comments is illuminating. Though we see art through different
eyes, comparisons of what we see are not futile; the pool of collective understanding
is valuable; perhaps this pool of understanding was what Virginia Woolf was trying
to portray in the many different responses she provides to the pageant.

After having indicated the many different reactions to the pageant, it may
seem temerarious to stand back and provide another, but it is necessary. The
meaning of the pageant for the reader lies in its structure and its complex
relationship to Pointz Hall. I have suggested that life there is constricted and arid,
and (taking the hint from Miss La Trobe) that the pageant represents on one level
the 'development' of civilisation. Perhaps 'degeneration' is a more appropriate
word; Bart says at one point that those at Pointz Hall are "degenerate descendents" (62). There is a continual stress on history all through the novel; the pageant represents a historical process; and it may be that the type of progression it exemplifies accounts for the situation at Pointz Hall. In an essay on George Gissing Virginia Woolf said: "The past, with its literature and its civilization, solidifies the present" (CE I 301), and if we take into account the kind of progression shown in the pageant we can see more clearly the what and the why of life at Pointz Hall.

The first scene of the pageant—representing the Elizabethan era—is full of life and adventure. The symbolic figure of Queen Elizabeth is sturdy and vigorous (101), and her introductory verse is full of freedom and vitality, smacking of adventure at sea:

Mistress of ships and bearded men (she bawled)
Hawkins, Frobisher, Drake,
Tumbling their oranges, ingots of silver . . . (102)

The play itself is direct, and the language is alive and gripping. The play deals simply with basic subjects—love, death, hate—and there is "no need to puzzle out the plot" (109). What plot there is concerns the recovery of a lost child who is finally recognised as the Prince. Love is conveyed with no fuss:

"Look where she comes" he cried ....
All arms were raised; all faces stared.
"Hail, sweet Carinthia!" said the Prince, sweeping
his hat off. And she to him, raising her eyes:
"My Love! My Lord!"
"It was enough. Enough. Enough," Isa repeated. All
else was verbiage, repetition. (110)

At Pointz Hall love is a very different matter. The crone's death follows, consummated by the borrowed eloquence of the priest, and the scene ends with a lively medley: "an entrancing spectacle (to William) of dappled light and shade on
half clothed, fantastically coloured, leaping, jerking, swinging legs and arms" (112).
The play is romantic, unrealistic, poetic; and its accompaniments — music, processions — beget simple emotions. Nothing could be more removed from life at Pointz Hall.

The next play — a blend of the Restoration 'Comedy of Manners' and its eighteenth-century developments — is very different. With the advance of civilisation, Reason, not a great energetic queen, mounts the rostrum; emotion, presumably, is banished. And the principals are now lords and ladies not Queens and Princes.

Peace and civilisation — according to Reason's prologue — are now the characteristics of life. The play itself is built around a plot representative of the complexity of eighteenth-century plots, and the language is now not at all simple and direct.

Sir Spaniel talks in flowery flattery, larded with confused classical allusions:

"Methought, as I came along the Mall the air was something brighter than usual. Here's the reason .... Venus, Aphrodite, upon my word a very galaxy, a constellation!" (151). Some Elizabethan vigour of language survives, however;

Lady Harridan says Flavinda has "eloped ... with the entrails of a time piece, the mere pendulum of a grandfather's clock" (169).

With the greater complexity, the Romance has vanished; as Sir Spaniel says: "A done with rhymes. Rhymes are still-a-bed. Let's speak prose" (152). Imagination is now redundant: "What pleasure lies in dreaming" (148). Marriage is not arranged for love, but for money. There is romantic love between Flavinda and Valentine, but it is stilted, verbose, and perhaps too much conditioned by the reading of Romances (162). The voice's "All that fuss about nothing!" (163) is an apt comment on Flavinda's absurd long speech; the speech is a far cry from the attitudes about love suggested by the Elizabethan play.

The direct vigour of the Elizabethan play has vanished, and this is pointed by the increased domesticity of the eighteenth-century play; indeed, our attention is at one point deliberately drawn to this aspect: helpers arrange the
stage for the play: "In the middle they stood a table. On the table they placed a china tea service. Reason surveyed this domestic scene" (149). (Commenting on Congreve, Virginia Woolf said that one way in which the world of his comedies is different from that of the Elizabethans is that: "It is an enclosure surrounded with the four walls of a living-room" (CE I 79).) We are approaching the claustrophobic domesticity which Isa resents at Pointz Hall. A counterpart of this is the changed aspect of the sea. An easy commerce with the sea was suggested by the Elizabethan play; it is now a threat: Lady Harridan's brother Bob was drowned at sea, and Flavinda had to be rescued from it (152, 154). Lady Harridan says: "But the brig, frigate or what they call it, for I've no head for sea terms, never crossed a ditch without saying the Lord's Prayer backwards, struck a rock" (154). We remember the emphasis on the fact that Pointz Hall is far from the sea.

The key note of the Victorian play is authority, with the implied constriction it imposes. The presiding symbol is neither a great Queen nor Reason, but a waterproofed police constable, directing traffic. '"But my job don't end there", he says (189), and he lists his other charges: 'Over thought and religion; drink; dress; manners; marriage too, I wield my truncheon. Prosperity and respectability always go, as we know, 'and in 'and" (190). Authority is also heavily wielded by the Victorian parents in the play: "Mrs. H. (authoritatively) Eleanor and Mildred will now sing 'I'd be a butterfly' " (198). We have almost reached the conditions of life at Pointz Hall in 1937; life is regulated by "the laws of God and Man" (189).

