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THE YEARS BY VIRGINIA WOOLF: THE EVOLUTION OF A NOVEL

BY

GRACE RADIN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE YEARS BY VIRGINIA WOOLF: THE EVOLUTION OF A NOVEL

by

Grace Radin

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The original impetus for writing The Years was Virginia Woolf's desire to write a feminist essay that would be a sequel to A Room of One's Own. The idea for an essay led her to the creation of a new form, an "Essay-Novel," which would alternate scenes from the lives of a middle-class English family with essays interpreting the social, economic, and psychological forces that determined the way they lived. Woolf used this "Essay-Novel" form for her first draft of the "1880" chapter of The Years, but it proved unwieldy and was dropped for the rest of the novel. Despite the discontinuance of the essays, the holograph draft of The Years is still much longer than the published novel. It includes two complete episodes that were deleted before publication, as well as a wealth of detail and many explicit references to feminist, political, and sexual subjects that cannot be found in The Years as we know it. Eventually, some, but not all,

of the deleted material found its way into the pamphlet <u>Three Guineas</u>, which was intended to be a complement to <u>The Years</u>. A study of all the documents of <u>The Years</u>, which include eight holograph notebooks, a nearly complete set of galley proofs, and fragments of typescripts and later page proofs, along with Virginia Woolf's published and unpublished journals and letters, leads to the realization that there were two main reasons for most of the changes she made. One of her greatest concerns was the avoidance of one-sided polemic or propaganda. The other was her attempt to create a coherent, well-structured novel out of a long and rather formless draft. As a result of her efforts to avoid propaganda, much of the ideological content was eliminated, made vague, or countered with opposing points of view. In order to give the work more structure, Woolf developed a pattern of repetitions, so that phrases, images, and incidents keep recurring, and the characters frequently refer to past events. Work on the novel continued for nearly five years, and many important changes, including the insertion of the descriptive passages that introduce chapters and scenes, and the deletion of two entire episodes, were made during the last few months before publication. Yet Woolf's efforts to create a coherent work of art were not entirely successful. <u>The Years</u> reflects its author's desire to include everything in her novel, to express many ideas and points of view, but it does not really come together as a whole. In Virginia Woolf's

earlier works she had enclosed a portion of the world in a private vision, limiting her concern to a few characters and a few events. In _The Years_ she was determined to break the mold of her earlier work, and her greater openness was responsible for many of her difficulties with the novel. Nevertheless, despite its unevenness, its lack of resolution, _The Years_ is a novel rich with meaning which reveals Woolf's willingness to take risks in order to grow as a writer. Study of the manuscripts and documents of _The Years_ illuminates the published novel and traces Woolf's development as an artist-craftsman and as a writer who was deeply concerned with the great issues of her time.

My Thanks

To Ruth Z. Temple, who encouraged me to begin my study of The Years' manuscripts, and gave unstintingly of her time and guidance at every step of the way.

To Robert Day, who read the first three chapters and did some invaluable editing, and to Marvin Magalaner and David Gordon, who read both the draft and final versions and made many helpful suggestions.

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Abbreviations

TY	The Years	The novel as published.
TP	The Pargiters	The original holograph draft--also called the MS
BA	Beginning Again	Volume III of Leonard Woolf's memoirs--1911 to 1918
DAW	Downhill All the Way	Volume IV of Leonard Woolf's memoirs--1919 to 1939
AWD	A Writer's Diary	Leonard Woolf's selected edition of Virginia Woolf's journals
PW	"Professions for Women"	the typescript and holograph of the speech
G	The March 1936 galley proofs of The Years	
P	The December 15, 1936 page proofs of The Years	

Terms and Symbols

I use the term "chapter" to indicate the large divisions of the novel bearing dates as titles. (Woolf herself refers to these divisions as either "parts," "sections," or "chapters.") I refer to episodes within chapters as "scenes" when they involve changes in place or time. I call the descriptive passages that open chapters "preludes," and those that are placed between scenes within a chapter "interludes." (Woolf referred to the similar descriptive passages that open the chapters of The Waves as "interludes.")

In quoting from Virginia Woolf's letters, journals, and manuscripts, I have preserved her idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation. Words that have a line through them in her draft are enclosed by parentheses. Words that I have inserted in her text to clarify meaning are enclosed by brackets. All ellipses in quotations indicate that I have left out words in the original text unless I have indicated that the ellipsis is the author's.

The Pargiters: Dramatis Personae: (major figures)

(Names changed in The Years are indicated by parentheses)

- Abel Pargiter
- Rose, his wife
  - their children:
    - Morris
      - Celia, his wife
        - their children:
          - George (North)
          - Peggy
    - Eleanor
    - Edward
      - his friends:
        - Gibbs (later Milly's husband)
        - Tony Ashton (Ashley)
    - Delia
      - Patrick, her husband
    - Milly
    - Bobby (Martin)
    - Rose
  - the Pargiter's maid: Crosby
  - Abel Pargiter's mistress: Mira

- Digby Pargiter, Abel's brother
- Eugénie, his wife
  - their children:
    - Maggie or Magdalena
      - Renny, her husband
    - Elvira (Sara or Sally)
      - their friend: Nicholas Pomjalovsky or Brown(in both versions)

- Mr. Malone
- Mrs. Malone, Rose Pargiter's sister
  - their daughter: Kitty
    - her teacher: Lucy Craddock
    - her friend: Nelly Hughes or Brook (Robson)
      - her parents: Mr. and Mrs. Hughes or Brook (Robson)
      - her brother: Jo

Introduction

Working with drafts and revisions changes one's perception of the nature of a literary work. What we initially perceive as a discrete entity, complete in itself and destined to be what it is by some inner necessity, becomes part of a continuum, a point in a series of possibilities where the author decided to stop, perhaps for no more apparent reason than a publisher's deadline or sheer exhaustion. One realizes that anywhere along the way to that final moment another turning could have been taken, or a discarded option retrieved, so that a different work would have been created.

These are the thoughts that have gone through my mind as I have read through the manuscripts, proofs and fragments of typescript that remain as evidence of the process that Virginia Woolf went through as she shaped the novel we know as _The Years_. I have been led to wonder, as its story unfolded before my eyes, what other unwritten novel might lie hidden in the pages of scratched-out handwriting and cancelled galley proofs. If she had stopped revising sooner, if her work had gone on for another year, what novel would we be reading today as the last novel Woolf published in her lifetime?

That is a question that can never be answered, any more than we can truly understand what motivated her at crucial points to turn the novel in the direction she did, although the details of her biography and revealing comments in her

journals and letters provide many fascinating clues. All we have to go on are the facts, as they can be found there, and in the memoirs of Leonard Woolf, who lived with her through nearly five years of struggle with The Years.

The documents that have survived provide a picture of the way Woolf worked, but though these materials are extensive, they are in no way complete. The major source we have is impressive, for it consists of eight bound notebooks containing what appears to be a handwritten first draft of the novel.[1] Yet Leonard Woolf's memoirs tell us that, for his wife, months of mental activity usually preceded the actual writing of a draft, so that the characters and scenes came alive in her mind long

[1]This manuscript, and all other documents mentioned here, save for eight pages of typescript in the library of the University of Sussex, England, are preserved in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature of The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. (This collection will be referred to hereafter as Berg.) In a personal letter, Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf's official biographer, has informed me that he does not know of any documents relating to the writing of The Years other than those in these two libraries. (Letter from Professor Quentin Bell to Grace Radin, [Cobbe Place, Beddingham, Lewes, Sussex, 5 May 1975].)

before they appeared in any text.[2] In the case of The Years, this prior development is attested to by evidence in the draft and in her journals.[3]

As we progress through the six years' history leading from Woolf's first inkling of the idea for the novel, which came to her as she prepared to give a speech before a feminist organization in 1931, to the publication of The Years in 1937, it becomes evident that there are many lost stages in the evolution of the novel. The holograph itself contains many variant versions of scenes, and after it was completed in 1934 further revision

[2]Leonard recalled that he " . . . had never known any writer who thought, ruminated so continuously and consciously over what she was writing, turning her problems over in her mind persistently while sitting in a chair in front of the winter fire or going for her daily walk along the bank of the Sussex Ouse. She was able to reel across the last ten pages of The Waves stumbling after her own voice and the voices that flew ahead only because of the hours of intense, conscious thought she had given to the book for weeks and months before the words were actually put upon paper." (Leonard Woolf, Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918 [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964], p.33.) (This will be cited hereafter as BA.)

[3]The way in which Woolf developed the character of Elvira-Sara in her mind months before Elvira appeared in the holograph will be examined in Chapter III below. (Chapter III, pp.79-80.)

continued, probably in typescript.[4] The only documents we have that may possibly be a survival from this period are eight sheets of undated typescript that have been preserved in the Library of the University of Sussex.[5] Aside from these fragments we have no idea of what the alternate versions were like, save for what we can glean from Woolf's journal entries.

It was not until March, 1936 that the first galleys were set in type, and it is our good fortune that a nearly

[4]There is a strong possibility that a typescript was made up at the same time as the holograph. Leonard Woolf, in describing his wife's writing habits, said that "She wrote only in the morning from 10 to 1 and usually she typed out in the afternoon what she had written by hand in the morning . . . " (BA, p. 232.) Woolf herself called the revised version she typed after completing the holograph her " first wild retyping." (Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf [London: Hogarth Press, 1953], 17 July 1935, p. 252.) (This will be cited hereafter as AWD.)

[5]With the permission of Quentin Bell and through the courtesy of Mr. John Burt of the Library of the University of Sussex, England, I have been supplied with copies of the extant typescript pages. They correspond approximately to part of the holograph version of the "1910" chapter of The Years. Since the typescript is undated it is impossible to know just when it was written, but the pages are close enough in content to the holograph to suggest that they were written either concurrently or soon after the holograph was completed.

complete set of proofs pulled at that time is still in existence, preserved along with the holograph in the Berg Collection of English and American Literature of the New York Public Library. The Berg Collection also possesses proofs of the "1917" chapter, which were pulled in December, 1936, just before the novel was published; these last are quite close to the chapter in the Hogarth Press first edition, save for a few minor changes in wording.

Given this massive collection of documents, with a holograph many times the length of The Years that is replete with details that have been expunged from the final text, many questions arise as to the relationship between the original manuscript and the novel that finally emerged. It happens that at the time when Woolf was beginning to realize the scope of the problem of revising her long, discursive first draft, she was reading Turgenev in preparation for writing an essay on his work.[6] She was

[6]The essay Woolf wrote on Turgenev at that time can be read as a commentary on what she was trying to do in The Years, since many of the qualities she finds in Turgenev's works can also be ascribed to The Years. ("The Novels of Turgenev," TLS, 14 Dec. 1933, rpt. in The Captain's Death Bed [1950]; in Collected Essays [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967], I, 247-253.)

struck by his idea of form:

> T[urgenev]'s idea that the writer states the essential and lets the reader do the rest. . . . T. reduces the possibilities. The difficulty about criticism is that it is so superficial. The writer has gone so much deeper. T.kept a diary for Bozarov: [sic] wrote everything from his point of view. We have only 250 short pages. Our criticism is only a birds eye view of the pinnacle of an iceberg. The rest under water. (AWD, 16 Aug. 1933, p. 210)

Like Turgenev, Woolf was beginning to see her manuscript as the base of an iceberg that could be submerged beneath the finished novel, giving it substance and depth. In his case the technique was consciously arrived at, for he deliberately wrote Bazarov's diary for his own benefit. Woolf's approach was more spontaneous; she seemed to use her first draft as a way of writing out her thoughts, and talking to herself as she went along about the problems of craft she was encountering. This way of working was not new to her.

As early as 1909, when she was working out an earlier version of her first novel, The Voyage Out, she had given a copy of her draft to her brother-in-law, Clive Bell. When he criticized one passage, she wrote him the following explanation:

> These bare passages were not meant to remain in the text. They are notes to solidify my own conception of the peoples characters.

> I thought it a good plan to write them down; but having served their purpose they will go.[7]

Thus we can see that to understand Woolf's method we must regard the unpublished draft as a kind of source book, not as a first version of a novel that would be ready for publication after a little polishing and revision. At least in the two novels that nearly span her writing career, Woolf's elusive, impressionistic style was arrived at by paring down a more detailed original manuscript.

Despite the many gaps, The Years' documents provide an exceptional opportunity for following a work of a major writer from its conception through to its completion. But this is not the only reason for undertaking this study. The Years is not just one of the novels of Virginia Woolf; it is the work which she intended to be her summa--which would, in her words, contain " . . . millions of ideas but no preaching--history, politics, feminism, art, literature--in short, a summing up of all I know, feel, laugh at, despise, like, admire, hate and so on." (AWD, 25 March 1933, p. 198). Readers of the novel as we know it might find

[7] The Letters of Virginia Woolf, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman, I, 1888-1912 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), Letter 471: to Clive Bell [29 Fitzroy Square W.], [7 Feb. 1919], 382.

this ambitious declaration puzzling, for although all sorts of ideas are suggested or alluded to in its pages, the references are often indirect or incomplete. It is apparent that, in the long process of revision and compression, some of Woolf's original intentions were obscured, and the result is a novel that has engendered wide disagreement among critics as to its tone, meaning and value.[8]

It is impossible to isolate any one factor as decisive in bringing about the transformation the novel underwent, but one note sounded frequently in her own comments as she worked expressed her fear of becoming shrill and one-sided, of allowing her ideas to destroy her art. The story of the writing of The Years is the story of a struggle to embody ideas in imaginative fiction, to write a work that expresses the deepest beliefs of its author without losing its balance and integrity. Eventuall,, as the extreme difficulties of this task became apparent, Woolf deleted

[8] These opinions range from Josephine O'Brien Schaefer's view of the novel as the most pessimistic of all Woolf's novels to James Hafley's perception of The Years as a breakthrough from the enclosed world of her earlier novels and a courageous attempt to come to terms with the realities of her time. (Josephine Schaefer O'Brien, The Threefold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf [The Hague: Mouton, 1965]; James Hafley, The Glass Roof [1954]; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963].)

many of the ideas she had expressed directly in her original draft and incorporated them in the pamphlet Three Guineas, which she published in 1938 as a complement to The Years. It was her hope that readers would see the connection between the two works, and would regard them, as she did, as one book. (AWD, 3 June 1938, p. 295) But for a time the connection was lost, and it is only in recent years, as readers turn to these seminal works and their drafts to learn more about Virginia Woolf's social theories, that they are being read as she wished.

Soon after the publication of The Years Virginia Woolf was to write: "I myself know why it's a failure, and that its failure is deliberate." (AWD, 7 March 1937, p. 277) This seems a strange remark for an author to make, though it is at least partly attributable to her anxiety as she waited for the first reviews to appear. It does indicate Virginia Woolf's fear that the original impetus for the work had been lost, and that what she had meant to say would not be understood.

The Years was not a failure in the eyes of the public when it was published in 1937, for it became a best seller both in England and the United States. But as time went by its reputation faded, and it came to be ranked below the

level of her most highly regarded novels.[9] Today a new generation of readers is turning to The Years, finding in its pages a more serious social and political commitment than can be discerned in the graceful prose of her more lyrical novels.[10] And The Years rewards careful reading, for though its tone is quiet, its fabric is rich with meaning, and some of Virginia Woolf's most memorable writing can be found in its pages.

For many years studies of Virginia Woolf have emphasized the aesthetic and psychological values of her works, and have placed her, for better or worse, among the novelists

[9]Although the early reviews were mainly favourable, many of the later critical studies echo E. M. Forster's view that" . . . in The Years as in Night and Day, she deserts poetry, and again she fails . . ." (E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf [The Rede Lecture,1941], [London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1942], p. 17). Until recently the strongest dissenting note was sounded by James Hafley, who called The Years " . . . possibly the best, and certainly one of the most interesting of Virginia Woolf's novels. . . ." (The Glass Roof, p. 132.)

[10]As part of the growing interest in The Years, The Bulletin of The New York Public Library has devoted its recent Virginia Woolf issue to discussions of The Years and Three Guineas. (The Bulletin of The New York Public Library, 80 [Winter, 1977].) (This issue will be cited hereafter as Bulletin.) Also, an edited version of the first two notebooks of The Years' holograph is scheduled for publication in the fall of 1977. (The Pargiters: The Essay-Novel Portion of The Years, ed. Mitchell Leaska [New York: The New York Public Library and Readex Books].)

of "sensibility." Scant attention has been paid to her social theories, perhaps because they cluster around feminism, a point of view that has only recently been restored to serious consideration. For this reason The Years and its documents are at the heart of the current reappraisal of Virginia Woolf, for it was in these uncut documents that her social and political theories were developed most fully.

The first to undertake a careful examination of The Years MS was Charles G. Hoffman. Beginning in 1968, he published a series of articles describing what he found in the unpublished drafts of Orlando, Mrs. Dalloway, and The Years.[11] In his article on the MS of The Years, published in 1969, he pointed out the discrepancy between Woolf's intention to write" . . . a sequel to A Room of One's Own--about the sexual life of women . . ." and the content of the novel that was the result of that impulse. (AWD, 20 January 1931, pp. 165-166) Professor Hoffman was also the first to comment on the striking difference between the "Essay-Novel" format of the first section of the holograph

[11]Charles G. Hoffman, "Fact and Fantasy in Orlando: Virginia Woolf's Manuscript Revisions," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 10 (Fall, 1968), 435-444; "From Short Story to Novel: The Manuscript Revisions of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway,"Modern Fiction Studies, 12 (Summer 1968), 171-186; "Virginia Woolf's Manuscript Revisions of The Years," PMLA, 84 (Jan. 1969), 79-89.

and the more conventional structure of the published novel. My analysis of the evolution of The Years is indebted to Professor Hoffman for his pioneering efforts.

My own study has as its main focus the manuscript notebooks, for it is in their pages that one finds a wealth of detail that has been excised from the published novel. Beginning with an analysis of the speech that sparked Woolf's initial impulse to write a feminist essay, I have followed her through the chapters of her draft, using diary comments and other biographical materials wherever they provide insights into the circumstances surrounding her work.[12] My first six chapters deal with the holograph notebooks, and in all but Chapter V, which describes the two episodes that are not included in the published novel, I have used the corresponding chapters of The Years as a basis for comparison. Chapter VII carries the history of the writing of the novel forward from the end of the holograph to the date of publication; its focus is the set

[12]At present, only Leonard Woolf's edited selections from his wife's journals, which have been published as A Writer's Diary, can be quoted directly. The Berg Collection holds the unpublished journals, which date from 1915 to 1941. Although I will refer to the unpublished journal occasionally, most of my references will be to the published edition, which includes most of her comments on her writing.

of galley proofs pulled in March, 1936, which provides most of the documentation for the last stages of revision. My discussion of the proofs in Chapter VII includes a detailed comparison of the galley proofs and the published version of the "1917" chapter of the novel.

My methods has been quite selective. I have chosen to follow certain trends, such as the deletion of sexual and ideological material, and the changes in the depiction of one character, Elvira,(Sara in The Years). I have skipped over some of the scenes that center on Eleanor, and have paid less attention to stylistic variations than to changes that significantly alter form and meaning. These omissions are avenues that remain to be explored. And now that many of Woolf's unpublished documents are being given increased attention, I look forward to the day when comparative studies of the MSS of all her novels will produce insights into her creative processes that go far beyond what can be learned from a study such as mine, which centers on the evolution of a single work.

Chapter I: The Germination Period

By the time Virginia Woolf began actually writing the novel that would become The Years, she had been mulling over the ideas that led to it for over a year. The first impetus had come to her as she prepared a talk to be given before a women's group, the London and National Society for Women's Service, an organization whose purpose was the furtherance of women's careers in the professions.[1] It was their invitation, and the thoughts that came to her as she prepared her speech, that led her to plan the essay on women which would evolve into her novel.[2]

[1]The society was a direct descendant of the first women's suffrage committee. Its object was the bettering of the economic position of women by increasing their opportunities for employment. For a brief lively history of the organization see Rachel Strachey's pamphlet, Women's Suffrage and Women's Service (London: London and National Society for Women's Service, 1927).

[2]Although this is the first reference that directly relates to the evolution of The Years, another possible "germ" is suggested by Louise Desalvo. She notes that an undated entry in one of Woolf's reading notebooks, which was written, Desalvo believes, around May 1, 1930, contains the following passage: "Reading Dante-- a story about it-- what happens to the mind-- a room--people--interruptions." This suggests both the atmosphere of The Years and the significance of Dante to the novel. (Louise Desalvo, "A Note on the beginning of The Years," Bulletin, p. 139. For a discussion of the significance of Dante in The Years, see Margaret Comstock, The Loudspeaker and the Human Voice: Politics and the Form of The Years," Bulletin, pp. 268-269.)

The idea for a feminist essay came to her in her bath, on the day before she was to make her speech:

> I have this moment, while having my bath, conceived an entire book-- a sequel to A Room of One's Own--about the sexual life of women: to be called Professions for Women perhaps--Lord how exciting! This sprang out of my paper to be read on Wednesday to Pippa's [Phillipa Strachey's] society. (AWD, 20 Jan. 1931, pp. 165-166)[3]

A Room of One's Own, which deals mainly with women as writers, had been inspired by two lectures on Women and Literature that Virginia Woolf had given at the women's colleges of Cambridge in 1928.[4] Now, three years later, another address before a group of women had given her an idea for a sequel in which she would attempt to generalize from her experience as a writer in order to help other women understand the obstacles they would face as they attempted

[3]Philippa Strachey was Lytton Strachey's sister, and an old friend of Virginia. We have no record of who invited Virginia Woolf to speak at the meeting, but since Philippa was apparently an active member of the group she was probably instrumental in persuading Woolf to speak. Virginia Woolf's close friend, Ethel Smyth, was another of the speakers, which may have encouraged Woolf to participate.

[4] Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (New York:Harcourt, Brace, 1929).

to move into all the professions. Her diary remarks suggest, moreover, that she planned to broaden her topic to include her thoughts on the sexual life of women.

As we trace the history of The Years, we will come to see how that idea for an essay was transformed, first into an "Essay-Novel," and then into a more conventional novel, and how some of the ideas developed for the original essay found their way into Three Guineas, the pamphlet on women and war that was published as an offshoot of The Years.[5] And we will see that the first hints of the themes she would deal with in her novel, the methods of revision she would use, and the special problems she would face, can be found in the holograph and typescript of the speech she gave on that January evening in 1931.

Virginia Woolf's fellow speaker that night was Dame Ethel Smyth, a 71-year-old composer and one-time militant suffragette. Ethel was a new friend who had attached

[5]The diary entry describing Virginia Woolf's idea in her bath (AWD, 20 Jan. 1931, pp. 165-166) has two notes attached to it. Where Woolf says that she has "conceived an entire new book," an editor, presumably Leonard Woolf, has added a note suggesting that the new book planned here was "Eventually Three Guineas." Virginia Woolf herself, however, had already appended another note: " (This is Here and Now, I think. May '34,)" which also appears in the published edition. Here and Now was one of the many provisional titles for The Years, and Woolf connects her original idea with the novel, not the later pamphlet. Since Three Guineas was based on the research for the essay that became the "Essay-Novel" Leonard Woolf is not incorrect in his notation; it is possible, however, that Leonard did not know of the close connection between The Years and Three Guineas since there is no evidence that he read The Years in its earlier form, before the essays had been deleted.

herself passionately to Virginia. All through the preceding autumn the two had spent many afternoons together, going over Ethel's memoirs of her early struggles to become a composer and to further the women's cause.[6] Virginia was both fascinated and repelled by Dame Ethel's indomitable egoism, but the story of her friend's unswerving effort to achieve recognition and equality in a man's world had impressed Woolf deeply. In an early section of the typescript of her speech, she had paid tribute to her:

> (She was one of the ice-breakers, gun-runners, the window smashers, the armoured tanks who climbed the rough, drew the enemies fire, and left behind her a pathway for those who came after her, not yet smooth or macadamised--but still a pathway.) [7]

[6]At this time Ethel Smyth was probably preparing material for her contribution to Little Innocents, a collection of childhood reminiscences. (Ethel Smyth et al.) Little Innocents [London: Cobden Sanderson, 1932], and for a collection of her own autobiographical essays. (Ethel Smyth, Female Pipings in Eden [London: P. Davies, 1933].)

[7]Virginia Woolf, Typescript,"Professions for Women" (Listed in Berg as Virginia Woolf, "Professions for Women," [The Death of the Moth], Speech 21 January, 1931. Typescript with the author's MS corrections, unsigned and undated.) Leonard Woolf edited and published a version of this speech after his wife's death. He made several important changes in the text, eliminating references to feminist leaders and softening the tone. ("Professions for Women," The Death of the Moth [1942], rpt. in Collected Essays, II, 284-289.) The typescript of "Professions for Women" will be published as an appendix to the forthcoming edition of the Essay-Novel of The Years. (See above, Introduction, p. 10, note 10.) (Hereafter the typescript will be cited as PW, typescript.)

Because this part of her tribute to Ethel has been crossed out in the extant typescript, it is doubtful that these words were spoken that night; nevertheless, it is unusual to find Virginia Woolf, who abhorred violence, giving even a fleeting stamp of approval to such militant tactics. In this instance her sympathies outweighed her reservations: "I never know," the deleted passage continues, "whether to be angry that such heroism was needed, or glad that such heroism was shown." (PW, typescript, p. 1)

Her own work, Woolf went on to tell her audience that night, had not demanded such extraordinary valor. Paper and pen and a stamp to mail one's essay to an editor were all a young woman required to launch her on a career in journalism, and these were more readily available than artist's models and studios, or orchestras to perform a composer's works.

Yet she saw now, as she looked back, that she had fought her own psychological battle, a struggle she had shared, she suspected, with many another daughter of the middle class. It was a battle with a phantom she called "The Angel in the House," after the heroine of Coventry Patmore's famous paean to Victorian womanhood.[8]

[8] The Angel in the House, in The Poems of Coventry Patmore, ed. Frederick Page (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 61-205.

This is the "Angel" her typescript describes:

> (She was the woman that men wished women to be . . .) she soothed, conciliated, sacrificed herself took the hash if there was only chicken enough for one and in short was so constituted that she never had a wish or a mind of her own but preferred to sympathise with the wishes and needs of others. Above all--I hope I need not say it--she was pure. There were a great many things one could not say without bringing a blush to her cheek. (PW, typescript, pp. 3-4)

The "Angel" had tried to dictate what Virginia might write about and how she should approach her material, especially when she wrote for a paper owned and edited by men, and reviewed books written by men. "Be sympathetic," the "Angel" warned her, "be tender; flatter; use all the arts and wiles which I Heaven help me have used 'til I am sick of the whole thing . . . " (PW, typescript, p. 5) Such pressures, Woolf suspected, had destroyed the creativity of many a talented woman of the past. "Writer after writer, painter after painter and musician I daresay too she has strangled and killed. One is always meeting their corpses laid out in biography." (PW, typescript, p. 6)

In addition to the typescript we have a brief holograph draft of the speech, which probably preceded the typescript.[9]

[9]The holograph draft of the speech is brief and incomplete. It is entitled "Speech" and is dated "21st Jan. 1931"; it is located in Virginia Woolf's working notebooks. (Listed in Berg as Articles, essays, fiction and reviews, 4, 1930-31, pp. 117-133,) The typescript, which appears to be complete, is undated, but it is likely that Woolf followed her usual practice of jotting down her ideas in longhand and then revising as she typed. Since the speech was given on January 21, 1931, the two versions probably were written at nearly the same time. (The holograph draft will be cited hereafter as PW, holograph.)

Although the typescript version may be closer to the actual words Woolf spoke that night, comparison with the longhand draft affords an insight into the process of distillation and modification which was part of Woolf's writing method, and which would be used again and again in the course of her revisions of The Years. In the typescript the young aspiring journalist whom Woolf conjures up as an example for her audience is reviewing a novel by someone like Arnold Bennett, but in the holograph version of the speech the subject of the review is a memoir of the last war written by a participant:

> If I were reviewing books now I would say this was a stupid and violent and hateful and idiotic and trifling and ignoble and mean display. I would be bored to death by war books. I detest the masculine point of view. I am bored by his heroics, virtue and humor. (PW, holograph, p. 121)

This version is a spontaneous outburst, an expression of anger, irritation and disdain for the "masculine point of view." As was her wont, when Woolf rewrote she softened her remarks and placed them in a broader context, believing that this would make them more palatable and persuasive.[10]

[10]The value of writing freely and polishing later was something Woolf had learned from keeping her diary. In 1924, she had written,"What I was going to say was that I think writing must be formal. The art must be respected. This struck me reading some of my notes here, for if one lets the mind run loose it becomes egotistic; personal, which I detest. At the same time the irregular fire must be there; and perhaps to loose it one must begin by being chaotic, but not appear in public like that." (AWD, 18 Nov. 1924, p. 69.)

Here, as in The Years, the handwritten drafts seemed to function for her as a way of venting her own anger and frustration, freeing her to write her final version more reasonably, with a wide readership in mind.[11]

Here in this early speech Woolf also touched on one of the major themes that she would explore in The Years and Three Guineas: the connection between "the masculine point of view" and the causes of domestic tyranny and savage warfare. This "masculine" attitude was not, in her belief, natural to all males. It was the idea of masculinity as defined by social expectations and instilled through education that had acted throughout history to constrict and deform what was best in human nature. Only by changing the conditioning of both sexes, she believed, could the direction of civilization be changed.

[11]Woolf frequently expressed her belief that the expression of anger and resentment weakened and distorted a work of art. In an essay entitled "Women and Fiction," written in 1929 (Virginia Woolf, "Women and Fiction," Forum [March, 1929], rpt. Granite and Rainbow [1958], in Collected Essays, II, 141-148.), she notes that this element was seldom absent from the work of women writers, who like Negroes and working-class men, had a personal grievance against society. At that time she was optimistic enough to think that women's new freedom would help them to write more objectively. Nevertheless, the documents show that Woolf herself had never expunged the anger and bitterness from her soul, and that it was only through careful editing that she moderated the tone of her writing.

These passages already suggest one of the questions that would occupy Woolf's thoughts throughout her exploration of the ways in which the lives of men and women might be changed. How was one to distinguish between the "heroism" of an Ethel Smyth and the "heroics" of those who led men into senseless battle?" How were women to prevent themselves from adopting the "masculine point of view" as they struggled to achieve an equal place in society? Would they be able to change social institutions by infusing them with more humane values, or would their efforts be just one more source of conflict and polarization? The life and character of Rose Pargiter, the militant suffrage fighter in _The Years_, who proudly wears her medal for war service on behalf of the very government she had spent her life attacking, dramatizes this dilemma.[12]

[12]Jane Marcus suggests that Woolf expressed her fear of Ethel Smyth's violent nature in the character of Rose,"whose image of herself as 'Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse' is similar to Dame Ethel's self-image as the daughter of a general in the Royal Artillery. A good friend of Emmeline Pankhurst, Dame Ethel was the composer of 'The March of the Women,' battle song of the suffragettes. Imprisoned, she conducted the march from her jail cell with a toothbrush. Like Rose Pargiter she became a patriot during the wars, supporting the very government she had fought, not refusing honors as Woolf and Margaret Llewelyn-Davies did. The odd scene in the novel in which Rose buys violets for Sara, then knocks her against a wall (calling her a 'damned liar' as Sara later remembers), suggests the combination of affection and violence which characterized the friendship of the composer and the novelist."(Jane Marcus,"The Years as Greek Drama, Domestic Novel, and Gotterdammerung," _Bulletin_ , pp. 297-298.)

The holograph of Woolf's speech goes on to touch on one of the difficulties she faced as a writer, a difficulty that was to surface again and again in the years to come. She feared that even if she were able to conquer her personal "Angel" and allow herself to write about her deepest feelings and experiences, the men who read and judged her work would not tolerate the degree of frankness in a woman's writing that they were willing to accept from men.

> Take Mr. Joyce or Proust, one of the achievements of their books is their honesty, their openness, their determination to say everything. For women, the prudery of men is a terrible bugbear . . . . Now men are shocked if a woman said what she felt (as Joyce does) Yet literature which is always pulling down the blinds is not literature. All that we have ought to be expressed--mind and body--a process of incredible difficulty and danger. (PW, holograph, pp. 121-122)

In the typescript Woolf broadens this narrowly feminist view and includes male writers like D. H. Lawrence in her concerns. He too had suffered as an artist because he had defied convention. The opposition his writing had aroused had, in her opinion, injured his imagination and distorted his personality. She feared the same fate for herself if she took up the role of an iconoclast:

> The moment I become heroic the moment I dash my imagination against an obstacle; it shrivels up and hardens. I become a preacher, not a writer. . . . I become hard and shrill and positive. . . . in short I cease to be a writer. . . (PW, typescript, pp. 13-14)

This was the impasse that Woolf was to arrive at repeatedly in the long, arduous course of writing The Years. How was she to write about what she wanted most to express, how reach down and bring up the truth as she saw it, without preaching or insisting, without distorting her art? A note of regret sounded in her voice as she told her audience in 1931 that the time was not ripe for what she had to say.

