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1975

The English Moderns: A Study of the Romantic  
Tradition in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster

by

Diana Arbin Ben-Merre

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## Chapter I

We want to understand the great sum of things which a writer takes for granted, which is the background of his thought; for if we imagine that, the figures in the foreground, the pattern he has wrought upon it, will be more easily intelligible.

Virginia Woolf

### 1

The purpose of this study is to trace the presence of the values and assumptions of the nineteenth-century British Romantic tradition in the modern novel. This tradition, whose major exemplar was Wordsworth, has as its central concern "the unity of individual life with universal life."<sup>1</sup> This unity is evident in man's relationship with nature.

For Wordsworth and his followers, "nature"<sup>2</sup> was embodied in the landscape. Landscape itself first became prominent as subject matter in English literature--especially poetry--during the mid eighteenth-century, as both a response to and a development of qualities prevailing during the Augustan Era.<sup>3</sup> By the mid nineteenth-century, the particular aesthetic developed by Wordsworth and Coleridge, investing the natural landscape with specifically moral meaning that was apprehended by the artist in certain transcendental moments,<sup>4</sup> was accepted as a cultural norm.

In addition to this view of nature, Wordsworth had a particular view of art. He "made a special point of empha-

sizing that the artist's activity is founded on a use of human powers common to all men, and that these powers may be strengthened by artists [but]...are not invented by artists."<sup>5</sup> Although the Romantics developed a theory of the poetic imagination to account for the poet's special authority, our concern will be with that aspect of their poetic theory, which, in conformity with certain ideas about the natural landscape, seemed to value the artist's intuitive response to the natural world rather than his sophisticated rendering of experience in an elaborately finished work.

The moral aesthetic established by Wordsworth became the nineteenth-century norm for an individual's relationship to his surroundings. Wordsworth's influence cannot be overestimated. Marius Bewley notes,

Wordsworth's originality as a poet was of a different order from Blake's. It was not revolutionary, it offered no apocalyptic vision. It represented a direct development out of eighteenth-century English thought, and for that reason it may be tempting to undervalue its newness. But if Wordsworth's poetry appears a little unsensational beside Blake's, or even Shelley's, it was Wordsworth's poetic practice, not theirs, that profoundly shifted the sensibility of the age, and made him the greatest of the English Romantic poets.

Matthew Arnold's judgment was typical:

...I firmly believe that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton, of which all the world now recognize the worth, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethans to the present time.<sup>6</sup>

Basil Willey has shown that "many leading minds of [the nineteenth-century] revered Wordsworth and looked to him for spiritual guidance, refreshment and healing." Willey's list

includes people as diverse as Coleridge, Thomas Arnold, Newman, J. S. Mill, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Pater, Ruskin, Leslie Stephen, Mark Rutherford, John Morley, and as this list partly suggests, Wordsworth's influence, like Carlyle's, was felt mainly by minds estranged from orthodox religion, yet eager for a satisfying substitute.<sup>7</sup>

More extravagantly, DeQuincey insists, "'the very image of Wordsworth...as I prefigured it to my own planet-struck eye, crushed my faculties as before Elijah or St. Paul.'"<sup>8</sup> F. W. H. Myers, who compares "Lines near Tintern Abbey" with the Sermon on the Mount, (admittedly, "great things with things vastly greater"), insists that Wordsworth has shown "how the contemplation of Nature can be made a revealing agency, like Love or Prayer--an opening...into the transcendent world."<sup>9</sup> Thus, through the influence of Wordsworth's own writings and the writings of his followers, the moral aesthetic established by Wordsworth became the nineteenth-century norm for an individual's relationship to his surroundings.

The Modernist tradition largely has done away with the Wordsworthian concern for the artist's spontaneous apprehensions of the natural world. These apprehensions were given value by their implicit connection with a moral scheme that was seen as inherent in the natural landscape. Although the Wordsworthian mode of seeing was based upon a particular aesthetic associated with the natural landscape, this mode

was understood to be a matter of truth rather than aesthetics since it was based, in part, upon eighteenth-century science, upon "Newton's demonstration that everything from the fall of an apple to the movement of planets is governed by a single law." This order in nature was considered evidence of God's existence, and could therefore "inspire feelings, even supernatural apprehensions."<sup>10</sup>

With the absence of such objective sanctions for his perceptions, the Modernist artist has tended to exploit his own subjective impressions of reality. Grasmere, as a meaningful locale, has become less significant than the contours of the mind itself. To express these feelings the Modernist writer, as H. M. McLuhan explains, tends to use different aspects of landscape to serve as what T. S. Eliot called "objective correlatives" for his feelings. The differences in the techniques of the Romantics and Modernists are clearly evident if we contrast the discontinuous subjective landscapes of Eliot's The Waste Land with the unified objective landscape of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey."<sup>11</sup> Wordsworth's landscape has an objective reality that Eliot's lacks. The speaker of Wordsworth's poem tests his responses and his memory upon this outward scene, while the speaker of Eliot's poem summons up remembered and imagined scenes to serve as symbols of his feelings. The vision of the Modernist author is no longer determined by his surroundings.<sup>12</sup> But the Wordsworthian artist, whose thoughts are formed by a complex

interaction between the self and the outside world, is limited both by his surroundings and by his response to these surroundings. Therefore, a modern writer who uses Romantic techniques will appear more traditional in subject matter and style than the writer using Modernist or symbolist techniques.

Although the novel as a genre has been more concerned with presenting social relationships than with man's relationship to nature, there have been rather impressive descriptions of nature in many nineteenth-century British novels. Mary McCarthy observes that the descriptions of "Nature" (the word is written with a capital "N") that often were considered the hallmark of the nineteenth-century novelist's skill, "Dickens' London fogs..., Emily Brontë's moors, Hardy's heath and milky vales," and that "in their day were taken as samplings of the author's purest creative ore, his vein of genius..." have disappeared from the modern novel.<sup>13</sup> The use of the subjective Modernist landscape in the works of Joyce, Pound, and Eliot<sup>14</sup> has so influenced modern literature that Miss McCarthy's observations are pertinent. However, she has overlooked the presentation of nature and natural forces in the novels of Forster, Woolf, and Lawrence. It is in the work of these writers that the nineteenth-century belief in the connection between man and the natural world is explored.

The presence of these Romantic assumptions has af-

fected both the subject matter and the form of their works, as well as their literary reputations. Because modern literature has been valued for its innovative, experimental qualities in dealing with subjective reality, these writers generally have been regarded as secondary and their works less interesting than those of Joyce or Conrad. McLuhan's comment that "an understanding of the art of Joyce, Pound, Eliot and Wyndham Lewis depends upon seeing why they... deprecated the aims of Proust and Woolf,"<sup>15</sup> suggests the limits of much Modernist criticism. The reverse judgment, Leavis' insistence that "if you took Joyce for a major creative writer, then, like Mr. Eliot, you had no use for Lawrence, and if you judged Lawrence a great writer, then you could hardly take a sustained interest in Joyce,"<sup>16</sup> is not as helpful as a recognition that the modern period itself may contain two separate traditions. The works of James Joyce, the major Modernist novelist, and Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, the major Modernist poets, exemplify how le passage intérieur<sup>17</sup> has replaced descriptions of exterior landscapes. These writers, and Conrad and Beckett, with their American, Irish, and Polish backgrounds,<sup>18</sup> were able to recreate what is considered the major tradition of British literature.

But what of the other tradition, the tradition established by the nineteenth-century Romantics, which posited a special relationship between man and natural landscape? Certainly the influence of the Romantics on Modernist poetry



has remained peripheral. Unlike the Modernists who developed new techniques and subject matter for both prose and poetry, the nineteenth-century novelists seem to have experienced a time lag in their use of specifically Romantic subject matter. Writing after the publication of Lyrical Ballads, Scott and Austen were more concerned with the individual's place in history or in society than with his relationship to unknown forces in the landscape. The Victorian novelists also tended to deal with social problems and social relationships rather than the relationship between man and nature.

In Victorian novels, for the most part, the characters are aware of themselves in terms of their relations to others. The integrity of the selfhood of each person depends neither on reaching the deep buried self by descent into the mind in solitary meditation, nor on a contemplation of rocks, trees, and daffodils, nor on confrontation of a deity who is the ultimate foundation of the self. In most Victorian novels the protagonist comes to know himself and to fulfill himself by way of other people.<sup>19</sup>

The few Victorian novelists who include landscape nature in their works tend to use it as a background to the protagonists' actions. Their nineteenth-century inheritance is evident in the fact that this background is given a Wordsworthian coloring. Irving Howe's analysis of Hardy's Wordsworthianism explains the similar set of feelings in George Eliot and Meredith.

There is a strong Wordsworthian quality in Hardy's conviction--perhaps one would say, Hardy's passionate intuition--that the natural world is the source and

repository of all the energies that control human existence. Like Wordsworth, Hardy instinctively unites nature and man, making the external setting a kind of sharer in the human fate. Still more Wordsworthian is Hardy's persuasion that the best life is one spent in undemanding harmony with the biological and geographic environment.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, whether nature is viewed as part of the nostalgia of childhood in George Eliot or as embodying the evolutionary process in Meredith, their failure to question the Wordsworthian assumptions about the morality inherent in man's relationship to nature places them outside the thought of their own times, which, responding to nineteenth-century science, was engaged in a re-evaluation of the Wordsworthian assumption that nature never did betray the heart that loved her. Since the novel is concerned with social reality, it is not surprising that the assimilation of these complex ideas about nature took time. Perhaps it is surprising that they were assimilated at all.

It is interesting that nature in late nineteenth-century British fiction tended to reflect the simplest aspects of Romanticism: the use of the landscape as a source for metaphors<sup>21</sup> and center for inarticulate feelings. Only in the modern British novelists, Woolf, Forster, and Lawrence, do the profounder implications of Romanticism emerge. Therefore, it is with the English novelists of the modern period, Woolf, Forster and Lawrence, that man's relationship to natural forces as they are embodied in the natural landscape enters the novel as subject matter.

For these modernists, born at the end of the nineteenth century, the influence of Wordsworth was inescapable:

In the neighborhood of latitude fifty north, and for the last hundred years or thereabouts, it has been an axiom that Nature is divine and morally uplifting. For good Wordsworthians--and most serious-minded people are now Wordsworthians, either by direct inspiration or at second hand--a walk in the country is the equivalent of going to church, a tour through Westmorland is as good as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. To commune with the fields and waters, the woodlands and the hills, is to commune, according to our modern and northern ideas, with the visible manifestations of the "Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe."

Of course, serious writers, like Huxley, whose statement appears above, and Woolf, Forster, and Lawrence, did not accept their Wordsworthian inheritance without question.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the modes by which they understand their experiences depends upon a Wordsworthian rather than a Symbolist or Modernist view of the world.

"The Worlds revolve like ancient women/Gathering fuel on vacant lots." Eliot's image embodies the Modernist view of the universe as a vast machine that offers man no sustenance. Conrad's letter to Cunningham Graham is also useful here:

There is a,--let us say,--a machine. It evolved itself...out of a chaos of scraps of iron and behold! it knits. I am horrified at the horrible work and stand appalled. I feel it ought to embroider,--but it goes on knitting. You come and say: "This is all right: It's only a question of the right kind of oil. Let us use this,--for instance,--celestial oil and the machine will embroider a most beautiful design in purple and gold." Will it? Alas, no! You cannot by any special lubrication make embroidery with a knitting machine. And the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself: made itself

without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart. It is tragic accident,--and it has happened. You can't interfere with it...and it is indestructible! It knits us in and it knits us out. It has knitted time, space, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the illusions, --and nothing matters.<sup>24</sup>

For some moderns, however, nature still is a source of meaning and value. In their world nature not only knits, it also has the potential to "embroider." "We have come to forget,"

Woolf writes,

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; we are not entirely occupied in personal relations; all our energies are not absorbed in making our livings.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, it is in the differing views of nature that the Modernists can be divided from the novelists we may designate as the Romantic Moderns.

These differing concepts of nature affect perception. Faced with a meaningless universe, the Modernist retreats. The landscape, no longer a source of value, becomes a source of subjective impressions. McLuhan's distinction between the interior Modernist landscape and the exterior Romantic landscape has been further clarified by Denis Donoghue's distinction between the modes of perception in nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry. Donoghue uses Tennyson's "Mariana" and T. S. Eliot's first "Prelude" as his examples. In Eliot's first "Prelude," the subject and object "are blurred into one another." As in the work of the Modernist novelists, no dis-

inction can be made between subjective and objective reality. However, in Tennyson's "Mariana," which represents the nineteenth-century or Romantic mode of perception, "the subject and object still are distinct."<sup>25</sup> The work of Forster, Woolf, and Lawrence also preserves this distinction between the self and the perceived objects. However, according to Romantic theory, such a mode of perception does not preclude a profound insight into the nature of experience. McLuhan writes,

the poetry of Wordsworth is in itself a sufficient testimony to the eighteenth-century obsession with the private moment of heightened awareness presented to the inward eye as a landscape. In such moments we see into the life of things, yet are detached from them.<sup>26</sup>

The Romantic mode of perception both accounts for and exploits this dualism inherent in man's experience. The Romantic way of knowing the self through a simultaneous identification with and withdrawal from the landscape is best suggested by an analysis of this mode of perception:

We take it for granted, merely by perceiving or being aware, that the given world both is and is not extrinsic to our selves, and that through what goes on within our own experience we can know things as they really are, or as they would be if unknown.<sup>27</sup>

In this context, the individual's

two-fold belief that he is on the one hand in the midst of realities which are not himself nor mere obsequious shadows of himself, a world which transcends the narrow confines of his own transcendent being; and, on the other hand, that he can somehow reach beyond these confines and bring these external existences within the compass of his own life, yet without annulment of their transcendence,<sup>28</sup>

is the basis of the Romantic poet's faith in an inherent order in nature that he can perceive. This way of knowing depends upon the individual's ability both to project himself into nature and to recognize his separation from her. In this relationship the landscape becomes the version of nature in which man most fully experiences himself, both in place and in time."<sup>29</sup>

When this kind of perception is dramatized in the novel the result is a moment of understanding that takes place outside the realm of social and novelistic reality, a moment we associate with lyric poetry. In lyric poetry "the mind which its words express is...a solitary mind exploring itself or exploring its relations to objects outside itself--trees, flowers, mountains, and clouds." In the novel, the perceiving mind, in contrast to the lyric, is concerned with relationships between people: "a novel is a structure of interpenetrating minds, the mind of the narrator as he beholds or enters into the characters, the minds of the characters as they behold or know one another." In the Romantic lyric, the mind discovers itself and its relationship to God through its relations to the natural objects--trees, flowers, mountains--outside the self. The novelistic presentation normally excludes the lyric mode: the novel generally does not present "isolated consciousness, [nor] consciousness fact to face with God in meditation...."<sup>30</sup> It is this mode that is used by Woolf.<sup>31</sup>

An understanding of Woolf's mode should make it impossible for a critic to assert that her novels are about "almost nothing."<sup>32</sup>

Forster's mode is mythic rather than lyrical. Although Yeats's lament that "the woods of Arcady are dead" expresses his regret for the loss of old poetic modes, most Modernists applauded their demise. The mythic mode, which was considered acceptable in the nineteenth century, is considered adequate only when it is used ironically by modern writers. Forster's serious use of this mode has led to an undervaluing of his work. Here, Jane Austen, one of Forster's favorite novelists, provides a useful critical gloss, when she shows how Elizabeth Bennet pleads with Mr. Collins to "pay me the compliment of believing what I say." Unlike Mr. Collins, who refuses to heed Miss Bennet's request, those readers who profess affection for Forster must prove the better suitors. They can pay Forster the compliment of acknowledging that the mythic mode is as appropriate as the lyrical in Romantic writing.

The Romantic poet, according to Basil Willey, must either "make poetry out of the direct dealings of his mind and heart with the visible universe, or he must fabricate a genuine new mythology of his own (not necessarily rejecting all old material in so doing)." Both possibilities were explored by the English Romantics. "Keats and Shelley often follow the second of these methods; Wordsworth typically

follows the first."<sup>33</sup> Forster, whose reinterpretation of the old myths of Greece and Rome results in the fabrication of a new mythology, follows the second method Willey defines; Woolf, the first. Forster's use of the old myths, in which the gods embody vital forces in nature, offers an alternative to Woolf's presentation of nature in the novel. In addition, Forster's particular interest in the way these gods embody certain unknown forces in the landscape brings his work very close to that of D. H. Lawrence.

The gods of Greece offer a way of getting in touch with nature. Because they contain within themselves nature's vital forces, they offer man a way of understanding these forces. The presence of these gods reveals the presence of specific powers in nature. Thus, mythical figures become another way the nineteenth century dramatized the presence of spiritual powers in the landscape.

Willey's distinction is useful in indicating the major poetic modes in the Romantic period. Wordsworth, who is responsible for much that is taken for granted in nineteenth-century poetry, not only states the central mythical theme, but also validates the sources of this mode. Myers is again useful here:

in the natural religion of Wordsworth we may discern the modified outcome...of those instincts which led our forefathers to people earth and air with deities, or to vivify the whole universe with a single soul.<sup>34</sup>

In this context, the old leech-gatherer who "is likened to a stone which in turn is likened to a sea beast crawled forth



to sun himself"<sup>35</sup> provides as much of a connection between the human and natural worlds as the wished for vision of "Proteus rising from the sea" or "old Triton blow[ing] his wreathed horn."<sup>36</sup>

Using these modes, this study will attempt to trace the continuity between the English poetic tradition, a way of apprehending and knowing the natural world, established by Wordsworth and the other Romantic poets, and the modern novel. It will show how two modern novelists, Woolf and Forster, used the novel as a means of understanding this relationship between man and nature in a manner similar to that of the Romantic poets; and how, in their novels and criticism, each tried to redefine the novel so that it could accommodate subject matter and modes of understanding traditionally the province of Romantic poetry. Woolf and Forster have been chosen as the major exemplars of the tradition because their work illustrates how each mode can be incorporated into the novel. (Lawrence uses both modes.)<sup>37</sup>

# ii

Even before it was available to these moderns as subject matter, the Romantic ethos itself underwent a change. The Romantic landscape, with its grassy meadows and plowed fields, a humanized landscape, where even high mountains were conducive to pleasurable feelings of awe rather than terror, could not accommodate the new features of nineteenth-century

science. The discoveries of Lyell, Darwin, and others that nature was a battleground of contending forces where chance and strength rather than natural goodness ruled--Tennyson's nature red in tooth and claw--made necessary a re-evaluation of man's relationship to nature.

Darwin's work serves as an appropriate symbol for the sense of profound pessimism in the Victorian period, which was apparent as early as 1830, because his book served to give the final blow to the providentialist interpretation of nature.<sup>38</sup>

Though they could see in retrospect that the ground had been mined by eighteenth-century rationalism and the revolution of 1789--and even earlier, it was thought by the Reformation appeal to the liberty of judgment--the Victorians were utterly unprepared for the radical crisis in thought and society which burst over England in the thirties and forties.<sup>39</sup>

The destruction of the providential world view is perhaps most implicit in the British positivist tradition, "a tradition that owed something to Bacon but first took shape in the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Newton." The most important assumption of this tradition, "that knowledge was a unity," meant that in the nineteenth-century science was seen as a method for discovering new laws "replete with profound cosmological implications."<sup>40</sup>

There was nothing new in such extrapolation. From Newton's laws not only had a new physical universe been constructed; psychology and even economics and religion were infused with Newtonian inferences. And so, as each new scientific law in Victorian times was propounded, man tried to apply it to society or the universe.<sup>41</sup>

The impulse to interpret all natural and human behavior in

positivist terms was so strong that "it was...through a study of human history and not through natural history that George Eliot and many of her contemporaries reached a position where they could no longer accept the Bible or the Church as sources of authority." And "their position was clearly defined long before the publication of The Origin of the Species."<sup>42</sup> However, as Noel Annan notes, "Darwin remains a crucial name and 1859 a crucial year. The [Origin] became the foundation of a new history of the world."<sup>43</sup> And here, the effect of Darwinism is most profound. Houghton writes, "Death is not all that man now shares with the other animals. Carlyle fought against Darwin's theory,' though... he dreaded that it might turn out true,' because if man were no more than a developed animal, conscience and intellect were 'but developments of the functions of animals.'"

Far from being the special gift of God they would be natural mechanisms which all the higher animals had acquired, perhaps by "natural selection," and developed because of their enormous utility in the struggle for existence. Family and gregarious instincts would have made for better survival by cooperation and group cohesiveness; and tribal punishment would in time have build a conscience into human nature. From this standpoint the moral sentiments were simply a disguised form of selfishness, and the moral life had no moral purpose.<sup>44</sup>

Arriving at a time when men had been taught to look to nature for moral guidance as well as for pleasure, these discoveries which questioned man's place in the external world tended to undermine his view of himself. Wendell Stacy Johnson suggests that this problem haunts Victorian literature.

It is a question of understanding the self in an intensely self-conscious age and especially of relating the idea of the self to the idea of nature--to the idea of the physical universe that may or may not be in essence a spiritual or moral universe.<sup>45</sup>

"Typically Victorian" is "the curiously ambivalent attitude toward the natural, temporal world" as well as "the feeling of self-consciousness" which is "embodied in the simultaneous self-probing and self-masking of so much Victorian literature."

In both their self-consciousness and their mixed feelings about things in the landscape, Victorian artists are reacting to, testing, and often radically qualifying the early faiths of so many Romantic poets.<sup>46</sup>

The sense of loss was so strong that Robert Langbaum asserts:

No nineteenth-century reader could share in one of Wordsworth's epiphanies--one of his revelations through visible nature of "the life of things"--without a very poignant awareness of Victory over the age. That is what John Stuart Mill meant when he called Wordsworth "the poet of unpoetical [distinctively modern] (sic.) natures"; it is what Matthew Arnold meant when he said that in "this iron time" Wordsworth taught us to feel again.<sup>47</sup>

Although Victorians like Leslie Stephen and Mark Rutherford continued to climb the alps or to visit the sea shore, and Wordsworth's poetry remained popular, the works of Victorian poets and painters tended to reflect a deep anxiety about man's relationship to the natural world. Unlike the emphasis in Romantic landscape which celebrates the natural order, Johnson notes

the tendency of [landscape] painting, from the 1840's (the last decade of Turner's career) until the

1870's was to emphasize human foregrounds, to produce narrative or illustrative scenes with human interest, and either to make landscape sketchy and subordinate or to use it for its symbolic and psychological relevance to the people in the picture.<sup>48</sup>

The presentation of landscape and its subordination to human or moral concerns suggests that men were still deeply interested in the natural world but unsure of the particular moral significance of the natural landscape. Such a treatment suggests the "need to exert control over [nature] and thus, as it were, to keep the landscape safe...."<sup>49</sup> Despite their individual differences, the Victorian poets recognized that the "landscape may be darkened, may be ravaged, and after all, has 'no heart to feel.'"<sup>50</sup> Their

oblique, often nervous, constantly self-questioning manner and...deep feeling of ambivalence about the sea, the sky, the seasonal trees, flowers, and fruits, the very light of day--about the whole Romantic landscape<sup>51</sup>

reflects a new shift in taste marking a new development in man's sense of his relationship to the world around him.

Thus, like their Romantic counterparts, the poets and painters of the Victorian period reformulated the relationship between man and nature for their era. The most important Victorian poets--Tennyson, Arnold, Swinburne, Hopkins, and Browning--tended to question the benevolent Wordsworthian ideas about the relationship between man and nature. However, as we have seen, most of the Victorian novelists, like the novelists of the Romantic period, dealt with man and his place in the social order. Therefore, it is in the poetry

and the painting rather than in the fiction of both the Romantic and Victorian periods that man's relationship to nature was examined and a particular ethos was developed.

The changed attitude towards the natural world in the later nineteenth century resulted in a re-evaluation of the role of the artist and the place of art. The Romantic poet, as we noted earlier, sees himself as a man speaking for all men. He differs from other men only in the intensity, not the quality, of his perceptions. However, the discoveries of nineteenth-century science, which revealed that the workings of natural law were dependent upon the chance occurrences of an indifferent universe rather than the love of a benevolent deity, brought about a change in the role of the artist and the significance of art. Although Darwin's discovery of the way chance operates in nature should have illuminated the essentially aesthetic component of Romantic thought, the early Victorians, like Tennyson and Arnold, were unaware that what had been understood to be a matter of truth was really a matter of aesthetics. And their poetry expresses their bewilderment that nature's benevolence was not as available to them as it had been to Wordsworth. Tennyson's cry, "are God and Nature then at strife," carries the pain of his sense of betrayal. However, the later Victorians, like Pater, and sometimes even Ruskin, recognized the aesthetic nature of their perceptions of truth.

Josephine Miles' analysis of the pathetic fallacy

provides one of the clearest outlines of the changing relationship between man and nature in the nineteenth century and the changing sensibility that found its poetic expression in the earlier and later parts of the century.<sup>52</sup> This "derogatory label," the pathetic fallacy, was given by Ruskin to the poet's attribution of the "powers of human nature" to objects which were to be found in the natural landscape.<sup>53</sup> Before Ruskin, this kind of attribution was given the more favorable term, bestowal, " by Wordsworth, and his whole philosophy of bestowal, suggested in his letter on "The White Doe of Rylstone," insists upon the validity of the kind of perception that links man and nature in terms of feeling. "The Poetry...proceeds whence it ought to..., from the soul of Man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world."<sup>54</sup> However, nature itself is not inert. The correspondent breeze,<sup>55</sup> the basic Romantic metaphor, suggests a union between the spirit of nature and the soul of man. Therefore, the Wordsworthian process of bestowal becomes a revelation of being.

However, according to Miles, Tennyson's popularity in the 1840's signaled a new change in poetic taste. The spiritual metaphor of breath (suggested in the correspondent breeze), gave way to the more corporeal term "pulse."<sup>56</sup> Now man and nature are joined but their bond is one of physical likeness rather than spiritual identity. Because of the desire to believe that man's special qualities keep

him apart from a nature red in tooth and claw, an analogy dependent upon physical likenesses was difficult to accept. Therefore, instead of making direct assertions about the similarities between man and the natural world characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, the Victorians tended to state their comparisons indirectly. When Wordsworth writes in "The Tables Turned,"

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher;  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher,<sup>57</sup>

the spiritual similarities between man and nature are expressed in a direct, positive fashion. What nature symbolizes and teaches was more problematic for the Victorians, as in Tennyson's poem "The Eagle,"

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands.  
Ringed with the azure world he stands.<sup>58</sup>

Here the similarities between man and nature are suggested in a physical likeness, and any moral or spiritual significance only can be suggested.

Tennyson's poem offers a good example of what happens when the poet's perceptions are stated in terms of color and form rather than in moral or spiritual certainties. This shift from the direct moral lessons that Wordsworth is able to derive from nature to an oblique presentation of secondary qualities that are supposed to suggest some kind of order is a sign that the poet's aesthetic sensibility has come to mediate between his own experience and whatever moral or



spiritual certainties he can derive from it. Wordsworth is sure of the meaning of the "host of golden daffodils" "fluttering and dancing in the breeze." Confronted with a single flower, Tennyson insists "if I could understand/What you are...I should know what God and man is."<sup>59</sup>

This questioning of what nature symbolizes and teaches also affects the mythic mode. Shelley and Keats had no difficulties with their gods. However, when Tennyson wanted to retell the story of Demeter's search for Persephone, he said "'I will write it, but when I write an antique like this I must put it into a frame--something modern about it. It is no use giving a mere réchauffé of old legends.'"<sup>60</sup> Apparently it was easier for the lyrical mode to gain the reader's assent.

When nature's message is no longer clear, the artist's role becomes problematic. He is no longer a man speaking to all men but a special seer, piercing through the contradictory aspects of the world in order to arrive at some kind of truth. However, the artist's new role did not lead the later Victorians to reject the validity of his truths. It is important to note that in their "search for the 'Idea' in Nature"<sup>61</sup> the Victorians hoped to achieve the moral certainties once available in "one impulse from a vernal wood."

This, then, is the mixed Wordsworthian and post-Romantic tradition inherited by Forster, Woolf, and, in a further attenuated form, by Lawrence. Unlike the Modernists, they are bound to the nineteenth-century seeking for belief,

for significant meaning in a landscape external to the self. Meaning still is seen as something in the outer world to be perceived and communicated by the artist. Although their analysis of the relationship between the artist and the natural world is more complex than it was for Wordsworth, their Wordsworthian inheritance prevents them from completely assenting to the Modernist view of art as a "sanctuary"<sup>62</sup> from life. Therefore, in the ways in which they come to terms with the meaning of the landscape, a nineteenth-century poetic subject, in the dominant modern form, the novel, and in the ways in which they worked out the problematic place of the artist as an interpreter of nature, these English novelists define their modernity.

## Notes for Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>The phrase "the unity of individual life with universal life" is from Charles Williams' "Wordsworth," English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York, 1960), p. 111. The English Romantic tradition can be divided into two streams: the Wordsworthian and the Blakean. Blake's importance, as Richard Ellmann has aptly stated, is in his assertion of the "mind's supremacy over all it surveys." (James Joyce, New York, 1959, p. 162). This assertion makes him a forerunner of the Symbolist or Modernist writers. Wordsworth, as René Wellek observed, never denied the objective reality of the outside world. ("The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," Comparative Literature, I [1949], p. 162. Because Wordsworth had greater influence on nineteenth-century thought, this study will deal with the Wordsworthian aspects of Romanticism, especially as they apply to art and nature.

<sup>2</sup>John Stuart Mill's essay "Nature," one of his Three Essays on Religion, which was written before Darwin's Origin of Species but published only posthumously in 1874, is particularly helpful for defining our terms "nature" and "art." In his essay, Mill is particularly interested in distinguishing between the Romantic ideology that finds nature a source of morality for men and the actual operations of forces in the natural world. The word "nature" is first defined as "all the powers existent in either the outer or the inner world and everything which takes place by means of these powers" ("Nature," Essential Works of John Stuart Mill, ed. Max Lerner [New York, 1961], p. 370). In this context, nature would be "the sum of all phenomena together with all causes which produce them including not only all that happens but all that is capable of happening...." (Ibid. p. 368). Such a definition becomes a "name for the mode, partly known to us and partly unknown, in which all things take place" (p. 369).

Mill's second principal definition points more clearly to his particular interest in his essay, his criticism of the Romantic belief that finds nature a source of morality for men. (p. 370). Men, as beings belonging to the order of nature, cannot help but follow her dictates. However, "conformity to nature has no connection whatever with right and wrong" (p. 399), since "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's everyday performances" (p. 381). Therefore, men should avail themselves

of the virtues and restraints taught by civilization. "All human action whatever consists in altering, and all useful action in improving, the spontaneous course of nature" (p. 401). Mill's second principal meaning of the word nature thus includes "not everything which happens, but only what takes place without the agency, or without the voluntary and intentional agency of man" (p. 370). In this context, "nature can be opposed to art." And it is this sense of the differences between nature and art that will be drawn upon in this study.

<sup>3</sup>Although the difficulties inherent in using such critical terms as "the Augustan Era" or "the Romantic Period" are evident, their usefulness or their validity cannot be easily denied. In his essay "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," Wellek effectively answers Lovejoy's "extreme nominalism" (p. 2) by demonstrating the validity of a concept such as "Romanticism" as well as the need for such terminology: "If literary history is not to be content to remain the usual odd mixture of biography, bibliography, anthology, and disconnected emotive criticism, it has to study the total process of literature. This can be done only by tracing the sequence of periods, the rise, dominance, and disintegration of conventions and norms" (p. 172).

<sup>4</sup>Raymond Dexter Havens writes, "Nature, the immediate subject of much of [Wordsworth's] verse, is connected with the more fundamental topic through nature's being a chief means of entering into communion with the One and of discovering and drawing upon the sources of power. It is not itself primarily a source of power but a means of reaching such a source. So with the imagination, which is the subject of The Prelude: it is important not merely because it is the life of poetry but because through it we commune with the One and become conscious of all nature as permeated by the One, because spiritual love cannot exist without it, and because through it alone we enter into the hiding-places of power. It is the doorway to the life of the spirit" The Mind of a Poet: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought, Baltimore, 1941, I, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Alec King, Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision: An Essay in Interpretation, London, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Marius Bewley, ed., The English Romantic Poets (New York, 1970), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>The English Moralists (Garden City, New York, 1967), pp. 62, 281. Willey includes "such more recent figures as Earl Grey, A. N. Whitehead, and G. M. Trevelyan."

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in F. W. H. Myers' Wordsworth, English Men of Letters (New York, 1898), p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 129-30. (Myers' italics are omitted.) The omitted portion of the quotation, "if indeed there be any opening," makes him a Victorian rather than a Romantic.

<sup>10</sup>Robert Langbaum, "The New Nature Poetry," The Modern Spirit (New York, 1970), p. 101.

<sup>11</sup>McLuhan makes this distinction between interior and exterior landscape in his essay "Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry," (Essays in Criticism I [1951], 262-82). (The examples are my own.)

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 281. The subjective quality of the modernist landscape is evident in Stephen Dedalus' definition of an epiphany as "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself." James Joyce, Stephen Hero, ed., John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, New Edition (New York, 1959), p. 211. (Italics added.)

<sup>13</sup>"One Touch of Nature," The Writing on the Wall (New York, 1970), p. 189. Miss McCarthy includes "Fenimore Cooper's waterfalls, forests, prairie" and "Melville's Pacific" in her list. I have omitted these because the use of nature in the American novel belongs to a different tradition. Richard Poirer notes in A World Elsewhere that writers like Cooper and Melville as well as Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Twain, and James "constitute a distinctive American tradition within English literature" and are "very often clumsy examples of a modernist impulse in fiction: they resist within their pages the forces of environment that otherwise dominate the world" (New York, 1966), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Joseph Conrad also could be included with this group for his treatment of landscape in such works as Heart of Darkness, The Nigger of Narcissus, and The End of the Tether. The inclusion of Eliot and Pound is appropriate here, for, as McLuhan noted, the substitution of an interior for an exterior landscape developed as part of the same movement in the novel and the poem.

<sup>15</sup>"The Aesthetic Moment in Poetry," English Institute Essays, ed. Alan S. Downer (New York, 1952), footnote 12, p. 179. McLuhan's linking of Proust and Woolf has become a critical commonplace. Despite his French origin, Proust is closer to the English Romantic tradition than Joyce or T. S. Eliot. See below, Chapter II, note 95, p. 98. Although this

study will trace some specific influences, we will be concerned with the attempt to understand the survival of the poetic subject matter and modes of perception in the works of these modern English novelists.

<sup>16</sup>F. R. Leavis, D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (New York, 1955), p. 10.

<sup>17</sup>This is McLuhan's term, in "Tennyson," p. 270.

<sup>18</sup>In this context, Woolf's comment that novelists beginning to write in England in 1910 could not learn from Conrad, "Mr. Conrad is a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes him, however admirable, not very helpful," becomes understandable in literary rather than patriotic terms, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Collected Essays (London, 1966), I, p. 326.

<sup>19</sup>J. Hillis Miller, The Form of Victorian Fiction (Notre Dame, Indiana), 1968, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Hardy (New York, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>21</sup>Charlotte Brontë uses nature as metaphor in Jane Eyre: "in the recurrent reference to the great chestnut-tree, riven and black at the upper trunk but firm and strong at the base and roots, there is the intertwining connection between man and Nature; the tree is a simplified image of Jane and Rochester, seemingly split, with the sap no longer running between them, but nevertheless joined in feeling and memory, their roots also, so to speak, intermixed and inseparable"; Frederick R. Karl, An Age of Fiction: The Nineteenth Century British Novel (New York, 1964), p. 100. Although Brontë is a Romantic in her insistence upon the reality of an individual's passions and his need for fulfillment and often turns to nature as a refuge, she never finds in the natural order a moral alternative to society. In her famous appeal for the fulfillment of women as well as men ("It is vain to say that human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility..."), Jane Eyre, speaking for her author as well as for herself, calls upon an elemental sense of social justice and common sense rather than upon a transcendental moral code associated with the natural order. Woolf appreciated Emily Brontë's theme. For example, Rachel's desire for the sea and the sky recalls Woolf's discussion of Wuthering Heights. However, she did not follow her mode. (See pp. 44 and 70-71 below.)

<sup>22</sup>Aldous Huxley, "Wordsworth in the Tropics," Collected Essays (New York, 1960), p. 1. Despite Huxley's hostility to Wordsworth, Gumbriel Senior's nightly wait for a visitation from nature as he strains "his eyes and his ears in the hope of seeing, of hearing something--something significant, ex-

planatory, satisfying" separates him from the other, rather despicable, characters in Antic Hay. (It is also interesting, in terms of the later development of our theme, that Gumbril Senior is an artist). The desire of the savage, in Brave New World, to grow his own food and to read Shakespeare (an idea of paradise that would not be alien to the Romantics), suggests that Huxley himself may have found Wordsworth inescapable.

<sup>23</sup>This letter is quoted in Jocelyn Baines' Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography (New York, 1960), p. 200.

<sup>24</sup>Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art," Collected Essays (London, 1966), II, p. 225.

<sup>25</sup>The Ordinary Universe: Soundings in Modern Literature (New York, 1968), p. 98.

<sup>26</sup>McLuhan, "The Aesthetic Moment," p. 177.

<sup>27</sup>C. C. Clarke, Romantic Paradox: An Essay on the Poetry of Wordsworth. (New York, 1963), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. Clarke Quotes from Arthur O. Lovejoy's The Revolt Against Dualism. [(LaSalle, Indiana, 1955), p. 17.]

<sup>29</sup>Christopher Salvesen, The Landscape of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>30</sup>Hillis Miller, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>Ralph Freedman discusses Woolf's work in connection with his analysis of the "lyrical novel." Freedman is not concerned with the specific subject matter and modes of British Romantic poetry. Therefore, his analysis takes him outside the tradition of the English lyric, and he offers Hesse and Gide, as well as Woolf, as his examples of lyrical novelists. The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Herman Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf (Princeton, 1963).

<sup>32</sup>"Novels About Almost Nothing," TLS, July 20, 1973, p. 831.

<sup>33</sup>Basil Willey, Seventeenth Century Background (Garden City, New York, n.d.), p. 294.

<sup>34</sup>Myers, p. 128.

<sup>35</sup>W. K. Wimsatt, "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery," English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M. H. Abrams (New York, 1960), p. 34.

<sup>36</sup>William Wordsworth, "The World is Too Much With Us," The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, New Edition, Revised by Ernest de Selincourt (London, 1960), p. 206.

<sup>37</sup>It is easier to place D. H. Lawrence among the Romantics. Both Forster and Woolf are conscious stylists, but Lawrence eschewed the highly stylized Modernist tradition, derived from Flaubert, whom he saw as standing "away from life as from a leprosy" ("Thomas Mann," Selected Literary Criticism, ed. Anthony Beal [London, 1967], p. 265.) Highly stylized art, according to Lawrence, fails to depict life, and "the business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment" ("Morality and the Novel," Selected Literary Criticism, ed. Anthony Beal [London, 1967], p. 108.)

Lawrence's work, like Woolf's, has affinities with Wordsworth's; these writers "find a central purpose and motivation in their attempt to seek out the sources and manifestations of power in human life and the physical universe." (Herbert Lindenberger, "Lawrence and the Romantic Tradition," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, ed. Harry T. Moore [Carbondale, Illinois, 1959], p. 330.) Although Lawrence rejects Wordsworth's mode--"Lucy Grey, alas, was the form that William Wordsworth thought fit to give the Great God Pan,"--("Pan in America," Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Edward D. McDonald [New York, 1936], p. 23)--"the dark gods with which Lawrence grappled in their many guises share this life with Wordsworth's 'underpresences,' 'underpowers,' 'undersoul,' 'unconscious....'" (Lindenberger, p. 331.)

Lawrence's complaint about Wordsworth suggests his own interest is in the aspects of nature that are dark and inhuman. In his emphasis upon nature's darkness, its separation from man, and in his interest in mythic characters, Lawrence's mode, like Forster's, derives from the nineteenth-century tradition of Romantic Hellenism.

<sup>38</sup>Asa Briggs, "Religion and Science," Backgrounds to Victorian Literature, ed. by Richard A. Levine (San Francisco, 1967), p. 86.

<sup>39</sup>Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven, 1957), p. 66.

<sup>40</sup>Noel Annan, "Science, Religion, and the Critical Mind," Backgrounds to Victorian Literature, ed. by Richard A. Levine (San Francisco, 1967), p. 97.



- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-98.
- <sup>42</sup>Briggs, p. 90.
- <sup>43</sup>Annan, p. 100.
- <sup>44</sup>Houghton, p. 70.
- <sup>45</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Poet as Victorian (Ithaca, 1968), p. 3.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.
- <sup>47</sup>Langbaum, p. 110.
- <sup>48</sup>Johnson, p. 36, note 22.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 36.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 44.
- <sup>52</sup>Pathetic Fallacy in the Nineteenth Century: A Study of a Changing Relation Between Object and Emotion (New York, 1965).
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 7, 6. Ruskin's statement appears in Modern Painters, III, iv, xii. The Works of John Ruskin, V, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. 39 Vols. Library Edition. (London, 1903-1912).
- <sup>54</sup>Miles quotes an excerpt from Wordsworth's letter, p. 6. The original source in Wordsworth's Letters: Middle Years, ed. Selincourt, II, 705.
- <sup>55</sup>M. H. Abrams, "The Correspondent Breeze," English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M. H. Abrams, (New York, 1960), pp. 37-54.
- <sup>56</sup>Miles, p. 42.
- <sup>57</sup>Wordsworth, Poetical Works, p. 377. This example and the next example are my own.
- <sup>58</sup>The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks (London 1969), p. 496.
- <sup>59</sup>Wordsworth, "I Wondered lonely as a Cloud," Poetical Works, p. 149. Tennyson, "Flower in a Crannied Wall," Poems, p. 193.

<sup>60</sup>Tennyson, Poems, p. 1373.

<sup>61</sup>Gerald Cornelius Monsman, Pater's Portraits: Mythic Pattern in the Fiction of Walter Pater (Baltimore, 1967), p. 60.

<sup>62</sup>Irving Howe, Literary Modernism, (New York, 1967), p. 38.

## CHAPTER II

It is for a voyage into solitude that man was created...the soul, like the body, voyages at her own risk.

E. M. Forster

The daughters of that Victorian papa Sir Leslie Stephen began preparing for their professional and therefore personal emancipation under the tutelage of that other Victorian patriarch John Ruskin. Ruskin was important to Woolf because he showed how Wordsworth's sense of the special relationship between man and the natural world could be embodied in prose. While they were still in the nursery, Virginia Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell began her art studies with exercises from Ruskin's Elements of Drawing. Instead of "filling rectangles with [the] perfectly regular hatching in the manner perscribed in Exercise Number Seven,"<sup>1</sup> Virginia practiced "Ruskinian exercises in descriptive writing." With touching fidelity to Modern Painters, she noted,

...the edge of this...[cloud] glistened with fire--vivid & glowing in the east like some sword of judgment or vengeance--& yet the intensity of its light melted & faded as it touched the gray sky behind so that there was no clearly defined outline. This is one observation that I had made from my observation of many sunsets--that no shape of cloud has one line that is the least sharp or hard....Everything is done by different shades and degrees of light--melting & mixing infinitely....<sup>2</sup>

Like Wordsworth's, Ruskin's descriptions of nature were

motivated by the sense of a supernatural presence ordering and informing nature. John Rosenberg notes that

the prose hymns to nature throughout Modern Painters suggest that the book belongs more to the history of Romanticism than to the history of art. They are the counterparts of Wordsworth's invocations in The Prelude:

To Presences of God's mysterious power  
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty....<sup>3</sup>

In his descriptions of nature, which are the prose equivalents of certain moments in Wordsworth, Ruskin showed Woolf how prose could be used not only to describe the natural landscape, but also to include that subject which heretofore had been the exclusive domain of poetry, the sense of the existence of some "Presence" in nature. Although Woolf was not religious, the depiction of the natural world in her novels was motivated by a similar belief in some "Presence" in nature. This belief was related to her deeply personal sense of "what I call 'reality': a thing I see before me: something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; beside which nothing matters; in which I shall rest and continue to exist."<sup>4</sup> Later in her career Woolf became somewhat critical of Wordsworth's poetic techniques, but despite her awareness of the poetry of her contemporaries, his work continued to serve as a poetic ideal. As late as 1939 she wrote, "I read 'Ruth' before breakfast. Its stillness, its unconsciousness, its lack of distraction, its concentration and the resulting 'beauty' struck me."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, although the

representation of what Woolf calls "reality" changes in her novels, her sense of something in the landscape "in which I shall rest and continue to exist" remains central to her perception of the world.<sup>6</sup>

Woolf is generally considered to have joined the modern literary scene in 1922, with the publication of her third novel Jacob's Room. Sometimes, she is allowed entry as early as 1919, the year she published an experimental sketch "Kew Gardens" and an essay, which could be seen as a manifesto, "Modern Fiction."<sup>7</sup> Yet, Woolf began writing literary criticism and considering serious fiction as early as 1904.<sup>8</sup> The roots of her achievement, the transformation of subject matter appropriate to the lyric poem into novelistic prose, lie here. Although Woolf's great personal accomplishment is the forging of a prose style that carries this lyrical material, her first concern was with the material itself. The style was developed to contain the material. Only a recognition of her concern for the appropriate subject matter for the novel will rescue Woolf from being considered a beautiful stylist whose novels were almost "about nothing."<sup>9</sup>

By the time Woolf completed her first novel, The Voyage Out, in 1915, she had spent about ten years writing articles and book reviews which appeared in the Times Literary Supplement and other periodicals.<sup>10</sup> Although Woolf declined to reprint the material written during this period, it has a special interest, for in these essays we can distinguish

several major ideas which deal with the particular form and content of her later novels.<sup>11</sup>

The appropriate subject matter for the novel was one of her earliest considerations. In a 1905 review of W. E. Norris' Barham of Beltana, Woolf criticizes Norris for being "the type of writer who regards marriage and the events that precede it as the legitimate end of a novel...." Such a view, according to Woolf, is inadequate because "real life is deficient in plots." Not a fool, Norris himself indicates that he knows "well enough what is ordinary in human existence [with] its ever-recurring developments; but [insists] we prefer not to contemplate the normal, the monotonous, the sad-denning." And here Woolf's comment is devastating: Norris "represents a middle-aged, perhaps a prosaic point of view...."<sup>12</sup> Lest we consider her use of "prosaic" as a synonym for "ordinary," it is important to recognize that for Woolf as well as Wordsworth, ordinary "human existence and its ever-recurring developments" are "the stuff of poetry."<sup>13</sup> "It is when we feel most that we live most," Woolf writes,

and we cannot believe that [the famous actress] Rachel, married to a real man, bearing real children, and adding up real butcher's bills, could have lived more truly than Rachel imagining the passions of women who never existed.<sup>14</sup>

In a review of an edition of Wordsworth's letters, Woolf writes, "There is no gulf between the stuff of daily life and the stuff of poetry, save that one is the raw material of

the other...."<sup>15</sup> The private life is significant because it is not merely personal; it belongs to the experience of the human race. When we look at the tombs of the dead "we think not of them, but of ourselves, and the mystery of the past. Tombs are milestones to show us how far we have travelled along the invisible way."<sup>16</sup>

However, Woolf and Wordsworth recognize that life must be presented by the artist in such a way that its significance can be apprehended. Woolf criticizes Mrs. Warrenne Blake for not being "artist as well as editor," because she fails to set free the central pattern implicit in her biography of the Knox family. "Captain Knox and his son, although they took part in the campaigns and manoeuvres of the great armies and navies, are among the multitudes who have vanished." Woolf sees them in the following manner:

There is a certain thrill in the spectacle; we see so bright an image of the family, glowing for a minute in a compact body; they seem too simple to survive; a kind of pathos is on them, because they must go.<sup>17</sup>

Woolf's vision of the meaning of these lives illuminates her central subject. In her later work Woolf defines as poetic the intensity of the vision that perceives the pattern of human life as a glowing moment in the darkness of a non-human world. This perception, central to all of Woolf's work, provides the pattern for her first novel, The Voyage Out.

Probably because of her conviction that real life is deficient in plots, Woolf began her novelistic career not by creating a new form of her own but by showing that the traditional novelistic plot dealing with love and marriage is absolutely meaningless.

"The great event of the years 1907-1908...[was] the birth of Melymbrosia" which eventually became The Voyage Out. Although The Voyage Out was published in 1915, it "may, indeed, have had its beginnings in [Woolf's] imagination at some earlier date; perhaps even...in 1904."<sup>18</sup> Thus, The Voyage Out was written while Woolf was considering the potential of prose in her book reviews and articles. This work, which had a rather long gestation and difficult birth (seven different versions were burned)<sup>19</sup> is interesting chiefly for what it reveals of Woolf's conception of the appropriate content and theme for the novel.

Although Woolf believed that daily life could not be understood in terms of plots, it did contain a pattern which was often obscured by many details. And it is the artist's responsibility to illuminate this pattern. Woolf herself revealed to Strachey the pattern she saw in The Voyage Out:

What I wanted to do was to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life, as various and disorderly as possible, which should be cut short for a moment by the death, and go on again--and the whole was to have a sort of pattern, and be somehow controlled.<sup>20</sup>

The Voyage Out, which contains an overabundance of people and the details of their daily lives, is intended to give the



feeling of "a vast tumult of life" which is cut short by Rachel's death. However, even the pattern Woolf's suggests cannot account for specific aspects of the novel, as, for example, Rachel's death. Almost any event can interrupt the flow of life. Therefore, to understand the novel it is necessary to consider specific aspects of The Voyage Out, especially those aspects that distinguish this novel from others of its type.

Viewed in traditional terms, this novel seems to have a kind of plot--a love story--and another story, which is made up of the author's philosophical observations.<sup>21</sup> Extraneous to plot, the author's philosophical observations were integral to Woolf's conception of the novel which deals with man's relationship to the non-human landscape.

The division of the novel into plot and philosophical observations is suggestive, for in indicating the way in which The Voyage Out deviates from the norm, it makes us aware of some of Woolf's goals. David Daiches comments upon the way characters appear, seem to change their size and importance "oscillate from background to foreground," and disappear.<sup>22</sup> The way these characters seem to change in size is very significant because it enables Woolf to suggest that human beings do not determine the proportions of the world in which they live. The traditional novelist may present the world as a stage upon which her heroine can develop; such a view, however, which emphasizes the significance of the individual life

by placing the characters in a human-centered world, denies aspects of the world impervious to human domination and control. In this context, it is interesting to note that in 1908 Woolf wrote that Sarah Bernhardt's memoirs were somewhat superficial because she reduced "all the vast unconscious forces of the world, the width of the sky and the immensity of the sea" to "some effective scenery for her solitary figure."<sup>23</sup> These "vast unconscious forces," which are reminiscent of Wordsworth's "Presences," are introduced into the novel when Woolf shifts the scale between human beings and the landscape so that the landscape, nominally a background to a novel's action, becomes a disruptive force threatening the validity and significance of the world man creates for himself.