As a concomitant of this, the play itself is unrelievably domestic. Its only concern is the family picnic, with the parents rigorously presiding. The action revolves around filling the kettle, gathering sticks, and eating. Its central image, one might say, is "the connubial respectable tea-table-token, a cosy with honeysuckle embossed" (197), and the main concern "O has Mr. Sibthorp a wife?" (197).

Marriage and love, with love coming a poor second, is a much duller affair than in the previous plays. In place of the sudden flash of the Elizabethan play and the
lively, if sordid, plot and counter-plot of the eighteenth-century play we have
Mrs Hastings, a typical Victorian mother, worrying about marrying off her
daughters (196-7), and the young 'lovers' who will marry because of their mutual
determination to convert the heathen. There is no romance, little imagination;
everything is deathly dull. Mrs Hastings, with unconscious humour, accents this,
talking about a dispute between Mr Piggot and Mr Hardcastle about archeology:
"last year they quite came to words" (196).

Several things emphasise the falling off from the life of the other periods:
the principals are now middle-class Victorians, not princesses, nor even lords
and ladies. The religious connection is duller; in place of the eloquent speech
of the Elizabethan priest, and the holy virgins of the Age of Reason, we have the
connubial Mr Sibthorp. On a symbolic level, the action is now quite removed from
the sea: they picnic beside a lake. And although the overseas dominions are
mentioned it is in the context of ambiguous Victorian morality and authority:
Budge says: "I take under my protection and direction the purity and security of all
Her Majesty's minions; in all parts of her dominions; insist that they obey the laws
of God and Man" (189).

The style of the play mirrors the dulness. It is domestic and realistic — as
the previous plays were not. It is in unrelieved prose; even the "O has Mr. Sibthorp
a wife" song is written out in prose. Its language is tired; it has not even the
occasional sparks of the eighteenth-century play; many words convey little matter.
(One might compare this sense of a falling off with what Virginia Woolf said of
the differences between the Elizabethan era and the eighteenth century in "Lord
Chesterfield's Letters to his Son" (CE III 80).)

The Victorian play, then, approaches very near to the conditions of life at
Pointz Hall — domestic, dull, constrained — and sometimes this becomes almost
explicit. The smothering respectability of the Victorians is demonstrated by their
conception of the home, and Budge implicates Pointz Hall in this conception: "From
where I stand, truncheon in hand, guarding respectability, and prosperity, and the
purity of Victoria's land, I see before me—(he pointed: there was Pointz Hall;
the rooks cawing; the smoke rising) 'Ome, Sweet 'Ome' (200). More tentatively
I would suggest that the action of the Victorian play reflects the afternoon's events
at Pointz Hall. The picnic followed by the entertainment— the young persons
singing—may mirror the meal at Pointz Hall followed by the pageant.

We now arrive at the twentieth century—at the fragmented modern conscious-
ness. The solid Victorian edifice is now in ruins: the broken wall is modern
civilisation (211-12). I have said in earlier chapters, especially in relation to
Louis of The Waves, that Virginia Woolf had an acute sense of the fragmented nature
of the modern mind—in "The Narrow Bridge of Art" she said: "Emotions which
used to enter the mind whole are now broken up on the threshold" (CE II 222)—and
the bleak statement of the mirrors, reflecting ourselves (214-17), is perhaps
her most successful rendering of this fragmentation. What they point to is one
aspect of life at Pointz Hall, the split-mindedness which I commented on earlier.
We remember Isa's mirrors, in which "she could see three separate versions
of her rather heavy, if handsome, face (19), and the inner and outer loves: "Inside
the glass, in her eyes, she saw what she had felt overnight for the ravaged, the
silent, the romantic gentleman farmer . . . outside . . . was the other love; love
for her husband, the stockbroker" (19). People at Pointz Hall live divided
discontinuous lives; there are continual splits in their beings. (The mirrors, of
course, also suggest the means by which modern artists may deal with the world
in fragments: in an essay on Coleridge Virginia Woolf said: "Yet it is the only
way of getting at the truth—to have it broken into many splinters by many mirrors
and so select" (CE III 220).)

The degeneration is pressed home when art merges into life as Streatfield
makes his speech; the symbolic progression Great Queen—Reason—Authority
is concluded as he mounts the soapbox: "There he stood their representative spokesman; their symbol; themselves" (222). He sums up in his person the quality of life at Pointz Hall; twentieth-century life. Its self-doubt, hesitance, constriction, - "he touched the white gate that enclosed his neck" (223) - and its inability to communicate: "His command over words seemed gone" (226). The ominous noise of the planes, which interrupts his speech and brings Giles's fears into the pageant, warns of the possibility of the total destruction of civilisation.

What we have in the pageant, then, is a representation of the 'advance' of civilisation and society, with the individual becoming more and more circumscribed, and being compelled more and more to play specific parts. A certain social cohesion has been achieved at the expense of the individual, and now even this cohesion is threatened. We see this progression against the background of many references to the past, references which suggest no dynamic continuity with the past: it too is a litter of fragments. Old Bartholemew's "degenerate descendents" (62) now looks right. From the liveliness and vigour of the Elizabethan era we arrive at the fragmented dulness of the twentieth century. All levels of the progression - a progression similar to that in Orlando - show to the disadvantage of Pointz Hall. It is far from the sea (37), with only a lily pool, not even a lake; its inhabitants are powerless to govern their lives; contact and conversation between them is mundane and repetitive; life is entirely domestic and frustrating. Art merges into life as we see that Pointz Hall is the necessary next step in the sequence presented by the pageant.