> We will wait another fifty years. But it seems to me a pity. . . . I will wait until men become so civilized that they are not shocked when a woman speaks the truth about her body. (PW, typescript, p. 14)

The experiences she had encountered as a writer were different from what her listeners would meet as they entered other professions, and she told them that she looked forward to gaining new insight into women's nature as a result of their growing freedom to explore all their potentialities. Yet, although women would surely go through many changes as they undertook new roles, Woolf believed that there were profound differences between men and women, differences that would make progress in a man's world more difficult, but that she hoped would not be erased.

For Virginia Woolf, the distinctive qualities that made a woman what she was came from the divergence between her upbringing and experience and those of a man.

> Her experience is not the same. Her values both in art and in life are her own. . . . And you are bound to find when you come to practice your innumerable professions that your differences of outlook will bring you to loggerheads with some respected chiefs of your profession . . . that you will have to make your profession adapt itself to your needs, your sense of values, your moral sense your sense of what is due to humanity and reason. (PW, typescript, pp. 8-10)

Woolf thought that the way women were brought up and the role they played in the family had developed a sensitivity to others and an awareness of the rich fabric of physical and emotional life that was denied to most men, who had been forced into narrow specialities at an early age in order to achieve advancement in their careers. She hoped that the professions would be humanized by the entrance of women, so that new possibilities would open up for both sexes.

Yet the future held dangers for women. In competing with men at work they would meet with a great deal of opposition and derision, and would feel pressured to become as ego-bound and careerist as the men. It would take strength and courage to retain their individuality, and, she warned, ". . . it is of the highest importance that you should not add to your burdens the heavy and unnecessary burden of bitterness." (PW, typescript, p. 17)

Despite these obstacles, Woolf saw the future as an opportunity for a new growth of understanding and a new kind

of dialogue between the sexes. The note on which she ended her brief talk was optimistic and visionary:

> You have earned the room; you have paid the rent for it . . . that is perhaps enough for the moment. But then, as Dame Ethel asks, what will be the next step? There will be one. And I predict that the next step will be a step upon the stair. You will hear somebody coming. You will open the door. And then--this is at least my guess--there will take place between you and someone else the most interesting exciting and important conversation that has ever been heard. (PW, typescript, pp. 21-22)

In A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf had described her vision of a young couple who meet and share a cab.[13] From this image she went on to explain her concept of androgyny, a theory which suggests that each human being has within him both male and female qualities of mind. If these were fully developed, the androgynous being would be able to move freely from one side of his or her nature to the other, and would not be constrained from developing any talent or interest out of fear of being branded unmanly or unfeminine.

The text of "Professions for Women" suggests that as women moved out of their conventional roles as wives and mothers and explored their full potentialities they would be becoming more andrygynous. And this last passage expresses the hope that men would be changed by their contact with these new women, so that they too would have the chance to

[13] A Room of One's Own, pp. 167-171.

develop fully and communicate freely. It is in this context that the exciting conversation Woolf predicts will take place, between men and women who have learned how to speak to one another as human beings.

When Woolf began to plan the feminist essay she had thought of in her bath, she tentatively entitled it "The Open Door," or "A Tap on the Door," which suggests that she planned to focus her essay on that hoped-for moment when such a conversation would be possible. (AWD, 23 Jan. 1931, p. 166; AWD 13 Jan. 1932, p. 178) And it is to that vision of a fruitful new relationship between the sexes that she would return at the end of The Years, when Eleanor Pargiter will see a young couple, who may well be the same pair that entered the cab in A Room of One's Own, emerging from a taxi-cab at the doorstep of the house in which they will begin their life together.[14]

The speech on "Professions for Women" had given Virginia Woolf an idea for an essay, and it had provided an opportunity to explore many of the themes that would be developed in the novel that the essay became. And, when we come to examine the first draft of that novel, we will find that a version of that speech has been incorporated into its text to create a new form, the "Essay-Novel."

[14]Virginia Woolf, The Years (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), p. 434. This will be cited hereafter as TY.

Woolf had been so excited by her idea for the essay that she could not resist starting it right after her speech was given. (AWD, 23 Jan., 1931, p. 166) But the impulse to write a feminist essay had come, as Woolf's new beginnings often did, just as she was struggling with the conclusion of a novel, in this case The Waves;[15] endings were always difficult for her, and often her mind would seek release by charging off in a new direction.

This idea for an essay was so stimulating that she found it difficult to shake off its obsession and return to The Waves. The Waves, Woolf's most experimental work, had developed into a series of interior monologues without direct action or dialogue. The experiences of its characters are conveyed indirectly, through their thoughts and memories, so that the facts of daily life acquire reality only through their consciousnesses. After working so long in this subjective vein, it is easy to see why Woolf found herself drawn back to the outside world, to arguments and politics and the concerns of ordinary people.

By August, 1931, The Waves was ready for publication, but though Woolf had begun some notes for "The Knock on the

[15] Virginia Woolf, The Waves (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959).

Door" on July 20, 1931, it seems that she did not pursue them for long.[16] Instead she began work on Flush, a little fantasy about Elizabeth Barrett's spaniel that she had conceived of as a diversion during the last difficult stages of The Waves.[17] And by the end of 1931 she had embarked on a new project, the revision of a series of articles to be included in a second Common Reader.[18] These, along with her pamphlet, A Letter to a Young Poet,[19] and a few stories, were all the literary assignments she would undertake during the first nine months of 1932.[20]

[16]Our only evidence of these early notes for the essay is at the beginning of Notebook I of the holograph of The Years. (Berg) The first page bears the title "Notes for The Knock on the Door?" and is dated July 20, 1931, which is just about the time Woolf finished her final typescript of The Waves. (AWD, 17 July 1931, p. 172.) This first effort was abortive, apparently, for after the title a number of pages have been cut out of the notebook. The next page left intact bears the date "11 October 1932," followed by the first working title of The Years: The Pargiters A Novel-Essay Based upon a paper read to the London/National Society for Women's Service; this page begins the holograph of the novel. (The holograph of The Years will be referred to hereafter as The Pargiters and cited as TP.)

[17]Virginia Woolf, Flush: A Biography (London: Hogarth Press, 1933)

[18]Virginia Woolf,The Common Reader: Second Series (London: Hogarth Press, 1932)

[19]Virginia Woolf, A Letter to a Young Poet [1932], rpt. in Collected Essays,II, 182-195.

[20]My source for this description of Woolf's literary activities during the early part of 1932 is Quentin Bell's biography. (Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), II, 171.)

Yet all during this period her mind kept turning back to "A Knock on the Door" and collecting data for its arguments. In February, 1931, we find her talking with her physician about "the period and professional women," following up her theories about women's special nature and professional life. (AWD, 4 Feb. 1931, p. 167)[21] In September of that year she came across a passage in Montaigne that suggests that women have voracious sexual appetites; his remark set her to wondering why that instinct seems to have atrophied in so many women of her generation and she began making up a chapter of "Tap on the Door" on the spot.[22] Early in 1932 her thoughts are set running on her essay once again," . . . owing largely to reading Wells on Women--how she must be ancillary and decorative in the world of the future, because she has been tried, in 10 years, and has not proved anything." (AWD, 11 Feb. 1932, p. 179)

[21] Woolf herself was plagued by an unusual degree of discomfort during menstruation. In letters to her sister she frequently mentions being unable to travel, entertain, or work because of headaches or discomforts associated with menstruation. In a letter to Clive Bell she writes, "Possibly I see on looking at a calendar, the usual indisposition of my sex may make me unable to come on Monday." (Letters, II, 1912-1922, Letter 1049: To Clive Bell [Hogarth (House, Richmond)], [23 May 1919], 360. During the time she was working on The Years she suffered from dizziness and fainting spells that were partially attributed to menopause .(Bell, II, 197) She feared that she would be "balked by time of life, etc. from completing The Years successfully. "(AWD, 14 March 1937, p. 278.)

[22] Virginia Woolf, unpublished journals, 1916-1941 (Berg), 3 Sept. 1931, n. pag.

Finally, on July 13, 1932, Woolf announced that she had been "sleeping over a promising novel." (AWD, 13 July 1932, p. 182)[23] She had been prompted to begin spinning fictional lives by reading the biography of Joseph Wright.[24] Wright, a maker of dialect dictionaries, had been a workhouse boy whose mother had worked as a charwoman to put him through school. Woolf felt a special bond with this man, whose respect for his mother had led him to devote himself to the education of working women.

At this point it appears that Woolf had begun to feel that the feminist questions she had been mulling over might best be expressed in a novel rather than an essay--a novel that would be based on the real lives of people like Joseph Wright whom she had encountered in the memoirs and biographies she loved to read. And when we turn to the eight handwritten notebooks that comprise the first complete draft of the novel, we will find the lives of Joseph Wright and others like him reflected in its pages.

[23] An earlier comment that suggests she was already thinking of a novel with some resemblance to The Years is recorded in her diary in November, 1931: ". . . in the City today I was thinking of another book--about shopkeepers, and publicans, with low-life scenes: and I ratified this sketch by Morgan's [E.M. Forster's] judgment." (AWD, 16 Nov. 1931, p. 176.)

[24] Elizabeth Mary Wright, The Life of Joseph Wright (London:Oxford Univ. Press, 1932), 2 volumes.

Thus, in the course of a year and a half, Woolf had moved away from her idea for a feminist essay to plans for a novel that would somehow incorporate the themes she had been exploring and the stories of people like the Wrights. What was needed now was a form that could include both, and, logically enough, that form would be the "Essay-Novel."

Chapter II : 1880

"I prefer, if I wish to tell the truth, to write fiction"

(*TP*, I, 13)

We have seen how the idea for a feminist essay had remained in the background of Woolf's mind all through 1931 and most of 1932, until something in Joseph Wright's biography set her to thinking of a novel instead. By October, 1932 the two threads had come together, and the essay and novel had merged, creating a new form, the "Essay-Novel." Once she had hit upon the form, Woolf began to write at once, working with such excitement that it was November bfore she stopped for breath and explained what she was about:[1]

> I have entirely remodelled my "Essay." It's to be an Essay-Novel, called The Pargiters--and it's to take in everything, sex, education, life, etc: and come, with the most powerful and agile leaps, like a chamois, across precipices from 1880 to here and now. That's the notion anyhow, and I have been in such a haze and dream and intoxication, declaiming phrases, seeing scenes, as I walk up Southampton Row that I can hardly say I have been alive at all, since 10th October. (AWD, 2 Nov. 1932, p. 189)

[1]In his study of the geneses of Virginia Woolf's novels (based mainly on A Writer's Diary, since the unpublished documents were not available to him), Jean Guiguet has posited the theory that the discovery of an appropriate form for each work served as the " active, fertilising element " that freed her to write. (Jean Guiguet, Virginia Woolf and Her Works [1962], trans. Jean Stewart [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965], p. 230) The idea for the "Essay-Novel" form was the impetus that started Woolf working on The Years after a long period of germination; unfortunately, in this case the form proved unworkable, so that after completing the first section, Woolf would find herself struggling to substitute a more viable structure.

Woolf began writing her "Essay-Novel" in the bound notebook in which she had started the essay on professions for women that she had originally planned.[2] The notes for the essay had been cut out of the book, and the new title, The Pargiters A Novel Essay Based upon a paper read to the London/National Society for Women's Service, announces both the form her novel would take and the source from which her inspiration came.

For the opening of her novel Woolf recreates the occasion that had inspired it. She pretends that she is speaking before the women's group once more, and in that role she tells her audience that she has overcome her usual reluctance to speak in public because" . . . any request made by young women who are earning their livings in the professions is of such importance that to refuse it . . . would be an act of ingratitude and selfishness." (TP, I,5)

After further introductory remarks, Woolf reveals her real purpose. She explains to her imaginary audience of young women that as a writer she is an "outsider" by profession, who can show them aspects of their own situation that are not always visible on the inside. It is her belief, she explains, that in order to understand themselves they must have some understanding of those who

[2]See above, Chapter I, page 29, note 16.

came before them:

> We cannot understand the present if we isolate it from the past. If we want to understand what it is that you are doing now (I must ask you to) forget that we are in this room, this night; (in the year 1931) . . . We must forget that we are, for the moment ourselves. We must become (our grandmothers.) (TP, I, 12)

She proposed to lead them back into the past by reading them scenes from a novel-in-progress that follows a family called Pargiter from 1800 to the year 1932. (Actually,the scene she inserts at this point is set in 1880, and is very much like the second scene in The Years, which opens with Delia and Milly preparing tea.) In this way Woolf hoped to show these emancipated, ambitious young women she had conjured up as her audience what it had been like to grow up in a Victorian household. "You look upon us, " she told them, "with pity and contempt." (TP, I, 34) She felt that the new generation was unable to understand the subtle pressures that had kept healthy middle-class women confined in curtained drawing rooms, preoccupied with making tea and getting married.

Virginia Woolf's own lifetime had spanned the transition from the Victorian era to that of the new "emancipated woman." Her sense of responsibility as a writer, which had been brought home to her as she had stood on the dais before that group in 1931, may have led her to adopt an approach that was almost didactic. As one reads this introductory essay it seems that Virginia Woolf saw herself speaking for

her generation and sex, with an obligation to state as clearly as she could what she believes to be the truth about the important issues of her time.

Thus it does not come as a surprise when one realizes that this opening speech is more than a conventional framing device. After the tea-table scene ends, another essay appears, in which Woolf explores the economic and social implications of the lives the Pargiter sisters lead. This becomes the pattern of the "Essay-Novel", a pattern which will persist throughout the first two notebooks of the holograph. After each scene of the novel the author inserts an interpretive essay in which she analyzes the events she has just portrayed and relates them to their historical background, using facts and quotations gleaned from biographies and other documents.[3]

This form, the "Essay-Novel," was a new departure for Woolf: by alternating her fictional scenes with explanatory essays she was abandoning her novelistic detachment, placing herself in a radical stance between her novel and its

[3]Many of the facts and quotations in the essay part of The Pargiters eventually found their way into the body and footnotes of Three Guineas. (Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1938].) A set of holograph reading notes still exist which show the research through which Woolf found her facts. (Listed in Berg as Three Guineas, holograph reading notes, undated and unsigned.) Since the notes are undated and many of the same sources are cited in both The Pargiters and Three Guineas, it is impossible to know which work the notes were originally intended for.

readers to serve as her own interpreter.[4] Thus it is that we find Virginia Woolf, a writer whose temperament and aesthetic inclinations had heretofore led her to express herself in novels that were suggestive and impressionistic, creating a strange, hybrid form[5] which combines story-telling with analysis that is explicitly ideological and didactic.

In the introductory essay to The Pargiters Woolf makes a statement that suggests the method behind her invention of this new form:

> I prefer, (if I wish to tell the truth) to write fiction. . . .This novel the Pargiters, moreover is not a novel of vision but a novel of fact. It is based on scores--I might boldly say thousands--of old memoirs & there is scarcely a statement in it that cannot be (traced to some biography) verified if anyone should wish to so misuse their time. (TP, I, 13)

In order to "tell the truth" Woolf has invented a special kind of fiction, a fiction buttressed by facts. And as becomes clear some pages later, the truth she wishes to tell is a special kind of truth: "truth of fact, as distinct from truth of vision." (TP, I, 41) Truth is not, then, an

[4]Charles Hoffman notes that "Nowhere else, not even in the working notes for Mrs. Dalloway (which of all the novels except for The Years has the most commentary by the author while the writing was in progress), does Virginia Woolf analyze and comment on the characters to the extent that she does in these first two notebooks of The Years." (Hoffman, "Manuscript Revisions of The Years," p. 81.)

[5]Jean Guiguet has pointed out that Woolf also conceived of The Waves as a hybrid form, a "play-poem." (Guiguet, p. 281; AWD, 18 June 1927, p. 108.)

absolute--it can vary depending on its source. It is easy here to become lost in semantics, for Virginia Woolf seldom defines her terms, and it is obvious that "truth," and "fact," and "vision" are part of a cluster of concepts that we must define for ourselves. These are words that appear frequently in Woolf's writing, especially in her critical essays, and examining their use in that context may provide clues to their meaning here.

In "Phases of Fiction," her survey of novelists of the past, she names a group of writers, Defoe and Swift among them, as "The Truth Tellers." These are the writers who gratify our sense of belief, in whose work " . . . emphasis is laid upon the very facts that most reassure us of the stability in real life, upon money, furniture, food, until we seem wedged among solid objects in a solid universe."[6] It is likely that in The Pargiters Woolf was attempting to create just such a solid sense of reality, based on the facts she had gleaned from biographies. But it can be noted that Swift and Defoe did not need to shore up their work through research--their source was life itself, as they experienced it.

Virginia Woolf, it seems, did not have their confidence in her perceptions. This may have stemmed, in part, from the

[6]Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction," Bookman [1929], rpt. Granite and Rainbow [1958]; in Collected Essays, II, 58.

limitations of her own experience, as a woman and as a semi-invalid, but as she had stated elsewhere, her whole generation suffered from a lack of confidence in their own experience: Defoe and Swift's certainty about the nature of reality was not available to the modern writer since" . . . science and religion have between them destroyed belief, . . ." and "It is as if the modern mind, wishing always to verify its emotions, had lost the power of accepting anything simply for what it is."[7]

The direction Woolf herself was planning to take at this point comes as a surprise to those of us who have followed her literary development. Earlier in her career she had repudiated the methods of Edwardian writers like Arnold Bennett, with their "enormous stress upon the fabric of things";[8] now she was" . . . infinitely delighting in facts for a change, and in possession of quantities beyond counting . . ." (AWD, 2 Nov. 1932, p. 189)

But it is her turning away from "vision" that seems even more significant than her new infatuation with facts, for the pursuit of "vision" had always been the great object

[7]Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art," NY Herald Tribune, 14 Aug. 1927, rpt. in Granite and Rainbow [1958]; in Collected Essays, II, 219 and 223.

[8]Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,"Literary Review of the NY Evening Post, 17 Nov. 1923, rpt. in The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays [1950]; in Collected Essays, II, 332.

of her literary quest. In Virginia Woolf's private language, "vision" seems to mean a way of looking not at but through the object, to its deepest level of meaning.[9] For her, facts and objects had always achieved their significance in this way, so that, at her best, she achieved the effect she had admired in Ibsen's writing:

> A room is to him a room, a writing table a writing table, and a wastepaper basket a wastepaper basket. At the same time, the paraphernalia of reality have at certain moments to become the veil through which we see infinity.[10]

As we continue our exploration of the way *The Pargiters* evolved into *The Years* we will see that the combination of reality and vision that Woolf found in Ibsen is what she herself would try to achieve in her novel. But at least at the outset Woolf appears to have set aside her search for

[9]Alice Van Buren Kelly, whose study of Virginia Woolf's novels focusses on the dialectic between fact and vision, has defined Woolf's concept of vision in a way that is useful and comprehensive: "In the world of vision, physical objects are not bounded, but instead transcend themselves to take on universal significance. Identity in the world of vision is unity, merging, a combining of things. Only madmen live there entirely--most often it is discovered in moments of mystical understanding. . . . It also reveals itself in patterns outside the individual life, in patterns of history, of a certain sort of immortality, and in the pattern of accumulated moments of vision." (Alice Van Buren Kelly, *The Novels of Virginia Woolf: Fact and Vision* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 5)

[10]Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E. M. Forster," *Atlantic Monthly* (Nov. 1927) , rpt. *The Death of the Moth*, 1942; in *Collected Essays*, I, 346.

that glimpse of infinity to focus on the solid facts of daily existence.[11]

When we turn back to the holograph, we can see how Woolf used these facts to illustrate the themes she had touched upon in her speech on "Professions for Women." As she describes the lives of the young Pargiters, in the first section of the novel, she emphasizes the way in which education and life-work will serve as a wedge between the sexes, so that even brothers and sisters who were affectionate companions as children will find it impossible to share their feelings as they grow older. In her scenes from the novel, and in the accompanying essays, Woolf will examine the powerful economic, social, and psychological forces that create barriers between the sexes and impede the full development of both men and women. Although these themes can be found in The Years as well as in The Pargiters,

[11]Looking back on her work on The Years, Woolf was to feel that her attempt to convey the dailiness of life in this novel had been a failure, since this was not her métier. In Moments of Being, a collection of autobiographical writings published after her death, Woolf divided time into moments of "being" and "non-being"--times when one lives consciously and when one does not. She found the unconscious moments more difficult to write about: "The real novelist can somehow convey both sorts of being. I think Jane Austen can; and Trollope; perhaps Thackeray and Dickens and Tolstoy. I have never been able to do both. I tried--in Night and Day and in The Years." (Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," in Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings, ed. Jeanne Schulkind [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976], p. 70.)

they are more cleaerly stated and fully developed in the earlier version. And one important theme, the way the ideal of female chastity served to repress the sexual life of women, will be given far less attention in The Years than it is accorded in The Pargiters.

The first scene that Woolf introduces in the holograph focusses on Delia and Milly, who are sitting in the drawing room of the house on Abercorn Terrace, impatiently waiting for the water to boil for tea. (In The Years it is the father, Colonel Pargiter, who appears first, but here in the draft we meet the daughters first; it is the lives of the women that are at the center.)

The portrait of Delia that emerges in this first scene is sharper and clearer than in The Years. She is an accomplished violinist who wants to go to Germany to study. Later, her father will refuse to let her go, and she is already well aware that her plan is futile. Closed off from this possibility, Delia will escape into an adolescent dream of sharing in Parnell's cause. She will move, as young girls often do, from pursuit of achievement in her own right to submersion of her self in a romantic dream of fulfillment through a heroic man. In The Years, where there is no mention of her musical interests, she appears as a rather ambiguous and one-dimensional character.

In the holograph, even the sheep-like Milly loves to paint, but since her parents regard working from live models

as a questionable pursuit for their daughter she is limited to sketching landscapes and flowers. For Milly, marriage and children are always the most important goals, but Delia is constituted differently. Later in the same scene, the two girls see a woman with a baby walk by their window. Each girl reacts to the sight in her own way, but in the essay that analyzes this scene Woolf explains that Delia perceives this difference in herself as a kind of defect.

> The sight of the baby had stirred in each quite a different emotion. Milly had felt a curious though unanalyzed desire to look at the baby, to hold it; to feel its body, to press her lips to the nape of its neck--whereas Delia had felt, also without being fully conscious of it, a vague uneasiness, as if some emotion were expected of her which for some vaguely discreditable reason she did not feel; & then, instead of following the perambulator, as her sister did, with her eyes, she turned abruptly into the room, to exclaim a moment later "O my God," as the thought struck her that she would never be allowed to go to Germany to study music. (TP, I, 44)

This is the kind of interpretive comment that one finds in the essays, which allow Woolf to integrate explication and expansion of her text into the structure of the novel. Without this commentary, Delia's cry of despair in The Years appears to be a generalized response to the limitations on her life brought about by her mother's prolonged illness, which has restricted her social life. And since the girls' observation of the baby is not described in detail in The Years the two sisters seem to share a longing to marry.

In both versions of the novel the sisters also see a young man emerging from a cab as they peer through the

curtains, and each secretly hopes he is coming to call on them. Eleanor, the oldest sister, has joined them by this time, and in her role of surrogate mother she warns them, "Don't be caught looking." (TY, p. 19) In The Pargiters' accompanying essay Woolf explains how remarks of this kind can have a profound and insidious effect.

> Both Delia and Milly blushed with a peculiar shame, when Eleanor said "Don't be caught looking" they wanted to look at the young man; they knew it was wrong to look; they were caught looking; they disliked being caught: they were ashamed, indignant, confused--all in one--& the feeling, since it was never exposed, save by a blink, or a giggle; wriggled deep down into their minds & sometimes woke them in the middle of the night with curious sensations, complicated dreams that seemed all to come from one fact--that Abercorn Terrace was besieged on all sides by what may be called street love. (TP, I, 47)

Woolf's essay goes on to explain that this "street love," which we might call sexuality, posed a peculiar threat to the Pargiter girls because one of the doctrines that governed their lives was that of chastity, which meant that a middle-class girl would not be marriageable unless her reputation and her virginity were intact. In a society where "nice" women did not work for pay, and where the only acceptable work available to those who did not marry was in the servile role of governesses, marriage was an overriding goal. Yet, paradoxically, the "Angel in the House" insisted that young ladies should have no awareness of sex nor interest in their bodies' sensations. These healthy, restless young women, cut off from any worthwhile goal or activity, must pretend that they are indifferent to men.

The ideal of chastity limited their lives in many ways; Woolf explains that girls could not go out alone because their reputations must be protected, and though some might venture into the slums to do charity work they had to avoid venturing alone into the fashionable part of the city where they might encounter eligible young men. Of course the more adventurous girls evaded these rules and managed to slip out alone occasionally, but the price they paid was high. Of necessity they constructed a tissue of lies that distorted their relations with their parents, their brothers, and with one another. The lying and hypocrisy that flourished under the smooth surface of the Victorian family is a theme Woolf will return to again and again in both _The Pargiters_ and _The Years_.[12]

In her essay Woolf defines the forces that "control the apparently inevitable" behaviour of people, both in novels and in real life. (_TP_, I, 36) She uses the terms "Money and Love" as a kind of shorthand for the complex psychological,

[12]Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary defines pargeter or parjeter as "a plasterer," and parget as "to plaster with cement or mortar," or "to whitewash." (_English Dialect Dictionary_, ed. Joseph Wright [London: Henry Froude, 1903], IV, 423; quoted in _Bulletin_, p. 173.) Mitchell Leaska and Jane Marcus suggest that Woolf's family derives its name from this source, and that the name connotes the process of plastering over or "whitewashing" the truth, covering over the cracks in the family structure with lies and hypocrisy. (Mitchell Leaska, "Virginia Woolf, the Pargeter: A Reading of _The Years_, " _Bulletin_, pp. 172-210; Jane Marcus, "_The Years_ as Greek Drama, Domestic Novel and Götterdämmerung," _Bulletin_, pp. 280-283.)

social and economic pressures that shape our lives. It is her belief that when the motives of Money and Love become confused and entangled with one another their power becomes insidious, and the relations between parents and children are forced into unnatural patterns. In a patriarchal society, the father uses the giving and withholding of money to maintain his power over his wife and children. Natural feelings of love and concern motivate the parents to force their children to conform, for they see it as their duty to protect their daughters' chastity and educate their sons to become heads of families in their turn.[13]

The need to channel boys and girls into different social roles meant that brothers and sisters must be treated differently from an early age. The girls, who had shared a happy intimacy with their brothers in the nursery, found that a chasm opened between them as soon as the boys started school, leaving them behind.

[13] The preceding three paragraphs of my text have been a summary of the ideas Woolf expresses in the essay that occupies pp. 34-48 of Notebook I of The Pargiters. Many of the same facts and theories can be found in the text and footnotes of Three Guineas. (Three Guineas, esp. Chapt. I, pp. 3-39, and Notes and References, pp. 145-158) Although Woolf herself was a young woman in the twentieth century, she felt that she had experienced Victorian family life first hand:" . . . our surroundings were at least fifty years behind the times. Father himself was a typical Victorian: George and Gerald [her half-brothers] were unspeakably*conventional. So that while we [Virginia and her sister Vanessa] fought against them as individuals we also fought against them in their public capacity. We were living say in 1910: they were living in 1860." *doubtful reading. ("A Sketch of the Past," in Moments of Being, pp. 126-127.)

In both The Pargiters and The Years, the early stages of this estrangement are dramatized through the experience of Rose, the youngest Pargiter. Rose has always been a tomboy, who loves to climb trees and play ball with her brother Bobby. (Martin in The Years). In The Pargiters the episode in which Rose goes to the store alone is clearly connected with the growing hostility between the girl and her brother, and with her desire for independence. She and Bobby have been engaged in a struggle over use of the schoolroom they share, because Bobby has claimed it for his alone now that he has started school. Because of their quarrel, Rose is sure that Bobby will refuse to accompany her to the store.

> She had known it was hopeless to ask him when he was doing his prep, because now that he was what she called "a proper schoolboy" he was apt to sneer at her & treat her as if she were a baby, especially when she interrupted his work. So, holding the door open for a moment & looking around her as if to assert that though Bobby claimed the schoolroom for himself, she was not going to give up her claim without a fight for it--she was not a baby any longer to be kept with nurse in the nursery--she departed. Her mind was made up. She would go to Lamley's alone. (TP, I, 50)

In The Years, we are told that the children had quarreled about "Erridge and his microscope and then about shooting Miss Pym's cat next door." (TY, p. 117) The struggle over control of the schoolroom is not mentioned. Rose's desire not to be treated like a baby, her resentment at being left at home while her brother goes to school, are part of her struggle for recognition and equal treatment. In The Pargiters her decision to go to the store alone stems from her resentment at the way

she has been held back from growing up. In this context the frightening experience with the man who exposes himself to her on the way home from the store appears to her to be a punishment for daring to assert herself.

In the holograph Woolf describes Rose's feeling as the terrified child runs back to the house:"She did not mind banging the front door when she came in--she did not mind being found out in her disobedience. . . . "(TP, I, 60) It is almost as if she wants to be punished, to relieve some of the uneasiness she felt about what she had seen, an uneasiness that could not be expressed directly because she could tell no-one what had happened.

Woolf tells us that Rose feared that if her father knew what she had seen he would be angry at her. As with Eleanor's warning to her sisters not to be "caught looking," guilt and shame are attached both to natural curiosity about sexual differences and to seeing what one is not supposed to see.[14]

In the essay that accompanies this scene Woolf associates Rose's response to this experience with the difficulties

[14]Mitchell Leaska suggests that Rose's sense of guilt is connected with an Oedipal attraction to her father, and that she fears he will be jealous that she has seen another man's genitals. It does not seem necessary to make this inference to explain the guilt and shame a child might feel in such circumstances. (Leaska, Bulletin, pp. 180-181.)

a writer faces when dealing with sexual material, a problem she had alluded to in "Professions for Women:"

> This instinct to turn away & hide the true nature of the experience either because it is too complex to explain, or because of the sense of guilt that seems to adhere to it of course prevented the novelist from dealing with the emotion in fiction--it would be impossible to find any mention of such feeling in the novels that were being written by Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Oliphant, George Meredith, during the eighties; & if the novelists ignore it, this is largely because the biographies and autobiographies also ignore it & thus reduce the material which the novelist has to work upon, to a minimum. In addition, there is, as the three dots after the sentence "He unbuttoned his clothes. . . " testify a convention supported by law, which forbids, whether rightly or wrongly any plain description of the sight which Rose, in common with many other little girls, saw . . . (TP, I, 61)

Continuing her discussion of Rose's experience, Woolf explains that she realizes that such incidents, and many more serious ones, occur every day.[15] But she feels that the experience itself was not as harmful to the child as the aura of secrecy and guilt that surround it. This could have a lasting effect on the child's development:

> . . . imagine the impression on the nerves, on the brain, on the whole being of the shock which the child instinctively conceals, as Rose did; & also is too ignorant, too childish, too frightened to describe or explain even to herself as again Rose was. Rose next day, of course began to observe Bobby more closely. She began to hunt about in the little bookcase in her father's study for some of

[15] Quentin Bell's biograph reveals that Woolf herself remembered having been sexually molested as a child by her half-brother George Duckworth. Like Rose she told no-one at the time; many years later she was able to tell her teacher Janet Case what had happened to her. (Bell, I, 42-44,)

> his old books about the treatment of tropical diseases, because they had certain pictures. (TP, I, 61-62)

The child's natural curiosity has been forced underground; it has become a secret preoccupation that separates her from her playmate:

> After her adventure in the street Rose changed slightly but decidedly in her feeling for Bobby. Again it is difficult to say how far this change was the result of some fear or shock; how far she felt dislike for her brother because of his sex; how far she felt & resented the change that was making him . . . into a "proper schoolboy." (TP, I, 65)

As Bobby grows older his experiences with his schoolmates and his desire to be accepted as one of them alter his behaviour toward his sister. At twelve he already knows a great deal more about life than even Milly and Delia do--and he had once been walking with an older boy when they were accosted by a brightly-dressed woman who was, his friend told him, a prostitute. "Prostitute" was a word he would never dream of using in his sisters' presence: its casual introduction into the conversation initiates him into a great fellowship:

> . . . the fellowship of men together--a fellowship which, he began to feel, yielded a great many rights and privileges and required even of himself, at the age of twelve, certain loyalties and assertions, for example it was essential to make it plain that the school room was his room--especially when his school friends came to tea. (TP, I, 66)

Bobby is really rather fond of Rose, and enjoys playing with her when they were alone, but he finds that his new

status among his friends requires him to treat her with scorn. Rose begins to notice this.

> Bobby was always much rougher with her when his friends were there. He turned her out of the schoolroom once and locked the door behind him; whereupon she locked herself into the bathroom and sobbed. But, after the first spasm of weeping was over, she held what she called in her private language a "grand council of war", that is to say she determined that after this Bobby was in the Enemies Camp & she would do everything she could to thwart him and spite him . . . & as soon afterwards he was sent away to Rugby that quarrel was never entirely made up. (TP, I, 66)

Since Rose will grow up to become a militant feminist who is sent to jail for smashing the Prime Minister's windows, it seems that this childhood quarrel has planted seeds of bitterness that will become generalized into hostility towards all men. Thus the resentment and jealousy engendered by the family and the educational system are perpetuated.