The traditional relationship between man and nature is suggested in Jane Austen's Emma. At Knightley's, the view is "sweet," "sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive."<sup>24</sup> In Emma, the landscape functions as both a background for the action and as a moral ideal for English society. Like the Box Hill picnic, the mountain picnic in The Voyage Out is used to bring about a crisis in the plot.<sup>25</sup> However, here the landscape has not been humanized:

the vast expanse of land gave them a sensation which is given by no view, however extended, in England; the villages and the hills there having names, and the farthest horizon of hills as often as not dipping and showing a line of mist which is the sea....

The South American landscape "was one of infinite sun-dried earth, earth pointed in pinnacles, heaped in vast barriers, earth widening and spreading away and away...."<sup>26</sup> The scale of the landscape tends to diminish the characters and to deny the validity of their moral ideals. The effect of so much space is "chilling" and the people feel "themselves very small."<sup>27</sup> This sense that characters are diminished by the landscape recurs throughout the novel. From their boat, the Portuguese towns "appeared to be very small in comparison with the great purple mountains behind them."<sup>28</sup> And when Rachel is dying Terence recognizes that the towns they live in are small and insignificant and that they themselves are only "tiny" people. The "minuteness of their bodies" in a "vast universe" makes their pain absurd.<sup>29</sup> Clarissa Dalloway, who makes her first appearance in this novel, sums up their feelings when she says "'I don't like views. They're too inhuman.'"<sup>30</sup>

Ironically, this very resistance to human beings also gives the landscape positive value in a novel where an individual's life in society is associated with a kind of dilution or loss of self and his integrity and wholeness is guaranteed by the unconscious identification of the self with the natural world.

In an interesting analysis of The Voyage Out James Hafley notes that there are two voyages in the novel; the first is the voyage from England to Santa Marina, the second,

a ten day trip up the Amazon, is what Hafley calls the "voyage in."<sup>31</sup> On the trip out, Woolf shows how Rachel discovers the potential of her own personality:

The vision of her own personality, of herself as a real everlasting thing, different from anything else, unmergeable, like the sea or the wind, flashed into Rachel's mind and she became profoundly excited at the thought of living.<sup>32</sup>

On the journey within she discovers her love for Terence. They are "blissfully" happy until they return to the town. Then Rachel wants to preserve the isolation they experienced in the jungle, while Terence wants to join their lives with those around them. Rachel's denial of the claims of the world outside destroys her and suggests to Hafley that "to see oneself as reality and the social world as illusion...is fatal."<sup>33</sup> But this conclusion denies Rachel's own experience of herself which has an imaginative intensity and validity in a world where women waste their lives in meaningless activities, and where even Terence, who is so aware of the way men stifle women, tells Rachel, whom he has constantly interrupted while she is playing the piano:

I've no objection to nice simple tunes--indeed, I find them very helpful to my literary composition, but that kind of thing [a late Beethoven sonata] is merely like an unfortunate old dog going round on its hind legs in the rain.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to this is Rachel's experience of herself as "unmergeable, like the sea or the wind."<sup>35</sup> "I like seeing things go on," Rachel tells Terence, "as we saw you that night when you didn't see us--I love the freedom of it--it's like being the wind or the sea."<sup>36</sup> To Rachel for whom

"flowers and even pebbles in the earth had their own life and disposition, and [even to a girl of twenty-four bring] back the feelings of a child to whom they were companions," social pressures and limits are strange and unreal.<sup>37</sup>

Rachel experiences a sense of belonging to a limitless eternal world as long as she is not made conscious of herself. When Terence expresses interest in her opinions "partly because you're a woman," Rachel, "who had become oblivious of anything, and had reverted to a childlike state of interest and pleasure, lost her freedom and became self-conscious" and desired to wound him in order to defend herself.<sup>38</sup> Rachel rejects not sexuality itself but the social channeling of sexual impulses which insists that the self that experiences itself as limitless must assume a socially limited role. Rachel's sense of limitlessness is best symbolized in the sea and the sky, aspects of the natural world which seem most resistant to change. When Terence complains, "I don't satisfy you in the way you satisfy me.... There's something I can't get hold of in you. You don't want me as I want you--you're always wanting something else," Rachel realizes that his words were "perfectly true."

She wanted many more things than the love of one human being--the sea and the sky. She turned again and looked at the distant blue, which was so smooth and serene where the sky met the sea; she could not possibly want only one human being.<sup>39</sup>

Because the preservation of self becomes identified with childhood and nature rather than adulthood and society, the

real conflict in the novel is between the social world which includes Terence, marriage, and meaningless tea parties and thank you notes and an impersonal world of being which is located beyond the natural world but symbolized in the sea and the sky. But even here, the word "conflict" is misleading. Rachel simply turns away from love and marriage, sexuality and adult life to an eternal world symbolized in nature. Thus, the teacups are discarded, the social dimension recedes, and the novel assumes a different shape. Like Wordsworth's Lucy Grey,

she has to be detached from comrades so as to belong wholly to the ground from which she grows, and from which grows also the violence which is her death. We first see her,...and then we separate her from companionable life, only to be able to feel how she belongs to her earth, growing as a flower may....<sup>40</sup>

The superiority of the eternal world to the known is an insistent theme in the novel. Even Terence, who loves Rachel deeply, never finds their relationship complete until her death. After this Terence feels "they had now what they had always wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived."<sup>41</sup> Like Wordsworth's Lucy, Rachel is destined to die before she is able to develop the self-consciousness of adulthood that would separate her from the transcendental natural world. In the novel, as in Wordsworth's poems, the natural world is a symbol of the integrity of the heroine's personality and of her connection with a realm beyond the finite social world in which most men live.

This realm is associated with permanent being.

By dying [Lucy of the "untrodden ways"] ceases to be a piece of separated liveliness--she has no force or motion of her own, no power to see and hear, but she becomes an inseparable part of the eloquent silent world of things....[And] her living solitude [is] only to be confirmed by the deeper solitude of death.<sup>42</sup>

This desire for absolute being is characteristic of what David Ferry calls the mystical imagination. Ferry's distinction between the mystical and the sacramental imagination is useful here. The sacramental imagination is the more familiar, for it accepts the fact that objects only can be symbols for an eternal world. It is the socialized imagination of the adult, dealing with the known world, the world of time and change, and it is grateful for occasional intimations of immortality. The mystical imagination, on the other hand, rejects the world of nature, the world of time and appearances, and anything--including art--that mediates between itself and the absolute.<sup>43</sup> In this context, the true self is seen as "inviolable and unchangeable," operating 'according to its own laws, which are remarkably like cosmic and other nonhuman natural laws, as for example the waxing and the waning of the moon, the coming and going of clouds."<sup>44</sup>

Ferry's suggestion that this self is totally undramatic explains the sense we have that Rachel, whose actions suggest she embodies this mystical self, experiences no true conflict in the novel. This self "has no crisis because it is immune to any danger, and is immune from any danger because it is immune to any but metaphysical experiences."<sup>45</sup> Therefore

action in The Voyage Out is meaningless because experience "take[s] place [only] so that the true self can discover its own nature."<sup>46</sup> Rachel discovers her need to be separate from the world around her. Therefore, at its deepest, this imagination, which finds its full expression in Wordsworth's poetry, is subversive of everything that makes adult life meaningful. "Success" in his poems "is not to enter into a fuller and sweeter communication with mankind generally," but "to retreat from humanity, to become as nearly as possible a natural and not a human thing."<sup>47</sup>

No motion has she now, no force;  
 She neither hears nor sees;  
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.<sup>48</sup>

Woolf is deeply attracted to this level of the imagination. The needs of the mystical imagination are present not only in Rachel but also in other characters, like Jacob Flanders and Mrs. Ramsay, who are driven or who long for a union with the inhuman "other."

Opposed to this level of the imagination is that which accepts the sacramental aspect of experience and views the artist as a mediator between the known world and the world of the mythic imagination. This level expresses itself in Woolf's concern for the value and potential meaning in art.

In The Voyage Out Woolf attempts to create characters of sufficient weight to dramatize the sacramental view of life that makes art possible. Terence expounds a theory of a novel about silence (the things people do not say to one



another), but his failure with Rachel suggests the gulf between his reality and hers. St. John, whose final vision ends the novel, is an inadequate artist because this vision approximates Woolf's own, instead of proceeding directly from his own character. Therefore, it is the narrator of the novel who most clearly embodies the sacramental vision which makes art possible.

While writing The Voyage Out Woolf was considering how she should "re-form the novel."<sup>49</sup> Her notes on the frescos in the Collegio del Cambio in Perugia are especially interesting because they show how she conceived the novel as a vehicle for the author's perceptions of reality.

The painter's art is seen as an essentially static reproduction of a vision in his mind: Perugino's "fresco seems to me infinitely silent; as though beauty had swum up to the top and stayed there, above everything else, speech, paths leading on, relation of brain to brain, don't exist."<sup>50</sup> The writer, in contrast, can present the paths of both action and thought that create the beauty that is perceived.

I attain a different kind of beauty, achieve a symmetry by means of infinite discords, showing all the traces of the mind's passage through the world; achieve in the end, some kind of whole made of shivering fragments; to me this seems the natural process; the flight of the mind. Do they really reach the same thing?<sup>51</sup>

Because the writer creates a form out of the moving, diverse, and often contradictory aspects of reality, the novels should reveal the traces of the author's own mind as she herself

attempts to create order out of chaos. Thus, the meaning of The Voyage Out, like the meaning of Wordsworth's poems, is not contained in the heroine's death but the way this death is perceived by others, especially by the author.

Readers of Wordsworth's poetry usually associate narrator and poet. "Except for rare moments of semi-mystical fulfillment, [Wordsworth] is always careful to observe the distinction between the objects he contemplates and himself as thinking subject. There is a gulf between them."<sup>52</sup> In Woolf's novels, this gulf disappears. Woolf's characteristic mode is the "narrated monologue"; here, unlike the technique of stream of consciousness, the narrative voice does not attempt to reproduce the characters' thoughts, but renders them through the voice of the third person narrator.<sup>53</sup> In Woolf's novels the voice of the third person narrator often merges with the subject, with the voice of the character whose thoughts are being presented. Wordsworth's careful division between narrator and perceived object becomes blurred. Voices merge and there is no single figure of authority. It is this disjunction between Woolf's essentially Wordsworthian subject matter--"the place of mind in nature"<sup>54</sup>--and her characteristically modern method of narration--the use of multiple voices and figures of authority who share a Wordsworthian view of the artist's role--that creates the tension and interest in Woolf's novels. However, this narrative method is not perfected until Jacob's Room. The merging of character and author in The

Voyage Out creates confusion rather than tension.

After Rachel's death St. John, who expresses the author's vision of reality, sees "as he lay half-asleep, and yet vividly conscious of everything around him" pass "across his eyes...a procession of objects, black and indistinct, the figures of people picking up their books, their cards, their balls of wool, their work-baskets, and passing him one after another on their way to bed."<sup>55</sup> The people in the hotel, taking up their trivial belongings to prepare for another day, are presented with the dignity of ceremonial figures on a Greek vase. The final vision of the book combines, as Woolf intended, a sense of the trivia of individual lives and the immensity of the pattern of life itself. Woolf's ending embodies her goals more clearly than the novel. Woolf's desire to suggest the abstract pattern of life is partially fulfilled by the way in which she tries to break down the form of the traditional novel. However, enough remains of this traditional form to provide for some development of self-consciousness on Rachel's part. The normal transition from adolescence to adulthood that such a development of self-awareness implies is prevented by Woolf's theme, which demands Rachel's death. The resulting novel is confusing, for the action moves in two directions: towards self-awareness and towards self-obliteration, as if Wordsworth were presenting his own observations of Lucy along with Lucy's own comments upon herself.

Woolf solved this problem in Jacob's Room, her third novel, where she believed she found her "own voice,"<sup>56</sup> by presenting the material through an outside observer, comparable to the Wordsworthian narrator, who contemplates Jacob's situation, but never comes to understand him in a "novelistic" fashion, that is, his motivations, his relationships with others, or with his society. The narrator is like a poet, understanding only the lyric subject, Jacob's relationship to the natural world. But before this, Woolf wrote Night and Day, where she attempted to define the nature of poetry.

"'But is there no Shelley in the house?' 'Why, yes!' exclaimed the lady, in much agitation. 'Dear Mr. Bons, we aren't such Philistines as that. Two at the least. One a wedding present, and the other, smaller print, in one of the spare rooms.'"

E. M. Forster

Night and Day, Woolf's second novel, was begun in 1916 and finished in 1918.<sup>57</sup> Woolf considered this fairly conventional novel of manners as "an academic exercise" like "drawing from the cast."<sup>58</sup> Woolf's choice of this traditional form, which depends upon the facts of social life, was deliberate. Although Woolf saw Night and Day as a "novel of fact,"<sup>59</sup> she viewed facts, as Mrs. Hilbery viewed Katharine's managerial ability, as "poetry the wrong side out."<sup>60</sup> Woolf tries to show that, appropriately understood, facts have some relation to poetry. However, her adherence to the formal sur-

face of the traditional novel of manners makes this connection between facts and poetry rather difficult to achieve. The result is a long, rather tedious novel. Nevertheless, as Woolf herself wrote,

the second-rate works of a great writer are generally worth reading, if only because they are apt to offer us the very best criticism of his masterpieces. They show him baffled, casting about, hesitating at the branching of the paths, breaking into his true vein....<sup>61</sup>

Woolf's true vein emerges in Night and Day in her attempts to clarify the nature of poetry. Thus, instead of exploring new areas, the novel dramatizes ideas implicit in her earliest work.

In The Voyage Out, the social surface of the novel was deliberately disrupted and undercut by the natural world, which asserted its presence in a palpable manner. However, in Night and Day Woolf is trying to convey what lies outside or beneath the surface of the social world without disrupting this world. When everything is seen from the perspective of the social order, private life seems irrelevant.

Deprived of any palpable reality, the natural world is only a hollow symbol for the spirit in this enlightened Edwardian household where Sunday was "usually dedicated to Nature."<sup>62</sup> Kew, the Zoological Gardens, and the Thames are places where social roles can be abandoned and true feelings can surface. Here the characters daydream of events that would be impossible in their daily lives. But these dreams and feelings are meaningless: "If [Katharine] went by the

river she would certainly begin to think about things that didn't exist--the forest, the ocean beach, the leafy solitudes, the magnanimous hero."<sup>63</sup> In The Voyage Out, dreams were intimations or intrusions from another realm of being. These characters daydream "about things that didn't exist." In The Voyage Out the natural world exerts its claim on Rachel. In Night and Day it forms an attractive background for actions or daydreams.

The disparity between these two realms of life suggests the need for a unifying force which is found not necessarily in poetry but in the poetic spirit. In a review written while she was working on Night and Day Woolf wrote, poetry is not "fine words with the semblance of beauty on them," and criticized those who would "make art appear so intricate and so remote from the interests of ordinary people that it is useless for them to try to care for it, let alone to attempt the practice of it."<sup>64</sup> Here, Woolf suggests the Wordsworthian idea that the poet is only a man speaking to another man, the voice for the feelings experienced by all. Night and Day is divided between those who practice poetry as if it were an arcane science to be used as an adjunct to an elite social position and those who respond profoundly to the feelings originally moving the poet to create. William Rodney, Katharine's fiance, believes that poetry is an exercise in metre and form. William produces competent but second-rate sonnets and imitations of Elizabethan plays. Obviously he

say all the clever things,"<sup>69</sup> she is more like a comic version of McDuff and Duke Vincentio, when, hidden by laurel boughs from Shakespeare's tomb, she returns from her pilgrimage to Stratford-on-Avon and proceeds to unite the appropriate couples.<sup>70</sup> As an embodiment of the poetic spirit, she is able to engineer the denouement because she can penetrate to the emotions and feelings and dreams beneath the prosaic surface of civilized life. The denouement of a novel of manners is usually worked out on the level of appropriate social relationships: recognition of the beloved is associated with the recognition or discovery of one's proper social role. In Night and Day, where emotions and society are at odds, someone must be able to intuit and articulate hidden feelings before the proper social arrangements can be made. Thus, the survival of society depends upon poetry, that carrier of dreams.<sup>71</sup>

Mrs. Hilbery's definition of poetry is central to the novel. She tells Ralph Denham, "...I think I do know a little about poetry....And all the things that aren't written down, but, but--" and Woolf adds "she waved her hand, as if to indicate the wealth of unwritten poetry all about them." This "unwritten poetry" is in "the night and the stars, the dawn coming up, the barges swimming past, the sun setting...."<sup>72</sup> The catalogue Mrs. Hilbery offers suggest a view of human life closely tied to nature. The barges are a symbol of human endeavor. Combining them with night, dawn, and sunset, suggests

not only the pattern of a day but also the abstract pattern of human life in time. This pattern, which recalls Woolf's vision of the Knox family, also reinforces the Wordsworthian quality of Mrs. Hilbery's poetic. Wordsworth, we recall, chose "incidents and situations from common life" because here "the primary laws of our nature" were more evident.<sup>73</sup>

Mrs. Hilbery's insistence upon the presence of poetry in "all the things that aren't written down" suggests that poetry inheres in feeling rather than language: "I sometimes think that poetry isn't so much what we write as what we feel, Mr. Denham."<sup>74</sup> When poetry inheres in feeling rather than in language, the poet truly becomes "a man speaking to men," a man whose abilities differ from other men in degree rather than in kind.<sup>75</sup> The process by which the ordinary becomes poetry is illustrated in Night and Day. Wordsworth suggested that the poet make "incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature...."<sup>76</sup> "The authentic history of Hilda's engagement to an officer in the Indian Army "<sup>77</sup> remains only trivial social chatter. However, Woolf shows that even ordinary events take on a certain grandeur when they are related to the common experiences of the human race. Mrs. Hilbery's story of her own courtship becomes an "ancient fairy-tale" when it is placed in the universal context suggested by images of sunsets and barges:



We were in a little boat going out to a ship at night,...the sun had set and the moon was rising over our heads. There were lovely silver lights upon the waves and three green lights upon the steamer in the middle of the bay. Your father's head looked so grand against the mast. It was life, it was death. The great sea was round us. It was the voyage for ever and ever.<sup>78</sup>

But emotions undirected are no guarantee of poetry.

"The Poet," according to Wordsworth, "binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time."<sup>79</sup> Mrs. Hilbery's "strange, half-earthly song" about Shakespeare's tomb celebrates a union between nature and human song. Mrs. Hilbery sings "of dawns and sunsets, of great poets, and the unchanged spirit of noble loving which they had taught, so that nothing changes, and one age is linked with another, and no one dies, and we all meet in spirit...."<sup>80</sup> Her song proclaims that poetry teaches not only the value of emotions but also their proper channeling. The "spirit of noble loving" links one age with another, and suggests the appropriate uses of tradition "so that one age is linked with another, and no one dies, and we all meet in spirit." The appropriate relationship between past and present is suggested in Mrs. Hilbery's desire that "on her daughter's wedding-day the noble cadences, the stately periods, the ancient eloquence of the marriage service would resound over the heads of a distinguished congregation gathered together near the very spot where her father lay quiescent with the other poets of England."<sup>81</sup> Here it is evident that although Woolf lacked

Wordsworth's interest in shepherds and their huts, she, like Wordsworth, is profoundly moved by a vision of life so closely tied to natural rhythms that the processes of growth and decay are made to seem inevitable. Reviewing the memoirs of Lady Fanshawe in 1907, Woolf wrote,

a stranger who finds himself in that churchyard, or comes upon the low little stone house from which they issued [would not find it difficult] to perceive a family history running alongside of all seasons of English life, inconspicuously, as a murmured accompaniment.<sup>82</sup>

In this way, nature's vitality becomes incorporated in society's own growth, and all that nature symbolizes: beauty, poetry, feeling, will be incorporated into society.

Woolf's tribute to Lady Fanshawe's work has similar Wordsworthian quality; she praises "this candid tale with its air of something naturally completed, a statement as round and as detached as a bird's song...."<sup>83</sup> Poetry that approximates song or stories that carry the experience of the race are the source of the visions that inspire more formal art. This praise of Lady Fanshawe illuminates something of Woolf's praise of Mrs. Hilbery. Woolf insists that Mrs. Hilbery's songs express emotions that cannot be explained in words. As important as these are the songs she herself invents, songs that take over when speech itself fails.

Mrs. Hilbery is useful, for she dramatizes many of Woolf's ideas about poetry especially the sense she got from Wordsworth that "there is no gulf between the stuff of daily life and the stuff of poetry, save that one is the raw

material of the other." However, Woolf's dependence upon this frail, almost bodiless deus ex machina and resident sage reveals the inadequacies of the novel. Within the milieu Woolf has created, Mrs. Hilbery's voice, the voice of poetry, only can sound thin and somewhat uncertain. Although Woolf tries to suggest the "unwritten poetry" surrounding the studied surface of the drawing room, the factual texture of Night and Day is limited to the creation of outward surfaces. The dream or poetic element fails to emerge because it has been obliterated by the facts of daily life.

The failure of Mrs. Hilbery is very important because Woolf believes that poetry is a "genuine test" of the quality of an individual's life in society.

If you were so rash as to quote Keats [in the house of a particular aristocrat], an almost visible struggle would go on for a moment between the words and the atmosphere, alarming as a sudden precipice in a meadow; and afterwards the house is more shabby and less beautiful than ever, as though lightning had singed it.

If Mrs. Hilbery had been given a more robust presence, all the "furniture of life" in the novel would have been disintegrated.<sup>84</sup>

If you break faith  
With those who died  
They will not sleep  
Though poppies grow in Flanders fields  
World War I poster  
(adapted from "In Flanders Field")

Wordsworth influenced the theme of The Voyage Out and the poetic of Night and Day. However, neither the lyrical poems nor the Romantic poetic offers a model for recreating this

subject in an extended prose narrative. The failure of both The Voyage Out and Night and Day suggested Woolf needed to do more than to extend the range of the novel; she had to create a new form. During the period between the writing of Night and Day and Jacob's Room Woolf attempted to deal with some of the formal problems of the poetic novel. The short pieces, critical articles, and descriptive sketches, written before this novel that deal with certain of these formal problems have the same interest as the essays written before the appearance of The Voyage Out, which dealt with the appropriate subject for the novel.

Woolf recognized that her conception of Jacob's Room, her third novel, depended on three sketches written during the composition of Night and Day: "The Mark on the Wall," "Kew Gardens," and "An Unwritten Novel."<sup>85</sup> Although Woolf's sketches and short stories are outside the scope of this study, it is appropriate to examine these works not only because Woolf herself recognized their influence upon Jacob's Room, but also because they indicate how Woolf successfully began to include poetic subject matter in prose forms. They suggest the use she was to make of Ruskin and Hardy, two prose writers whose Wordsworthian inheritance was indicated earlier. Ruskin provided Woolf with a way of dramatizing the Wordsworthian interaction between nature and man's mind. Hardy provided a way of dramatizing the Wordsworthian vision of man as a traveler upon the earth. The influence of both Ruskin

and Hardy is evident in Jacob's Room.

Ruskin's influence is apparent in "The Mark on the Wall," a sketch in which Woolf tries to suggest the process by which someone like Rachel might come to recognize her affinities with the sea and the sky. The subject matter of "The Mark on the Wall" is not directly related to nature; however, it gives Woolf an opportunity to explore the content and significance of the subjective reverie, the mode by which nature's meaning is revealed to man. A spot on the wall, subsequently revealed to be a snail, forms a center for woman's thoughts about life, death, time, nature, and history. Guiguet suggests that the speaker who intrudes upon these thoughts and identifies the mark as a snail asserts the impossibility that an individual, limited by his subjective concerns, ever can understand objective truth.

The fact that the mark was a snail--and it was only necessary to...connect the visual data by the tactile data to make sure of this--is both ridiculous and unimportant. The coincidence between the original sensation and the object is, basically, purely accidental. What is essential is all that came into the mind between sensation and perception: this content is reality, it is the mark on the wall....All mystery lies in the impenetrability of the non-self, of all that lies around us and the reality of which is only a postulate--in fact, a pure nothingness by the side of that inner effervescence aroused by the activity of our senses.<sup>86</sup>

Although Woolf acknowledged that much of life is impenetrable, she believed that life outside the self could be understood intuitively, and that the "inner effervescence aroused by the activity of our senses" was meaningless unless

validated by an objective reality. In fact, one purpose of the poetic novel, is to unite these two realms. The reveries in "The Mark on the Wall" are neither meaningless nor self-contained; their meaning is clarified by the intrusive outside voice which not only identifies the snail but also insists that there is no point in getting a newspaper. Nothing happens: "Curse this war; God damn this war."<sup>87</sup> The speaker's identification of the mark, a center of luminous thought, as a snail, his boredom with the war, and his search for reality in the newspaper only underline the richness of the speaker's subjective life. Here, as in To the Lighthouse, neither the subjective nor the objective visions of reality are complete in themselves: like Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, they complement one another. However, in underlining the narrowness of the world that is available to this intrusive voice, "The Mark on the Wall" asserts the validity of the subjective aspects of experience; it is not a statement of epistemological despair.

It is interesting to note that Ruskin may have inspired "The Mark on the Wall." In Modern Painters Ruskin wrote,

...the error into which many superficial artists fall [is] in speaking of "addressing the imagination" as the only end of art. It is quite true that the imagination must be addressed; but it may be very sufficiently addressed by the stain left by an ink-bottle thrown at the wall. The thrower has little credit, though an imaginative observer may find, perhaps, more to amuse him in the erratic nigrescence than in many a laboured picture.<sup>88</sup>

The freedom with which Woolf treated the imaginative potential of the "erratic nigrescence" suggests the rather creative use

she was to make of her knowledge of Ruskin. However, "The Mark on the Wall" is more than a joke on that eminent Victorian; it is also a tribute. The difference between the presentation of thought in Night and Day and "The Mark on the Wall" or "Kew Gardens" indicates what Woolf really learned from Ruskin. In Night and Day Woolf generally uses metaphors to suggest an individual's state of mind. For example,

but a far stronger passion had taken possession of [Mary's] soul than any her brother could inspire in her, and, seeing Ralph's change of expression, her hand almost automatically continued its movements, while her mind plunged desperately for some hold upon slippery banks.<sup>89</sup>

Instead of recreating the characters' dreams or thoughts Woolf tries to present the equivalents of thought in metaphors or symbols. The result is that rather than having the intensity of personal revelation, these thoughts take on an almost abstract Jamesian quality. In "The Mark on the Wall" Woolf discards the metaphors which were supposed to represent an individual's state of mind for language which expresses the play of mind itself:

But after life. The slow pulling down of thick green stalks so that the cup of the flower, as it turns over, deluges one with purple and red light. Why, after all, should one not be born there as one is born here, helpless, speechless, unable to focus one's eyesight, groping at the roots of the grass, at the toes of the Giants?...There will be nothing but spaces of light and dark, intersected by thick stalks, and rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour--dim pinks and blues--which will, as time goes on, become more definite, become--I don't know what....<sup>90</sup>

Ruskin suggested a specific literary technique--how to

create the prose equivalent of the Wordsworthian moment of vision, when perception becomes cognition. Woolf's use of the process of perception as an adjunct to the presentation of thought suggests the nature of Ruskin's influence upon her. In an extremely persuasive article "Art Criticism as a Prose Genre," G. Robert Stange suggests an affinity between the major art critics of the nineteenth century and the experimental novelists of the twentieth. "Art criticism," which Stange defines "as a writer's attempt to give a prose account of the aesthetic values and affective qualities of a work of visual art," did not exist before the nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup> Nineteenth-century art criticism, beginning with Lamb and Hazlitt, reached its fulfillment in Ruskin and Pater, who attempted "to provide an aesthetic equivalent for their sense of a work of plastic art."<sup>92</sup> Such an attempt "to create a verbal equivalent to painting or sculpture involves a conscious complication of the ordinary procedures of prose description...."<sup>93</sup> Stange calls "Ruskin's and Pater's descriptive passages...expressive imitations of the experience produced by a work of art." His term, Stange notes, refers to the process Susanne Langer describes as "transformation." "The effect of [Mrs. Langer's] theories," Stange adds, "is to provide an aesthetic which affirms the special qualities of Romantic art."

When her fine insights are applied to the prose  
 ...[under discussion] they make it possible for  
 us to find a special value in the impulse toward



expressionism, and to affirm more confidently the originality of the Victorian prose writers' experiments....Perhaps...we could...find in the expressive imitations of Ruskin and Pater not only a culmination of certain theories of Romantic art but a trying out of new possibilities for the prose that was to come.<sup>94</sup>

Stange's conclusion that the work of the nineteenth century art critics "helped to make possible the intensity, the insight, the new sensibility which had its fullest development in writing that was seemingly unrelated to art criticism--in those complex forms of prose fiction later evolved by Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf," seems most apt in regard to Joyce and Pater, and Proust, Woolf, and Ruskin.<sup>95</sup>

The previous discussion suggested that Ruskin offered Woolf a way of dramatizing the process of thought by linking it with the process of perception. Woolf's conclusion to an essay on Ruskin suggests their common indebtedness to Wordsworth. Woolf quotes the final passage from Praeterita, Ruskin's autobiography, which presents a vision of the earth, the sky, and man's own creation, in a moment of transcendent harmony.

...the fireflies...shone fitfully in the still undarkened air. How they shone! moving like fine-broken starlight through the purple leaves. How they shone! through the sunset that faded into thunderous night as I entered Siena three days before, the white edges of the mountainous clouds still lighted from the west, and openly golden sky calm behind the Gate of Siena's heart, with its still golden words. "Cor Magis tibi Sena pandit," and the fireflies everywhere in sky or cloud rising and falling, mixed with the lightning, and more intense than the stars."<sup>96</sup>

This momentary sense of the magical connection between all things was also Ruskin's contribution to Woolf.

It is interesting that Woolf also treats Ruskin almost as if he were a character in one of her novels. Like Rachel in The Voyage Out, Ruskin is seen as one who

was still further drawn from the ordinary traffic of life by Nature who, to most people only the background, lovely or sympathetic to their own activities was presence mystic, formidable, sublime, dominating the little human figures in the foreground.<sup>97</sup>

In other moods, Woolf sees Ruskin as a guide for life on this earth. "D'you know, Mr. Denham" says Mrs. Hilbery in Night and Day, "you remind me so much of dear Mr. Ruskin."

Some one, the other day, said to me, "Oh no, we don't read Ruskin, Mrs. Hilbery." What do you read, I wonder?--for you can't spend all your time going up in aeroplanes and burrowing into the bowels of the earth.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, the sense of the intricacy and the energy of the moving, expanding world of "Kew Gardens" and the palpable presence of the natural world in her later works, is Woolf's tribute to "dear Mr. Ruskin."

Despite his value as a model, Ruskin's own difficulties with Modern Painters must have indicated that his writing could not provide a form or a principle of order for an extended work of prose. Woolf ultimately found this form in Hardy, who was also deeply influenced by Wordsworth's vision of nature. Woolf's vision of the relationship between man and the earth indicates the use she was to make of Hardy. This vision is evident during several moments in Night and Day when Woolf tried to dramatize rather than to explicate her ideas about poetry. For example, while waiting to tell her father

about her cousin Cyril's "misbehavior" Katharine reads "Isabella and the Pot of Basil," Keats's poem about murder and treachery. "Her mind was full of the Italian hills and the blue daylight, and the hedges set with little rosettes of red and white roses."<sup>99</sup> The way the events of the poem seem to have disappeared suggests that the earth itself--not betrayal or treachery--is permanent and enduring in the human imagination. In a moment like this the minutiae of daily life recede and the earth actively enters human life to reveal its eternal pattern. This moment of recognition is central in Hardy's novels.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly, when Katharine and Ralph visit Kew, Ralph begins to speak to Katharine about science, and Katharine begins to enjoy contemplating "that other part of life where thought constructs a destiny which is independent of human beings": "the very trees and the green merging into the blue distance became symbols of the vast external world which recked so little of the happiness, of the marriages or deaths of individuals."<sup>101</sup> Despite changes in individual lives, the earth, like the worlds of art and science, is permanent. Unlike Hardy, for whom these moments of recognition are only part of a larger narrative structure, Woolf makes man's relationship to the landscape a principle of organization.

"Kew Gardens" illustrates how Woolf proposes to use this organizing principle in order to validate her perceptions of reality. This sketch presents life from the point of view

of a third person narrator who sees life from the vantage point of a flower-bed at Kew. A snail's activities are presented with the seriousness usually ascribed to those of human beings; the human beings are presented as if their lives were similar to that of the flowers and their words as significant as the movements of insects. Because both worlds are presented with dignity, the result is not a post-Darwinian debunking of man and his place in the universe. In their merging, the human and the natural worlds are both seen as fascinating and complex; thus, as one early reviewer noted, at first it seems that "the mysterious intricate life of the flower-bed goes on untouched by those odd creatures [the men and women visiting Kew]." The "tiny rich, minute" insect life seems "all [Woolf's] concern until suddenly with a gesture she shows us the flower-bed, growing, expanding in the heat and light, filling a whole world."<sup>102</sup>

The apparently simple merging of the human and natural worlds represents a very important discovery for Woolf. In The Voyage Out Woolf had tried to show nature's power by altering the scale between the landscape and the individual. The alternations between tea parties and reveries in Night and Day were an attempt to do the same on a subjective level. However, neither succeeded in suggesting the absolute interdependence of man and nature. Thus, "Kew Gardens" represents an important discovery for Woolf in terms of both subject matter and technique.

"Kew Gardens" also showed Woolf how to bypass social realities and present individual lives from a cosmic point of view. The following passage suggests the need for this discovery. In Night and Day Woolf describes how Katharine and Ralph "wandered in and out of glass-houses," at Kew and

saw lilies swimming in tanks, breathed in the scent of thousands of carnations, and compared their respective tastes in the matter of trees and lakes. While talking exclusively of what they saw, so that any one might have overheard them, they felt that the compact between them was made firmer and deeper by the number of people who passed them and suspected nothing of the kind.<sup>103</sup>

However, in "Kew Gardens" the couple courting in the gardens becomes symbolic:

...they were both young, a young man and a young woman. They were both in the prime of youth, or even in that season which precedes the prime of youth, the season before the smooth pink folds of the flower have burst their gummy case, when the wings of the butterfly, though fully grown, are motionless in the sun.<sup>104</sup>

Once they become symbolic, their experience becomes the experience of the race:

Thus one couple after another with much the same irregular and aimless movement passed the flower-bed and were enveloped in layer after layer of green blue vapour, in which at first their bodies had substance and a dash of colour, but later both substance and colour dissolved in the green-blue atmosphere.<sup>105</sup>

The experience of this couple becomes part of the ongoing stream of life.

"An Unwritten Novel" develops the implications of this method of characterization, combining it with the type of

reverie Woolf experimented with in "The Mark on the Wall." In "An Unwritten Novel," the narrator, journeying on a train, makes up a story about a woman in her compartment whom she names Minnie Marsh. When events reveal that her story about this woman is untrue, her first reaction is that "life" is "bare as a bone." Then she is forced to recognize that life itself seems to offer more riches than the artist's isolated imagination:

Mysterious figures! Mother and son. Who are you? Why do you walk down the street?...Oh, how it whirls and surges--floats me afresh! I start after them. People drive this way and that. The white light splutters and pours....Wherever I go, mysterious figures, I see you...you, you, you. I hasten, I follow. This, I fancy, must be the sea....It's you, unknown figures, you I adore; if I open my arms, it's you I embrace...adorable world!<sup>106</sup>

Here we have the stance of the narrator of Jacob's Room, a writer, whose subject, Jacob Flanders, forever eludes her, yet whose work provides him with an appropriate memorial.

The vision of a character whose deepest dreams remain unarticulated and whose life finally is determined by forces larger than himself is very close to Hardy's. If we could imagine Hardy's The Trumpet Major rewritten from the point of view of "Kew Gardens," we would see that John Loveday, who dies "upon one of the bloody battle-fields of Spain," is the ancestor of Jacob Flanders, who dies on the battlefields of Belgium or in the trenches of France.<sup>107</sup> This kind of character, whose life is determined by forces outside himself, is related to Woolf's conception of the poetic novel. Writing

about literary form in 1918 Woolf notes,

we cannot recognize among ourselves a conception of the art of fiction such as Jane Austen seems to have held so surely and unquestioningly; we are only now beginning to make out with hesitation and difficulty the form concealed in what still appears to many the formlessness of Mr. Hardy's novels.<sup>108</sup>

Woolf does not specify this form. However, an essay written a year earlier suggests that this form is related to a conception of the individual and his relationship to the landscape.

The sense of the country which both Mr. Hardy and Emily Brontë possess [Woolf writes] is so remarkable that a volume might be spent in discussion of it. We should scarcely exaggerate our own belief if we said that both seem to forecast a time when character will take on a different aspect under the novelist's hand, when he will be less fearful of the charge of unreality, less careful of the twitterings and chatterings which now make our puppets so animated and for the most part so ephemeral.

These characters will have stature because they will be presented in their eternal connection with the land: "Through the half-shut eyes with which we visualize books as a whole, we can see great tracts of Wessex and of the Yorkshire Moors inhabited by a race of people who seem to have the rough large outline of the land itself."<sup>109</sup> In another essay written during this period Woolf notes that Wuthering Heights seems to take place not between human beings but between "'the whole human race'" and "'the eternal powers.'"<sup>110</sup> Although this discussion suggests that Emily Brontë achieved some of Woolf's goals, the 1918 review (which talks about the form

of Mr. Hardy's novels) and the language of the 1917 review (which talks about "a race of people who seem to have the rough large outline of the land itself") suggest that Hardy offered Woolf an image for the poetic novel. Woolf's phrase recalls a scene in Hardy's Under the Greenwood Tree, which suggests how individuals appear to take on "the rough outline of the land itself."

Shuffling, halting, irregular footsteps of various kinds were not heard coming up the hill, and presently there emerged from the shade severally five men of different ages and gaits, all of them working villagers of the parish of Mellstock. They, too, had lost their rotundity with the daylight, and advanced against the sky in flat outlines, which suggests some processional design on Greek or Etruscan pottery.<sup>111</sup>

Only when people are cut off from the trivia of social life "the twitterings and chatterings" which make them and their affairs seem so ephemeral, can they seem to be eternal. The connection between this passage in Hardy's novel and the final vision of The Voyage Out is striking. The image of man as a traveler on the earth is also Wordsworthian. In fact, the pattern of Jacob's Room and The Voyage Out seems to be that of the Wordsworthian narrator who, like the speaker in "Resolution and Independence," perceives a traveler moving in the landscape and tries to understand him. Because this traveler seems to be closely related to the landscape, they illuminate one another. King notes how Wordsworth identifies the Leech-Gatherer with "the silent things of nature." "Everything [about him]...gives him Presence within a universe



of earth and sky."<sup>112</sup> The image of the traveler or voyager is appropriate here, for Jacob's Room can almost be said to begin with the image of human beings as travelers on the earth. Thus, Jacob's Room begins with the final image of The Voyage Out.

Jacob's Room is neither about Jacob Flanders nor the various rooms in which he lives, but, like The Voyage Out, it is an examination of man's place in the natural world. Because the central characters of both Jacob's Room and The Voyage Out die young and because there is an attempt in both novels to view their deaths in a larger context, a comparison between the two novels may be useful.

In a perceptive criticism of The Voyage Out, Daiches suggested that if Woolf had "been free to use the fact of the heroine's eventual death throughout the book, instead of waiting until it took place, she would have presented her vision more clearly."<sup>113</sup> Although Woolf's use of different perspectives which tended to diminish the importance of an individual's place in the world seems to have been an attempt to suggest Rachel's eventual death, Woolf's vision, as Daiches suggests, remains somewhat muddled. Jacob's end, however, is implicit in his beginning. Even his name may suggest a poetically appropriate end as "a little dust somewhat in Flanders."<sup>114</sup> The simple events of Jacob's life are framed by a larger vision of man's mortality. This framework is established in the very

first chapter by a detached omniscient narrator. This voice, similar to the narrative voice in "Kew Gardens," ranges over the landscape and within the thoughts of some of the characters and introduces a similar theme: the identity of the human and natural worlds. This theme is also carried by a more personal voice, that of a narrator who acts almost like a character in the novel, and who, like the speaker in "Unwritten Novel," can make only approximate guesses about the people she sees. But the detached voice of the omniscient narrator, which begins and ends the novel, has the authority of the abstract voice of the Interludes in The Waves.

Jacob's eventual death is evident in the very opening of the novel. Like Lucy Grey's, his death is related to the landscape. We see Wordsworth's Lucy Grey "moving over the inhuman snow," "carrying her death within her, quite alone, with the world closing in on her from the outside...."<sup>115</sup> We see Jacob walking on the sand, picking up "something horrid," a sheep's jaw, and leaving its skull on the sand. Signs of the coming hurricane display the earth "luridly."<sup>116</sup>

Against this coming dissolution stands only "the eternal conspiracy of hush and clean bottles" of mother and nurse.<sup>117</sup> Even the bedtime story Mrs. Flanders tells Archer suggests the process of growth and decay: "Think of the lovely, lovely birds settling down on their nests. Now shut your eyes and see the old mother bird with a worm in her beak."<sup>118</sup> The chapter ends with clumsy, blind acts of destruction. Jacob is

in bed with the sheep's jaw "he had kicked...against the iron bed-rail" and, in the hurricane outside, "the aster [is] beaten to the earth" and in a "child's bucket...half-full of rainwater" inside of which "the opal-shelled crab slowly circled round the bottom, trying with its weakly legs to climb the steep side; trying again and falling back, and trying again and again."<sup>119</sup>

Despite the clear presence of death in the opening chapter of the novel, the tone of this chapter and of the book itself is not morbid. Death, like Charles Steel's pleasure in "the effect of the black" dab on his canvas, is "just that note which brought the rest together."<sup>120</sup> The violet black dab gives shape to a landscape that otherwise would be too pale and shapeless. Although this landscape is associated with man's mortality, it never becomes overwhelming. The landscape in The Voyage Out dwarfs man and reveals his insignificance. But the earth in Jacob's Room, as in "Kew Gardens" is scaled to human beings. Man is at home in nature.

No words can exaggerate the importance of Dods Hill. It was the earth; the world against the sky; the horizon of how many glances can best be computed by those who have lived all their lives in the same village, only leaving it once to fight in the Crimea, like old George Garfit, leaning over his garden gate smoking his pipe. The progress of the sun was measured by it; the tint of the day laid against it to be judged.<sup>121</sup>

Betty Flanders understands that her dead husband Seabrook has become part of these comforting surroundings: "at first, part of herself; now one of a company, he had merged in the

grass, the sloping hillside...."<sup>122</sup> Like the little girl who insists of her dead brothers and sisters "their graves are green, they may be seen," Mrs. Flanders makes no artificial distinctions between the living and the dead.<sup>123</sup> When she hears the bell for the service of a funeral [she hears] "Seabrook's voice--the voice of the dead." Archer's question, "'Wouldn't you like my knife, Mother?'"...sounding at the same moment as the [church] bell" mixes, as Woolf notes, "life and death inextricably, exhilaratingly."<sup>124</sup>

Death is presented in this fearless way because it enables individuals to merge with something more permanent than themselves. As in The Voyage Out, Woolf attempts to redefine death by merging the finite individual with the landscape which endures forever. Man no longer has to fear destruction or obliteration because nature provides him with a kind of immortality. In fact, Woolf suggests, life is more likely to destroy the individual. Julia Eliot, who "was no fool," knows that destruction does not come from bodily injury but from the very process of living:

when the trees are rustling, the wheels churning yellow...the tumult of the present seems like an elegy for past youth and past summers, and there rose in her mind a curious sadness, as if time and eternity showed through skirts and waistcoats, and she saw people passing tragically to destruction.<sup>125</sup>

And Betty Flanders notes "even if it weren't the habit of the undertaker to close the eyes, the light so soon goes out of them."<sup>126</sup> Nature preserves man; life destroys him.

Because man's relationship to nature is presented in so clear a fashion, the Victorian view, which fears a nature "red in tooth and claw," can be treated rather lightly. Mrs. Jarvis, a clergyman's wife, is confronted with the dilemma of the typical Victorian intellectual. She was "just the sort of woman to lose her faith upon the moors...."

Mrs. Jarvis walked on the moor when she was unhappy going as far as a certain saucer-shaped hollow... and there she sat down, and took out the little book hidden beneath her cloak and read a few lines of poetry, and looked about her.

Mrs. Jarvis is a comic figure. Fearful of going beyond the hollow, she neither leaves her clergyman husband, nor loses her faith in God, and "never read her poem [perhaps one of Swinburne's] through."<sup>127</sup> She is treated comically because, like many Victorians, her preoccupation with minor details gives her no sense of the whole. "'Yet, I have a soul,' Mrs. Jarvis would bethink her, as Captain Barfoot suddenly blew his nose in a great red bandanna handkerchief...."<sup>128</sup> As Woolf notes, Mrs. Jarvis mistakenly confounds her confusions about god with "the universal that is...."<sup>129</sup>

The existence of this universal is suggested by Seabrook's voice and the voices of the other dead, which are carried by the church bells, but have nothing to do with this building: "The church clock struck ten. Did the strokes reach the furze bush, or did the thorn tree hear them?"<sup>130</sup> The moors, the repository of Mrs. Flanders' brooch and centuries of bones, accept and preserve all things. "The Roman skeletons are in

safe keeping. Betty Flanders's darning needles are safe too and her garnet brooch." "Tom Gage cries aloud so long as his tombstone endures."<sup>131</sup> After this tombstone crumbles, he will rest as quietly as the other once animate beings and inanimate things.

Here, perhaps it is useful to distinguish again between nature and the natural processes; one preserves man, the other destroys him. The moors represent the timeless realm of being which can be known through the natural world but which ultimately is outside it. Like Rachel's, Jacob's destiny is here.

More clearly than Wordsworth, Woolf recognized the dual potential of nature as mind or spirit and matter. The first, mind or spirit, allows for transcendence. In Jacob's Room this potential is suggested by the narrator's view of England from the Channel.

Strangely enough, you could smell violets, or if violets were impossible in July, they must grow something very pungent on the mainland then. The mainland, not so very far off--you could see clefts in the cliffs, white cottages, smoke going up--wore an extraordinary look of calm, of sunny peace, as if wisdom and piety had descended upon the dwellers there. Now a cry sounded, as of a man calling pilchards in a main street. It wore an extraordinary look of piety and peace, as if old men smoked by the door, and girls stood, hands on hips, at the well, and horses stood; as if the end of the world had come, and cabbage fields and stone walls, and coast-guard stations, and, above all, the white sand bays with the waves breaking unseen by any one, rose to heaven in a kind of ecstasy.<sup>132</sup>

Phrases like "the end of the world" and "the waves rising to

heaven in a kind of ecstasy" suggest the possibility of movement from a world subject to time to a world that is eternal. Although the stone walls and the cabbage fields become caught up with the breaking waves, they are raised above this "to heaven in a kind of ecstasy." The vision of world animated by a single spirit is Wordsworthian.

But Woolf is very careful to show the negative side of this vision, because she recognizes that matter often resists transcendence or that untranscended matter remains after the moment of vision: "...imperceptibly the cottage smoke droops, has the look of a mourning emblem, a flag floating its caress over a grave. The gulls, making their broad flight and then riding at peace, seem to mark the grave." This truth about the landscape is the same everywhere.

No doubt if this were Italy, Greece, or even the shores of Spain, sadness would be routed by strangeness and excitement and the nudge of a classical education. But the Cornish hills have stark chimneys standing on them; and, somehow or other, loveliness is infernally sad. Yes, the chimneys and the coast-guard stations and the little bays with the waves breaking unseen by any one make one remember the overpowering sorrow. And what can this sorrow be?<sup>133</sup>

The overpowering sorrow is death, not the grave marked by the smoke but the slow wearing away of the promise and the bloom of life, the rustling trees that seem "an elegy for past youth and past summers." Jacob also recognizes "it's not catastrophes, murders, deaths, diseases, that age and kill us; it's the way people look and laugh, and run up the stairs of omnibuses."<sup>134</sup>

Echoing the language of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," Woolf writes that this sorrow "is brewed by the earth itself. It comes from the houses on the coast. We start transparent, and then the cloud thickens. All history backs our pane of glass. To escape is vain."<sup>135</sup> The cottage smoke that droops like a mourning emblem suggests "the world of the elderly," the deadly world of social games, dinner and tea, which blights the world of the young, becoming a "black outline" upon their "reality; the moors and Byron; the sea and the lighthouse; the sheep's jaw with the yellow teeth...." No better than the vapid tea parties is the world of "Wells and Shaw and the serious sixpenny weeklies." To escape, Jacob turns to the landscape:

he draws into him at every step as he walks by the river such steady certainty, such reassurance from all sides, the trees bowing, the grey spires soft in the blue, voices blowing and seeming suspended in the air, the springy air of May, the elastic air with its particles--chestnut bloom, pollen, whatever it is that gives the May air its potency, blurring the trees, gumming the buds, daubing the green.<sup>136</sup>

Like Rachel, Jacob learns to find reassurance of his essential being in nature.

However, Jacob's actions fail to form any meaningful pattern. He lives in a world where life is ordered mechanically, a place of "carriages irresistible driven;...of force rushing round geometrical patterns in the most senseless way in the world."<sup>137</sup> The first World War is an expression of this desire to assert mechanical order everywhere, "to impose



some coherency upon Rajahs and Kaisers and the mutterings in bazaars...."138

Man's life belongs to nature. "Real flowers can never be dispensed with. If they could, human life would be a different affair altogether. For flowers fade...."139 Disregarding man's essential nature, society makes these flowers grow in "beds uncompromisingly geometrical."140 The adjustment between these two realms, nature and society, is made by art. Here the role of the artist, the writer-narrator, who is trying to write about Jacob, becomes important.