We are not, however, left with this chilling pessimism: much of the novel suggests possible remedies for this appalling condition. Miss La Trobe's speech is far from despairing; it ends thus: "All you can see of yourselves is scraps, orts and fragments? Well then listen to the gramophone affirming" (220). What the gramophone affirms is the possibility of union, and not only social union, but inner psychic harmony. It displays what art can do for us, and hints at the
necessity for the natural and the primitive to find their place, for all levels of the mind to achieve expression:

The tune began; the first note meant a second; the second a third. Then down beneath a force was born in opposition; then another. On different levels they diverged. On different levels ourselves went forward; flower gathering some on the surface; others descending to wrestle with the meaning; but all comprehending; all enlisted. The whole population of the mind’s immeasurable profundity came flocking; from the unprotected, the unskinned; and dawn rose; and azure; from chaos and cacophony measure; but not the melody of surface sound alone controlled it; but also the warring battle-plumed warriors straining asunder: To part? No. Compelled from the ends of the horizon; recalled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united. (220)

Art, then, may be a healer; the passage I quoted from Anthony Storr in my previous chapter is again apposite: "It seems likely that when we either create something ourselves, or contemplate the creations of others, we are attempting to integrate and reorganize our own inner experience". 31

If we now look more closely at some of the parallels between life at Pointz Hall and the presentation of the pageant, we shall see, perhaps, why things have gone wrong, and possible remedies.

I showed earlier how important illusion, fantasies, and roles are in the life of Pointz Hall; they are also vital, of course, for the pageant. Illusion is the mainstay of art; when Miss La Trobe feels her illusion failing "Blood seemed to pour from her shoes" (210). Continually during the presentation of the pageant we are made aware of artistic legerdemain. Actors’ identities are guessed at, and sometimes settled by the audience: "From behind the bushes issued Queen Elizabeth - Eliza Clark, licensed to sell tobacco. Could she be Mrs. Clark of the village shop?" (101). We are given, with consummate economy, a glimpse of her everyday personality - "She could reach a flitch of bacon or haul a tub of oil with one sweep of her arm in the shop" (101) - and of the means by which she is turned into Queen Elizabeth - "her cape was made of cloth of silver— in fact swabs used to scour saucepans" (101). The change is extreme— village shopkeeper to great
Queen, scouring swabs into cloth of silver— and intentionally so, to call our attention to the illusion. To press the point home, some individual actors are identified as playing different parts: Mrs Otter of the End House plays "An aged crone" and Lady Harpy Harridan (107, 150); and Mr Streetfield observes: "Did I not perceive Mr. Hardcastle here [a character in the Victorian play] ... at one time a Viking?" (224). The stage too is transformed at times: "helpers, issuing from the bushes, carrying hurdles, had enclosed the Queen's throne with screens papered to represent walls. They had strewn the ground with rushes" (106). Even the audience plays a part in the communal creation of illusion: "'Our part,' said Bartholomew, 'is to be the audience. And a very important part, too!'" (73). The spectators are always aware of their role as audience, with all its duties and restrictions.

The main agency which transforms Mrs Otter into Lady Harridan is her costume, and here is one of the more accessible hints about how we should see the relations between the pageant and Pointz Hall. The actors each "acted the unacted part conferred on them by their clothes" (228) — the implication being that, in the context of art, different clothes extend them. (In Orlando there is this suggestion: "Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us".32) When the clothes of those at Pointz Hall are mentioned, though, it is usually in the context of restriction. When Giles sees Mrs Manresa's car parked at his door the social conventions compel him to change, despite the fact that this trifle jars painfully with what he feels about the fighting on the continent. He is constrained to exhibit what he does not feel, and to conceal what he feels. Similarly, clothes images are used to express the different roles Isa fits herself into in relation to her son and husband: Dodge sees her change her dress twice (metaphorically), and the second dress is "something in the nature of a strait waistcoat" (126). So we see clearly a relationship between the parts the
actors play and the roles those at Pointz Hall act out; the difference is that the roles of those at Pointz Hall—particularly Giles's and Isa's—lead to restriction and frustration. The assumption of roles for the actors, however, represents an extension and a liberation. They play out "the unacted part conferred on them by their clothes" (228)—the clothes bring out the possibilities of expression which are not encountered in 'real life'.