Yet, as Woolf is careful to point out, though Bobby's life may be freer than his sisters' in many ways, he too must learn a complex system of reserves and deceptions. The need to be "one of the boys" makes his school life so difficult, strange, and unnatural that Rose has no just cause for resentment.

> Had she known what her brother was going through at school she would very likely have decided when she called her grand council that instead of being members of opposite camps they ought on the contrary to combine together in a blood brotherhood. (TP, I, 67)

Both brother and sister are victims of an unnatural system, which forces them into rigid postures of opposition and

destroys any possibility of communication and sharing. When men and women have been effectively turned against each other, Woolf suggests, the circumstances that oppress them both go unchallenged.

In _The Years_ the details of the estrangement between Rose and Bobby are treated rather sketchily, but the way in which Eleanor and Morris begin to grow apart is given a sensitive treatment in both versions of the novel. But _The Pargiters_, unlike _The Years_, describes their childhood relationship as well as the way they see one another at the time the novel opens. These two had always been very close, for Eleanor had been Morris's confidante when he was roughed up at school or when he felt discouraged because his brother Edward had taken all the prizes. Morris had never got on well with his father, so that it was Eleanor who had gone to the Colonel and persuaded him to let Edward study for the law.

Now his superior education is beginning to separate them. They are no longer able to talk to one another about what interests each most:

> She often wished that she had been better educated. Morris was giving up talking to her about his cases. She found the law was so very difficult to follow & she kept back a good deal about the Levys. Morris called them "the poor" too. They had been such friends when they were children--they had shared everything--she could remember bringing him back a piece of toffee in a pocket handkerchief. (_TP_, I, 31-32)

Eleanor is a gentler person than Rose, and she seldom consciously resents the limitations of her life. Though they no longer share everything, she and Morris continue to have a special tenderness for one another, and she is able to make a life for herself out of her satisfaction in giving to others. Her self-effacement is in some ways the opposite side of Rose's militance. Where Rose's resentment of women's inferior position causes her to turn against men and live a life of continual warfare, Eleanor accepts her position and learns to live within it. Both have allowed themselves to be defined by men, and both are less than complete because of this.

After Mrs. Pargiter's death, both versions of the novel move from Abercorn Terrace to Oxford, where Edward Pargiter is cramming for his exams. There, through Edward's thoughts and experiences, we will be led to examine how the "masculine point of view" is impressed upon young males.

The Years focusses on Edward's evening at Oxford, as does The Pargiters, but in the holograph we are given additional insight into how Edward's personality was formed by having him recall his public school days. As he summons the courage to tackle his books, to beat out that "clever little Jew boy" from Birmingham, he seems to hear the voice of his old headmaster, speaking at his public school graduation:

> . . . it seemed the voice of the names carved upon the old stone marble tablets--the names of the old boys who had fought in war after war for five hundred years; . . . whose bones lay unburied in India, who had saved Europe again and again & dying asked only that their names be written upon the old school. "No other influence," the doctor said, " has produced so great a growth of the sterner & more robust virtues--fortitude; self-reliance, intrepidity, devotion to the common-weal; readiness for united action and self-sacrifice." (TP, I, 73)

These boys have been bred and trained for warfare, and in the bloodless battleground of the examination room the rules are no different. Colonel Pargiter recognizes this when he send his son some good port to help him study, because" . . . you can't ram a bayonet through another fellow's ribs in cold blood." (TP, I, 33) Here, at the beginning of the novel, a connection has already been made between the male ethos of competition and blood warfare. Edward is the son of a man who lost his fingers putting down a mutiny in India in order to establish the right of the white male to govern his possessions. He is just as much his father's child, as he sharpens his wits to get his fellowship, as is Rose, who pretends she is "Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse" and who will fight for women's rights by adopting the methods of her "enemy."

The education Edward is receiving goes beyond the instillment of warlike virtues. Like his brothers, Edward is developing an attitude toward the opposite sex that is compounded of desire, sentimentality, and ignorance. As

Edward studies his Greek, fortified with a few sips of wine, he feels a stirring of the senses stimulated by the intensity of his concentration. He tries to resist this incipient arousal, and looks to the picture of his headmaster on his desk for support against this "bestiality." Through an effort of will, his thoughts become purified and his unfocussed sexual impulses are replaced by an idealized image of his cousin Kitty, for whom he proceeds to write a poem. But the poem is a rather stilted imitation of the Greek verse he has been studying, for if the truth be known he barely knows his cousin, and his infatuation is based on a few polite encounters over tea, and a vision of her in a white gown.[16]

Save for a reference to Colonel Abel's gift of port, _The Years_ does not develop the comparison between the examination room and the battlefield, nor does it dwell on Edward's struggles with his sexual impulses. There is, however, a detailed account in both versions of a conversation

[16]Like Edward, Leslie Stephen, Virginia's father, had more fully developed critical than creative powers, and Virginia blamed this, at least in part, on his university education: "Give him a thought to analyse, the thought of Mill, Bentham, Hobbes; and his is (so Maynard [Keynes] has told me) acute, clear, concise: an admirable model of the Cambridge analy[tical spirit]. But give him life, a character, and he is so crude, so elementary, so conventional, that a child with a box of coloured chalks is as subtle a portrait painter as he is. To explain this, one would have to discuss the crippling effect of Cambridge; and its one-sided education. . . ." ("A Sketch of the Past," in _Moments of Being_, p. 126.)

between Edward and his two friends. Since Edward has no opportunity to get to know young women of his own class, his intimate daily life is spent among the young men who are his fellow students. Of these, Hugh Gibbs is a clumsy, athletic fellow who spends his time hunting foxes or farmers' daughters, depending on the season. Both are acceptable pursuits for upper-class young men, since casual liaisons with "common" girls are part of the system that protects the chastity of young ladies.

Edward's other friend, Tony, is a more ambiguous figure. The Years suggests, and The Pargiters makes clear, that Tony's interest in Edward goes beyond casual friendship, that his jealousy has the intensity of a lover's. The complex interaction between the three young men is in reality much more important to Edward than his romantic fantasy about Kitty.

> They had discussed every subject--hunting, philosophy, Greek, sex, in common. They had eaten together and worked together . . . If he had written a poem to Tony or Gibbs it would have been quite different from his poem to Persephone [the poem about Kitty]. And without too much license, one is justified in thinking that a poem to a person whom the writer knows little, whom he idealises, whom he sentimentalizes, is always a bad poem. (TP, I, 95)

It was Virginia Woolf's belief that good literature that deals with both sexes cannot be written in an atmosphere in which men and women cannot know one another--all that can be produced is sentimental nonsense like Coventry Patmore's poem, which survives to delude another generation into taking a false view of life.

Women's writing as well is hampered by the separation of the sexes, since all the important experiences that mould their brothers when they are at public school and university are unknown to the girls. The camaraderie in Edward's study is as inaccessible to Kitty Malone as it would have been to Hardy's Jude, though she lives in the Master's Lodge and can see Edward's light from her bedroom window.

As the focus of the novel shifts from one young person to another, it becomes clear that common influences create the circumstances that direct their lives. When we enter the life of Kitty Malone, we find that the special problems of her Abercorn Terrace cousins are not solely responsible for their feeling of stultification. Kitty's mother is not slowly dying, her father is a respected college Master, not a retired Army man, and she lives surrounded by the great libraries and brilliant scholars of the university.[17] But what Kitty really wants is to live on a farm in Yorkshire and work the land, a desire that is so unattainable that it is only in her dreams that she can bring herself to tell her parents about it. Instead she serves tea to undergraduates

[17]Jane Marcus suggests that Woolf's main sources for Kitty's Cambridge life are the Joseph Wright biography and Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Recollections. (Mary Augusta Arnold Ward, A Writer's Recollections [London: W. Collins, 1918].) Marcus also suggests that Kitty's married life in Grosvenor Square recreates another part of Mrs. Ward's life. (Marcus, Bulletin, p. 290.)

and shows visitors the sights, while her mother wonders why she is so restless. (As in the case of Delia's music, Kitty's dream of becoming a farmer is presented in only the vaguest terms in The Years , so that her discontent seems rather pointless.)

Although Kitty lives at Oxford, she cannot study at the university; some classes for women have been started recently, but her parents look upon this movement toward women's colleges as inappropriate for their daughter. Kitty studies a little history with a woman tutor, but her interest in the subject has been squelched by her father, who remarked one day, with "ironical courtesy," that she " . . . shared the inability of your sex, my dear, to grasp the importance of historical facts." (TP, I, 107)[18]

The question of what is involved in an historical point of view, and what are the relevant "facts" is a consideration that runs through many of Woolf's works. In Orlando, in The Pargiters, and in Three Guineas one finds a running criticism of historical method, ironic yet serious, for Woolf could never see how valid history could be written without a knowledge of the daily lives of ordinary people. History as

[18]Mr. Malone's remark is reminiscent of Charles Tansley's words in To the Lighthouse: "Women can't paint, women can't write. . . ."(Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse[1925; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955], p. 75.) Unlike Kitty, Lily Briscoe was not so easily deterred.

she knew it ignored these "facts," and concerned itself with the public lives of those in power; the lives of the obscure, and especially the lives of all but a handful of women, constituted a still unwritten history.

This is the history Woolf was attempting to write in *The Pargiters*, which treats the minutiae of ordinary life with a seriousness and penetration usually reserved for momentous affairs of state.

As Woolf follows Kitty Malone through her day, she shows us how Kitty is being guided away from developing her scholarly interest or her love of the outdoors so that she can be prepared for the proper marriage that her mother envisions for her. Kitty scarcely knows why she is dissatisfied, but a visit to her friend Nelly Brook (Robson in *The Years*) gives her a new perspective on her own life.

The visit makes her feel like Alice in Wonderland--she feels huge and clumsy compared to the short, stocky Brooks. As with Alice, proportions shift and change, and conventions are called into question when Kitty learns that in some houses fried fish is served at tea[19] and that a young man who is studying for examinations is still expected to mend hencoops

[19]Jane Marcus notes that Leonard Woolf described having " . . . an enormous high tea, usually fried fish with delicious rolls and cakes. . . ," when he visited working-class homes while working for the Co-Operative Movement. (Marcus, *Bulletin*. p. 288; Leonard Woolf, *BA*, p. 112.)

and serve himself at table. In her family the women are always waiting: the cousins wait for the kettle to boil, and her mother waits for her father to come home at night before she will go to bed. In the Brook family, young Jo is neither waited for nor waited on.

Most important, it is clear that the women in the Brook family are treated as equals. Mr. Brook asks about Kitty's studies rather than about her distinguished father, and he expects his own daughter to become a doctor. Though his mother had to work as a servant to help him get his education, he is determined that his "Nell" shall have a better life. Because of this atmosphere of mutual respect, the relations between members of this family are different from any Kitty has known.

The Years focusses its account of Kitty's visit mainly on her impression of Mr. Brook, but in the holograph as much attention is paid to the shrewd Mrs. Brook's appraisal of her daughter's friend and especially to the feelings Kitty has about what their marriage is really like: "Mr. and Mrs. Brook were married in a way that none of [her] parents' friends were married so that she could feel quite free with Sam." (TP, II, 69) In Sam's house, she feels instinctively, even an eminent historian like "Chuffy" would not dare to put a damp, heavy hand on her knee, and Jo Brook would kiss her, if he felt like it, as frankly as the farmer's son had

kissed her in Yorkshire when she was sixteen.

In the Brooks Woolf has given us a picture of family life as she would like to see it.[20] Everyone works, and everyone's work is taken seriously; daughter and son are both afforded a good education, yet their aspirations do not exempt them from performing household tasks or make them ashamed that their mother was a cook.

The essay that accompanies this scene recounts the story of Joseph and Lizzie Wright, whose biography Virginia Woolf had been musing over when she first conceived the idea for her novel. Like Sam Brook, Wright owed everything to his mother, who had worked hard all her life to educate her children.[21] When Joseph became engaged, the plan for married life that he proposed was revolutionary for his time. He did

[20]Charles Hoffman suggests that "Because of her limited experience of other social classes, Kitty romanticizes the Robson family, but although her wish to be a farmer is part of her romanticizing the working classes, it also represents her desire to be free." (Hoffman, "Virginia Woolf's Manuscript Revision of _The Years_," p. 84)Actually, despite their origins, the Robsons are not working-class: the father is on the university faculty and is a self-made man. Like Kitty, Woolf seems to be romanticizing the family; Mr. Robson's determination that his daughter be a doctor could be just as oppressive as the Malone's desire that Kitty marry well.

[21]The photograph of Mr. Robson's mother, described in both _The Pargiters_ and _The Years_, bears a remarkable resemblance to the portrait of Joseph Wright's mother. (_The Life of Joseph Wright_, I, opposite 20; reproduced _Bulletin_, p. 289)

not wish his wife to become a "hausfrau": "It is my greatest ambition," he wrote to Lizzie, "that you shall live, not merely exist; and live too in a way not many women have lived before . . ."[22] By contrasting the lives of people like the Wrights, the Levys, and each succeeding generation of Pargiters, Woolf uses this novel to explore the question of how both men and women can "live, not merely exist."

This first long chapter of The Pargiters, the 1880 episode, takes up approximately two and a half volumes of the holograph MS. Each scene and essay is written with a wealth of detail, and many passages have been revised even in the first draft. Woolf completed the draft of the chapter by the end of January, 1933--save for the Colonel Pargiter-Mira scene, which would be added in March.[23]

Before moving on the next chapter, Woolf began immediately on revisions, and on February 2nd she announced, "Today I finished--rather more completely than usual--revising the first chapter. I am leaving out the inter-

[22]Wright, I, 311.

[23]In the holograph Colonel Pargiter's liaison with Mira is treated more sympathetically than it is in The Years. Charles Hoffman notes this: "Although the manuscript version of this opening scene is quite similar to the final version in the novel, there is more authorial commentary on the meaning of his relationship with Mira than in the novel. Colonel Pargiter is aware of the tawdriness of his affair, and the cheapness of Mira's way of life, but her room is a sanctuary from the reality of his old age, his dying wife, his responsibilities as a father and husband . . . . " (Hoffman, p. 86)

chapters--compacting them in the text. . . . " (AWD, 2 Feb. 1933, p. 195)[24]

By "interchapters" Woolf presumably meant the inserted essays, for they do not appear in The Years, nor are they to be found in the later chapters of the holograph. When Woolf discarded the essays she attempted to work her generalizations about love, money, and the oppression of women into the dramatic sequences. As they brush their teeth or take the bus, Woolf has Eleanor, Kitty, and the others reflect on the ideas that she had originally expressed in her essays. Though the use of multiple points of view obscures her intentions somewhat, the amount of ideological material that she was able to inject into the rest of the draft in this way is still far greater than can be found in the published novel.

Woolf's decision to delete the essays seem inevitable, for interesting and valuable as they are to those who wish to study The Years, it must have become increasingly obvious to her that they were a clumsy device that impedes the narrative flow of the novel. What they do indicate is the

[24]Some attempts at revision of the scenes of the first chapter, with no essays and the essay content "compacted" into the text, can be found at the end of Notebook II and the beginning of Notebook III of The Pargiters. (TP, II, 85-124, III, 2-60) Charles Hoffman has described these revisions in detail in his study of the MS of The Years. (Hoffman, pp. 84-87.)

extent to which Woolf felt the creative and analytic functions of the brain to be essentially separate.[25] Once the essays had been deleted, she found herself immersed in a struggle to merge these separate spheres of mental activity in order to try to achieve an integrated work of art.

This struggle continued as she completed her first draft and began to revise it, but it would not be until 1935, when she was attempting to cut her completed draft to a manageable 150,000 words, that she would face up to the need to cut many of the long political passages from the novel.[26] It is likely

[25] At times she felt that the two types of thought were actually in opposition: " . . . how my brain is jaded with the conflict within of two types of thought, the critical, the creative. . . ." (AWD, 26 May 1932, p. 181)

[26] With only the published diary to go by, Jean Guiguet assumes that "The sequel to A Room of One's Own, planned in January, 1931, had no doubt, by the beginning of 1932, split up to produce, on the one hand, A Tap on the Door (later Three Guineas) and on the other, the book that was to be The Years." (Guiguet, p. 302) The documents that are now available show that the first extant attempt at a draft of the essay that would become Three Guineas is dated April 12, 1935. ("Draft of Professions," in Articles, Essays, Fiction and Reviews [Berg], 6, 125-145.) This date corresponds with Woolf's account of her meeting with E. M. Forster on the steps of the London Library, when he told Woolf that the committee had voted to continue excluding women. This event inspired her to begin writing "On Being Despised" (her provisional title for Three Guineas. (AWD, 9 April 1935, pp. 243-244) According to her diary, she stopped writing it a few days later, having decided that " . . . one can't propagate at the same time as write fiction. And as this fiction is dangerously near to propaganda, I must keep my hands clear." (AWD, 13 April 1935, pp. 244-245.)

that it was then that she conceived of the idea of reassembling them in the form of the pamphlet which was published in 1938 as Three Guineas.

Woolf's diary comments during the long period of revising that followed the completion of the first draft of the novel emphasize the difficulties of trying to give a coherent form to the overflowing mass of material in the draft. Nevertheless, there appear to be additional motives for the specific decisions she made as to what to delete.

In the first section, and in the episodes that follow, the incremental effect of the cuts and revisions creates a substantive change in the impact of the novel as a whole. It appears that somewhere along the way Woolf had come to feel that she had gone too far, that the hazards she had warned of in "Professions for Women" had become nearly insurmountable obstacles. She felt, it seems, that she had flouted the conventions of what it was possible for her as a woman and a writer to reveal, and in so doing had become too insistent and one-sided. By the time the novel was published she had softened, deleted, or made vague many of her strongest attacks on English society and its treatment of women, and had eliminated most of the overt statements of her own beliefs.

As has been noted, some of this deleted material found its way into Three Guineas, though even there the tone is curiously apologetic and the arguments often circuitous

when compared with the frankness of the essays in The Pargiters. What is particularly noteworthy is that wherever the MS dealt with "women's bodies for instance . . . their passions," these passages have been deleted both from the published novel and from the published essay. Three Guineas deals with economies and politics but not with sexuality; it attacks the tyranny of Fascism but only in passing mentions the tyranny of chastity.

Yet the pattern of the original novel, which defined the underlying forces that govern our lives as Money and Love, placed sexuality within its definition of love and traced its effects with the utmost seriousness. Clearly Woolf originally intended to show that life as lived in the private house and the streets around it was inseparable from the quality of civilisation as a whole, and that the alienation of the sexes from one another, both emotionally and sexually, had caused a schism in the society. It was Virginia Woolf's deepest belief that the only solution to political and social problems lay in an open acknowledgement of all the impulses within ourselves. Yet, sadly, the differences between the MS of The Pargiters and the works that were published reveal that there had come a moment when her courage failed.

Between the first draft and the published novel we can discern a shift from an explicitly political novel to

a gentler study of manners and relationships through the years. In addition, it is possible to trace another evolution that occurred after this first section was completed, a shift from the novel of "fact" and biographical detail to the subjective, fragmented approach that characterises the chapters dealing with Elvira Pargiter [Sara in The Years]. And as Elvira emerges as a major center of attention, Kitty Malone fades into the background.

In both the original and final versions of the novel, the character of Kitty is developed with vivid and engaging detail, raising the expectation that she will remain an important figure as the years move on. But after the first chapter Kitty is seldom present, save as the glamourous Lady Lasswade who appears briefly at a suffrage meeting and at the opera, and once again in later years when she becomes both a party hostess and a woman who loves nothing better than walking alone in the country, with a packet of sandwiches in her pocket.

The space and attention devoted to Kitty in the "1880" section suggest that she may have been intended to play a larger role in the novel, possibly as a counterpoint to Eleanor, so that, as in The Old Wives' Tale, we might have followed the course of their parallel lives. With both women of similar age and background, but one marrying into the aristocracy and the other becoming a benevolent spinster, they would have provided an opportunity to contrast the

position of women in different class and social roles. Perhaps following Kitty's progress more closely seemed too reminiscent of Woolf's study of Clarissa Dalloway for this course to have appealed to her, but if The Pargiters had remained the realistic family chronicle it appeared to be at this point, continuing the story of Kitty would have been a logical development.

But Woolf's conception of her novel was about to change. She was beginning to see her work as an experiment in integrating fact and vision , and starting to work out ways of achieving this end. Yet these new ideas would not become apparent in the novel itself until the "1907" chapter, in which Elvira Pargiter takes center stage.[27]

[27] Some of the material covered in this chapter was presented in a slightly different form in my article in The Massachusetts Review (Grace Radin, "Virginia Woolf: The First Version of The Years," The Massachusetts Review, 16, No. 1 [Winter 1975], pp. 195-208.)

Chapter III: Elvira's Scenes

"I've brought it down to Elvira in bed--the scene I've had in my mind ever so many months, but I can't write it now. It's the turn of the book."

(*AWD*, 6 April 1933, p. 196)

In this chapter I will examine the scenes in The Pargiters that center on Elvira Pargiter, who will become Sara in The Years. Elvira is the focus of those aspects of the novel that are visionary and poetic, in contrast with the more matter-of-fact atmosphere of the episodes centered on Eleanor, for as the novel developed Woolf began to experiment with ways of depicting a multi-leveled reality, and hit upon the idea of alternation and contrast, with scenes focussing first on Eleanor's world, and then on Elvira's. But before turning to the "Elvira" scenes we will try to see how Woolf arrived at the decision to develop the novel in this way.

When she had completed the first draft of the "1880" chapter, Woolf found that the flood of inspiration that had carried her through the first 60,000 words in little more than two months had begun to subside. From this point on, the progress of the novel would be erratic; sometimes it would move forward easily; at others the work would be halting and slow, and plagued by her self-doubt.

Woolf's practical reason for laying aside her novel at the end of the first chapter was that she had to turn her attention to finishing Flush, which had been started as a lark, but had now become an unwelcome burden. Yet even when Flush was finally dispatched to the printers, and she

had picked up The Pargiters again, she found herself restless.

> No critic ever gives full weight to the desire of the mind for change. Talk of being manysided--naturally one must go the other way . . . Looming behind The Pargiters I can just see the shape of pure poetry beckoning me. (AWD, 26 Jan. 1933, pp. 194-195)

Already she was beginning to yearn for more "poetry" than her projected novel of "fact" could allow.

(At this point she was looking beyond The Pargiters, for a chance to write in a different vein, but by the following August she was to see that her poetic vision might become part of this novel, and that the second part, which opens with Elvira in bed in 1907, could provide the opportunity she was seeking: "I have a good excuse for poetry in the second part, if I can take it. Rather an interesting experiment--if I could see the same thing from two different views." [AWD, 24 Aug. 1933, p. 211])

But Virginia Woolf was too much of a professional to allow wayward thoughts about poetry to deter her from the work she had laid out for herself. From February to the end of April she was occupied in making her revisions of the "1880" chapter, and in drafting the scene with Colonel Pargiter and Mira and the description of Eleanor's day in 1891.[1]

[1]See above, Chapter II, page 62, esp. note 23.

The "1891" chapter serves as a bridge between the full portrait of the Pargiter clan in the "1880" chapter and the more selective, impressionistic mode of the ensuing episodes. It is after this episode that the novel begins to bifurcate, focussing alternately on the personalities of Eleanor and Elvira.

In the "1891" chapter we meet Elvira for the first time, when another branch of the Pargiter family is introduced. Abel's brother Digby is married to Eugénie, who brings an exotic strain into their prosaic line. Eugénie, who is half Spanish, is a sensual, imaginative woman who loves to embroider the truth with little harmless fantasies. Her daughters, Magdalena (Maggie) and Elvira, have inherited her artistic tendencies, for Maggie sees the world as a conjunction of light, shape and color, and Elvira is a conjurer with words.

When Abel Pargiter goes to visit Eugénie on Maggie's birthday, Elvira makes her first appearance in the novel. She is introduced as a little girl of six or seven, bright and lively, but slightly disfigured because one shoulder is higher than the other. This defect makes her father and uncle uncomfortable, so that her mother tries to protect her. Elvira already shows a talent for mimicry, and for making other people uneasy in her presence.

It is at the point when Woolf was beginning to see that she wanted _The Pargiters_ to go beyond her original concep-

tion, a novel of fact and history, that Elvira emerges as a major character, and Woolf envisioned Elvira's first important scene as the "turn of the book." But when she first attempted to write the "1907" scene she found she was too exhausted to begin.

> Oh I'm so tired! I've written myself out over The Pargiters, this last lap. I've brought it down to Elvira in bed--the scene I've had in my mind ever so many months, but I can't write it now. It's the turn of the book. It needs a great shove to swing it around on its hinges. (AWD, 6 April 1933, p. 196)

She decided to postpone writing the scene until after her vacation in Italy, and by the time she returned to England, she had formulated her new plan for The Pargiters:

> I think this will be a terrific affair. I must be bold and adventurous. I want to give the whole of present society--nothing less: facts as well as the vision. And to combine them both. I mean The Waves going on simultaneously with Night and Day. Is this possible? At present I have assembled 50,000 words of "real" life: now in the next 50 I must somehow comment; Lord knows how--while keeping the march of events. The figure of Elvira is the difficulty. She may become too dominant. She is to be seen only in relation to other things. This should give I think a great edge to both of the realities --this contrast. (AWD, 25 April 1933,p. 197)

Woolf's new scheme is ambitious; she will try to combine fact and vision, to write a novel that is as objective as Night and Day and as introspective as The Waves. Her process here seems to be a kind of dialectic; first she swings entirely to fact, excluding vision; then she is tempted to poetry or vision (they seem nearly synonyms here) and then to an idea for fusion, for both modes going on at once.

Although Woolf apparently worked out this synthesis after she began writing the novel, her thinking here was foreshadowed in an essay written shortly before she began The Pargiters. As was mentioned earlier, one of the few works Woolf published in the early part of 1932 was A Letter to a Young Poet, a pamphlet that purported to be a letter to her friend John Lehmann, but was really addressed to all the poets of his generation. Because it was written while she was musing over plans for her next novel, and because it deals with poetry--that "shape" she saw looming on the other side of her novel of fact--it may help us understand what Woolf had in mind when she said that she wanted to combine fact and vision.

In A Letter to a Young Poet Woolf poses the dilemma of the modern poet in terms very like those she uses for her own concerns as a writer--though this is not said explicitly in the essay, the discussion seems to be part of her continual search for a way to break down the distinction between the novel and the poem.

When Woolf describes the creative process of her young poet she describes it as a rhythm, a "rhythm which was opening and shutting with a force that sent shocks of excitement from your head to your heels . . .;"but then the rhythm is abruptly destroyed by an encounter with a "hard and hostile object."[2] This is very much the way Woolf

[2] Collected Essays, II, 185.

described her own experience in "Professions for Women," when she told how when she allowed her imagination to flow freely it sometimes dashed itself against an obstacle--the fear of censure that made it impossible to speak the truth about her body.[3] The difficulty Woolf sees the poet facing is quite similar to hers--the poet is trying to include words and ideas in his poems that do not seem to belong there. The scraps of poetry Woolf inserts here (probably her own invention, and even as parody a rare venture into verse for her) describe such unpoetic acts as easing one's bowels and pursuing what "buggers" are after. These jarring notes, she says, show that the poet "strained himself to include an emotion that is not domesticated and acclimatized to poetry;" thus the poem is "cracked in the middle." [4]

Here we see that Woolf has shown her poet confronting a problem familiar to her, one that she will struggle with all through her work on The Years: how can the artist include all of life in his art without destroying the unity of his work?[5]

[3]PW, typescript, p. 14; see above, Chapter I page 23.

[4]Letter, Collected Essays, II, 187.

[5]Jane Novak has skillfully delineated Woolf's response to this problem, showing how Woolf" . . . worked to create an ordered aesthetic form that, for all its symmetry, would nevertheless accommodate disorder . . . . " (Jane Novak, The Razor Edge of Balance: A Study of Virginia Woolf [Coral Gables, Florida: Univ. of Miami Press, 1975], p. 1.)

Her poet's first response is to do what she sees many poets of his generation doing--he retreats into himself and writes only about his search for his own being; as a result, he risks becoming unintelligible.

But this introspection is necessary, she feels, if he is to arrive at his own voice. His first task is to free himself from certain falsities, "the wreckage of the great Victorian age," by going down into his own mind to verify its outlines," . . . a work of renovation that must be done from time to time and was certainly needed, for bad poetry is almost always the result of forgetting youself--all becomes distorted and impure if you lose sight of that central reality-- . . . ." [6] But now, she asks, now that the poet has found himself, why should his poetry not" . . . once more open its eyes, look out of the window and write about other people?" [7]

Anyone who has followed the course of Woolf's own career can see that though she claims here to be writing about "other people"--the poets--she is also writing about herself. We can see the task she had set herself as a writer, to strip away the falsities of an earlier age so that she could be free to write her own kind of novel. And in

[6] Letter, Collected Essays, II, 190.

[7] ibid., 190.

The Waves, the work she had just completed, she had gone deeply into herself, so that all of its characters can be seen as facets of her own mind. Now she was ready to look out of her window, as people do so often in The Years, and make everything she sees a proper subject for her work.

She continues telling her poet that in order to accomplish his formidable task," . . . to find the right relationship . . . between the self that you know and the world outside . . ." he must rely on his rhythmic sense--that deeply rooted instinct that Woolf seemed to regard as the creative force--for the poet and, I believe, for herself as well. He must let that rhythmical sense" . . . wind itself in and out among men and women, omnibuses, sparrows--whatever comes along the street--until it strings together in one harmonious whole."[8] This is how she defines his task:

> . . . to find the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity, to absorb every experience that comes your way fearlessly and saturate it completely so that your poem is a whole, not a fragment; to rethink human life into poetry and so give us tragedy again and comedy by means of characters not spun out at length in the novelist's way, but condensed and synthesized in the poet's way--that is what we look to you to do now.[9]

It is a tall order she suggests for the poet, and she admits that she can give him little guidance in how to accomplish all that has been laid out for him. Yet she offers

[8] ibid., 191.

[9] ibid., 191.

one further suggestion--that the poet will only be able to draw upon all the riches of the English language if he does what Shakespeare does, if he writes about all sorts of people and lets them talk for themselves. What she says is that he should" . . . embark upon a long poem in which people as unlike yourself as possible talk at the tops of their voices."

Woolf's prescription for the poet provides some possible answers to several of the questions that arise as one follows her work on The Years. Why, one has wondered, did she use part of her diary in 1932 to copy down the chatter of her friends when they came to call?[10] It seems now that what Woolf was trying to do was to get out of herself, to get in touch with other people's lives and other people's voices, so that she could write a novel that was different from any she had done before. This is what may have led her first to her novel of "fact," hoping to augment her own limited experience with the facts about how others lived. But, as we have seen, she soon realized that fact must be combined with poetry, that the poetic vision must not be excluded since it was needed to make a whole out of the fragments of modern life.

[10]In the published diary she says rather cryptically, "And for purposes which I need not go into here, I want to use these pages for dialogue for a time." (AWD, 31 Jan. 1932, p. 178) The unpublished diary follows this announcement with entries dated 31 Jan. 1932 to 13 Feb. 1932, in which Woolf has painstakingly recorded the conversation of her friends.

Just how to bring about this fusion was unclear, and what Woolf developed first was not really a synthesis but a series of alternating, contrasting scenes.[11] This first becomes evident at the beginning of the "1907" chapter where Elvira appears as a young woman, for it is there that Woolf began to work out her pattern of alternation, contrasting the factual and the visionary[12] through the personalities of Eleanor and Elvira.

Since Woolf chose to introduce the element of vision in Elvira's first important scene, something in Elvira's personality must have made her an appropriate vehicle for this aspect of the novel. Yet, as we have seen, Woolf feared that Elvira might become too dominant, and wished her to be seen only in relation to others. (AWD, 25 April 1933, p. 197) Perhaps Woolf feared that Elvira might take over

[11]Jean Giguet sees the failure to synthesize the two modes as the source of Woolf's difficulties with The Years: "To begin with, she is well aware that what is needed is profound fusion, which is essentially a matter of artistic creation. . . . Then gradually she accepts the solution of simple alternations. . . . Her intuitions of the different levels of consciousness, of the different layers of the mind, seems to have crystallized . . .into a complex vision which The Years tries in vain to unify in the sweep of artistic creation." (Guiguet, pp. 314-316)

[12]Jane Novak sees Woolf's method of composition as always involving an alternation of the analytic and subconscious aspects of the mind, which suggests that what Woolf attempts in The Pargiters is an overt expression of a process that was natural to her. Novak believes that "Even her method of composition was alternation, a knowing tightening and loosening of the rational analytic powers in order to hold or release the chaotic, fruitful, subconscious powers of emotion." (Novak, p. 54)

the novel because she sensed that this character expressed something in herself that could get out of control.