Barry Morgenstern corrects the tendency to ignore the narrator's voice or to assume that her voice is identical with Woolf's. However, in his zeal to right this critical balance, Morgenstern's conclusion, that Jacob's Room is "a portrait of an artist," i.e. that the novel exists to present a picture of the writer-narrator, tips the scale in an equally misleading direction.141

Jacob's Room is neither a traditional omnisciently narrated novel nor "a portrait of the artist telling the story"; in fact, its form moves between these extremes. Jacob's Room seems to be narrated by an omniscient voice that becomes personal and finally identifies itself as thirty-five and female. Occasionally, this voice seems to become detached and omniscient, but the shifting point of view does not become disturbing; in fact the quality of the personal voice is such that it seems to guarantee the validity of the omniscient

voice. The voice, cultivated, sympathetic, and knowledgeable about upper-middle class life, remains a voice, not, as Morgenstern suggests, a character, although it pretends to go about interviewing people who knew Jacob. The following is a typical passage:

Every face, every shop, bedroom window, public-house and dark square is a picture feverishly turned--in search of what? It is the same with books. What do we seek through millions of pages? Still hopefully turning the pages--oh, here is Jacob's room.<sup>142</sup>

The narrator's treatment of Jacob reflects Woolf's particular ideas about human personality, ideas she expressed in relation to biography long before she began to write Orlando. In 1920 Woolf wrote,

But then, in justice to...biographers, what do we know of people? Even in the case of our friends the deposit of certainty is all spun over by a myriad changing shades; what they are depends upon what we are; then there are marriage, separation, the taking of office, and the birth of children; in short, when we come to say what anyone is like we often find ourselves in [a] predicament...and merely reply that an anonymous old woman once sat in the King of Saxony's coach. If this is so with the living, what can we know about the dead? Surely we can only invent them, and the best biographers are those who have most inventive power, along with an affinity of temperament which easily transmits shocks of love and hatred.

Life is best understood through the imagination: "A phrase in a letter, a glance from a portrait, an old name on a tomb, and the mischief is done--we love or we hate."<sup>143</sup> A biographer can only make up stories about people. The writer-narrator of Jacob's Room says, "It is no use trying to sum

people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done."<sup>144</sup> The best biographer, the person best able to convey the quality of another person's life, is therefore the novelist or the poet.

The writer-narrator of Jacob's Room establishes her affinities with Jacob. Both love Greece and British literature, hate the Plumers, and resist being placed in social categories: "from looking at [Jacob], one would have found it difficult to say which seat in the opera house was his, stalls, gallery, or dress circle."<sup>145</sup> She, too, resists categories: "wherever I seat myself, I die in exile."<sup>146</sup> She also tries to transmit the "shocks of love" she feels for this young man, for she knows him best in this guise:

Back from the Chapel, back from the Hall, back from the Library, came the sound of his footsteps, as if the old stone echoed with magisterial authority: "The young man--the young man--the young man--back to his rooms."<sup>147</sup>

Her ten years' seniority makes her very aware of youth and its vulnerability, and it is she who sees the skeleton beneath the flesh and understands the potential disillusionment Jacob will feel in middle age. Thus, her point of view enables us to recognize that Jacob's death preserves his essence in a world where Aristotle is "a dirty man, carnivorously interested in the body of the...guest" and where Jacob's own search for truth becomes a marginal correction in a book of moths or an attack against the bowdlerization of Marlowe."<sup>148</sup> Jacob's death therefore preserves him from the

inevitable compromises and disillusionments life offers and saves him from being submerged in a world of meaningless dinner parties, editorials, and love affairs:

For he had grown to be a man, and was about to be immersed in things--as indeed the chambermaid, emptying his basin upstairs, fingering keys, studs, pencils, and bottles of tabloids strewn on the dressing-table, was aware.<sup>149</sup>

In presenting the quality of Jacob's life the writer-narrator's method elucidates Woolf's belief that

the values of life are quite different from those of biography. There is such a thing as living. We are enmeshed in a texture of incredible fineness. It is character that enchants and colours. Achievement has nothing to do with it....<sup>150</sup>

The word "achievement" is particularly important here. Jacob's Room is also an anti-biography that has particular relevance to the twenties in England: Woolf wrote

the war has made us familiar with the type of book [in which] a young man impresses his friends with his powers, writes one novel of great promise, and is killed at the age of thirty. The friends then attempt to record what he was to them, and to adumbrate what he might have been to the world.<sup>151</sup>

Jacob's Room presents the lives of these men as complete in themselves. Thus, the central theme of Jacob's essay, "Does History consist of the Biographies of Great Men?" is answered in the course of the novel.<sup>152</sup> History, Woolf suggests, is the story of the "old man [who] has been crossing the Bridge these six hundred years..."

The wind has blown up the waves. The river races beneath us....On the other side the city is white as if with age; St. Paul's swells white above the fretted, pointed, or oblong buildings beside it. The cross alone shines rosy-guilt. But what century

have we reached? Has this procession from the Surrey side to the Strand gone on for ever?<sup>153</sup>

Drama and excitement is here: "Merely to see the flash and thrust of limbs engaged in the conduct of daily life is better than the old pageant of armies drawn out in battle array upon the plain."<sup>154</sup>

Although Woolf is concerned with these questions, Jacob's Room is neither a history or a biography, but a novel about a young man; perhaps it is a novel about writing his biography, and, finally, it is about art. The writer-narrator of Jacob's Room is presented as rather ineffectual; she searches for Jacob but is unable to find him. But her failure is only apparent. Jacob's elusiveness, like Rachel's, is thematically appropriate, for both suggest the promise of youth that is quickly lost. In conveying the quality of Jacob's life, the writer-narrator achieves a measure of success.

"Life, which...is quite unlike biography, is not a series of episodes, or of sentimental adventures, or of descriptive scenes, or even the drudgery of daily existence, but consists in the passage of Time; of perpetually stepping towards the westering sun."<sup>155</sup>

Jacob's Room is successful because it presents Jacob's steps westward. The biography is successful because it presents Jacob in terms that reveal his ultimate significance. This method of characterization is derived from Wordsworth. In The Prelude, the poet speaks of meeting a blind beggar who "Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest/Wearing a written paper, to explain/His story." He seems "an apt type, [His] label seemed of the utmost we can know,/Both of our-

selves and of the universe."

And, on the shape of that unmoving man,  
His steadfast face and sighless eyes, I gazed,  
As if admonished from another world.<sup>156</sup>

The conclusion of the novel tests how well the writer-narrator has read Jacob's lable.

Her vision is tested in the final scene of the novel, which is presented by the more detached omniscient voice of the opening chapter. After Jacob's death his mother and his friend Bonamy come to sort out his possessions:

Bonamy crossed to the window. Pickford's van swung down the street. The omnibuses were locked together at Mudie's corner. Engines throbbed, and carters, jamming the brakes down, pulled their horses sharp up. A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible. And suddenly all the leaves seemed to raise themselves.

"Jacob! Jacob!" cried Bonamy, standing by the window. The leaves sank down again.

Bonamy's confused impressions suggest that intimations of immortality may be more indigenous to Scarborough than to London. And here the artist becomes important. After Bonamy's cry, Mrs. Flanders enters the room and asks "'What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?' She held out a pair of Jacob's old shoes."<sup>157</sup>

In an article on Haworth, which she visited in 1904, Woolf commented upon the relics in the Brontë Museum and noted

the most touching case--so touching that one hardly feels reverent in one's gaze--is that which contains the little personal relics, the dresses and shoes of [Charlotte Brontë]. The natural fate of such things is to die before the body that wore them, and because these, trifling and transient though they are, have survived, Charlotte Brontë the woman comes to life....<sup>158</sup>

Jacob's shoes, then, are actual testimony that he lived. However, the meaning of the novel seems to depend, in part, upon a successful assimilation of these objects--Jacob's shoes--into the texture of the narrative.

The best biographers, as Woolf noted, can only testify to their affinity of temperament and their love for their subject. When she discusses Jacob's travels in Italy the narrator tries to understand Jacob's feelings by remembering her own:

And there is a lonely hill-top where no one ever comes, and yet it is seen by me who was lately driving down Piccadilly on an omnibus. And what I should like would be to get out among the fields, sit down and hear the grasshoppers, and take up a handful of earth--Italian earth, as this is Italian dust upon my shoes.<sup>159</sup>

Although the final chapter is presented by an omniscient voice, Jacob's shoes remain a testimony to the writer-narrator's affinities with her subject and a guarantee of the validity of her vision of Jacob. Through her writer-narrator, Woolf seems to suggest that the artist's love and imagination participate in the saving powers of nature. The shoes Betty Flanders finds testify that Jacob had been present, that he, like the narrator, had walked on the earth. And the dust the writer-narrator describes testifies to his continued presence as part of the earth.

Although Hafley suggests "Woolf had no reason for mixing omniscient point of view with dramatic,"<sup>160</sup> she seems to have done so in order to portray the dramatic aspect of the poetic

consciousness. The embarrassed biographer who is trying to follow Jacob down the street or up to his room is subtly replaced by a more omniscient voice which, like the voice in Wordsworth's poems, arranges the people or the objects in the landscape to reveal their meaning.

In a discussion of poetry in the Romantic tradition, J. Hillis Miller suggests that this poetry "is usually dramatic or dialectical in structure." The dual narrative made in Jacob's Room recreates this dramatic or dialectical structure of Romantic poetry. The structure of Romantic poetry, according to Hillis Miller, "often presupposes a double division of existence."

The objects of this world are separated from the supernatural realities they signify, and the consciousness of the poet is separated both from objects and from their celestial models. A poetry based on such assumptions will be a verbal act bringing about a change in man's relation to the world. In uniting subject and object it will give the poet momentary possession of that distant reality the object symbolizes.<sup>161</sup>

The poet who must unite the objects of this world with "their celestial models" suggests this possibility for the prose writer who, according to Woolf, presents "what is deeply revealing together with what is likely...[making] the prosaic look of things...yield...true poetry."<sup>162</sup> Like the Romantic poet, the poet-novelist can unite the subjective world with the objects it perceives through an act of understanding. Thus, it is clear that although Woolf used Wordsworthian themes in her first two novels, her imagination was engaged with his



ideas on a more profound level. Earlier, we noted that the pattern of Jacob's Room and The Voyage Out seems to be based upon Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence." The speaker sees a traveler moving in the landscape and tries to understand both the man and his surroundings. The structure of Jacob's Room dramatizes the process of understanding that takes place in the poet's mind. The writer-narrator is like the speaker of the poem. The omniscient narrator is like the poet, who, while remaining outside the action, places it in an arrangement which indicates its significance. In addition to its lyrical subject matter, the poetic novel recreates the process by which the Romantic poet comes to apprehend the nature of reality.

With Jacob's Room, Woolf ended a period of useful experimentation with subject matter and style. Night and Day, unfruitful in itself, was a useful exercise: "Oh, it's a dull book I know," Woolf said to Maynard Keynes, "but don't you see you must put it all in before you can leave out."<sup>163</sup> Jacob's Room, as Woolf herself indicated, is "entirely different...no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart...."<sup>164</sup>

The desire to write a book of this sort reveals that Woolf's preoccupation with the Romantics was more extensive than a desire to reproduce a Romantic subject or a similar way of knowing. Her desire to write a novel which is "all crepuscular, but the heart" owes much to a concept of poetry developed

in the nineteenth century. Poetry, as Mill suggests in his autobiography and his criticism, is concerned primarily with the cultivation of feeling. Therefore "the word 'poetry' imports something quite peculiar in its nature, something which may exist in what is called prose as well as verse, something which does not even require the instrument of words, but can speak through the other audible symbols called musical sounds, and even through the visible ones which are the language of sculpture, painting, and architecture...."<sup>165</sup>

Elsewhere, he wrote more briefly to George Henry Lewes, "you have not...yet convinced me that the line between poetry, & passionate writing of any kind, is best drawn where metre ends & prose begins."<sup>166</sup>

This concept of poetry, however, is significant not only because it led to an interest in the possibility of "poetry" in different genres, but also because it gave rise to a demand for a new kind of poetic structure. Lindenberger writes,

in the course of the early nineteenth century the Longinian demand for intensity had gradually been narrowed down to the point where it was no longer satisfied by individual moments of elevation embedded within a larger structure, but, rather, insisted that the only proper business of poetry was the exclusive cultivation of these moments.<sup>167</sup>

Although Poe's discussion of the lyric is perhaps the most well known formation of this doctrine, Arnold's touchstones, George Eliot's praise of feeling condensed "into the diamonds of poetry"<sup>168</sup> suggest the pervasiveness of this idea

in the latter part of the nineteenth century in Britain. A contemporary of Wordsworth who complained that in The Prelude Wordsworth "dashes his very poetry with prose"<sup>169</sup> suggests that the term "poetry" came to be applied to the presentation of these ecstatic moments, and that "prose" referred to the narrative or to what Woolf called the "scaffolding."

Woolf's idea of the poetic novel has its origins in the literary taste of the nineteenth century. The poetic novel will have the point of view and the intensity of a lyric poem. Like a lyric poem it will be concerned with presenting ecstatic moments rather than with narrating events.

## Notes for Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography (New York, 1972), p. 29. (Bell's italics have been omitted.) Vanessa Bell later found "fault with Ruskin" (p. 92), but he remained a serious influence on Woolf.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 69. Bell also calls attention to Woolf's more playful style of writing, evident in her early correspondence, which is "not unlike the kind of letter she was to write in later years...."

<sup>3</sup>The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius, New York, 1961, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary (New York, 1953), p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>6</sup>Louise Bogan and Josephine Schaefer criticize those who would consider Woolf's view mystical. They recognize that Woolf "sought to pin down these moments, when life seemed revealed in all its essential luminosity." However, they believe "the quality has been called mystical--very mistakenly, because this hyperaesthetic awareness of the poetry of existence, with the senses of smell, sight, hearing, touch, heightened, and the mental and emotional faculties refined and taut, has nothing to do with the mystic's experience of unity with God, such as we find, for instance, in Blake and in Emily Dickinson." "Afterword" A Writer's Diary, p. 345. Although their criticism is rightly aimed at those who would etherealize Woolf, their emphasis seems misplaced. Woolf's perception of "reality" is no more private or idiosyncratic than Wordsworth's sense of: "A presence that disturbs me with the joy/Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime/Of something far more deeply interfused,/Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,/And the round ocean and the living air,/And the blue sky, and in the mind of man...." It is also interesting to note that Woolf's experience is not limited to patterns of nineteenth-century thought. On 9 January 1939 Albert Einstein wrote the following to Queen Elizabeth of Belgium: "I have been too troubled to write in good cheer. The moral decline we are compelled to witness and the suffering it engenders are so oppressive that one cannot ignore them even for a moment. No matter how deeply one immerses oneself in work, a haunting feeling of inescapable tragedy persists. Still, there are moments when one feels free from one's own identi-

fication with human limitations and inadequacies. At such moments, one imagines that one stands on some spot of a small planet, gazing in amazement at the cold yet profoundly moving beauty of the eternal, the unfathomable: life and death flow into one, and there is neither evolution nor destiny; only being." (Jeremy Bernstein, "Profiles: The Secrets of the Old One-I," The New Yorker, 10 March 1973, p. 46.)

Without having to venture further philosophically, it is clear that Wordsworth, Woolf, and Einstein are expressing what we call an idealist philosophical position which believes that man and nature, which are finite, are not the whole of reality. Both man and nature are grounded in an ultimate reality transcending space, time, and all finite existence. Woolf's sense that beside the permanence and endurance of the earth "the twitterings and chatterings" of human beings are ephemeral makes her seek for a principle of reality that is symbolized in the earth. (See p. below.) Critics who find her celebrated style empty fail to recognize, as E. M. Forster did, that her novels are "trophies" "won by the mind from matter, its enemy and its friend." "Virginia Woolf," Two Cheers for Democracy (Harmondsworth, England, 1965), p. 265.

<sup>7</sup>James Naremore, The World Without a Self: Virginia Woolf and the Novel (New Haven, 1973). Writing about The Voyage Out, Woolf's first novel, Naremore notes "there is comparatively little criticism on the novel..., the assumption apparently being that Virginia Woolf's career really began only with the experimental sketches in Monday or Tuesday, or even later, with her third novel, Jacob's Room," p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Woolf's first published essay, "a review of The Son of Royal Langbirth by W. D. Howells, appeared in The Guardian on 14 December 1904..., " (Bell, p. 97). Although Bell places "the birth of Melymbrosia," which became The Voyage Out, in 1907-1908, he believes that it "may, indeed, have had its beginnings in Virginia's imagination...at Manorbier in 1904," (p. 131).

<sup>9</sup>Woolf seems to have had an understanding of her method as early as 1908. In a review of "Blackstick Papers" by her aunt, Lady Ritchie, she wrote the following: "If we try to discover what her method is we must imagine that she looks out of a window, takes somehow the impression of a gay, amusing world, turns over the leaves of her book and seizes a sentence here and there, remembers something that happened forty years ago, and rounds it all into an essay which has the bouyancy and the shifting colours of a bubble in the sun" ("Blackstick

Papers," TLS, 19 November 1908, p. 411). Later, she found similar modes in such Russian writers as Chekhov and Dostoyevsky. It is significant, however, that in Woolf's fictional portrayal of Lady Ritchie as Mrs. Hilbery in Night and Day, she is presented as someone who has a beautiful style but who is unable to complete a literary work. Although Lady Ritchie was "slightly taken aback" by this portrayal, Woolf apparently believed that style did not guarantee substance. (Lady Ritchie's response is noted by Joanne P. Zuckerman in "Anne Thackeray Ritchie as the Model for Mrs. Hilbery in Virginia Woolf's Night and Day," Virginia Woolf Quarterly, I, 3 [Spring 1973], p. 32.)

<sup>10</sup>Kirkpatrick indicates that Woolf published 61 articles between 1904 and 1913. B. J. Kirkpatrick, A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf (London, 1957), pp. 97-101. I am referring to citations C01-C49.

<sup>11</sup>Kirkpatrick's listing indicates that three of the articles were reprinted in Granite and Rainbow and five in Contemporary Writers. Neither collection of essays was published during Woolf's lifetime. (Granite and Rainbow: Essays, ed. Leonard Woolf [New York, 1958]. Contemporary Writers, ed. Jean Guiget [London, 1965].)

<sup>12</sup>"Barham of Beltana," TLS, 17 March 1905, p. 90. (*Italics added*).

<sup>13</sup>For the phrase "the stuff of poetry," see note 15 below.

<sup>14</sup>"Rachel," TLS, 20 April 1911, p. 155.

<sup>15</sup>"Wordsworth's Letters," TLS, 2 April 1908, p. 108.

<sup>16</sup>Virginia Woolf, "The Duke and Duchess of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne," TLS, 2 February 1911, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup>"A Vanished Generation," TLS, 3 December 1908, p. 445.

<sup>18</sup>See note 8 above.

<sup>19</sup>Bell, p. 132.

<sup>20</sup>Virginia Woolf & Lytton Strachey: Letters, ed. Leonard Woolf and James Strachey (London, 1956), p. 75.

<sup>21</sup>David Daiches writes, "It is clear that 'plot' in the traditional sense has no interest for this writer. The story is carried forward to a conclusion...but...the real interest [in the novel] derives from the quality of observation the

novelist brings to bear now on this subject, now on that." My division between plot and philosophical observations was suggested by Daiches' discussion, though he himself does not abide by these distinctions. Virginia Woolf, The Makers of Modern Literature (Norfolk, Connecticut, 1942), pp. 11-14.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>23</sup>"The Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt," Cornhill Magazine, n.s., XXIV (1908), p. 194.

<sup>24</sup>Emma, ed. Lionel Trilling (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957), p. 282.

<sup>25</sup>Trilling discusses the moral meaning of the landscape in his "Introduction," Ibid., xii-xiv. Clive Bell also found similarities between the mountain picnic in The Voyage Out and the picnic at Box Hill. Quentin Bell reprints Clive's letter on The Voyage Out in Appendix D, Bell, pp. 215-217. The comparison is on p. 217.

<sup>26</sup>Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out, New Edition (London, 1933), p. 249.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 422.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>31</sup>The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist (New York, 1954), p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>The Voyage Out, pp. 94-95.

<sup>33</sup>Hafley, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup>The Voyage Out, p. 357.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 370.

<sup>40</sup>King, p. 148. J. K. Johnstone also notes a connection between these feelings and those portrayed in several of Wordsworth's poems. The Bloomsbury Group: A Study of E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and Their Circle (London, 1954), p. 137.

<sup>41</sup>The Voyage Out, p. 431.

<sup>42</sup>King, p. 150.

<sup>43</sup>David Ferry, The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems (Middletown, Connecticut, 1959), pp. 32-33. (For Ferry's discussion of mystical and sacramental poetry, see Chapter Two, "The Love of Nature," especially pp. 29 ff.) In this context, Rachel's impatience with earthly limits is significant. She complains, "what's so detestable in this country...is the blue--always blue sky and blue sea. It's like a curtain--all the things one wants are on the other side of that. I want to know what's going on behind it,..." The Voyage Out, p. 369.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-157.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>48</sup>This is the second stanza of Wordsworth's "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal." Poetical Works, p. 149.

<sup>49</sup>Bell, p. 143.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 144

<sup>52</sup>Geoffrey H. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814 (New Haven, 1964), p. 350.

<sup>53</sup>I am using Dorrit Cohn's term. Her essay, "Narrated Monologue: Definition of a Fictional Style," provides an excellent analysis of these modes. (Comparative Literature XVIII [Spring, 1966], pp. 97-112.)

<sup>54</sup>C. C. Clarke, Romantic Paradox: An Essay on the Poetry of Wordsworth (London, 1962), p. 26.

<sup>55</sup>The Voyage Out, p. 458. St. John speaks for Woolf



because only he perceives the pattern she mentions in her letter to Strachey, (see note 20 above). As a character, St. John is not clearly enough developed so that his vision of reality would gain our assent if it were not for the placement of this vision at the conclusion of the novel, which invests it with the authority of the impersonal voice of the narrator.

<sup>56</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 54.

<sup>57</sup>Bell, pp. 270, 293.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>59</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 179.

<sup>60</sup>Night and Day (London, 1919), p. 38.

<sup>61</sup>"A Minor Dostoevsky," TLS, 11 October 1917, p. 489.

<sup>62</sup>Night and Day, pp. 387- 88.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>64</sup>"Mr. Symons's Essays," TLS, 21 December 1916, p. 623.

<sup>65</sup>William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1850)," The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, Vol. I, Oxford, 1974, p. 135. The 1800 "Preface" states a similar principle, *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>66</sup>E. M. Forster, "The Celestial Omnibus," Collected Short Stories, (Harmondsworth, England), 1965, p. 58. "Bons' attitude provides much of the comedy in the novel. Two of Katharine's aunts carry Shakespeare's works wherever they go to fortify themselves against daily life. A third dismisses the Russians, whom Woolf was reading with great admiration at the time with the judgment, 'insanity is not a fit subject for fiction.' " 'There's the well-known case of Hamlet,' Mr. Hilbery interposed, in his leisurely, half-humorous tones." "'Ah, but poetry's different...' Aunt Eleanor insists," (p. 369).

<sup>67</sup>Night and Day, p. 152.

<sup>68</sup>Because Mrs. Hilbery is based on Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Woolf's aunt, Joanne P. Zuckerman associates Alardyce with Thackeray. It is true that "some of the events of Thackeray's career are discernable under the disguises they assume in that of Richard Alardyce," p. 34. The novel places Alardyce among the first generation of Romantic poets. When Woolf indicates that Alardyce lost his poetic talent when he became a respectable pillar of society, she may be having a joke at Wordsworth's expense.

<sup>69</sup>Night and Day, p. 324.

<sup>70</sup>Josephine O'Brien Schaefer has compared the denouement of Night and Day with that of Twelfth Night. Her comparisons are interesting and suggest the importance of Shakespeare's presence in the novel. However, as Schaefer herself suggests, Shakespeare becomes a symbol for all of literature, and it is in these terms that his place in the novel is considered here. The Three-Fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf, Studies in English Literature, Vol. VII (The Hague, 1965), pp. 50-51.

<sup>71</sup>Night and Day, p. 152.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>73</sup>Wordsworth "Preface" (1850), p. 123; cf. "Preface" (1800), p. 122.

<sup>74</sup>Night and Day, p. 451.

<sup>75</sup>Wordsworth, "Preface" (1850), p. 138; cf. "Preface" (1802), Poetical Works, p. 737.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 123; cf. "Preface" (1800), p. 122.

<sup>77</sup>Night and Day, p. 226.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., pp. 511-12.

<sup>79</sup>Wordsworth, "Preface" (1850), p. 141; cf. "Preface" (1802), Poetical Works, p. 738.

<sup>80</sup>Night and Day, p. 526.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 518.

<sup>82</sup>"Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs," TLS, 26 July 1907, p. 234.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>"The Memoirs of Lady Dorothy Nevill," Cornhill Magazine, n.s., XXIV (1908), p. 473.

<sup>85</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 32. "The Mark on the Wall" was published in 1917, "Kew Gardens," 1918, and "An Unwritten Novel," in 1920. These have been collected in A Haunted House and Other Stories (New York, n.d.).

<sup>86</sup>Jean Guiguet, Virginia Woolf and Her Works, trans. Jean Stewart (New York, 1965), p. 385.

<sup>87</sup>"The Mark on the Wall," p. 46.

<sup>88</sup>John Ruskin, Modern Painters, III, iv, x, ~~10~~, p. 179, The Works of John Ruskin, V.

<sup>89</sup>Night and Day, p. 200.

<sup>90</sup>"The Mark on the Wall, " p. 39.

<sup>91</sup>The Art of Victorian Prose, ed. George Levine and William Madden (New York, 1968), p. 40.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-52. Ruskin, Proust, and Woolf are bound by an allegiance to a common Wordsworthian heritage. Christopher Salvesen suggests the kind of connection with which we are concerned: "Memory has to do not only with specific emotions but also with states of being, continuities of feeling; and George Eliot shows how connections can be made, almost physically perceived, between nature, time, and the sense of self. This comprehensive and characteristically sensuous mode of memory is very evident in Wordsworth; and has been made familiar by Proust--who was, in his turn, a great admirer of George Eliot....There is a community of experience stretching from Wordsworth through George Eliot to Proust which is all the more fascinating because there is no immediately obvious intimate point of contact between the Lake Poet and the novelist of Combray and Paris, of aristocracy and decadence as well as of provincial life," pp. 20-21. The probable point of contact was Ruskin, whose influence upon Proust was decisive, George D. Painter, "Salvation Through Ruskin," Proust: The Early Years (Boston, 1959).

This link between Proust and Ruskin also explains why some critics have insisted that Woolf simply imitated Proust. For example, Dorothy Hoare comments on the fact that Wordsworth's mode of association is similar to Woolf's but insists that "the credit of originating this method in the novel...does not belong to Virginia Woolf but to Proust, who must have very greatly influenced her work..., Some Studies in the Modern Novel (London, 1938), p. 43. Guiguet is more accurate. "Woolf's judgment on Proust, in which every word speaks of a deep-seated kinship...is not a matter of influence but of a complex coincidence, consisting on the one hand of the analogy between two temperaments...and on the other of the exploitation of a common fund of ideas and theories which were in the air...,

p. 247. Although both knew Bergson, their "common fund of ideas" included a Wordsworthian heritage that was transmitted through Ruskin.

<sup>96</sup>"Ruskin," Collected Essays, I, pp. 207-208.

<sup>97</sup>"Praeterita," New Republic, 28 December 1927, p. 166.

<sup>98</sup>Night and Day, pp. 6-7.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>100</sup>John Peck speaks of the "high moment in the Victorian novel which, by installing the central figure in a landscape prospect, permits him to adjust his private morality to the social one, or otherwise to clarify his sense of himself and his situation. We find these index vistas, these prospect scenes, from Austen through George Eliot and Hardy, in novels of manners and passion alike." "Hardy and the Figure in the Scene," Agenda: Thomas Hardy Special Issue, ed. Donald Davie, X, 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1972), p. 118.

After Hardy's death Woolf wrote, "we do not know [Hardy's] men and women in their relations to each other," but more importantly, "we know them in their relations to time, death, and fate. If we do not see them in quick agitation against the lights and crowds of cities, we see them against the earth, the storm, and the seasons." As a result, "we know their attitude towards some of the most tremendous problems that can confront mankind." "The Novels of Thomas Hardy," Collected Essays (London, 1966), Vol. II, p. 262.

<sup>101</sup>Night and Day, p. 350.

<sup>102</sup>"A Short Story," Athenaeum, 13 June 1919, p. 459.

<sup>103</sup>Night and Day, 359.

<sup>104</sup>"Kew Gardens," p. 33.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>106</sup>"An Unwritten Novel," p. 21.

<sup>107</sup>Thomas Hardy, The Trumpet-Major John Loveday A Soldier in the War with Buonaparte and Robert His Brother First Mate in the Merchant Service: A Tale (London, 1925), p. 385.

<sup>108</sup>"Mr. Howells on Form," TLS, 14 November 1918, p. 553. Woolf's appreciation of Hardy had increased. In 1908 "she

read Two on A Tower and considered him too clumsy a writer to be counted a classic, but there was a kind of bleak force about him, a sort of 'rude honesty' which was very much to her taste," (Bell, p. 144).

109"Flumina Amem Silvasque," TLS, 11 October 1917, p. 489.

110"Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights," Collected Essays, I, p. 189.

111Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree or The Mellstock Quire: A Rural Painting of the Dutch School (London, 1961), p. 13.

112King, p. 157.

113Daiches, p. 14.

114This is Guiguet's conclusion, p. 220.

115King, p. 149.

116Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room in Jacob's Room & The Waves (New York, n.d.), pp. 10, 11.

117Ibid., p. 13.

118Ibid., p. 12.

119Ibid., p. 14.

120Ibid., p. 9.

121Ibid., p. 17.

122Ibid., p. 16.

123Wordsworth, "We are Seven," l. 37, Poetical Works, p. 66.

124Jacob's Room, p. 16. Italics added.

125Ibid., p. 168.

126Ibid., p. 16.

127Ibid., p. 27.

128Ibid., p. 28.

129Ibid., p. 27.

- 130 Ibid., p. 132.
- 131 Ibid., p. 134.
- 132 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- 133 Ibid., p. 49.
- 134 Ibid., p. 82.
- 135 Ibid., p. 49.
- 136 Ibid., p. 36.
- 137 Ibid., p. 152.
- 138 Ibid., p. 172.
- 139 Ibid., p. 83.
- 140 Ibid., p. 152.
- 141 "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Jacob's Room,"  
Modern Fiction Studies, XVIII, 3 (Autumn 1972), 361.
- 142 Jacob's Room, p. 97.
- 143 "The Wrong Way of Reading," Athenaeum, 28 May 1920,  
 p. 696.
- 144 Jacob's Room, p. 154.
- 145 Ibid., p. 70.
- 146 Ibid., p. 69.
- 147 Ibid., p. 46.
- 148 Ibid., pp. 138, 107.
- 149 Ibid., p. 139.
- 150 "A Character Sketch," Athenaeum, 13 August 1920, p. 201.
- 151 "Review of The Life and Last Words of Wilfrid Ewart,  
 by Stephen Graham," Nation & Athenaeum, 21 June 1924, p. 392.  
 Schaefer suggests that Jacob "is all the young men who did  
 not come back to their rooms," p. 70.
- 152 Jacob's Room, p. 39.
- 153 Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>155</sup>"A Character Sketch," p. 201. Woolf quotes this passage from Augustine Birrell's biography of Frederick Locker-Lampson, which she is reviewing in this essay.

<sup>156</sup>IV, ll. 640-42, 45-49, Poetical Works, p. 545.

<sup>157</sup>Jacob's Room, p. 176.

<sup>158</sup>"Haworth," Guardian, 21 December 1904, p. 2159. In Night and Day, Alardyce's "large, worn slippers" are displayed among the poet's relics (p. 7).

<sup>159</sup>Jacob's Room, p. 136.

<sup>160</sup>Hafley, p. 53.

<sup>161</sup>"Introduction," William Carlos Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey), 1966, pp. 4-5.

<sup>162</sup>"Mr. Symons's Essays," p. 623.

<sup>163</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 43.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>165</sup>John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry," Literary Essays, ed. Edward Alexander (Indianapolis, 1967), p. 50. The essay was first published in 1833.

<sup>166</sup>This letter, written in 1841, is reprinted, Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>167</sup>Herbert Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's "Prelude" (Princeton, 1963), p. 101.

<sup>168</sup>This phrase is from a review of Tennyson's Maude and Other Poems, originally published in 1855. It is reprinted as "Tennyson's 'Maud,'" Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), p. 191. Of Tennyson's "Ulysses," Eliot wrote, it "is a pure little ingot of the same gold that runs through the ore of the Odyssey," Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Lindenberger, p. 99. Margaret Schlegel in E. M. Forster's Howards End uses similar terminology. Speaking of Leonard Bast she says "he cares for something special in adventure. It's quickest to call that something special poetry...." Later, we are told that Margaret believed in helping Henry to build "the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion." (New York, 1958), pp. 145, 186.

## CHAPTER III

...somehow Jacob has come to a stop, in the middle of that party too, which I enjoyed so much.

Virginia Woolf

Because Jacob's continued presence, his "immortality," in the world is dependent upon his absence (his death), this solution is not entirely satisfactory. Victory over the forces of dissolution and destruction is achieved only by accepting this destruction as necessary and by allying the artist with the destroyer. Although the narrative reveals a pattern that illuminates the meaning of Jacob's death, his absence leaves the book without a meaningful center. However, even during his lifetime, Jacob "himself lack[ed] the presence and the substance needed to absorb his universe, to make it solely his own."<sup>1</sup> In Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf tries to create this center.

With Mrs. Dalloway we enter the period of Woolf's greatest achievement. Woolf worked out the Wordsworthian theme of The Voyage Out in Jacob's Room and defined poetry in Night and Day. In Mrs. Dalloway Woolf explores the implications of these themes. This exploration involves a reconsideration of Wordsworthian themes and subject matter.

In Mrs. Dalloway nature is no longer seen as an autonomous realm of value outside of civilization. Instead of



uniting her major characters with the natural world, Woolf tries to place in the social order the vitality, meaning, and permanence she found in nature. Gaston Bachelard's statement, "we all know that the big city is a clamorous sea...",<sup>2</sup> suggests the kind of shift Woolf intended. The city comes to suggest the potential vitality in the natural order. Although her characters are anxious to establish a connection with vital natural forces, this connection, unlike those made by Rachel and Jacob, must be made within the context of adult responsibilities and social relationships. Thus, in Mrs. Dalloway Woolf tries to discover what enables young people like Rachel or Jacob not only to survive to adulthood but also to live vividly and meaningfully in a constricting social order.

Clarissa Dalloway, the central character, first appears in The Voyage Out. There, she is presented as a snobbish aristocrat, protective of her husband, the fatuous M. P. Richard Dalloway. But even here, Woolf presented aspects of Mrs. Dalloway's personality that elude this definition. The Mrs. Dalloway who reads "our beloved Jane" to her husband to lull him to sleep has a "little white volume of Pascal which went with her everywhere."<sup>3</sup>

Woolf's characterization of Mrs. Durrant in Jacob's Room seems to be another attempt to suggest the ambiguities in the personality of the socially prominent woman. Like the Mrs. Dalloway of The Voyage Out, Mrs. Durrant is a rather

forceful woman who enjoys a very full social life of dinners, weekend guests, and concerts. However, in sending her to bed with Dante's Inferno, Woolf is trying to suggest another side of her character, which she embodies more fully in the Mrs. Dalloway of the novel which bears her name.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. Dalloway is truly Woolf's first complete poetic novel, for it is almost entirely composed of the "poetry" of daily life that Woolf wrote about almost twenty years earlier. Even the minimal plot of the earlier novels is absent. Woolf did not need the "scaffolding" of a love story or a life history to present her material. The novel deals with one day in Clarissa's life, a day in which she gives a party. The occasion and the guests enable Woolf to include Clarissa's friends, her family, and her previous history. A secondary story concerning the suicide of a shell-shocked veteran joins Clarissa's story when his death is mentioned at her party. Her connection with him illuminates what Woolf tried to suggest in the reading of Pascal in The Voyage Out or the reading of Dante in Jacob's Room.

Woolf's search for a pattern of meaning in the social order involves a reconsideration of Wordsworth's achievement. Woolf's final resolution involved a stressing of the sacramental aspect of Wordsworth's imagination. She abandons the mystic and chooses the poet who affirms the value and worth of the creative artist who understands

...the mighty world  
Of eye, and ear--both what they half create,  
And what perceive....<sup>5</sup>

In 1921 Woolf used a review of Courage in Politics and Other Essays by Coventry Patmore to announce her dissatisfaction with Wordsworth. Woolf's review ignores the title essay and concentrates upon the ideas suggested in Patmore's essay "Out-of-Door-Poetry," an essay dealing with the presentation of nature in English and Scottish poetry. Woolf commends Patmore for making "straight for the aesthetic problem" and while acknowledging that "Mr. Patmore would not agree," complains that much of Wordsworth's poetry is "oppressive,"

because the poet has not seen nature with intensity either in relation to his poem, to himself, or to other human beings; but has accepted her as something in herself so desirable that description can be used in flat stretches without concentration.<sup>6</sup>

Although Woolf's belief that natural description for its own sake is to be avoided probably would gain everyone's assent, her questioning whether nature is "in herself so desirable" suggests a reconsideration of the ethos that pervaded her early novels and points toward the tension that will give moral and philosophical depth to the great novels of this period.

Repudiating Wordsworth, Woolf turns to Hardy, who is without rival in his power to make nature do his will, so that she neither satiates nor serves as a curious toy, but appears at the right moment to heighten, charm, or terrify, because the necessary fusion has already taken place.

The character of this fusion is suggested in Woolf's discussion of Patmore:

The quality which distinguishes good descriptive poetry from bad descriptive poetry [according to

Patmore] is...that the poet in the first case has seen things "in their living relationships." "The heather is not much, and the rock is not much; but the heather and the rock, discerned in their living expressional relationship by the poetic eye, are very much indeed--a beauty which is living with the life of man, and therefore inexhaustible...."<sup>7</sup>

Rather than depicting nature as an autonomous presence, Woolf sees Hardy as using nature for specifically human ends.

Woolf's analysis of Hardy's treatment of nature reflects her new interests. Her 1917 essay, which was discussed in relation to Jacob's Room, presented Hardy as one who forecasts a new method of characterization for the novel, "a time when character would take on a different aspect under the novelist's hand," when characters would be given "the large outline of the land itself." Now that Woolf is interested in the possibilities of man's control over nature, Hardy is valued as the artist who creates a "beauty which is living with the life of man." Such a presentation, Woolf implies, involves a more serious process of selection and creation than Wordsworth employed. Actually, her criticism of Wordsworth reveals that Woolf's sense of man's relationship with nature has become more complex. It is no longer meaningful to see individuals as part of the landscape. Now that vision must be tempered to yield human meaning.

Mrs. Dalloway is Woolf's first attempt to center a novel on a character who is an artist. The writer-narrator of Jacob's Room collects her impressions of Jacob but the final synthesis is provided by a more omniscient voice. It is this

voice which finally places both Jacob and the writer-narrator under the aspect of eternity. In Mrs. Dalloway Woolf suggests that the artist himself must achieve a form for his vision. However, it is important to note that Woolf retains her allegiance to the Romantics because she fails to endorse the absolute modernist separation between art and life. For Woolf, art must always be life-enhancing.

In Jacob's Room Woolf noted "there will be no form in the world" for the individual who is determined to preserve his identity unless he "makes one for himself."<sup>8</sup> Jacob is unable to save himself. However, in Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf reveals that in creating a form that comes to express a particular vision of the world, the artist also creates a form for his life. Without the artist, man is doomed to choose between the order of nature and the order of the machine.

The alternative to the natural order is the mechanical order imposed by man, the blind mechanical force that in Jacob's Room expressed itself as the determination "to impose some coherency upon Rajahs and Kaisers and the mutterings in bazaars...." Jacob escapes from this order into the natural world. However in Mrs. Dalloway, where this escape is no longer possible, the mechanical order established by society has become a threat to the spirit.

Every reader of Mrs. Dalloway remembers the opening scenes in the London streets, where various people in the novel are attracted by the sight of an official "car with

drawn blinds which, because it contains some royal personage or public dignitary, attracts the attention of all the persons in the neighborhood who observe its progress."<sup>9</sup>

Daiches notes that the progress of this car is an interesting device "for tying together the diverse groups of people to whom we are introduced in the first part of the book" and adds that

the use of the car to relate certain characters with each other is paralleled by similar devices throughout the book. The aeroplane, for example, which is sky writing in a clear sky, attracts the simultaneous attention of all sorts of people in all parts of London, and enables Virginia Woolf to move from one to the other, using the aeroplane as a means of easy transition.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, this device, uniting the crowd by a single vision, has come to be seen as an image of transcendence: The skywriting plane "creates or at least discloses a kind of ideal realm where the message has less to do with what is actually being spelled in the sky...than with the emotions which unite the separate individuals."<sup>10</sup> Although the crowd can be mesmerized momentarily by looking at a single object, Woolf shows the unity created by these machines is superficial:

listlessly, yet confidently, poor people all of them, they waited; looked at the Palace itself with the flag flying...singled out from the motor cars in the Mall first this one, then that; bestowed emotion, vainly,....<sup>11</sup>

With the concentration upon impersonal mechanical forces, human beings are impoverished: "'glaxo,' [reads] Mrs. Coates [in an attempt to fathom the skywriting] gazing straight up,

and her baby, lying stiff and white in her arms, gazed straight up. 'Kreemo,' murmured Mrs. Bletchley, like a sleepwalker."<sup>12</sup> If these objects could energize life and provide meaning, there would be no need to conclude the novel with Clarissa's party. At her party Clarissa creates a profoundly human order, analogous to a work of art, where both the randomness of nature and the unnatural rigidity of society are made subservient to profoundly human ends.

In Mrs. Dalloway, "it," "reality," or "life" itself is not perceived as an autonomous force that manifests itself in "the round ocean" or "in the mind of man"; reality is created through a collaboration between man and the world in which he lives. His perception of this reality renders it meaningful, but so does his participation in its creation. The need for the individual to collaborate in the social order redefines the role of the artist. The artist no longer passively confronts what is before him but must order reality to make it meaningful. Only when this need is recognized does the life of a society hostess, Clarissa Dalloway, become worth considering.

Reuben Brower's analysis of the key metaphors in the novel helps to clarify Clarissa's role. Brower notes that "the dramatic sequences [in the novel] are connected through a single metaphorical nucleus, and the key metaphors are projected and sustained by a continuous web of subtly related minor metaphors and harmonizing imagery."<sup>13</sup> The

"central metaphor" is "twofold: the exhilarated sense of being a part of the forward moving process [of life] and the recurrent fear of some break in this absorbing activity ...."<sup>14</sup> The idea of life as a process is suggested by phrases which become metaphorical in the context of the novel, such as "building it," "creating it every moment," and "also by various images of sights, sounds, and actions." The "fear of some break in this absorbing activity" is "symbolized by the 'suspense' before and after Big Ben strikes."<sup>15</sup> The word "solemn" which appears on the first page of the novel and recurs, suggests, as Brower indicates, "some terror of entering the sea of experience and of living life and an inexplicable fear of a 'suspense' or interruption."<sup>16</sup>

Here, the word "solemn" and the idea it represents--the terror of entering into experience--seem to provide an adequate link to what Brower sees as the twofold nature of the central metaphor. Entering life is terrifying--but so is the other alternative--breaking the chain and allowing everything to come to a stop. In this context, the triumphant isolation and self-preservation of Rachel and Jacob can be seen only as tragic or perverse.

Brower also notes that in Mrs. Dalloway

"life"...consists first in the doings of people and things and in the active perception of them. To meet Clarissa's approval, people "must do something," as she did in "making a world" in her drawing room.... The perception, the savoring of these doings of oneself and of others is in itself a creation. For Mrs. Dalloway "enjoying" and "loving" is [also] "creating" and "building up...."<sup>17</sup>



Therefore, although Clarissa senses a force beneath the phenomena of daily life that will continue to flow despite acts of parliament, she understands that this force does not have an autonomous presence in the world. Individuals either through nurturing life, "loving it" or through "making it up" "building it round one" "creating it every moment afresh"<sup>18</sup> collaborate with this force, keeping it going.

By now, most readers know Woolf first intended to have Mrs. Dalloway die or kill herself at the end of her party and that Septimus Smith, who was intended to be her double, dies in her place.<sup>19</sup> Death is used here, as in The Voyage Out and Jacob's Room, to illuminate the fragility and precariousness of life. For example, Clarissa's appreciation of Bond Street and the spectacle she calls "life," is enhanced by her recent illness. And Lady Bexborough, whom Clarissa admires most, "opened a bazaar...with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed...."<sup>20</sup> Against the background of death, Clarissa's attempts to preserve and enhance life deserve serious attention. The alternative, offered by Smith, is madness and suicide.

Woolf wrote that "in the first version" of Mrs. Dalloway Septimus Smith "who later is intended to be [Mrs. Dalloway's] double, had no existence....Mrs. Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party."<sup>21</sup> Hafley's interpretation of Woolf's use of death is fairly typical. "In either event" Hafley writes "there would have been

the breaking down of the wall between the self and the not-self that is the novel's affirmation."<sup>22</sup> Although Woolf's concern in the novel is the merging of the self with something more than its own finite being, "the realm where I shall live and continue to exist," the role of death, unlike that in the earlier novels, does not guarantee this merging. There is also a tendency among critics to idealize Smith because he is clearly identified as a victim of his society. However, this idealizing makes the fact that Mrs. Dalloway survives irrelevant. Therefore, it is important to note that Woolf herself does not idealize Smith. She wrote, "Sanity & insanity. Mrs. D. seeing the truth. S.S. seeing the insane truth...."<sup>23</sup> Thus, Smith represents the submerged aspects of Clarissa's personality, the irrational fears and impulses which, if allowed to emerge, would not only destroy Clarissa's carefully ordered world, but also would destroy the stability and continuity of the human order.

Although Smith is not to be blamed for his insanity, it is necessary to comprehend his view of life in order to understand what Clarissa herself achieves. Both Clarissa and Septimus "share a similar constitution, an organization of nerves and imagination which forms the basis of their response."

Both "are highly-tuned instruments...whose physical response to sensations are intense."<sup>24</sup> They are preoccupied with death and fear emotional involvement. But Clarissa's way of seeing the world is life-enhancing, while Smith, as his wife

Rezia recognizes, "made everything terrible."<sup>25</sup> Clarissa's sense that in death she will somehow merge with her surroundings and gain a kind of immortality is complemented by Smith's vision of the interconnection between himself and nature: "But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibers with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement...."<sup>26</sup> Smith's version of the interconnection between man and nature means the death of the self because it turns the individual into a natural object. In asserting the physical identity between man and nature, Smith obliterates all that is considered characteristically human. Clarissa's meditation, which deals with a vision of her merging with the environment, forms a striking contrast with Smith's because immortality does not depend completely upon the obliteration of the human self but it is guaranteed, in part, by loving human memories:

somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself.<sup>27</sup>

The human community, seen as an organic growth, differs profoundly from the view of human beings moving like leaves in the wind. Clarissa's meditation, which ends with her thoughts on Lady Bexborough, confirms a vision of human solidarity in

a world whose stability is threatened by violence and death. Clarissa's response to her sister's death "to see your own sister killed by a falling tree...was enough to turn one bitter" is also enough to suggest that value resides in the human rather than the natural world. Clarissa's response to this death was to evolve an "atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness."<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, when confronted with his friend Evans' death, Smith turns from the world of human sympathy and pity to the impersonal world of nature. Evans' death in the war reveals how thin the veneer of human civilization is. Instead of recognizing his responsibility to deepen this, Septimus contemptuously turns away from human beings. In his refusal to accept process, the need to keep the human world going by "building it up," he threatens human solidarity. His rejection of process reveals that he also fails to perceive the source of real energy in the natural world. The song of the "battered woman" near the Regent's Park tube station which is "the voice of no age or sex" but seems to issue like "the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth" asserts that human love is the vehicle for nature's vitality and continuity:

Her lover, who had been dead these centuries, had walked, she crooned...in May; but in the course of ages, long as summer days, and flaming, she remembered, with nothing but red asters, he had gone; death's enormous sickle had swept those tremendous hills, and when at last she laid her hoary and immensely aged head on the earth, now become a mere cinder of ice,

she implored the Gods to lay by her side a bunch of purple heather, there on her high burial place which the last rays of the last sun carressed; for then the pageant of the universe would be over.<sup>29</sup>

Smith's denial of the need for man to collaborate in nature's own vitality is suggested in the curiously mechanistic relationship he establishes with nature.<sup>30</sup> However, because his inability to feel causes him great anguish, Smith, to use Forster's term, is capable of being "saved."

Although, in a sense, Smith dies instead of Mrs. Dalloway, his suicide achieves a kind of pathos and dignity of its own. Just before his suicide he has begun to establish a loving connection with his wife. He dies, in part, trying to preserve this connection.

Smith's wife Rezia is shown sewing and "building up" a happy moment with a little girl. Her actions, which make her similar to Mrs. Dalloway, create an island of peace which enables Smith to turn away from the disembodied but seductive natural world and venture into the world of "real things."<sup>31</sup> Smith and Rezia are both very happy together and she becomes his ally against Holmes, who is coming to take Septimus away to a nursing home, where he will learn to conform to society's standards of normality. Rezia tries to forbid Dr. Holmes to come to Septimus, but Holmes, "a powerfully built man," puts "her aside." Septimus' suicide was "not his or Rezia's ['idea of tragedy'] for she was with him."<sup>32</sup> Smith's suicide is profoundly ironic because it occurs just when he is beginning to reestablish his connection with the human world, perhaps to achieve greater normality than even Holmes or Bradshaw

could conceive. Thus, it is Smith's desire to connect that makes his death so significant in our evaluation of Clarissa Dalloway's achievement.