Similarly, the use of illusion and fantasy is different: at Pointz Hall illusion feeds on itself. Although we see the real phenomenal world sometimes through a projected fantasy picture—as we see the door of the library through the troopers' barracks—the two do not interact fruitfully. Isa's poems are concealed, and have no serious relation to anything outside themselves. They are a pallid response to her frustrated condition. This is where her fantasies and illusions differ from Miss La Trobe's: Miss La Trobe's are made public. Art, pace Freud, is not merely an elaboration of fantasy: Miss La Trobe, unlike Isa, uses illusion to reveal reality. The real artist is not in retreat from reality: she encounters and reveals it. Her illusions are not sterile, as Isa's and Bart's are. Lionel Trilling makes the point succinctly: "the illusions of art are made to serve the purpose of a closer and truer relation with reality". And this is precisely the function of Miss La Trobe's pageant. Her illusions establish a "recreated world" (180) in which she analyses and comments on the kind of life lived at Pointz Hall. And so she says at the end: "how's this wall, the great wall, which we call, perhaps miscall, civilization, to be built by (here the mirrors flicked and flashed) orts, scraps and fragments like ourselves?" (219). Almost paradoxically, her actors and the continual stress on roles lay bare the conditions of life at Pointz Hall; their reality is an illusion; they are all acting; Miss La Trobe's illusion contains reality. Again, the pageant suggests the liberation of creativity as a remedy for the malaise of Pointz Hall.

In my earlier analysis of life at Pointz Hall, I suggested that a rejection of
nature was an important feature, and that this partly accounts for its barrenness. As a counterweight to this, our attention is continually directed to the natural, and focused particularly on its richness. The barn quivers with small life: "Mice slid in and out of holes, or stood upright, nibbling. Swallows were busy with straw in pockets of earth in the rafters. Countless beetles and insects of various kinds burrowed in the dry wood" (119-20). None of this is seen by Mrs Sands as she hurries in to prepare the tea: "But butterflies she never saw; mice were only black pellets in kitchen drawers; moths she bundled in her hands and put out of the window" (120). Again, the richness of nature is suggested in the description of the site chosen for the dressing room (70-1).

I have said in earlier chapters that Virginia Woolf often hints at a close relation between art and nature, and in Between the Acts this hint becomes almost explicit. Miss La Trobe chooses to present her pageant in the open, on the stretch of ground which "Nature had provided ... for a house" (15), and this makes a natural (in both senses of the word) stage: "The terrace, rising, made a natural stage" (93). Miss La Trobe's close relation to nature is confirmed when we are told "Nature had somehow set her apart from her kind" (247), and when nature twice comes to her aid during the pageant — "Nature had once more taken her part. The risk she had run acting in the open air was justified" (211). Her pageant portrays on one level the progression of civilisation, and this involves a retreat from the natural. Life becomes more and more artificial, removed from its sources.

In other places too nature is implicated in the presentation of the pageant. Trees and swallows cooperate when the waltz tune is played after the civilisation tableau: "The swallows danced it .... Real swallows .... And the trees, O the trees, how gravely and sedately like senators in council, or the spaced pillars of some cathedral church .... Yes, they barred the music, and massed and
hoarded; and prevented what was fluid from overflowing" (212-13). When Mr Streatfield's speech — which is in some respects a continuation of the pageant — stumbles into silence, nature reasserts itself: "Every sound in nature was painfully audible; the swish of the trees; the gulp of a cow; even the skim of the swallows over the grass could be heard" (227). Perhaps the most revealing example, however, comes when the audience is subjected to the agony of facing themselves in the mirrors: "And Lord! the jangle and the din! The very cows joined in. Walloping, tail lashing, the reticence of nature was undone, and the barriers which should divide Man the Master from the Brute were dissolved" (215).

As I have indicated, most of the trouble with the family at Pointz Hall is that they do erect barriers — between each other and between themselves and nature. One might refer "the Master" and "the Brute" here to Mr Oliver's earlier treatment of his dog: Bart is called "The Master" (41), and when he yells at his dog he addresses him as "you brute" (17).

Before I say more about the connections between the natural, the artistic and the civilised, I should like to bring in the related topic of the primeval, for towards the end of the novel it becomes very important. I pointed out in my chapters on Night and Day and The Waves Virginia Woolf's awareness of the survival in ourselves of primitive man, and although it might seem superfluous to comment further on what is now such an accepted part of our conception of the human personality, it may be worth pointing out that Freud stressed in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego the survival of primitive characteristics — "primitive man virtually survives in every individual" — and that Virginia Woolf read this work while she was writing Between the Acts: "I read Freud on Groups" (AWD: December 1939).

The primeval and the primitive are continually mentioned throughout the novel. Mrs Swithin reads about "rhododendron forests in Piccadilly" (13), conjuring up the "green steaming undergrowth of the primeval forest" (14), and
discusses with Isa the rumour that "savages could perform very skilful operations on the brain" and "had false teeth" (38). More pointedly, she expresses her amusement "at men who spent their lives, buying and selling . . . . to savages who wished most oddly — for were they not beautiful naked? — to dress and live like the English" (59). In the prologue to the eighteenth-century play Reason tells us: "In distant mines the savage sweats" (147) — at the behest presumably of those who came to civilise him — and in the Victorian play matters are taken a stage further as Eleanor and Edgar undertake "To convert the heathen" (194-200).