Elvira seems to have been a character who captured Woolf's imagination almost as soon as she conceived of her. Although the "1907" chapter was not written out in the holograph until April 3, 1933, Elvira had already been living a life of her own in Virginia Woolf's mind for quite some time. Leonard Woolf has described how his wife would mentally inhabit the scenes of her novel long before she wrote them out,[13] and the way Elvira developed is clearly an example of this process, for familiar references to her as an adult character appear in the journal months before her appearance in the MS as anything but a young child.

The keystone of Elvira's character will be her repudiation of society's bribes and rewards, and evidently Woolf had worked this out long before she had Elvira express these ideas in the holograph. The first of Elvira's speeches on this subject was recorded in the MS at the end of June, 1933, but by the previous March Woolf was already so involved with her character that she hardly knew whether she was herself or Elvira when she turned down the offer of an honorary degree:

> It is an utterly corrupt society, I have just remarked, speaking in the person of Elvira Pargiter, and I will take nothing it can give me etc etc: Now, as to Virginia Woolf, I have

[13] BA, p. 33. See above, Introduction, page 3.

> to write . . . to the Vice Chancellor of Manchester University and say that I refuse to be made a Doctor of Letters . . . Lord knows how I'm to put Elvira's language into polite journalese. What an odd coincidence!that real life should provide precisely the situation which I am writing about. I hardly know which I am, or where: Virginia or Elvira: in the Pargiters or outside. (AWD, 25 March 1933, p. 195)[14]

The close identification of Elvira with Woolf's own personality becomes evident as Elvira's character unfolds in the novel. All of the young women in The Pargiters share some of Woolf's girlhood experiences and feelings,[15] but Elvira alone exhibits the volatile temperament, hyper-sensitivity, and addiction to making up stories about people that characterized the young Virginia Stephen. (Even Elvira's odd appearance reflects something in Virginia's own experience; Leonard Woolf tells us that although by any standard she was a beautiful woman, there was something strange in her appearance that often caused strangers to stare at her and laugh. [BA, p. 29] In The Pargiters Elvira frequently refers to her dislike of being stared at or laughed at. Elvira is set apart by her deformity, so that it is unlikely

[14]Woolf's remark that she had been "writing about" Elvira's situation months before the scene appears in the holograph suggests that she made detailed notes on scenes before developing them in her notebook.

[15]For example, Delia's feelings when her mother dies (TY, pp. 46-47) echo Woolf's memories of her own mother's death. "Remember turning aside at mother's bed, when she had died, and Stella [Duckworth, Virginia's half-sister] took us in, to laugh secretly, at the nurse crying. She's pretending, I said, aged 13, and was afraid of not feeling enough." (AWD, 12 Sept. 1934, p. 224.)

that she will marry and have children, and Virginia Woolf was also deprived of the natural experience of motherhood because of her precarious mental state, a psychic aberration that parallels Elvira's physical defect.

While Eleanor Pargiter typifies the stable, sensible, community-minded woman that Woolf admired but never desired to emulate,[16] Elvira's character is a portrait of an erratic, unstable, perceptive artistic sensibility. Elvira, who cannot cope with the minutiae of daily life, can perceive the deeper meaning behind the rush of daily events. Because she can participate only as a spectator, it is her function to provide a link between the life of the mind and spirit and that of the everyday world. When Elvira sits in her window, listening to the birds while she regards the activities of her fellow human beings from an ironic distance, she often becomes an authorial presence in the novel, making connections between its multiple levels.

This strange and complex creature, who seems to come straight out of Virginia Woolf's own psyche, almost evaded being pinned down on paper. Nowhere in the manuscript are

[16]As sources for Eleanor Pargiter Jane Marcus suggests Virginia's cousin Margaret (Marny) Vaughan, whose slum settlement work influenced Leonard to become a socialist, and Margaret Llewelyn-Davies, a leader of the Co-operative Working Women's Guild. (Bulletin, pp. 288-289) Another possible model is Margery Fry, Roger Fry's sister. The Woolfs went to Greece with Margery and her brother in 1932, and in her unpublished diary Woolf describes Margery as virginal, benevolent, and an enthusiastic traveler. (Unpublished Diary [Berg], 16-17 April 1932)

there as many scratched-out passages and illegible words as in the scenes where Elvira appears. Even Woolf's handwriting, which is relatively neat and legible when she is writing about Eleanor in what she calls her "Jane Austen" style, (AWD, 20 July, 1933, p. 209)[17] deteriorates into hen-scratchings when she tries to evoke Elvira.[18] It is as if Elvira's persona was created from a level of consciousness that is different from that which produced Eleanor, a level that is far less amenable to expression through the written word.

The Years as well as The Pargiters reflects the difference between two modes of perception; in The Years the "Eleanor" scenes are ordered and interpreted by a third person narrator who reveals Eleanor's thoughts and shows us the world through her eyes, while the "Elvira" scenes, save for "1907," are presented solely as dramatic dialogues. Thus we have no access to Elvira's thoughts in her later scenes, so that the reader is forced to interpret her racing, leaping voice for himself.

[17] Woolf apparently took Jane Austen as her model for objective, realistic writing. Later she came to feel that her own attempt to write in this manner had been a failure. See above, Chapter II, page 41, note 11.

[18] The way her handwriting looks in the Elvira scenes fits John Lehmann's description. He said her writing looked" . . . as if a high voltage current had been in her fingers." (John Lehmann, "Working with Virginia Woolf," The Listener [15 Jan. 1955], pp. 60-62.)

Elvira's sensitive, responsive mind does not select or compose in an obvious way; a line of poetry, a street-caller's cry, or a change of light can fill her with strong emotions that must be expressed at once. Elvira's truth is the truth of feeling, of the flashes of insight that arise from the association of images that float to the surface of the mind. Childhood impressions, scraps of poetry and drama are perpetually creating little pictures in her mind, so that what she experiences in the present is inextricably mingled with everything she has read, seen, or heard.[19]

Both The Pargiters and The Years exhibit a change in direction at the point where Elvira-Sara becomes a main character, but the two versions portray her differently. In the MS she has dimensions that are less evident in The Years, in part because Elvira is a budding writer, at least in the sense that she is always taking notes, trying to comprehend her experience by putting it into words. (Although her writing is a private occupation, for herself alone, later she will be forced to venture into journalism, writing tidbits

[19]Alice Van Buren Kelly's description of Sara suggests that for perceptive readers she retains many of the qualities that are more clearly developed in Elvira: "Sara borrows or coins for each member of the family a phrase that shows in miniature that person's way of life. But at the same time she herself diffuses her identity into every crook and cranny of the world and assembles the fragments of fact she sees in stories that transform the scattered shards to unified visions." (Kelly, p. 211.)

of society news and household hints for a women's magazine to earn some badly needed money.)[20]

When we first come upon Elvira, lying in bed on that summer night in 1907, she is trying to overcome her feeling that she is insubstantial, unreal. She turns to her writing to reassure herself that she exists. First she describes the effect of moonlight on the tree outside her window, then firmly writes down the date: " . . . she sat up, noted everything in the room; as if it were necessary to authenticate the moment with the greatest precision." (TP, III, 109) When she has completed her description, including even a little pencil sketch of the room, she adds, " . . . this is perfectly & exactly true to the best of my belief. She felt that she had made a mark which in years to come she would still find there; that she had asserted once and for all the fact of her existence." (TP, III, 109)

The close identification between Virginia Woolf and her character at this point will be clear to anyone who has read Woolf's many comments on the way her writing helped to stabilize her life. The connection with this particular passage is even more direct because the scene that Elvira sees when she looks out her window is taken from an essay entitled "A Dance at Queen's Gate" in Virginia Woolf's 1903

[20]Virginia Woolf, like Elvira, did her first writing for pay in a magazine for women, the Women's Supplement to The Guardian, a London weekly. (Bell, I, 93.)

journal, a little book in which she wrote a series of descriptive essays.[21]

The essay in Woolf's 1903 journal recounts her experience when she was awakened on a warm evening by the sound of dance music and looked down from her window to observe the goings-on at a party being given in a house across the mews. Her description was the "mark" that she herself had made when she was just a few years older than Elvira is in this scene, and now, in 1933, she has gone back to her own early work to help her evoke the mood of Elvira's evening. Though the details of the description are very much the same, Woolf as a mature writer has added the insight that explains the motivation for Elvira's effort. It is only now that Woolf can look back and see that those pretty little essays were more than practice exercises; they were a way of authenticating her own existence.

By introducing a writer as a character in her novel, Woolf created a figure with whom she could identify and gave herself a vehicle for commenting on the technical and

[21]Virginia Woolf, Unpublished Diary (listed in Berg as Diary, holograph notebook, unsigned. June 30-October 1, 1903), "A Dance at Queen's Gate," pp. 1-8. These little notebooks precede the continuous journal which Woolf began in 1915. I am indebted for this reference to John Hulcoop, who noted the source for the "1907" scene in the Virginia Woolf Miscellany. (John Hulcoop, rev. of Mrs. Dalloway's Party, by Virginia Woolf, ed. Sheila McNichol, Virginia Woolf Miscellany, [Spring 1975], p. 4.)

aesthetic problems of her work in progress within its own pages. This resembles the role that Lily Briscoe plays in To the Lighthouse, but Elvira's involvement in making pictures with words rather than paints makes the connection even clearer.[22] The exclusion of this aspect of Elvira from The Years meant that of necessity most of her literary commentary would be deleted from the published novel.

Woolf wrote and rewrote the opening of the 1907 chapter several times, and in her second version she added a new element. As Elvira painstakingly records the details of the room's appearance, the sound of music floats in through her open window, and interrupts her catalogue of facts. "It was full of (sadness, joy melancholy) other emotions Pleasure, yes; sadness; yes; & what else?" (TP, III, 112) Elvira realizes that her record must contain all of this if it is to tell the whole truth. But capturing everything at once proves much too difficult; nothing stays in place long enough--things change before they can be grasped and expressed in words.

Elvira sees a couple wandering out of the party to stand together under the trees, and tries to listen to what

[22]Elvira's note-taking is like Bernard's in The Waves. As James Hafley notes, Bernard is a writer too. "From his childhood he has been fascinated with phrases, and in school he begins to keep the notebook in which he records phrases that seem to capture the evanescent but lastingly significant incidents of his experience, thus hoping to rescue them from the flux." (Hafley, p. 126)

they are saying to each other. "She tried to put words to the inarticulate sounds. But what could be beautiful enough, passionate enough, she thought?" (TP, III,119) The inarticulate sounds, the rhythms of speech heard from a distance, hold some meaning that is lost when they are reduced to mere words. Elvira, like Virginia Woolf, is continually struggling with the impossibility of rendering the ineffable into words.[23]

Elvira is at home alone because her sister and parents have gone to a party. She has been told to lie straight and still, like Antigone in her tomb, in order to rest her twisted back. Elvira's deformity has excluded her from ordinary social life; she has been placed in the position of an outsider, an observer, who asks questions and takes notes. Her special perspective is like that of the writer Woolf described in "Professions for Women," whose professional detachment allows her to see the significance behind the events of daily life.

[23]Allen McLaurin has noted Woolf's interest in the effect of words that are heard but not understood. He writes: "The rhythm of a phrase can have an effect even when the phrase itself has no meaning. The repeated cry of the street hawker in The Years is unintelligible; the rhythm persists, but the words are 'almost rubbed out.' [TY, p. 175] This lack of meaning can also free the phrases and allow them to become pure pattern. If exact words and phrases to some extent falsify, then the truth might be contained in the modified repetition, the rhythm of language." (Allen McLaurin, Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved [Cambridge, England: the University Press, 1973], p. 109.)

When Maggie comes into her sister's room after the party, Elvira questions her closely, trying to find out what a party is like by making her sister recount all the details. But her questions keep missing the essence of the experience, and Elvira realizes that she must develop some subtler method of finding out what she wants to know.

> . . . it was a case that would need not these wild, these silly these rather exaggerated questions: but a much subtler method; just as an explorer, if he sees a lump, in the sand, makes first a deep trench all the way around it; & then slowly digs & digs & digs . . . (TP, III, 126-7)

Whenever Woolf has written about her writing method she has pictured it as a kind of digging, tunneling, or fishing, all images that convey the idea of a search beneath the surface of life to find its hidden springs.[24] Through Elvira she is suggesting yet another approach, that of circling around the subject rather than confronting it directly. Elvira is voicing the need for subtlety that Woolf had expressed in her diary when she decided that this novel should contain "millions of ideas but no preaching." (AWD, 25 April 1933, p. 198) Woolf was evolving a way to present her ideas by

[24]While writing Mrs. Dalloway Woolf had discovered what she called" . . . my tunneling process, by which I tell the past by instalments, as I have need of it." (AWD, 15 Oct. 1923, p. 61) In "Professions for Women" she compares a girl who is writing a novel to" . . . a fisherman lying sunk in dreams on the verge of a deep lake with a rod held out over the water. She was letting her imagination sweep unchecked round every rock and cranny of the world that lies submerged in the depths of our unconscious being." (Collected Essays, II, 287.)

circling carefully around them, and digging in deeply.

Elvira as outsider acts as a mouthpiece for Woolf's attempts to deal with her material, a way of talking to herself as she goes along, and as a personification of the philosophical position of the deliberate outsider. One way of seeing The Pargiters is as a kind of Menippean satire, in which the characters act out the implications of the social and intellectual stances they take.[25] Elvira is a person who is governed by an inner law, the law of feeling, who regards the law of society as something external that does not apply to her. Thus she takes on the persona of Antigone, the Greek heroine whose tragedy she is reading as she lies in bed. Like Antigone, Elvira is an extremist who openly expresses her repudiation of social law and refuses to compromise despite the personal cost. Maggie, like Antigone's sister, Ismene, sympathizes with her sister's position but does not cut herself off from conventional life.

[25]According to Northrop Frye, "The Menippean Satire deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes. . . . The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent." (Northrop Frye, "Rhetorical Criticism: Theory of Genres," in Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957], p. 309.) The kinship with this genre is more evident in The Pargiters than in The Years, where Woolf struggles to clothe her characters in human traits, and disguise their function as "mouthpieces." Nevertheless, especially in the conversational scenes, the particular ideological stance of each character can often be discerned.

The frequent references to the Antigone legend in both versions of the novel provide a mythic analogue for the confrontation between a "feminine" system of ethics based on feeling and personal relationships, and the "masculine" rationale of power and conformity to an external social code. Moreover, the legend of the Greek sisters serves as a model for the intimate relationship between Maggie and Elvira. In _A Room of One's Own_ Virginia Woolf had pointed out that literature has seldom adequately portrayed relationships between women, for women are usually seen primarily in their relationship to men as lovers, wives, and mothers.[26] In this novel Woolf shows women as friends, sisters, cousins and nieces, learning from one another and communicating freely.

In the first scene between Maggie and Elvira, Elvira learns about social life vicariously, through Maggie's experience. Maggie tells her about the man dressed in gold braid who sat next her at dinner and told her that power was what counted.[27] The sisters compare the world of politics and competition he represents with the way boys behave at at school. When they had gone to a cricket match with their

[26] _A Room of One's Own_, pp. 142-143.

[27] In _Moments of Being_ Woolf describes going to dine with Ottoline Morrell and meeting Winston Churchill there: ". . . very rubicund, all gold lace and medals, on his way to Buckingham Palace. . . . " ("Old Bloomsbury," in _Moments of Being_, p. 177.)

brothers, they saw all the boys cheering fiercely for their team, and the girls, who didn't care who won, realized that what mattered at school was to pick a side and identify with it, in order to belong. To them the masculine domain is just a continuation of the cricket match, and they resolve to find some other way of life.

Elvira decides, after her sister and mother leave, that she will dedicate her life to the quest for truth. She is just beginning to realize how difficult that task will be.

> Even after Maggie had gone she lay still in the dark. It was only (then by) shutting out sounds lights, by (lying still) that she could hope to deal with the tremendous number of things (half-realised ideas) which in the last hour. . .
> . . . .
> She was only 17, moment would add itself to moment . . . And perhaps, by using immense care, not chattering so much, but (carefully devising more powerful means of) never sleeping, never drowsing--following with extreme daring each indication that was revealed, in (the end, at seventy,) without this blur of chatter that often misled, she would have . . . cleared the whole the complete truth. (TP, III, 153)

The next time Elvira and her sister Magdalena appear in the novel it is 1910. By then the girls' parents are dead and they are living alone in a rather disreputable section of London. As the scene opens in The Pargiters Elvira is reading Shakespeare and commenting to herself about how he handles the technical problems of his play. Elvira is acting as a critic now, as well as an imaginative writer.

She is impressed by Shakespeare's handling of transitions and his use of contrasts, concerns that Woolf was dealing with herself at this time. Shakespeare is particularly relevant here because Woolf was beginning to see that the techniques of drama might be useful to her in the "Elvira" scenes, which tended toward dramatic form, with much dialogue and little narrative description. (AWD, 20 July, 1933, p. 209)

In May, when she began work on the "1907" chapter, she had already come to realize how challenging and problematic her novel was going to be. It was then that she formulated her plan:

> The thing is to be venturous, bold, to take every possible fence. One might introduce plays, poems, letters, dialogues: must get the round, not only the flat. Not the theory only. And conversation: argument. How to do that will be one of the problems. I mean intellectual argument in the form of art: I mean how give ordinary Arnold Bennett life the form of art? (AWD, 31 May 1933, p. 208)

In the holograph and in the final version of the "Elvira" scenes we can see Woolf working out the techniques with which she would attempt to solve these problems.

In the "1910" chapter, cousin Rose's arrival provides the occasion for an "intellectual argument" that Woolf would later attempt to transform into art. Her arrival also adds interest to the structure of the scene, for as Elvira observes in her role as critic, a triangle is a more interesting form than a line between two points. Rose will provide a foil for Elvira, presenting a point of view based on a

different kind of life experience.

Rose serves several functions in this chapter. By recalling scenes from her childhood at Abercorn Terrace and stimulating her cousins to remember incidents from their common past, she re-creates the bond of family; in this way she conveys the sense of doubleness, of looking back and commenting while still marching forward, that Woolf was aiming for.[28]

Maggie and Elvira's shabby little flat is furnished with fragments salvaged from their past, and Rose recognizes an elegant old chair and a spotted mirror that she remembers from their mother's home.[29] They are familiar, yet different in this new environment. As Rose sees herself as a little girl running home from the store, and Maggie thinks of the blue and gold necklace her Uncle Abel once gave her, they begin to see the past refracted from a new angle. This perception is found in both _The Pargiters_ and _The Years;_ in _The Years_ it is Rose who is most aware of what is happening:

> They talked, she thought, as if Abercorn Terrace were a scene in a play. They talked as if they were speaking of people who were real, but not real in the way she felt herself to be real. It puzzled her; it made her feel

[28]" . . . I must somehow comment; Lord knows how--while keeping the march of events." (_AWD_, 25 April 1933, p. 197)

[29]Lucio Ruotolo's slide show of Monks House, the Woolfs' country home, at the 1976 MLA Convention, included a picture of a large red chair much like the one that appears frequently in _The Years_. The chair is still part of the furnishings of Monks House--a "solid object" that has survived. Professor Ruotolo believes that it once belonged to Leslie Stephen.

> that she was two different people at the same time; that she was living at two different times at the same moment. She was a little girl wearing a pink frock; and she was here in this room, now. (TY, p. 167)

In The Years the cousins' conversation is mainly personal, and political and social questions are suggested only indirectly. Children scream in the road, and pubs filled with drunken men are near by, but Rose does not refer to the problems of the poor, nor does she talk to the two young women about what interests her most, the women's suffrage movement. In The Pargiters these subjects are examined in much detail, but the way they are presented has not reached the level of "intellectual argument in the form of art"; the dialogue is wordy and didactic, though it does indicate quite clearly what the issues are.

In The Pargiters, Rose, who is older than her cousins, is shocked by the frankness with which Elvira speaks of her family. Elvira says that she hated her father, and Rose responds that it is wrong to speak that way. Elvira interprets Rose's answer as meaning that lies are necessary to the continuance of the family:

> You see Rose says one mustn't say one hates one's father. one mustn't tell the truth about anything. why not? I say; because, says Rose, the bloom of the family, the continuance of Abercorn Terrace and the great round tea table . . . the maid all depend upon lies; she says; or rather upon a kind of forbearance and respect: whereupon I look down in her mind & see the Pargiters crossing the desert; & the stars. this I think is all life taking its way from the end of time: a sort of reverence fills me: helpless, small, tenacious as they are. (TP, IV, 22-23)

Here Elvira has caught the two conflicting images of the family that are presented throughout the novel. Sometimes it is described as a kind of hell, a stuffy prison where people are forced to lie to one another. At other times the family takes on the dignity of a little caravan bravely crossing the desert, a group of human beings who have banded together for protection against the terrors of isolation and savagery.[30] In Virginia Woolf's dual vision, both truths have equal validity and do not cancel one another out. The family exists because the human condition requires it, and it shares in all the contradictions of the beings who created it.

But what Rose questions is whether these two healthy young women have the right to live as they do, cut off from their family, and ignorant of the poverty and suffering of the people who live around them. The sisters live in social isolation and are unaware of the problems of the poor. They do not understand why people go on having children that they cannot care for, instead of going to a physician for contraceptive help, as Maggie has done. When Rose points out that poor women do not have the three guineas to pay a Harley Street physician, Elvira proposes to write a letter to the *Times*, suggesting that birth control devices be made

[30] At one point Woolf thought of calling the novel *The Caravan* (*AWD*, 11 Jan. 1935, p. 237) The caravan crossing the desert as a metaphor for the family appears frequently in the holograph.

available to all. (This passage probably contains the germ of the idea for the title and the epistolary form of Three Guineas.)

Elvira's suggestion amazes Rose, for she realizes that Elvira does not know that it is illegal to disseminate birth control information in the England of 1910. And Elvira, in her turn, is shocked to learn that such an absurd law exists. "It seems to me that you live in a very odd world, " she tells Rose, who holds the same opinion of the "ivory tower" her cousins inhabit. (TP, IV, 27) Maggie and Elvira, who have lived abroad for years and have never gone to school, have not been indoctrinated with the mores of English society. To them the social codes of England are like the peculiar rituals and taboos of an unknown tribe.

During this conversation, Maggie and Elvira notice that Rose blushes whenever sexual matters are discussed. They cannot understand the importance she places on chastity, for they see it as an artificial concept that has prevented women from developing their potentialities. They can see no reason why a young girl should not walk alone wherever she pleases, but Rose's own experience as a child makes her feel quite differently:

> "I did" said Rose "But I wouldn't allow a child of mine to do it. You talk as if these things weren't complicated. But they are tremendously." (TP, IV, 30)

Because Rose is immersed in the day-to-day struggle for women's votes she is aware of all the compromises and contra-

dictions that are part of any political movement. Elvira and Maggie, as outsiders, can be iconoclasts, for from their vantage point they can see through to the hypocrisy at the heart of the entire moral code. Though Rose opposes some of the laws of her country, she accepts its Victorian morality, and once her specific grievance has been corrected she will take her place proudly in the ranks of England's defenders.

That evening, when Maggie and Elvira sit together summing up the events of their day, Maggie tries to break through her sister's vagueness to find out about the meeting where Rose had taken Elvira that afternoon. In *The Years* we are given two perspectives on the meeting, which is attended by many of the Pargiters. First we see it through Eleanor's experienced eyes as she places it in the context of the myriad similar meetings she has attended. Later on we are given Sara's impressions. In *The Pargiters* we have only Elvira as a guide, and she tells Maggie that what impressed her was not the substance of the discussion but the feeling that these people had come together to be part of something larger than themselves, an eyeless, ego-less embodiment of their collective will.

Elvira tells her sister that she had chosen a seat at the window, and when the window was opened the noises of the street, the calls of the hawkers and the cries and coos of cats and pigeons had created a kind of broken music that had

a most curious effect. As in the earlier scene in her bedroom, when the waltz music and the nightingale's song broke in upon her thoughts and added the emotional dimension that had been missing, the sounds Elvira heard from outside the meeting room lent a spiritual quality to its rather bloodless atmosphere. Elvira does mention the purpose of the meeting to her sister, for it has been called to decide whether the group will join the militant wing of the suffrage movement or whether it will eschew such violent tactics. Their purpose is important, surely, but Elvira's dreamy perspective places their concerns in the context of what is eternal; pigeons will coo and cats will cry long after the group's weighty deliberations have been forgotten.

In 1935, when she was rewriting her manuscript, Virginia Woolf was to see" . . . that here are four? dimensions: all to be produced, in human life: and that leads to a far richer grouping and proportion. I mean: I; and the not I; and the outer and the inner. . . ." (AWD, 18 Nov. 1935, p. 259) In this scheme Elvira is often the intermediary who brings the different levels in touch with one another, for to her the inner and the outer, the I, and the not I, are not as separate as they are for other people. In her mind the barriers are always breaking down, and the felicity of her peculiar way of looking at things is shared with the reader,

as it is here in the description of the meeting.[31]

As Elvira's account continues, Maggie begins to question the purpose of the group. To Maggie the idea of fighting for the vote seems pointless: "But suppose (we had votes) then we should be Englishwomen. Do we want to be Englishwomen? I don't." (TP, IV, 56) Maggie sees the role of women in English politics as that of prostitutes; she says that every patriarch has his prostitute, a charming woman who comforts him after his hard day's work and wheedles favors from him. If this is the only way to get the vote, she will have none of it.

The only thing that Maggie thinks women can do to end corruption and change the system is to refuse to take any part in it. "Whereas what Rose does say is . . . give me a vote and I'll be like you." (TP, IV,56) Like Virginia Woolf, Maggie realizes that men and women were reared in different traditions, the men working only for pay and the women trained never to earn a penny. She hopes that women can retain the selflessness and integrity of their tradition even though they may need to support themselves. She thinks that

[31]In her novel Woolf seemed to be trying to achieve the multi-leveled effect she had admired in Turgenev's work: "We look at the same thing from different angles, and that's one reason why the short chapters hold so much; they contain so many contrasts. On one and the same page we have irony and passion; the poetic and the commonplace; a tap drips and a nightingale sings. And yet, though the scene is made up of contrasts, it remains the same scene; our impressions are all relevant to each other. ("The Novels of Turgenev," Collected Essays, I, 249-250)

they should earn only enough to live modestly, eschewing ambition.

The sisters decide that they cannot share Rose's political goals. Nevertheless, she fascinates them, for many aspects of her personality are puzzling.

> This is a most curious & interesting woman, Elvira said at length because her powers of expression have obviously been atrophied by some early & painful I should venture to say hideous experience: (which she doesn't want to talk about) Just as a tree you know Maggie, if you put a ring round its root all the apples on one side are bitter (small); wrinkled . . . bitter, and about the size of a (halfpenny) . . . but on the other side dipped in golden lustre. (TP, IV, 51)

Elvira, who is physically deformed, senses that Rose too is maimed in some way.[32] Though Rose had felt the impulse to tell her cousins about the strange man who had frightened her as a child, she had been unable to bring out the words. And as they had noticed earlier, whenever sexual matters came up, she blushed and hesitated.

In the light of the Bell biography's account of Virginia Woolf's childhood trauma, it is possible to conjecture that

[32]Herbert Marder has pointed out that all of the characters in Woolf's novels who commit themselves to a cause are maimed in some way, as Rose is. "In the aridity of these 'shadow people,' in the sense that ' some essential part had been cut away,' we are shown the tribute the patriarchal order exacts from those who oppose it. . . . And Mary Datchet [in Night and Day], in deciding to turn aside and specialize in women's rights, will perhaps lose something . . . and suffer to some extent the fate of a 'cripple in a cave.'" (Herbert Marder, Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968], p. 94.)

this passage reflects the author's attempt to come to terms with her own past experience and its effect on her ability to deal openly with sexuality in all its manifestations. Since the intention of this study is to focus on Woolf's writing process, what is especially important is the idea that because of her experience Rose's "powers of expression" have "atrophied." This remark becomes even more meaningful when it is juxtaposed with earlier parts of the same conversation with Maggie and Elvira.

In her attempt to understand her cousin, Elvira had used her imaginative sympathy to conjure up a picture of Rose as a young woman. First she imagined her in the arms of a young man, lying in a flower-strewn meadow. But Maggie had disagreed.

> "Besides if Rose loved anybody . . . it was (obviously not) a man" said Maggie. . .
>
> ("Then the story will have to be completely different.") said Elvira. (TP, IV, 69)

Maggie's suggestion is so upsetting to Elvira that it is some time before she can speak again. Maggie, on the other hand, cannot see what difference it makes whether one loves a man or a woman. Elvira explains,

> "But whereas . . . I could think of Rose with equanimity in the arms of a man . . . the other thought is loathesome: just for ten seconds. But in the one case, you see Maggie I covered them with syringa petals. In the other--I didn't cover them (at all)--I saw them, naked; which seems to prove Maggie, that (the nature) of the act itself is a mixture of the ridiculous & the repulsive, or am I wrong?" (TP, IV, 69-70)

Woolf may be suggesting here that heterosexual love, which has been idealised and sentimentalised in our art and literature, has been made an acceptable subject, while homosexual love has usually been deprived of such treatment and so appears to us naked of the trappings of legend and romance. In its nakedness it appears ridiculous and repulsive to those who have not experienced it, while the same act between opposite sexes has been clothed in flower petals.

By opening up this subject, Elvira begins to feel that she is getting in touch with a mystery, with something buried deep in human history; she tells her sister, "My feeling was this: when you said Rose flung herself into the arms of Mildred in a greenhouse, a shock; horror; terror; . . . Something that lights up the whole of the dim pale past of the human race . . ." (TP, IV, 70) For a moment, it seems that Woolf is about to allow her character to explore the deepest levels of sexual feeling, but the moment passes, and the conversation moves on to other things.

This passage raises the question that Woolf had posed in "Professions for Women" when she had wondered how long it would be before women could speak the truth about their bodies. When she began the essay that became The Pargiters it had been her intention to write about women's sexuality, yet even in the draft manuscript she never really tackles the subject directly. Although several major characters are openly homosexual, Woolf never explores that part of their lives.

It seems that Virginia Woolf, whose "powers of expression" on almost any subject were prolific, found herself nearly as tongue-tied as Rose when she tried to deal with sexual behavior. One feels in reading these conversations in *The Pargiters* that her attempt to introduce the subject there is a first tentative step towards overcoming this inhibition.

The discussion of Rose's sexual nature that appears in the MS is not included in *The Years* in any form. Its deletion is part of a pattern of exclusion in which almost all the sexual material in *The Pargiters* was ultimately excluded from the novel.[33] The only exceptions are the story of Rose's childhood experience and a brief discussion of Nicholas' homosexuality. While Rose's lesbianism is strongly suggested in the holograph, the published novel presents her as simply a strong, rather mannish woman who has "felt many passions and done many things." *TY*, p. 166)[34]

Virginia Woolf had written that she wished Elvira to be "seen in relation to other things," (*AWD*, 25 April 1933, p. 198) so that first we found her looking out her window at a

[33]See below, Chapter VII, pages 200-201.

[34]It is possible that Woolf avoided labelling Rose as a homosexual in the published novel out of consideration for Ethel Smyth, who was a model for Rose. (See above, Chapter I, page 22, note 12.)

neighborhood party, then at a suffrage meeting, and finally, in 1913, on the steps of St. Paul's. In each instance she is an observer: of social gatherings, political meetings, and religious devotees.

She is at St. Paul's,we learn, because she has quarreled with Maggie, who is too busy with her baby now to spend time with her sister. Elvira is seeking consolation elsewhere, and she has gone to church for the first time in years, after reading the book of Job as she lay awake at night. But she finds that religion has lost its meaning for her.[35] She tells her cousin Bobby (Martin in The Years), when he comes upon her there, that

> "Ten years ago I felt, let me see, something dusky, dim. And it's all gone, Bobby." (TP, IV, 119)

Bobby understands what she is saying: "'You don't get a thrill any longer. We're an odd generation, aren't we? The grandsons of bishops.'" They had been brought up to believe in the moral authority of the Church and State, but, he says,"'it doesn't work any longer, flags the British army--St. Paul's no longer thrill you.'" (TP, IV, 120)

Elvira tells him that she has been trying to find some connection between the stark words of the Old Testament and

[35]While revising The Pargiters Woolf began reading the Bible, prompted, perhaps, by the same impulse that led Elvira to explore the origins of Christianity. "I must buy the Old Testament. I am reading the Acts of the Apostles. At last I am illuminating that dark spot in my reading." (AWD, 1 Jan. 1935, p. 236.)

the dim respectability of St. Paul's.

> " And then, out I came onto the steps, & thought to myself. What remains of all this?--what's the meaning? It always escapes me, Bobby. (The book) of Job. There should be lions roaring, & yellow sand: its a savage religion." (TP, IV, 123)

Elvira tries to understand what people feel when they shut their eyes and pray, but for her something fundamental has been lost.

Now the only heaven Elvira believes in is physical pleasure, like the rapture that spreads through her body when she eats "perfect meat, perfectly cooked" in the restaurant Bobby takes her to. (TP, IV, 124) Without any system of belief, she and her generation can judge only by their feelings. Even when Bobby tells her that his brother Edward prefers young men to women she is not as shocked as she was earlier when she learned about Rose.