Clarissa's real victory is in the creation of a personal realm of order and value in a world of constant change and dissolution. Smith helps to illuminate an important aspect of the order she creates because we are told that in his illness Septimus has difficulty dealing with objects; "real things were too exciting." "He must be cautious....He looked at the sideboard; the plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria....All were still; all were real."<sup>33</sup> Smith's denial of man's need to create his world results in feelings that objects are unpredictable. These objects are unpredictable because they seem to be autonomous; they seem to exist outside of any human context. In contrast, in Mrs. Dalloway's world, all objects are grouped around a human center for human purposes. Lucy, Mrs. Dalloway's maid, believes,

of all [the guests at the party] her mistress was loveliest--mistress of silver, of linen, of china, for the sun, the silver, the doors off their hinges, Rumpelmayer's men, gave her a sense, as she laid the paper-knife on the inlaid table, of something achieved.<sup>34</sup>

Like the artifacts, the order Clarissa creates is the result of human labor. The two great sequences of the book "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" and Mrs. Dalloway's Party show how this is achieved.<sup>35</sup> The world of the street, unlike the world of the drawing room, has no discernable order. Walking in London, Clarissa sees an old friend, some lines from

Shakespeare's Cymbeline, a Dutch picture, "one roll of tweed [cloth]," "a few pearls; a salmon on an ice block" gloves, flowers.<sup>36</sup> She remembers her youth and the friends of her youth, Peter Walsh and Sally Seton. An expensive motor car passes ("was it the Prince of Wales's...") and for a moment the crowd in the street is united.<sup>37</sup> The poor people gathered at Buckingham Palace become so mesmerized by an airplane that is skywriting that they never find out who is riding in the car. But for a moment, again, the crowd in the street is united, this time by the plane which "was coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, which curled and twisted, actually writing something! making letters in sky! Every one looked up!"<sup>38</sup> But in both situations, the union is mechanical and superficial. The imagery used to describe each experience ends with the idea of death and dissolution.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the emotions of the crowd are similar to the superficial emotions felt by various observers of the ambulance carrying Smith's body.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, the party enables Clarissa to gather together and order the elements of her day so that they acquire more than random meaning. This creation provides a vital human center outside the processes of nature and the mechanical connections of a mass society.

The night of her party, Mrs. Dalloway's street looks like a bridge: "cabs were rushing round the corner, like water round the piers of a bridge, drawn together, it seemed ...because they bore people going to a party, Clarissa's

party."<sup>41</sup> This image suggests how the sea, although not physically present, permeates the novel. The very air of London is a sea: "What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges,...she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air."<sup>42</sup> However, the sea is the sea of mortality, a symbol of time, man's destroyer. Big Ben's chimes, reminders of the passage of time, are described by images that suggest the effect of a stone dropped into water, "the leaden circles dissolved in the air." If air and water "are the two fluidities between which we maintain our permanence,"<sup>43</sup> in this novel, the two fluidities become one which is constantly shifting. As a symbol of time, water suggests the destruction of the human world. Clarissa "had a perpetual sense...of being out, out, far out to sea and alone...."<sup>44</sup> Human beings are "a doomed race, chained to a sinking ship...."<sup>45</sup> Clarissa's party--a bridge over this rushing water--is an attempt to create something permanent in this flux. However, the party does not seem to be a success. The aimless disorder of the world of the street permeates the room and subjects everything to dissolution and destruction. "Anything, any explosion, any horror was better than people wandering aimlessly, standing in a bunch at a corner like Ellie Henderson, not even caring to hold themselves upright."<sup>46</sup> But the moment when "the curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again" and



"Clarissa saw--she saw Ralph Lyon beat it back and go on talking," marks the beginning of Clarissa's success. "So it wasn't a failure after all! it was going to be all right now--her party." What she has created is "something...not nothing, since Ralph Lyon had beat back the curtain."<sup>47</sup>

When the curtains first blew into the room earlier, "it seemed as if there were a flight of wings into the room...."<sup>48</sup> Clarissa's party begins when this flight of birds is beaten back and the random occurrences of the natural world are not allowed to interrupt the conversation. She is asserting the triumph of civilization (art) over nature. "Every time she gave a party she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that every one was unreal in one way; much more real in another."<sup>49</sup> And "old Mrs. Hilbery, stretching her hands to the blaze of...laughter" is reassured "on a point which sometimes bothered her if she woke early...how it is certain we must die."<sup>50</sup>

Clarissa's party also protests against the natural order because it refuses to acknowledge the limits of time or space, reality and imagination. Peter has come from India, Mrs. Hilbery from Night and Day, and Mrs. Durrant and Clara from Jacob's Room. Clarissa looks "so like her mother," and old Mrs. Parry, Clarissa's aunt, who should be dead, is also present.<sup>51</sup>

Although death may be easily vanquished in laughter, in Clarissa's resemblance to her dead mother, and in Aunt Parry's

continuing existence, the real test of Clarissa's creation is the news of Smith's suicide: "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death...." At first she is indignant: "What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?"<sup>52</sup> But then she relives Smith's suicide and comes to understand that he died in order to protect his soul from the Bradshaws. Thus, she understands, without her hearing, that Smith's last words "I'll give it you," mean that although he surrenders his body he retains his spirit.<sup>53</sup> "A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life....This he had preserved."<sup>54</sup>

In contrast to Smith's singlemindedness, Clarissa sees herself as impure, dependent upon others. Yet, she herself has gone beyond the simple pilfering and scheming which enable most people to live. "No pleasure could equal...this having done with the triumphs of youth; [she] lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank."<sup>55</sup> Clarissa's wholehearted involvement in the process of living has worn away her individuality. Clarissa's identification of herself with nature is reminiscent of Jacob and Rachel's identification with the natural world. But the difference is important. Mrs. Dalloway's identification is impersonal. Jacob and Rachel identify themselves in this fashion in order to keep themselves intact; Clarissa earns this identification with nature

because in the process of living the edges of her selfhood have been worn away. With this identification Clarissa begins to transcend herself. She comes to embody the experience of the race. In a sense she contains the experience of Smith's youth: "he made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun"<sup>56</sup> and that of the old age of the woman across the way: "to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed." "It was fascinating to watch her...." Both youth and age are known; neither possibility is awesome or terrible because Clarissa participates in and continues the experience of both. Smith is not dead and the old woman is not alone for both exist in Clarissa's mind and sensibility. Only now, "she must go back. She must assemble."<sup>57</sup> The word "assemble" with its suggestions of creation, of "building up" indicates that Clarissa cannot die because she is still needed to provide a center of meaning for the party. The early centers created by the car and the airplane were false. Clarissa offers a true center because she sums up much of human experience.

When she returns to the party almost everyone has already left. "And Richard and Elizabeth [Clarissa's husband and daughter] were rather glad it was over...." Richard is able to express his love to her and, watching them, Sally, who has always resented Richard, decides he "has improved."<sup>58</sup> She goes to talk to him. Peter, also a hater of Richard, is willing to recognize him. This movement towards unity is an

unconscious tribute to the personal wholeness Clarissa herself has achieved. The party is a success because the wounds of the past have been healed. The public event, which brought all these separate people together, becomes the occasion for the healing of old wounds and enhancing the quality of these personal relationships as well as of these private lives. Thus, the social order has been reinvigorated.

Peter, Clarissa's severest critic, recognizes her the moment she returns to the party. The final words, "For there she was," sum up the achievement.<sup>59</sup> This is her honor. The artist creates not only a form for his life but also enhances those of others. Clarissa has emerged from the flux of time. The natural world has been subdued by art.

Clarissa's achievement depends partly upon her memories and the memories of those who love her. "Without the power of memory...personality lacks continuity and must dissolve; experience untouched by memory remains outside, alien, because it is indigestible."<sup>60</sup> The presence of time and memory in the novel indicates the pervasiveness of Wordsworth's influence even after Woolf expressed dissatisfaction with his presentation of nature. This mode of presenting time and memory is Wordsworth's important contribution to modern literature. "Nowadays," Christopher Salvesen writes,

it can sometimes be casually assumed that a subjective involvement with time, an awareness of duration, is a condition not only under which life is experienced and work is done, but which most literature embodies. A moment's reflection, of

course, shows this to be anything but the case, But such a notion is partly a tribute to our own ways of thinking about time which Wordsworth was, one of the first to put into action naturally and in detail.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, "the workings of memory make their first fully subjective appearance in English literature in the poetry of Wordsworth."<sup>62</sup> In Wordsworth's Prelude,

memory has...become a creative act, fusing together diverse images of the past, substituting a wholly new order of time for the old, creating--by the energy of the emotion it releases--a type of vision which, in turn, alters the subject's present condition.

Because Clarissa is both artist and subject, the presentation in Mrs. Dalloway is more complex than that in The Prelude. However the goals are the same. Like Wordsworth's, Woolf's concern with time (external and internal time have a place in both works) is "rooted in a larger philosophical and moral quest: a quest for the restoration of powers associated with a lost or fading past." This quest gives "significance to that private order of time--the time of personal experience, revery, intuition--which...serves essentially as an image of timelessness to confound the pretensions of public, calendar time."<sup>63</sup> The final vision of Clarissa, "for there she was," both sums up and stands apart from the events of the novel. This mode by which specific details are made to yield a timeless revelation is also Wordsworthian. According to Wordsworth's poetic method, the object generating a vision must "'grow into intelligence.'"

"The phaenomena (the material) must wholly disappear, and the laws alone (the formal) must remain. Thence it comes, that in nature itself the more the principle of law breaks forth, the more does the husk drop off, the phaenomena themselves become more spiritual and at length cease altogether in our consciousness."<sup>64</sup>

As artist, the order Clarissa creates is similar to the poet's:

The poet's imagination imitates, not the products of nature, but rather her creative action, especially her power to transform and to unify natural objects. In so doing, his imagination reveals the meaning of these objects--a meaning not imposed upon them but discovered within them.<sup>65</sup>

Ruskin offers a fine example of this process for the writer in prose. In Praeterita, Ruskin speaks of feeling ill and vainly trying to sleep on a bank by the side of a road "where there was nothing to see but the blue sky through thin branches" of young trees. Unable to sleep, he became interested in "the branches against the blue sky...motionless as the branches of a tree of Jesse on a painted window." He took out his book and "began to draw a little aspen tree." Then, as Ruskin relates,

languidly, but not idly, I began to draw it; and as I drew, the languor passed away: the beautiful lines insisted on being traced--without weariness. More and more beautiful they became, as each rose out of the rest, and took its place in the air. With wonder increasing every moment, I saw that they "composed" themselves, by finer laws than any known of man. At last the tree was there and everything that I had thought before about trees, nowhere.<sup>66</sup>

George Painter called this experience a "typically Proustian moment of truth."<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the anonymous critic who wrote of the first two volumes of A la Recherche du Temps Perdu: "the tone of reminiscence in which the book is written

gives it a feeling of poetry, if the 'emotion remembered in tranquillity' be a correct definition,"<sup>68</sup> suggests the real link between Woolf and Proust, which was forged by Wordsworth and Ruskin. But Woolf's major interest is not in the Proustian use of time and memory as a way of recovering the self. In her essay on Sir Thomas Browne, Woolf writes,

while most fiction, the nine volumes of M. Proust for example, makes us more aware of ourselves as individuals, "Urn Burial" is a temple which we can only enter by leaving our muddy boots on the threshold. Here it is all a question not of you and me, or him and her, but of human fate and death, of the intensity of the past, of the strangeness which surrounds us on every side.

The difference between the two writers is reminiscent of the differences Woolf found between the Brontës: the reader of Proust learns to value individual experience, the reader of Browne "is not left to read alone in his armchair but is made one of a congregation."<sup>69</sup> Woolf's interest is still the relationship of "the human race" and "the eternal powers." At the end of Mrs. Dalloway, Clarissa, like Ruskin's tree, is "there" and "everything" the reader thought about individual men and women "nowhere."

Woolf's discussion of Proust illuminates the differences between them. Although Proust's mode is close to the Romantics, his concern with individuality and his belief that art is necessary to make something permanent of time and memory ally him with the Moderns. In general, Woolf rejects the Modernist emphasis on the value of art and believes that time and memory find their true embodiment in "the ebb and

flow of things."<sup>70</sup>

Despite the philosophical differences between Proust and Woolf the conclusion of Mrs. Dalloway suggests that it may be the most Proustian of her works. Mrs. Dalloway's life enhancing energies seem to have flowed into a work of art. The novel does not provide for their return to the life processes which are the source of this art. In fact, the static, monumental quality of the novel ignores Clarissa's belief that after death she will continue to exist in this "ebb and flow." Woolf herself believed that after death the individual joins with a spirit embodied in the natural order. In her diary she calls this "'reality': a thing I see before me: something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; beside which nothing matters; in which I shall rest and continue to exist."<sup>71</sup>

The endings of The Voyage Out and Jacob's Room (as well as those of the later novels) celebrate this flow by concluding in a manner that suggests life begins again. The deaths of Jacob and Rachel mark their return and the incorporation of their energy into the natural world. However, Mrs. Dalloway's participation in the natural process (building it up") seems to end with her creation.<sup>72</sup>

Perhaps the clearest sign of Woolf's dissatisfaction with the transmutation of life into art in Mrs. Dalloway is the fact that she continued to write stories about the Dalloway party after she completed the novel.



It is particularly uncharacteristic of Virginia Woolf's normal writing habits that she should have allowed her completed novel's central concern to retain the hold on her imagination that it obviously then had....Usually when she had finally revised a novel, Virginia Woolf was only too anxious, as it were, to shut it out of her mind.<sup>73</sup>

Since several of the stories about the Dalloways are directly concerned with issues Woolf considers in To the Lighthouse, her fifth novel, it is also possible to see, in this novel, a further development or elaboration of ideas Woolf first proposed in Mrs. Dalloway. Thus, To the Lighthouse represents Woolf's attempt to explore aspects of experience that were not fully dealt with in Mrs. Dalloway.

We cannot reason of these things. But this I know--and this may by all men be known--that no good or lovely thing exists in this world without its correspondent darkness....

John Ruskin

Before beginning To the Lighthouse Woolf wrote five stories about guests who fail to share the experience of unity.<sup>74</sup> Characters in two of the stories seem to be preliminary sketches for characters in the novel. Lily Everit, a student in English literature who tries to resist the traditional female social role, anticipates Lily Briscoe, the artist in To the Lighthouse. Similarly, Prickett Ellis, an embittered lawyer who claims to love mankind, anticipates Charles Tansley, who angrily preaches "brotherly love."<sup>75</sup>

In To the Lighthouse Woolf tries to explore the artist's responsibility to these outsiders. The motive for the novel

might almost have been suggested by the isolation of Mrs. Vallance, a guest in a third story, who mourns for her childhood in Scotland: "It is in the past with those wonderful men and women...that I really live...." Mrs. Vallance's inability to give up the past makes the present intolerable. The close connection between her feelings and those of James Ramsay suggests that her attitude is somewhat adolescent.<sup>76</sup> Yet the compelling beauty of the past makes it necessary that any attempt to come to terms with time and change include a recognition of this beauty. Here the artist is particularly important. In offering the individual some understanding of his relationship to his society, his natural surroundings, and to his own past, he can validate that experience and free him for the present.<sup>77</sup> Woolf, like Conrad, offers the artist the hope that

if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or mirth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.<sup>78</sup>

The excluded guests suggest both the difficulty and the achievement of Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa's party is a creation that saves herself; it affirms the value of her life, her world, and, finally, her sanity. Although Mrs. Ramsay's party also affirms her way of life, she exists apart from it. Clarissa's party is an expression of her being. It is a performance which she herself initiates and in which she

participates. It is appropriate that the illumination at the Dalloway party occurs at the end of the evening, when only a few friends remain. Only these people can perceive Clarissa's transfiguration. At the Ramsay party, "there is plenty for everybody."<sup>79</sup> This party is more successful because all the guests share Mrs. Ramsay's vision of unity and her experience of order.<sup>80</sup>

The isolation of some of the guests is necessary for the success of Mrs. Dalloway. Unlike Mrs. Ramsay, who fulfills the natural and social female role (nurturing her husband, her children, and her guests), Clarissa is a rather remote figure, who has no real interest in her guests and who refuses to intrude in the emotional lives of her husband and daughter. She also appears to be sexually cold. Her remoteness, however, has a purpose.

Clarissa is supposed to represent the individual's momentary triumph over the natural biological order. Yet Clarissa's end is no different from that of all "golden lads and ladies."<sup>81</sup> So that she can symbolize the possibility of human transcendence, her natural biological being has to be submerged. In To the Lighthouse Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe split Clarissa's role between them. Mrs. Ramsay is allowed a richer participation in the natural order because Lily Briscoe will be able to make something permanent of her life.

Coleridge's distinction between the primary and secondary imagination is useful for understanding the different ways

these women create. Clarissa embodies the primary imagination, which is responsible for the individual's own creation of himself. The primary imagination is "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception." It repeats "in the finite mind...the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."<sup>82</sup> Clarissa suggests the potential all individuals have to create themselves. Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe represent a secondary aspect of the imagination.

Although the secondary imagination is similar to the primary differing only in "degree" and "mode" of operation, this imagination is associated with the creative artist. When possible, it "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate."<sup>83</sup> Lily Briscoe, in whose picture "a mother and child might be reduced to a shadow without irreverence," represents this aspect of the secondary imagination. Mrs. Ramsay who "compose[s]" diverse individuals "into a party round a table"<sup>84</sup> represents its simpler aspect "to idealize and to unify." Thus, as artists, Lily and Mrs. Ramsay represent two aspects of the creative imagination: the analytical and the unifying. It is important to note that the aim of both modes is unity: the analytic mode "dissolves...in order to recreate"; "where this process is rendered impossible...it struggles to idealize and to unify."<sup>85</sup>

These two imaginative modes were important to Woolf. In 1918 she wrote, "the romantic poet lays heavier tasks upon his imagination than any other. The vision alone is not

enough; he must see it in detail as well as hold it in mass ...."<sup>86</sup> The static, monumental conclusion of Mrs. Dalloway seems to obliterate this dual vision. To the Lighthouse tries to maintain it. These two modes are embodied in Lily and Mrs. Ramsay as well as in To the Lighthouse, a novel that is formal and analytical but whose basic impulse is toward idealization and unification.

The dual aspect of the novel is suggested in its dual theme; it deals with a family living in time and an artist creating a work of art. The impulse toward unity and idealization is suggested in the setting and the characterization: Mr. Ramsay, the archetypal male, Mrs. Ramsay, the female; the island, a little world; the time, all time. The analytical basis for this unity is suggested in the carefully articulated structure of the novel and the carefully detailed presentation of Lily Briscoe's education as an artist.

The first part of the novel takes place in the late afternoon of a September day and ends late that night. The second part details ten years of decay during which the house remains uninhabited and the forces of nature threaten to destroy it. The deaths of Mrs. Ramsay and their two most promising children Andrew and Prue are included in this chapter in brackets, reminders, from the author, that in nature's long dark night human events are insignificant. Although the third section takes place ten years after the first, it is clearly meant to complete the first section. It too

takes place in September, beginning late at night and ending about mid day. This time scheme completes the half day of section one which began in the afternoon and ended late at night. Acts uncompleted in the first section--James's trip to the lighthouse and Lily's painting a picture--are completed in the third. Lest this pattern seem too schematic, it is important to note that Woolf tries to show how difficult it is both to assert and to perceive a human order in time.

Mrs. Ramsay creates order and unity in "The Window," the first section of the novel. Her creative ability is symbolized by her dinner party, which depends, like Clarissa's, upon shutting out the "fluidity" of the natural world. "Now all the candles were lit up, and the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candle light, and composed,...for the night was now shut off by panes of glass ...." This unity depends upon idealization: "some change at once went through them all...they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow on an island...." However, their faces "seen by candlelight" are "bright" and "mask-like."<sup>87</sup> Unity depends upon the obliteration of individual differences.

Mrs. Ramsay's refusal to recognize individual differences suggests one of the sources of her power; she embodies the continuity in the biological and social order. "She was driven on, too quickly she knew, almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people

must have children."<sup>88</sup> Social continuity depends upon suppressing individual differences and submitting to nature. Mr. Ramsay's friendship with Bankes was "suddenly interrupted...by a hen, straddling her wings out in protection of a covey of little chicks...." Mr. Ramsay "stopping, pointed his stick and said "pretty-pretty," and "after that, Ramsay had married."<sup>89</sup> As mother and wife, Mrs. Ramsay embodies this order. As artist, she helps to create it. Even if nature is shut out of her party, her method of creating follows nature's. "Luriana Lurilee," the poem chanted by Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Carmichael, affirms her connection with nature's creative vitality: "And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves."<sup>90</sup>

Lily sees Mrs. Ramsay as if she were leading "her victims...to the altar."<sup>91</sup> Mrs. Ramsay herself recognizes: "for what could be more serious than the love of man for woman, what more commanding, more impressive...." Yet: "at the same time these lovers, these people entering into illusion glittering eyed, must be danced round with mockery, decorated with garlands."<sup>92</sup> The ambiguous images "danced round with mockery" and "decorated with garlands," reminiscent of pagan ritual, suggest a submerged aspect of Woolf's characterization of Mrs. Ramsay, her relationship to Demeter, the Greek goddess of fertility.<sup>93</sup>

When Lily hears of Mrs. Ramsay's death, she imagines Mrs. Ramsay "putting her wreath to her forehead and going un-

questioningly with her companion, a shade across the field"; the shade is probably Prue, Persephone to her Demeter.<sup>94</sup>

"It was strange how clearly [Lily] saw her, stepping with her usual quickness across fields among whose folds, purplish and soft, among whose flowers, hyacinth or lilies, she vanished."<sup>95</sup> Although these allusions give Mrs. Ramsay's character depth and help to suggest some of the fascination she exerts on others, she is still a novelistic character, similar to Demeter in her anxiety to preserve the social human order. "Demeter Thesmophoros," writes Pater, "is the guardian of married life, the deity of the discretion of wives. She is therefore the founder of civilized order."<sup>96</sup>

However, Woolf's presentation of Demeter is closer to that of her friend Jane Harrison's than to Pater's. Harrison's "Demeter is not the Earth-Mother, she is the goddess of the fruits of the civilized cultured field of the tilth ...."<sup>97</sup> Woolf eschews the ambiguity of Pater's strange dual goddess for the clarity of the Hellenized imagination: "It was the mission of the Greek artist and the Greek poet to cleanse religion from fear. This is the greatest of debts that we owe to the Greek myth-maker."<sup>98</sup>

When Mrs. Ramsay comforts Cam by covering the boar's skull with her green shawl, she acts like Demeter, converting death and barrenness into a living landscape: "How lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; it was like a beautiful mountain...."<sup>99</sup> But



the skull, whose presence even Mrs. Ramsay acknowledges, symbolizes her limits. Embodying the creativity of the natural order, she dies with it.

According to traditional myths, the earth is barren in Demeter's absence. However, in nature, birth and decay are so firmly interconnected that fertility as well as barrenness, can bring "sorrow" and "darkness." The second part of the novel "Time Passes" deals with the "dreadful and cruel" period of Demeter's absence.<sup>100</sup> Here barrenness is the result of nature's destructive vitality.

The shell that explodes in France, blowing up "twenty or thirty young men...among them Andrew Ramsay" and Prue Ramsay's death "in some illness connected with childbirth" asserts an intimate connection between sterility in nature and destruction in society.<sup>101</sup> In this setting the coming of spring is meaningless:

The spring without a leaf to toss, bare and bright like a virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity, was laid out on fields wide-eyed and watchful and entirely careless of what was done or thought by the beholders.<sup>102</sup>

Those Wordsworthians who seek a message from "the sea and the sky" are confronted with "the usual tokens of divine bounty--the sunset on the sea, the pallor of dawn, the moon rising, fishing-boats against the moon, and children making mud pies or pelting each other with handfuls of grass...."<sup>103</sup> No wonder they are baffled. This list of the "usual tokens of divine bounty" recalls Mrs. Hilbery's definition of poetry

without the order she envisioned and treats Wordsworth's "best philosopher" with a bit more than Wordsworthian candor. The connection between man and nature seems to have been severed.

For those determined to come to "the most comfortable conclusions"<sup>104</sup> about the relationship between man and nature, there is "no image...to...[bring] the night to order and [to make] the world reflect the compass of the soul."<sup>105</sup> The Romantic belief that the beauty of nature confirms the presence of an order in the cosmos and of a harmony between man and nature seems destroyed. Yet Wordsworth never assumed that nature merely provides a simple mirror for man. A mirror only reflects the appearance of the viewer; nature reveals the spirit. "Forms...yield the spiritual presences of absent things."<sup>106</sup> Here the spirit reveals itself in "the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship...come, gone; there was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath."<sup>107</sup> The ship disturbing the "bland" mirror-like "surface of the sea," offers reminders of Mrs. Ramsay. Purple and grey are her colors and they predict her return. If Mrs. Ramsay's death affirms the power of the natural order, it also suggests the promise of an eternal renewal of life. Ruskin tells how the Greeks defied death because "death was swallowed up in victory. Their blood, which seemed to be poured out upon the ground, rose into hyacinth flowers."<sup>108</sup>

Life is renewed in the third section of the novel, where Demeter seems to preside again, for unity is achieved at the price of individuality. Taking Mrs. Ramsay's place, Lily gives Mr. Ramsay the sympathy he needs for the journey. Cam and James stop resisting their father. Cam begins to respond to Mr. Ramsay with feelings of admiration and love similar to her mother's. "Now she felt as she did in the study when the old men were reading The Times. Now I can go on thinking whatever I like, and I shan't fall over a precipice or be drowned, for there he is, keeping his eye on me ...."<sup>109</sup> Although she lacks Prue's beauty, Cam clearly is learning to take her mother's place. Similarly, James begins to identify with his father. He gives up his murderous rage when his father praises his steering of the boat. And James' austere sense of himself suggests his affinities with his father:

He looked at his father reading fiercely with his legs curled tight. They shared that knowledge [of the lighthouse as a "stark tower on a bare rock"]. "We are driving before a gale--we must sink," he began saying to himself, half aloud, exactly as his father said it.<sup>110</sup>

The loss of selfhood is rewarded. Lily is able to finish her painting. James and Cam are saved from a prolonged adolescence and an embittered adulthood.

Mr. Ramsay also changes. His egotism and pity vanish. The edges of his self, like Clarissa's, are worn away in the process of living. The final view of Mr. Ramsay standing

"in the bow of the boat, very straight and tall, for all the world, James thought, as if he were saying, 'There is no God,' and Cam thought, as if he were leaping into space," has affinities with Lily's vision of Mrs. Ramsay, crowned with flowers, leaving human life for the flowered meadows of death.<sup>111</sup> Mrs. Ramsay was responsible for the children in the nursery; Mr. Ramsay is needed to bring them to adulthood. "To what extraordinary adventure?...To land somewhere, to climb somewhere? Where was he leading them?"<sup>112</sup> Now the Ramsays can retire; Cam and James take their places and continuity of the social order is assured. Unlike the earlier section which ended at night, this part of the narrative ends at midday. The mythic twenty-four hour day is complete--except that the novel ends with the promise of daylight and continued life rather than night, darkness, and death. The order Woolf created in the novel seems to suggest that somehow, even though society exists in opposition to nature, society contains within it certain laws of continuity that are related to the continuity of the natural world, where child succeeds parent as day succeeds night.

[Demeter] is the goddess, then, at first, of the fertility of the earth in its wildness; and so far, her attributes are to some degree confused with those of the Thessalian Gaia and the Phrygian Cybele. Afterwards...she separates herself from these confused relationships [and becomes] the goddess of agriculture, of the fertility of the earth when furthered by human skill. [Therefore,] she is the preserver of the seed sown in hope....<sup>113</sup>

Lily's contribution to the success of the voyage sug-

gests, as in Mrs. Dalloway, that individual effort is somehow implicated in nature's continuity. However, it is necessary to recognize that Lily's contribution to this continuity is rather impersonal. Any female, Woolf seems to suggest, can help to further life's natural processes. Thus, Lily's success here seems to validate Mrs. Ramsay's view of the world. To some extent, in fact, Lily seems to share Mrs. Ramsay's interest in abstract patterns of process and continuity. The artist, according to Lily, is really a lover who chooses "out the elements of things and place[s] them together and so, [gives] them a wholeness not theirs in life." But Lily's concern with the individual qualities of objects, her desire "to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, it's a miracle, it's an ecstasy," affirms the analytical quality of her imagination.<sup>114</sup> Thus Lily's efforts embody those of the Romantic artist who desires to see the vision in detail as well as hold it in mass. "For nothing" as James learns, is "simply one thing."<sup>115</sup> The presentation of Lily Briscoe's development as an artist stresses this complexity.

The identification of Woolf's novel and Lily's painting-- both complex, detailed structures that yield visions of unity-- has become a commonplace of literary criticism. Often less understood is the fact that the Lily Briscoe who paints a picture that "would be hung in attics" is not the Virginia

Woolf who was the center of London literary society.<sup>116</sup>

To the Lighthouse follows the traditional pattern of the Künstlerroman, "the novel that traces the growth, specifically of an artist and the artistic conscience...."<sup>117</sup>

This novel usually concludes when the artist has been granted a vision, which, embodied in artistic form, will result in the kind of work the reader has just completed. Perhaps, then, all Künstlerromanen are circular in structure. But the artist, unlike the snake, cannot swallow his own tail. Therefore, Lily has not produced the work in which she appears; she is educated so that she will have the ability to do so. The process of education is also useful, for it provides Woolf an opportunity to elucidate her ideas about art. However, Lily's paintings also have a purely novelistic value in helping to define her as a character. Her completed painting not only mirrors the structure of the novel, but also helps to indicate Lily's development as an artist.

Lily first perceives Mrs. Ramsay as if she were a dome-shape hive, which Lily "haunted" like a bee.<sup>118</sup> This vision offers a false, sterile idea of unity and wholeness, for the isolation Lily envisions makes Mrs. Ramsay's creativity impossible. Lily begins to understand Mrs. Ramsay when she recognizes that Mrs. Ramsay exists in a living relationship with others. Lily gains this awareness through her art.

The pleasing shape that Mrs. Ramsay has in Lily's first painting is formed because Mrs. Ramsay is sitting with

her son James. Together they form a purple triangle that must be put into a relationship with a form suggested by a dark hedge. The purple triangle suggests Mrs. Ramsay's femininity. This has its counterpart in nature in the dark hedge. However, Lily also recognizes that her picture will only be complete after she understands the place the tree--also a part of nature, but in contrast to the hedge, a masculine symbol--will have on her canvas. Form is achieved only in the balance of male and female. Creativity is similar. Ten years later, Lily completes her second picture only after she resolves to "give [Mr. Ramsay] what she could."<sup>119</sup> Thus, Mrs. Ramsay's creative power remains a paradigm for all modes of creation. However, Lily's experience suggests that mimicking nature is not enough. Her painting is both an intuitive response to reality and an analytical creation of the mind.

The formal concerns that Lily expresses as well as the importance of form in the novel invite a consideration of Roger Fry's influence on Virginia Woolf. This is particularly important in evaluating Woolf's treatment of the relationship between art and nature in this novel because Fry consciously repudiated the theories of Ruskin.<sup>120</sup>

Fry and the Woolfs were friends. Leonard assisted Fry at the Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910, which introduced Post-Impressionist art to the English public. The effect of this exhibit is well summarized by Guiguet:

It was from that moment, from that manifestation that (without mentioning it) Virginia Woolf was later to date a change undergone by human personality. According to her, it marked a break between Edwardians and Georgians, and in actual fact between an outworn literature and a truly living one.

Modern art means "that artistic creation is primarily the creation of a form, the invention of an original means of expression perfectly adapted to render the artist's vision."<sup>121</sup> There are similarities between Fry's insistence on the non-representational quality of art and Woolf's own resistance to realism in fiction. However, Woolf's own statements about Fry's influence on her work are ambiguous. After finishing To the Lighthouse Woolf regretted "that she had not dedicated [the novel] to Roger" because she felt "a debt of gratitude for his aesthetic guidance; he had kept her, she felt, on the right path."<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, in her biography of Fry, Woolf noted, "as a critic of literature...he was not what is called a safe guide." In his desire to find works where writers "treat words as painters treat paint" he "looked at the carpet from the wrong side; but he made it for that very reason display unexpected patterns."<sup>123</sup> Probably, it is this kind of patterning that Woolf found useful in her work. Fry's belief "that the emotions resulting from the contemplation of form were more universal...more profound and more significant spiritually than any of the emotions which had to do with life..." seems to have given Woolf a way of dealing with intensely personal and therefore potentially disturbing material.<sup>124</sup> Woolf universalizes the characters



and the setting and makes the resolution of the novel depend upon events which gradually have been emptied of personal content so that the satisfactory conclusion depends upon the completion of a formal design. However, Fry's insistence upon the idea that formal relationships engender an aesthetic response "independent of any requirement of everyday life,"<sup>125</sup> suggests why he might be an unsafe guide.

Fry's major idea, a result of his study of Cézanne, is his insistence upon the complete separation between art and life. In Vision and Design he wrote, "forms themselves generate in us emotional states."<sup>126</sup> Art

demands the most complete detachment from any of the meanings and implications of appearances.... In such circumstances the greatest object of art becomes of no more significance than any casual piece of matter; a man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin....<sup>127</sup>

Although Lily's theories about painting echo Fry's, her experience while painting suggests that form itself cannot generate art. Human content is so important that she cannot begin to complete her second painting until Mrs. Ramsay seems to return to the house and to be present in so substantial a manner that she actually "cast[s] her shadow on the step."<sup>128</sup>

Woolf's depiction of Lily's development is also antithetical to Fry's theories. In his discussion of Cézanne, D. H. Lawrence suggested that "Fry reduced the main terms of the artist's struggle to a conflict between the painter and his medium...." Although Woolf also is concerned with the conflict between the artist and his medium, she, like Lawrence,

"is much more inward with the creative process, in its presentation of a conflict between the artist's mind and his feelings, or old and new ways of seeing the object."<sup>129</sup>

Thus, Woolf's use of the ideas of post-impressionism is complex: To the Lighthouse offers both an exposition and a critique, perhaps a humanizing of Fry's major ideas.

The second section of the novel, which Fry disliked,<sup>130</sup> provides an effective test for an aesthetic of pure form. Here Woolf suggests that beauty does not inhere in specific objects or in formal relationships but in feelings and memories of things that have the imprint of the human form or mind:

What people had shed and left--a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded shirts and coats in wardrobes--these alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated....

Both what is natural and what is man-made is subject to decay, but beauty is found only in reminiscences of human beings. In the empty rooms "loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted...." Beauty is created by the human form and exists in human memory. The loveliness and stillness in the landscape are associated with human experience. Beauty is "solitary like a pool at evening, far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed its solitude, though once seen."<sup>131</sup>

Woolf's example of the empty clothes that still "kept the human shape" is particularly interesting because Ruskin connects "the power of the landscape" with a human presence. Even when a human being in the landscape can barely be seen, "the perceivable fact that the drapery is worn by a figure makes all the difference."

One of the fainting Maries in Tintoret's Crucifixion has cast her mantle over her head, and her face is lost in its shade, and her whole figure veiled in folds of gray. But what the difference is between that gray woof, that gathers round her as she falls, and the same folds cast in a heap upon the ground, that difference, and more, exists between the power of Nature through which humanity is seen, and her power in the desert....

"True desertness is not in the want of leaves, but of life." Without humanity, "the best natural beauty is more than vain. It is even terrible; not as the dress cast aside from the body; but as an embroidered shroud hiding a skeleton."<sup>132</sup> The terrible, inhuman spring of "Time Passes" has this quality.

Although it probably is possible to indicate as many similarities between Lily's practice and theory of art and Ruskin's as there are between Lily's and Fry's, the real meaning of the affinities between Woolf and the Romantics is one of values rather than specific theories or techniques.

Ruskin, whom Fry called "that old fraud,"<sup>133</sup> was distrusted for more than his moralizing. Quite simply, unlike Fry, "Ruskin does not distinguish clearly between aesthetic satisfaction received from Nature and that received from art." Nature, according to Ruskin, is God's creation, reflecting

His order and His goodness. The human artist "abstracts and reproduces fragments of the design he has perceived in nature." Although "he may employ any degree of abstraction," the artist's work begins with and celebrates "a formal order in nature."<sup>134</sup>

Fry denies that there is any purpose in nature. Although he grants the artist a vision of the reality beneath appearances, this vision is generated entirely by the formal arrangements and has no connection with any other aspects of human life.<sup>135</sup> Thus, Fry cuts the cord which had bound art to human experience and to the natural world.

The complex structure of the novel and the sympathetic portrayal of Lily's ideas suggest that Woolf shared Fry's concern with form and his belief in the importance of the aesthetic emotion. However, the novel also reveals an inability to separate these concerns from human content. For example, Woolf's use of color as both fact and symbol in the novel asserts a continuity between art and human experience. Both Ruskin and Fry consider color secondary to form.<sup>136</sup> However, Fry's use of color is just as abstract as his use of form. The meaning a color has on a canvas is determined, like the shapes on the canvas itself, by its context. Colors, like forms, exist independent of human significance. Ruskin asserts the more traditional association of colors with human experience. Woolf's use of colors to signify values also reflects their origins in human experience.

Woolf uses specific colors as symbols in the novel. As Daiches notes, "there is a colour symbolism running right through the book....Red and brown appear to be the colours of individuality and egotism, while blue and green are the colours of impersonality." Allen McLaurin's discussion of this symbolism is more complex than Daiches'; however, neither acknowledges its source in human experience.<sup>137</sup> Ruskin provides a human context for these colors. According to Ruskin, the color brown cannot be found in nature, and red (Ruskin's scarlet), "is on the whole the most perfect representation of abstract colour which exists...."<sup>138</sup> Both, appropriately, are the colors of "individuality and egotism" because neither is to be found in nature. The reddish brown stocking Mrs. Ramsay knits for the lighthouse keeper's son is as "unnatural" as the red and ermine robe she imagines her son James wearing. Both are creations of the social civilized world.

Purple, Mrs. Ramsay's color, suggests, according to Ruskin, majesty and tenderness.<sup>139</sup> Yellow, which is associated with Carmichael, the poet, is the color of "light," and blue, which is associated with Lily, is the color of shadow. Color is virtually absent from the second section, and appropriately so, for Ruskin asserts that color is "associated with life in the human body, with light in the sky, with purity and hardness in the earth,--[therefore] death, night, and pollution of all kinds [are] colourless."<sup>140</sup> This designation

of colorlessness in the absence of human life is not the same as Woolf's use of the color white. White does not seem to suggest a negative lack of color as much as a potential for fulfillment: The white plate, which will be filled with Mrs. Ramsay's stew, the white canvas which will be filled with Lily's vision.<sup>141</sup>

Woolf's concern with color makes it important to understand why Lily is portrayed as a painter because Woolf's other practicing artists generally are writers.<sup>142</sup> McLaurin suggests that Fry's preoccupations with the spatial quality of painting and the possibility of using a book as if it were a canvas were important to Woolf.<sup>143</sup> He also suggests that Woolf used certain devices to "frame" aspects of her novel and used language to create a certain pattern and depth the way a painter uses paint.<sup>144</sup> However, it also is important to recognize the significance of space as a concept in the novel--pure space as opposed to time. Woolf presents the visionary moment, the moment when time seems to stop and reality is revealed, in spatial terms. For example, when Lily sees Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay as "symbols of marriage, husband and wife": "for one moment, there was a sense of things having been blown apart, of space, of irresponsibility...."<sup>145</sup> A painting is an appropriate symbol for this moment because a painting encloses a space.

However, the spatial moment is more significant than the object memorializing it: Lily nicks "the catch of her

paint-box to, more firmly than was necessary, and the nick seemed to surround in a circle forever the paint-box, the lawn, Mr. Bankes, and that wild villain, Cam, dashing past."<sup>146</sup> Another moment is memorialized by "a little hole in the sand" which Lily covered up, "by way of burying in it the perfection of the moment."<sup>147</sup> Thus, the vision does not have to be translated into a work of art. "Why, after all these years had [Lily's moment on the beach with Mrs. Ramsay] survived, ringed round, lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank and all after it blank, for miles and miles?"<sup>148</sup> Fry would insist that the significant vision is experienced only during the process of creating a work of art. But Woolf restates the Romantic belief, originally stated in Night and Day, that the poet expresses himself in the quality of his visions rather than in his achieved work of art. The vision experienced in time and the work of art embodying it are equal. Both offer buttresses against time; both create significant areas of space (actual space on a canvas or imaginary space in the mind) in which time itself becomes insignificant.

Woolf also seems to suggest that a work of art can only approximate the reality that inspires it, Lily Briscoe's painting of Mrs. Ramsay as a purple triangle is offered as a recognition that she imaginatively penetrates to the center of Mrs. Ramsay's being because, in her reverie, Mrs. Ramsay experiences herself as "a wedge-shaped core of darkness."<sup>149</sup>

But the term "wedge-shaped core" suggests spatial depth and a sense of the extension of physical being in space that only is approximated in the flat triangular shadow that appears in Lily's first painting. Woolf's use of the term "reduced" in relation to this shape suggests her fundamental dissatisfaction with the Modernist belief that art is an adequate substitute for life. "Mother and child then--objects of universal veneration...might be reduced...to a purple shadow without irreverence." Fry's term is "transformation" rather than "reduction."<sup>150</sup>

Although Lily's second painting is more successful than her first, the context Woolf has created robs it of any special significance as an artifact. Her second painting is more successful. Even here, however, Woolf indicates that the vision is more important than the achievement: "It would be hung in the attics, [Lily] thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter?...I have had my vision."<sup>151</sup> After her vision, Lily will return to the world of time and change, the source of all visions. Lily returns to life for her subject matter because life's ongoing processes are more important than the completed works of art that attempt to capture them. In Night and Day, Mrs. Hilbery also insisted that the process is more important than any formulation of it:

"Who knows," exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery, continuing her reveries, "where we are bound for, or why, or who has sent us, or what we shall find--who knows anything except that love is our faith--love--" she crooned....<sup>152</sup>



Here Lily, who also is in love with everything she sees, insists, "the great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark...."<sup>153</sup> The real tribute to Mrs. Ramsay is therefore not a finished work of art but something that participates in this flux.

Thomas A. Vogler observes that "one of the most important features of the novel, one which is too often ignored, is its 'bookishness.'"

"All the characters are readers" and

when the "great clangour of the gong" sounds the call for dinner in part I, everyone is summoned from scattered places "in attics, in bedrooms, on little perches of their own, reading, writing...to leave all that...and the novels on the bed-tables, and the diaries which were so private...."<sup>154</sup>

Writers, whose names and works are mentioned or quoted, including Tennyson, Cowper, Scott, Vergil, George Eliot, Tolstoy, Carlyle, and Shakespeare, represent the literary culture of the time.<sup>155</sup> Yet, the poem that becomes a tribute to Mrs. Ramsay cannot be read, it must be chanted.

Denis Donoghue's discussion of the differences between an oral and a written culture is useful here in determining the meaning of the poem "Luriana Lurilee" and the significance of the mode by which it is presented. Human content is present in the living voice rather than in the silent artifact. Donoghue distinguishes folk literature, which is oral, from modernist (symbolist) literature, which is visual: "symbolism

creates a mystique of the Book: [folk literature] transcribes a world of sound."<sup>156</sup> Donoghue continues:

In visual cultures it is very difficult to feel the continuities from one generation to another, because so much feeling is overwhelmed by intimations of waste and decay. Within an oral culture it is easier to reconcile oneself to the temporal, the limited, the finite, because these are the very conditions of Voice. In this sense, [the Voice contains] "all lives that [have] lived."<sup>157</sup>

Thus, the voice, like the landscape, is eternal. The novel shows how the landscape changes with the seasons, but remains eternally the same. Similarly, individual voices die, but the generations remain the same. Not surprisingly, then, in her quest for the continuity of life in man and in nature, Woolf turns to the "voice," which, like the landscape, will outlast the "book" or the painting. The tribute to Mrs. Ramsay is the recitation of "Luriana Lurilee," a poem whose words have the quality of folk poetry: "The words...sounded as if they were floating like flowers...as if no one had said them, but they had come into existence of themselves." And their message, like that of folk poetry, is anonymous, natural, and timeless: "And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves."<sup>158</sup> The theme of the poem reinforces the movement of the novel, the continuity of the family, which is connected with the passage of time, so that the continuity of the society itself seems to be inherent in the natural process. Perhaps, then, it is the combination of these rather simple feelings and the elegant structure that makes To the Lighthouse such a moving book.

## Notes for Chapter III

- <sup>1</sup>Guiguet, p. 388.
- <sup>2</sup>The Poetics of Space, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, 1969), p. 28.
- <sup>3</sup>The Voyage Out, pp. 55, 66.
- <sup>4</sup>Jacob's Room, p. 77.
- <sup>5</sup>Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey," ll. 105-107, Poetical Works, pp. 164-65.
- <sup>6</sup>"Patmore's Criticism," TLS, 26 May 1921, p. 331. (The ellipsis is Woolf's.)
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup>Jacob's Room, p. 36.
- <sup>9</sup>Daiches, p. 67-69.
- <sup>10</sup>Naremore, p. 83.
- <sup>11</sup>Mrs. Dalloway, New York, 1925, p. 27.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 29.
- <sup>13</sup>"Something Central Which Permeated: Virginia Woolf and 'Mrs. Dalloway,'" Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Claire Sprague (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), p. 51.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 55.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-54
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 54.
- <sup>18</sup>These phrases are among those singled out by Brower; the interpretation is my own.
- <sup>19</sup>Virginia Woolf, "Introduction," Mrs. Dalloway, First Modern Library Edition (New York, 1928), p. vi.
- <sup>20</sup>Mrs. Dalloway, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>See note 19 above.

<sup>22</sup>Hafley, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup>Woolf's statement is from a holograph notebook dated March 12, 1922 (p. 133) in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. Charles G. Hoffman quotes this material in "From Short Story to Novel: The Manuscript Revisions of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway," Modern Fiction Studies, XIV (Summer 1968), p. 174. In her Diary Woolf wrote: "Mrs. Dalloway has branched into a book; and I adumbrate here a study of insanity and suicide; the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side....," p. 59.

<sup>24</sup>Schaefer, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup>Mrs. Dalloway, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>30</sup>For example, Septimus enjoys watching "swallows swooping, swerving, flinging themselves in and out, round and round...." But nature is not vital; it is mechanical. The "perfect control" of the birds results not from their skill in the air, but reflects an impersonal, mechanical force. They fly "as if elastics held them" (p. 104).

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 215

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>35</sup>"Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," an early version of the first sequence, was published in The Dial, LXXV (July 1923), pp. 20-27.

<sup>36</sup>Mrs. Dalloway, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup>See p. 110 above, and Mrs. Dalloway, pp. 40-41.

<sup>40</sup>Peter Walsh believes that the ambulance speeding to the hospital with Smith's dead body is "one of the triumphs of civilization," and represents "the efficiency, the organization, the communal spirit of London," p. 229. (*Italics added*). His response, like that of the crowd, is on the level of sensation, the only possible response when the connections between people are mechanical rather than organic.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>43</sup>Guiguet, p. 408.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 258-59.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 266-67, 271.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 279-80.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 283-84.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Schaefer, p. 93.

<sup>61</sup>Salvesen, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>Lindenberger, pp. 141-43.

<sup>64</sup>Earl R. Wasserman's discussion of Wordsworth's poetic method uses "Coleridge's analysis of a partial, inadequate form of his own epistemology," p. 338, "The English Romantics: The grounds of Knowledge," Romanticism: Points of View, ed. Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey), 1962. The quotation in the text is from p. 339.

<sup>65</sup>James A. W. Heffernan, Wordsworth's Theory of Poetry: The Transforming Imagination (Ithaca, New York, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>66</sup>John Ruskin, Praeterita ii, iv, pp. 313-14 Collected Works, Vol. XXIII.

<sup>67</sup>George D. Painter, Proust: The Early Years (Boston, 1959), p. 346. Painter cites this passage from Ruskin and indicates its significance for Proust, p. 347.

<sup>68</sup>"A Sequel to 'Swan,'" TLS, 14 August 1919, p. 435.

<sup>69</sup>"Sir Thomas Browne," TLS, 28 June 1923, p. 436.

<sup>70</sup>Mrs. Dalloway, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 130.

<sup>72</sup>In The Voyage Out the storm ends and people go back to their rooms to resume their individual lives. Jacob's Room, which ends with Mrs. Flanders's question, also assumes that life and experience have not been completed. The sense of closure at the end of Mrs. Dalloway is more emphatic. Here it is interesting to note that Woolf criticized Conrad for the static, monument quality of some of his work. "In a novel we demand something more than a still life, and where the still life is thus superbly designed we want humanity as largely modelled and inspired by a vitality deep and passionate in proportion to the magnificence of the conception..." (Mr. Conrad's Crisis," TLS, 14 March 1918, p. 126.)

<sup>73</sup>Stella McNichol, "Introduction," Mrs. Dalloway's Party: A Short Story Sequence by Virginia Woolf (London, 1973), p. 10.

<sup>74</sup>These stories were collected and edited by Stella McNichol, Ibid. "'Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street' and 'The New Dress' are both connected with the genesis of the novel

Mrs. Dalloway; the other five stories written consecutively and probably not later than May 1925 form a kind of epilogue to it," McNichol, p. 14. "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" and "A Summing Up" are closer to the material of the novel than the others: "The Man Who Loved His Kind," "The Introduction," "Ancestors," "Together and Apart," and "The New Dress," which deal with characters who remain outside the party.

<sup>75</sup>Lily Everit is the central character in "The Introduction" (Mrs. Dalloway's Party); Prickett Ellis, the central character in "The Man Who Loved His Kind" (Mrs. Dalloway's Party). Lily Briscoe hears Tansley "denouncing something," "condemning somebody," "preaching brotherly love," Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (New York, 1927), p. 294.

<sup>76</sup>"Ancestors," Mrs. Dalloway's Party, p. 46. The image Mrs. Vallance uses for her experience "she had suffered abominably, life had passed over her like a wheel" links her with James Ramsay. However, he gains the maturity to recognize that "the wheel was innocent," To the Lighthouse, p. 275.

<sup>77</sup>Of herself Woolf wrote, "I used to think of [father] and mother daily; but writing the Lighthouse laid them in my mind." A Writer's Diary, p. 135.

<sup>78</sup>Joseph Conrad, "Preface," The Nigger of the Narcissus (New York, 1960), p. 28.

<sup>79</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 158.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 166-67. Mrs. Ramsay knows that "everyone at the table" was listening to Mr. Ramsay's chanting of "Luriana Lurilee" "with the same sort of relief and pleasure that she had." For the significance of this chant, see pp.152-53 above.

<sup>81</sup>Shakespeare's song from Cymbeline is an important motif in the novel. See, for example, Mrs. Dalloway, pp. 13, 59.

<sup>82</sup>Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), Vol. I, p. 202.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>To the Lighthouse, pp. 81-82, 146.

<sup>85</sup>Biographia Literaria, p. 202. (Italics added.)

<sup>86</sup>"Two Soldier-Poets," TLS, 11 July 1918, p. 323.