There are many other allusions to the primitive, but it would be tedious to quote many more. One other, however, makes some decisive links: commenting on the role of the idiot in the pageant, an anonymous voice says: "Did she mean, so to speak, something hidden, the unconscious as they call it? But why always drag in sex . . . . It's true, there's a sense in which we all, I admit, are savages still. Those women with red nails. And dressing up — what's that? The old savage, I suppose" (233). This voice sees further than Mrs Parker, who would prefer the absence of the idiot: "Surely, Mr. Oliver, we're more civilized?" (132). The anonymous voice sees too that the primitive survives in all of us, and her reference to the women with red nails relates the primitive to Mrs Manresa and implies a qualification — the attitude to the primitive is not a simple one. She has red nails (50) and is in some ways more primitive than those at Pointz Hall. One may associate her, however, with what Virginia Woolf once said about red nails: they represent, perhaps, a "subconscious Hitlerism" (CE IV 174). The violence of the image used to convey Mrs Manresa's effect on Bart makes the point that not all manifestations of the primitive are beneficient: she "ripped the rag doll and let the sawdust stream from his heart" (236). Miss La Trobe, however, uses the primitive creatively, and this brings me to the other link made by the anonymous voice: "And dressing up — what's that? The old savage, I suppose (233). Drama,
as well as being the most immediate, is the oldest of the art forms.

A relationship is established, then, between art and the primitive, and this relationship can be seen in the mental processes of the audience and of the creator. In my chapter on To the Lighthouse I showed that art is crucially dependent on the more primitive levels of the mind, and that the experience of art is dependent on the willingness of the experiencer to submit himself to more primitive modes of mentation. There I was primarily concerned with painting, but it is as true of drama.

Concentrating for the moment on the audience: it knows that Budge is Budge, but it must also accept that he is the Victorian policeman. This capacity for embracing mutually contradictory notions is a characteristic of the primitive and unconscious minds. In The Act of Creation Arthur Koestler emphasises this point. He says of the audience:

Of course, these people know that they are watching actors. Do they nevertheless believe that the characters are real? The answer is neither yes nor no, but yes and no. The so-called law of contradiction in logic—that a thing is A or not-A but cannot be both—is a late acquisition in the growth of individuals and cultures. The unconscious mind, the mind of the child and the primitive, are indifferent to it.

It is in the primitive or unconscious mind, then, that we find the root of the ability to accept one thing as something else—an ability which we see exercised in daily life at Pointz Hall and during the pageant. As I pointed out earlier, though, Miss La Trobe uses this capacity creatively.

There is another way in which the pageant affects the normal everyday conscious mind: in To the Lighthouse the loose, floating, unattached state Lily experiences as she begins to paint is an essential part of her creative process, and a feeling similar to this is experienced by the audience of Miss La Trobe's pageant: somehow they felt—how could one put it—a little not quite here or there. As if the play had jerked the ball out of the cup; as if what I call myself was still floating unattached, and
didn't settle. Not quite themselves, they felt. Or was it simply that they felt clothes conscious? (175)

Normal consciousness is disturbed; the more unconscious layers of the mind are stirred. Mrs Switchen tries to convey something of this feeling to Miss La Trobe:

"This daily round; this going up and down stairs; this saying 'What am I going for? My specs? I have 'em on my nose.'... What a small part I've had to play! But you've made me feel I could have played ... Cleopatra" (179). Miss La Trobe's interpretation brings out her meaning more clearly: "You've stirred in me my unacted part, she meant" (179).

This happens between the eighteenth-century and the Victorian scenes of the pageant, and later, when the pageant is over, Mrs Switchen assumes another very different part: William Dodge again tells her his name, and "At that she revived, like a girl in a garden in white, among roses, who came running to meet him — an unacted part" (241) — an unacted part very different from the role of Cleopatra. That they are two very dissimilar parts was more transparent in an earlier draft: youth and virginity were emphasised more, and there was more stress on the fact that it is another unacted part: "At that, she revived; like a girl; a girl in a garden, among roses, in white, who came running to meet him. For they were both quite young. Another unacted part". 37 ("Another" is crossed out in this draft, and "An" is substituted.) Mrs Switchen is stimulated to express regions of her personality which are normally suppressed; she seems to be the most susceptible to the effects of Miss La Trobe's art.

The more primitive layers of the mind are also involved in Miss La Trobe's creative act — indeed, it is probable that, as Koestler says, "the creative act always involves a regression to earlier, more primitive levels in the mental hierarchy". 38 This idea is, of course, not new, and it does not necessarily mean that the artist abandons all rational control over his work. As conscious an artist as T.S. Eliot insisted on the importance of the primitive to the artist, but
civilisation is also important: "The artist, I believe, is more primitive as well as more civilized, than his contemporaries, his experience is deeper than civilization, and he only uses the phenomena of civilization in expressing it".  

(Eliot's 'influence' is, of course, felt throughout the novel. There are echoes of The Waste Land and Four Quartets, and the verse he wrote for a pageant, The Rock, may have provided some images—in particular the image of Miss La Trobe as rock, and the rock of her next play. The rocks of Between the Acts naturally do not carry the same implications as Eliot's Rock, but they too represent something eternally durable in the human personality.)

In To the Lighthouse the activity of the unconscious mind is a vital element in Lily's creative process, and although we do not see as much of Miss La Trobe's creative processes it is clear that the unconscious mind is again vital. Like Lily, she takes a voyage from the shore, and becomes immersed in water: "From the earth green waters seemed to rise over her. She took her voyage away from the shore" (246). What happens literally is that she goes to the village pub seeking "oblivion" (247)—though not total oblivion. She attains a trance-like, muffled state:

smoke obscured the pictures. Smoke became tart on the roof of her mouth. Smoke obscured the earth-coloured jackets. She no longer saw them, yet they upheld her, sitting arms akimbo with her glass before her. There was the high ground at midnight; there the rock; and two scarcely perceptible figures. Suddenly the tree was pelted with starlings. She set down her glass. She heard the first words. (248)

What appears to happen is that the words are heard, the creative moment arrives, when, in her trance, she associates starlings with the figures by the rock. Earlier she saw starlings pelting the tree behind which she had hidden during the pageant—"In one flock they pelted it like so many winged stones" (244-5)—and just after that she had a glimpse of her next play: "Then something rose to the surface. 'I should group them,' she murmured, 'here'. It would be midnight; there would be two
figures, half concealed by a rock. The curtain would rise. What would the first words be? The words escaped her" (264). The first words occur as, under the influence, she associates the starlings with her two figures. One remembers Isa's odd and unproductive fusion of Mrs Swithin's hammer and the newspaper report.