> "I don't feel it." she spread her hand out. (You see) that's the only test after all. (one's body) You can't say (this is right that's wrong.)"(TP, IV, 124)

Nevertheless, they have both been brought up to make judgments from a moral point of view. Neither one of them can pass a noseless beggarwoman on the street without having tears come to his eyes, without feeling that something must be done for those who are unfortunate. Elvira's ability to put herself in another's place enhances her response to the beggarwoman, but she fears that acting on emotion can be dangerous, for "'it's a beastly sentimental feeble emotion.'" (TP, IV, 14)

The sight of the beggarwoman introduces an idea that Woolf will develop further when Elvira and Bobby encounter the "soap-box" orators in the park. The genuine sympathy that the cousins feel for the poor and wretched and their longing for a more humane society can be exploited by demagogues whose solutions lie in rigid ideologies that will destroy individual freedom. As Elvira puts it;

> There are two people (yourself and me) alive with emotion. spouting with emotion, who can't walk along the street without the tears starting to our eyes & (our bodies) burn with the beauty of the spring...& then they take that emotion & down comes the stamp. An ugly stamp. & a lying stamp. What is left of (that emotion?) Hatred (or merely laughter) ... or nothing at all. (TP, IV, 146)

It doesn't matter whether that authoritarian "stamp" is that of an established church or state, or of some new religion or political system; the genuine emotion that generated it will be perverted or destroyed once power is solidified.

When Woolf wrote of this novel that it should contain "millions of ideas, but no preaching" (AWD, 25 April 1933, p. 198) she was warning herself against the temptations of the soapbox, the inclination towards self-righteous moralism that she feared she had inherited from her father and his

Clapham ancestors.[36] This concern moulded her style as well as her thinking, for when this series of dialogues between Elvira and Bobby is compared to the meeting of Sara and Martin, their counterparts in The Years, the form is strikingly different.

In The Pargiters the conversation between the two cousins is extensive and detailed, and, as we have seen, it ranges over many topics. In The Years, although Martin tells Maggie when they meet her that he and Sara had talked of "'The whole world . . . Politics; religion; morality,'" (TY, p. 244) this is actually a much better description of the original version of the scene. In the "1914" chapter of The Years Sara's words are continually interrupted and drowned out in the noisy restaurant and on the crowded street, and the cousins agree that it is impossible to carry on a conversation in a public place. Instead, the political, religious and ethical themes are presented indirectly, through a series of images and incidents seen mainly through Martin's eyes.

[36] Leslie Stephen's family had been members of the Clapham sect, a group of wealthy Evangelicals who were ardent followers of John Wesley's social doctrine. The Clapham group struggled to abolish slavery, sent missionaries to the tropics, and organized philanthropy in England. According to Annan, "Their enthusiasm for humanitarian causes sent ripples across the surface of English life and inspired such people as Shaftesbury and Florence Nightingale, herself a descendant of a member of the sect." (Noel Annan, Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952], p. 4)

When Martin reads the words "God is Love" chalked on Apsley House[37] in defiance of the law, or watches an old man feed the sparrows on the church steps, "haloed by a circle of fluttering wings" (TY, p. 227) he knows that the religion of feeling espoused by Christ and St. Francis can only exist precariously now, outside the established institutions. He watches as the tolling of the bells of St. Paul's frightens the birds and puts them to flight, and later sees how a frail old woman in the park who is "saying something about sparrows" is mimicked by a chorus of little boys. (TY, p. 240) Only the powerful egotistical speaker is able to hold the attention of the crowd by manipulating their emotions.

The relation of money to power, another theme of the cousins' conversation, is also dramatized through incidents in The Years. Martin's feelings of guilt about his privileged position are illustrated through his reaction

[37] Apsley House was the home of the first Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoleon and went home to become a reactionary political leader. Wellington's house is an appropriate choice as a symbol of the masculine power structure's rejection of the religion of love. It also suggests a connection with Napoleon, whose name comes up in the "1917" chapter. Among other things, Napoleon was concerned with keeping women and their property under male control.

to the waiter who tries to hold back a coin.[38] His anger at being cheated is soon followed by discomfort and embarrassment. And later, in the park, though he is impressed by the argument of the socialist speaker he knows that he, as a wealthy, artistic dilettante, would have no place in the society the man proposes. He thinks to himself: "There wouldn't be much justice or liberty for the likes of him if the fat man had his way--or beauty either." (TY, p. 241)

Martin knows that his way of life could not survive an authoritarian regime, and he is fully aware that his position is founded on money. But Sara is quite naive about the real source of the freedom she cherishes. When Martin takes her to lunch, he brings her into the busy world of the "City Man," an atmosphere as alien to her as was the suffrage meeting. She is out of her element there, and embarrasses him by talking too loudly and getting tipsy on a glass of wine.

In The Pargiters Elvira is fascinated by the bustling atmosphere of the restaurant, but she clearly rejects Bobby's materialism. Continuing the train of thought that had prompted Maggie to eschew Rose's efforts to gain women the vote,

[38] Joanna Lipking has shown how Martin characteristically relates all human situations to cash; he learned this from his father, who rewarded him with sixpence for being top of his class. Lipking points out that Martin's last act,". . . in the last pages is an imitation of his father's. . . .'Speak! Speak!' he commands the caretaker's children.'Sing a song for sixpence!'" (TY, p. 429; Joanna Lipking, "Looking at the Monuments: Woolf's Satiric Eye," Bulletin, p. 144.)

Elvira tells Bobby that she can't understand why Rose would want to join this "corrupt, lying society." Bobby tells Elvira that she too is part of society in spite of herself, since she must pay taxes, and the money is used to wage wars without her consent.

But Elvira prefers to write her check and let others decide what to do with it. She thinks that Rose is a fool to get involved.

> ("She'd like them to do (another sort of job) or she'd like (to do it herself) Whereas once I'm a member of this society . . . I'm committed it seems to me . . . I've got to sit in an office telling lies." (TP, IV, 130)

Martin disagrees:

> "But you're a fool too if I may say so" he remarked. "A greater fool than Rose . . . You don't even know the way your money's invested . . . There's nothing you can do . . . you're not educated . . . (you don't even know how to work a typewriter.) (TP, IV, 131.)[39]

Bobby thinks that Elvira is a parasite, living on her income of 250 pounds a year. If she lost her money, he tells her, she would be forced to live with her brother and earn a pittance walking dogs.

Bobby admires his sister Rose because she and her friends are working for the vote so that they can get jobs and become self-sufficient. Elvira is seeking another kind of freedom; she thinks that because she has accepted no

[39] Anyone who has seen samples of Virginia Woolf's typing might suspect that she is poking a little fun at her own ineptitude here.

"bribes"--no education, no honors, no social position--society has no hold on her. If she refuses everything that society has to offer, she reasons, she can remain uncommitted to its values.

But Bobby's opposition to her stance is more than economic. He remembers how she sat at the window of Rose's meeting:

"No, you know he said. "you can't do it."

"do what/"

("What you do.) Well, (remain outside") Sit on a chair in the window taking notes . . . Well, you can't go on doing that all your life. (TP, IV, 37)

This remark goes to the heart of Elvira's symbolic position in the novel, for the price she pays for her refusal to participate is poverty, loneliness, and helplessness in the face of impending events.

At the time she was writing these words Virginia Woolf was faced with a crisis that was calling her own detachment into question. She had long played the role of spectator in public affairs, using her profession as a writer as an excuse for maintaining her distance and "taking notes." Woolf's journal shows that this episode was written shortly after she accompanied her husband to a Labor Party conference in Hastings. (AWD, 2 Oct. 1933, p. 212) This was in October, 1933, when opposing factions in Britain's left were struggling to overcome their differences in order to forge a common opposition to the growing threat of Fascism. Both of the

Woolfs were beginning to realize that the future of civilization might depend on the commitment of people like themselves.

Virginia Woolf had always used her writing as a way of transforming everyday life into problems of form and language. Now, in *The Pargiters*, she was using her writing as a way of exploring the implications of her own beliefs, and reexamining her position on the relationship between the artist and politics.[40]

The full effect of these manuscript passages cannot be conveyed through quotations and paraphrases, but it should be evident that the originals of the "Elvira" scenes are more like a series of dialogues than a fully developed fiction. Elvira appears as a restless, querulous spirit whose oddities never quite coalesce into a recognisable human being. Though she had seemed so alive in the author's mind, she eludes translation into print.

This difficulty persisted as Woolf began going over her original draft, for though the episodes centered on Eleanor and Kitty flowed easily, the more experimental sections where

[40]In 1936 Woolf would write an article for *The Daily Worker* which would further explore the relationship of the artist and society. By that time Woolf was ready to argue that the artist must leave his "ivory tower" in a time of political crisis in order to insure the survival of himself and his art. ("Why Art Today Follows Politics," *The Daily Worker*, 14 Dec. 1936, rpt. as "The Artist and Politics,"*The Moment* [1947]; in *Collected Essays*, II, 230-232.

Elvira appears were revised again and again. While working on these scenes in February, 1935, Woolf commented that

> Sara is the real difficulty: I can't get her into the main stream, yet she is essential. A very difficult problem; this transition business. And the burden of something that I won't call propaganda. I have a horror of the Aldous novel: that must be avoided. But ideas are sticky things: won't coalesce: hold up the creative, subconscious faculty; that's it, I suppose. I've written the chophouse scene I don't know how many times. (AWD, 20 Feb. 1935, pp. 238-239)

A month earlier Woolf had been reading Aldoux Huxley's Point Counterpoint and had found it "raw, uncooked, protesting"; her greatest fear was that The Pargiters would resemble it. (AWD, 23 Jan. 1935, p. 238) She too was writing a novel of ideas, with an element of protest, and she was engaged in a struggle to transform this recalcitrant material into art without losing sight of what she meant to say.

In January, 1935, as she continued her revision of the encounter with the soap-box orators in the park, we find the first mention of an essay to be called "On being despised." (AWD, 1 Jan. 1935, p. 236) The title suggests Woolf's idea that women have both benefitted and suffered because of their ignominious position in society. This idea for an essay seems to be a revival of her original plan for the feminist essay which became the "Essay-Novel." Now, as she struggled to free her novel from "the burden of something that I won't call propaganda" (AWD, 20 Feb. 1935, p. 239), it appears that she was beginning to feel that her ideas on

women might be better expressed in a pamphlet that would serve as a complement to the novel. Soon she would find herself "plagued by the sudden wish to write an anti-Fascist pamphlet;" (AWD, 26 Feb. 1935, p. 239) eventually her ideas on women's status and on the roots of Fascism would coalesce to form the basis for Three Guineas.[41]

Unfortunately, when Woolf began to delete some of the dialogue and soften the argumentative edge of the Elvira-Sara scenes they lost some of their significance. In The Pargiters Elvira represents a particular point of view--the repudiation of society with all its bribes and rewards. She is visionary and poetic, but she is also argumentative, though her point of view is often intuitive and irrational. She regards the world from the vantage point of an outsider, who is more concerned with her own emotional reactions than with objective meaning.

But in her discussions with her sister and with Rose and Martin Elvira can be long-winded and shrill, and as a fictional character she lacks dimension; she is more of a

[41]The earlier titles for the projected essay, such as "A Tap on the Door," and "On Being Despised," suggest that the status of women was to be her main subject; here for the first time she mentions anti-fascism. In October, 1935 she mentions " a book on women and fascism"; apparently her feminist and anti-fascist concerns had merged by that time. (AWD, 15 Oct. 1935, p. 257)

voice than a human being. As we have seen, giving her substance was a problem for Woolf. In January of 1935 she hit upon the idea of having Elvira (called Theresa at this point) sing, " and so lyricise the argument." (AWD, 23 Jan. 1935, p. 238) This device is used effectively in The Years to convey the dreamy, whimsical way Sara speaks, moving from one image to another with the rhythm of music. (In "1907" Sara sings her thoughts along with the music coming in from the street; in "1910" we find her at the piano.)

Although the Sara of The Years does not write in a notebook as Elvira does, she displays her imaginative powers in the series of images which is her response to her reading of Antigone (TY, pp. 135-136) and in the continual making up of stories that occupies her. Woolf tries in many ways to give her definition, having her mother call her "that imp, Sally," in the opening of the "1907" chapter, revealing her first through her own thoughts as she lies in bed, and then through the impressions of Maggie, Rose, and Martin. She is described as sallow, angular, and plain and compared to an ungainly bird as she hops about. She is clumsy, she talks to herself, she embarrasses her cousin by getting tipsy in a restaurant. We begin to see her sitting there, swinging her leg and asking, "Shall I, or shan't I?" yet she remains elusive.

Perhaps it is her eccentricity, her differentness from other people that makes it so difficult to envision her. She remains more of a presence in the novel than a character, and her peculiar manner of speaking is often hard to follow. Her quick flashes of perception are meant to convey some of the important ideas behind the novel, but they are presented so indirectly that they can be overlooked by all but the most careful reader.

Sara is a fascinating, quicksilver creation, but she is a bit of a lightweight to fulfill the function in the novel that Woolf had originally envisioned for Elvira. In her effort to prevent her character from dominating the novel, Woolf created scenes that are charming and lighthearted, but in the process the significance of Elvira's beliefs was obscured.

Chapter IV: "1917"

"that very difficult much too crowded raid chapter"
(*AWD*, 21 March 1935, p. 241)

The holograph of the "1917" chapter gives us Woolf's most complete explication of her ideas on war and peace and on the relations between men and women. But this chapter, which gave her more difficulty than any other, was to undergo a remarkable transformation: by the time the novel was published many of these ideas had been excised, called into question, or presented in an extremely truncated form. This is especially true of the anti-war position, which is given far less prominence in the chapter in The Years, perhaps because Woolf had decided in the interim that she would explore this question more fully in Three Guineas.

The hand-written draft of "1917" begins with a series of scratched-out pages that are among the most fragmented in the entire MS. Woolf's journal entry of February 18, 1934 explains that a headache had overtaken her as she began writing this important section, so that "It has gone--the talk during the Raid--running all over the place, because I was tired; now I must press together; get into the mood and start again." (AWD, 18 Feb. 1934, p. 215)

Yet though she stuck to her resolve and began again more than once, none of the MS versions of the dinner party scene have much coherence of form. The drafts are a series of long speeches in which the characters debate nearly all the major themes of The Pargiters. The abundance of ideas is what makes this episode so central to the novel, but she

soon realized that it would be impossible to embody all of them in a fictional structure. A year later, when Woolf was faced with the task of revising "that very difficult much too crowded raid chapter" once more the prospect helped bring on another headache. (AWD, 21 March, 1955, p. 241)

The problems that afflicted Virginia Woolf as she attempted to revise this episode make it equally difficult to describe and explicate. In order to convey the essence of the loosely structured material, I shall not always follow its sequence, but shall consolidate its major themes in some sort of coherent order. And rather than contrasting each passage with its counterpart in _The Years_ as I have done previously, I shall examine the material in the MS version as a whole and then the chapter in _The Years_.

Earlier we have seen how the two separate strands of the novel, the factual and the visionary, have been developed in alternating, contrasting scenes. Now, in 1917, they are beginning to converge. Since Eleanor and Elvira are cousins, they presumably know one another, but their first meeting in the pages of the novel takes place in this chapter. Though they meet here as guests at an intimate family dinner, they have little to say to one another, and the distance between them symbolizes the split in the novel between their modes of perception, a split that will not be fully resolved until the final chapter of the novel.

Though Eleanor and Elvira do not communicate directly as yet, they are linked through Nicholas, who loves Elvira and will become Eleanor's friend. Nicholas Pomjalovsky is a foreigner, and a philosopher of sorts.[1] When Eleanor is introduced to him she realizes that he is a man who has a compulsion to explain everything, to put everything into words. She thinks to herself that he seems likeable, but fears he may become a bore. (This observation may reflect the author's own fear that too many long speeches by Nicholas will become deadly unless she can find some way of dramatizing them.)

Nicholas fulfills an important function in the novel. In the MS, Eleanor sees him as someone who can "fill in the gaps" for her, (TP, V, 72) who will articulate the vague, rambling thoughts that she has mused over for years. She hopes that he will break through her solitude. As he puts

[1]Avrom Fleischman has suggested S.S. Koteliansky as a model for Nicholas. (Avrom Fleischman, Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975], p. 173.) "Kot," as he was known to his friends, was a Russian-Jewish emigré who was a close friend of the Woolfs. He and Virginia collaborated on several translations of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, a relation that may have been the model for the way Eleanor supplies words for Nicholas. Like Nicholas, Kot was a Utopian. He carried on a long correspondence with D. H. Lawrence in which they planned their escape to a mythical Paradise named Rananim, where they would build a new society. (Leonard Woolf, BA, pp. 247-253, and "Kot," The New Statesman and Nation, XLIX [5 Feb. 1955], 170-172; The Quest for Rananim: D.H. Lawrence's Letters to S.S. Koteliansky, 1914-1930, ed. G.J. Zytanuk [Montreal, n.p., 1970])

it in The Years, "We all think the same things; only we do not say them." (TY, p. 282) Because Nicholas lacks the reticence of his English friends, he says whatever he thinks. (At least this is true in The Pargiters, where he is allowed to give the substance of the speech that is always being interrupted in The Years.)

When Eleanor enters Maggie's living room she finds that Elvira has not yet arrived, and Renny and Nicholas are in the midst of a conversation about the war. Renny explains that though they are discussing Napoleon now, they have been searching for the origins of the war: "That was how we came to Napoleon. What the Allies should have done at the end of the Napoleonic Wars." (TP, V, 73)[2]

Elvira finally arrives, late and disheveled as usual. Eleanor notices that she has changed, that she seems less crooked than she was, and more grown up. After watching them together Eleanor realizes that Nicholas and Elvira are in love. It seems that the war has brought many changes, breaking down barriers between different kinds of people, so that unorthodox relationships like that between Elvira and Nicholas are now possible, and family life has become more relaxed and natural. With the absence of servants,

[2]How the settlement terms for one war can lay the groundwork for the next was becoming clear to Woolf and her contemporaries as they began to realize that the Versailles settlement at the end of World War I had created the climate which led to the rise of Hitler.

husbands and wives have been brought closer to each other; Renny helps Maggie with the washing up and with the children, which would have been unthinkable for Eleanor's parents. Marriages like theirs, Eleanor thinks, could not have existed in her day.

As the guests settle down to their talk, the conversation becomes a symposium on attitudes towards the war and towards human suffering, and an exploration of the far-reaching social changes that must take place if the future is to be better than the past.

To Nicholas the war is just a symptom of the distorted values that pervade their society and afflict even its most decent members. When Elvira describes how she heaped scorn and ridicule on Eleanor's nephew George [North in *The Years*] who came to tell her he had enlisted,[3] Nicholas points out that George's decision was a perfectly logical result of the kind of education he had been given as a barrister's son and as a student at Rugby and Oxford.

> "How can you expect a boy who has been educated like that, who is in no way remarkable, who sees his friends go to the war, who is rather bored by his profession, a nice ordinary English boy--was he

[3]By a strange coincidence, Virginia Woolf's own nephew, Julian Bell, went off to drive an ambulance in the Spanish Civil War just at the time when *The Years* was about to be published. According to Quentin Bell, Virginia found Julian's desire to participate in a war incomprehensible. Julian was killed six weeks after he went to Spain, and Quentin believes that later, when she was writing *Three Guineas* " . . . she found that it became in large measure a kind of argument with Julian, or rather with what she supposed to be Julian's point of view." (Bell, II, 203.)

> that?" Eleanor nodded: it struck her that Nicholas spoke of him as if he were dead--"to take up an attitude that requires a great deal of courage?" (TP, V, 79)

For Nicholas and Elvira, George's enlistment is an act of conformity, while refusal to fight would signify real courage. But by calling George "Eleanor's nephew" Elvira has identified him with Eleanor and her point of view, and it is Eleanor who comes to George's defense. Eleanor thinks it is perfectly natural to want to defend one's country, since she too has a deep love for her native land, and would fight for it if she could. Renny, who makes shells for the army, agrees with Eleanor; the Germans have invaded his native France and burned his uncle's farm, so that for him the war has a grim reality.

As usual, Maggie and Elvira take an extreme position. They refuse to see that it matters who claims Alsace-Lorraine, or England, for that matter. Elvira, who had been reading Job in 1914, has apparently been continuing her study of religion; she tells them that Jesus said that the only freedom is "not to own". The two sisters are still so removed from an understanding of what the war really means that they can discuss it in these abstract terms. They have no feeling for their country and cannot understand patriotism in others.

> "That's very interesting" said Nicholas. "You get two women like Magdalena & Elvira" he continued; "who are absolutely uneducated; they have received nothing from their country from the institutions of their country; they cannot

> inherit titles; they cannot vote: they cannot practice professions, they are kept purely as slaves for the breeding of children: & that system it seems (has) abolished all feelings of patriotism." (TP 5, 100)

But the others respond that Nicholas' explanation is an over-simplification. Eleanor does not share her cousins' detachment, and she points out that Rose, who had been so militant in her fight for suffrage, has volunteered to drive an ambulance at the front. The war has provided Rose with an outlet for the aggressiveness and energy that had made her restless and dissatisfied in peacetime. For her, too, the war has broken down barriers and allowed her to express her personality.

When Nicholas describes how the sexes have been forced to develop in different ways, and the limitations this has placed on women's lives, he raises a theme that has been developed all through the earlier chapters of The Pargiters. As the dinner guests see it, the resulting difference in the way women act and think has both negative and positive elements. Earlier, when Elvira had described her rather emotional reaction to George's enlistment, Maggie had commented," It's very difficult, being a woman, Elvira behaves in a (very) silly irrational, undignified & sentimental way; but its partly her training." (TP 5, 83) And Eleanor defends her own lack of interest in the kind of education men are given, since despite having been denied so much she has been able to retain a kind of integrity that men, who must make careers for themselves, cannot afford.

As the conversation continues, the guests begin to wonder whether the over-specialized roles played by men and women have contributed to the sorry state of the world they live in.

As the guests sit down to dinner, they hear a siren accouncing an air raid, and adjourn to finish their meal in the shelter of the cellar, just as Leonard and Virginia Woolf had done during World War I.[4] Woolf uses the atmosphere of the cellar to create an aura of primitive mystery around the little group. She says that they are "like old men round a campfire or a circle of witches brewing some midnight potion." (TP, V, 97) In the flickering candlelight beneath the stone arches, Nicholas looks priestlike and Eleanor like an old Abbess in a dressing gown put on for warmth.

Despite the shells falling outside, their thoughts begin to turn to the future, after the war. Nicholas explains that according to his philosophy the war is just an interruption; what matters is the direction in which society is moving. This shocks Eleanor at first, because

[4]Before beginning to write this chapter Woolf read through her old diaries to "freshen my memory of the war." (AWD, 17 Dec. 1933, p. 214) Her diary entry on December 17, 1917 tells of a dinner party during an air raid at which Bob Trevelyan was a guest. He apparently talked so loudly that it was impossible to hear the guns. The same journal entry describes Leonard sitting on a box in the coal hole reading the paper, for like Maggie and Renny, the Woolfs retired to their cellar during raids. (Unpublished Diary [Berg], 17 Dec. 1917)

she cannot see how the suffering of millions of people can be dismissed as unimportant. But, as Nicholas points out, human suffering has gone on for centuries, without receiving very much attention.

> As we did not find it in the least terrible until August the 4th 1914; as we all enjoyed ourselves in perfect comfort while (people) in millions were suffering far more terribly than they suffer on battlefields . . . (TP, V, 98)

Eleanor recalls her experience working in the slums, and realizes that Nicholas may be right.

> "Yes," said Eleanor, "I have always thought that . . . in a poor district--up in Notting Hill . . . I've always thought the lives people live there; the women always having children; never enough to eat; & not for three four five years, but all their lives, in rooms where you wouldn't keep a dog; that's far worse and infinitely worse. . . that's why . . . war is possible. It's so much better for most people than the lives they are leading, the women can feed their children. The men get excitement." (TP, V, 98)

As Nicholas and Eleanor talk they realize that the war has been made possible by the conditions in which people live, and that important changes must be made to prevent a repetition of what they are living through.

Nicholas suggests that if no honor were accorded to soldiers there would be no more wars. He thinks that no man would care to fight without parades and medals and pretty girls to spur him on. But Eleanor wonders whether, in the absence of rewards and recognition, anyone would do anything worthwhile, since there seems to be so little disinterestedness in human nature. She has seen that even

when young men go into public life out of a genuine desire to serve their fellow men, they are soon forced to compromise their principles, and end by seeking privileges and patronage like all the rest.

As Eleanor considers the lives men lead, she begins to understand her own reluctance to fight for the right to imitate them:

> Perhaps that's why--one always tries to find excuses for oneself--but I never felt so strongly as my sister felt; & so did Bobby my brother--about politics: (votes for women) And I remember thinking, when there was all that talk about education . . . a man's education is all mixed up with money. That's wrong. (TP, V, 110)

Eleanor realizes that most men, who have always had to earn their living, have never known the luxury of doing something for the love of it, for its own sake. For them everything has always been "mixed up with money."

Nicholas explains:

> "The nineteenth century was the age of the specialist: The men were educated in one way; to make money; the women in another, to bear children. The result is war . . . [I'll] tell you what matters; It is to develop not this faculty which makes money, not that faculty which breeds children;--it is to develop the whole soul. the whole being." (TP, V, 111)

The present system, with its separate roles for men and women, gives its rewards to those who conform; this distorts and impedes the growth of the soul, the soul including, in Nicholas' terms, all of the faculties of the brain and body, for they are mixed.

> . . . the soul grows by spreading in rings like those you see in water when a stone has fallen. The only way in which we can educate ourselves at the present moment (when we are so immature--so barbaric, killing ourselves as Renny says for a bit of land) [VW's parentheses] is not to impede those rings: to let them spread; when we (interrupt the soul & say) [parentheses to show crossed-out words] this is right, not knowing what is right . . . when we give a prize to the soul--say a peerage, say a don perhaps at Edinboro & Oxford University; and the soul repeats the same rhythm again & again & again: like . . . the needle of a gramaphone which has stuck. (TP, V, 112)

Thus the encouragement given a child or an adult to specialize his interests, to repeat activities that win him praise and rewards, leads to a stultification of growth. In addition, too much emphasis is placed on the "I", on the narrow, individual ego. Nicholas gives a little demonstration:

> . . . we . . . sit like this," he drew himself up, primly, . . . in our separate cubicles, each with his own little cross, or holy book--each mending his own sock." (TP, V, 114)

According to Nicholas it will take centuries to break down these separate selves; the evolution of the soul is the evolution of the race, and it is almost indiscernible in the individual. Yet he believes that they can tell that their present way of life is an outrage to the soul--they can feel this in their bodies. Hatred causes a sensation which is harsh and painful, while there is a sensation of pleasure at the base of the spine when the soul expands. Like Elvira, Nicholas believes that what the body tells you is the only

reliable guide. If goodness is innate, it follows that freeing the soul from all its strictures will allow the development of a higher form of human being and an ideal society.

But at the present time, since the milennium has not yet come, men are afraid to tell the truth to one another about their bodies. Nicholas adds: "'We all (conceal) have things we dare not say. I myself' he smiled." (TP, V, 123) Eleanor realizes that Nicholas is trying to tell her that he is a homosexual. At first she shrinks from his confession, not wanting to be told so much about another's private life. Then she begins to see that this opening up of what has gone unsaid is the beginning of the new kind of life they are hoping for, where honesty and trust will be possible.

> Eleanor again thought she ought to go. and yet if people wanted to talk, if they tried to say what they thought, if in spite of all the lies, the exaggerations, the foolishness of their language, they tried to set free the secret within them, and it is not necessarily a little foolish confidence she added. It does not matter whether Nicholas & Elvira are 'in love' or not. but the state of mind, the true balance, the living thing which makes them themselves; if they are to try to communicate that to me that is generous; humane; & I must annihilate little timid defensive self-protective warding off--hoarding up . . . (TP, V, 126)

By allowing herself to listen to what Nicholas is saying, Eleanor has opened herself to a kind of communication that she has never experienced before. Nicholas suggests that

she is able to do this because her education has been of a very special kind. By visiting the poor, by pouring tea and caring for her family, she has developed compassion and sensitivity. Because she has not had to harden herself to make her way in a competitive profession, she has retained the ability to grow and learn. Her creed has been that of the Victorian gentlewoman:

> "Not to earn money; not to have power, not to be famous--obscurity, inferiority, to be despised--not to possess; that's the finest education in the world." (TP, V, 132-3)

This description suggests that these women were like members of a religious order, taking vows of poverty, chastity and humility in imitation of Christ. Like Elvira, Eleanor has been able to retain her integrity by refusing to be "bribed" by worldly possessions and acclaim; Elvira quotes her Bible and Eleanor reads Renan's life of Jesus to find a model for their way of life.[5]

But Eleanor realizes that the obscure life that has been satisfying for her would mean misery for a different kind of woman. One must not gloss over" . . . the bitter-

[5]In the "1908" chapter Eleanor is reading Renan because "She had always wanted to know about Christianity--how it began; what it meant, originally." (TY, p. 154) She is probably reading Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, written in 1863, which approaches the story of Christ from an historical humanistic point of view. In 1935 while working on revisions of *The Years*, Woolf read Renan and the Apostles and was planning to buy an Old Testament. (See above, Chapter III, page 104, note 35.)

ness of the woman who feels all her gifts wasting within her. who is compelled to fritter her life away." (TP, V, 133) She hopes that the younger generation, Maggie and Elvira, will never have to live with that sense of waste. Even for Eleanor there is a new freedom now, for, as Nicholas tells her, "'(Now that you have learned to give up) to own nothing . . . now you must learn to enjoy. Cigars, love, wine, knowledge.'" (TP, V, 134) This is the new adventure awaiting women, the chance to experience what only men have known in the past. Maggie's mother, always married to one man, could not experience the varieties of love, but now women will be free to explore all aspects of life.

On this note of optimism the manuscript version of the chapter ends, having travelled far afield from the guns of war that sounded ominously over their heads. By now the raid is over, and the dinner guests depart.

When we turn to the "1917" chapter of The Years we find that a remarkable transformation has taken place. The pages and pages of long-drawn out exposition which I have summarized here have been reworked into a fictional representation of the atmosphere in which people lived their lives during the war.

The weather description that begins the chapter appears only in the published novel, for these descriptive passages

were apparently an afterthought added after the first proofs were pulled.[6] In the "1917" chapter the brief description is particularly effective, since it suggests the frozen darkness of a country at war, "congealed in the stillness of glass." (TY, p. 279) In the midst of the frozen night, Maggie and Rennie's home is an oasis of light and warmth. The people who gather there are able to keep the flame of civilized discourse alive, and to kindle hopes for the future. When Eleanor comes in, dazed and cold, she is able to warm herself at their fire.

> It was a real fire; wood blocks were blazing; the flame ran along the streaks of shiny tar. A little trickle of feeble gas was all that was left her at home. (TY, pp. 280-281)

Images like that of the fire and the searchlight at the end, contrasted with the frozen night and the falling shells, enabled Woolf to embody her belief that it is through the continuity of human relationships that man will overcome isolation and death.

But imagery alone could not adequately express all the ideas that were crowded into the original air raid chapter. Many of them had to be discarded, and others expressed in a form that bears more resemblance to the way people really

[6] The Years was set in type in March, 1936, and again in December of that year. The circumstances surrounding the final revisions will be the subject of Chapter VII of this study.

talk to each other. In 1935, when Woolf was struggling with the revision of this difficult chapter, she hit upon a new method of handling the long discourses. On March 25, she wrote:

> And this morning, in spite of being in a rage, I wrote the whole of that d--d chapter again, in a spasm of desperation and,I think, got it right, by breaking up, the use of thought skipping and parenthesis. Anyhow, that's the hang of it. And I cut from 20 to 30 pages. (AWD, 25 March 1955, p. 242)

The parentheses that she mentions seem to have been dropped, for only one appears in the chapter, in Maggie's brief aside about her children. But "breaking-up" and "thought-skipping" may refer to the way one character pauses in the middle of a sentence only to have his thought completed by someone else who is tuned in to what he is trying to say.

This device, which lends naturalness to the discourse, is frequently used between Nicholas and Eleanor. In the MS it is Eleanor who feels that Nicholas puts her thought into words, but the Nicholas of The Years is less fluent, and sometimes relies on Eleanor to supply him with the right words. In one passage, as Nicholas struggles to explain his theory, Eleanor helps him out, and in so doing, makes sense for herself of what he is trying to say:

> " . . . and if we do not know ourselves, how then can we make religions, laws, that--" he used his hands, as people do who find language obdurate, "that--"

> "That fit--that fit," she said, supplying him with a word that was shorter, she felt sure, than the dictionary word that foreigners always use.
>
> . . . .
>
> " . . . that fit." she repeated. She had no idea what they were talking about. Then suddenly, as she bent to warm her hands over the fire, words floated together in her mind and made an intelligible sentence. It seemed to her that what he said was, "We cannot make laws and religions that fit because we do not know ourselves." (TY, p. 281-282)

Merely hearing Nicholas' words had not made Eleanor understand him; it is only through her own participation that she is able to grasp his real meaning. This device of Woolf's is more than a literary technique; it is a transformation of Nicholas' sterile, one-sided "speech-making" into a creative interaction. Woolf is trying to show how people kindle and stimulate one another, how the sharing of ideas can create a sense of community, of being among people who think as we do.