<sup>87</sup>To the Lighthouse, pp. 146-47. The image "making a party in a hollow" is interesting because Walter Pater notes that "an actual hollow in the earth is the prototype" for Demeter's temple. Greek Studies: A Series of Essays, Library Edition (London, 1910), p. 115. Woolf identifies Mrs. Ramsey with Demeter. See pp. 134-36 above.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 92-93.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 166 (The poem is by Charles Isaac Elton.)

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>93</sup>Woolf's use of this mythic mode is rather uncharacteristic. Unlike many of her generation, she preferred to create her own myths rather than to draw upon established mythological figures. In a review of Elinor Mordaunt's Before Midnight, Woolf wrote, "we like Mrs. Mordaunt best when she is most resolutely matter-of-fact. Indeed, it is when she is keeping strictly to what she has observed that we catch sight of those curious hidden things in human life which vanish instinctively directly there is talk of ghosts or gods." ("Before Midnight," Contemporary Writers, ed. Jean Guignet [London, 1965], p. 55.)

Woolf's characterization of Mrs. Ramsay seems to have been influenced by Forster's characterization of Mrs. Wilcox in Howards End and Mrs. Moore in A Passage to India. (Johnstone's comments are useful here, p. 354.)

<sup>94</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 270.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 269-70.

<sup>96</sup>Walter Pater, Greek Studies: A Series of Essays, Library Edition (London, 1910), p. 108.

<sup>97</sup>Jane Ellen Harrison, Mythology (Boston, 1924), p. 79.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>99</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 172. The image of the landscape is from Allen McLaurin's Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved (Cambridge, England, 1973), p. 203. The interpretation is my own.

<sup>100</sup>Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York, 1953), p. 52.

<sup>101</sup>To the Lighthouse, pp. 201, 199.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 201.



- 104 Ibid.
- 105 Ibid., p. 193.
- 106 Wasserman, p. 338. See p. 125 above.
- 107 To the Lighthouse, p. 201.
- 108 Ruskin, Modern Painters, V, ix, 11, p. 276, Collected Works, Vol. VII.
- 109 To the Lighthouse, p. 304.
- 110 Ibid., p. 302. Schaefer also comments upon the way the children assume Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's characteristics, pp. 112-13.
- 111 Ibid., p. 308.
- 112 Ibid., p. 303.
- 113 Pater, Greek Studies, pp. 102-103.
- 114 To the Lighthouse, pp. 286, 300. (The capitalization in the second quotation follows that in the text.)
- 115 Ibid., p. 277.
- 116 Ibid., p. 309.
- 117 Frederick R. Karl and Marvin Magalaner, A Reader's Guide to Great Twentieth-Century English Novels (New York, 1959), p. 157.
- 118 To the Lighthouse, p. 80.
- 119 Ibid., p. 225. Ruth Z. Temple has clarified this issue: "In Part III Lily is painting a new picture (not completing the first, as some critics have affirmed)." "Never Say 'I': To the Lighthouse as Vision and Confession," Virginia Woolf, A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Claire Sprague (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), p. 98.
- 120 Denys Sutton writes that Fry's "clear distinction... between art and morality [was] all the more necessary in a country where the shadow of Ruskin had weighed so heavily on aesthetic thought." "Introduction," Letters of Roger Fry, Vol. I (New York, 1972), p. 35. Woolf wrote "we cannot help thinking that of two poems the one with a higher morality is better aesthetically than the one with a lower morality." "Creative Criticism," TLS, 7 June 1917, p. 271.

- <sup>121</sup>Guiget, pp. 30-31.
- <sup>122</sup>Bell, p. 361. John Hawley Roberts was the first to write about Fry's influence upon Woolf ("'Vision and Design' in Virginia Woolf," PMLA, LXI [September 1946], pp. 835-47).
- <sup>123</sup>Roger Fry: A Biography (New York, 1940), p. 240.
- <sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 230. See note 77 above.
- <sup>125</sup>Sharon Wood Proudfit, "Lily Briscoe's Painting: A Key to Personal Relations in To the Lighthouse," Criticism, XIII (Winter 1971), p. 28.
- <sup>126</sup>Cleveland, Ohio, 1969, p. 37.
- <sup>127</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-52.
- <sup>128</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 300.
- <sup>129</sup>John Remsburly, "'Real Thinking': Lawrence and Cézanne," Cambridge Quarterly, II, (1967), p. 131.
- <sup>130</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 105.
- <sup>131</sup>To the Lighthouse, pp. 194-95.
- <sup>132</sup>Modern Painters, V, ix, i, #3, p. 258. Works, VII.
- <sup>133</sup>Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 280.
- <sup>134</sup>Graham Hough, "Ruskin and Roger Fry: Two Aesthetic Theories," Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Revolution (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960), p. 166.
- <sup>135</sup>Soloman Fishman writes, "Fry had always been convinced that the specialized vision of the artist was intrinsically remote from ordinary human experience...." The implications of this view are significant. The artist's vision is so specialized and so remote "that the number of people who were capable of reacting to that vision was necessarily limited...." Thus, Fry's artist is certainly not "a man speaking to all men." The Interpretation of Art: Essays on the Art Criticism of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, and Herbert Read (Berkeley, 1963), p. 141.
- <sup>136</sup>Ruskin, Modern Painters II, i, x, pp. 4-5, Modern Painters IV, v, iii, pp. 71-72, Works, VI. Fry, p. 35.
- <sup>137</sup>Daiches, pp. 87-88. McLaurin, pp. 193-95.

<sup>138</sup>Modern Painters, IV, v, iii, ~~#~~ 24, Works, VI, p. 69.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., v, xx, ~~#~~ 4, p. 421.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., v, iii, ~~#~~ 24, pp. 69, 71.

<sup>141</sup>McLaurin finds that "'white,' the absence of colour, symbolizes just that--the uncolourful definite meaning of science and abstract thought," (p. 193). I stress the potential implicit in the plate and the canvas. Our differing interpretations reveal more profound differences. McLaurin, who sees Woolf as having been deeply influenced by Fry, believes that she shares Fry's view that nature is completely without meaning. McLaurin believes that "silence and emptiness" are central to Woolf's vision of the world (p. 90). I believe that To the Lighthouse reveals both Woolf's admiration and her criticism of Fry. Woolf's admiration is evident in Lily's serious presentation of his theories of art. Her deepest criticism is directed at his belief that nature is totally meaningless. See pp. 145 ff.

<sup>142</sup>Terence and St. John of The Voyage Out are writers. In Night and Day, Mrs. Hilbery is trying to write her father's biography. William Rodney writes poetry. Jacob writes essays. In The Waves, all the male characters, except Percival, write poetry or prose. Miss LaTrobe, whose function in Between the Acts is similar to that of Lily Briscoe's in To the Lighthouse, is a playwright.

<sup>143</sup>McLaurin, pp. 86 ff.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., pp. 195--96.

<sup>145</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 111.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 256. This hole, which contains a memory, recalls a comparable moment in Wuthering Heights. Nelly Dean's past is recreated when she discovers "a hole...still full of snail shells and pebbles" she stored there twenty years before. (New York 1959), p. 108. Thomas A Vogler associates this with a Proustian image, "Story and History in Wuthering Heights," Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Wuthering Heights": A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968), p. 90.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., p. 81. "By the word 'Transformations' [Fry wrote] I wish to suggest all those various transmutations which forms undergo in becoming parts of esthetic constructions...." Woolf quotes this passage in Roger Fry, p. 258.

<sup>151</sup>To the Lighthouse, pp. 309-310.

<sup>152</sup>Night and Day, p. 512.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>154</sup>"Introduction," Twentieth Century Interpretations of To the Lighthouse (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), p. 22.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., pp. 23, 27.

<sup>156</sup>Donoghue, p. 130.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>158</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 166.

## Chapter IV

...the poet might equally celebrate the strange beauty of the broad-leaved water plants trembling in the current, or the sinister procession of self-centred sea-beasts for ever circling and seeking perhaps some minute prey, perhaps some explanation of a universe which evidently appears to them of inscrutable mystery.

Virginia Woolf

When Carmichael joins Lily Briscoe on the lawn just as Mr. Ramsay completes his journey to the lighthouse, he seems to surge up "puffing slightly...looking like an old pagan god, shaggy, with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand."<sup>1</sup> In this guise, he symbolizes the artist, who succeeds for a precarious instant when he extracts a moment or a work of art from the sea of time. Carmichael can be treated somewhat comically because the novel provides assurance that the relationship between man and nature is essentially benign and that the visionary realm always will be available. In her last novels The Waves, The Years, and Between the Acts, Woolf tests this assumption and, in so doing, alters the form and extends the content of the poetic novel and redefines the artist's role.

Woolf's need to redefine the relationship between man and nature points up an important aspect of the Romantic imagination: the fact that the vision exists apart from traditional bodies of knowledge. Unlike the religious vision,

which can be validated by a system of knowledge that has specific content, the Romantic vision constantly must be reaffirmed. The Waves deals with the inevitable corollary of this aspect of Romanticism: the difficulty of sustaining this mode of knowing. Thus Woolf, who began by asserting the timeless promises of "Tintern Abbey," begins to consider the losses presented in the "Immortality Ode," and the timeless garden of childhood comes to be measured according to human time. In fact, the central vision of The Waves may have been generated by the "Ode":

...in a season of calm weather  
 Though inland far we be,  
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea  
 Which brought us hither,  
 Can in a moment travel thither,  
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.<sup>2</sup>

However, even the ode, an extended lyrical form, is no longer adequate for her vision. Woolf turns to the poetic drama, "the one form," she wrote in 1927, "which seems dead beyond all possibility of resurrection today."<sup>3</sup> Woolf's interest in the poetic drama reflects an interest in extending the range of experience that can be included in a poetic form. "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."<sup>4</sup> Despite her interest in poetic drama, the subject matter of the new novel is to remain the same as that of the poetic novel. "It will

give not only or mainly people's relations to each other and their activities together...but it will give the relation of the mind to general ideas and its soliloquy in solitude." The reasons are the same: "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...."<sup>5</sup>

The method of characterization also will be similar to that of the poetic novel because this form "will give, as poetry does, the outline rather than the detail."<sup>6</sup> In this situation, the role of the artist must change. In Woolf's previous novels, the artist emerged as the figure whose understanding interpreted the poetic subject. Here, he loses his autonomy and becomes part of the drama. Thus, the "play-poem" represents Woolf's desire for a form that achieves the unity of the lyric but which retains the complexity of the drama.<sup>7</sup> Although Woolf is concerned with Elizabethan drama in her essays, her concept of the poetic drama, like her concept of poetry, is essentially Romantic. Her drama is a closet drama.

Woolf's statement that of the poetic dramas of the last century "probably only Swinburne's Atalanta and Shelley's Prometheus are still read" suggests one of her sources.<sup>8</sup> In Woolf's interpretation of these plays, conflict and character development are eliminated: "then at the back of this, imposing not unity but some sort of stability, is what we may

briefly call a sense of the presence of the gods."<sup>9</sup>

The outline of a scenario for this kind of drama was written as early as 1920, in what Woolf considered her "too mad, too mystical" reading of The Cherry Orchard. The setting is timeless: "The English person who finds himself at dawn in the nursery of Madame Ranevskia feels out of place, like a foreigner brought up with entirely different traditions."<sup>10</sup> The sense of foreignness is not the result of the Russian background; it arises because the world of cause and effect, space and time, cannot be obliterated without difficulty. These boundaries are also obliterated in The Waves: "I shall do away with exact place and time. Anything may be out of the window--a ship--a desert--London."<sup>11</sup> Her description of Chekhov's play has affinities with Bernard's final summing up and the stillness achieved "in the presence of the gods":

...on this occasion, since everything is so strange, the dawn rising and the birds beginning to sing in the cherry-trees, let us gather round the coffee-cups; let us talk about everything in the whole world. We are all in that queer emotional state when thought seems to bubble into words without being spoken. The journey is over and we have reached the end of everything where space seems illimitable and time everlasting.

Even the action, as she describes it, is more Woolfian than Chekhovian:

In the room the characters spoke suddenly whatever came into their heads, and yet always vaguely, as if thinking aloud. There was no "comedy of manners"; one thought scarcely grazed, let alone struck sparks from another; there was no conflict of individual wills. At the same time the characters were entirely concrete and without sentimentality.



The absence of sentimentality is important, for it suggests the objective quality Woolf believes appropriate to the play-poem:

Not for an instant did one suppose that Madame Ranevskaya was wrapping up a mystic allusion to something else when she spoke. Her own emotions were quite enough for her. If what was said seemed symbolical, that was because it was profound enough to illumine much more than an incident in the life of one individual.

When the characters and the setting are universalized, everything can be seen as symbolic. Thus, the play-poem is a drama from which conflict and distinct settings and characterizations are eliminated. What is left is a mood:

And, finally, though the leap from one thought to another was so wide as to produce a sense of dangerous dislocation, all the separate speeches and characters combined to create a single impression of an overwhelming kind.<sup>12</sup>

Woolf believed the greatness of Shelley's Prometheus and Epipsychidion "lies...in a state of being. We come through skeins of clouds and gusts of whirlwind out into a space of pure calm, of intense and windless serenity."<sup>13</sup>

Since character development and conflict are eliminated, the play-poem becomes a drama of ideas. In her own play-poem, The Waves, Woolf tests the usefulness of the ideas of the poets Wordsworth, Shelley, and T. S. Eliot, in an effort to find a link between human life and nature.

Shelley's presence in the novel signals Wordsworth's defeat. The view of nature as process in The Waves is similar to the Shelley's presentation of Demagorgon in Prometheus

Unbound. Woolf's desire to include "the idea of some continuous stream not solely of human thought" is suggested in the structure of Shelley's poem, where all levels of being, the gods, the earth, man, and matter, are given voices. In addition, Shelley's belief that "Prometheus is nailed down, not by an external principle of evil, but by his own separated faculties, gone wrong in their isolation from each other,"<sup>14</sup> suggest the fragmented quality of the characters in The Waves. Despite these similarities in structure, Shelley is important to the novel because he states

an uncertainty about the relative primacy, in this world, of the human imagination, with its endless train of rich and apparently holy impressions, on the one hand, and the "everlasting universe of things" which, as inhuman and possibly mindless power, presents a chillingly negative version of the Intellectual Beauty in which the mind craves to believe, on the other hand.<sup>15</sup>

This questioning of a connection between the world of nature and the world of the imagination undermines the very basis of the Wordsworthian vision. In Prometheus Unbound, the failure of "even the Earth, the Titan's mother," to help Prometheus indicates Shelley's belief that "Wordsworthian Nature cannot herself be an agency of liberation." Shelley's Prometheus can "bring earth and the human again into the reality of a shared freedom"<sup>16</sup> because Shelley believes in the "Imagination's freedom from Nature."<sup>17</sup>

This view makes it appropriate that Shelley's poetry enter the novel with Rhoda, who desires to be free of the limits of earthly life.<sup>18</sup> She finds satisfaction only in an

art that creates an ideal image of order and meaning.

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....This is our triumph; this is our consolation.<sup>19</sup>

However, once the imagination can no longer triumph over the natural order, once the elegant structure, once the square upon an oblong, is revealed to be a slab upon a grave "the house which contains us all,"<sup>20</sup> life no longer has any meaning.

Since this is a modern investigation of Romanticism, it is appropriate that T. S. Eliot, who found Shelley's ideas adolescent and "repellent," serve as his counterpart.<sup>21</sup> Although echoes of "The Waste Land" occur throughout the novel, suggesting the validity of this vision as part of a total world view, Louis holds this vision to the exclusion of any other. Louis' "sordid imagination" suggests the response of a disillusioned Romantic. "His heroes wore bowler-hats and talked about selling pianos for tenners....He haunted mean streets and towns where women lay drunk, naked, on counterpanes on Christmas day."<sup>22</sup> The danger of this exclusive concentration on the more sordid aspects of the world is suggested in Woolf's coupling of Louis and Rhoda. Appropriate and inevitable, the failure of the affair between them suggests that extreme fear and disgust makes love, and, for Rhoda, even life, impossible.

Bernard also sees the wasteland aspects of the world but refuses to acknowledge these as the only reality or to be overwhelmed by disgust: "Let a man get up and say, 'Behold, this is the truth,' and instantly I perceive a sandy cat filching a piece of fish in the background. Look, you have forgotten the cat, I say."<sup>23</sup> (He also is not a mystic.) Because Bernard refuses to become disgusted with life, he is the "inheritor" and the "continuer," providing an alternative view.<sup>24</sup>

Bernard's philosophy is close to Wordsworth's--not the poet of "Tintern Abbey," who affirms the relationship between man and nature, but that of the "Immortality Ode," who details its loss. "I shall never again walk bang into the pillar-box. But [Bernard adds] still a few stars fall through my night, beautifully, from the violence of that concussion."<sup>25</sup> The "Immortality Ode" is also important structurally because it has the autobiographical pattern Woolf wanted for The Waves.<sup>26</sup> Both works detail the development of self-consciousness. "In the beginning, there was the nursery....I saw something brighten....Then Mrs. Constable raised the sponge above her head, squeezed it, and out shot, right, left, all down the spine, arrows of sensation." After the development of self-awareness ("I could implore them not to squeeze the sponge over that new body"),<sup>27</sup> comes knowledge of death.

Frank McConnell observes that the tree, "the immitigable tree which we cannot pass," which announces death

to Neville, and symbolizes for all of them "the intransigence of the non-human world," is "inescapably related" to the tree in the "Immortality Ode."<sup>28</sup> "The tree," which "alone resisted our eternal flux," is associated with Bernard's vision of the house by the river where "the gardners sweep [the lawn] with great brooms and the lady sits writing,"<sup>29</sup> and Bernard's recognition that he cannot interfere with these figures who seem to symbolize nature's processes. In their ceaseless activities these figures are reminiscent of the fates in Greek mythology. Bernard's term for these figures, "these enemies, these presences"<sup>30</sup> suggests an implicit criticism of Wordsworth's assurances of the benign presences in nature, whose existence he affirmed in "Tintern Abbey."

McConnell suggests that the old nurse to whom Bernard refers in his summary "may very well be a reminiscence of the foster-mother Nature of the '[Immortality] Ode.'"

McConnell points out that she "shows Bernard"

the world of the italicized chapter-heads, "the house, the garden, and the waves breaking"--precisely,...the world of unobserved, nonconscious things in the full ambivalence of its relationship to the characters of The Waves so that in a moment of almost perfect representative form, Bernard simultaneously breaks out of subjectivity into a phenomenological perception, and breaks into The Waves in its inmost narrative structure.<sup>31</sup>

If the nurse is a reminiscence of the foster-mother Nature of the "Ode," this scene reveals the differences between Woolf and Wordsworth. In Wordsworth, nature can be a foster-mother, whose toys dazzle the young child and make him forget his

celestial origins. Here, the objects are intact; they preserve an original purity and it is Bernard who adds "a comment in the margin."<sup>32</sup> Any suggestion of transcendent meaning or celestial origin--"our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" is impossible.<sup>33</sup> Although Bernard's development and perceptions are indebted, in part, to Wordsworth, Woolf's presentation of nature is more complex than Wordsworth's. In addition, Woolf goes beyond the consolations of the "Ode" which finds meaning

In the primal sympathy [with nature]  
Which having been must ever be,  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.<sup>34</sup>

At first, The Waves seems to be the novel that fulfills Mrs. Hilbery's definition of poetry: "the night and the stars, the dawn coming up, the barges swimming past, the sun setting...."<sup>35</sup> But Woolf's desire to include "the idea of some continuous stream, not solely of human thought, but of the ship, the night, etc., all flowing together,"<sup>36</sup> suggests that her formulation is more complicated than Mrs. Hilbery's. The representation "of some continuous stream, not solely of human thought" indicates the complex vision for which Woolf sought an adequate form.

Woolf first imagined that this continuous stream of thought would be "intersected by the arrival of bright moths. A man and woman are to be sitting at a table talking....She might talk or think about the age of the earth; the death of

humanity; then the moths keep on coming....Hear the sea; at night; a garden under the window."<sup>37</sup>

A later entry reformulates the central situation:

"The current of the moths flying strongly this way. A lamp and a flower pot in the centre. The flower can always be changing." The moths and the flower provide "two different currents--the moths flying along; the flower upright in the centre; a perpetual crumbling and renewing of the plant."<sup>38</sup> The two different currents, "the moths flying along" and "the flower upright in the centre," become embodied in the ephemeral lives of the characters depicted in the novel and the permanent life of nature, depicted in the Interludes. The content of Woolf's original vision, a woman who "might talk or think about the age of the earth; the death of humanity" is embodied in this symbolic situation.

The completed novel makes the transition from the moths to the six characters seem almost inevitable. Woolf's interest in including "some continuous stream, not solely of human thought" suggests a desire to include whatever consciousness is possible in the cosmos. As insects, the moths are part of nature. Yet, their closeness to butterflies suggests they may be symbols of the human soul. Thus, the moths reflect the physical and spiritual potentials of human beings. The traditional image of moths drawn to a flame is often used to dramatize a pattern of human behavior that is instinctive, irrational, and sometimes destructive.

Woolf was struck by the instinctive quality of human behavior while she was writing The Waves.

Do you suppose then that we are now coming like the homing rooks back to the tops of our trees? and that all this cawing is the beginning of settling in for the night? [she wrote of herself and her friends.] I seem to notice in several of my friends some endearing and affecting cordiality; and a pleasure in intimacy; as if the sun were sinking.<sup>39</sup>

The sinking sun, which seems to control their lives, dominates the action of The Waves. The centrality of the sinking sun in the novel means that nature, no longer a background for man's actions or even a partner in his creative activity, becomes an autonomous presence, a force in the novel, whose relationship to the human world is ambiguous. The power and autonomy of the material world is such that the slight, moth-like characters seem to exist as disembodied consciousnesses. Bernard speaks of the moment with his friends when they see "laid out among us the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be."<sup>40</sup> This aspect of The Waves is implicit in Woolf's earlier work. Marjorie Brace notes that

with each novel, the characters become more shadowy and we have in their stead, almost alarmingly real--as large as life and twice as natural--seasons, boats, oceans, leaves, furniture; the very streams of consciousness, when not a highly lyrical poetry, sound like overheard conversations or the confessions a stranger might impart on a train.<sup>41</sup>

In this situation, Woolf provides some understanding of the meaning of consciousness in a world made up "not solely of human thought."



The Interludes, which detail the relationship between man and nature, as Frank McConnell observes,

are not simply...compelling prose-poems paralleling human life with the cycle of the day and of nature. They are...deliberate and highly effective attempts to present a phenomenal world without the intervention of human consciousness, a world of blind things which stands as a perpetual challenge to the attempts of the six monologists to seize, translate, and "realize" their world.<sup>42</sup>

The characters assume their autonomy; however, their actions and feelings reflect, unknowingly, the fact that they participate in the natural processes of growth, death, and dissolution. The vague generalized quality of this process, sometimes objectified in one character, sometimes in another, seems deliberate. The Interludes tie the presentation of the lives of the six characters to the natural processes of growth and decay. Although McConnell ignores the "'anthropomorphic' metaphors" in favor of seeing Woolf as anticipating "the concerns and predispositions of contemporary novelists like Alain Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute,"<sup>43</sup> Woolf's use of "anthropomorphic" metaphors are an expression of her vital concerns.

The presentation of nature involves more complexity than simple process. In part, nature itself is seen to evolve in a way that is complementary to man's own evolution. For example, in the first Interlude, which signals the coming of human life, dawn is personified: The sky clears "as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a

lamp...."<sup>44</sup> One motif established in this Interlude is the humanization of the natural landscape. However, as man becomes more rational, the landscape becomes successively less human, more bestial, and, finally, dark and inert. Thus, an alternate view of man's relationship to the landscape would be that consciousness is present in the world, sometimes it reveals itself in man, sometimes in nature. Although this consciousness in nature is difficult to define, it clearly is not Wordsworthian. It is closer to the sheer random processes in the life cycle and in the evolution of the earth. Therefore, both nature and man participate in this process. "Our psyche is part of nature, and its enigma," Jung writes, "is as limitless. Thus we cannot define either the psyche or nature. We can merely state what we believe them to be and describe, as best we can, how they function." How is this to be perceived or even understood?

Bernard, who is chosen to "sum up" the meaning of the novel, has always looked for significance and completeness in his relationships with others and in his art. His friends give him a vision of unity: "I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am--Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs."<sup>46</sup> Yet this sense of unity is only momentary. The visionary moments Bernard experiences with his friends are unsatisfactory because they are totally subjective; they depend upon a denial of the reality of the outer world, the

world of pure phenomena, which is presented in the Inter-ludes. However, Bernard is also granted two visions of this world.

After he hears of Percival's death, Bernard is given an objective vision of the world:

To see things without attachment, from the outside,  
and to realise their beauty in itself--how strange!  
And then the sense that a burden has been removed;  
pretence and make-believe and unreality are gone,  
and lightness has come with a kind of transparency....<sup>47</sup>

Here Bernard's vision is similar to the Wordsworthian experience of seeing "into the life of things."<sup>48</sup> Only here there is no echo of human meaning or significance. In order to keep this detached vision, Bernard goes to an art gallery. The pictures "still as on the first day of creation, but acquainted with grief" seem free and immune from time and change. But Bernard's vision does not last. Soon memories intrude and objects reassert their quotidian meanings. The return to the life of ordinary time involves a loss that was not present in To the Lighthouse.

Soon, too, a maid come in with a note and as  
[Jinny] turned to answer it and [Bernard] felt  
[his] own curiosity to know what she was writing  
and to whom, [he] saw the first leaf fall on  
[Percival's] grave."<sup>49</sup>

Man lives in time; art presides over eternity.

Bernard's vision of an eclipse offers another moment outside of time but it helps to destroy him as an artist:  
"But how describe the world seen without a self?"<sup>50</sup> Bernard discards his notebook because his words are inadequate for

his experience. And the easy return of light to the world after an eclipse suggests that nature does not need man to guarantee her renewal. Bereft of his vocation, of significance, as he completes his summing up, Bernard seems to welcome death. "What is dawn in the city to an elderly man standing in the street looking up rather dizzily at the sky?" With the coming of dawn he allows his life to begin again. Thus, in part, his defiance of death reflects his response to the rising sun. However, in his refusal to depend entirely upon nature to sustain him, his defiance of death becomes a willed affirmation of his subjective being. At this point he calls on his memory of Percival and imagines himself riding "with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man's, like Percival's...."<sup>51</sup> It is appropriate that Bernard imagines himself as a man on a horse, a traditional symbol of complete being, both mind and body, subject and object. In so doing Bernard gives significance to his life and achieves the wholeness that had always eluded him. It is also appropriate that he calls on Percival.

Woolf's statement "I use my friends rather as giglamps: There's another field I see--by your light--over there's a hill"<sup>52</sup> suggests the function of Percival in the novel. The landscape that Percival's death should illuminate for his friends is, of course, the landscape of a world indifferent to human beings. Percival is presented only from the outside. He does not seem introspective, and he seems to possess himself

and to possess the objective material embodiment they all lack: "Percival sat staring straight ahead of him that day in chapel. He also had a way of flicking his hand to the back of his neck. His movements were always remarkable. We all flicked our hands to the backs of our heads--unsuccessfully...."<sup>53</sup>

Percival is one of those figures, who, like Rachel and Jacob, dies before his promise is fulfilled. However, unlike Rachel and Jacob, he seems to have been fitted for the adult world. Yet the presentation of this fairly ordinary, games loving young man, is rather unusual. Although Percival rarely reads, Neville insists he understands everything, and Louis declares he inspires poetry.<sup>54</sup> Even if their love is considered, the claims made by his friends sound rather extravagant. However, their emphasis gives Percival symbolic significance. Percival has been associated with the Parsifal of the grail legends.<sup>55</sup> The Wagnerism of the pre-World War I intelligentsia suggests that Woolf's knight would be Wagner's Parsifal rather than Tennyson's Percival. Parsifal becomes a redeemer because he is the innocent fool who is made wise through compassion.<sup>56</sup> If Parsifal had died before his education was complete, he would have remained the innocent fool. And, in his summing up, Bernard refers to Percival's "wild hunting-song," a reminder that Parsifal, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, begins his moral education by killing an innocent bird. Although Bernard insists "he would have done justice, he would have protected,"<sup>57</sup> Percival's dying young

identifies him with his wild hunting song. He has not had a chance to gain wisdom. Yet, Percival is still given enormous significance.

Perhaps Percival is more than a figure for the Grail knight. Parsifal also can be seen as a symbol of the sun.<sup>58</sup> As a source of light or power, however, Percival neither can replace the real sun nor stay its progress. Yet, as someone who lacks the nervous self-consciousness of the others and seems to possess himself, he, unlike the others, is closely related to the somewhat self-contained phenomenological world of nature, the world of the Interludes. "Not a thread, not a sheet of paper lies between him and the sun, between him and the rain, between him and the moon as she lies naked, tumbled, hot, on his bed."<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Percival is significant because he had the potential to mediate between the world of men and the world of things. Then, perhaps, as Dorothy Van Ghent suggested in another context,

perhaps the world of the animals and the elements... would have offered itself completely to human understanding and creative intercourse. Perhaps the dark powers that exist within the soul, as well as in the outer elemental world, would have assumed the language of consciousness, or consciousness would have bravely entered into companionship with those dark powers and translated their language into its own.<sup>60</sup>

But this possibility is denied. Like Rhoda and Jacob, Percival dies and joins his vitality to that of the natural world. However, here, the significance of his death is never understood. The inarticulate world remains silent and the world of human

consciousness, though continually intruded upon, continues to act as if man can fashion a life for himself without acknowledging the world outside, the world of the Interludes, where "old ladies may be equivalent in value to the weather or snails on a rock...."<sup>61</sup> In the absence of a redeemer, Woolf seems to say, man only can achieve wholeness in his confrontation with death. Here the artist has no special skills, only the courage to take the measure of his own experience and to confront the unknown. Even this cannot prevent the waves from breaking on the shore.

I see them all so excellently fair,  
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

Samuel T. Coleridge

The dual picture of reality--the presentation of the vision in detail as well as in mass--that Woolf felt was necessary for the Romantic poet is no longer possible in The Waves. "When I look down from this transcendancy," Bernard says, "how beautiful are even the crumbled relics of bread! What shapely spirals the peelings of pears make...." However, he also recognizes, "how unutterably disgusting life is! What dirty tricks it plays us....Here we are among the breadcrumbs and the stained napkins....That knife is already congealing with grease....We have been taking into our mouths the bodies of dead birds."<sup>62</sup> The details of experience, the "disgusting" aspects of material life, destroy any vision of unity or harmony. Although this duality is never reconciled,

the ambivalent attitude toward the material world is never resolved, Bernard's perception of his own completeness provides the necessary closure for the novel.

Bernard's vision affirms the value of man's intelligence, and courage, but fails to deal with the loss of imaginative power. Once the animating vision is lost, once nature's "presences" are no longer visible in the details of ordinary life, nature becomes inert and physical life becomes meaningless. The mood of The Waves is suggested in "Dejection: An Ode," which Coleridge wrote after he heard the opening stanzas of Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode."<sup>63</sup> Both odes dealt with the negative aspects of the Romantic way of knowing, the inevitable loss of an original oneness with the universe and, its corollary, the loss of visionary power. Wordsworth suggests that individuals find strength in memories of visionary moments in nature and in pleasant relationships with others. In part, Bernard seems to accept this attitude, although his loving memories of Percival move him to defy death rather than to seek philosophical consolation. However, the novel seems to accept "the logic of Dejection...that human process is irreversible: imaginative loss is permanent, and nature intimates to us our own mortality always."<sup>64</sup> It is important to recognize, however, that this questioning of the Romantic way of knowing the world in no way refutes the validity of previous visions; it just asserts that this mode of knowing is no longer available.<sup>65</sup>



Bernard's heroic defiance of death enabled Woolf to avoid the implications of these losses. But she was forced to consider them in The Years. She seems to have viewed this novel as a critique or an analysis of The Waves. After finishing The Waves, Woolf wrote, "what it means I myself shan't know till I write another book."<sup>66</sup> This book was The Years. Bernard's vision of dead birds and debris overwhelms this novel.

The structure of The Years almost inverts--sometimes even parodies--The Waves. The first part of the novel, which is made up of ten sections of varying lengths, includes, in a somewhat spotty fashion, the years 1880 to 1918, the concluding decades of the Victorian period to the end of World War I. The second section "Present Day," like the last section of The Waves, is an attempt to "sum up." As an inverted version of The Waves, it deals with the conscious and socialized aspects of an individual's life rather than with his thoughts and feelings. Although such thoughts and feelings are presented, they are so limited and conditioned by social demands and expectations that by the end of the novel only a few characters--and these are social deviants in the sense that they do not marry or have professions--possess themselves and their thoughts.

Each of the chapters in The Years begins with a short description of the natural world, usually in terms of the weather. But unlike the longer Interludes in The Waves, these

descriptions form no pattern. The "uncertain spring" of 1880 brings death rather than life. The March wind of 1908 "scrape[s] and scourge[s]." <sup>67</sup> Even when the natural surroundings are pleasant, human beings generally act to constrict life. In The Waves, Woolf suggested that nature needed and perhaps helped to create human consciousness. Here, nature is a blind mechanism and both man and nature seem to be denied the potential for consciousness.

However, The Years also marks Woolf's heroic attempt to extend her range as a novelist. In her diary she speaks of the need for change and the fact that "the sign of a masterly writer is his power to break his mould callously." In The Waves Bernard achieves his true identity after he discards his notebook. Of The Years Woolf wrote, "I am breaking the mould made by The Waves." "After abstaining from the novel of fact all these years...I find myself infinitely delighting in facts for a change...." <sup>68</sup> Like Night and Day, The Years is concerned with poetry.

The Years was conceived of as an "Essay-Novel" that "take[s] in everything, sex, education, life, etc." <sup>69</sup> This idea links the novel very closely with the literature of the Thirties, especially with that of the young poets Auden, Spender, and C. Day Lewis, whom she knew though John Lehmann. <sup>70</sup> Apparently Woolf felt challenged by them. The first diary entry that mentions Woolf's idea for an essay-novel, begins with the following description:

He is a rattle-headed, bolt-eyed young man, raw-boned, loose-jointed, who thinks himself the greatest poet of all time. I daresay he is--it's not a subject that interests me enormously at the moment. What does? My own writing of course.<sup>71</sup>

Woolf did not blindly follow these young men when she made the subject matter of The Years comparable to that of their poems. Her novel is an attempt to join their subject matter with the values of her own generation, to join charwomen and omnibuses to "'those "goods" which were ends in themselves... the search for truth, aesthetic emotions, and personal relations.'" <sup>72</sup> Woolf's desire to take in sexuality, education, and life is not very successful. Sexuality is perverse, education meaningless, and life "nothing whatever...happening; a few children...playing in the street, two cats turn[ing] something over in the gutter with their paws."<sup>73</sup> However, in her desire to meet these poets on their own ground, Woolf offers important insight into the language and subject matter of modern poetry.

Modern poetry is a poetry of disconnected objects, a poetry littered with the debris of modern civilization. These objects, whether natural or man-made, testify to the fragmented quality of modern life. The difficulties the Thirties poets have in including nightingales and omnibuses in their poetry is really an inheritance from their predecessors, the poets of Woolf's generation, like T. S. Eliot, who found these impeding their "search for truth."

A concern with the epistemological significance of ob-

jects is new to modern poetry. Although Dickens' novels are full of unredeemed objects, the poetry of the nineteenth century is rather uncluttered. Keats' urn is the ideal Romantic artifact. It is an object that "speaks to us."

"Cold though it be, it is a friend to man, for its temporal freedom intimates to us another dimension of man's freedom...."<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, objects in Dickens' universe "actually usurp human essences, beginning as fetishes, they tend to--and sometimes quite literally do--devour and take over the powers of the fetish-worshiper." "The conversion of spirit into matter"<sup>75</sup> that pervades the Dickens world suggests the view of objects taken by modern poets.

Woolf's concern with the meaning of objects was evident as early as The Voyage Out, but received its first thematic articulation in a full length work in Jacob's Room, where the writer-narrator recognizes that Jacob's death saves him from being submerged in a world of things. Of the objects left behind him, his shoes are given human meaning and significance by the writer-narrator and by the context provided by Woolf. Similarly, the objects in Mrs. Dalloway's drawing room are a meaningful reflection of her life. One of the symptoms of Smith's insanity was his difficulty in dealing with objects because he found them "too real."<sup>76</sup> Smith's belief in the independent lives of the objects around him suggests that these objects are usurping the vitality and concern appropriate for human beings. In part, the novel supports his

belief. The crowd that admires the gray limousine, without knowing its human occupant, and searches the heavens for a message from an airplane represents a society that is abandoning its true sources of vitality. It is this vision of a world completely cut off from nature's sustaining power that dominates The Years.

Mrs. Dalloway's main achievement is her ability to make objects cohere around a human center. Mrs. Ramsay also creates a human center for the things around her; this achievement is so meaningful that when the house Mrs. Ramsay created is destroyed, its destruction is seen as a human loss rather than as part of a natural process of decay. In The Waves, however, the objects in the Interludes, seem to have an autonomous life apart from man. Their mute endurance makes them seem portentous; they exist outside of man's control. Objects in The Years lack this portentous quality; they are trivial, but their very triviality undermines the quality of human life. The teapot that never boils properly suggests how objects can absorb human energy and virality and still remain strange and inert.

Woolf's sense of the remoteness and strangeness of things is best suggested in an early sketch, "Solid Objects." The sketch, which was published two years before "The Waste Land" expresses a similar view of life. As John, the young man who begins to collect objects, burrows in the sand, he creates a more congenial landscape in his imagination: "He

remembered that, after digging for a little, the water oozes round your finger-tips; the hole then becomes a moat; a well; a spring; a secret channel to the sea." Therefore the lump of glass he discovers in this setting seems to have some kind of symbolic significance, to offer some clue about the universe: "It pleased him; it puzzled him; it was so hard, so concentrated, so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore."<sup>77</sup> John neglects his duties to spend all his time collecting objects that are shaped by nature or human events. He believes that these objects must have some significance and is moved by "always some gleam of hope, some piece of china or glass curiously marked or broken...."<sup>78</sup> Josephine Miles suggested that as theories of evolution made belief in nature's benevolence more difficult to sustain, men turned for illumination to smaller objects in the landscape.<sup>79</sup> The incomprehensible litter of objects on John's mantelpiece is a fine symbol of a world without meaning or value. And a social outcast searching garbage heaps for objects embodying significant forms is the appropriate modern equivalent of the Romantic poet addressing one solitary flower "in a crannied wall."<sup>80</sup>

The world of The Years seems to have been constructed out of fragments that are similar to the incomprehensible objects on John's mantelpiece. All the rooms have "too many little objects about." "The houses opposite all had the same little front gardens; the same steps; the same pillars; the

same bow windows." The objects on Mrs. Pargiter's dressing table have "the perfect order of things that are not used."<sup>81</sup> Even the most trivial objects seem strange and unreal because they are presented as if they were entirely distinct from human life. Eleanor

stopped. The rim of a bowl outlined itself upon her eyeballs; there was water in it; and something yellow. It was the dog's bowl, she realized; that was the sulphur in the dog's bowl; the dog was lying curled up at the bottom of the stairs. She stepped carefully over the body of the sleeping dog...."<sup>82</sup>

These objects symbolize a world that ignores man's will or desires and makes him waste his days "fiddling and trifling."<sup>83</sup> Eleanor wonders whether their things will outlast all of them, and the wooden walrus that was thrown out the day of Queen Victoria's funeral only to turn up in Crosby's room in 1913, suggests that they might.<sup>84</sup>

The disorder that is created when the appropriate relationship between people and objects is disturbed is mirrored in the language of the novel. The broken pieces of china Woolf's collector finds are complemented by the fragmented quality of the language of much of modern poetry. The "heap of broken images," with which Eliot concludes "The Waste Land," is both material and linguistic. Isolated from any meaningful context, words, like objects, tend to appear meaningless. Words have become so opaque and meaningless that they seem to be objects to be surmounted rather than vehicles of communication. "Rose looked up. She had repeated herself. She thinks me an old fool, Rose thought, making the same remark

twice over."<sup>85</sup> The stylistic bareness of The Years underlines this meaninglessness.

Woolf's style has always been at the service of meaning. Although her novels are known for their particular stylistic qualities, much of her writing, even at its most stylized, has a narrative aspect. The following passage, selected at random from The Waves, her most consciously stylized work, is a good example:

Now grass and trees, the travelling air blowing empty spaces in the blue which they then recover, shaking the leaves which then replace themselves, and our ring here, sitting, with our arms and bending our knees, hint at some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly.<sup>86</sup>

The story is Wordsworth's, the narrative mode Ruskin's.

Perhaps every part of a novel must have implicit narrative significance. However, even the strangeness and originality of much of Woolf's very concentrated imagistic language seems to have had its origins in a Romantic view of the world. "Now the cock crows like a spurt of hard, red water in the white tide....The walls are cracked with gold cracks...and there are blue, finger-shaped shadows of leaves beneath the windows."<sup>87</sup> Hugh Kenner's discussion of Ruskin's influence on Marianne Moore is useful here. Ruskin believes that "Nature" teaches "by guiding an act of perception and enunciation entered into with the whole being." This act "is a moral act, and exfoliates legitimately into moral reflections." To illustrate his point Kenner quotes Ruskin's description of a fir tree:



The Power of the tree...is in the dark, flat, solid tables of leafage, which it holds out on its strong arms, curved slightly over them like shields, and spreading towards the extremity like a hand. It is vain to endeavor to paint the sharp, grassy, intricate leafage until this ruling form has been secured; and in the boughs that approach the spectator the foreshortening of it is just like that of a wide hill-country, ridge just rising over ridge in successive distances.

Kenner notes that

The moral reflection Ruskin derives from this is that painters have an obligation to look. For the passage is specifically an education of the eye for painters, who without Ruskin to instruct them in seeing are apt to paint fir trees constructed like chandeliers. He is tracing the tree's visible gestures.

Kenner adds that Ruskin's descriptions "do not constitute a recipe for a painter, who if he were to paint what Ruskin names would arrive at surrealism."<sup>88</sup> This intensity and concern with seeing the "visible gestures" in the objects around her also account for a good deal of the power in Woolf's images. However, the style of The Years is bare. Objects in the novel offer no gestures. Her style, which was designed to illuminate these transcendent connections, has nothing to reveal.

The Years lacks an artist; neither the narrator nor a figure in the novel provides meaning. However, Sara Pargiter represents the estranged Romantic artist who can no longer find meaning in the world around him. "Sara looked at her father as if she were considering him. 'To-er-to-er-reform one's habits,' she repeated. Emptied of all meaning, she had

got the rhythm of his words exactly." Her way of mocking language by repeating words until they are emptied of meaning itself becomes a meaningless gesture. Sara's vision makes "poetry" impossible. While North recites from "The Garden" she makes him aware of the realities of living in a society where Marvell's solitude is impossible. Her "poem," a brilliant pastiche of Eliot's "The Waste Land" and "Gerontion," illustrates the failure of the artist's traditional view of nature as both an escape from and a place of moral certainty outside society.<sup>89</sup>

Other works of art--even the most trivial--only mock man's aspirations for meaning and order. The terra-cotta plaque, "that symbol of her girlish sentiment amused [Eleanor] grimly. She had meant it to signify flowers, fields in the heart of London; but now it was cracked." The world of The Years is so poorly ordered that even when objects do survive they too mock these aspirations. The portrait of Mrs. Pargiter as a young girl "seemed to be presiding over the protracted affair of her own death-bed with a smiling indifference."<sup>90</sup> Although a work of art should be separated from man's life, its separateness, like that of Lily Biscoe's painting, should reflect the triumph of man's spirit over matter. It should not mock his frailty.

Music, an art which should be closer to man because it lives in time and needs to be recreated, performed by man in order to exist, is also shown to be meaningless. In "Street

Music," a very early article, Woolf praised street musicians for expressing their vitality and identity through their music, which she saw as so stimulating that it might threaten the social order.<sup>91</sup> Here, however, the

street musicians doled out their frail and for the most part melancholy pipe of sound, which was echoed, or parodied, here in the trees of Hyde Park, here in St. James's by the twitter of sparrows and the sudden outbursts of the amorous but intermittent thrush.

Nature's imitation of man's songs is appropriate to a world cut off from all sources of life or creativity. In addition, it suggests a ghastly parody of the kind of complementary relationship between man and nature suggested in The Waves. Without a source of vitality, life becomes meaningless and repetitive. "The mixed light of the [gas] lamps and the setting sun" may achieve picturesque effects, but neither the natural nor the man-made world provides adequate illumination.<sup>92</sup>

The major event of the second part of the novel, a party that fails to cohere, seems to suggest that the vision of unity and significance animating Woolf's creation of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay no longer is meaningful. Instead of Mrs. Dalloway's presence, or Lily's painting, meaning is summed up in a song, the song of the caretaker's children:

Etho passo tanno hai  
Fai donk to tu do,  
Mai to, Kai to, lai to see  
Toh dom to tuh do--

Wordsworth's Highland girl sings with nature's voice; these offer "horrible...noise." "It was so shrill, so discordant, and so meaningless."<sup>93</sup> These creatures, Wordsworth's "best

philosophers" reveal that his vision of man's place in the world is meaningless. This is underscored when Nicholas decides to offer a "peroration" for "the dawn--the new day...." Although he changes his mind, "the dawn" as Renny points out "has risen" anyway.<sup>94</sup> Woolf insists that the party ends with general feelings of good will and: "the sky above the houses wore an air of extraordinary beauty, simplicity and peace."<sup>95</sup> However, nothing in the novel suggests that the coming day will offer anything more than "the days, the weeks, the years" that have already passed mechanically "slowly wheeling, like the rays of a searchlight...one after another across the sky."<sup>96</sup>

Woolf used the subject matter and language of modern poetry as a way of testing her essentially Wordsworthian vision of the world. The failure of her conclusion suggests the inadequacy of Wordsworth's philosophy.

The common life that Wordsworth celebrated was far removed from the "'expensive shoes,'" the "'bowels,'" and the "'buggers'" of the poets of the Thirties.<sup>97</sup> In "A Letter to a Young Poet," ostensibly written to John Lehmann in 1932, Woolf comments upon the difficulty these poets have in including life's more common and sordid aspects in their work. "Here are the common objects of daily prose--the bicycle and the omnibus. Obviously the poet is making his muse face facts." However, "the poet...has strained himself to include an emotion that is not domesticated...to poetry; the effort

has thrown him off balance; he rights himself...by a violent recourse to the poetical--he invokes the moon or the night-  
ingale." The result is that "the poem is cracked in the  
middle....Here is reality on one side, here is beauty on the  
other...."<sup>98</sup> Her novel suffers similarly. Woolf wanted the  
first part of the novel to present the facts; the second,  
the poetic vision.<sup>99</sup> However, there is something too willed  
about the final vision, and the "transition" between the two  
realms is too "sharp."<sup>100</sup> Fact and vision cannot meet. Her  
book, like their poems, is "cracked in the middle."

And first, before we begin the history of life,  
let us tell something of the stage upon which  
our drama is put and of the background against  
which it is played.

H. G. Wells

Although the form of The Years offers an implicit critique  
of The Waves, it also allowed Woolf to move beyond this syn-  
thesis to the more comprehensive view of Between the Acts.  
It is almost as if Woolf needed to break the pattern she had  
developed so that she could again apprehend the sheer energy  
that manifests itself in the natural world.

Between the Acts makes something whole of the debris  
that submerged The Years. In this novel Woolf comes to terms  
with the sordid materialism that marred and twisted the char-  
acters in The Years, depriving their lives of meaning and  
dignity. Woolf uses the material of The Years to create a  
new synthesis that reinterprets the relationship between man

and nature in a way that affirms the enduring validity of the Romantic tradition.

Here Woolf's characterization of Eleanor Pargiter in The Years becomes important. There are two aspects to this characterization. The first presents Eleanor as a kind of prophetess and attempts to endow her with some of the significance Bernard had in The Years. Near the end of the novel she is presented as feeling "as if she were standing on the edge of a precipice with her hair blown back...." It is this Eleanor who gives some kind of significance to the sunrise that ends the novel. These gestures are not as significant as the secondary aspects of Woolf's characterization of Eleanor as someone whose experiences never exhaust her sense of life's potentials. Unlike her brother Edward, she never has something "final," "sealed up" or "stated" about her.<sup>101</sup> This aspect of her personality brings her close to Lucy Swithin in Between the Acts.

Only Eleanor or Lucy finding herself "staring at an old man in the corner [of an omnibus] who was eating something out of a paper bag" would invite the following response:

"Like to see what I've got for supper, lady?" he said, cocking one eyebrow over his rheumy twinkling old eyes. And he held out for her inspection a hunk of bread on which was laid a slice of cold meat or sausage.<sup>102</sup>

The man's response translates what Bernard would consider a potentially disgusting situation--eating dead meat--into a human encounter. If Wordsworth had lived in the age of omni-

buses, he might have found his subject matter in Eleanor's encounter with the old man. Even Crosby, whom circumstances "reduce to an organism" "bent on surviving," was once able to extract pleasure from the most ordinary kind of experience: "Crosby held open the door of the dining-room as she waited for them to come down. The silver paid for polishing, she thought."<sup>103</sup>

Woolf's presentation of this endurance, this energy, and even this minimal delight in the physical world separates her from the poets of the Thirties for whom the "'ninety-nine in the hundred who never attend the banquet'" exist only to "'wash the grease of ages off the knives.'"<sup>104</sup> This separation is clearer in Between the Acts, where even the village idiot has an important part in the pageant. The pageant, which insists upon the essential similarity of all human experience in time, is a tribute to the Romantic poet, who, Woolf notes, is more "interested in what we have in common than in what he has apart."<sup>105</sup> The assertion of the common basis of experience is Woolf's final tribute to Wordsworth.

The pageant asserts the common denominator in all experience. Queen Elizabeth is acted by Eliza Clark, "licensed to sell tobacco."

Could she be Mrs. Clark of the village shop?  
She was splendidly made up. Her head, pearl-  
hung, rose from a vast ruff...her cape was made  
of cloth of silver--in fact swabs used to scour  
saucepans. She looked the age in person.<sup>106</sup>

All the vulgarity and vigor of the Elizabethan period is

suggested in Mrs. Clark's costume. This appetite for life survived in a few characters in The Years. It becomes a creative principle in Between the Acts.