E.M. Forster had a similar conception of the creative act. In "The Raison d'Etat of Criticism in the Arts" he says:

What about the creative state? In it a man is taken out of himself. He lets down as it were a bucket into his subconscious, and draws up something which is normally beyond his reach. He mixes this thing with his normal experiences and out of the mixture he makes a work of art .... Such seems to be the creative process. (TC 123)

Another link between the primitive and Miss La Trobe's creative process is the fact that her initial apprehensions are visual. When she first conceives the pageant it is in visual terms (71), and she conceives her next play too in visual terms: "Miss La Trobe stopped her pacing and surveyed the scene. 'It has the makings ....' she murmured .... Shading her eyes, she looked. The butterflies circling; the light changing; the children leaping; the mothers laughing" (78). Similarly, in the later passage I have quoted, she sees the figures by the rock.

Emphasising that "the creative act always involves a regression to earlier, more primitive levels in the mental hierarchy", Koestler points out that "pictorial thinking is an earlier and more primitive form of mentation than conceptual thinking.

This is one of the more direct ways in which we see the interaction of different levels of Miss La Trobe's mind as she conceives her next work. Virginia Woolf of course, worked much like this — indeed, writing out her thoughts about The Waves she uses the same image: "But I think it possible that I have got my statues against the sky" (AWD 157: April 1930).

The primitive is of course related to the natural, and the association is clearly made as the cows come to the rescue when illusion fails during the pageant: "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" (165). What happens after the pageant is finished, and the audience has departed, is that those who live at Pointz Hall move closer and closer to the natural and the primeval, and this seems to be a result of the pageant; although it is fading, "Still the play hung in the sky of the mind" (248). They are all reading in the big room, and the atmosphere becomes stranger and stranger, until:

The circle of the readers, attached to white papers, was lit up. There in that hollow of the sun-baked field were congregated the grasshopper, the ant, and the beetle, rolling pebbles of sun-baked earth through the glistening stubble. In that rosy corner of the sun-baked field Bartholomew, Giles and Lucy polished and nibbled and broke off crumbs. (253)

The primeval is introduced as Lucy reads her Outline of History: "'Prehistoric man,' she read, 'half-human, half-ape, roused himself from his semi-crouching position and raised great stones'" (255). When Lucy goes to bed, all the masks and disguises used by Giles and Isa during the day are dropped:

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. (255-6)

They have moved to a much more primitive, natural position— and the house too is affected: "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" (256). All is now primitive, natural; without masks; without shelter. Things are now very different from what they were that afternoon when Mrs Manresa arrived, "blowing", as she thought, "into this ... sheltered harbour" (52). The shelter has gone; they can speak to each other: "Then the curtain rose. They spoke" (256), and although it is not made explicit, it is probable that it is the pageant which has brought this about. A. E. Housman, in
The Name and Nature of Poetry, expresses a similar idea about how our minds are affected by art. Writing about some lines of Milton, he says: "they are poetry, and find their way to something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire." 41

Primitive man raising "great stones" is, of course, a reference to civilisation; the stones form the wall which, as Miss La Trobe says, "we call, perhaps miscall, civilization" (219). "Miscall" may be right, for, as we have seen, it is the order of civilisation at Pointz Hall which makes life for everybody there so sterile. The pageant traces the development of this civilisation up to the present moment, in which Mrs Parker objects to the idiot: "Surely, Mr. Oliver, we're more civilized?" (132). The idiot, we remember, is also the 'natural', or, as in an anonymous voice's interpretation: "something hidden, the unconscious as they call it" (233).

It is the denial of the something hidden, the natural, the primitive, which so reduces life at Pointz Hall. It is civilisation, or society, which compels Isa and her family to confine themselves to their set roles, which makes them act out one part. Lionel Trilling discusses in Sincerity and Authenticity 42 the conflict between the individual's desire to be his self and the pressure society exerts on the individual to assume set roles—indeed this idea is now a commonplace of existentialist psychological writings—and Virginia Woolf's analysis is essentially similar. (The toad/snake symbol may stand as an apt representation of the grotesque impasse produced by these conflicts.) It may well be that the mystery author in Between the Acts—"He said she meant we all act. Yes, but whose play?" (233); "Surely it was time someone invented a new plot, or that the author came out from the bushes" (252)—is not, as one might at first suppose, some remote and mysterious Demiurge, but society/civilisation itself. But there is no loss of faith in civilisation as such—the optimistic conclusion of Miss La Trobe's
megaphonic address precludes this interpretation. Virginia Woolf was not advocating a new barbarism. Indeed, one of the products of civilisation may save the situation: the function of art as it is presented in Between the Acts is to stir the "something hidden"; to make available to the individual parts of himself which society has repressed: "You've stirred in me my unacted part" (179). The audience itself feels the liberating, healing quality of art: "I hear music, they were saying. Music wakes us. Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken" (143).