Aside from his hesitant speech, the Nicholas of The Years is much the same character we met in The Pargiters, and his theories are presented sympathetically, although their reception is somewhat ambiguous. The attitude toward "Elvira-Sara", however, has undergone a decided shift. Even her appearance is described differently. In The Pargiters Eleanor thinks that Elvira looks happier and less crooked. In The Years she sees Sara as having become "older, more worn; though she laughed, she was bitter." (TY, p. 285)

In the original version of the chapter, when Elvira tells of the scorn and ridicule she heaped on her young relative because he has enlisted she is supported in her opinion by both Maggie and Nicholas, and Nicholas justifies the sisters' lack of patriotism as a logical result of the oppression of women. When Sara tells the same tale in The Years her attitude is repudiated immediately, not only by Eleanor, but by Nicholas as well:

> "How unfair you are," Nicholas was saying to Sara. "Prejudiced: narrow; unfair," he repeated, tapping her hand with his finger.
>
> He was saying what Eleanor felt herself. (TY, p. 286)

Since Maggie's exposition of why she refused to be an Englishwoman does not appear in the published version of the "1910" chapter, and Nicholas' repetition of this thesis has also been deleted, the idea is never touched on in The Years, save for Sara's anecdote about North's enlistment. (North is George's name in The Years) And even Sara's story, told in her elliptical manner, may not be fully comprehended by the reader.

These changes go along with the general tenor of the alterations in the novel, from the straightforward presentation of unorthodox and even radical ideas to a subtle and seemingly offhand use of ridicule and irony to make comments that can easily be overlooked or misunderstood.

But though the political debate that makes up most of the content of the original chapter is much attenuated in The Years, one theme that the published version conveys well is the way the war changed the fabric of life. In addition to the more obvious changes--the lack of servants, eating in the basement--there is the suggestion that objects themselves seem to have lost their edges, to be merging. Eleanor notices this:

> A little blur had come round the edges of things. It was the wine; it was the war. Things seemed to have lost their skins; to be freed from some surface hardness; even the chair with gilt claws, at which she was looking, seemed porous; it seemed to retain some warmth, some glamour, as she looked at it. (TY, p. 287)

This is the same chair that Rose had recognized in Maggie and Sara's little flat when she visited them:[7] it is a remnant of Aunt Eugénie's furniture, part of their common past. Perhaps the warmth and glamour emanate from Eugénie's remembered personality, transferred to the object that has long outlived her; the heightened atmosphere of wartime has made Eleanor receptive to these associations.

As in The Pargiters, the feelings of the dinner guests change dramatically when the bombing begins. The shells interrupt their conversation, illustrating the way in which the war, in Nicholas' theory, interrupts the evolution of

[7] See above, Chapter III, page 93, note 29.

mankind to a higher state of being. Eleanor's perception of the raid is that "She felt as if some dull bore had interrupted an interesting conversation." (TY, p. 288) The colors seem to fade; even the red chair looks as if " a light had gone out." (TY, p. 288)

The sense of relief at the end of the raid is more marked in The Years,[8] and it is made the occasion for a toast to the "New World," signifying their hopes for a better future after the war. This leads naturally to Sara's call for a speech from Nicholas, but as at Delia's party in the final chapter, Nicholas is not allowed to make his speech in full. It is only at the end of the chapter that Eleanor, who wants to understand him, asks the right question to set him off. As they talk together softly, he is able to express some of his favorite ideas, until Renny's cynicism interrupts them with his exclamation that "it's all damned rot!" (TY, p. 296) Although it is left unclear whether Renny is referring to the paper he is reading or to what Nicholas has been saying, his remark undercuts Nicholas' theories, just as Nicholas' criticism had called Sara's views into question earlier in the chapter. This continues the characteristic

[8]In rewriting this chapter Woolf was concerned about how she might bring in the different layers of life, using music and painting together with certain groupings of people, as well as conveying the way the mood changed during the raid: "This is what I want to try for in the raid scene: to keep going and influencing each other: the picture; the music; and the other direction--the action--I mean character telling a character--while the movement (that is the change of feeling as the raid goes on) continues." (AWD, 16 Oct. 1935, pp. 257-258.)

trend of the revisions, which balance visionary and radical ideas with opposing points of view, creating a deliberate ambiguity. It is difficult to understand why Woolf went quite so far in this direction, since a reading of _Three Guineas_ shows that the positions that Sara and Nicholas take bear a close resemblance to her own views.[9] She seems to have been so concerned with avoiding a one-sided polemic that she ended by burying some of her ideas in obscurity and circumlocution.

The ending of the chapter illustrates another, and more successful result of the revision process: the embodiment of ideas in human situations and in symbolic images. Nicholas' theories about the changes in the relations between the sexes are given human form in the happy marriage of Maggie and Renny, and in the strange yet loving relations between Sara and Nicholas. And as Eleanor leaves the house, all that she has been thinking and feeling becomes transformed into a "broad fan of light," the light of the searchlight sweeping the sky over the now peaceful city. "It seemed to take what she was feeling and to express it broadly and simply,

[9]It should be noted that while Elvira in _The Pargiters_ takes a pacifist stance in the midst of World War I, Woolf in _Three Guineas_ strongly opposes fascism while suggesting ways of avoiding future wars by changing society. This is not nearly as controversial a position.

as if another voice were speaking in another language." (*TY*, p. 299) The hopes and dreams that the dinner guests have tried to share through the recalcitrant medium of speech have found another form.[10]

[10] A detailed examination of the galley and page proofs of the "1917" chapter appears in Chapter VII of this study,

Chapter V: Two Unpublished Episodes

"She cut out bodily two enormous chunks . . . ."
(*DAW*, p. 156)

In the holograph, the "1917" chapter does not stand alone as a representation of how the Pargiters lived during World War I. It is preceded by an episode centering on Eleanor's thoughts about the war which was deleted before _The Years_ was published, as was another complete episode set in 1921, which followed the "1917" chapter in the MS. These excluded episodes, along with the essays of the original "Essay-Novel," comprise the most dramatic differences between _The Pargiters_ and _The Years_.

Our sources indicate that the two episodes were retained in the text through several years of revision, for they can be found in nearly their original form in the galley proofs that were pulled in March of 1936, just a year before _The Years_ was published. Evidently it was in that final year that Woolf made her decision to delete them. The circumstances surrounding her decision to exclude these scenes from _The Years_ will be described in Chapter VI as part of my discussion of the proofs and final revisions of the novel. In this chapter I will examine the episodes as they appeared in the holograph, and try to see what their presence added to the shape and meaning of _The Pargiters_.

The first question that arises from the discovery of these unpublished episodes is how a novel could survive such an amputation and still retain any integrity. But the continuity of this novel is achieved through repetition

of phrases and situations that seem the same yet are always a little different,[1] and through the reminiscences of family members who share a common past. Because of this reverberative structure, there is no necessary causal relationship between one scene of the novel and the next, so that even the deletion of entire phrases can go unnoticed.

Yet these cuts do have their effect, for they cause a shift at the center of the novel, throwing its balance askew. It is possible to project these scenes back into the text and see how their presence changes the meaning of the work as a whole, for both scenes describe experiences that are grim and even terrifying, and their reinsertion deepens the tone of what is often regarded as Virginia Woolf's darkest novel. And since Eleanor Pargiter is a major figure in both episodes, the effect on her of what she experiences in them adds a significant dimension to her character.

Eleanor Pargiter, as we come to know her in The Years, is a cheerful, capable woman, whose enthusiasm for people and good works carries her buoyantly through life. Though given to introspection when alone, she is usually able to find some justification, however vague, for her faith in

[1]Throughout the novel, phrases and situations repeat themselves with slight variations; in the final chapter Eleanor asks,"Does everything then come over again a little differently? . . . If so, is there a pattern; a theme, recurring, like music; half remembered, half foreseen?" (TY, p. 369)

humanity. But in the episodes Woolf deleted Eleanor is beginning to realize that her absorption in her family and charities has prevented her from coming to grips with the destructive forces that are overtaking her society. And when she is exposed to experiences that shake her faith in ordinary people, she is shocked to find herself regarding them with fear and revulsion. She is forced to question her values and her idea of herself, to wonder if all her good deeds have been nothing but a pose and a meaningless pastime.

The first unpublished episode is set in the same period as Maggie's party, and may have been intended as the opening scene of the "1917" chapter. Crosby, the Pargiter maid that Eleanor had pensioned off, is taking her land-lady's grand-children to the park. On the way they pass marching soldiers and newsboys hawking the latest news of the war. (Although we do not know the year, World War I is apparently still going on.)

The scene soon shifts to a crowded London train, where an unknown man catches sight of the headlines blazing from the newspapers being read around him: three British cruisers have been sunk. He looks at the other passengers:

> He fixed his eyes on the swarthy fat face of the woman in a shawl; (she was not to blame; she was) impassive, indifferent; . . . but she was (respectable) innocent compared [to] the men: & he (again attacked) the usual (people:) the statesmen, English, French, Germans: . . . They were the criminals: they were the plotters; educated men. And the newspapers puffing up these poor half

> educated defenceless bodies with their swollen words. Everybody looked bloated (and) enlarged in his eyes--the atmosphere was thick with a kind of uneasy gloating excitement; something uneasy moved down the carriage; there was the suppressed excitement that comes when everybody is thinking the same thing. (TP, V, 52)

He thinks that he alone feels differently; he wants to cry out, to protest, but knows that he is powerless to change anything.

A young couple boards the train, an officer and his girl, and the other passengers look at them with sympathy, admiring their air of decorous resignation. An elderly lady imagines that this is their last night together before he goes to the Front.

> She sighed, perfunctorily. But it was right; it was inevitable. English people always behave like that, she thought to herself, crooning over in the depths of her mind the stock phrases . . . She had a touching & moving feeling that they all belonged to one family, were moving on, united to (one high goal) victory. (TF, V, 53)

Caught up in this spirit of patriotism, she is able for a moment to forget her loneliness and her own petty concerns.

The scene shifts to Eleanor, who is walking home alone after a play. She overhears two men arguing over how the war got started, and begins to ask herself what she might have done to prevent it. If, she thinks, she had started a society, had marched on Whitehall in protest--but no, that was absurd. She had no eduaation; she had become absorbed in building her houses and caring for her father. Yet she realizes she might have done more.

Eleanor is disturbed by her own apathy about the war:

> She had no strong convictions . . . She did this & that; often she forgot about the war for hours together. (But then she thought) And it was for that reason that there was war. (TP, V, 55)

She has come to feel that their lives are governed by vast forces that individuals cannot control, that the day when leaders like Gladstone and Parnell could make history through the force of their personality is over.

Eleanor boards a bus, hoping to find relief from her solitary thoughts in the company of other people. "She had a queer feeling that she wished to give up her solitary attempt to find something solid: . . . perhaps other people would help her--her own individual effort started valiantly, then it faded." (TP, V, 60) The passengers on the bus have little to offer her, but at Maggie's party, as we have seen, she would meet Nicholas, who would share his thoughts with her, and give her his friendship.

Eleanor lives alone now, in a flat. As she arrives at her door, she cannot help feeling happy at the thought of her empty room, where no Crosby awaits her, where heat and light and boiling water for tea are available at the flick of an electric switch. Time and technology have brought her a freedom and independence she had never dreamed of.

But Eleanor's mood is quickly broken as she picks up the newspaper lying at her door and reads of the disaster at sea. Among those drowned she recognizes the

name of a young man she had met at her brother's house:[2]

> For a second the scene appeared quite clearly: The calm swaying waves; For all she could do to stop it she could not help seeing his face, politely smiling up at the moon; & then she looked & realized it was a dead face, quite helpless, drifting away, something like anger guilt terror rose in her; (But) I didn't ask it (of you) she said, as if she had been telling him not to hold the door open for her. He was the first person to die in the war that she knew. (TP, V,65)

In her mind she makes a connection between the courtesy with which the young sailor had held the door for her in Morris's drawing room, and the sacrifice of his life. It was not she who had asked it of him, but his upbringing had taught him that men must die for their women as gallantly as they held doors for them and took their arms as they crossed the street.

These scenes of England at war are based in part on Woolf's re-reading of the diaries she had kept during the last years of World War I. (AWD, 17 Dec. 1933, p. 214) The draft was written in 1934, but by 1936, when she was revising her proofs, Woolf may have felt that her recollections were too critical of the heated patriotism of World War I to be published at a time when Hitler was gaining

[2]This incident may be based on the drowning of Charles Fisher, Virginia's cousin, who went down on the Invincible in 1916. (Letters, II, Letter 762: To Vanessa Bell [Hogarth House, Paradise Road, Richmond],[6 June 1916], p. 98.)

power and England was facing the possibility of attack. Both Leonard and Virginia Woolf were struggling in those years to reconcile their commitment to peaceful solutions with their growing horror of Fascism, and though Woolf would deal incisively with the roots of war in British society in Three Guineas she apparently chose to soften the anti-war impact of The Years by deleting this episode.[3]

But in the tempering process an important turning point in Eleanor's development was obscured. It is here in her little flat that Eleanor begins to question the assumptions that have guided her all her life. She is beginning to wonder whether her charitable efforts had been mistaken because they had diverted her energies and prevented her from confronting the real issues of her time. She had accepted a limited role in her society, concerning herself with her family and her tenements and leaving politics to the men.

It is with these questions in her mind that Eleanor makes her way to the house of Maggie and Rennie, hoping, perhaps, that her cousins will help her find that "something solid" for her to grasp that the strangers on the bus could not provide. In The Years' version of the "1917" chapter, the only comment that might refer to the cancelled episode preceding it appears when Eleanor responds to Nicholas'

[3] See above, Chapter IV, p. 127, note 9.

philosophizing with a vague remark:

> "Coming along in the omnibus tonight," she began, "I was thinking about this war--I don't feel this, but other people do . . ." She stopped. He looked puzzled; probably she had misunderstood what he had said; she had not made her own meaning plain. (TY, p. 282)

What had been a dramatic representation of the consequences of Eleanor's detachment from the political issues of her time has been reduced in this final version to an example of another major theme of this novel, the difficulty of communication. In this case, Virginia Woolf, like Eleanor,has not been able to make her meaning clear.

The second unpublished episode was set in 1921 . The war is over now, and life is beginning again. Kitty, whose husband has died, meets her cousin Edward for a stroll in the park. She has heard that Edward may be appointed Master of his college, to live in the house where she had grown up. To her discomfort, she realizes that he is about to propose marriage to her again, and she quickly distracts him with idle chatter. Now, as before, neither Edward nor Oxford is what she wants, and since as a widow she must relinquish her home to her daughter-in-law, she plans to buy a little house in the North, where she can cultivate her garden.

Kitty leaves Edward, and hurries to her home, where Eleanor is waiting for her. As the two middle-aged women drink their tea, they talk of the freedom to live as they choose that has finally come for them. Kitty invites

Eleanor to join her in the country, but Eleanor says that she cannot imagine leaving the city because people interest her so much.

In recent years Eleanor has made new friends like Nicholas, to whom she can talk more openly than she ever could to other men she had known.

> I can say to Nicholas things I never dreamed of saying to my own brother. Why I was never in love; for instance . . . And his feelings are so interesting: he's always loved men, not women; how Rose loves women & not men. (And) Life's more interesting than it was when I was a girl. (TP, VI, 4)

Eleanor and Nicholas have initiated a new kind of communication between a man and a woman, but even Nicholas has not been able to relinquish his masculine need to dominate; she recalls that Nicholas has all sorts of theories about creating a new world, but he won't let her pay the bill at dinner.

After Eleanor tells Kitty about Nicholas, the two women begin to talk about how Kitty might educate her boys to be different from the men they have known. Eleanor warns Kitty not to bring them up to seek for power, for power will make them barbarous . . .

> But it sounded a little silly in that room with the manservants coming in & out--Two men, just to clear away tea.
> . . . .
> "Power," Kitty repeated. "Yes," she said But it has an extraordinary fascination. I find it quite difficult to give up the little bit of power I had: now I'm pensioned off like an old servant. (TP, V, 5, 12)

Kitty's remark creates a parallel with the earlier scene when Eleanor "pensioned off" her old servant, Crosby. Kitty's

little bit of power was derived from her husband's social and financial position. Now that he is gone, even the house she lives in is passing on to the male heir, and she has been pushed aside. In the suffrage meeting Kitty had argued against the use of force to attain women's rights, and had tried to use her influence with those in power to further their cause, and in the holograph Maggie had pointed out that "Every patriarch must have his prostitute." (TP, IV,56) Like the prostitute and the servant, Kitty had been discarded after her usefulness is over.[4]

After tea, Eleanor leaves Kitty's elegant house and wanders through an unfamiliar, rather dingy part of the city. She passes stalls hawking the racing news, and prostitutes parading. She wonders whether women would be like men and have no shame about sexual passion if they could prevent themselves from having children. She glances "rather furtively at a shady little shop with red rubber tubes in the window"--probably some form of contraceptive device. (TP, VI, 14) Such things could not be openly displayed in her youth, she realizes, and her thoughts turn to the plight of unwed mothers and to the fears her own

[4]In the holograph version of Kitty's dinner party in the "1914" chapter, Kitty had remembered the same slogan, "Every patriarch has his prostitute!" It had been shouted at her by a girl at a meeting. At her party, watching the way the women of her class wheedle jobs and favors from their men, she asks herself, "What else am I?" (TP, V, 17-18.) The same idea had been expressed earlier by Maggie. (See Chapter III, p. 99)

mother must have had after bearing five children. Though her mother had money, she must have dreaded another pregnancy, which must surely have affected her feelings about sex. The frank, wide-ranging talks Eleanor has been having with Nicholas have led her to examine aspects of life she had known little about when she was young, and she finds herself asking questions she had never asked before.

When she realizes that she is getting hungry, Eleanor decides to dine out alone, for it is too late to make plans to meet a friend. At first this seems an exciting adventure. She enters a restaurant that is bright and gaudy--not expensive, yet pretentious. Sitting alone, she observes the other diners. She realizes that they are working people, hairdressers and manicurists, playing at the game of leisure. When her food finally comes it is tasteless and unimaginative, and the tired waitress is rude. Yet all around her people are acting as if they are enjoying themselves.

> Why was this their dream? Did they like it or were they afraid because they were supposed to like it? Nothing could be more passive than their faces . . . they seemed under a spell, (drugged hypnotized) (TP, VI, 22-23)

Yet she senses an energy here, a potential for something more than this dreary imitation of the rich.

Leaving the restaurant, Eleanor passes a moving-picture house, where over-life-sized, red-lipped images embrace, enticing the work-sodden people to enter their false dream-world. "Common lust she thought would be better." (TP, VI, 30) Then she remembers the men at the next table

winking at the waitress, and recalls that even at her age she must avoid certain streets at night.

> Then the world was nothing but a (jungle) men and women remained beasts; veneered, covered over, suffused with pink light from cheap lamps; she looked at the faces-- . . . when they were not sodden and passive, the expression was (hard, rapacious insolent). (TP, VI, 30)

Eleanor remembers telling Kitty how she enjoyed people, found them so interesting.

> And that was a lie she said (to herself) the kind of lie she hated most; (the becoming pose) --she who said that she did not pose. The lie that makes one out a lover of one's kind. (TP, VI, 24)

She asks herself whether in fact she has been a hypocrite, serving on her committees and visiting the poor because she enjoys her little bit of power and the sense of her own importance.

All that she had worked for and believed in seems to dissolve in the harsh light of the common street. As she walks along a group of young men lurches drunkenly toward her, "bawling a coarse, defiant song, so that she stepped off the curb to avoid them--" She seems to be walking into a nightmare.

> One of the big shops was being pulled down, a line of scaffolding zigzagged across the sky. There was something violent and crazy in the crooked lines. It seemed to her as she looked up, that there was something violent and crazy in the world tonight. It was tumbling and falling, pitching forward to disaster. The crazy lines of the scaffolding, the jagged outline of the broken wall, the bestial shouts of the young men, made her feel there was no order, no purpose in the world, but all was hurtling to ruin beneath a perfectly indifferent moon. (TP, VI, 31)

Throughout The Years Eleanor has struggled to find order and meaning amidst the confusion of proliferating events. Here Woolf has allowed her character to experience the terror and violence of the postwar world, and forced her to confront her own helplessness when faced with brutality and unreason. In the restaurant and the street Eleanor has begun to see that the civilization she believed in is crumbling, that it is at best a thin veneer over unthinking bestiality. The poor people she had worked all her life to help, whose energy and openness had given her hope for the future, have been manipulated into aping the upper classes or drugged into passivity with alcohol and movies. Eleanor's innate generosity and sympathy cannot withstand exposure to the reality of life amidst the crude violence of the modern city.

This final scene reflects an experience of Virginia Woolf's that she had recorded in her diary in 1932. At that time she recalled a walk she took with her husband shortly after the death of Lytton Strachey and the suicide of Carrington.[5]

> A saying of Leonard's comes into my head in this season of complete inanity and boredom. "Things have gone wrong somehow." It was the night C. killed herself. We were walking along that silent blue street with the scaffolding. I saw all the violence and unreason crossing in the air: ourselves small; a tumult outside: something

[5]Dora Carrington lived with Lytton Strachey and was deeply attached to him. She committed suicide shortly after his death. (Bell, II, 165-167)

> terrifying: unreason--shall I make a book out of this? It would be a way of bringing order and speed again into my world. (AWD, 25 May 1932, p. 181)

Since the jagged skyline with its scaffolding was one of the seminal images that set Woolf's mind working on the idea for this novel, it seems strange that this significant passage should be eliminated. But this image is the climax of the episode, and it would undoubtedly have lost a great deal of its impact if it had been inserted somewhere else. Some of the images and ideas in this episode were later transferred to the final chapter when the episode was deleted, but evidently Woolf could not find a way of using this passage elsewhere.[6]

Even in its final form The Years was longer than any of Woolf's novels since Night and Day, and as was noted earlier, Woolf made her decision to delete these episodes only months before the novel was published, probably because when Leonard Woolf read her proofs, he suggested that the novel was too long, especially in the middle.[7] The text had already been cut and compressed a great deal as Virginia had worked on it over the years, and it may have seemed more advisable at this point to omit entire episodes than to try to pare them down.

[6]See below, Chapter VII, pages 207-209.

[7]Leonard Woolf, Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919 to 1939 (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1967), p. 155. This will be cited hereafter as DAW.

What seems to have been lost when these episodes were removed are some of the complexities of Eleanor's character and the contrasts between her solitary musings in these scenes and the social interchanges in the chapters that were originally placed after them. In both of these introspective episodes Eleanor finds herself longing for the solace of human companionship, first when she boards the bus hoping that being with other people will lift her spirits, and then in the later scene when she sits alone in the restaurant and looks for someone to take her confused thoughts and give them the stamp of certainty.

If the "1921" chapter had not been deleted, it would have been followed by the family reunion, which we will examine next. It is there, among her relatives and friends, that Eleanor will catch a glimpse of the truth that has been evading her for so long. But I believe that the loneliness and self-questioning described in the deleted episodes would have deepened the significance of Eleanor's vision at the end of the novel, because with their inclusion she becomes a woman who has struggled with her own doubts and fears, and has come through to a reaffirmation of her faith in man and his future.[8]

[8]The complete text of the unpublished episodes as they appear in the March, 1936 galley proofs has been reproduced as part of my article, "Episodes Excluded During Final Revisions of The Years." (Bulletin, pp. 221-251.) Some of the material in this chapter of my study can be found in my article in slightly different form.

Chapter VI: The Final Chorus

"The last chapters must be so rich, so resuming, so weaving together. . . ."

(*AWD*, 22 May 1934, p. 219)

While the holograph of the air raid chapter gives the fullest explication of the major themes of the novel, the final, or "Present Day" chapter of the MS provides a reprise and summing up of all that has been implied before. In a manner reminiscent of Proust's Le Temps Retrouvé, all of the major characters will reappear at the party and the lives they have lived will serve as a commentary on human nature, and on what time and history have wrought. And even before the party begins, as the cousins prepare for the gathering, questions will be raised about what their lives have meant, and where they are heading, both as individuals and as a society.

Throughout the novel, the characters have been asking one another whether things are getting better in the world, whether human nature can change, whether solitude is good and society bad, whether it is possible to lead a better life. Now, as Woolf prepared to write her concluding chapter, she asked herself how she could give these questions substance without resorting to long passages of exposition. She found herself thinking of musical forms as a way of developing a structure for her final chapter. In her diary she noted; "But I am thinking all the time of what is to end Here and Now. I want a chorus, a general statement, a song for four voices." (AWD, 7 Aug. 1934, p. 221) In these last scenes she would try to bring the rhythms and structure of music and poetry into her prose.

Thus the opening scenes, which take place simultaneously at the homes of Eleanor and Elvira, are written as a fugue for four voices that alternate, contrast, and develop their themes in counterpoint. The milieu in which they meet and talk takes on the aspect of an opera, with all the noises of the city streets providing the chorus. As in contemporary music, street cries and the sounds of technology--the ringing of telephones and hooting of car-horns--are integrated into the action and meaning of the scene. The telephone creates a link between the four main actors in the drama, allowing them to interrupt one another and share their thoughts, though they are far apart. As Woolf uses it, the telephone is a manifestation of the invisible network she believed existed between those who love one another.

Since the idea for using musical forms came to her as she contemplated writing the first draft of the chapter, her attempts at working out this technique are visible in the holograph even more clearly than in the published version. The effects are more awkward and obvious there, for by the time she had completed her revisions she had found ways of making her transitions smoother. In general, the published chapter follows the same form as the holograph, though it is less detailed, and many long explanatory passages have been left out. In my interpretation of this material, I will endeavor to point out the difference between the two texts as they occur, and to quote passages from the holograph

whenever they add new dimensions of meaning.

In both versions of these interlocking scenes we meet Eleanor and Elvira once more, each flanked by a young relative who will provide a new perspective on the two older cousins. According to the MS, what The Years calls "Present Day" is the year 1927; ten years have passed since the dinner at Maggie's where they drank their toast to the "New World" after the war. (In The Years "Present Day" is undated.) Now the "New World" has arrived, and with it the new generation, Peggy and George [North in The Years], who are trying to find their own way of life, and who look to their older relatives for an understanding of what came before.[1]

Peggy, who is Morris's daughter, is at Eleanor's apartment, waiting to accompany her to the family party. As she listens to Eleanor's talk, she finds herself imagining how she would describe her aunt to a friend. In earlier scenes it was Eleanor who carried on imaginary conversations, turning her solitary musings into dialogues.

[1]Charles Hoffman argues that the introduction of a new generation in the last chapter in order to illustrate the social and economic changes that have occurred destroys the continuity of the novel. In his view," . . . the need to focus on Peggy and her brother North, both of whom have no sympathy with or understanding of the older generation, removes what focus there had been on Eleanor, who attempts to interpret the past in relation to the present." (Hoffman, p. 88) It does not seem to me that Peggy and North are as unsympathetic to their elders as Hoffman sees them to be, but their introduction does add to the confusion of multiple characters.

Here Peggy's thoughts serve as a distancing device; instead of responding to Eleanor she tries to place her, to type her as a typical Victorian spinster, and to use her to make some generalizations about the past.

Similarly, George finds himself regarding Elvira as a stranger might, after his ten years abroad.[2] (George, Peggy's brother, whom we first met as a young boy in 1911, has returned to England from Australia, where he had gone to raise sheep after serving in the army during the war.) The holograph describes how he comes upon Elvira on her little island, the shabby little flat in which she is "living on the outskirts of the real world." (TP, VI, 101) Like Peggy, he tries to find words to describe his relative, and when prose fails he turns to poetry, for he had once tried to be a poet himself. He thinks that poetry may suit Elvira better than prose, for its rhythms convey the movement of her body as she sits swinging her leg, saying, "I shall, I shan't, I shall, I shan't," to life. Elvira, in her turn, sees George as a young man in an old portrait, holding his hat. It is only after they have been together for a while that they can pick up the threads of their old relationship and piece together the fragments of the years gone past.

[2]James Hafley finds some basis for a comparison between North and Marcel in Le Temps Retrouvé: "Since North has been in Africa and has just returned to London, the impact of the change affects him just as it affects Marcel, returned to society after his long illness." (Hafley, p. 143)

As the scene shifts back to Eleanor and Peggy they begin a debate as to whether the world has improved since the days when Eleanor was young, raising the question that will be repeated in many forms all through the chapter. Eleanor praises the advances of science, the shower baths and electric lights that have made her life more comfortable, and Peggy tells her how little is really known about how things really work. While Peggy questions her Aunt about her childhood, thinking that Victorian women were "suppressed" but admiring the vigor and strength of character that upbringing seems to have produced, Eleanor extols the excitement and freedom of the modern age.

An ominous note is struck when Eleanor, the "fine old Prophetess," sees a picture of a fat, gesticulating man in the newspaper. (Doubtless he is one of the Fascist dictators that have recently appeared on the scene.[3]) Just before picking up the paper, Eleanor's mind had wandered for a moment. In _The Years_, we learn that her thoughts had turned to the night at Maggie's during the raid, but in the MS her mind's eye had seen the grey head of the dead sailor bobbing in the water. This image from one of the deleted episodes

[3]Virginia Woolf had become aware of Fascism and its implications as early as 1933, when Bruno Walter told her what Hitler was doing to Germany. (_AWD_, 28 April 1933, p. 199)

makes a powerful connection with the picture of the man in the paper--they are both death's heads, one from the past and one soon to come. The MS has Eleanor explaining her sudden anger by saying," . . . when I read the paper, when I saw that man's face:--& you can't help seeing it everywhere --then I do ask myself, haven't people forgotten, haven't they gone crazy? What is wrong with men?" (TP, VI, 96) As she recalls the horrors of the last war, her instincts tell her the world is preparing for the next. In the MS, Elvira also sees the dictator's picture and comments on it to George, whom she has been reminding of his role in the war. She asks him scornfully if he " . . . didn't mind shooting the (tops of their) heads off and finding bloody hands?" (TP, VI, 103) Her remarks, along with Eleanor's thoughts, create an atmosphere of grim foreboding in the MS that is more muted in The Years.

The counterpoint between pessimism and optimism that is expressed in the dialogue between the cousins is translated into sound as well. When George arrives at Elvira's house he hears the voice of a soprano paralleling his movements as he mounts the stairs; her scales move upward, slowly but inexorably. Against her confident voice another is heard, the wail of a trombone, crying for all the sorrow and suffering in the world. In The Years Woolf underlines the meaning of this passage, commenting that " . . . they sounded like two people trying to express completely different views of the

world in general at one and the same time. The voice ascended, the trombone wailed." (TY, p. 316)

In the holograph we learn more about Elvira's relationship with Nicholas because George questions her about why they have never married, and why she has chosen to live as she does. She tells George that she loves Nicholas, but that he had become too possessive. He had wanted to pin her down, to control her:

> "First you shall explain to me he would say your conduct. As if I were there; I in one place, I nothing but one person." (TP, VI, 38)

Elvira wants the freedom to grow and change; she doesn't want to become solidified into a single identity. If she married Nicholas she would no longer be able to live as she pleases, and eat underdone lamb in her shabby flat. Nicholas would want everything well-done (In the MS Elvira and her way of life are presented in a more attractive light than they are in The Years--even George overcomes his dislike of undercooked meat, and discovers it is quite succulent served that way.)

Nevertheless, Elvira tells George, she has been forced to deal with life outside her door, despite her wish to keep herself separate. As Bobby had predicted, she has not been allowed to go on sitting in her window "taking notes." She tells George that the money needed to buy"Johnny's pop-guns" --to pay for the weapons of war--has raised the taxes on her little income, so that now it cannot sustain her unless she is willing to share a bath with a Jew who leaves a line of

grease around the tub. From her window she has seen the unemployed singing for a handout, and has watched the mourners carrying wreaths for the war dead. One day, in despair, she ran out to the river bank and watched the rushing hordes of workers, and asked herself--must she join this company "And sign on to this damned humbug & crouch under idols & serve a master; and make thirty bob a week all because of a Jew in my bath?" (TP, VI, 119)[4]

Elvira has been forced into a compromise, but she still refuses to mix love and money. She decides that she will write for money, but not about the literature she loves. Instead she will write about practical things--how to remove

[4]The disgust Elvira expresses at sharing a bath with a greasy Jew sounds anti-Semitic. Such an attitude would not be uncommon among young women of Elvira's background, and it may well have been Virginia Stephen's own attitude before she came to know Jews like Leonard Woolf and S. S. Koteliansky. It is only one of several references to Jews in the novel, in many different contexts. There are the Levys, "who enjoy themselves more than we do" (TY, p. 30); the "clever little Jew-boy from Birmingham," who is vying with Edward for honors at the University (TY, p. 49); and Nicholas, who is half-Jewish in the holograph, as was S. S. Koteliansky. (See above, Chapter IV, page 119, note 1) Margaret Comstock suggests that "Sara begins by thinking of Jews in a voice like Eliot's, perhaps expressing and confronting her own anti-Semitism, but by remaining in her shabby flat she chooses to live in the poverty that has always been the condition of the ghettoized Jews." Comstock quotes Three Guineas, where Woolf tells men that the dictators are now doing to them what they have always done to women: "You are feeling in your own persons what your mothers felt when they were shut out, when they were shut up, because they were women. Now you are being shut out, you are being shut up, because you are Jews, because you are democrats, because of race, because of religion." (Bulletin, p. 273; Three Guineas, pp. 102-103) In the holograph, though not in The Years, Elvira will decide to remain in her apartment and learn to live with her Jew. (See below, p. 173)

stains from tablecloths and fry fish. But the woman who edits the women's weekly she goes to for work tells her that what are wanted are articles with the personal touch. She wants Elvira to report on the parties of fashionable people, and to write as if she were talking to her sister about a mutual friend.