In Between the Acts, Woolf shows that the material aspects of life do not necessarily have to thwart man's spiritual being. This subject is dealt with at the very opening of the novel: "It was a summer's night and they were talking, in the big room with the windows open to the garden, about the cesspool." Talk about the cesspool does not prevent the company from quoting Byron. Thus, poetry, Woolf's test for the quality of a society, is possible here. Although language is still seen as somewhat repetitive, individuals communicate with one another intuitively or instinctively. In contrast to the opaque, unyielding quality of words in The Years, here even the crudest kind of statement communicates. The nurses "rolling words, like sweets on their tongues; which, as they thinned to transparency, gave off pink, green, and sweetness. This morning that sweetness was: 'How cook had told 'im off about the asparagus....'"<sup>107</sup>

The presence of poetry indicates that Woolf was anxious to establish a richer linguistic texture and therefore richer possibilities for individual experience than was available in The Years. The novel itself, as Hafley noted,

is a finished product: its form is in every way consistent and expressive. But as a "work of art"--that is to say, in the smaller but important matters of prose style and texture, and even in so relatively unimportant a thing as punctuation--it is not quite finished....<sup>108</sup>



However, Woolf's goals are clearly evident in the larger aspects of the novel. Between the Acts avoids the "singular" narrow vision of The Years and redeems the obsessive disgust with the past, with language, and with the physical bases of man's being. Between the Acts also becomes an answer to these "young" poets showing them how Romantic poetic theory can be made relevant to the present.

In the particular disgust with materiality--in objects, language, and sexuality,--that pervades The Years, the novel reflects the concerns of the poets of the thirties. However, the motivation for this disgust is closer to the concerns of the novel's initial historical setting. The sexual inversion and the "two large feet, in tight shoes, so that the bunions showed" belong to "buggers" and the "expensive shoes" of the Thirties poets. But the motive for the disgust, the vision of people wallowing "in the primeval swamp, prolific, profuse, half-conscious" is Victorian.<sup>109</sup> It reflects the cultural crisis precipitated by evolutionary theory, which makes the world into a jungle, where nothing has value. Woolf's inability to deal with this fills The Years with objects and bodies that seem to lack the possibility of redemption. It is appropriate that the presentation of nature in Woolf's encounter with the subject matter of modern poetry took this form, for it was evolutionary theory that began to destroy the vision of the Romantic poets. In The Years Woolf finds herself, "wandering," like Matthew Arnold, "between two worlds,

one dead, the other powerless to be born." Yet, Woolf's desire to give meaning and significance to man's place in nature in Between the Acts means that she must come to terms with this theory.

As early as The Voyage Out, Woolf presented Rachel Vinrace as

haunted by absurd jumbled ideas--how, if one went back far enough, everything perhaps was intelligible; everything was in common; for the mammoths who pastured in the fields of Richmond High street had turned into paving stones and boxes full of ribbon, and her aunts.<sup>110</sup>

This view of evolution, which postulates a life force that realizes itself in various forms of matter, probably is a material embodiment of the living spirit that Wordsworth found in all things. Evolutionary theory makes this spirit into a force that realizes itself in matter. However, Woolf's images, mammoths and paving stones, ribbons and aunts, suggest that this spirit might have chosen loftier ends. Thus Woolf seems to mock this view of evolution.

The belief in the materialization of the life force probably has its source in Meredith. The earlier Victorians believed that the process of evolution eventually led to the spiritualization of matter. If an ape could bring forth a man, man could bring forth an angel. Thus, momentarily dismayed by a vision of "nature red in tooth and claw," Tennyson looked forward to the nobler type of man promised in that "far-off divine event,/To which the whole creation moves."<sup>111</sup> Both views, Rachel's and Tennyson's, tie evolution to material

and ethical progress. Both assume that nature's chaos has teleological ends. However, Woolf resists this interpretation because the goal of nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, man's progress from ape to angel, makes matter intrac-table, dead, and, finally, irrelevant. In Between the Acts Woolf shows that matter, the source of energy and creativity, is to be sought rather than to be transcended. Therefore, evolutionary theories that tie the biological development to some kind of theory of historical progress are essentially false.

The continuity between past and present is mirrored in the continuity of the racial past. Mrs. Swithin's difficulty in separating "Grace herself, with blue china on a tray, from the leather-covered grunting monster, who was about... to demolish a whole tree in the...primeval forest,"<sup>112</sup> is a comic statement of this theme, that receives a more serious embodiment in the feelings of violence that different characters try to suppress and in the war that is, so to speak, in the wings. The final scene of the novel, which presents Giles and Isa in the primeval darkness preceeding the dawn of civilization or the dawn of a summer day in 1939, suggests that man always remains part of nature; he never evolves beyond it. Therefore, any idea of historical progress is also false. "'The Victorians,' Mrs. Swithin mused. 'I don't believe' she said with her odd little smile, 'that there ever were such people. Only you and me and William dressed dif-

ferently."<sup>113</sup> The vision of human personality liberated from the narrowness of a particular historical time is in direct opposition to the sense of history communicated in The Years. This novel, which is divided between fact and vision, was designed to reveal the differences between Victorian and contemporary societies. Committed to showing that life is qualitatively different after 1918, Woolf forgets her own injunction to these younger poets: "never think yourself singular."<sup>114</sup> The vision of the poets of the thirties is incomplete because their obsession with history gives them a "singular" view of reality.

In "The Leaning Tower," a talk Woolf gave in 1940, which might almost be a companion to "A Letter to a Young Poet," Woolf reasserts the value of Wordsworth's poetry and his poetic method. He becomes the standard by which the Thirties poets are to be judged. They are public poets; their work is "oratory, not poetry." "It is necessary, in order to feel the emotion of [their poetry], that other people should be listening too. We are in a group, in a class-room as we listen." As a contrast, Woolf suggests "listen now to Wordsworth":

Lover had he known in huts where poor men dwell,  
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,  
The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.<sup>115</sup>

Wordsworth's interest in the poor was not part of a political program. Poor men, he believed, lived close to nature and therefore to eternal things: the woods, the starry sky, the

lonely hills. At a time when London was burning, Woolf remembered "look your last on all things lovely."<sup>116</sup> The unconscious, unmediated quality that Woolf ascribes to Wordsworth's method is important here. The poets of the thirties are too self-conscious, too deliberately programmatic. Because they are caught up in political issues, their poetry is "oratory." "They feel compelled to preach...." Thus, their poetry has a "pedagogic," "didactic," "loud-speaker strain."<sup>117</sup>

It is appropriate that Miss La Trobe, who draws upon Wordsworth's methods of creating, disappoints the expectations of her audience when she avoids oratory. Instead of a "Grand Ensemble": "Army; Navy; Union Jack; and behind them perhaps...the Church," the audience gets "ten mins. of present time."<sup>118</sup> The way art is treated in the novel suggests why it is so important for the audience to experience the present and to understand its part in the pageant.

Unlike Mrs. Manressa, most individuals do not take off their stays and roll in the grass. And most are so cultivated and so self-conscious that they have lost touch with their own creative powers. Here the place of art in society becomes important. The artist reveals not only the individual's unacted part, but, more importantly, his closeness to nature, the source of all creativity.

When Lucy Swithin takes William Dodge on a tour of the house, "she ran her hand over the sunk books in the wall on the landing, as if they were pan pipes. 'Here are the poets

from whom we descend by way of mind...."<sup>119</sup> The pageant presents a comic version of this descent and the poetic reminiscences of the characters underline the theme in a more serious manner.

The descent "by way of mind" from the poets is as important as bodily descent from the apes. Pointz Hall, which contains so much of human history, is like a shell, a fossil, containing the past history of this descent. "Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent. The room was a shell, singing of what was before time was...."<sup>120</sup> This image seems to be related to the shell Wordsworth dreamed of in The Prelude. Wordsworth's shell symbolizes poetic knowledge. It has "power/To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe/...the heart of human kind."<sup>121</sup> However, the silent singing of the empty shell-like room suggests that the society in Between the Acts has been cut off from artistic truth. The painting of the young woman is also silent. "The picture looked at nobody. The picture drew them down the paths of silence." These silent paths are uncomfortable. As soon as they are given the chance, the family follows the crude naturalism of Mrs. Manressa which seems to offer a more pleasant alternative. "Now they could follow in her wake and leave the silver and dun shades that led to the heart of silence" in the painting.<sup>122</sup> All art, Woolf suggested in her essay on Sickert, has a silent core. "The artists themselves live in it. Coleridge could not explain Kubla Khan--that he left

to the critics." Although the essay suggests that even the critics may not be able to explain the core of silence, they may be able to bring people to the edge of meaning:

"Since we love words let us dally for a little on the verge ...."<sup>123</sup> In the novel, the room and the painting and the silent alabaster vase will remain forever silent and empty unless someone (here it is Miss La Trobe) can show that art is not remote from human concerns. Part of this awareness includes a true understanding of the relationship between nature and art. Nature may be offering more than a less troublesome alternative.

During the first scene when the audience is made to see them, they are seen from the mirrors "save Mrs. Manressa...powdered her nose; and moved one...alone she preserved unashamed her image without blinking herself." Her vitality and absolute lack of self-consciousness associate her with nature. Mrs. Manressa seems "goddess-like, buoyant, abundant, her cornucopia running over." She embodies "the power of the human body to make the earth fruitful."<sup>124</sup> This phrase is particularly important. Wordsworth placed man's collaboration with nature in the mind or the spirit. Here Woolf suggests that a more physical collaboration is needed. The quality of this collaboration is rather complex. However, it is suggested in the structure of the novel.

Bernard Blackstone calls Between the Acts "the most

lyrical of Virginia Woolf's novels. Its prose slips easily into poetry: in parts it is poetry, not poetry pretending to be prose...."<sup>125</sup> The quality of some of the verse makes this statement questionable. However, Woolf herself believed that poetry is not guaranteed by the presence or absence of rhyme.

More important than rhyme is rhythm. Poetry is present in the rhythmic structure of the novel. In her "Letter to a Young Poet," Woolf speaks of the "rhythm" that "on the floor of [the poet's] mind...keeps up its perpetual beat." "Is it not this that makes you a poet?"<sup>126</sup> Rhythm is created by a pattern of emphasis which is based upon recurring intervals of time or recurring intervals of intensity. Woolf uses both modes of rhythm in her novel. The first, recurrence through time, is based upon the patterns of repetition in an individual's life or in the history of the race. The "chiming" that Isa hears in repeated conversations about the weather<sup>127</sup> suggests rhythmical intervals can be measured in an individual's life; the repeated song in the pageant "digging and delving"<sup>128</sup> suggests its measure in racial history. Woolf's presentation of history as repetition is another way of creating this rhythm. These rhythms make apparently random events in the lives of individuals into meaningful patterns.

Miss La Trobe's concern with maintaining the level of intensity created by the various scenes of the play during the intervals ("between the acts") suggests that alternating



to the critics." Although the essay suggests that even the critics may not be able to explain the core of silence, they may be able to bring people to the edge of meaning: "Since we love words let us dally for a little on the verge ...."<sup>123</sup> In the novel, the room and the painting and the silent alabaster vase will remain forever silent and empty unless someone (here it is Miss La Trobe) can show that art is not remote from human concerns. Part of this awareness includes a true understanding of the relationship between nature and art. Nature must be seen as offering more than a less troublesome alternative to art.

During the final scene of the pageant when the audience is made to see themselves, everyone turns away from the mirrors "save Mrs. Manressa who...used it as a glass...powdered her nose; and moved one curl...to its place....Alone she preserved unashamed her identity, and faced without blinking herself." Her vitality and absolute lack of self-consciousness associate her with nature. Mrs. Manressa seems "goddess-like, buoyant, abundant, her cornucopia running over." She embodies "the power of the human body to make the earth fruitful."<sup>124</sup> This phrase is particularly important. Wordsworth placed man's collaboration with nature in the mind or the spirit. Here Woolf suggests that a more physical collaboration is needed. The quality of this collaboration is rather complex. However, it is suggested in the structure of the novel.

Bernard Blackstone calls Between the Acts "the most

lyrical of Virginia Woolf's novels. Its prose slips easily into poetry: in parts it is poetry, not poetry pretending to be prose...."<sup>125</sup> The quality of some of the verse makes this statement questionable. However, Woolf herself believed that poetry is not guaranteed by the presence or absence of rhyme.

More important than rhyme is rhythm. Poetry is present in the rhythmic structure of the novel. In her "Letter to a Young Poet," Woolf speaks of the "rhythm" that "on the floor of [the poet's] mind...keeps up its perpetual beat." "Is it not this that makes you a poet?"<sup>126</sup> Rhythm is created by a pattern of emphasis which is based upon recurring intervals of time or recurring intervals of intensity. Woolf uses both modes of rhythm in her novel. The first, recurrence through time, is based upon the patterns of repetition in an individual's life or in the history of the race. The "chiming" that Isa hears in repeated conversations about the weather<sup>127</sup> suggests rhythmical intervals can be measured in an individual's life; the repeated song in the pageant "digging and delving"<sup>128</sup> suggests its measure in racial history. Woolf's presentation of history as repetition is another way of creating this rhythm. These rhythms make apparently random events in the lives of individuals into meaningful patterns.

Miss La Trobe's concern with maintaining the level of intensity created by the various scenes of the play during the intervals ("between the acts") suggests that alternating

periods of intensity and rest are another mode of creating rhythm. Alternating the narrative between the audience and the pageant provides an example of this method in the novel. However, the great achievement of the novel is the joining of the private individual world of the interludes with the greater history of the race. This happens in the novel as well as in the pageant.

Although the movement from play to interlude creates a basic rhythm, variations within this pattern suggest the deeper rhythms ordering the world in which men live. These provide an insight into the sources of being in the universe. In her "Letter," Woolf writes that the poet's "task" is "to find the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity...."<sup>129</sup> At two crucial moments, when the rhythm created by the play seems to fail, nature provides continuity. The cows bellow and the rain falls. These events, usually meaningless, are given significance by the context of the play. The first crisis occurs when the players talk about the fall of great cities "Babylon, Nineveh, Troy....," but their words are inaudible.<sup>130</sup> "The stage was empty; the emotion must be continued; the only thing to continue the emotion was the song, and the words were inaudible."<sup>131</sup>

Miss La Trobe leant against the tree, paralyzed.... Then suddenly, as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden.... From cow after cow came the same yearning bellow. The whole world was filled with dumb yearning.

The cows "filled the emptiness and continued the emotion."<sup>132</sup>

At the end of the pageant, the play again seems to fail when the audience is unable to respond to the unstructured minutes of "present time." "And then the shower fell, sudden, profuse....Down it poured like all the people in the world weeping....All people's tears, weeping for all people."<sup>133</sup> Without the context provided by the pageant, these natural events are meaningless. Thus the artist creates the conditions where nature's relationship to the human world can be revealed. He "re-think[s] human life into poetry."<sup>134</sup>

The meaning of the pageant is rather simple. As the vicar suggests, "to me at least it was indicated that we are members one of another. Each is part of the whole." The pageant offers a total picture; daily life, composed of "scraps, orts and fragments," offers only a part of the whole.<sup>135</sup>

Because the pageant communicates so much more than Miss La Trobe originally planned, her view of art as "illusion" is somewhat misleading. Miss La Trobe, Woolf insists, "was not merely a twitcher of individual strings; she was one who seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a recreated world."<sup>136</sup> Miss La Trobe does not create an illusory world, she "recreates" the known world into a new whole. Woolf's artist is still the Romantic artist who reveals reality, not the modernist magician who calls it into being.<sup>137</sup>

If Miss La Trobe's vision is in any way limited, it is

limited to seeing man in the context of human history rather than in context of nature or of racial history. However, her understanding is enlarged by the pageant. Her new awareness is so important that Woolf presents the process by which it is developed. Like Woolf, Miss La Trobe knows that "another play always lay behind the play she had just written." The play she imagines before the pageant originates in a rather ethereal vision of life: "The butterflies circling; the light changing; the children leaping; the mothers laughing...."<sup>138</sup> After the pageant she imagines a different play.

Miss La Trobe's method of creating is a modern version of Wordsworth's. "Do we strain Wordsworth's famous saying about emotion recollected in tranquillity" Woolf asks, "when we infer that by tranquillity he meant that the writer needs to become unconscious before he can create?"<sup>139</sup> After the pageant Miss La Trobe seeks the "oblivion" of a pub.

She raised her glass...and drank. And listened.  
Words of one syllable sank down into the mud.  
She drowsed; she nodded. The mud became fertile.  
Words rose above the intolerably laden dumb  
oxen plodding through the mud. Words without  
meaning--wonderful words.<sup>140</sup>

Out of this fertile mud comes the vision of her next play. Crude materiality is the source of all creativity.

Her vision is of "the high ground at midnight;...the rock; and two scarcely perceptible figures..."who begin to speak.<sup>141</sup> A similar vision concludes the novel, confirming Woolf's belief that real life is the source of poetry. As

Mrs. Swithin reads the words "prehistoric man...half-human, half-ape, roused himself from his semi-crouching position and raised great stones," Giles and Isa prepare to fight and to embrace. "It was [the] night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among rocks. Then the curtain rose. They spoke."<sup>142</sup> "There is no longer any difference between the pageant world and the actual world, for past and present have become one...."<sup>143</sup>

As in Woolf's other novels, the subject matter of Between the Acts deals with the interchange between the human and natural worlds. But in Between the Acts the movement between these two worlds is reversed: the individual is no longer assimilated into the natural landscape--he is the product, the distillate, and he, within himself, carries the whole experience of human life on the earth.

The image of solitary individuals against a natural landscape is the appropriate focus for the poetic novelist. The Waves ended with death and darkness. The Years with a false sunrise. Here darkness and night become the sources of life. The landscape will continue to yield human meaning. For, as Woolf said in 1940, "there will be a next generation, in spite of this war and whatever it brings."<sup>144</sup>

## Notes for Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>To the Lighthouse, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," ix, 165-71, Poetical Works, p. 462.

<sup>3</sup>"The Narrow Bridge of Art," Collected Essays, Vol. II (London, 1966), p. 219.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 224-25.

<sup>7</sup>Woolf calls The Waves a "play-poem." A Writer's Diary, pp. 109, 134.

<sup>8</sup>"The Narrow Bridge of Art," p. 219.

<sup>9</sup>"Notes on an Elizabethan Play," Collected Essays, Vol. I (London, 1966), p. 60.

<sup>10</sup>"The Cherry Orchard," The New Statesman, 24 July, 1920, p. 446.

<sup>11</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 139.

<sup>12</sup>"The Cherry Orchard," p. 446.

<sup>13</sup>"Not one of Us," Collected Essays, Vol. IV (London, 1967), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Harold Bloom, Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry, Revised and enlarged edition (Ithaca, New York, 1971), p. 307.

<sup>15</sup>Frank D. McConnell, "'Death Among the Apple Trees': The Waves and the World of Things," Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Claire Sprague (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), p. 117.

<sup>16</sup>Bloom, Visionary Company, p. 307.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>18</sup>Rhoda picks up "a poem about a hedge." Irma Rantavaara has identified this as Shelley's "The Question," (Virginia Woolf's "The Waves" [New York, 1960], p. 40). Rhoda's reading of "The Question," a minor poem about a girl who imagines "Bare winter suddenly was changed to Spring" and picks a bouquet of imaginary flowers, turns the coy ending of Shelley's poem ("Oh to whom" shall this bouquet be presented), into a cry that expresses her absolute isolation and anguish, The Waves, Jacob's Room and The Waves (New York, n.d.), p. 213.

Rhoda's choice of Shelley's poetry is appropriate, for her desire to transcend earthly limits is an important theme in Shelley's poetry. However, her fear, "life how I have dreaded you....I have been stained by you and corrupted....," echoes, without Shelley's magnificent ambivalence, the famous lines from "Adonais." However, Shelley's recognition that both life and eternity have the potential for splendor is alien to Rhoda because she finds life itself corrupting: "What dissolution of the soul you demanded in order to get through one day, what lies, bowings...and servility....How you snatched from me the white spaces that lie between hour and hour and rolled them into dirty pellets....," The Waves, p. 317. Thus, as Shelley's voice, Rhoda presents one extreme aspect of his philosophy.

<sup>19</sup>The Waves, p. 288.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>21</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Shelley and Keats," The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism (London, 1964), p. 89.

<sup>22</sup>The Waves, p. 352. Schaefer comments upon Louis' resemblance to Prufrock, p. 141.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>26</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 139.

<sup>27</sup>The Waves, p. 342.

<sup>28</sup>McConnell, p. 126. Rantavaara makes a similar connection, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup>The Waves, p. 349.



- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 343.
- <sup>31</sup>McConnell, p. 128.
- <sup>32</sup>The Waves, p. 342.
- <sup>33</sup>Words, "Immortality Ode," v, 59. Poetical Works, p. 460.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., x, 185-90, p. 462.
- <sup>35</sup>Night and Day, p. 451. See pp. 54-55.
- <sup>36</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 109 (Italics added.)
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 139.
- <sup>39</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 129.
- <sup>40</sup>The Waves, p. 369.
- <sup>41</sup>"Worshipping Solid Objects: The Pagan World of Virginia Woolf," Critics on Virginia Woolf, Readings in Literary Criticism 8, ed. Jacqueline E. M. Lathem (Coral Gables, Florida, 1970), p. 120.
- <sup>42</sup>McConnell, p. 126. The pattern for these interludes, the observation of a landscape during the course of a single day, may have come from Ruskin. Modern Painters, I,ii,iii,v, pp. 421-23 Works III.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-27.
- <sup>44</sup>The Waves, p. 179.
- <sup>45</sup>Carl G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (New York, 1964), p. 23.
- <sup>46</sup>The Waves, p. 368.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 359.
- <sup>48</sup>This realization, according to Harold Bloom "is not mysticism but, rather, a state of aesthetic contemplation. All contemplation of objects except the aesthetic is essentially practical, and so directed toward personal ends....To see into the life of things is to see things for themselves and not for their potential use," p. 134. Therefore, it is appropriate that Bernard goes to an art gallery after he hears of Percival's death.

- 49 The Waves, pp. 359-60.
- 50 Ibid., p. 376.
- 51 Ibid., p. 382-83.
- 52 Bell, p. 389.
- 53 The Waves, p. 344.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 207, 202.
- 55 Guiget, p. 403. William York Tindall also comments on this connection, The Literary Symbol (Bloomington, Indiana, 1955), pp. 187-88.
- 56 Robert Raphael, Richard Wagner (New York 1968), p. 98.
- 57 The Waves, pp. 350, 345.
- 58 Guiget, p. 403.
- 59 The Waves, p. 207
- 60 "On Wuthering Heights," The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1967), pp. 207-208.
- 61 Brace, p. 121.
- 62 The Waves, pp. 387, 380.
- 63 M. H. Abrams, ed., The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Revised Edition (New York, 1968), p. 251.
- 64 Bloom, Visionary Company, p. 222.
- 65 Ibid., p. 174.
- 66 A Writer's Diary, p. 166.
- 67 The Years (Harmondsworth, England, 1968), pp. 5, 119.
- 68 A Writer's Diary, pp. 191, 206, 179.
- 69 Ibid., p. 179.
- 70 John Lehman's connection with the Hogarth Press "strengthened the first tenuous contacts between the Woolfs and those remarkable young writers of the Left--Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood....," Bell, p. 392.

<sup>71</sup>A Writer's Diary, p. 179.

<sup>72</sup>Virginia Woolf, "The Leaning Tower," Collected Essays, II, p. 167. The elipses are Woolf's. In this piece Woolf quotes from an essay Desmond McCarthy wrote in 1940. It is quoted here because it offers a general observation on the differences between her generation and the generation of the Thirties.

<sup>73</sup>The Years, p. 79.

<sup>74</sup>Bloom, Visionary Company, p. 419.

<sup>75</sup>van Ghent, p. 161.

<sup>76</sup>See p. 76.

<sup>77</sup>"Solid Objects," A Haunted House and Other Short Stories (New York, n.d.), pp. 80, 81.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>79</sup>From "the very plain and leafy fact" of the flower, followers of Tennyson were able to infer a greater order: that "that which is sweet, soft, cool, feels," or followers of Ruskin were made to understand that highly organized and aesthetic structures in nature must have meaning. Miles, pp.106,38

<sup>80</sup>See pp. 23.

<sup>81</sup>The Years, pp. 8, 17, 20. It is interesting that the phrase "solid objects" or "solid object" appears in the novel, pp. 30, 74, 105.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>86</sup>The Waves, p. 201.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>88</sup>Hugh Kenner, "The Experience of the Eye: Marianne Moore's Tradition," Southern Review, n.s., I, 4 (Autumn, 1965), pp. 759-60.

- 89 The Years, p. 103, pp. 272-75.
- 90 Ibid., pp. 82, 38.
- 91 "Street Music," National Review, lxx (London, 1905), p. 146-47.
- 92 The Years, pp. 5-6.
- 93 Ibid., p. 345.
- 94 Ibid., pp. 346-47.
- 95 Ibid., p. 349.
- 96 Ibid., p. 6.
- 97 "A Letter to a Young Poet," Collected Essays II, pp. 186-87.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 A Writer's Diary, p. 205.
- 100 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 187.
- 101 The Years, pp. 343, 327.
- 102 Ibid., p. 242.
- 103 Ibid., pp. 244, 30.
- 104 "The Leaning Tower," p. 173. Italics are omitted.
- 105 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 189.
- 106 Between the Acts (London, 1941), p. 101.
- 107 Ibid., pp. 7, 15.
- 108 Hafley, p. 160.
- 109 The Years, pp. 314, 301.
- 110 The Voyage Out, p. 73.
- 111 For Meredith, see Georg Roppen, Evolution and Poetic Belief: A Study in Some Victorian and Modern Writers (Oslo, 1956), p. 217. The quotation from Tennyson is from the "[Epilogue], In Memoriam A. H. H.," ll. 143-44, Poems, p. 988.

- 112 Between the Acts, pp. 13-14.
- 113 *Ibid.*, p. 203.
- 114 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 184.
- 115 "The Leaning Tower," pp. 175-76. (*Italics have been omitted.*)
- 116 A Writer's Diary, p. 333.
- 117 "The Leaning Tower," p. 175.
- 118 Between the Acts, p. 209.
- 119 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- 120 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 121 The Prelude, V, 107-109, Poetical Works, p. 522.
- 122 Between the Acts, pp. 57, 63.
- 123 "Walter Sickert," Collected Essays II, pp. 236, 241.  
(The italics are Woolf's.)
- 124 Between the Acts, pp. 217, 142.
- 125 Virginia Woolf: A Commentary (New York, n.d.), p. 241.
- 126 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 185.
- 127 Between the Acts, pp. 29, 77.
- 128 *Ibid.*
- 129 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 191.
- 130 Between the Acts, p. 164. (*Italics omitted.*)
- 131 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.
- 132 *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.
- 133 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 134 "A Letter to a Young Poet," p. 191.
- 135 Between the Acts, pp. 224-25. A D. Moody explains the tentative quality of the vicar's remarks: "What is in question...is not the idea as such, but the more difficult matter of its value as reality, as something lived and actual ...." Virginia Woolf (New York, 1963), pp. 94-95.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>137</sup>Graham Hough, Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Revolution (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960), p. 10.  
Hough's distinction between Symbolist and Romantic poets is similar to our distinction between Modernists and Romantics.

<sup>138</sup>Between the Acts, p. 78.

<sup>139</sup>"The Leaning Tower," p. 166.

<sup>140</sup>Between the Acts, pp. 247-48.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., pp. 255-56.

<sup>143</sup>Hafley, p. 151.

<sup>144</sup>"The Leaning Tower," p. 178.

## Chapter V

Blessed is he who masters nature's laws  
 ...But happy  
 Too is he who knows the gods of nature,  
 Old man Silvanus, Pan, the sister nymphs.

Vergil

Early in his career Forster numbered himself among the "happy few" who dismiss Wordsworth and Ruskin for "the little chalk pit" and "the firs and undergrowth...." These aspects of the landscape suggest a desire for nature that has not yet been civilized. On an afternoon walk in Cambridge, most individuals in search of nature's beauties allow their perceptions to be directed by Ruskin or Wordsworth. These men, Forster notes,

ascend the hill and quote Ruskin, or if they have got past him, write an account of the view themselves, beginning "With what varied emotions did I behold this striking scene,"....Here, too, Wordsworth's three sonnets on King's may be quoted, especially the one beginning "What awful perspective."

Only "a happy few find the little chalk pit this side of the village where they may wander among the firs and undergrowth, folded off from the outer world."<sup>1</sup> This secret world is Forster's ideal landscape. His countryside is less cultivated than Wordsworth's or Ruskin's. It is in this secret undergrowth that the "unseen," the name Forster gives to the spiritual forces in the universe, manifest themselves.<sup>2</sup> And

they generally appear in the guise of the ancient gods of Greece and Rome.

Forster rejects Wordsworth and Ruskin because their view of the pagan gods, like their view of nature, lacks terror. In their view the Greeks banished fear of the unknown by "making...beautiful images." Their gods belong to the sunlit world of classical Greece. "'There is no dread in their hearts; pensiveness, amazement, often deepest grief and desolation, but terror never. Everlasting calm in the presence of all fate, and joy such as they might win, not indeed from perfect beauty but from beauty at perfect rest.'"<sup>3</sup> Forster believed that an encounter with the unknown results in terror. His gods are closer to those of Walter Pater, whose Dionysus is both "the eater of raw flesh" and "the honey-sweet."<sup>4</sup>

For a young man who prided himself on avoiding the ideas of both Wordsworth and Ruskin and still desired to get "into touch with Nature,"<sup>5</sup> the nineteenth century offered another tradition, which was embodied in the stories of the gods of Greece.

These gods offer a way of getting in touch with nature because they contain within themselves nature's vital forces. Dionysus, according to Walter Pater, is at first "the soul of the individual vine," Then he comes to embody "all that life in flowing things of which the vine is the symbol." Finally, "he comes at last to have a scope equal to that of Demeter, a



realm as wide and mysterious as hers; the whole productive power of the earth is in him, and the explanation of its annual change."<sup>6</sup> Pater's study of Dionysus offers a poetic version of the knowledge offered by some scholars of comparative religion. They have shown that

man only at a late stage attributes complete personality to the thing he worships. Personality comes with the giving of animal or human form. Before anthropomorphism (human form), before theriomorphism (beast form) we have a stage of animism when the gods are intangible forces dwelling anywhere and everywhere."<sup>7</sup>

The ease with which some of the late Victorian classicists, like Jane Harrison and Gilbert Murray, became involved in the very unclassical study of mythology suggests the powerful appeal these myths had for the cultivated imagination. The interest in the gods of the earth, in Dionysus, Pan, and Demeter, is especially interesting in this context because it relates the nineteenth century to its classical forebearers.

Long before the coming of Dionysos the Greeks had nature-gods....But...these...[gods] had passed into a state of complete anthropomorphism....They have cut themselves as far as possible loose from plant and animal nature.

Like other highly civilized groups

the Greeks of the sixth century B.C. may well have been a little weary of their anthropomorphic Olympians, tired of their own magnified reflection in the mirror of mythology....With Dionysos, god of trees and plants as well as human life, there came a "return to nature," a breaking of bonds and limitations and crystallizations, a desire for the life rather of the emotions than of the reason, a recrudescence it may be of animal passions.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps, the interest in mythology allowed nineteenth-

century individuals, as it allows us, to think about the gods without having to worry about belief.<sup>9</sup> Certainly, it offered some a less austere and less arduous way of getting "into touch" with nature than climbing Mt. Snowden.

Even as Forster began his career he recognized that the use of the deities who personify aspects of the landscape was considered a poor literary technique. Such personifications, he recognized, "give no pleasure to those whose taste is really pure."<sup>10</sup> In fact, "generations of critics...have censured the poets for reviving the effete mythology of Greece, and urged them to themes of living interest which shall touch the heart of today."<sup>11</sup> However, Forster himself believes that "Demeter alone among the gods has true immortality," and, in the early essay "Cnidus" from which we have been quoting, he indicates her continued vitality in his introduction of a new male avatar for this goddess:

Someone had joined us. It is well known (is it not?) who that extra person always is. This time he came hurrying down to the beach at the last moment, and tried to peer into our faces. I could hardly see his; but it was young, and it did not look unkind....But there was a general tendency to avoid his attentions....<sup>12</sup>

This is Forster's central theme, the continued vitality and presence of the ancient gods who incarnate the spirit of Greece. This spirit "can appear, not only at any time, but also in any land."<sup>13</sup>

The nineteenth-century interest in Greece is part of a larger cultural development that had its origins a century

earlier. Bernard Stern, who traces this development, observes that "together with an enthusiasm for Greek ruins there is the conception of ancient Greece as an Arcadia where life was ideal because it was primitive, simple, idyllic. Ancient Greece becomes the symbol of liberty and happiness." This concept accounts for "the marked hellenism of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Landor, on the one hand, and of Arnold, Pater, Swinburne, Moore, Henley, and Lang, on the other...."<sup>14</sup> Forster uses this longing for Arcadia in many of his short stories and in several of his novels that show how contact with the ancient world of Greece or Rome often "saves" a particular character from being destroyed by the deadliness of modern culture. This attitude of Romantic hellenism is very close to that of pastoral poetry which allows an individual to withdraw from a complex, overcivilized world to a peaceful Arcadia. According to this myth, nature, not civilization, is seen as essentially Greek.

Romantic Hellenism "begins...in a complete distrust of the classics, which are associated with the neo-classical period of western European literature." "Gradually," as Harry Levin suggests, "Greece is dissociated from the rest and converted into an Arcadia for the romanticists." The myth is European. "World-weary denizens of the drawing-rooms are ready to divide the world, with Schiller, into naïve and sentimental peoples, and to yearn for the primitive, simple, and idyllic society of the Greeks." Émile, Levin reminds us,

"took his books along with him into the thicket and the shadows of leaves sifted over the pages as he read them." Naturally, "Émile prendra plus de goût pour les livres des anciens, que pour les nôtres...par cela seul qu'étant les premiers, les anciens sont le plus près de la nature, et que leur génie est plus à eux."<sup>15</sup> In England, such poets as "Thomas, Akenside, and the Wartons," also exhibit "the nostalgia for the Arcadian life that was ancient Greece...."<sup>16</sup>

Wordsworth and Coleridge rejected the tenets of neo-classic poetry as well as its gods. The second generation of Romantic poets "no longer under the necessity of reacting to a Latinized neoclassicism, held no bias against the glory that was Greece."<sup>17</sup> However, we must look to Wordsworth for restating one of the central mythic themes, the war between Christ and Pan.<sup>18</sup> Wordsworth's sonnet, "The World is Too Much With Us" introduces "the old antagonism between Pan and Christ."<sup>19</sup> This antagonism is embodied in the myth of Pan's death at the time when Christ, "'making His sojourn among men, is recorded to have been ridding human life from daemons of every kind.'"<sup>20</sup>

"One evening...a traveller set sail from Greece to Italy. The wind fell, and the ship was becalmed, while it was making its way through the crowd of little islands off the west coast; and it drifted close to the island of Paxos." A voice cried out "Thamûs." After his name was called three times, Thamûs, a steersman, answered. Then the voice said,

"when you come over against Palôdês, tell them that Great Pan is dead!" He did so, and "immediately they heard a loud noise on shore, weeping and wailing and lamentation; and a wind sprang up, and they sailed away on their voyage."<sup>21</sup> For the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the antagonism between Christ and Pan "has become a contrast between the urly materialism of our commercial and industrial civilization and the natural religion, the ideal beauty and harmony, of Hellenic life." The Coleridges and Mrs. Browning sided with Christ; Swinburne and Meredith, of course, with Pan.<sup>22</sup> However, it is Pater's formulation of this conflict that provides Forster with his particular vision of the dual nature of the pagan gods. This formulation is subtler and closer to the natural forces these gods are seen to embody than the simple antithesis between Christ and Pan. The variety of European and English sources suggests the potential richness of this theme.

Willey's discussion of the Romantic who fabricates a genuine mythology of his own without rejecting the old myths also suggests the possible complexities of this mode.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of his career Forster draws upon the mythical formulation of the late Victorians or Edwardians. As his work achieves greater depth and sophistication, he turns to the earlier Victorians, the Romantics, and such classical poets as Vergil. Forster makes this material his own not only by his specific quest for gods of place but also by his search

for the ultimate origins of myth. This he finds in ritual. Forster's investigation of the literary and cultural origins of myth probably was assisted, perhaps even prompted, by the work of such contemporary scholars as Sir James Frazer, Gilbert Murray, and Jane Harrison.<sup>24</sup>

As his work becomes more complex, Forster examines several aspects of this tradition. However, his earliest work assumes its value. The various uses to which Forster puts this nineteenth-century version of the pastoral is evident in his earliest stories and sketches. Forster's use of this mythic material does not have the quality of personal discovery of Woolf's use of Wordsworth's themes. In the literature of his contemporaries and predecessors, Forster found both his subject matter and his themes. Forster's originality is in the uses he made of this subject and the depth with which he explored these themes.

Ruskin provided a link between Wordsworth and Woolf; he showed how the mode of knowing that was present in lyrical poetry could be translated into prose. Pater provided a similar link for Forster, by showing how the mythic mode in Romantic poetry could become a source for plot and characterization in the novel. Unlike the moderns who look to Pater as one who offers stylistic models for presenting subjective experience, Forster's interest in Pater is in his subject matter, his vision of the Greek gods as the embodiment of certain forces in the universe. Pater's concept of the Greek

gods as "the spiritual form" of the things in nature reflects the influence of Victorian mythography, which, basing all scientific inquiry on evolutionary patterns, saw myths developing "from a kind of primitive pantheism to a humanization of the elements of nature and finally a re-evaluation of these personifications in ethical terms."<sup>25</sup> However, in these analyses as well as in his "Portraits," it is evident that Pater's imagination is aroused by the ambiguities that result when the human form is made the vehicle for expressing or containing the inhuman aspects of nature.<sup>26</sup>

Zeus, according to Pater, owes his origins to man's perceptions of the heavens. "Zeus is, in earliest, original, primitive intention, the open sky, across which the thunder sometimes sounds, and from which the rain descends...."<sup>27</sup> In their embodiment in legend these gods assume the dual aspect of their natural elements: as giver of life Zeus provides gentle rain, and as giver of death Zeus provides destructive storms. This dual aspect is evident in legend, when, for example, Zeus gives life to Dionysus and death to Semele. However, Pater's real interest, like Forster's, is in Dionysus and Demeter, the gods who embody these aspects of the earth. The worship of Demeter, according to Pater, "belongs to that older religion, nearer to the earth....She is the goddess of dark caves, and is not wholly free from monstrous form." But she is also the goddess of the fertility of the wild earth and "the goddess of agriculture, of the fertility of the earth when furthered by human skill."<sup>28</sup> Therefore

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she is "the founder of civilized order."<sup>29</sup> Hecate, Persephone, and Demeter embody the totality of the creative and destructive forces associated with the earth.

The complexity of Pater's characterization of these gods is important for understanding the behavior of characters Forster designates as centers of value. The figures embodying the sacred aspects of nature in his first three novels, (Where Angels Fear to Tread, The Longest Journey, and A Room With a View), Gino Carella, Stephen Wonham, and Mr. Emerson, like Pater's Demeter, are perceived by others in completely contradictory ways as originators and sustainers of life and as actual or potential murderers. Although clearly seen as centers of value by the author, characters who embody the sacred forces in nature tend to be perceived as acting in brutal or arbitrary ways. These actions become explicable in terms of Pater's sense of the duality of the natural forces--the earth is both Hecate and Demeter--as they are embodied in the partly humanized figures of the pagan gods.

Forster also handles this duality in a manner that suggests these myths by presenting characters who act as doubles for the characters embodying the sacred aspects of nature. Because Pater believes that the gods of the earth were created out of similar imaginings, except that each region of Greece tended to deify the sacred in the crop most necessary for its survival, the concept of Dionysus "became almost identical with that of Demeter."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the double for Mrs. Eliot,

a figure for Demeter, is the Dionysian Stephen Wonham. Mrs. Wilcox survives in Margaret Schlegel, and Mrs. Moore in Ralph Moore.

The puzzling withdrawal of two central characters in Forster's major works, Howards End and A Passage to India, cannot be explained satisfactorily without a knowledge of the seasonal changes Pater associated with the gods of the earth. The dual aspects of the gods mirror the dual aspects of the earth. Like the earth, these gods experience "summer and winter phases" in their own lives. Summer is associated with youth and optimism, winter with old age and melancholy. Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Moore, middle-aged women who can no longer bear children, seem to withdraw from life and choose to die. Their withdrawal is related to the changing seasons. The world of youth and sunshine "is inadequate for the service of the expanding soul." It "is finite, bound by the restrictions of time and space....The mature soul, which dreams of an immortality stretching from past to future, cannot be happy in this narrow world of the present, this simple life of sensations enjoyed from moment to moment."<sup>31</sup> Both Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Moore withdraw from this simple world into the wintry world of death.

In addition to these mythic studies, which are important for understanding Forster's method of characterization, Pater wrote several stories about post-classical figures who embody the characteristics of these gods. These stories also in-

fluenced Forster.

Pater's central theme is found in Heinrich Heine's essay "Gods in Exile." Heine draws upon the medieval idea that with the advent of Christianity the pagan gods went underground becoming "devils." This myth refutes the earlier myth of the death of Pan. Although Heine's treatment is less serious, his interest, like Pater's, is in the clash between Christianity and Paganism. Peter's essay on "Pico Della Mirandola" in The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry contains a long passage from Heine concerning this theme:

"how the gods of the older world, at the time of the definite triumph of Christianity, that is, in the third century, fell into painful embarrassments, which greatly resembled certain tragical situations of their earlier life. They now found themselves beset by the same troublesome necessities to which they had once before been exposed during the primitive ages....They had then to take flight ignominiously, and hide themselves among us here on earth, under all sorts of disguises....Many of these unfortunate emigrants, now entirely deprived of shelter and ambrosia, must needs take to vulgar handicrafts as a means of earning their bread. Under these circumstances, many whose sacred groves had been confiscated, let themselves out for hire as woodcutters in Germany....Apollo seems to have been content to take service under graziers, and as he had once kept the cows of Admetus, so he lived now as a shepherd in lower Austria...."<sup>32</sup>

In "Denys L'Auxerrois," one of Pater's most interesting stories, a youth of mysterious origin is made to participate in the traditional Dionysian sacrifice that will insure the fertility of the vineyards. Here, his dual nature is dramatized not only in his deeds but also in the conflicting judgments the townspeople make of him.<sup>33</sup> This story is well

written, and the interest is in how the action of the pagan myth will be worked out in the thirteenth-century French setting. The link between Pater's stories and Forster's stories that have a more contemporary setting, "The Story of a Panic" and "The Road From Colonus," are almost evident in Forster's titles.<sup>34</sup>

In the short stories Forster was writing early in his career, he acknowledged his affinities with Romantic Hellenism by creating characters who must choose between their emotionally sterile civilized society and an emotionally fulfilling but more primitive world. The identification of Christianity with materialism belongs to Wordsworth, and the sense of the darkness of the pagan world to Pater. "The Story of a Panic," Forster's earliest story,<sup>35</sup> reveals the similarities and differences between him and Pater and also suggests Forster's attitude toward nature and art, which forms one of the major themes of his novels. Unlike Pater's narrative of the return of the old gods of Greece, Forster's story places Pan in the context of contemporary society. Instead of Pater's Renaissance Italy or medieval France, Forster's stories are placed in his immediate present. Forster's belief in Pan's existence apparently is firm enough to avoid the need for evasively setting the action in the past.

The story also suggests Forster's typical narrative pattern. Beginning with an effete, overcivilized narrator, an immediate target for social satire, the typical Forsterian

Briton with an "undeveloped heart,"<sup>36</sup> Forster moves to his major concern, the reappearance of the old god. This manifestation brings terror. Even the narrator is afraid "not as a man, but as a beast."<sup>37</sup>

Against Pan, both religion and aestheticism are impotent. Mr. Sandbach, the clergyman who represents the oppressiveness of Western Christian culture which has cut off man from contact with the earth and his own passion, makes the traditional identification between Pan and "The Evil One." However, his contact with Pan belies his statement, "Pan is dead. That is why the woods do not shelter him."<sup>38</sup> And his prayers against Pan are useless.

The artist Leyland seems more sympathetic to nature: "all the poetry is going from Nature...her lakes and marshes are drained, her seas banked up, her forests cut down...." "It is through us, and to our shame, that the Nereids have left the waters and the Oreads the mountains, that the woods no longer give shelter to Pan." But Leyland's aesthetic attitude also resists life. "Look," he commands, "how intolerably straight against the sky is the line of the hill. It would need breaking up and diversifying. And where we are standing the whole thing is out of perspective. Besides, all the colouring is monotonous and crude."<sup>39</sup> Leyland's belief that the artist brings his taste to refine and curb nature, and that art is therefore superior to nature, is clearly undercut in this story.

However, Leyland is more than a figure of fun. The terrible death of Mr. Bons in "The Celestial Omnibus" reveals the potential power of art. Bons dies because he believes that poetry is something to be bound in vellum. But "poetry is a spirit; and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth."<sup>40</sup> Despite his "puerile command of words," Eustace's desire to praise and bless "the great forces and manifestations of Nature"<sup>41</sup> is closer to Forster's idea of art. Although he uses Pater's mythography, Forster's view of art affirms the Wordsworthian belief that the poet is only a man speaking to other men. These men, however, do not listen, and Eustace's paeon to nature ends in tears because he is unable to relate his vision of Pan's universe, where all life is interconnected to the world of men.<sup>42</sup> This problem, the relationship between man and nature, is something Forster tries to fathom in his novels.

Unlike Woolf, who perceives a basic dualism in the world, Forster seems to believe in three separate orders of reality: the natural world, the human (including the man-made world of culture, civilization, and art), and the "unseen," (an unknown realm outside man's comprehension that manifests itself in nature or in art). The power of the unseen to manifest itself in art is evident in Mr. Bons' death. The unseen reveals itself in nature when "something" goes wrong inside Gennaro who betrays Eustace, and he lies dead on the asphalt while "far down the valley towards the sea, there

still resounded the shouts and the laughter" of Eustace, as he escapes to serve Pan.<sup>43</sup>

Two minor aspects of "The Story of a Panic" suggest ideas that Forster elaborates in his novels. After he sees Pan, Eustace kisses one of "three old women...standing by the wayside."

Eustace said nothing, but offered the old woman some of his flowers, and then hurried on....The old woman's companions seemed astonished.... But she herself had put the flowers in her bosom, and was murmuring blessings.<sup>44</sup>

Eustace, a young man, has met Pan, the spirit of nature. Now he salutes the old woman, who, like the earth in her youth, also had the potential to bring forth life. This encounter between the young man and the old woman occurs in several of Forster's novels as a reminder that Demeter, goddess of the earth, is also the mother of Pan or Dionysus.

The second is related to Eustace's singing of "five-finger exercises, scales, hymn tunes, scraps of Wagner--anything that came into his head"<sup>45</sup> before he begins his great paeon to nature. Forster's inclusion of Wagner is a reminder that the general European coloring of Romantic Hellenism continued into the twentieth century. Several of Wagner's operas as well as his ideas about the closeness of opera to Greek tragic drama were, as we shall see, important to Forster. Forster's inclusion of Richard Wagner also serves as a reminder of that other German Hellenist Friedrich Nietzsche, whose identification of the Dionysian spirit as

"the spirit that feels the oneness of all things" provides a way of identifying the ideas Eustace tries to express in his song.<sup>46</sup>

Despite these influences, however, Forster's concept is essentially English. The conflict between Nietzsche's Appollo and Dionysus cannot quite be equated with Pater's presentation of the conflict between Christ and Pan. "For Pater the personality of Dionysus is somewhat more complex than it was for Nietzsche." Nietzsche's "Dionysus was merely a personification of a component in an abstract philosophical theme." Pater's Dionysus participates in a mythic pattern. "Dionysus' alternations between summer and winter mark him as a vegetative god, a representative of the seasonal cycle ...." The emphasis upon the mythical relationship between Dionysus and the earth makes Pater's concept more poetic.<sup>47</sup> In addition, it helps to explain the arbitrary, often brutal behavior of characters Forster clearly intends to be centers of value. However, this use of the myth is developed in Forster's later novels. In his early novels, Where Angels Fear to Tread and A Room With a View, Forster is mainly interested in discovering the old gods.

In "The Pack of Anchises," an early essay, Forster suggests that at the end of the three years at Cambridge "it is worth while looking back to see how our belongings have stood the great move. Has Anchises dropped the gods, or have we dropped Anchises and the gods together?"<sup>48</sup> In these novels



Forster attempts to rediscover the gods the British versions of Anchises and Aeneas have dropped on their way to founding a "raw over-built country," whose moral imagination could encompass nothing more than "petty unselfishness" and extreme respectability.<sup>49</sup>

"Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? But these thou  
                                   shalt not take--  
 The laurel, the palms, and the paeon, the breasts  
                                   of the nymphs in the brake...."

Algernon Charles Swinburne

The mood of Where Angels Fear to Tread, Forster's first published novel, is very close to that of the stories. Harriet and Mrs. Herriton take the place of the morally righteous Sandback, and Philip fits easily into the role of the aesthete Leyland. Neither the Christians nor the aesthetes believe in Pan. Although Gino is associated with Pan, the interest of the novel is in the way the conflict between Christ and Pan is presented in terms of two different forms of art. Painting and sculpture are associated with aestheticism and Christianity, music with anti-aestheticism and paganism. Therefore, the moral education of Philip Herriton and Caroline Abott begins when they give up a nominally Christian and aesthetic view of life for a more complex and painful vision of reality.<sup>50</sup>

This complex vision eludes them on their first visits to Italy. Although Caroline insists that she wants to see Italy because it must offer something more than what is suggested in books, she spends her time "looking at the view and sketch-

ing" while Lilia sits with "her head upon [Gino's] shoulder." After visiting Italy, Philip declares "Italy really purifies and ennobles all who visit her."<sup>51</sup> On their second trips to Italy, neither is allowed to remain detached. Instead of observing events as if they were visitors in a museum, each is made to enter into the emotions that produced these cultural monuments.

Caroline no longer turns her back on lovers in order to sketch a landscape; she herself becomes a figure in two love scenes. The first scene, which Philip, always the connoisseur, perceives as "Virgin and Child, with Donor," is created when Gino watches Caroline with "the dripping baby on her knee." "For a time Gino contemplated them standing. Then, to get a better view, he knelt by the side of the chair, with his hands clasped before him." Gino is contemplating the mysterious sources of life. Gino is on his knees, but Philip remains a detached observer, "glad to find things in such cheerful trim."<sup>52</sup> Although Philip cannot be expected to share Gino's desire for physical continuity, his lack of any serious response suggests that his culture fails to nourish passion. One of the main events of Christendom will always remain a rather cheerful tableau. Philip is unable to feel either pagan or Christian awe. His aesthetic detachment makes him unable to perceive the sacred in any form, and so he acquiesces in the kidnapping of the child.