These are some of the effects the pageant has on the audience; there are some other suggestions of less startling influences. Art may also stir one to think consciously, to re-examine settled opinions. Before the Victorian play Mrs Lynn Jones sits beside Etty Springett and lovingly reminisces with her about her life during the Victorian period; her memories are largely happy (185-7). After Budge's prologue, however, she feels "that a sneer had been aimed at her father; therefore at herself" (192), and resents it. Mrs Springett, though she too deprecates, is stirred to think rather more objectively: "Etty Springett tutted too. Yet, children did draw trucks in mines; there was the basement; yet Papa read Walter Scott aloud after dinner; and divorced ladies were not received at Court. How difficult to come to any conclusion" (192). After the play, which provides no favourable view of the Victorians, their roles are reversed: Mrs Springett is angry - "Cheap and nasty, I call it" (202) - and Mrs Lynn Jones is stirred to think:

But Mrs. Lynn Jones still saw the home. Was there, she mused, as Budge's red baize pediment was rolled off, something - not impure, that wasn't the word - but perhaps 'unhygienic' about the home? Like a bit of meat gone sour, with whiskers, as the servants called it? Or why had it perished? (202)

Her old ideas are disturbed; she is made to think; this is one of the valuable things art can do for us.

There is a suggestion too that art can function as a social unifier - it can bring people together, and extend its own unity to its audience. The need for a
greater unity is clear from what we see of life at Pointz Hall, and the audience itself feels this need: "What we need is a centre. Something to bring us all together" (231), and some of the members of the audience are glad of the opportunity the pageant has given them: "That's what's so nice— it brings people together. These days, when we're all so busy, that's what one wants" (187). The trees and the birds urge the necessity for participation: "And the trees with their many-tongued much syllabling, their green and yellow leaves hustle us and shuffle us, and bid us, like the starlings, and the rooks, come together, crowd together, to chatter and make merry while the red cow moves forward and the black cow stands still" (143). The pageant confers a unity on the audience, and this is gratefully recognised:

The gramophone was affirming in tones there was no denying, triumphant yet valedictory: Dispersed are we: we who have come together. But, the gramophone asserted, let us retain whatever made that harmony. O let us, the audience echoed (stooping, peering, fumbling), keep together. For there is joy, sweet joy, in company. (229)

The pageant was the ideal means of establishing for a while this kind of harmony. Implicit in what I have said so far is that there is demonstrated in Between the Acts a very close, almost symbiotic, relation between life and art; an early diary entry indicates that this was a conscious purpose: "'We' . . . the composed of many different things . . . we all life, all art, all waifs and strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole" (AWD 289-90: April 1938). As I showed in the introduction and the earlier chapters, the relations between life and art were a continual preoccupation of Virginia Woolf's, and particularly prominent was a feeling that they should come together somehow. This idea was present in embryo as early as The Voyage Out, and it is explored throughout her novels until in Between the Acts much of the substance of the novel is taken up with the theme. The relationship between life and art is seen to be closer and more complex in Between the Acts than in the earlier novels. They mingle on many different
levels in many different ways.

The dramatic form is, naturally, well adapted to indicate one level of inter-
reaction — the audience can identify the actors; Albert can be an idiot and portray
one; things in the real world — like the cows — can mingle with and affect the
creation of the artistic event; at the close the actors can leave the stage and
mingle with the audience. It is not only at the end of the pageant, though, that the
audience is drawn into the play. Their comments are persistently important, and
we see much of the pageant through their eyes. Just before the Victorian play
the audience creates the ambience in which it is presented. And some audience
conversation anticipates Miss La Trobe's megaphonic address.

There are continual echoes between the acts and after of the matter of the
pageant: "There is little blood in this arm" (108)/"There is little blood in my arm,'
Isa repeated" (109); "Where the gull haunts and the heron stands/Like a stake on the
edge of the marshes" (108)/"Giles remained like a stake in the tide of the flowing
company" (116). Common symbols — primarily the fish pond — are dextrously used
in the portrayal of life at Pointz Hall and the representation of Miss La Trobe's
creative process.

Art and life flow into each other. As Trilling said in a different context, "The
elements of art are not limited to the world of art. They reach into life". Conversely, the elements of life flow into art as Miss La Trobe brings the starlings
which had carolled "life, life, life, without measure" (245) into her next play:
"Suddenly the tree was pelted with starlings" (248).

Perhaps the most striking representation of this perpetual flow from life
to art and from art to life comes at the end of the novel. Miss La Trobe pictures
her next play: "There was the high ground at midnight; there the rock; and two
scarcely perceptible figures . . . She heard the first words" (248). After this the
family at Pointz Hall become more and more like characters in a play: Mrs
Swithin: "looked like a tragic figure from another play" (251); Giles and Isa
become large symbolic figures—like those in Miss La Trobe's play—almost imperceptible as they stand near to the window open to the night: "The great hooded chairs had become enormous. And Giles too. And Isa too against the window" (256); and the novel concludes with: "Then the curtain rose. They spoke" (256). These two descriptions (of Miss La Trobe's conception of her next play, and of the symbolic transformation of Lucy, Giles and Isa) represent complementary processes by which life and art mingle. Smoke images are used in both to stress their correlations (248, 249), and both Miss La Trobe and Lucy take voyages: "She took her voyage away from the shore" (246), "Lucy returned from her voyage into the picture" (250).