As George listens to his cousin's tale, he realizes that she is trying to keep her commercial writing separate from her creative work in order to protect what is vital to herself. He knows that her physical defect had affected her childhood, making her the object of other children's ridicule. He sees her writing as a kind of defense:

> Probably people who have been bullied when they are young, find ways of protecting themselves. Is that the origin of art he asked himself: (phrase making singing) making yourself immune by making an image? (TP, VI, 104)

Once more we see how Woolf uses the characters of Elvira as a way of exploring her own need to write; here she has George realize that Elvira holds her pen in hand as armor against the world.[5]

[5]In *Moments of Being* Woolf writes that when she experiences a shock she deals with it by putting the experience into words: "It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together." ("A Sketch of the Past," in *Moments of Being*, p. 72.)

Sara's story of her job-hunt and North's perception of her are conveyed differently in The Years. The draft of this section is long and rambling, and Elvira goes into great detail about her visit to the editor's office. In The Years the same story is presented through a few vivid images: Sara remembers that on the day she saw the mourners with their wreaths she thought," . . . this is Hell. We are the damned?" (TY, p. 321) When she goes to the river, she encounters an upper-class couple in a Rolls Royce, and sees the woman polishing " that spade, her mouth." [6] (TY, p. 322) When North remembers Sara as a child, he recalls that when she visited them she wore her skirt the wrong way 'round, and he and Peggy had laughed at her crookedness. Some of these incidents and phrases can be found scattered through the several versions of this scene in the holograph, but in The Years Woolf has brought them to the fore to create a powerful effect.

Sara's job hunt is mentioned in The Years, but only in the sketchiest terms. Sara's flights of fancy make her story almost unintelligible, and North interrupts her repeatedly,

[6]Jane Marcus notes that "Pargetting as painting to hide ugliness is used in Ben Jonson's Silent Woman:'She's above fiftie too, and pargets." Peggy is well under fifty and she pargets; Eleanor says that lipstick would make her feel 'bedizzened.' The American professor's wife in the Oxford section pargets, and Sara in an extraordinary metaphor tells North how angry the sight of a wealthy woman painting her face made her." (Bulletin, p. 281)

trying to establish the facts of the situation. In the end, whether or not it all happened is left in doubt, for he asks her, "How much of that was true?" (TY, p. 342) Sara's life seems much more shadowy in The Years than Elvira's is in The Pargiters.

In the "1917" chapter Eleanor and Elvira appeared together for the first time. Now, in the final chapter, they seem to be converging on a deeper level.[7] Eleanor is becoming more like Elvira; Peggy notices that she is beginning to wander in her talk as her mind wanders, instead of carefully reserving her wayward thoughts for solitude as she had done when she was younger. She speaks in discontinuous phrases like her cousin, and now she too is characterized as a "queer old bird, venerable and funny at one and the same time." (TY, p. 328) (In earlier chapters it was always Elvira who was described as a bird and associated with birds.)

And now it is Eleanor who calls Elvira to remind her to come to the party, trying to pull her back into the family fold. First George, then Eleanor, and later Maggie and Renny,

[7]Victoria Middleton has assumed, incorrectly, that Woolf had " . . . split the original visionary character, Elvira, into Eleanor and Sally." (Middleton's confusion is based on several ambiguous diary references, especially the one that refers to Woolf's original plan to have Elvira, not Eleanor, hold coppers in her hand in "Present Day." (AWD, 17 Aug. 1934, p. 222) Middleton is closer to the truth when she suggests that Eleanor and Sally [Sara] are somehow alter egos: "Eleanor, mild and discursive, and Sally, the Cassandra-like prophetess of doom, share the visionary role." (Victoria S. Middleton, "The Years: A Deliberate Failure," Bulletin, pp. 163-164, note 14.)

are engaged in waking Elvira from her dream, bringing her back to family and society.

In the MS this theme is reinforced by images from _The Tempest_, used to suggest the dream-like slumber in which she had been living. Like Ferdinand, George comes to her little island of a flat from a far-away land, and as they sit together George picks up a copy of Shakespeare and begins to read the play to himself. Elvira watches him and tries to imagine the scene he is reading: " . . . the storm was over: there was music in the air . . . the shipwrecked crew rubbed sleep from their eyes." (_TP_, VII, 14) At that moment Maggie appears in the doorway, and Elvira asks,"'Who is this spirit that has come among us . . . what is this vision? Do I wake or dream?'" (_TP_, VII, 15)

With Maggie's entrance the spirit of reunion takes over, and Elvira is persuaded that she must come to the party after all. In the holograph we learn that Renny too is hesitant about going, for he hates family affairs. The others accuse him of coldness, and they ask how he can be so concerned about the plight of the Africans and care so little about the feelings of his relatives. This discussion revives another important theme, the link between public and private life, the importance of family relationships as the basic unit and model for society as a whole. This linkage is reiterated when Eleanor and Peggy arrive at the rooms that Delia has rented for her party. They recognize the house

as the place where political meetings were held in the past. Here Rose's suffrage meeting was held, and here Delia met with her Irish sympathizers.[8] Now they are meeting once more, and the memory of all those forgotten causes will be revived in their conversation.

In the holograph, when Maggie, Renny, George, and Elvira reach the building they hesitate outside the door. "Come in! Come in!," Delia calls from the window, but Elvira still hangs back. The others pause too, George still talking of Africa and the charms of solitude, Renny hearing the voice of duty urging him to enter. Elvira hears "The voice of the nightingale singing out of time in the wastes of the heart." (TP, VII, 58) The call of the spirit is pulling her away from the others, for she is still reluctant to relinquish her separateness. She stops to read the names of all the societies to free the slaves or help the poor, all the well-meaning organizations that have held their meetings here. They symbolize the good that can come from common effort, and suggest that her isolation is selfish. As she continues to hold back, "Renny put his arms round her; she

[8]The building described here resembles the one that housed the leftist 1917 Club, which Leonard Woolf helped to found. It was located, he recalled, " . . . in Gerrard Street, in those days the rather melancholy haunt of prostitutes daily from 2:30 P.M. onwards." (BA, p. 216) It was a gathering place for artists and politicians, and Virginia often met friends there for tea.

was about to lag behind & give them the slip he knew." (TP, VII, 58)

> Finally Elvira enters the room.
>
> "Come and sit beside me, Elvira" said Eleanor, stretching out her hand. We won't dance. We'll watch the others dancing."
>
> "Like sitting in the stalls at a play" said Elvira sitting down on a stool beside Eleanor . . . Elvira laid her hand on Eleanor's knee. (TP, VII, 63-64)

Though she tries to fall back into her role of observer, by entering the party Elvira has moved away from her solitary stance. This incident, which is underlined in a rather obvious way in the holograph, is absent from the published version of the scene. There the whole group pauses before entering the party, until Renny cries "Come! . . . Come. We must." (TY, p. 363) In the published novel the significance of Elvira's move from separation to identification with the family is lost.

The Pargiters describes how, as the family group forms, Eleanor becomes its center. The "old prophetess" is now the matriarch of her clan. Each in turn comes to her and touches her in some way, as if she were a talisman. Even Peggy, the skeptic, will momentarily relinquish her separateness and enter Eleanor's world; late in the evening she goes to sit at her aunt's side and leans her head against Eleanor's knee " . . . with a feeling that she was for the moment

shutting her notebook, giving up her attempt to check to count to analyse. Perhaps what George said was true--sometimes it was better to enjoy, to feel, to have done with probing and dissecting." (TP, VII, 99) Eleanor has come to symbolize the life of feeling, of family warmth. As she has grown older she has expanded, freeing herself from worries and constraints, and becoming aware of her inner life and that of others.

Nicholas arrives and begins to tease Elvira about her unmatched stockings. She had dressed in the dark, still immersed in her dream, and though she has finally come to the party she wears motley. Dressed as a fool, she retains her right to ridicule and mock, to be different. But as the music starts she decides to join the dance, saying to Nicholas, "I will dance with you," echoing Emma's words to Mr. Knightley.[9]

As Eleanor watches, she thinks of the two couples--of the happy marriage of Maggie and Renny, and of Elvira's and Nicholas' strange alliance:

> Eleanor had long given up wondering what their relationship was. They kissed each other's hands. They abused each other. He scolded her--she railed

[9]As Joanna Lipking has noted, these are Emma's words as Woolf quoted them in her essay "On Not Knowing Greek" where she called them a moment with "the whole weight of the book behind it." This is the quotation as Woolf gives it; Austen actually has Emma say, more submissively, "With you, if you will ask me." (Jane Austen, Emma, [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952], p. 290; Bulletin , p. 142)

> at him. It did not seem to matter any longer . . . (if [one] married) or did not marry. Except now & again a marriage like Rennys and Maggies seemed (different), to matter. (TP, VII, 74)

Even the married couple, though more conventional, are living differently. Maggie has persuaded Renny to give up his job making munitions, and they are trying to live as simply as possible. This is an aspect of their relationship that is not discussed in The Years, a deletion which dilutes the activist message of the draft, which, like Three Guineas, suggests ways in which women can influence men to abandon their war-like pursuits.

As the family members make their appearance, alone, or in couples, their demeanour forms a commentary on the question of how best to live one's life. Save for Maggie and Renny, with their new style of marriage, those who are single appear to have fared better.[10] Rose is proud of her lifelong fight for "Justice and Liberty," Elvira has found her moments of truth, and Eleanor has had her share of happiness. Even Edward, though somewhat dessiccated, has retained his integrity. Delia and Patrick, and Milly and Hugh, provide dire

[10]Herbert Marder disagrees: he regards the unmarried state of many of the characters as symptomatic of the breakdown of the family and the isolation of the individual. He regards Eleanor as "pathetic" because "she recognizes the man she might have loved twenty years too late." (Herbert Marder, Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968) pp. 26 and 62) He seems to overlook the personal freedom Kitty, Eleanor, and Sara value so highly.

examples of the pitfalls of marriage, for Patrick is a far cry from the noble Parnell, and the Gibbses are more like cows than human beings.

But even the single have failed to achieve wholeness. Peggy, the emancipated woman who has a profession, has lost some of her humanity in the process of entering the male domain. She is narrow, bitter, and repressed. As North puts it in The Years, "She was neither one thing nor the other." (TY, p. 396) She uses her analytic mind to shield her from the horrors of personal relations. Like Elvira, she takes notes, but her mental note-taking is most unlike Elvira's imaginative flights:

> Her imagination was not creative it was analytic: she was very good at collecting facts; but not good at combining them. She had a fair visual imagination; if she said to herself "an anodyne sold at the chemists" she instantly saw a packet covered in shiny green paper: but the visual imagination is not the other kind of imagination. . . . She did not like messing about with he feels that, she feels this. She got things wrong . . . She could not make any number of lists of qualities; but she could not make of it Delia. . . . (TP, VII, 41-42)

Her mind is not synthetic, only analytic; she cannot combine.

When George becomes entranced with a pretty girl, Peggy can only see this as a potential disaster. She feels that she and her brother have been warped and maimed, he in one way and she in another:

> I so suppressed I can feel practically nothing: George all sex. So we go on; breeding--producing. . . . But perhaps it was better to produce Gibbses than to be, as she was, so sexless, so inhibited,

> so aware of all the things she mustn't do, mustn't be, so abused from childhood for any breach of the conventions that she could never let herself go in any relation without a sense of guilt. (TP, VII, 130-131)

Here in the holograph, the theme of sexual repression and its source in childhood experience is raised once again, as it was in the "1910" chapter when Elvira and Maggie discussed Rose.[11] Like Nicholas, who believes that the soul is warped and distorted by pressures to conform, Peggy realizes that their upbringing has forced both her and her brother into an unnatural way of life. As she looks around the room, she thinks that someone could write a novel about all of them, and call it "Warped Souls." This could well be another alternate title for The Pargiters, for all of its characters are shown to be maimed, handicapped, or warped in some way. (This idea is clearly a part of The Years as well as The Pargiters, but the sexual effects of such distortions are treated less openly in the published novel.)

The draft tells us that Peggy is particularly disgusted with her own generation, which seems to have produced a crop of effeminate, egotistical young men. Only the servants, stealing kisses in the doorways below, seem capable of real passion. Peggy's attitude toward homosexuality differs markedly from the tolerance exhibited by Elvira and Eleanor. It reflects her own fear of any form of sexuality, and it is

[11]See above, Chapter III, pp. 100-102.

also a reaction to a younger group of homosexuals, who are unlike Nicholas and Rose. Since the war she has noticed that young men have become the object of too much attention, because their older brothers had been lost. "How could young men be other than pretty girls nowadays, being as they were the centre of all the sentimental adoration of the old?" (TP, VII, 51) Peggy wonders whether the reason she has never married might be that there are no men for her. The new era has brought a further separation of the sexes, not a coming together, as far as she is concerned.

In The Years, Peggy's bitterness and isolation are still evident, but they are not associated with sexual difficulties. She continues to play the role of Devil's advocate as Eleanor sings the praises of progress and describes her vision of happiness. Instead of reflecting on her private experiences, the Peggy of The Years opens a book and reads a pessimistic passage in French, and asks herself how anyone can proclaim their happiness in a world bursting with misery. There is still some suggestion that her unhappiness is rooted in her own personality, but since less attention is given to her personal life her role as skeptic is given more validity than in The Pargiters.

The other young person in the family, George, becomes the center of interest when he asks the others for help in choosing a way of life for himself. After ten years abroad,

the "nice cricketing boy" who had gaily gone off to the war has changed greatly. He has had his taste of war and empire, and now he wants to live differently. Like the young Leonard Woolf, who returned from Ceylon in 1911 and gave up a government career to marry Virginia and earn his living as a writer and journalist,[12] George decides that he does not want to work at a conventional office job. He has saved some money, and his cousins decide immediately that they must draw up a budget that will allow him the freedom to live as he chooses. They all agree that money is the determinant of freedom, for to have enough for basic needs, and not to want what one cannot afford is the only way out of the morass of ambition and greed that can poison one's life. In the MS, a passage added to this scene in a later revision has Elvira give George a piece of paper to write his figures on. It is the paper she had brought in order to take notes on the party for her article, but she decides not to write it, declaring that perhaps the Jew is not such a bad fellow after all. She will not sacrifice her integrity for the sake of a private bath.

The prerequisite for a decent, self-respecting life for George, they decide, is a moderate income, enough to provide for a little house and one servant, for theirs is a profoundly middle-class notion. Then he will have the freedom

[12] _BA_, pp. 47-70.

to find whatever occupation he likes. Renny, ever-practical, wonders if many people could be happy living that way. He reminds them that many men die within two years of retirement, unable to live without regular work. But Eleanor thinks that George will find his new way of life a challenge:

> Oh but he'd have to work much harder than he's ever worked in his life, if you didnt allow him to kill & you didnt allow him to have a career. . . . He'd have to be a really imaginative man. Liking things for themselves; music art, books . . . Not in order to make money out of them. that's the hardest work there is. (TP, VII, 95)

Their prescription for George will require exceptional courage on his part.

In The Years, this earnest discussion of George-North's future is turned into a farce, for instead of drawing up a budget, Maggie draws a picture of her older brother as a fat man in a white waistcoat, a caricature of the British imperialist that North has refused to become. When North tells her that he doesn't know what he wants to do, Eleanor feels very happy, for he has suggested that the future is open and full of exciting possibilities:

> It seemed to her that they were all young, with the future before them. Nothing was fixed; nothing was known; life was open and free before them. (TY, p. 382)

The sober little group in The Pargiters, plotting George's future with pencil and paper, has been transformed in The Years into a gay company full of laughter and hope.

In both versions, George-North soon drifts away from the group and finds a pretty girl who suddenly gives him a new purpose in life. This is the incident that brings on Peggy's outburst, for she sees her brother falling into the same trap that has snared Delia and Kitty, and has kept Morris, her father, penned in the law courts day after day to support his family.

> All the talk had become to her perfectly meaningless. How to live? What to live on? Ideals. A life in common. Tush, she echoed Renny's word. He would marry a pretty silly girl & the usual thing would begin all over again. (TP, VII, 104)

Peggy continues to be the voice of pessimism, for she foresees no fundamental change in the way people live. She tries to speak to George, to warn him not to allow himself to be captivated by youth and sex, but the words come out all wrong; she only succeeds in hurting and angering him.

Peggy's outburst struck a deep chord in Woolf's own psyche, according to her diary:

> I wrote like a--forget the word--yesterday; my cheeks burn; my hands tremble. I am doing the scene where Peggy listens to their talking and bursts out. It was this outburst that excited me so. Too much perhaps. (AWD, 2 Sept. 1934, p. 223)

Peggy's emotions seemed to serve as a release for Woolf, as she lived through the experience with her character. The directness of Peggy's anger, and the pain it causes her when she realizes that she has alienated her brother seem to express Woolf's own difficulties with anger and criticism,

and her fear of being misunderstood.

But in the novel all is not lost. When Peggy and George go down to supper together, their memories of a common childhood bridge the gap of time and misunderstanding. George senses the concern for him behind Peggy's anger, and they are reconciled. With her reunion with George, Peggy's isolation is broken, and like Elvira, she rejoins the family. She too has been converted to a belief in the bonds of kinship and the importance of common human experience that breaks down the barriers between individuals.

Meanwhile, all evening long Eleanor has carried her knotted hankerchief and clutched the coins with which she wished to pay her own way. She is holding on to the money that has given her independence and the practical concern for others that has given her life meaning. (Woolf's diary indicates that she originally pictured Elvira holding the coins, but Eleanor seems a better choice for this role, since the freedom she had won so late in life is so important to her. [AWD, 17 Aug. 1934, p. 222].)

When Eleanor asks Edward to help the porter's son go to college, he asks what examinations the boy has passed, for this is what is important to him--not the desire for learning but the ability to pass exams, as he had done.[13] Eleanor

[13]Nevertheless, as Margaret Comstock points out, "Edward is doing what Woolf calls for in Three Guineas, seeing to it that his profession is not closed off by reason of class." (Three Guineas, p. 80, Bulletin, p. 256)

doesn't know or care about exams; what she sees is a boy whose parents want a better life for him than they have had, and her own role as one who will help the poor realize their aspirations.

Eleanor's good deeds are only the outward manifestation of the inner peace that has come to her. Earlier in the evening she had fallen asleep, to waken with an ineffable feeling of happiness. In the holograph Elvira is so closely united with Eleanor now that she can tell her what she has dreamed; Eleanor remembers only the feeling, but Elvira tells her that she had dreamed she was a young girl standing on the edge of a cliff above the water, with all her life before her. Her dreams have made Eleanor believe in some new capacity in human nature:

> "Renny says people cant make use of freedom. But why not? when dreams are so full of extraordinary emotion! Just falling asleep for a moment one seems to be in another universe . . ." (TP, VII, 101)

In earlier chapters it was Elvira who seemed to be always between sleep and waking, by the Round Pond, where she fell asleep against a tree after drinking too much wine at lunch, and in the scene with George in her apartment, with its dreamlike Tempest ambience.[14] Now it is Eleanor who drifts off

[14]The frequent recurrence of descriptions of sleeping and near-sleeping states in The Years may have had an autobiographical source, since at the time she was writing the novel Woolf was subject to strange lapses when she would sink into a trance-like state while sitting alone. She attributed this to the coming of menopause. (Bell, II, 197; see Chapter I, page 30, note 21)

while the others talk and wakens with a feeling that she has seen a vision. Harvena Richter, in her study of modes of perception in Woolf's work, speaks of the "hypnagogic state" between sleeping and waking when "things simplify themselves" so that complex structures are reduced to blurs or single lines.[15] Thus in Eleanor's reverie the complexity of conflicting events and forces that she has struggled to understand all her life is reduced to a single image of herself as a young girl, looking into the future, and a single feeling, of unexplainable happiness.

When the porter's children come in and sing their song, Eleanor is able to see their innate dignity despite their shrill, unintelligible Cockney accent. Like the boy who wants to go to college, they are part of a new generation, full of strength and determination. She realizes that in many ways the time to come will be both alien and incomprehensible to her, but she believes it will have its own strange beauty, like the children's song.[16]

[15]Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 35 and pp. 178-179.)

[16]Joanna Lipking suggests a further interpretation of the children's song: "Their hideously discordant song is at once a triumphant answer to this raw act of class condescension and a suggestion of something beyond, outside history, some unknown and more authentically divine spirit borne in through a speaking in tongues. (As St. Paul says, 'If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two.')" (Bulletin, p. 144.)

The image of the strange children blends into the final moment of the party. Eleanor sees the harsh new light of day falling on their pallid faces, bringing them back to reality. She goes to the window:

> She looked at the square. She thought how she had walked round it, all those years ago. how she had explored the back streets: how she had felt rather afraid. how the people had seemed to her alien and hostile; And then she must have been young, almost a girl; the sleeping street seemed for a moment the grave; & the pigeons were crooning a requiem for her past;for one of the selves that had been; for one of the many million human beings who had walked, who had suffered, who had thought so intensely. . . . And now a new moment was coming into being . . . made of the dust of generation upon generation: . . . " I have enjoyed myself," she said to Delia. (TP, VIII,12-13)

In the holograph, the first ending of the novel is very simple. After her words to Delia, Morris gets Eleanor's coat, and they say good night. These lines are dated September 30, 1934, which is the day that Woolf announced in her diary that "The last words of the nameless book were written 10 minutes ago, quite calmly, too." (AWD, 30 Sept. 1934, p. 225)

In the pages of the holograph that follow, Woolf has written some brief revisions of the final scene, ending this time with Delia exclaiming, "And the sun has risen!" (TP, VIII, 20) These words can be said to be the last in the first complete version of the novel, for in the next few pages, dated November 15, Woolf has returned to the

beginning of the "1880" chapter to begin her rewriting of the text. This attempt at revision dwindles away on page 23, and the rest of notebook VIII is blank.

The scene Eleanor sees through the window in The Years, the young couple getting out of the cab, does not appear at all in the holograph; it must have been added at a later time, as was the expansion of Delia's announcement of the sunrise into a vision of "extraordinary beauty, simplicity and peace." (TY, p. 435)

"Present Day" has re-evoked all of the motifs of the novel: the themes of love and marriage, money and power, integrity and conformity have been acted out once more as the family members repeat their childhood quarrels and cousinly debates. Woolf has repeated key phrases until they become a kind of litany: The lost flower in Mrs. Pargiter's portrait, the owl that flew over Peggy's porch, the Jew in the bath, the teapot that would not boil, all reappear as memories out of the past.

Her diary tells us that when Woolf was preparing to write the last chapter, she tried to recreate mentally the scenes and events that had made up the rest of the novel:

> The last chapters must be so rich, so resuming, so weaving together that I can only go on by letting my mind brood every morning on the whole book. There's no longer any need to forge ahead, as the narrative part is over. What I want is to enrich and stabilise. This last chapter must

> equal in length and importance and volume the first book: and must in fact give the other side, the submerged side of that. I shan't I think, re-read; I shall summon it back--the tea party, the death, Oxford and so on, from my memory. (AWD, 22 May 1939, p. 219)

Because she remembered rather than re-read, the moments from the past are blurred and dreamlike, and slightly inaccurate, as memories often are, so that Eleanor is remembered fraying the wick of the flame under the teapot with her hairpin, when it was Delia who actually had this habit. (Eleanor does do this once later in the book, and the recollection merges the two sisters into one figure presiding over the tea table.) (TY, p. 151)

Initially, Virginia Woolf had seen her last chapter as a series of "very intricate scenes: all contrasting; building; . . ." (AWD, 11 June 1934, p. 219) Intricate and contrasting they are, but whether they "build" to a satisfying climax is another question. Did she achieve the rich "weaving together" that would orchestrate into a resounding finale, or do the thousands of details militate against this effect? For me, at least, the chapter that appears in The Years does not come together as a whole.[17]

[17]Many critics, including several who have a low opinion of The Years as a whole, disagree with my estimate of this chapter. These include Edwin Muir and W.H. Mellers, both of whom regard "Present Day" as the best part of the book. (Edwin Muir, rev. of The Years by Virginia Woolf, The Listener, 31 March 1937, p. 622; W.H. Mellers, rev. of The Years by Virginia Woolf, Scrutiny [June 1937], rpt. in The Importance of Scrutiny, ed. Eric Bentley [New York: New York Univ. Press, 1964], p. 382.)

Perhaps it fails because, unlike the earlier episodes, which are shorter and focussed on a few characters at a time, "Present Day" attempts to include too much, moving so rapidly from one voice to another that the sense of continuity is lost. The first scenes, set in the cousins' flats, have a more coherent structure, if only because fewer people are involved. But once the guests arrive at the party, they wander about and engage one another in conversation that seems nearly as aimless as the talk at most real-life parties, despite Woolf's deliberate introduction of her themes and motifs. The idea of structure seems overwhelmed by her attempt at verisimilitude, for the party is so much like "life" that it has little semblance to art. As I have shown, some sense of pattern was suggested in the MS by the way the family gathered around Eleanor, making her its center, but this effect is almost lost in The Years.

Apparently Woolf was well aware of the problems the chapter posed, for while revising she remarked, "I think I see that the last chapter should be formed round N[icholas]'s speech: it must be much more formal; . . . "(AWD, 17 July 1935, p. 252) Most readers are under the impression that no speech is ever given, but a careful reading of the last section of the chapter shows what Woolf was about. Nicholas says he will speak "in the name of all" but, of course, he can only speak for himself, out of his own sense of "I", like the

soap-box speaker; therefore each character must have his own say, stepping forward to do his turn.

Thus, when Nicholas speaks of gratitude, Renny, ever the skeptic, asks, "What for?" while Sara pokes her hand up from under the table to scatter petals on Rose, who has fought for her liberation. Then as Martin proposes a toast to "Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse, " Kitty insists, as usual, that Force is always wrong. Peggy is asked to speak for the younger generation, but she had already said her piece when she warned North of the pitfalls of marriage. Now North takes up what she said, that they must live differently. Maggie too is asked to speak, but all she can do is laugh," as if possessed by some genial spirit," and North hears the words "No idols, no idols, no idols" chiming in her laughter: if they wish to change themselves and their society, they must follow no leaders, and worship no gods--their future lies in themselves. As they turn once again to Nicholas, he asks them to drink to "The human race, . . . which is now in its infancy, may it grow to maturity!" (TY, p. 426) He is reasserting his belief in human evolution, and in the potential of the new generations; as he puts his glass down it shatters, as in the Jewish ritual that symbolizes fertility.[18]

[18]Delia remarks at this point that this is the thirteenth glass broken that night. (TY, p. 426) Since the thirteenth year marks the beginning of manhood for the Jewish male, this remark also relates to Nicholas' hope that the human race will grow from infancy to maturity. (As noted above, in the holograph Nicholas is half Jewish. See above, page 161, note 4.)

As if on cue, children appear, and add their peculiar chorus. But we are still left feeling, as Kitty did, that we want "something--some finish--some filip--what she doesn't know." (TY, p. 425) But to have an ending, to tie the novel together in a neat bundle, would violate the meaning of The Years, for though it dwells on the past, it looks toward the future, and so must remain open-ended. As James Hafley puts it in The Glass Roof, Eleanor's vision is of the future and what it will hold for mankind:

> Furthermore, although she knows now that she will not disappear into "the endless night; the endless dark," it is not the sense of her own immortality that most impresses and satisfies her, but rather the sense that life is improvable as well as everlasting, that good can triumph over and annihilate evil. The Years is not a triumph of consciousness over the past so much as it is a consciousness of triumph in the future. To the Lighthouse concludes when Lily Briscoe, exhausted but triumphant, says, "I have had my vision" and puts aside her paintbrush. The Years, on the other hand, concludes with Eleanor reaching out, asking, "'And now?'" The present moment is no longer simply an end in itself; it is at once an end and a means.[19]

The contrast between the ending of To the Lighthouse and the ending of The Years points to a significant difference between the two novels. To the Lighthouse is an artist's vision; it captures a particular group of people in a particular time, in an attempt to encapsulate experience and present it whole. As Woolf neared the end of The Years, she felt the same urge to enclose and complete her work, to bring its disparate elements together in a final moment of

[19]Hafley, pp. 143-144.

resolution. But where the world of To the Lighthouse could be placed in perspective through the artist's eyes of Lily Briscoe, there is no figure in The Years who can fulfill this role.

We have seen how in her first draft Woolf attempted to place Eleanor at the center, and to create a circle of family around her, and then how she tried to make Nicholas' speech into a final chorus. But in both The Pargiters and The Years the center does not hold.[20] A novel which "includes everything" can hold a focus only for a moment, and the final chapter, like the rest of the novel, becomes a series of moments. When an eccentric spinster joins the party, when an old lady falls asleep and awakens filled with a strange happiness, when a brother and sister understand one another across the barrier of years, the novel rises to a peak of intensity, and falls again like a wave that has crested. Each of these moments quickly dissolves in the maelstrom of voices, phrases, incidents that slow to a halt only as the party ends and the sun rises on another day.

[20]Margaret Comstock has suggested that the lack of a central figure in The Years is an expression of Woolf's rejection of a hierarchical, tyrannical social structure: "From this point of view, The Years may be said to be written on aesthetic principles that are the opposite of fascist. It has no center or central figure around which subordinate elements are arranged. The reader cannot possibly surrender to the glamour of a life that seems more elevated than one's own." (Bulletin, p. 254) This view is supported by the documentation, which shows that Woolf deliberately suppressed the tendency to center the final chapter first on Eleanor and then on Nicholas' speech.

My examination of the "Present Day" chapter completes my study of the holograph version of *The Years*. That version fills seven bound manuscript notebooks and overflows into an eighth, and in this brief survey I have been able to discuss only a small portion of what a reader can find by reading through them himself. I have tried to choose excerpts from *The Pargiters* for quotation and discussion that clarify the intentions behind the writing of *The Years* and that provides a basis for an understanding of the way Woolf worked from draft to published novel. But the record shows that the completion of this long MS did not mean that her work was nearing its end. *The Pargiters* was completed in September, 1934, and *The Years* was not published until March, 1937. What happened in the years between will be the subject of my next chapter.

Chapter VII: Revisions

Once Woolf reached the end of the holograph draft, the course of the novel becomes less clear. Between the end of the holograph notebooks, whose final entries are dated November 15, 1934, and the first set of galley proofs pulled in March of 1936, there is no substantive documentation of the revisions that were made. We know from Woolf's diary comments that most of the chapters were rewritten many times, but what we cannot be sure of is when many important decisions about the direction of the novel were made. We know that the "Essay-Novel" format had been abandoned very early in the writing of the first draft, but we do not know when Woolf made the decisions that led to the diminishing presence of political and sexual content in the text as a whole. What _is_ evident is that even at the point when the first proofs were pulled many political and sexual references remained that cannot be found in the published novel. Thus we can see that their excision was part of a process that continued to the end; a process that paralleled and seemed closely related to Woolf's efforts to make the novel more dramatic, more concise, and more readable.

In order to examine this process we shall have to review the history of the novel as it went through its transformations and gather what evidence we can from the documents that survive. The actual writing of the first draft ended on September 30, 1934. It is on that date that Woolf wrote

in her diary that "The last words of the nameless book were written 10 minutes ago, quite calmly too. 900 pages: L[eonard] says 200,000 words." (AWD, 30 Sept. 1934, p. 225) Though she had recorded the many vicissitudes of those first two years, in retrospect she felt that the draft had gone at a "greater gallop than any of her other works, owing to the ease with which the objective, representational episodes flowed forth." (AWD, 30 Sept. 1934, p. 225) (This is attested to by the greater legibility of those sections of the holograph, where even the penmanship is more flowing than in the more fragmented episodes.)[1] But she realized that the extreme length of the draft meant that the work of revision would have to be extensive if the novel were ever to be cut to a manageable size. Many of the diary comments of the next two years document this concern, for she writes repeatedly of the need to cut and compress, and worries that she may ruin her work in the process.[2]

The diary comments are almost all the documentation that survives for this period. A few days after writing the last words of the first draft, which ends on page 13 of Notebook 8 of the holograph, Woolf did begin to revise her

[1] See above, Chapter III, p. 82, note 18.