Philip finds Caroline's second love scene more instruc-

tive, perhaps because he has been made to experience great pain. As he watches Caroline comforting Gino after his son's death, she seems to be a figure for Mary: "Her eyes were open, full of infinite pity and full of majesty, as if they discerned the boundaries of sorrow, and saw unimaginable tracks beyond." Philip is too overcome to detach himself from the scene by naming it, but Forster's description suggests that these figures form a Pietà. He also indicates that Philip is "saved," born into a new life. Although this scene provides Philip with some kind of moral instruction, the novel seems to suggest that the real sources of art are not in the finished beauty of a work but in the emotions that brought it into being. "Philip looked away [from the Pietà], as he sometimes looked away from the great pictures where visible forms suddenly became inadequate for the things they have shown to us."<sup>53</sup> Images offered by these paintings are adequate only when they reveal the sources of great emotions. To convey the reality of human experience art must offer more than detached images of perfect love (the Virgin and Child) or perfect grief (the Pietà). The performance of Lucia, which occurs before either of these two scenes and occupies a central place in the novel, offers another view of art.

Alan Wilde has indicated why Forster preferred music to art.

The characteristic approaches to that art--looking, viewing, seeing, contemplating--suggest distance, detachment; pictures themselves, framed and hung,

proclaim, more obviously than works of literature or music, the fact that they are isolated and apart from the confusion of ordinary reality. Music, on the contrary, suggests to Forster--probably to most people--a more flexible, a less constricting form; it seems closer to the mysteries at the heart of the universe....

Music is closer to this mystery because Forster "conceives of music as something to be shared."<sup>54</sup> Lucia is a communal experience. "Families greeted each other across the auditorium. People in the pit hailed their brothers and sons in the chorus, and told them how well they were singing. When Lucia appeared by the fountain there was loud applause, and cries of 'Welcome to Monteriano!'" "The audience sounded drunk, and even Caroline, who never took a drop, was swaying oddly. Violent waves of excitement, all arising from very little, went sweeping round the theatre." This excitement reaches a climax in the mad scene. "Lucia clad in white... suddenly gathered up her streaming hair and bowed her acknowledgements to the audience." Her bow invites their participation in the drama. She presses several flowers to her lips and flings them to her admirers. They respond. Harriet discovers a billet-doux in a bouquet that "struck her full in chest"<sup>55</sup> and Philip discovers Gino. "The next moment he was swinging by his arms...over the balustrade into the box." The fact that the opera provides an opportunity for Philip and Gino to meet and for others to arrange their love affairs is more important than the quality of the performance. In addition, the easy flirtation between the singer and her

admirers and the easy meeting of the two "brothers" Philip and Gino, serve as a reminder that Lucia's madness is the result of thwarted romantic love and twisted fraternal love. The audience's participation offers them an opportunity to relate the sources of the opera to their own lives. A concern with life does not diminish art. After the audience takes care of its needs, "the house was hushed, and Lucia di Lammermoor resumed her song of madness and death."<sup>56</sup> Humor and squalor, love and madness--each enhances the other. The performance of the opera reflects the mixed experience of human life.

Harriet's assumption that the opera would be a significant cultural experience is a reminder that by the turn of the century, opera was no longer an occasion for an enjoyable night on the town; Wagner had elevated the opera into a religious ritual. However, it is Wagner's belief in the relationship between art and classical drama that suggests why Forster made the performance of Lucia one of the central experiences in the novel. The comic treatment of Wagner's ideas in no way diminishes their interest.

Harriet, who had been promised "Sir Walter Scott--classical, you know" is enraged by the billet-doux that falls into her lap. "Call this classical?...It's not even respectable!"<sup>57</sup> Sawston's idea of art excludes sexuality. However, Forster's use of the term "classical" is more than a simple joke at Harriet's expense.

Wagner believed that in ancient Greece drama had expressed the ideas of religion and statehood. "With the fall of Hellas the ancient drama was destroyed. What had once been the indissoluble union of all the arts was now dismembered into the separate arts of poetry, music, dance, and architecture." Wagner believed that opera could reunite these arts and re-establish the appropriate relationship between art and society. "The Artwork of the Future will therefore be a communal affair in which all will participate." This work will show man his relationship with nature. "It will lay before the People the truth of their common life-force embodied in a form that speaks to all the senses and faculties of Man."<sup>58</sup> Thus, the opera will recreate the continuity between man and the natural order that was the foundation of Greek drama. Art will become ritual. Forster's vision of how "the common life force [embodies itself] in a form that speaks to all the senses and faculties of man" provides a good deal of comedy in the novel. However, it also offers a reminder that the promotion of fertility underlies the ritual origins of classical drama. Despite the tawdry production, the opera becomes a drama that expresses the deepest feelings of the community. Thus, Forster's comedy involves more than an amusing translation of Wagner's theories. In his insistence upon making the opera reveal and enhance the conditions of ordinary life, Forster avoids Wagner's aestheticism. A better classicist than Wagner, Forster never re-

veals contempt for the limits of daily life. This art demands pagan rather than Christian gods, and Forster offers Pan.

Philip's ironic description of Gino, "with curls all over his forehead, and teeth just as white as his father makes them" associates him with the traditional image of Pan just as Harriet's insistence that "he is the devil" confirms this. Caroline's terror, when she overhears Gino discussing the Tambola, offers a comic reinforcement for this theme.

He had got into another world. She watched his smoke-ring. The air had carried it slowly away from him, and brought it out intact upon the landing....The ring had extended its pale blue coils towards her. She lost self-control. It enveloped her. As if it was a breath from the pit, she screamed.<sup>59</sup>

However, Gino's association with Pan is more than merely comic. His Pan is not "the little god..., who presides over social contretemps and unsuccessful picnics" but "the great god" who was supposed to have been buried "these two thousand years."<sup>60</sup> When Gino is "possessed" the ladies cross themselves in fear, and he himself is frightened. "It was not I," Gino insists. "He stopped in the house for three days, positively ill with physical collapse."<sup>61</sup> The terrifying aspect of Gino's possession suggests the power of the god. In this moment Gino knows his god as part of himself. This kind of event is possible when "divinity has not yet separated off from humanity."<sup>62</sup>

Forster's use of mythical prototypes for characters

in his novels belongs to this level of the imagination. The gods do not actually appear in the novels as they do in several of the stories. Instead, certain characters in the novels reveal their possession of qualities that have been attributed to the gods. Gino is related to Pan because he, like the god of nature and nature itself, is capable of great kindness and great cruelty: "The man was majestic; he was a part of Nature...." Gino and his child suggest the impulse the Greeks embodied in Demeter:

He stood with one foot resting on the little body, suddenly musing, filled with the desire that his son should be like him, and should have sons like him, to people the earth. It is the strongest desire that can come to a man--if it comes to him at all--stronger even than love or the desire for personal immortality....It is the exception who comprehends that physical and spiritual life may stream out of him forever.<sup>63</sup>

Like Demeter, Gino becomes cruel and indifferent to human suffering when he loses his child.

Philip's reaction to Caroline's love for Gino is also related to this myth.

He smile[s] bitterly at the thought of them together. Here was the cruel antique malice of the gods, such as they once sent forth against Pasiphae. Centuries of aspiration and culture--and the world could not escape it.<sup>64</sup>

Italy may have made him kinder, more sympathetic, but, in spite of Forster's assurances, Philip may not have been truly "saved." Philip's disgust reveals that he fails to understand the sources of life. The story of Pasiphae and the bull represents more than the "antique malice of the god." It is



a reminiscence of a story about Dionysus, the bull-god, who is also Pan, the male counterpart of Demeter and Persephone, the nature goddesses who insure the fertility of the earth. In its original form the story told how the earth is made fertile through the joining of the male and female elements in nature.

The story of Pasiphae and the bull also may be linked with the story of Lucia, which begins when Lucia is rescued from a mad bull and falls in love with her protector. The replacement of the bull with the protective and loving male suggests the need for the humanization of sexual passion. Myth is one way man humanizes the forces he cannot understand. However, by preferring to see Caroline in the context of "the fair myth of Endymion," Philip designs a sterile future of perpetual spiritual adoration and physical decay that only can result in a desire for death: "He was her worshipper too....For all the wonderful things had happened."<sup>65</sup>

In addition to presenting one of the gods of classical mythology, Forster tries to suggest something of the land that gives rise to a belief in them. The landscape between Sawston and Charing Cross is "raw" and "over-built," but Monteriano is terrible and "mysterious."<sup>66</sup> The little wood outside Monteriano is covered with violets. "There are such violets in England, but not so many. Nor are there so many in Art, for no painter has the courage." The violets are associated with spring and with the beginning of life in

nature and in man: "next March [Philip] did not forget that the road to Monteriano must traverse innumerable flowers." In August, the wood is dark and rainy. Here the baby dies. The death of the child in August, a time of fruition, insures a sterile future. Thus, Where Angels Fear to Tread is a story of the interruption of the cycle of generation. This story begins and ends on "the cold March night" when Mrs. Herriton leaves the uncovered seeds in the garden to meddle in Gino and Lilia's affairs. The uncovered seeds are stolen by the sparrows, "but countless fragments of the letter [announcing the marriage] remained, disfiguring the tidy ground."<sup>67</sup>

The narrative pattern of Where Angels Fear to Tread suggests why Forster did not try to recreate the novel form so that it could embody his vision. He used the novel of manners, whose form he occasionally "wrecked," in order to provide room for the "unseen."<sup>68</sup> This use of a traditional form was both economical and expressive. By successfully using a traditional form, Forster was able to get on with novel writing more quickly than Woolf; by allowing himself the privilege of wrecking it, Forster was able to express his distaste for the conventional society whose values it seems to embody.

The way Forster uses the trappings of the novel of manners, indicates his interest, which is more explicit in his criticism, in the submerged aspects of experience that

generally are unrecognized in fiction. Forster's world is a place where human endeavors are secondary to nature's presence. "What shall we show you?" asks the Woodman who speaks the prologue in "The Abinger Pageant" Forster wrote in 1934. "History? Yes, but the history of a village lost in the woods. Do not expect great deeds and grand people here. Lords and ladies, warriors and priests will pass, but this is not their home, they will pass like the leaves in autumn but the trees remain."<sup>69</sup>

Unlike Woolf, who shares a similar vision which she dramatizes in the way she presents the landscape, Forster chooses to embody aspects of the landscape or its energies in characters who are based upon the Greek gods. These apparently human figures embody not only aspects of the landscape but also the strange, alien aspects of human life.

Forster's criticism of George Meredith suggests that the darkness in which men live can be embodied in nature. Because Meredith misses "what is really tragic and enduring in the scenery of England," he misses what is tragic and enduring in human life.<sup>70</sup> This is encompassed in the cycle of life and death in which both man and nature participate, in the continuity of the cycle of generation on earth, and in the continuity of the human race. The gods of the earth, like Demeter, who "'leaves for a season the company of the gods and abides among men'" embodies this tragedy and this continuity.<sup>71</sup> These themes are treated in The Longest

Journey, Forster's second published novel.

The gods are hard for men to recognize.

Walter Pater

The Longest Journey begins as an investigation of the nineteenth century's dream of Arcadia, where Stephen Wonham, like a real toad in an imaginary garden, manages to upset the decor. Forster, to paraphrase Harriet Herriton, is concerned with separating what is truly classical from what is merely respectable. Despite its origin, The Longest Journey is more than a critique of Romantic Hellenism; it probably is one of the most impressive products of this strange literary genre. In his evaluation of this genre, Forster draws upon Vergil's Eclogues and Georgics, two works that present opposing views of nature. Forster's use of these works is in accord with his belief that an author may be inspired by "an already existing book or literary tradition." He may use this material as if it were a system of "mythology" that can become "a framework or quarry for his own purposes."<sup>72</sup> Forster's use of the Eclogues and the Georgics provides a framework for understanding The Longest Journey.

Vergil's Arcadia, the world of the Eclogues, is "a far-away land overlaid with the golden haze of unreality." Here "the ancient gods are...reduced to the form of sigla: they are deprived of their primeval mysterious power, and all that is left to them is an ideality which no longer springs from

religious awe but from literary erudition." However, the Eclogues have an important place in classical literature; they helped "to channel the Greek heritage into the body of Roman thought." "Further than that, [the] Eclogues represent the first serious attempt in literature to mould the Greek motifs into self-contained forms of beauty whose reality lies within themselves. Thus art became 'symbol.'" <sup>73</sup> Despite a similarly symbolic use of Greek culture, it was impossible for the Romantic Hellenists to recreate Vergil's achievement.

The didactic intent of Romantic Hellenism--"to wean quiet English villages from respectability" <sup>74</sup>--prevented their works from becoming self-contained art forms, and the two thousand year span between Vergil's apprehension of Greek culture and the present has tended to rob the allegorical made of its substance. The figures in Rickie Failing's stories are allegorical because he believes neither in the gods nor the things they symbolize. His story about a girl who flees from her dull fiance and is turned into "a Dryad," "a tree," suggests the literary origins of his connection with nature. This antiseptic version of Ovid's myth also eliminates the terror and pain that makes such a transformation possible. The idea of metamorphosis reflects the imagination of an earlier culture which made few distinctions between human and nonhuman worlds. Rickie's story, as Agnes' equations suggest, belongs to a literary formula: "Allegory, Man=modern civilization (in bad sense). Girl=getting into touch with Nature." <sup>75</sup>

Forster himself had once written according to this formula; his criticism of Rickie suggests that he, like Vergil, is ready to move to a new genre. However, Forster is not quite ready to concede that "a genuine summons back to nature would silence the whole of pastoral poetry."<sup>76</sup>

"Pan ovium custos, tua si tibi Maenala curae,/Adsis, O Tegae, favens." Rickie starts "gaily" on these "familiar words" from Vergil's Georgics. Although his students do not find these words "beautiful," Rickie is undaunted.<sup>77</sup> More than beauty, the Georgics offer a way of life to a race for whom "urban civilization has not yet materially modified the instinct of a people once devoted to agriculture and stock-breeding...."<sup>78</sup>

The Georgics also have symbolic value in the novel. The world of Eclogues, the world of shepherds and Arcadia, was an "escape from the present" into a "world of verse." "Despite their contemporary political and social allusions, [the Eclogues] are essentially an attempt to substitute a world of imagination for that of fact."<sup>79</sup> Poetry becomes a way of escaping from the world. In the novel, this mode of escape is suggested in the exaggerated aestheticism of Rickie and Emily Failing. This is matched by that of Mr. Eliot, Rickie's father, who treats his wife's love affair as if it were a French comedy.

The Georgics offer another way of relating to the world. "In the Georgics it is not poetry that relates man to nature,

but labor."<sup>80</sup> The differences between the two works and their two views of nature make it appropriate that Forster first present Stephen in a comic version of the typical situation in the Eclogues: "the eternal man" with "the eternal dog, guarding eternal sheep" while another shepherd is paying court to his beloved. Unfortunately, Stephen, the sheep, and the dog are sopping wet and the lovelorn shepherd is named "Flea." Aunt Emily, who fears the earth, complains to Stephen: "I dream of Arcady. I open my eyes: Wiltshire. Of Amaryllis: Flea Thompson's girl. Of the pensive shepherd, twitching his mantle blue: you in an ulster."<sup>81</sup> At the end of the novel Stephen is a responsible landowner, husband, and father. In Rickie's death and Stephen's survival, Forster shows how the poet's wisdom is exchanged for that of the husbandman, the world of the Eclogues for that of the Georgics.

Vergil also helps to explain Stephen's drunken behavior and bawdy songs. Drinking and the reciting of unpolished poems and unrestrained jokes are aids to fertility, ways of getting the grapes to grow:

They wear the most hideous wooden  
Masks, and address the Wine-god in jovial ditties,...  
.....  
Thus will every vine advance to full fruition  
And valleys will teem....

At the end of the novel Stephen seems more settled, and his devotions are probably more restrained:

The farmer himself keeps holidays when, at ease in  
a meadow,  
A fire in the midst and friends there to crown the  
flowing bowl,  
He drinks the health of the Wine-god....<sup>82</sup>

It is this "natural piety, the heightened sense of the genius of the place,"<sup>83</sup> which is expressed in the daily routine of agricultural life, that Forster offers as an antidote to nineteenth-century Arcady and to the philosophy of people like Mrs. Failing who boast "my farm is a mystery to me."<sup>84</sup>

Pan ovium custos--the phrase was also used by Mr. Failing to explain Stephen's terror when

trespassing in [the] woods...he met...a flock of sheep....The flock, in a dense mass, pressed after him. His terror increased. He turned and screamed at their long white faces; and still they came on, all stuck together like some horrible jelly. If once he got into them!<sup>85</sup>

Stephen's terror serves as a corrective to Rickie's rather naive concept of nature. In calling up Pan, one calls up the most ambiguous of natural forces. The boys who torture Varden and Agnes who ensnares Rickie are also acting in response to "Nature's bidding."<sup>86</sup> Unless this spirit is civilized, "friends, and work, and spiritual freedom" will be destroyed.<sup>87</sup> In this context, the Georgics become "a monument to the human effort which transforms the face of the earth...."<sup>88</sup>

Vergil's words are also a reminder of the presence of Pan in the novel. In Stephen Wonham's room in Wiltshire, "a picture of Demeter of Cnidus hangs, swaying from the ceiling." She is associated with Mrs. Eliot, who dies in the "raw weather" and the "bitter" wind of autumn.<sup>89</sup> Her true son is Dionysus or Pan. The introduction of these characters suggests Forster's desire to recreate the Greek sense of the primitive mysterious power of the gods.



Stephen's claims on Rickie are associated with the earth and suggest the time when the spirits of the dead rather than parliaments ruled and the claims of kinship rather than enlightened citizenship determined a man's acts. The Cadbury Rings are the center of England, its real spiritual center where the Church bell sounds "petty and ludicrous." At the Rings, "Mars or Pan--Erda perhaps" were worshipped.<sup>90</sup> Of course, Mrs. Failing identifies these gods with the devil. Here Rickie learns about his brother and also about the earth: "The earth he had dreaded lay close to his eyes, and seemed beautiful." Rickie's acceptance of his brother would have connected him with the sources of life in the earth and in their common blood. Without this "the shadow of unreality [begins] to darken [his] world....It was as if some power had pronounced against him--as if, by some heedless action, he had offended an Olympian god."<sup>91</sup>

Rickie's bafflement is appropriate. He never understands the physical basis of earthly life. Despite the fact that "Stephen is the living proof that his mother surrendered to the physical contact and passion he himself shrinks from,"<sup>92</sup> Rickie never understands the sexuality of the earth. "The spire of Salisbury did alter, but very slightly, rising and falling like the mercury in a thermometer. At the most it would be half hidden; at the least the tip would show beyond the swelling barrier of earth."<sup>93</sup> The spire, which suggests what man can create, is almost submerged by the earth. Thus,

despite the presence of all the people who are writing books, the earth seems to have absorbed all the creative power in the novel. This is possible because it has not been brought into harmony with man's life.

"Mr. Failing had been a writer like John Ruskin or William Morris, interested in art and beauty but more interested in social amelioration."<sup>94</sup> His essays have some kind of vogue, but his real memory is carried by the "few disciples...a few young labourers and tenant farmers, who swore tempestuously that he was not really a fool."<sup>95</sup> Rickie's works have a similar posthumous fame, but the meaning of his life is found in his brother's survival rather than in his stories. Both the framework established by the Georgics ("it is not poetry that relates man to nature, but labor") and the events of the novel lead to a questioning of the role of art.

Successful art is closest to nature. When Stephen treats "a sordid village scandal...as a huge joke," Rickie "blushe[s]" at it like a maiden lady, in spite of its having a parallel in a beautiful idyll of Theocritus."<sup>96</sup> Rickie's misunderstanding reveals his inadequacies. However, Forster's criticism is more severe. He seems to suggest that art either fails to provide man with images of reality or that its way of formulating experience makes an individual lose touch with his own feelings. For example, Agnes' "beautiful" entry into Rickie's room obscures her real nature. "Anderson was playing Wagner, and he'd just got to the part where they sing Rhinegold!

Rhinegold! and the sun strikes into the waters, and the music...."97

Mrs. Lewin's tale of another Wagnerian hero "poor Parsival," a dove whose feathers were accidentally painted bright green, is more instructive. "Never shall I forget my horror when the knife-boy painted the dove's cage with the dove inside....Poor Parsival nearly died. His feathers were bright green!"

And while the cage was drying we put him among the bantams. They had been the greatest allies. But I suppose they took him for a parrot or a hawk, or something that bantams hate; for while his cage was drying they picked out his feathers...till he was perfectly bald. "Hugo,"...said I. "This is the end of Parsival...."98

When Rickie, like Parsival, a dove among the bantams, pretends that he belongs in the little barnyard that is Sawston, he is destroyed.

Rickie's death, the death of one unfit to reproduce, is softened by his dream of the mother who cries, "Never mind--come away--let them die out--let them die out."99 "Nature has no use" for men like Rickie and Ansell. Though Gerald is mourned as if he were a classical hero,--the women "sobbed ....They had not liked Gerald, but he was a man, they were women"100--his death suggests that his brutality may also die out. Forster's interest in racial survival is part of his nineteenth-century heritage, and Gerald's death reveals an interesting interpretation of "the survival of the fittest."

Stephen survives. "Though he could not phrase it, he

believed that he guided the future of our race, and that, century after century, his thoughts and his passions would triumph in England." He is grateful. "Again he marvelled why he, the accident, was here. He was alive and he had created life. By whose authority?" His authority is related to the earth because he continues the life cycle. "The dead who had evoked him, the unborn whom he would evoke--he governed the paths between them."<sup>101</sup>

The way of life Stephen establishes preserves the past by incorporating it into the present. Inside the house even Herbert Pembroke is aware of the picture of the Demeter of Cnidus, "the only other picture [beside the faded photograph of Stockholm] that the bare [parlor] boasted."

Outside the sun was sinking, and its last rays fell upon the immortal features and the shattered knees. Sweet-peas offered their fragrance, and with it there entered those more mysterious scents that come from no one flower or clod of earth, but from the whole bosom of evening.

The sweet peas are reminders of his mother's love affair, the earth, its promises of renewal. Demeter's shattered knees bring back Rickie's sacrifice. When Stephen worries whether his dead brother "Can...notice the things he gave me..." He bent down reverently and saluted the child; to whom he had given the name of their mother."<sup>102</sup> Her name, like the sacred name of the goddess, is never uttered.<sup>103</sup>

This child who "squall[s]" and "kick[s]" her father in the stomach"<sup>104</sup> is the more likely recipient of the "childish gifts of the Earth" than the child whose birth is pro-

phesied in the Eclogues.<sup>105</sup> Thus Forster seems to have used the world of Georgics not to destroy Arcadia but to infuse it with vigor.

Forster's serious interest in the mythic mode is evident in the careful way he developed these related themes. Unlike Pater, for whom "the myths of Demeter and Persephone... illustrate the power of the Greek religion as a religion of pure ideas,"<sup>106</sup> Forster finds in myth a source of what Daniel Hoffman calls "barbarous knowledge." Hoffman's term is from Thomas Love Peacock's "acerb conceit against the poetry of myth":

"A poet in our time is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community. He lives in the days that are past. His ideas, thoughts, feelings, associations, are all with barbarous manners, obsolete customs, and exploded superstitions. The march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backward. The brighter the light diffused around him by the progress of reason, the thicker is the darkness of antiquated barbarism in which he buries himself like a mole, to throw up the barren hillocks of his Cimmerian labors."

With the increase of rationalism and scientific materialism Forster would agree with Hoffman that it is the artist's responsibility to move backward so that he can resurrect "sacred objects, sacred emotions, sacred mysteries."<sup>107</sup>

Myth helps to liberate the imagination and the emotions "from bondage to the actual...."<sup>108</sup> Nothing is more "actual" in terms of the novel than cause-and-effect plotting and motivation in a novel that ends with a death or a marriage. Myth enables Forster to bypass or to reveal the insignificance of what usually is considered "actual." Once the proportions

of daily life have been altered, the mysterious elements of the universe can be revealed.<sup>109</sup> The result, what Woolf would have called "poetry," is clarified by Northrup Frye:

The sense of unity with a greater power is surely one of the reasons why so much of the best Romantic poetry is mythopoetic. The myth is typically the story of the god, whose form and character are human but who is also a sun-god or a tree-god or ocean-god. It identifies the human with the non-human world, an identification which is also one of the major functions of poetry itself.<sup>110</sup>

Oh mercy to myself I cried if Lucy don't get wed.

E. M. Forster

A Room With a View, Forster's third published novel, is one of his earliest works. Begun in 1901, Forster referred to it as "the 'Lucy Novel' until December 1903." At this time Forster decided to rewrite it, and what he called the "New Lucy" novel may have been completed in 1904. The first part of the "New Lucy" is close to the first part of A Room With a View. The second part of the novel was rewritten and completed in 1907. The novel was published in 1908.<sup>111</sup>

Originally, Lucy had a relationship of friendship with Arthur (who was also called Tancred), a character similar to Philip Herriton in Where Angels Fear to Tread. In replacing Arthur with George, who is more earthy,<sup>112</sup> Forster alters both the novel and his conception of Lucy, who is made more capable of passion. The characters in the novel are somewhat more developed than those in Where Angels Fear to Tread. How-

ever, like that of the earlier novel, the tone of A Room With a View is often reminiscent of the early stories. Courage and love guarantee happiness to the young and the physically beautiful.

A Room With a View is the most Meredithian of Forster's novels. In this novel Forster refers explicitly to Meredith's idea of comedy, and Frederick C. Crews has shown how much of the social comedy of the novel has its origins in Meredith.<sup>113</sup> Meredith was also one source of some of Mr. Emerson's ideas about sexual equality and nature's goodness. Emerson, however, cannot be equated with Forster. Forster used some of Meredith's ideas, but he also criticized them. The roots of Forster's later criticism of the Meredith, who missed "what is really tragic and enduring in the scenery of England," are also present in the novel. Forster's sense of the potential tragedy in the landscape makes him more than "a happy pagan, believing in the freedom and solid goodness of earth, of the natural life...."<sup>114</sup>

"New Lucy," the second draft of the novel that became A Room With a View, takes place in Florence and includes Lucy's witnessing of a stabbing and George's kiss among the violets.<sup>115</sup> Thus, almost from the outset, the novel contains two stories: a story of courtship and marriage in which young love overcomes obstacles to happiness, and a story of the discovery of the "facts" of life--death, love, and sexuality. The second story is generated by the landscape. It takes place at the

Loggia, which offers knowledge similar to that which can be gained from an encounter with the natural landscape. "The Loggia showed as the triple entrance of a cave, wherein dwelt many a deity, shadowy, but immortal, looking forth upon the arrivals and departures of mankind. It was the hour of unreality--the hour, that is, when unfamiliar things are real." Like the cave in A Passage to India, the Loggia suggests an entrance into knowledge generally suppressed by Western culture. Here, the cave-like Loggia reveals Lucy's sexuality.

She fixed her eyes wistfully on the tower of the palace, which rose out of the lower darkness like a pillar of roughened gold. It seemed no longer a tower, no longer supported by earth, but some unattainable treasure throbbing in the tranquil sky. Its brightness mesmerized her, still dancing before her eyes when she bent them to the ground and started towards home.

Her knowledge is so serious that it is followed by a man's death: "He frowned; he bent towards Lucy with a look of interest, as if he had an important message for her." Yet he is unable to speak. He "opened his lips...and a stream of red came out between them and trickled down his unshaven chin."<sup>116</sup> The blood on the souvenir photographs of "every well-known" artist's work suggests something of civilization's impotence before these facts.<sup>117</sup>

The intensity of this scene fails to accord with the light tone of the rest of the novel. However, as a communication from Forster, it has its own significance.

D. S. Savage criticizes Forster for the



importance [he] confers upon sexual passion. [This] is shown both by the excessive excitement with which he approaches it, and the way in which he connects it with violent death--the finality of death being utilized to confer something of its own ultimate, absolute character upon the emotion stirred by sex.<sup>118</sup>

The "intimate, absolute character" of this emotion is deliberate. Forster associates sexuality with death because it involves the end of one phase of an individual's life. "Something had happened to the living: they had come to a situation where character tells, and where Childhood enters upon the branching paths of Youth." Lucy's experience is a rite of passage. The statues around the Square

suggest, not the innocence of childhood, nor the glorious bewilderment of youth, but the conscious achievements of maturity. Perseus and Judith, Hercules and Thusnelda, they have done or suffered something, and though they are immortal, immortality has come to them after experience, not before.<sup>119</sup>

These presiding deities who suffered for love, suggest the connection between love and death and "the ambivalence of passion--its potentiality for both destructive and creative results...."<sup>120</sup> Finally, the connection between sexuality and death is mythical. Forster associates sexuality with the continuity of the human race and its only hope for immortality. Yet the price of sexual knowledge is often a kind of death. After she is abducted by Pluto, Persephone becomes a goddess of the underworld.

After her experience at the Loggia, Lucy struggles to relate it to the rest of her life. However, she is unable to

come to terms with what Forster calls "the real event [which] had taken place, not in the Loggia, but by the river," when Lucy establishes an instinctive relationship with George.<sup>121</sup> Phaethon, the carriage driver, understands Lucy's needs and sends her to George, who is poised, like a swimmer, waiting to enter the stream of life. The terrace where they meet "was the well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth." Lucy, who seems to fall out of heaven, becomes an embodiment of this earthly beauty: George "saw radiant joy in her face, he saw the flowers beat against her dress in blue waves." But Miss Bartlett, her unnatural attitudes symbolized in her dress, appears "brown against the view" and nature is thwarted.<sup>122</sup>

Here, the difficulties of the dual plot begin to emerge. Miss Bartlett can affect the landscape in such a way that Phaethon and his sister Persephone, the presiding deities, are vanquished and Lucy's world is darkened.

The rain was streaming down the black windows, and the great room felt damp and chilly. One candle burnt...cast[ing] monstrous and fantastic shadows on the bolted door. A tram roared by in the dark, and Lucy felt unaccountably sad, though she had long since dried her eyes. She lifted them to the ceiling, where the griffins and bassoons were colorless and vague, the very ghosts of joy.

Although Forster insists Phaethon "alone had interpreted the message that Lucy had received five days before from the lips of a dying man" and "Persephone, who spends half her life in the grave--she could interpret it also," the ease with which these deities are defeated suggests their inadequacy.<sup>123</sup>

Forster's emphasis is unequal to his characterization. Phaethon is a careful driver and luscious Persephone has nothing of the grave about her. Forster's lack of seriousness about these gods suggests we are in the realm of the lesser stories and "the little god Pan, who presides over social contretemps and unsuccessful picnics."<sup>124</sup>

The scene at the Loggia suggests that Forster had a sense of the dark, protentially tragic relationship between man and the landscape. The shift of place results in a shift of intensity. The charm of George's kiss among the violets not only erases the sexual terror of the scene at the Loggia, but also removes all sense of danger. George may look like a god or hero but the kiss becomes an "insult." The kiss takes place in the fields; the emotion belongs to the drawing room, albeit a drawing room with a view. Thus, the charm of George's kiss among the violets does not remove the essential unreality of the scene.

Forster's belief that art often robs life of its authenticity is ironically evident here. The surrounding landscape may have seemed unreal because it was noted for having been painted by Alessio Baldovinette.<sup>125</sup> Perhaps the scene is too literary. Similarities between the kiss among the violets and the scene in The Egoist, when Clara Middleton bends over Vernon Whitford when he is sleeping under a tree, may also contribute to its unreality.<sup>126</sup>

The unreality of the landscape destroys its gods.

Forster insists that when Lucy denies her love for George she joins those who "have sinned against Eros and against Pallas Athene and not by any heavenly intervention, but by the ordinary course of nature, these allied deities will be avenged."<sup>127</sup> But he is unable to bring these deities into the novel. In the second part, when Lucy breaks her engagement to Cecil and "pretended to George that she did not love him," the resulting storms and "the roaring tides of darkness" that engulf Windy Corner are theatrical because the natural world has lost its substance.<sup>128</sup> Only the drawing-room retains its reality. And it is in this world, the world of culture and art, that the novel is resolved.

Lucy's playing of Beethoven suggests depths that are not apparent in her everyday life. However, Forster is anxious to show that for most people art narrows behavior and sensibility. Its snares are palpable for the baby who stumbles "over one of the sepulchral slabs so much admired by Mr. Ruskin," but the more sophisticated characters have an even more difficult time.<sup>129</sup> Cecil Vyse's aestheticism robs his life of vitality and finally of love. His desire to make Lucy into a work of art suggests the absolutely destructive quality of their relationship.

Forster's designation of Cecil as "medieval" is significant, for it enables him to enact in a comic fashion the war between nineteenth-century paganism and Christianity. Cecil, a languid nineteenth-century aesthete, could become a soldier

of Christendom only when Christianity is seen as destructive of the life impulse. Asceticism then becomes allied with the fastidiousness of one who observes life but disdains participation. Opposed to Cecil is George, who looks "like someone in a book," like the "heroes--[the] gods...."<sup>130</sup>

As the father of a "hero" or a "god," it is appropriate that Mr. Emerson speak for the natural order. His insistence upon the rights of the body--"Do you suppose there's any difference between spring in nature and spring in man?"--brings his thought close to that of Whitman and Edward Carpenter. Emerson's is clearly the voice of morality, ethics, and, even, taste. More important than his function as oracular voice, however, is what Forster suggests of his personality:

Somehow it was impossible to cheat this old man. To George, to Cecil, [Lucy] would have lied again; but he seemed so near the end of things, so dignified in his approach to the gulf, of which he gave one account, and the [theological] books that surround him another, so mild to the rough paths that he had traversed, that the true chivalry...that all the young may show to all the old...awoke in her....<sup>131</sup>

This wise old man whose life confers upon him a certain dignity and truthfulness suggests Forster's use of similar characters in other novels: Mrs. Wilcox in Howards End and Mrs. Moore in A Passage to India. But to name these characters is to suggest the distance between A Room With a View and Forster's greatest works. Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Moore seem to share Mr. Emerson's importance but they also are tiresome and even seem perverse. As characters they are closer to Mrs. Eliot in The Longest Journey, the detached,

loving mother who embodies the ambiguous aspects of the natural world. As the spokesman for the natural order in A Room With a View, Emerson is too good and too loving. Only his aesthetic ideas are appropriate to this role. Emerson believes "there is only one perfect view--the view of the sky straight over our heads, and that all these views on earth are but bungled copies of it." If the sky is the aesthetic norm, human belongings are diminished.

Views are really crowds--crowds of trees and houses and hills--and are bound to resemble each other, like human crowds--and...the power they have over us is something supernatural, for the same reason. ...For a crowd is more than the people who make it up. Something gets added to it--no one knows how--just as something has got added to those hills.<sup>132</sup>

Nature's view of man is magnificent, but it is also impersonal. Although their intentions are different, both Mr. Emerson and Mr. Vyse suggest that "high" art does not provide an appropriate guide for life. In Where Angels Fear to Tread, as in The Longest Journey, Forster turns to a less polished art form. Miss Lavish's novel Under a Loggia proves more useful. Despite her execrable style and her false romanticism--"Love, murder, abduction, revenge, was the plot"--she presents the essentials of Lucy's relationship to George: "'Leonora...sat pensive and alone. Before her lay the rich champaign of Tuscany....The season was spring....All unobserved, Antonio stole up behind her...'" The action is wrong but the emotion is conveyed and precipitates George's second kiss--"the book made me do that."<sup>133</sup> He declares his love,

Lucy breaks her engagement to Cecil, and, finally, with Emerson's help, they marry.

Their marriage, when they "go off in the spring," is associated with the continuity of nature and therefore of life itself.

Youth enwrapped them; the song of Phaethon announced passion requited, love attained. But they were conscious of a love more mysterious than this. The song died away; they heard the river, bearing down the snows of winter into the Mediterranean.<sup>134</sup>

This happy conclusion suggests that violets and kisses are certainly more charming than caves and thwarted sexuality. In making the violets that bloomed uselessly at Monteriano bloom again, Forster makes the reader delight in sharing his view.

Perhaps the major difficulty of the novel lies in the fact that Forster deliberately seems to have divided his imaginative energies. "His 'imagination pure & simple' went into his short stories and the 'incidents & characters that [he came] across' went into his novels."<sup>135</sup> Although the tone of this novel is often reminiscent of the early stories, it lacks the presence of characters based on mythological figures. Without these figures who embody its energies, the landscape remains a background to the action. Nature is voiceless. And, in providing meaning for the virtually silent landscape, too much depends upon Emerson's oracular voice. A comparison of this novel with The Longest Journey confirms

Forster's wisdom in using characters based on mythology as a way of presenting the values inherent in the natural landscape.



## Notes for Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>"On Grinds," Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings, ed. George H. Thompson (New York, 1971), p. 46. "On Grinds" was written in 1900.

<sup>2</sup>Forster uses this term in Howards End (New York, 1958), pp. 81, 104, 202.

<sup>3</sup>Harrison, Mythology, pp. 145, 147. The second quotation is from Ruskin. Wordsworth has a similarly benign concept of these mythic figures. "Pan himself" is only "the simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God!" "The Excursion," IV, 886-87, Poetical Works, p. 636.

<sup>4</sup>Greek Studies, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup>Rickie Failing, whose stories are similar to Forster's, uses this phrase. The Longest Journey (Harmondsworth, England, 1960), p. 77. Stephen Wonham, who is associated with Pan, finds this idea absurd. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>6</sup>Greek Studies, pp. 13-14.

<sup>7</sup>Harrison, Mythology, pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>8</sup>Jane Ellen Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England, 1908), p. 444.

<sup>9</sup>Lionel Trilling suggests that there may be similar reasons for the contemporary popularity of The Golden Bough in his discussion of "the doubleness of mind of the author of The Golden Bough." Trilling observes that if Frazer "deplores the primitive imagination, he also does not fail to show it as wonderful and beautiful. It is the rare reader of The Golden Bough who finds the ancient beliefs and rituals wholly alien to him." "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning (New York, 1968), p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>"Cnidus," Abinger Harvest (Harmondsworth, England, 1967), p. 191. ("Cnidus" was written in 1904.) It seems as if Wordsworth's strictures against "personifications of abstract ideas" have prompted modern critics to take a similar view of Forster's use of mythology. Frederick C. Crews's excellent discussion of Forster's use of mythology is limited by his impatience with this mode. "The Limitations of Mythology,"

E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism (Princeton, 1962). George H. Thompson prefers to deal with mythical archetypes, which, he feels, extend the significance of primitive myths. I believe, with B. F. Westcott, whom he quotes (p. 38), that the "moral power [of myth] springs out of their concrete form," The Fiction of E. M. Forster (Detroit, 1967). The concrete forms of the myth Forster uses provide an excellent guide for interpretation and prevent, it seems to me, a misreading of Forster in otherwise useful studies. For example, although he is aware of Forster's Romantic heritage, James McConkey insists that "the transcendental and physical realms are always distinct...." The Novels of E. M. Forster, Reprint Edition (Hamden, Conn., 1971), p. 3. The vagueness of Denis Godfrey's concept of Forster's "Other Kingdom" is implicit in his belief that "more is needed to sustain the shocks and betrayals of everyday life than vague intuitions of the divine in nature, whimsically presented in terms of Greek myth." E. M. Forster's Other Kingdom (New York, 1968), p. 65.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 193. Even Tennyson, writing about Demeter and Persephone, felt the need to put the myth into some kind of contemporary frame. See p. 23.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 192, 194.

<sup>13</sup>E. M. Forster, "Gemistus Pletho," 1905. This essay is reprinted in Abinger Harvest, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup>The Rise of Romantic Hellenism in English Literature 1732-1786, Reprint ed. (New York, 1969), p. 4. Stern identifies the following as characteristic of Romantic Hellenism: "The use of Greece as a symbol of freedom; the identification of ancient with modern Greece; the nostalgia for the Arcadian life that was ancient Greece; and the inspiration of Greek ruins and other remains to poetry, moods, and action," p. 166.

<sup>15</sup>The Broken Column: A Study in Romantic Hellenism (Cambridge, Massachusetts), 1931, pp. 29, 18.

<sup>16</sup>Stern, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup>Levin, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup>Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry (New York, 1963), pp. 56, 59.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>20</sup>Patricia Merivale, Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), p. 13. Merivale is quoting from Eusebius, Praep. Ev. 208a.

<sup>21</sup>W. H. D. Rouse, Gods, Heroes and Men of Ancient Greece (New York, 1957), pp. 183-84. I chose Rouse's presentation designed for Perse School boys, because it seems to approximate the version that would have been known by late Victorian and Edwardians. Here Rouse's introductory warning to the boys to "be careful not to confuse" "stories of the Greek gods" "with your own God" is particularly instructive, p. 3. Merivale notes that the story of the death of Pan was first "recorded by Plutarch in his Moralia ("De Defectu Oraculorum," xvii), p. 12. This event was placed in a Christian framework by Eusebius. See note 19 above.

<sup>22</sup>Bush, pp. 59, 401.

<sup>23</sup>See pp. 13-14.

<sup>24</sup>Crews suggests "it is unlikely that [Forster] remained unaware of a trend in Cambridge anthropology that was influencing the interpretation of literature at the turn of the century," p. 127.

<sup>25</sup>James Kissane, "Victorian Mythology," Victorian Studies, VI (September, 1962), p. 11. In this context it is interesting to note that Pater speaks of Wordsworth's "sense of a life in natural objects" as a "'survival'...of that primitive condition, which some philosophers have traced in the general history of human culture, wherein all outward objects...were believed to be endowed with animation...that mood in which the old Greek gods were first begotten." "Wordsworth," Selected Works, ed. Richard Aldington (New York, 1948), p. 57.

<sup>26</sup>Pater, Greek Studies, p. 34.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup>Monsman, p. 21. Monsman's statement, "the summer Dionysus is inadequate....," refers to the summer phase of Dionysus rather than to his world. I made the connection because the two are identical. Monsman's analysis is particularly interesting in regard to Mrs. Moore: "Because the world

of the summer Dionysus is finite, the soul can expand beyond it, its inner visions becoming too great to find their counterpart merely in nature. Suddenly, what had been the objective world becomes subjective. There is no external outlet; the bloom of nature has become a trap; the dreaming soul is imprisoned; it descends to the delirium of the winter god. The 'sleeping' or 'imprisoned' Dionysus corresponds to the psychic realm, with its vastly heightened awareness of the shortness of life and the sense of death--the mind imprisoned in its own dreams..." p. 20.

<sup>32</sup>Heine's essay first appeared in 1853. Pater quotes from it in The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, Library Edition (London, 1910), pp. 31-32.

<sup>33</sup>Walter Pater, "Denys L'Auxerrois," Imaginary Portraits, Library Edition (London, 1910).

<sup>34</sup>Forster's stories are available in a single volume, Collected Short Stories (Harmondsworth, England, 1954). A posthumous edition of his unpublished stories was published in 1972. (The Life to Come and Other Stories, ed. Oliver Stallybrass [London.]) Some of these stories use mythical themes. They are often brutal, their brutality stemming not from nature's indifference but from sexual anger.

<sup>35</sup>According to Forster's statement in the "Introduction," it is the first story he ever wrote, Collected Short Stories, p. 5. (It was written in 1902 and published in 1904.)

<sup>36</sup>Forster uses this phrase in his essay "Notes on the English Character," Abinger Harvest, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup>Forster, "The Story of a Panic," p. 15.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 18, 13.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13, 11.

<sup>40</sup>E. M. Forster. "The Celestial Omnibus," Collected Short Stories, p. 58.

<sup>41</sup>"The Story of a Panic," p. 26.

<sup>42</sup>Merivale notes that "at least as early as the Homeric Hymn to Pan, writers had been struggling...to account for the apparent derivation of 'Pan' from pān meaning 'all....'" Although this derivation is incorrect, it has been useful for poets. "The history of the Pan motif would gain as much in logic as it would lose in variety and charm if this etymology

had been recognized from the beginning." Because of this "etymological confusion" this goat-god's form was extended "to include the heavens, the sea, earth, and fire--universal Nature...." His function was also extended; he became "Supreme Governor or 'soul' of the World," p. 9.

<sup>43</sup>"The Story of a Panic," p. 33.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 50. Forster's interest in Wagner is discussed by John Lucas in "Wagner and Forster: Parsifal and A Room with a View," ELH, XXXIII (March 1966), pp. 97-117.

<sup>46</sup>Crews, p. 124.

<sup>47</sup>Monsman, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup>Albergo Empedocle, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup>E. M. Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread (Harmondsworth, England, 1959), pp. 67-68.

<sup>50</sup>Lilia is given a bit more scope. Her brain is too "weak" to offer much opportunity for intellectual or moral development (p. 55). Yet at two moments in her life, she transcends herself when she transcends her culture. Lilia is ennobled when she recognizes Gino's essentially pagan desire for physical immortality: "Falling in love was a mere physical triviality, like warm sun or cool water, beside this divine hope of immortality: 'I continue'" (p. 60). She also becomes an artist. Before her death Lilia recognizes what she has made of her life. "Beside herself with passion" and barely able to "think or see" "she suddenly attained to magnificence and pathos which a practised [sic.] stylist might have envied" (p. 59). Having transcended herself and her usual style, Lilia has nothing more to do but to have a child and die.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 56, 9.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>54</sup>Art and Order: A Study of E. M. Forster (New York, 1964), p. 160.

<sup>55</sup>Where Angels Fear to Tread, p. 104-5.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 101, 105.

<sup>58</sup>Beekman C. Cannon, Alvin H. Johnson, and William G. Waite, The Art of Music: A Short History of Musical Styles and Ideas (New York, 1960), p. 379-80.

<sup>59</sup>Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, pp. 85, 71, 111-12.

<sup>60</sup>E. M. Forster, A Room with a View (Harmondsworth, England, 1955), p. 76.

<sup>61</sup>Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, p. 53.

<sup>62</sup>Jane Ellen Harrison, Epilegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Cambridge, England), 1921, p. 28.

<sup>63</sup>Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, pp. 121, 119.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 160 (Italics added.)

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 67, 21. In this context, Gino's recitation of the opening lines of the Inferno, "was more apt than he supposed," p. 29.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 23, 19. McConkey also discusses these images, pp. 103-105.

<sup>68</sup>Forster speaks of the way the novelist whose "theme is the universe, or something universal" adopts a bardic voice. "He is not...going to 'say' anything about the universe; he proposes to sing...." "The novel through which bardic influence has passed often has a wrecked air....," Aspects of the Novel (New York, n.d.), p. 125. Although Where Angels Fear to Tread is not the equal of the novels he assigns to the prophetic tradition, Forster indicates that fantasy, the lesser mode, can also transcend itself: "tragedy...though not excluded [from fantasy], will have a fortuitous air as if a word would disarm her." The two forms, prophecy and fantasy, are divided according to the gods they serve: "The power of fantasy penetrates into every corner of the universe, but not into the forces that govern it...." p. 110.

<sup>69</sup>Abinger Harvest, p. 370.

<sup>70</sup>Aspects of the Novel, p. 89.

<sup>71</sup>Pater, Greek Studies, p. 118. Pater is quoting from the Homeric hymn to Demeter.

<sup>72</sup>Aspects of the Novel, pp. 120, 119. Forster's use of this technique adds to the rich mythic texture of the novels. For example, James McConkey shows how Forster draws upon Swift's The Battle of the Books in A Room With a View (McConkey, pp. 57-59). John Lucas identifies Forster's use of Wagner's Parsifal in the same novel ("Wagner and Forster: Parsifal and A Room With a View," ELH, XXXIII [March, 1966], 97-117). Goethe's Faust is the source of one of the minor mythic patterns in Howards End (Trilling, Forster, p. 134).

It is appropriate to cite Aspects of the Novel at this point even though it was written after Forster completed his novelistic career. Unlike Woolf, who kept extending and modifying her concept of the appropriate form for the novel, Forster is a "traditionalist" in his "approach to fiction" and a skeptic in relation to formal experimentation. Mark Goldman, "Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster: A Critical Dialogue," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VII (Winter, 1966), p. 398.

<sup>73</sup>"Arcadia: The Discovery of a Spiritual Landscape," The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 282, 307, 308.

<sup>74</sup>Max Beerbohm, quoted by K. W. Gransden in E. M. Forster (New York, 1962), p. 11.

<sup>75</sup>The Longest Journey, pp. 77, 126. This story is similar to Forster's "Other Kingdom," Collected Short Stories.

<sup>76</sup>Snell, p. 287.

<sup>77</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 164.

<sup>78</sup>C. Day Lewis, "Foreward," The Georgics of Virgil (London, 1940), p. 7.

<sup>79</sup>Steele Commager, "Introduction," Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays (Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), p. 2.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>The Longest Journey, pp. 90-91, 93.

<sup>82</sup>Virgil, Georgics, trans. C. Day Lewis (London, 1940), II, 387-91, 528-30, pp. 47, 52.

<sup>83</sup>C. Day Lewis, The Buried Day (New York, 1960), p. 97, quoted in L. P. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil, (Cambridge,

England, 1969), p. 2. Lewis speaks about his experience of translating this poem during the war: "I felt more and more of the kind of patriotism which I imagine was Virgil's--the natural piety...the passion to praise and protect one's roots...."

<sup>84</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 92.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>86</sup>Ansell speaks of Agnes as "the emissary of Nature," fulfilling "Nature's bidding," Ibid., p. 87. Forster explains the torture of Varden in the following manner: "If you herd together human beings before they can understand each other the great god Pan is angry, and will in the end evade your regulations and drive them mad," Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>88</sup>A. G. McKay, "Virgilian Landscape into Art: Poussin, Claude and Turner," Virgil, edited by D. R. Dudley (New York, 1969), p. 141.

<sup>89</sup>The Longest Journey, pp. 124-25, 33.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 134, 135. The tree in the center of the Ring symbolizes the power of the earth. Man "sees in the earth the Mother as food-giver, and in the fruits of the earth her Son, her Kouros, his symbol the blossoming branch of a tree." Jane Ellen Harrison, Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion (Cambridge, England, 1912), p. xvi.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 137, 156.

<sup>92</sup>Gransden, p. 49.

<sup>93</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 116.

<sup>94</sup>Lee Elbert Holt, E. M. Forster and Samuel Butler," PMLA, LXI (1946), p. 809.

<sup>95</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 104.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 22. Later, with Wagner's help, Richie transforms a vignette of simple sexual desire into a cosmic drama: "He seemed to be looking down coloured valleys. Brighter they glowed, till gods of pure flame were born in them, and then he was looking at pinnacles of virgin snow," p. 45. The over-idealized landscape "the coloured valleys" and the "pinnacles of virgin snow" suggest the sterile quality of Richie's imagination.