The significance of this merger is difficult to assess—the images are numinous and deliberately imprecise. It might be suggested that the end somehow represents an abandonment of life in favour of art; but this is to ignore the earlier scene where life explicitly provides the impetus for art. The significance of the scenes lies in their sympathetic vibration; they should not be seen in isolation. Life is not somehow devalued into the status of fodder for the artistic process: art and life may merge with no loss to either, but with instead a mutual enrichment. This seems to be what is expressed at the end—and indeed throughout the novel. It is a logical development of the ideas about the relations between life and art which I have traced through the novels and, in my introduction, through some essays.

Far from it being a "requiem for a lost art", Between the Acts is an assured affirmation of the value and power of art. It is the thing which may keep us human, responsive and creative; which will maintain the vital link between the superficial and the profound in us; and which will ensure us the "delicious warmth and release of spirit" (CE I 200) which we need. Forster had essentially similar ideas about the value of art. In his novels he concentrates upon the dangers of retreating from life into art, and warns us in "A Note on the Way" that
"The arts are not drugs" (AH 88); the passage from the essay, however, continues: "Something as mysterious and capricious as the creative impulse has to be released before the arts can prop our minds" (AH 88), and this impulse is itself released by art: "What is so wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse" (TC 93). This is precisely what we see happening to those at Pointz Hall.
NOTES

4 Ibid., pp. 7, 15.
5 Information kindly supplied by Professor Quentin Bell.
8 Virginia Woolf, "The Pool", Monks House Papers, B. 9c.
14 Monks House Papers, B. 2b.
15 Monks House Papers, B. 2b.


Ibid., p. 157.


Koestler, p. 308.


Love, p. 234.


This was called "Anon": see QB II 222. Notes and drafts for "Anon" used to be in the Monks House Papers: they are now in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

Monks House Papers, B. 9a.


Koestler, p. 303; see also Huizinga, pp 22-3.

Monks House Papers, A. 28, verso p. 2.

Koestler, p. 316.

Koestler, pp. 316, 322.


Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination, p. 49

Philip Rahv, Image and Idea, p. 141.

The artist's work is necessarily nothing much more than a series of experiments with which the artist deals; he文艺评论家文艺评论家文艺评论家文艺评论家文艺评论家
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This study of Virginia Woolf's artists has inevitably omitted much that is interesting. I have said little, for instance, about the relationships between Virginia Woolf and her artists, about the connections between creativity and reverie as they appear in the novels, and about the complex relations between her artists and the milieu of the Bloomsbury Group—though I have said enough, I think, to indicate some general attitudes. For example, although some of the artists are preoccupied by the same problems which Virginia Woolf faced, they are never simply her, and only in general terms do some of them—Lily Briscoe, for instance—embody Virginia Woolf's theories about art. And where there is clearly a connection between the artists in her novels and the cultural ambience in which Virginia Woolf lived she is far from being uncritical about her milieu.

I have preferred to concentrate on her artists and on the connections between them and the rest of the novels in which they appear because it is in these connections that their significance lies: they are not presented as isolated manifestations of the aesthetic spirit. She did write about her technical problems, the nature of art, the relations between art and nature, and so on, but this is never solipsistic: there is an intimate fusion between these things and the other issues with which she deals. Necessarily, then, a full response to the novels I have discussed demands that attention be paid to the artists, and in particular to the relationships in which they stand to the rest of the novel.
Some commentators, as I have indicated here and there, seem almost perversely reluctant to accept the artists' activities as presented seriously (and even at times seem to find satisfaction in detecting an increasing 'loss of faith' in art), but if one dismisses Lily's painting and Miss La Trobe's pageant not only are the themes and attitudes of the novels distorted, but one also implies that much of the substance of the novels is redundant. This might be a legitimate view, of course, but not if one also believes the novels to be successful works of art.

The main theme which centres on the artists in the novels is, of course, the relations between art and life, and I have shown that Virginia Woolf approaches this theme on many different levels and in different ways. It would be possible here to extract from the novels various 'beliefs' about how best these relations should be managed, but that would be to make matters too definite—I hope that the previous chapters have drawn out the essentials of how Virginia Woolf felt about art and life. From The Voyage Out onwards she treats the topic with increasing subtlety, until we reach the profundity, belied by its surface simplicity, of Between the Acts, in which she presents her most mature intuitions, and we see that her attitudes are not so very different from those of Forster which I outlined in my introduction. Nowhere does she devalue life in favour of a frivolous aestheticism, and often she deals with the same dangers art may present as Forster does.

It is a common observation that during this century novelists have increasingly depicted novelists in their work, and written at length in their novels about their problems as artists, and sometimes commentators have expressed some impatience with this and implied that the art has become too inward-looking. At times this criticism is justified—a meagreness of imagination is sometimes involved; but with writers like André Gide, Thomas Mann, Doris Lessing and John Fowles this is certainly not the case. For many different reasons, historical and personal,
they write seriously about the artist and his relations with the rest of the world, and in a time when the forms and functions of art are changing so drastically this is a valuable activity. It is with this order of seriousness, I believe, that Virginia Woolf's writings about artists belong.
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