<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 82. A Punch and Judy show seems to teach Stephen how to keep his wife "in line," pp. 122, 287. Cf. p. 250.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 196. A similar dream occurs later, p. 250.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., pp. 69, 58.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 288. The autobiographical interest of the novel has obscured the fact that The Longest Journey, like Howards End, is concerned with the question of who will inherit England. (Lionel Trilling identified this theme in Howards End in E. M. Forster, [New York, 1943], p. 118.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 286, 288.

<sup>103</sup>In The Golden Bough, Sir James Frazer observes that the names of primitive gods were kept secret. The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion. Vol. III. 3rd ed., rev. and enl. (New York, 1935), pp. 387-91.

<sup>104</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 284.

<sup>105</sup>Vergil, Eclogue, IV, [ll. 18-19], Virgil's Works, trans. J. W. Mackail (New York, 1950), p. 274.

<sup>106</sup>Greek Studies, p. 151.

<sup>107</sup>Daniel Hoffman, Barbarous Knowledge: Myth in the Poetry of Years, Graves, and Muir (New York, 1967), pp. 6-7.

<sup>108</sup>Bush, p. 528.

<sup>109</sup>In his discussion of fantasy and prophecy, two modes that "are alike in having gods, and unlike in the gods they have," Forster notes that this mode will tug and strain "the stuff of daily life...in various directions, the earth will be given little tilts mischievous or pensive, spotlights will fall on objects that have no reason to anticipate or welcome them ...." (Aspects of the Novel, pp. 109-10.) "The novel through which bardic [prophetic] influence has passed often has a wrecked air, like a drawing-room after an earthquake or a children's party." (Ibid., p. 125.)

<sup>110</sup>Northrop Frye, "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism," Romanticism: Points of View. 2nd ed., Edited by Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald C. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), pp. 307-8.

<sup>111</sup>Elizabeth Ellem, "E. M. Forster: The Lucy and New Lucy Novels: Fragments of Early Versions of 'A Room With a View,'" TLS, 28 May 1971, pp. 623-25.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 624-25.

<sup>113</sup>Crews, pp. 99 ff. Dorothy M. Hoare also comments on Forster's debt to Meredith, pp. 68-71.

<sup>114</sup>Dorothy M. Hoare, Some Studies in the Modern Novel (London, 1938), p. 70. Hoare identifies Forster and Meredith. Both are "happy" pagans. However, her subsequent comments are useful. Forster's "paganism is definitely stressed as against other qualities which the civilized world possesses and which seem to be definitely inhibiting or destructive. In this he is perhaps as near D. H. Lawrence as Meredith, and D. H. Lawrence is a writer from whom Forster is not so far away as critics would have us believe (pp. 70-71).

<sup>115</sup>Ellem, "Lucy and New Lucy," p. 624. Part I of this novel "must have followed the story line of A Room With a View more closely than that of Lucy." In addition to the incidents mentioned in the text, this version includes the fact that "Lucy was prevented from telling her mother about [George's kiss] by Miss Bartlett, [and the fact that] Miss Bartlett had told Miss Lavish."

<sup>116</sup>A Room With a View, p. 47.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>118</sup>The Withered Branch: Six Studies in the Modern Novel (London, 1950), p. 54.

<sup>119</sup>A Room With a View, pp. 51, 64.

<sup>120</sup>Crews, p. 132. Crews also points out that "the blood of the dying man...spatters Lucy's picture of Venus, showing all too literally the nearness of the two passions of love and wrath." Ibid. This connection is also implicit in Lucy's reaction to the murder. She continues to murmur "Oh, what have I done?" (A Room With a View, pp. 47-49.)

<sup>121</sup>A Room With a View, p. 66.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 75. Ruskins' belief that brown cannot be found in nature was noted earlier, p. 148 above. Lucas believes that Forster is relying upon Ruskin's association of brown with "horror and death," note 20, p. 111.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., pp. 81, 76-77.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>126</sup> George Meredith, The Egotist (New York, 1963), pp. 113-14. The emphasis in both scenes is upon youth and love, which are reflected in the lush natural surroundings. Trilling comments on other similarities between the two novels, p. 103.

<sup>127</sup> A Room With a View, p. 186.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp. 186, 202.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 93, 79.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp. 71, 214.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., pp. 221, 223.

<sup>135</sup> Ellem, "Lucy and New Lucy," p. 624.

## Chapter VI

Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,  
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

Ben Jonson

"The aesthetic view of life," as Alan Wilde indicates, "suffered a setback" in Forster's first three novels.<sup>1</sup> In these works Forster prefers the apparent disorder of nature to the order promised by art. However, the mythic patterns of these books reveal that nature does have a pattern of order; this is determined by alternating cycles of death and renewal. Both Howards End and A Passage to India, the two major novels of his second period, include a search for the forms in art or in society that embody nature's order. The less successful works of this period, Maurice and the incomplete Arctic Summer, are concerned with creating alternative myths for ordering human life.

Howards End seems to have been written, in part, to answer the following: "Why has not England a great mythology?" Forster complains,

our folklore has never advanced beyond daintiness, and the greater melodies about our country-side have all issued through the pipes of Greece....The native imagination...seems to have failed here. It has stopped with the witches and the fairies. It cannot vivify one fraction of a summer field, or give names to half a dozen stars. England still waits for the

supreme moment of her literature--for the great poet who shall voice her, or, better still, for the thousand little poets whose voices shall pass into our common talk.<sup>2</sup>

The myths created by the "thousand little poets" are preferable to those created by the single "great poet" because these myths will represent the spirit of the people. Attempting the job of one of the little voices, Forster names a house and reveals the meaning of a tree and a field. Both are part of a specifically English landscape. However, their significance is connected with the more traditional mythology of the novel, which is Greek. Despite Forster's desire to create a specifically English mythology, his use of Greek sources suggests that the patterns established in classical mythology are the true embodiments of the sources of energy in the landscape.

The vision of a house as a sacred place seems particularly English. Although the tradition of country house poetry originates in the work of Horace and Martial and has analogues in France and Italy,<sup>3</sup> such poets as Ben Jonson and Andrew Marvell seem to have made it into a particularly British genre. In their "scorn of temporal power and fame and [their] desire for the retired life," these poems are also related to the pastoral tradition.<sup>4</sup> However, part of the pleasure in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" is given by the fact that "the greater world is annihilated, not by denying its values and characteristics, but by showing how they are included with completeness in the estate...."<sup>5</sup> Thus, Appleton House becomes a self-

contained world. Such a vision is no longer possible in the twentieth century. Howards End is a retreat; it is valued for what it excludes.

The name "Howard," "chief warden or guardian," is appropriate for the old estate Forster designates as the spiritual center of England. The name may also have recalled, to Forster and his contemporaries, that of Sir Ebenezer Howard, the English founder of the garden city movement. Howard's study Tomorrow, published in 1898.

envisaged self-contained communities with both rural and urban amenities and greenbelts, and led to the formation in 1899 of the Garden City Association and to the laying out of Letchworth [in] 1903.<sup>6</sup>

Forster's enlightened contemporaries viewed Howard's suggestions with great interest. However, the novel suggests that more than intelligent city planning is necessary to sustain a culture. Ruth Wilcox's bequest of Howards End to Margaret Schlegel is fulfilled when Margaret, legally and spiritually, becomes Mrs. Wilcox. The real inheritor, however, is Margaret's nephew, the son of Helen Schlegel and Leonard Bast. Thus, the union of the earth and intellect is necessary to produce the yeoman farmer, who, like Stephen Wonham, is destined to guide the fortunes of England.

The social narrative is supported by a mythical structure composed of the two stories with which we are now familiar: Pan's victory over Christ and Demeter's search for Persephone. When Margaret and Mrs. Wilcox go Christmas shopping, the city

seems a "Satanic" underworld, "the narrower streets oppressing like the galleries of a mine."<sup>7</sup> The physical darkness is a counterpart of the spiritual: Margaret

saw issuing from a forgotten manger at Bethlehem this torrent of coins and toys. Vulgarity reigned ....A poster of a woman in tights heralded the Christmas pantomime, and little red devils, who had come in again that year, were prevalent upon the Christmas-cards.

The "little red devils" on the Christmas cards are an appropriate symbol for a culture that has lost belief in the possibility of either salvation or damnation. "How many of these vacillating shoppers and tired shop-assistants realized that it was a divine event that drew them together?"<sup>8</sup> One of Margaret's last glimpses of Mrs. Wilcox offers a modern version of the ascension:

The beautiful head disappeared first, still buried in the muff; the long trailing skirt followed. A woman of undefinable rarity was going up heavenwards, like a specimen in a bottle. And into what a heaven--a vault as of hell, sooty black, from which soots descended!<sup>9</sup>

Christ has been defeated by the very conditions created by a civilization that pretends to worship Him.

If London is an inferno that only "caricature[s]... infinity," "nature, [even] with all her cruelty, comes nearer to us....A friend explains himself: the earth is explicable--from her we came, and we must return to her. But who can explain Westminster Bridge Road or Liverpool Street in the morning...."<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Wilcox's burial in the earth is to be preferred to her apotheosis in a dark and sooty heaven.

In midwinter, Mrs. Wilcox, who incarnates the spirit of nature, withdraws from the world. "She had gone, and as if to make her going the more bitter, had gone with a touch of mystery that was all unlike her." A country woman "had seen a strange look about Mrs. Wilcox for some time."<sup>11</sup> Even the insensitive Wilcoxes "felt her loss most" "especially in the garden."<sup>12</sup> At first it seems as if Demeter has been defeated by the conditions of a modern industrialized and nominally Christian society. There was "a strange look about Mrs. Wilcox for some time. London had done the mischief," said some.<sup>13</sup> However, the events of the novel indicate that her withdrawal is more clearly related to the death of nature in the "wintery garden" than to the celebration of Christ's birth.

Two years pass and Margaret and Mr. Wilcox meet in the spring and marry in the fall. The interrupted cycle of nature apparently is to be completed. However, as Lionel Trilling suggests, Forster's conclusion is "not entirely...happy." Besides intimations that "the rust of London" is creeping towards Hertfordshire, "the male [Henry] is too thoroughly gelded, and of the two women, Helen confesses that she cannot love a man, Margaret that she cannot love a child."<sup>14</sup>

Despite the creeping rust, the meadow is fruitful: "'the field's cut!' Helen cried excitedly--'the big meadow! We've seen to the very end, and it'll be such a crop of hay as never!'"<sup>15</sup> The relationship between Henry and the women is



more problematical.

The "gelding" of the male to which Trilling refers is the natural consequence of a vision that sees life arising from the earth. Despite Henry's "Olympian"<sup>16</sup> laugh, "his control of empires, and his association with the sun as a center of radiance, adult male deities have no mythical place in the natural order. (Dionysus, a young man, derives his power from his mother Semele, who is associated with the earth.)"<sup>17</sup> Leonard is used to continue the cycle of life and discarded. Henry must be "broken." Here, Forster's use of their mythical connections is so subtle, so slyly "Forsterian" that it deserves a brief comment.

Porphyryon, the insurance company for which Leonard works, is named after one of the giants. The giants were the offspring of Gaia, the earth, who produced them to conquer the Olympians because they paid no attention to her and to the other ancient gods. Zeus finally destroys the giants. In Forster's retelling of the myth, Leonard, a dwarf-like version of the original Porphyryon, actually brings down the whole structure created by the Olympian gods. When it is announced that Charles, the Wilcox heir and Henry's surrogate, will be indicted for manslaughter, the earth "moved as if it was alive." The Six Hills, like the Cadbury Rings in The Longest Journey, represent the sacred aspect of the earth. Like the earth, they embody life and death: "the Six Hills, tombs of warriors, breasts of spring."<sup>18</sup>

The earth triumphs over the Olympians. Despite Leonard's death, Henry's power is ended. It ends the moment Leonard recognizes that the sun is only a "fellow [of] the descending moon...the servant of the blue sky, not its lord." Henry saves himself by giving up his false power, the telegrams and motor cars, and acknowledging his dependence upon the earth: "I am extremely tired...I have been walking about all the morning, and wish to sit down."<sup>19</sup>

The goddess Demeter who wanders over the earth searching for her daughter is always alone; she has no consort. Even her daughter, once freed from Pluto, seeks union only with her mother. The earth is maiden or mother, never wife. After his first wife's death Henry remembers Ruth Wilcox "as bride and mother" "year after year, summer and winter,...she had been the same...." At first Margaret seems to be mother to both Helen and Tibby. However, it is Mrs. Wilcox who reminds her of her other role: "I--I wonder whether you ever think about yourself....I almost think you forget you're a girl."<sup>20</sup> Edwin M. Moseley suggests that in her search for Helen, Margaret acts like the mother Demeter searching for Persephone.<sup>21</sup> However, Margaret remains the maiden, "whom the snows made nightly virginal," and Helen becomes the mother.<sup>22</sup> The easy interchange between the roles of mother and maid emphasizes the essential identity of these figures and the eternal sameness of the earth, despite changes that take place in time. By splitting Mrs. Wilcox's role as maid and

mother between Margaret and Helen, Forster suggests that the women as well as the men are incomplete.

As the embodiment of the earth, Pan represented "all." Margaret ascribes that completeness to Mrs. Wilcox, when she tells Helen "I feel you and I and Henry are only fragments of that woman's mind. She knows everything. She is everything. She is the house and the tree that leans over it." Mrs. Wilcox, who represents the past, is complete in herself. But the conditions of modern life make a return to the unity Mrs. Wilcox represents impossible. Despite the renewal of fertility promised by the working out of the myth, Forster's use of mythical prototypes underlines the fragmented quality of the personalities of these characters. It is out of this sense of the inadequacy of his characters and the conditions of modern life that Forster creates his myth of the land.

London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever borne before. Under cosmopolitanism, if it ever comes, we shall receive no help from the earth. Trees and meadows and mountains will only be a spectacle, and the binding force that they once exercised on character must be entrusted to Love alone."<sup>23</sup>

Howards End, with its wych-elm, the Six Hills, and the meadow, offers Love its necessary sustenance. But it is the wych-elm that is most closely related to the house and helps to sanctify it. Tree-worship originated when

primitive man, observing the growth and death of trees, the elasticity of their branches, the

sensitiveness and the annual decay and revival of their foliage, anticipated in his own way the tendency of modern science to lessen the gulf between the animal and the vegetable world.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, the wych-elm, "a comrade, bending over the house," lessens the gulf between the vegetable world and the world man builds for himself. The house, like the tree, is alive; both are subject to the growth and decay of the natural order. "Every summer [Margaret] would fear lest the well should give out, every winter lest the pipes should freeze; every westerly gale might blow the wych-elm down and bring the end of all things...."<sup>25</sup>

Although the house and tree are subject to the earth, Forster tries to suggest that they transcend its gods. The union of natural forces and man's toil in the house, the hills, and the meadow, make the tree a particularly English symbol:

It was neither warrior, nor lover, nor god;  
in none of these rôles do the English excel.  
It was a comrade, bending over the house....  
House and tree transcended any similitudes  
of sex."

Forster's ideal is sexless. Yet the house seems to get its strength from the union of male and female elements in nature and in culture. The house, originally part of a farm, contains the Schlegel books and sword; it represents the civilization that arose when man began to till the fields and grew when he began to cultivate his imagination. The tree and the pig's teeth, both sacred to Demeter, represent the earth.<sup>26</sup>

Forster's consideration of the role of art enables him

to transcend the "similitudes of sex." Here, as in The Longest Journey, folk art is preferred to the higher art forms. Although Forster's presentation of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony enables him to introduce his major themes, the different responses to the music suggest that it cannot be a source of social harmony.<sup>27</sup> The performance of Lucia in Where Angels Fear to Tread suggests that successful art mirrors the major concerns of its audience. Forster's contemporaries believed that art begins in ritual: "It is at the outset one and the same impulse that sends a man to church and to the theatre."<sup>28</sup> Howards End contains two rituals. Both begin with a recognition of man's dependence upon the earth. Both approach art in the way they transcend earthly limits and approach tragedy.

Mrs. Wilcox's funeral is presented as if it were a tragic drama. After "the carriages rolled away...only the poor remained." "The funeral of a rich person was to them what the funeral of Alcestis, of Ophelia, is to the educated. It was Art; though remote from life, it enhanced life's values...."<sup>29</sup> The women "to whom black garments had been served out by Mr. Wilcox's orders" seem ritual mourners, the woodcutter in the tree a chorus. He places this event in the context of a whole society:

From where he sat he could see the village of Hilton, strung along the North Road, with its accreting suburbs; the sunset beyond, scarlet and orange, winking at him beneath brows of grey; the church; the plantations; and behind him an unspoilt country of fields and farms.

Nature mourns. "The rocks had cawed, and no wonder--it was as if the rocks knew too."<sup>30</sup> The emotions created by Mrs. Wilcox's funeral underline her connection with Demeter and her son Dionysus. Both were worshipped as vegetation spirits. The origin of tragedy in the Dionysiac dithyramb makes such a funeral appropriate. Tragedy arose out of man's sense of his dependence upon the earth and his recognition of the yearly cycle of birth and decay.<sup>31</sup>

In ancient Greece, a cycle of tragedies was followed by a satyr play. Here life and fertility return with the woodcutter. After the sunset, "his thoughts [dwell] no longer on death, but on love, for he was mating." "Trudging on a few steps, he stopped,...looked furtively at the dusk, turned back, wrenched a chrysanthemum from the sheaf, and hid it in his pocket."<sup>32</sup> Persephone, Milton recounts, was "gath'ring flow'rs" in "that fair field/of Enna" when she "Herself a fairer Flow'r, by gloomy Dis/ was gather'd."<sup>33</sup> But the chrysanthemums are Margaret's flowers, and their vivid color offers "hope this side of the grave."<sup>34</sup> Mrs. Wilcox is reborn in Margaret; Leonard in his child.

After Leonard's death, Margaret "moved through the sunlit garden, gathering narcissi, crimson-eyed and white." Narcissi are among the earliest flowers of Spring. "There was nothing else to be done...and it seemed wisest that the hands of Leonard should be folded on his breast and be filled with flowers." In drama, ritual cleanses what has been pro-

fanned. "Let Squalor be turned into Tragedy, whose eyes are the stars, and whose hands hold the sunset and the dawn." Here, the sunset and the dawn suggest death and new life, the stars possible immortality. "As a prisoner looks up and sees stars beckoning, so [Margaret], from the turmoil and horror of those days, caught glimpses of the diviner wheels."<sup>35</sup>

Margaret's glimpses of "diviner wheels" are appropriate to the tragic vision. Although tragedy begins in the earth, it points to another realm where the gods may offer man something more than biological continuity. Howards End suggests that fidelity to the earth, to "hope this side of the grave," offers a pattern of greater meaning, the possibility that the gods of place may reveal the greater spirits governing the universe.

Alas, without me for thousands of years  
 The Rose will blossom and the Spring will bloom,  
 But those who have secretly understood my heart--  
 They will approach and visit the grave where I lie.

from the sixteenth-century  
 tomb of Ali Barid at Bidar

In A Passage to India Forster attempts to fathom the relationship between the gods of the earth and those of the sky. But he first tries to create a new mythology centered on relationships between men. Both Arctic Summer, which was never completed, and Maurice, which was published posthumously, draw upon the ideals and the folklore of the Middle Ages. Arctic Summer was begun in 1911 and put aside when Forster

went to India in 1912. Upon his return, he began A Passage to India. This was put aside for Maurice, which Forster began in 1913 and completed in 1914. A Passage to India was finished in 1924.<sup>36</sup> It is useful to consider Arctic Summer and Maurice together because they deal with similar problems. In addition, both shed light upon A Passage to India.

Arctic Summer begins with the typical Forsterian clash between two ways of life. However, here the clash is between the ideals of the enlightened bourgeoisie ("the nonconformist intellectuals")<sup>37</sup> and those of medieval chivalry. Although "chivalry and medievalism keep appearing like angelic hosts to point out how nasty the vulgar bourgeoisie is,"<sup>38</sup> Forster's choice of the medieval ideal is rather unfortunate. It is difficult to see how the newest crusade, "'mang[ling] Turks by the thousand & throw[ing] them into the sea'" will save the earth from becoming "dull and commercial."<sup>39</sup>

Martin, whose life Clesant saves, symbolizes this dull world; Clesant, the ideals of medievalism and chivalry. Forster never completed the novel. The fragments suggest that despite Forster's intent, Clesant may have too much of the medieval sterility Forster found in characters like Cecil Vyse to become a center of value. The ideal of the bourgeois intellectuals is also sterile because it is unnatural. Their "'new era is to have no dawn. It is to be a kind of Arctic Summer, in which there will be time to get something really great done....Dawn implies twilight, and we have decided to



abolish them both."40

The central problem of this novel, as Elizabeth Ellem indicates, is Forster's vision of an ideal society. "If Forster had succeeded in bringing the two men together, what then?" Would Clesant marry Martin's sister-in-law and establish a "ménage à quatre" with Martin and his wife? "One might say" Ellem continues, "that Forster solved his problem in Maurice." In this novel the male characters flee from modern society. However, at the time Forster was writing Arctic Summer, he was still trying "to reconcile the genteel, womanish world of respectability and the secret world of men: to find a satisfactory relationship for his heroes within society."41

The secret world of men that is established in Maurice exists outside society because it is homosexual. Maurice recognizes that "he was an outlaw in disguise. Perhaps among those who took to the greenwood in the old time there had been two men like himself....Two men can defy the world." Maurice's identification of himself and Alec with men like Robin Hood and his band is appropriate, for both are fugitives from unjust, repressive laws. Despite these laws, Robin Hood sees himself as a loyal subject of the king. A similar connection is suggested in Maurice's belief that "England belonged to" him and Alex. "That...was their reward. Her air and sky were theirs...."42 The use of this myth suggests that Maurice, like Clesant, is associated with a medieval, pre-industrial

England. However, here the mythology is closer to the folk poetry Forster commended in Howards End. Robin Hood "is the people's counterpart of aristocratic heroes like Sir Gawain"<sup>43</sup> and the stories about him are a "popular equivalent of the courtly pastoral."<sup>44</sup>

Behind this myth of the greenwood lies another. Maurice speaks not only of the outlaw band but "the Greeks--Theban Band--and the rest of it."<sup>45</sup> Here Forster draws upon one aspect of the tradition of Romantic Hellenism, which saw "Hellas as the earthly paradise for Socratic lovers." John Addington Symonds was partly responsible for originating this myth,<sup>46</sup> Forster's friend Goldsworth Lowes Dickinson for its elevation as a cultural ideal. The highest form of relationship was "passionate friendship between men." "Not only, nor primarily, the physical sense was touched, but mainly and in chief the imagination and intellect."<sup>47</sup> This ideal is present in some of Forster's early work. Maurice, however, which was generated by Forster's meeting with Edward Carpenter, insists upon the value of sexuality.<sup>48</sup>

Maurice had no use for Greece. His interest in the classics had been slight and obscure, and had vanished when he loved Clive. The stories...were well enough for those whose hearts were empty, but no substitute for life. That Clive should occasionally prefer them puzzled him.<sup>49</sup>

Literature creates a golden age for Clive, but Maurice prefers life. When Maurice tells Alec that he loves him, "the rows of old statues [in the British Museum] tottered...."<sup>50</sup>

Although Forster draws upon the typically English green-

wood, where there is "no enemy/But winter and rough weather," his pastoral has too willed a quality. He himself insisted: "A happy ending was imperative. I shouldn't have bothered to write otherwise."<sup>51</sup> However, it is Forster's valuing of nature that finally undermines the novel.

"'Be fruitful and multiply.'" Cynthia Ozick observes "that Forster alone perhaps of all homosexual writers is willing to take seriously the biblical injunction, and is left feeling desolated by it...."<sup>52</sup> In The Longest Journey, Ansell views "the statue of the Cnidian Demeter" and recognizes "powers he could not cope with, nor, as yet, understand."<sup>53</sup> In Maurice "the life spirit" is incarnated in a woman.<sup>54</sup> Thus, as Ozick indicates, "Forster believes in the holiness of the goddess of fertility: Demeter, guardian of the social order and marriage."<sup>55</sup> Neither Maurice nor Alec can serve her.

However, the sense of loss is generated by more than a recognition of two modes of love. Brotherhood was seen as part of the Hellenistic ideal, and such writers as Dickinson, Carpenter, and Whitman associated homosexual love with a truly democratic society.<sup>56</sup>

Union with women represents confinement, an acceptance of slavery, a withering of the soul; union with man, however, suggests all the expansive ideas of brotherhood--a sense of limitless love, a transcending of the barriers of time and place.<sup>57</sup>

Forster dramatizes this idea in A Passage to India. The Englishmen at the Bridge Party "had intended to play up [to their guests] better, but had been prevented from doing so by their

women folk, whom they had to attend, provide with tea, advise about dogs, etc." And Fielding discovers "it is possible to keep in touch with Indians and Englishmen, but that he who would also keep in with Englishwomen must drop the Indians."<sup>58</sup> Thus, in part, A Passage to India is an acknowledgment of Demeter's power to disrupt the world in which men live. In an article that pleased Forster, Peter Burra observed that "the real theme" of the novel is "the friendship of Fielding and Dr. Aziz."<sup>59</sup> This friendship is not simply personal; it includes a total vision of the social order. Thus, A Passage to India dramatizes the tragic division between the powers of generation and the needs of society.

"It would have been surprising" Wilfred Stone writes, "if the war that was finishing off [Forster's] class and its culture did not prompt him to reappraise that inheritance."<sup>60</sup> But the war was only the culmination of larger cultural changes. The red rust of London, which threatens to destroy Howards End, leads Forster, in both "Arctic Summer" and Maurice, to place the sacred in the past. A Passage to India can be set in the present because the landscape, which cannot be humanized by man, still retains its sacred character. Here, it is still possible for the gods of the countryside to reveal the great gods.<sup>61</sup>

Adela's "morning kneel to Christianity" as "the shortest and easiest cut to the unseen" and Aziz's "Oriental" desire for children to carry on his name<sup>62</sup> suggests that Forster is

restating the same problems, the division between culture and nature, with which he began his novelistic career. But here, the earlier assumptions no longer work. In his previous novels, a voyage to a new place becomes a test of Englishmen and their culture. Individuals are saved when they recognize their connection with the earth. In India, union with the earth results in madness. The voyage to India reveals the earth to Forster as Africa had revealed it to Conrad. It is "unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there--there you could look at a thing monstrous and free."<sup>63</sup> The Indian landscape enables Forster to take the true measure of the earth without the consolations of Romanticism. His method is that of the characteristic nineteenth-century recourse to "geology," which looks "further than religion."<sup>64</sup> Instead of promising salvation, the earth is neutral: "if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil."<sup>65</sup>

A Passage to India has a point of view that is larger than that in Forster's other works. The war revealed "that Clesant's chivalry and romance had graver flaws than [Forster] suspected..."<sup>66</sup> Part of this change is evident in Forster's new view of history. G. D. Klingopulos suggests that it is not "fanciful to see in [Forster's account of] Alexander's changing 'hellenism' an intimation of deep changes taking place in the 'hellenism' of Mr. Forster himself." Of

Alexander, Forster writes,

Alexander still conceived of civilization as an extended Greece, and of himself as a Hellene. He had taken over Hellenism with the ardour that only a proselyte knows....After his return from Siwa his aspirations alter. Never again does he regard Greece as the centre of the world....<sup>67</sup>

Forster's view of the earth also alters. Even before his visit to India, however, Forster's extensive use of the mythology connected with the earth had begun to reveal its limitations. In Howards End, he wrote,

Remorse is not among the eternal verities. The Greeks were right to dethrone her. Her action is too capricious, as though the Erinyes selected for punishment only certain men and certain sins. And of all means to regeneration, Remorse is surely the most wasteful.<sup>68</sup>

When Aeschylus reveals how Athena dethroned the Furies, he asserts a principle of order based on the social order rather than on blood relationships, the patriarchy rather than the matriarchy. Aeschylus' goddess is Athena, who presides over the heavens rather than the hearth and offers another form of immortality which is based upon continuity in the societies men create to embody and perpetuate their ideals. Although Forster turns to the sky, he knows the earth too well to assume that its spirits, the Erinyes, ever could become "the kindly ones."

Forster's other novels end with the discovery of the earth and the salvation such a discovery promises to a few. In India, this view of the earth persists only as a memory. "At their first meeting, which had occurred among the grand

scenery of the English Lakes" Adela and Ronny are drawn together by their belief in "the sanctity of personal relationships." In India "Irritation exuded from the very soil. Could one have been so petty on a Scotch moor or an Italian alp?...There seemed no reserve of tranquility to draw upon in India." "Dearest Grasmere" is "romantic yet manageable"; India is shapeless.<sup>69</sup>

The mosque represents an attempt to humanize the earth. It suggests the possibility that the ground where men have worshipped can be sanctified. "You must...think of [the mosque] as a courtyard, decorated by the accidents of history" "and not a shrine...." The Christian may believe that god is inside the church, but the Moslem "cherishes no such illusion...."<sup>70</sup> The Moslem "attaches no sanctity to it beyond what is conferred by the presence of the devout."<sup>71</sup> The uneasy night which concludes the meeting between Aziz and Mrs. Moore at the mosque suggests the presence of forces that remain uncomprehended even in this open courtyard.

The caves reveal the difficulty the human imagination has in sanctifying the earth. "Before man, with his itch for the seemly, had been born, the planet must have looked thus."<sup>72</sup> The caves also symbolize the dry season when all life is reduced to the narrowest terms of material survival.<sup>73</sup> Their message, "everything exists, nothing has value,"<sup>74</sup> suggests that Forster, "like Alexander's Greeks,...has felt the existence of Asia as a challenge to the human spirit."<sup>75</sup> At

this time Krishna fails to come and Mrs. Moore becomes comprehensible as a figure for Demeter.

Like Mrs. Wilcox, Mrs. Moore represents the winter aspect of the goddess who seems to withdraw from the earth as she ages. Demeter is the goddess of the hearth as well as the goddess of the grain. Yet "centuries of carnal embracement, [and] man is no nearer to understanding man." The simple promise of regeneration and the continuity of life becomes meaningless. "The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use."<sup>76</sup> In this context, a child becomes "some vile naked thing,"<sup>77</sup> and love becomes rape. However, Mrs. Moore's withdrawal points to the cyclical quality of life on earth. Even as she leaves India, Mrs. Moore recognizes that her experience has been limited. "'I have not seen the right places,' she thought...." Before the others reach the "right place," they have to live through the dry season. If the festival at Mau symbolizes the regeneration brought to the earth during the rainy season the trial celebrates the sterility of the earth during the dry season. Thus the structures that men create reflect their servitude to the earth. "There's nothing in India but the weather...;it's the Alpha and Omega of the whole affair."<sup>78</sup> However, both the trial and the festival offer the possibility of enlightenment for those who desire to transcend the weather.

Although Wilfred Stone and others have related the



events of the novel to various aspects of the Hindu religion and ritual, it is useful to see the novel in terms of the ritual patterns Forster himself sets up in the trial of Aziz and in the festival at Mau. A careful examination of these patterns reveals the methods by which the artist can perceive truth as well as the way Forster uses these particular ritual forms to define the limits of art as well as the understanding it can provide.

Both the trial and the festival are responses to the incomprehensibility of the earth. Both recognize that nature, a source of life, cannot be a source of morality. The mysticism of the Hindus is a response to the incomprehensibility of a land where "everything exists, nothing has value." The justice of the British is an attempt to impose order on this potentially anarchic situation. Man, who establishes his society between the earth and the sky, only hopes that his rituals, designed to propitiate the gods of place, will lead him to the great gods.

Aziz's trial takes place during the Moslem festival of Mohurram, which commemorates the suffering and martyrdom of a Moslem prince. It is appropriate that the "drums of Mohurram sound discordant elegies for a martyred king," while the "rites of Krishna's birth are used as images of unity." It also is "appropriate that during 'the last awful night of Mohurram,' when [the Anglo Indians expect] an attack...the observances of the Moslem prince's martyrdom should kindle

flames of outrage and compassion for the innocent prisoner."<sup>79</sup> The British, however, prefer their own "martyr": "young Heaslop...he was the recipient of all the evil intended against them by the country they had tried to serve; he was bearing the sahib's cross."<sup>80</sup> Martyrdom and rebirth are the appropriate ritual patterns for the dry and the rainy seasons. The trial proves that sexual contact never took place; the festival celebrates the birth of a god. Thus, the British festival celebrates sterility; the Hindu festival, fertility.

The Collector, who appears, "like a god in a shrine," at Aziz's arrest, suggests that Forster is presenting the trial in terms that are similar to the religious festival at Mau. In the courtroom Adela immediately notices "the humblest of all who were present,...the man who pulled the punkah.... He had the strength and beauty that sometimes come to flower in Indians of low birth." The festival is incomplete without the "servitor" who places the clay images in the water. "He was naked, broad-shouldered, thin-waisted--the Indian body again triumphant--and it was his hereditary office to close the gates of salvation."<sup>81</sup>

The tazias which are thrown into the water after Mohurram and the "earthenware saucers and so on" that appear at tombs which are supposed to contain Mrs. Moore's remains offer the promise of the renewal of life after the dry season.<sup>82</sup> But the trial, which never acknowledges the power of the earth, allows no place for the renewal of life. The punkah wallah,

"the beautiful naked god" whose movements suggest the endless cycles of the earth, has not been incorporated into the judgment. Thus, the trial ends with the punkah wallah "rhythmically...agitat[ing] the clouds of descending dust."<sup>83</sup>

And "the earth and sky were insanely ugly, the spirit of evil again strode abroad." The servitor, the counterpart of the punkah wallah at the festival, has a place in the ritual. He is like "the spot of filth without which the spirit cannot cohere." Without the participation of the lower castes, "the friendly sun of the monsoons" cannot shine forth and the rains cannot come.<sup>84</sup> But the trial, which never acknowledges the earth, remains impervious to the sky.

Forster also suggests similarities between Adela's vision and Godbole's. In drawing the reader's attention to similarities between the trial and the festival, Forster's intent is more than simple irony; he seems to suggest that each culture has the means to save itself. The West relies upon the artist's vision, the East upon the mystic's. As Adela speaks "she created the Kawa Dol, saw the niches up the curve of the stone, and felt the heat strike her face." She continues to recreate the experience until she actually sees that "Dr. Aziz never followed me into the cave." Then, as Forster indicates, "something that she did not understand took hold of the girl and pulled her through. Though the vision was over, and she had returned to the insipidity of the world, she remembered what she had learnt."<sup>85</sup>

Although this crowded courtroom is a doubtful setting for the recollection of emotion in tranquility, Adela vindicates the artist's ability to perceive the truth. Despite her response to Grasmere, Adela is a passionless Wordsworthian. "While relieving the Oriental mind, she had chilled it...for her behaviour rested on cold justice and honesty; she had felt, while she recanted, no passion of love for those whom she had wronged."<sup>86</sup> Truth, Forster insists, is useless without kindness. After the trial Adela is confused with Mrs. Moore, but she is only a sterile goddess, and the experience in the cave has become a parody of Pluto's desire for Persephone.

Love enables Godbole to penetrate to the center of things. Just as the chant seems to generate Adela's insight, songs create the conditions for Godbole's vision. The singers "loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail, emerged for a moment to melt in the universal warmth." In this state, Godbole remembers Mrs. Moore. "Chance brought her into his mind while it was in this heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found."<sup>87</sup> "Completeness," Forster insists, "not reconstruction." Adela can only recreate images; Godbole is granted a vision of their being.

Despite the success of the festival and the failure of

the trial, neither event is experienced as fully complete in itself. The first ceremony tries to make men into gods, the second, gods into men; both succeed and both fail. The English are not satisfied. "Retired Anglo-Indians in Tunbridge Wells or Cheltenham still murmur to each other: 'That Marabar case which broke down because the poor girl couldn't face giving her evidence--that was another bad case.'" The festival has a similarly inadequate conclusion: the mystic "may think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time."<sup>88</sup>

Because events that occur in time are never experienced as complete in themselves, men need other images of permanence. Here the permanence that art provides becomes important. Mrs. Moore is reborn when her name is chanted at the trial. The Rajah is present at the festival through his statue. But these art forms are social. Society unlike "a friend or a god" has no need for an individual's total commitment.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, more important than the chant of the crowd or the public statue of the Rajah is the individual vision that brings the unseen into being.

Adela is a Westerner; her vision and her world are finite. "'In space things touch, in time things part' she repeated to herself"<sup>90</sup> after the episode in the caves. Godboles's vision shows that it is only in time that things touch and that unity can be achieved.<sup>91</sup> Thus his is a world of infinite possibilities. Western art is detached. Adela "would see India

always as a frieze, never as a spirit...." Miss Derek "regarded the entire peninsula as a comic opera." This detachment reflects the unnatural quality of their lives. Their assumptions that they can govern as if they were gods rather than men renders their world unreal: "one's always facing the footlights."<sup>92</sup>

In contrast, Indian drama overcomes divisions not only between the actors and the audience but also those between the play and the greater reality it represents. "The Rajah and his guests would...forget" that the "consecrated troupe of men and boys, whose duty it was to dance various actions and meditations of his faith" were presenting "a dramatic performance, and would worship the actors."<sup>93</sup> The East makes no division between art and religion because art has never been separated from its origins in ritual.

Forster's description of the festival at Mau draws attention to the similarities between Christianity and Hinduism, between Christ and Krishna. "Three minutes before it was due, a Brahman brought forth a model of the village of Gokul (the Bethlehem in that nebulous story)....Here, upon a chair too small for him and with a head too large, sat King Kansa, who is Herod, directing the murder of some Innocents...." These similarities suggest an end to the war between Christ and Pan. Ideally, this should result in unity between nature and society. However, this does not occur.

When that strange race [of Indians of low birth]  
nears the dust and is condemned as untouchable,

then nature remembers the physical perfection that she accomplished elsewhere, and throws out a god--not many, but one here and there, to prove to society how little its categories impress her.

Although the earth upsets society's divisions, it creates its own: "the spirit of the Indian earth, which tries to keep men in compartments."<sup>94</sup> Therefore, it is only in ritual that the war between Christ and Pan is over.

Mrs. Moore's vision in the caves suggests that the universe has evolved for the purpose of perpetuating and sustaining life. The festival at Mau reveals that the earth cannot regenerate itself.

The sky settles everything--not only climates and seasons but when the earth shall be beautiful. By herself she can do little....But when the sky chooses, glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon.<sup>95</sup>

The caves represent not merely aspects of the Indian landscape but the intractable quality of the earth itself, as it resists man's desires and spiritual needs; the Hindu temple represents the opposite.

"I needed a lump, or a Hindu temple if you like--a mountain standing up," Forster said of the function "of the long description of the Hindu festival in A Passage to India."<sup>96</sup> The caves are feminine, secret, and interior; the Hindu temple and its ritual, "a lump," "a mountain standing up," are masculine. The Hindu ritual is an attempt to shift creative power from the male to the female.

The religion of the Mother and the Daughter...reflected ...not so much the relations of mother and daughter as the two stages of woman's life, woman as maid, and woman as mother. If we are to have the relation of

parent and child mirrored in mythology, assuredly the closest relation is not that even of mother and daughter but of mother and son. Father and son, Zeus and Apollo, reflect a still further advance in civilization.<sup>97</sup>

The deities, the temporal rulers, and the participants at the Hindu festival are male. The maleness of the festival reflects a desire to establish an order that is independent of the earth. But the sky remains elusive.

The stars hang like lamps from the immense vault. The distance between the vault and them is as nothing to the distance behind them, and that farther distance, though beyond colour, last freed itself from blue.<sup>98</sup>

On earth men live as best they can and they are dependent upon the earth.

The cycle begins again when Adela sends Ralph Moore as her gift to India. The spirit of Mrs. Moore returns in the voice of her son Ralph and in the bees, sacred to Dionysus, who bring Ralph and Aziz together. "Then you are an oriental ....Was the cycle beginning again?"<sup>99</sup> But the cycle resumes in a way that recalls the fragmented conclusion of Howards End. Ralph recreates his mother's relationship with Aziz and guides him to the Rajah, but the Rajah is dead and Ralph is too frail to recreate the cycle of generation. His sister Stella serves this function.

Even if the novel reveals that the earth is a questionable source of morality, Forster continues to recognize its gods. Both Christ and Pan are figures for the god of fertility who dies every year: "Thus was He thrown [into the water]



year after year, and were others thrown--little images of Ganpati, baskets of ten-day corn, tiny tazias after Mohurram--scapegoats, husks, emblems of passage...." The gods of fertility are like Osiris and Adonis, lovers of the earth goddess. Their death insures her fertility. It is appropriate that Fielding, who sat at Aziz's trial with "an Indian child perched on his knee" is given a "son and heir."<sup>100</sup> But Fielding, like Mr. Wilcox, is both elevated and diminished by such goddesses. In this novel Forster is not satisfied with a fertile harvest. He turns to the sky.

The novel is concerned with more than physical regeneration or even spiritual regeneration that is dependent upon the earth. Because the earth has a life of its own, apart from human concerns, both Mrs. Moore and the unborn child remain on the periphery of the action. Throughout the novel, the distance and immensity of the sky offers relief from cyclical change and from bondage to the earth. The sky promises unity; the earth offers division. As Aziz and Fielding ride together, the earth forbids their friendship "sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file...." All the things on earth "in their hundred voices, [say] 'No, not yet,' [but] the sky said, 'No, not there.'"<sup>101</sup>

This contradiction recalls Adela's belief "in space things touch, in time things part," and Godbole's vision of unity which is achieved only in time. Although Forster contrasts the mystic's experience of time with historical time,

the structure of the novel offers moments when these different ways of experiencing time meet. "Only through time time is conquered." However, the novel also recognizes the possibility that this meeting can be anticipated in man's earthly life.

It is through ritual that the novel bridges the gap between the earth and the sky, between space and time. Ritual precedes myth. The throwing of figures and husks into the water precedes stories of Krishna, of Pan, of Osiris, of Christ. The fragmented conclusion of the novel suggests that Forster is choosing an ending that is closer to ritual than to the fully developed structures of myth or the expectations of art. As Forster himself observes, the final chapters of the novel "indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so far, comprehensible to our minds."<sup>102</sup> This conclusion validates Yeats' belief that man can embody truth but he cannot know it, and suggests that in A Passage to India the novel is made to fulfill the purpose of ritual.

## Afterword

"I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Koran, than that this universal frame is without a mind."

Francis Bacon

The work of Woolf and Forster exemplifies the two modes available to the Romantic poet and to the novelist who continues this tradition. Both recognize that modern conditions make man's relationship with nature more difficult than Wordsworth ever formulated; however, neither fails to see nature as a principal source of being. Their work and the work of other novelists who also might be considered Romantic Moderns offer an alternative to the view of man's relationship to the world in Modernist literature.

Those who believe "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," may prefer to see the world as a garden--even a ruined garden--rather than a wasteland.

## Notes for Chapter VI

<sup>1</sup>Wilde, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Howards End, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup>Frank Kermode, ed., "An Introduction to Marvell," The Metaphysical Poets, Literature and Ideas Series, ed. Irving Howe (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1969), p. 320.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph H. Summers, "Introduction," Marvell, The Laurel Poetry Series, ed. Richard Wilbur (New York, 1961), p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Kitty W. Scouler, Natural Magic: Studies in the Presentation of Nature in English Poetry from Spenser to Marvell (Oxford, 1965), p. 163.

<sup>6</sup>Chambers's Biographical Dictionary, new ed., edited by J. O. Thorne (New York, 1961). The name "Howard" has a multiple origin. One version of this name occurs in the Domesday Book. The noble family of that name has been traced back to the time of Edward I. P. H. Reaney, The Origin of English Surnames (New York, 1967), p. 18. Henry Barber, British Family Names, 2nd ed. enl. (London, 1903), p. 171.

<sup>7</sup>Howards End, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 280, 108.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 90, 88.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>14</sup>Trilling, E. M. Forster, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup>Howards End, p. 343.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>17</sup>Harrison, Prolegomena, p. 402.

<sup>18</sup>Howards End, pp. 334, 309. Harrison observes that "the dead, according to Plutarch's statement, were called by the Athenians 'Demeter's people.'" Prolegomena, p. 275.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 322, 333.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 89, 72.

<sup>21</sup>"A New Correlative for Howards End: Demeter and Persephone," Lock Haven Bulletin I:3 (1961), p. 5.

<sup>22</sup>Howards End, p. 183.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 313, 261.

<sup>24</sup>"Tree Worship," Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed.

<sup>25</sup>Howards End, pp. 206, 335-36.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 206, 313. Pigs were associated with Demeter. Harrison, Prolegomena, p. 122-27.

<sup>27</sup>The role of the symphony in the novel has been the object of a good deal of critical comment. Forster seems to endorse Helen's perceptions of the music, when he refers to the "goblins," the name she gives to spirits of evil, elsewhere in the novel. (pp. 45, 324). But Helen uses this perception in a way that is self-serving. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which she perceives as a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil is reduced to something that "sum[s] up to her all that had happened or could happen in her career ....The notes meant this and that to her, and they could have no other meaning, and life could have no other meaning," (p. 34). She has deprived music of its communal role and made it into a static art. Therefore, the views of Margaret, "who can only see the music," are closer to Forster's, (p. 31).

<sup>28</sup>Jane Ellen Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual (New York, 1913), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup>Howards End, pp. 87-88.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Pater, Greek Studies, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup>Howards End, p. 89.

<sup>33</sup>Paradise Lost, IV, ll. 269-70. John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 284.

<sup>34</sup>Howards End, p. 330.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. The narcissi are appropriate because Leonard generally sees only a world that is reflected in his own image.

<sup>36</sup>Elizabeth Ellem, "E. M. Forster's 'Arctic Summer,'" TLS, 21 September 1973, p. 1089. P. N. Furbank, "Introduction," Maurice by E. M. Forster (London, 1971), pp. v, vi. Forster worked on "the difficult last section" of Maurice in 1919 and 1932 and revised it "fairly drastically in 1950-60," Ibid., viii.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 1087. Ellem's quotations from Forster are indicated by the double quotation marks in the text.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 1089.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 1087.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., (Ellipsis in text.)

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 1089.

<sup>42</sup>E. M. Forster, Maurice (London, 1971), pp. 125, 233.

<sup>43</sup>Albert C. Baugh, ed., A Literary History of England (New York, 1948), p. 311.

<sup>44</sup>M. C. Bradbrook, "Comical-Fantastic: Love's Labour's Lost, As You Like It, Twelfth Night," Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry: A Study of His Earlier Work in Relation to the Poetry of the Time (Oxford, 1952), p. 226.

<sup>45</sup>Maurice, p. 196.

<sup>46</sup>Bernard Dick, "The Origins of Homosexual Fiction," Colorado Quarterly, XXII (Spring, 1974), p. 510.

<sup>47</sup>G. Lowes Dickinson, The Greek View of Life (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1958), pp. 184-85.

<sup>48</sup>E. M. Forster, "Terminal Note," Maurice, p. 235.

<sup>49</sup>Maurice, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>51</sup>"Terminal Note," Maurice, p. 236.

<sup>52</sup>"Forster as Homosexual," Commentary (December, 1971), p. 84.

<sup>53</sup>The Longest Journey, p. 186.

- <sup>54</sup>Maurice, p. 109.
- <sup>55</sup>Ozick, p. 85.
- <sup>56</sup>Wilfred Stone, The Cave and the Mountain (Stanford, 1966), p. 87.
- <sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
- <sup>58</sup>E. M. Forster, A Passage to India (New York, 1924), pp. 46, 63.
- <sup>59</sup>"Introduction," A Passage to India by E. M. Forster. Everyman ed. (London, 1957), p. xxi.
- <sup>60</sup>Stone, p. 280.
- <sup>61</sup>A Passage to India, p. 257.
- <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 211, 119.
- <sup>63</sup>"Heart of Darkness," Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer (New York, 1950), p. 105.
- <sup>64</sup>A Passage to India, p. 123. Both Alexandria: A History and a Guide and Pharos and Pharillon contain similar passages of geological history. These seem to suggest Forster's increasingly complex view of the earth. (Alexandria: A History and a Guide [Garden City, New York, 1961], pp. 5-7. Pharos and Pharillon [New York, 1923], pp. 9-10.)
- <sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125. The phrase refers specifically to the caves which embody the neutral, if not overtly hostile, quality of the earth.
- <sup>66</sup>Ellem, "Arctic Summer," p. 1089. The sentimental attachment to soldiers in Howards End also seems to be discredited.
- <sup>67</sup>G. O. Klingopolous, "E. M. Forster's Sense of History: and Cavafy," Essays in Criticism VIII (April, 1958), pp. 159, 158.
- <sup>68</sup>Howards End, p. 316.
- <sup>69</sup>A Passage to India, pp. 84, 78, 138. (*Italics added.*)
- <sup>70</sup>E. M. Forster, "The Mosque," Abinger Harvest (Harmondsworth, England, 1967), pp. 293-94.
- <sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 295.
- <sup>72</sup>A Passage to India, p. 147.

<sup>73</sup>Forster writes "the three sections into which [the novel] is divided, Mosque, Caves, Temple, also represent the three seasons of the Cold Weather, the Hot Weather, and the Rains, which divide the Indian year." "Author's Notes," A Passage to India, Everyman ed. (London, 1957), p. xxix.

<sup>74</sup>A Passage to India, p. 149.

<sup>75</sup>Klingopolous, p. 165.

<sup>76</sup>A Passage to India, pp. 135, 201-202.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 209, 49.

<sup>79</sup>June Perry Levine, Creation and Criticism: "A Passage to India" (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1971), pp. 46, 48.

<sup>80</sup>A Passage to India, p. 185.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 162, 217, 315. (*Italics added.*)

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 314, 257.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 235-36, 305.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 261, 288.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>91</sup>This is affirmed by the conclusion of the novel.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 47-49.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 287, 217, 127.



<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>96</sup>P. N. Furbank and F. J. H. Haskell, "The Art of Fiction I: E. M. Forster, Paris Review (Spring, 1953), p. 32.

<sup>97</sup>Harrison, Prolegomena, p. 402.

<sup>98</sup>A Passage to India, p. 9.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., pp. 311, 312.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., pp. 314, 222, 307.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>102</sup>"A Passage to India," Programme, [Programme of the Oxford Playhouse production of A Passage to India by Santha Rama Rau, from the novel by E. M. Forster] (London, [1960?]), [unpaged].

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