[2] As when she writes: "I am rather worried about the raid chapter: afraid if I compress and worry that I shall spoil." (AWD, 27 March 1935, p. 242)

first chapter in the same volume, but she soon stopped. She began to write in the notebook again in November, resolving to write ten pages a day for ninety days, and to " . . . contract: each scene to be a scene: much dramatised: contrasted: each to be carefully dominated by one interest: some generalized." (AWD, 14 Nov. 1934, p. 232) Comparison of the holograph and the published novel shows that these were indeed the directions in which she was working, but detailed evidence of how this was accomplished is not available because, as was noted earlier, the revisions in the notebook soon dwindle away, ending on page 23. After that she probably continued her work somewhere else, perhaps on her typewriter.

The only remnants that may date from the period that followed are eight sheets of typescript with the author's handwritten revisions.[3] The haphazard typing technique and Woolf's own handwritten corrections make it more than likely that she typed these pages herself, but they are not dated and could have been written earlier. As I have noted in my introduction, Woolf often spent afternoons typing up what she had written in her holograph notebook in the morning,[4] and since the contents of these pages is very close to what is in the holograph this seems more like a collation of its

[3]See above, Introduction, page 4, note 5.

[4]See above, Introduction, page 4, note 4.

passages than an attempt at revision along the lines she had described in her diary. (On the other hand, they could be part of what she called the "first wild retyping" which was completed in July of 1935. [AWD, 17 July 1935, p. 252]) These fragments cover the part of the "1910" chapter in which Sara and Maggie talk together at the end of the day. They correspond approximately to pages 186-189 of the Harcourt, Brace edition of The Years, although they contain a great deal of material that cannot be found in the published novel. (One important change that was not in the holograph is that Maggie and Sara appear as sisters of Eleanor and Edward, rather than as cousins. This idea was dropped, but a hint of it remains in The Years in Maggie's suggestion to Martin that since his father was in love with her mother, they might actually be brother and sister. [TY, p. 247])

By July 17th 1933 the first retyping was completed, despite the interruption caused by a trip to Europe and the temptation to break off and begin writing "On Being Despised," which would become Three Guineas. (AWD, 9 April 1935, pp. 243-244) The retyped version was 740 pages long, and it was already evident that still more cutting would be necessary. The reworking of the material continued for another two and a half years, for it would be the

beginning of 1936 before Woolf finally decided to have the novel set in type.[5]

In December, 1935, as she re-read her final typescript before sending it to a professional typist to be prepared for printing, the doubts and fears that had plagued her through all the years of revision reached a crescendo; a few weeks later she noted that she had seldom been more miserable than when reading over what seemed such "feeble twaddle," such evidence of her "decrepitude" as the last section of The Years. Yet the next day, dipping into it again, she found it a "full,bustling, live book." (AWD, 16 Jan. 1936, pp. 264-265) And so her feelings see-sawed, until the value of her work became so uncertain to her that she decided to order galley proofs rather than page proofs pulled, because, according to Leonard Woolf's account, "Virginia was in despair about the book and wanted galleys

[5]During January and February Woolf readied her work for the printer. On March 11 she sent off the first 125 pages to be set in type. (AWD, 11 March 1936, p. 266) When the galleys were printed a set of proofs was sent directly to Donald Brace of Harcourt, Brace and Company in New York. Brace was very enthusiastic about publishing The Years in the United States as soon as Woolf had corrected her proofs, and he sent an advance of $1920. (Donald Brace, Letters to Leonard Woolf, [Harcourt,Brace and Co., 383 Madison Ave., New York], 27 April 1936; 29 June 1936; 7 July 1936.],listed in Berg as [Woolf] Harcourt Brace and Co., inc. New York. 55 T.L.S., telegrams to the Hogarth Press or Leonard Sidney Woolf. 25 Nov. 1924-29 June 1944, folder 15)

so that she would be free to make any alterations she wished in proof." (DAW, p. 153)

Leonard Woolf had always been the first reader of his wife's completed novels, and he usually read them before they were set in type. In this instance he did not begin to read until April, when the first proofs came back from the printer. He made no comment as he read the first batch, but Virginia fancied" . . . a certain tepidity in his verdict so far: but then it's provisional." (AWD, 9 April 1936, p. 268)

Sadly, even this hint of disappointment was enough to tip the balance of Virginia's already precarious mental state. Her diary entries lapse at this point, and when they resume on June 11 they tell us that she had spent the past two months in the grip of " a most catastrophic illness." (AWD, 11 June 1936, pp. 289-9) In her own estimation, her collapse brought her closer to the edge of insanity than she had been in many years.

But by June Woolf was confident of her recovery, and set to work immediately on yet another complete revision of The Years. Her optimism proved premature, however, and after nine or ten days it became apparent that she was not well enough to work. Later she was to recall that experience:

> I wonder if anyone has ever suffered so much from a book as I have from The Years. Once out I will never look at it again. It's like a long childbirth. Think of that summer, every mormming a headache, and forcing myself into that room in my nightgown; and lying down after a page; and always with the certainty of failure. (AWD, 10 Nov. 1936, p. 273)

When it became evident that this effort was too much for her, the Woolfs retired to their country house at Rodmell, where she rested for three and a half months, and, according to Leonard, was unable to write, or even look at her proofs. (DAW, 154)[6]

Finally, she seemed to recover enough to take up her task once more. Leonard Woolf recalled that

[6]If Leonard's memoirs are accurate this would mean that Virginia spent only nine or ten days in June working on revising her proofs and did not begin work again until November. However, a letter of Leonard's to Donald Brace contradicts this account. On July 7, 1936, he writes:"My wife has been ill off and on, the whole time, and has not been able to work for any connected period on the novel. She is, at the present moment, working on the first proofs, but altering them considerably." (Letter from Leonard Woolf to Donald Brace [7 July 1936], with letters and telegrams from Donald Brace, folder 15. See above, note 5.) Woolf's own journal breaks off on June 23 and does not resume until October 30, 1936, so we do not have her record of what transpired that summer. (AWD, 23 June 1936, p. 270; AWD 30 Oct. 1936, p. 270) Quentin Bell does not mention a break in her work on the proofs. He writes:"Very slowly, very painfully, she set about the task of correcting her proofs. She had to take a great deal of rest, and was continually obliged to stop--the pain in her head, her feelings of complete despair and failure--were too intense." (Bell, II, 196) In her November diary entry, which I have quoted above (AWD 19 Nov. 1936, p. 273) she talks about working "that summer" with "every morning" a headache, which suggests a more continuous effort than the few days Leonard recalls. This discrepancy is important, because, as we shall see, the work done on the galley proofs was phenomenal: the entire text was carefully revised and all the descriptive preludes and interludes were added. If Leonard's recollection is correct all this would have to have been accomplished in ten days in June and about six weeks in November and December, since the second set of revised proofs had already been pulled by December 15, 1936. This seems almost impossible, no matter how assiduously Woolf worked.

> Toward the end of October she seemed very much better and we decided that I should read the proofs of The Years and that she would accept my verdict of its merits and defects and whether it should or should not be published. It was for me a difficult and dangerous task. I knew that unless I could give a completely favourable verdict she would be in despair and would have a very serious breakdown. (DAW, p. 155)

For the first time in their relationship, Leonard was less than candid in his appraisal of her work. He was relieved to find that the novel was not in any way as bad as she had feared, but in his opinion it was too long, especially in the middle, and not really as good as her other major novels. To Virginia he praised the book more than he would have done if she had been well, but told her exactly what he thought about its length.

> This gave her enormous relief and, for the moment, exhilaration, and she began to revise the proofs in order to send them back to the printer. She worked at them on and off from November 10 until the end of the year, sometimes fairly happy about the book and sometimes in despair. . . . She revised the book in the most ruthless and drastic way. I have compared the galley proofs with the published version and the work which she did on the galleys is astonishing. She cut out bodily two enormous chunks, and there is hardly a single page on which there are not considerable rewritings and alterations. (DAW, pp. 155-156)

The "two enormous chunks"referred to here are, of course, the two unpublished sections dealing with Eleanor's experiences during and after the war that have been described in Chapter VI of this study. The altered proofs, minus the "two chunks" and carefully revised, were made into page proofs on December 15, 1936. After further, less drastic,

revisions the text was set in type at least one more time, and it was finally published in March of 1937.

The major documentation we have for this final painful stage of the novel can be found in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. Their holdings include a nearly complete set of the March 1936 galley proofs, unmarked, plus a few galleys with the author's hand-written revisions.[7] (One of these hand-revised galleys will be reproduced and examined later on in this chapter.) Moreover, the Berg Collection owns 13 sheets of page proofs dated December 15, 1936.[8] The extant page proofs differ in some details from the Hogarth Press first edition and the pages do not correspond, so we can assume that the novel, or at least part of it, was reset in type after the December 15 page proofs were pulled, although no documentation survives for those final revisions.

Our most comprehensive single source of information about what took place from the end of the holograph to the publication of the novel is the set of unmarked galleys.

[7]Virginia Woolf, The Years, galley proofs (March-April 1936), (Listed in Berg as The Years [London: By L. and V. Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1936] Galley proofs, incomplete.) Hereafter the galley proofs will be cited as G.

[8]Virginia Woolf, The Years, page proofs (15 Dec. 1936) The page proofs are included in the same folder as the galley proofs in the Berg Collection. (See above, page 195, note 7)

(They are complete, save for nine missing galleys, as far as the "Presént Day" chapter, which is fragmented.) As would be expected, these 1936 galleys bear a much closer resemblance to the published novel than to the holograph, which had been completed a year and a half earlier. Many of the changes I have described in my comparison of the holograph and the published novel had already been made: the long.rambling chapters had been compressed and brought into focus, and the strings of dialogue had been dramatized.

In general, the structure and content of the scenes in the existing galleys corresponds to what one finds in *The Years*, with two important exceptions. The two unpublished episodes have not yet been removed--they appear in the galleys in the same places as in the holograph, and though the writing has been smoothed the content is very much like that in the holograph versions.[9] The other major difference between the holograph and *The Years* is quite surprising. The brief descriptive passages that open each chapter of *The Years* and the similar passages that serve as bridges between scenes within the chapters do not appear in the galleys at all. This

[9]As was noted above (Chapter V, page 153, note 8), the galley proofs of the two unpublished episodes have been reproduced in full in the Virginia Woolf Issue of *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library*. Some of the material covered in this chapter of my study can be found in slightly different form in my article,"'Two enormous chunks': Episodes Excluded during the Final Revisions of *The Years*," *Bulletin*, pp. 221-251.

suggests that they were not written until the very last months before publication. (The descriptive opening does appear in the December 15 page proofs of the "1917" chapter, which is the only chapter for which we have complete page proofs.) If all these passages were written during the same period, which seems likely, they must have been composed between November 10, 1936 and early December, unless she had begun revising her galley proofs earlier than Leonard Woolf's recollection suggests.)

The existence of the galley proofs makes it possible for us to see just what Woolf was working with during these final stages of revision. For this reason the main focus of this chapter will be a comparison of the galleys with the published novel to see what these changes entailed. (Since the galley proofs are an intermediate stage between The Pargiters and The Years they can be compared with either, and comparison to what was in The Pargiters will also be brought in wherever it seems relevant.)

The galleys are, of course, much smoother and more coherent than the original holograph draft, and one important difference between the two is the difference in tone. As I have noted many times, Virginia Woolf seemed to have used the holograph as a vehicle for personal expression--in its private pages she felt free to express a degree of anger, resentment and fear that sometimes borders on the irrational.[10] The

[10]See above, Chapter I, page 21, note 11.

galley proofs, which were at least tentatively prepared for publication, express many of the same feelings, but in a much more controlled manner. An example of this kind of change occurs in one of the unpublished episodes, when she is describing the reaction of the unknown man to the other passengers on the train. The holograph version of his thoughts is almost hysterical in tone:

> They were the criminals: they were the plotters; the educated men. And the newspapers puffing up these poor half educated defenseless bodies with their swollen words. Everybody looked bloated (and) enlarged in his eyes--the atmosphere was thick with a kind of uneasy gloating excitement; something uneasy moved down the carriage; there was the suppressed excitement that comes when everyone is thinking the same thing. (_TP_, V, 52)

The proofs describe the same atmosphere, but quietly, with building tension.

> They were all of the respectable classes, save for a flower-woman with a basket at the door . . . Nobody moved or spoke. Everybody seemed to be gloating; to have fed on the garbage in the newspapers; and to be passively chewing the cud. He felt that if this went on he must get up and cry out. (G, 182)

It is difficult to generalize about a document as massive as 83 sheets of galleys, but my overall impression is that its tone is blander than that of either the holograph or the final text. The proofs are much more wordy than the novel is, and Woolf seems to have been successful in heightening the dramatic impact of the scenes as she revised them before publication. Detail of one kind, that which is redundant because it simply reinforces what has already been

said in another way, has been eliminated, while detail of another kind, that which brings color and drama to pallid passages, has been added.

But though the text has been improved considerably, the cutting and compressing did entail some loss of clarity, particularly in the delineation of character and situation. For example, some references to Delia's ambition to be a violinist are still to be found in the galley proofs, but not in *The Years*, where, as I noted in my discussion of the "1880" chapter, her unhappiness seems vague and baseless.[11] In this as in many other instances, a pointed social comment in the holograph is reduced to a more casual reference in the galley proofs, and either eliminated altogether or obscured in *The Years*.

All of the details eliminated from the final version are not as ideological as the discussion of Delia's career, but many of them did add complexity to the characters and provide social and economic motivations for their behaviour. The galley proofs tell us, for instance, that Edward is not in fact a first-rate scholar; his main reason for wanting to do well in his exams is so he can avoid spending his life working in an office. (G, 31) This detail lends credence to the later impression of Edward as a "hollow man" who speaks of his "wasted life." (*TY*, p. 135 and p. 405) Martin, too,

[11]See above, Chapter II, page 42.

is treated in greater depth in the galleys: we learn that he is a snob when he hesitates to greet his cousin on the steps of St. Paul's because she is wearing a shabby coat. (G, 147) And an insight into the circumstances that have created this middle-aged dilettante is provided in the galleys when he muses on the way he had been coerced into a military career.

> It was an abominable system . . . How can a boy of fifteen know what he wants to be? So they shove you into the Army, he thought walking down Picadilly. There's the polo and the pig-sticking and by the time you're seen through the humbug it's too late in the day. . . . (G, 146)

Other instances of episodes that come through with greater clarity and depth in the galleys than in The Years are the scene between Abel Pargiter and Mira that opens the novel and the depiction of Rose at her luncheon with Maggie and Sara. Surprisingly, Colonel Pargiter's liaison with Mira is treated with greater sympathy in the holograph and proofs than it is in The Years. It is shown to be a necessary escape for him from the depressing circumstances of his family life, and the relationship between him and his mistress reveals that there is real affection between them.[12] The freer treatment of sexual themes in that episode of the galleys can also be seen in the way Rose's lesbianism is handled. In The Years her sexual nature is barely touched on, aside from the account of her childhood trauma. As an

[12] See above, Chapter II, page 63, note 24.

adult she is described through Maggie's eyes as "handsome, in a ravaged way; more like a man than a woman." (TY, p. 170) We can surmise that she had some sort of love life, because she remembers as she nears her cousins' house that she had cried one night because someone had become engaged. In the published version of this chapter there is no indication of the sex of the person she had loved, but in the galleys she tells her cousins that she had lived in the neighborhood with a friend: "A friend who married," she adds with a sigh. (G, 183) She had cried at the engagement, she remembers. In The Years a deliberate ambiguity is created by the deletion of this passage, and by the cryptic remark that she had "lived in many places, felt many passions, and done many things." (TY, p. 166) [13]

Although Woolf apparently felt free to present Nicholas as an overt homosexual and a sympathetic character, she seems more constrained when dealing with female homosexuality. This deletion is unfortunate because, in addition to limiting the novel's exploration of the variety of human relationships, it obscures the parallel between Rose's feeling for her friend and Sara's attachment to her sister. Later in this scene, Sara's realization that her sister will soon marry and leave her will sadden her (TY, pp. 189-190), and when we meet her again she will be alone, seeking comfort at St. Paul's. (TY, p. 228)

[13] See above, Chapter III, page 103.

Another theme that is presented more fully in the galleys is Eleanor's attitude towards being excluded from those areas of life that have been reserved for males only. In the "1913" chapter, when Eleanor leaves the dinner table with her sister-in-law Celia, the galley proof includes these thoughts:

> As she left the room, Eleanor felt that the men were glad to be free to talk about politics uninterruptedly. She felt for a moment shut out; rather as she did in one of the Greek churches when the guide refused to let her step on a sacred spot; or at Pompeii when a picture had been too indecent for ladies to look at. It did not make her angry, as it made Rose; it amused her rather. After all, she thought, as they went out, she did not want to step on a sacred spot, or to look at an indecent picture. But she wanted to see the owl. . . . (G, 133)

Eleanor's tolerant acceptance of the way things are is more consistent with her character than was the slightly paranoid feeling that the men are in a "conspiracy" that is ascribed to her in the holograph version of this passage.[14] But Eleanor's acquiescence will become a cause for regret later on, when, in one of the deleted episodes, she will realize that she might have done more to prevent war if she had gotten involved in politics.

The deletion of the two episodes, the wartime London scene and the one set in 1921, created several problems for

[14]In the holograph, when Eleanor left the table it seemed to her that" . . . the men were all drawing up at the end of the table to talk about politics in a conspiracy." (_TP_, IV, 96)

Woolf, since she could no longer use incidents from these scenes as recollections in the later chapters. This problem arises early in the "Present Day" chapter of The Years when Eleanor is momentarily distracted while talking to Peggy. (TY, pp. 329-330) In the proofs Eleanor's mind fills with the picture of the dead sailor's head bobbing in the water, the same image that had haunted her in the first deleted episode.[15] Because that scene did not appear in The Years, Woolf had to substitute a memory from another chapter, and she chose the night of the air raid when Eleanor had dinner with Maggie and Renny. So in the final version of "Present Day" what Eleanor recalls is not the dead sailor but the hope with which she and her cousins had drunk together to a "New World." (TY, pp. 329-330) This happier memory is at variance with Peggy's impression that what Eleanor is recalling is a " . . . painful thought; which she had once concealed. . . ." (TY, 329) And the first image, the sailor's death-head, had created a parallel that has now been lost between the head of the dictator which she will see grinning at her from the newspaper and the image of the drowned young man. The earlier juxtaposition of images seems more apt, although the association of 1917's hopes with 1930's realities creates an irony of its own.

In this case the deletion of material related to one of the unpublished episodes softened the political content

[15]See above, Chapter V, page 104.

of the "Present Day" chapter. In general it can be said that the galley proofs retained more of the anti-war commentary from the holograph than can be found in The Years. Despite the evidence that Woolf's plans for Three Guineas were well under way at this time, she apparently did not envision as sharp a dichotomy between the two works as later emerged. If more of the galley material had remained in the text, the connection between the novel and the essay would undoubtedly have been clearer.[16] (Although we cannot know how much influence Leonard Woolf had on the changes his wife made, it is worth noting that he had told her earlier that"Politics ought to be kept separate from art." [AWD, 2 Oct. 1935, p. 256] According to Leonard's account, all of these changes were made after his reading of the proofs.)

But the changes made between March and December of 1936 were not all deletions or substitutions. Passages and phrases were added throughout, and although fewer words were added than were subtracted, especially when the "two enormous chunks" are taken into account, the additions did have their significance.

One interesting addition to the novel involves the introduction of a much broader range of perspectives. In

[16]Woolf regarded The Years and Three Guineas as one book. (AWD, 3 June 1938, p. 295.) This connection went unnoticed until after A Writer's Diary was published in 1953. Jean Guiguet was the first to note the relationship between the two works, but he devoted little space to tracing their connection. (Guiguet, p. 179, note 249)

the galley proofs most scenes are presented from a limited point of view, with the narrator providing insight into the thoughts of only one or two major characters. It is only in the published novel that one finds what contemporary television viewers might call the "Upstairs, Downstairs" aspect of The Years.[17] At this late date Woolf apparently decided that she wanted to bring in more of the point of view of servants and working people, which she did both literally and figuratively, for she shows us both what they think of their "betters," and how the upper classes look when seen from below. (Crosby, the maid, had always been an important if minor figure in the novel; I am referring here to shorter inserts, such as the Italian manservant's reaction to Colonel Pargiter's arrival at Eugénie's home in 1891 (TY, p. 117) and the caretaker's view of Martin in 1908 (TY p. 147). This innovation makes a valuable addition to The Years; it rounds off our view of the major characters and enriches our sense of the London life of the time, with its servants and artisans doing the world's work below ground level, and viewing the gentry as just so many legs passing by.[18] They are part of

[17]I am referring here to a popular series on educational television in which Edwardian family life is portrayed from both the servant's and master's point of view.

[18]In Moments of Being Woolf explains that " . . . as it is impossible to have every experience, one must make do with seeds--germs of what might have been . . . momentary glimpses, like those glances I cast into basements when I walk in London streets." (Moments of Being, p. 116)

Woolf's sense of the great subterranean life of the city, with its sewers and tunnels and cavelike basements connecting what seem to be the separate lives of individuals.

The development of multiple points of view goes beyond the introduction of a servant or lower-class perspective. In passage after passage throughout the novel, Woolf carefully inserted a phrase here and there which made an objective description of a scene into something personal, because the feelings and perceptions of one or more of the participants has been introduced. (This technique will be examined further in the detailed study of the "1917" chapter below.)

As Woolf worked her novel into final form she found more and more opportunities for emphasizing the reverberative structure of the novel by introducing instances where the common experiences of the family are recalled as they meet. One such addition occurs in 1908, when Martin, chatting with Eleanor and Rose, recalls details of his childhood quarrel with Rose:

> He turned. Some memory from his childhood came over him as he saw Rose sitting there at the tea table with her fist still clenched. He saw her standing with her back to the school-room door; very red in the face, with her lips tight shut as they were now. She had wanted him to do something. And he had crumpled a ball of paper in his hand and shied it at her. (TY, p. 159)

In her final version Woolf created opportunities for reinserting some of the powerful images that had been discarded as she compressed her text. One such image is that of Rose

in her prison cell, being forcibly fed as she sits on a three-legged stool. (TP, V, 12) Rose's predicament, which is discussed by Bobby and Elvira in the holograph, was left out of the galleys but reinserted in The Years. (TY, p. 232)

In this way Woolf was able to recover ideas and themes from earlier versions for the final one. Moreover, she was able to weave some of the material from the deleted episodes into the chapters that remained. Thus we find Kitty telling Martin that she had met Edward and walked with him in the park. (TY, p. 261) That meeting originally occurred in the deleted "1921" section, but since Kitty now reports this in 1914, when her husband is still alive, the marriage proposal that Kitty evades in 1921 can have no place in her account. Nevertheless, Kitty's remarks to Martin manage to convey her continuing ambivalence about Edward and Oxford and all they represent.[19]

Of more significance are the insertions Woolf made in the "Present Day" chapter of The Years to suggest some of the atmosphere of modern London that had been conveyed with such intensity in the description of Eleanor's walk through the streets in the unpublished "1921" episode.[20] Woolf was able to bring this material in at two different points in her narrative. As Peggy and Eleanor ride to the party in

[19] See above, Chapter V, page 146.

[20] See above, Chapter V, pp. 148-151.

their cab, a view of the streets that is less ominous than that in the last part of the deleted episode is presented.

> They were driving along a bright crowded street; here stained ruby with the light from picture palaces; here yellow from shop windows gay with summer dresses, for the shops, though shut, were still lit up, and people were looking at dresses, at flights of hats on little rods, at jewels. (TY, p. 333)

This insertion picks up some of the images from the early part of Eleanor's walk, when she had enjoyed looking in store windows. (G, 222-223)

Later in the "Present Day" chapter, Peggy's thoughts will express some of the fear and horror that Eleanor had felt when she went out into the streets again after her disappointing dinner. This passage occurs after Eleanor had described her vision of being " . . . happy in this world, happy with living people." (TY, p. 387) In both versions Peggy reacts by asking herself how one can be happy in a world that is "bursting with misery." In the galleys her thoughts are presented briefly:

> Happy in this world with living people! she thought. What nonsense, what nonsense, she thought. Happy in this world--in a world that is bursting with misery, she thought. Look at them, she said to herself; there's cruelty, there's pettiness, there's meanness enough . . . (G, 279) [ellipse in text]

In The Years Woolf has expanded the passage. Though the words are different, she seems to have drawn upon the feelings

of the "1921" experience, when Eleanor saw the scaffolding against the sky, and chaos everywhere.

> On every placard on every street corner there was Death; or worse--tyranny; brutality; torture; the fall of civilisation; the end of freedom. We here, she thought, are only sheltering under a leaf, which will be destroyed. (TY, p. 388)

The fear and foreboding these lines express provide a moment of culmination for the vision of the destruction of civilisation that runs through the novel. And the direct image of placards proclaiming Death underlines the repeated use of newspaper headlines and placards to punctuate the novel with the death of kings and political leaders, the disasters of war, and the rise of tyrants.[21]

Further along in the same passage, Peggy recalls the scene at the movie theatre, seeing its sordidness now. Here her thoughts are expressed in almost the same words Eleanor had used near the end of the deleted "1921" episode:

> Thinking was torment; why not give up thinking and drift and dream? But the misery of the world, she thought, forces me to think. Or was that a pose? Was she not seeing herself in the becoming attitude of one who points to his own bleeding heart? to whom the miseries of the world are misery, when in fact, she thought, I do not love my kind. Again

[21] In her diary Woolf describes learning of her friend Stella Benson's death from a newspaper placard: "I was walking through Leicester Square--how far from China--just now when I read 'Death of a Noted Novelist' on the posters." (AWD, 7 Dec. 1933, p. 213) Josephine O'Brien Schaefer noted that "Death punctuates the novel." (Schaefer, pp. 176-177)

> she saw the ruby-splashed pavement, and faces mobbed at the door of a picture palace; apathetic, passive faces; the faces of people drugged with cheap pleasures; who had not even the courage to be themselves, but must dress up, imitate, pretend. (TY, p. 388)

These thoughts, once Eleanor's, seem more appropriate to Peggy, for though she is a doctor who heals the sick, she is bitter and disillusioned. For Eleanor to have reacted as she did in the "1921" episode was somewhat out of character, but arresting for that very reason.

Not all of the changes Woolf made between the galleys and The Years involved thematic material; some were made for the sake of style. Many of the most felicitous descriptive passages were perfected in the final stages of revision, as is easily demonstrated by the alterations in Kitty's soliloquy on the hilltop at the end of the "1914" chapter. The lines that were added there are among the most frequently quoted passages in the novel. Here is the galley proof version:

> Suddenly she saw the sky between two striped tree-trunks, extraordinarily blue. Then she came out on the rough turf by the monument which the old earl had built; the mark for ships at sea. The wind ceased, and the country opened wide all round her. Her body seemed to shrink and to become all eye. She threw herself on the ground and looked over the billowing land that went, rising and falling, away and away till somewhere off it reached the sea. It was an uncultivated land, seen from this height, an uninhabited land, existing by itself, for itself. Dark wedges of shadow, bright breadths of light, lay side by side. Then as she watched, light moved and dark moved; and light and dark went travelling over the hills and over the valleys.

> Yellow, blue, red and deep violet the land changed as the light and shadow passed over it. It seemed transient yet everlasting. Whoever comes, she thought, whether I see it or I don't see it, there it is; and these little bright flowers, she thought, holding one of the little moor flowers between her thumb and finger. (G, 177)

The version of the passage in The Years has been compressed and heightened:

> Suddenly she saw the sky between two striped tree trunks extraordinarily blue. She came out on the top. The wind ceased; the country spread wide all round her. Her body seemed to shrink; her eyes to widen. She threw herself on the ground, and looked over the billowing land that was rising and falling, away and away, until somewhere far off it reached the sea. Uncultivated, uninhabited, existing by itself, for itself, without towns or houses it looked from this height. Dark wedges of shadow, bright breadths of light lay side by side. Then, as she watched, light moved and dark moved; light and shadow were traveling over the hills and over the valleys. A deep murmur sang in her ears--the land itself, singing to itself, a chorus, alone. She lay there listening. She was happy, completely. Time had ceased. (TY, pp. 278-279)

As was noted earlier, though there were many internal changes, the structure of the galley proof version of the novel is quite similar to that of The Years. The most striking difference, aside from the deletion of two complete episodes, is the addition of the descriptive passages that open each chapter and serve as bridges between the scenes within each chapter. (I shall refer to these passages hereafter as the "preludes" and "interludes.") These

passages make their first appearance in the page proofs of the "1917" chapter, which are dated December 15, 1936.[22] The "1917" chapter is the only one for which a complete set of page proofs is still in existence but, as I noted above (p.197), if the format of this chapter is typical of the novel as a whole, we can assume that all of the preludes and interludes were written between March and December of 1936. Indeed, if Leonard Woolf's recollections are accurate, they were in fact written between November 10 and December 15. (DAW, pp. 155-156) Since the existing page proofs differ only in minor ways from the published novel, this would suggest that almost all of the changes I have described here were made in little more than a month! Common sense suggests that Virginia must have worked on the proofs for a longer period than Leonard recalls.

The dates as chapter headings also make their first appearance in the December 15 page proofs--the galleys have no chapter titles and the holograph chapters are simply headed "Part I" or "Part II." It is likely, however, that Woolf had intended to use dates as chapter titles as soon as she decided to call the book The Years, a title she was using

[22] Although the descriptive passages do not appear in proof until December 15, 1936, Woolf may have conceived of them earlier. In July, 1935, she noted: "I think I see how I can bring in interludes--I mean spaces of silence, and poetry and contrast." (AWD, 17 July 1935, p. 252) Woolf had called the descriptive chapter introductions in The Waves "interludes" (AWD, 7 July 1931, p. 171), so she may have been thinking, in 1935, of doing something similar in The Years.

as early as September, 1935. (AWD, 5 Sept. 1935, p.253) Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how the reader could have oriented himself in the novel without them.

It is remarkable that the preludes and interludes were added so late in the evolution of The Years, since they seem to be such an important structural device. As early as 1935 Woolf had noted that "The difficulty is always at the beginning of chapter or sections where a whole new mood has to be caught, plumb in the centre." (AWD, 13 Sept. 1935, p. 255) She was successful in achieving this aim, for each scene in The Years seems to open in medias res, as if one were suddenly allowed to focus a camera on an encounter between people and record each segment of their lives detached from any past or future.[23] These sudden shifts through time and space would seem abrupt and disjointed if it were not for the insertion of the preludes and interludes, which place the scenes in time and space, and provide a sense of continuity by picking up images from earlier chapters (In some cases they also provide information about what has transpired in the intervening years.)

The scenes of the novel are dramatic and immediate and bring the reader close to one or more of the participants; the preludes and interludes provide a way of stepping back to

[23]Basil de Selincourt described her method in The Years as concrete imaginative reconstruction: ". . . all is action, all is immediate contact with some one moving mind." (Basil de Selincourt, rev. of The Years by Virginia Woolf, The Observer, 14 March 1937, p. 5)

assume a more impersonal stance, to connect the encapsulated moment with past and future events, and with the themes and motifs that form the structure of the novel. It can be argued that these passages are artificially imposed on what had been an organic flow of narrative, and the documentation supports this view because they were added at such a late date. But almost from the beginning, and certainly from the introduction of Elvira, Woolf's conception of the novel were at variance with the naturalist tradition to which many of its early readers thought it belonged.

Woolf's diary comments through these years testify to her preoccupation with finding some means of providing pattern and continuity for the amorphous mass of material she had compiled in her first draft, and it is clear that a far more structured novel was her goal.[24] In my view, what the preludes and interludes signal to the reader is exactly what Woolf intended they should--that *The Years* is not, in fact, a *Forsythe Saga* or an *Old Wives' Tale*--it is a carefully organized symbolic structure in the guise of a family chronicle. The conflict between these two literary forms, which is, of course, at the heart of Woolf's difficulties with the novel,

[24]Jean Guiguet writes:"Certain resemblances with *The Waves* have already been noted; and it is to that book that one should refer, rather than to *Night and Day* as most critics have done, if one wishes to understand both what Virginia Woolf wanted to do and why she failed. In fact there is no question here of a return to her pre-1919'realism'. Many pages in *The Years* may perhaps suggest such a hypothesis, but the whole structure of the book refutes it. . . .) (Guiguet, p. 313)

is nowhere better delineated than in the contrast between the on-going narrative scenes and the distanced stasis of the preludes and interludes.

Thus it is not surprising to find the motifs and themes that are scattered through the novel gathered together in these passages. In the very first prelude,(TY, pp. 3-4) we find within the course of a page and a half, the contrasting of city and country life, a metaphor about the march of a caravan, the song of street musicians, the voices of sparrows and pigeons, a glance at London's monuments and government buildings,the sight of a royal Princess, servants in basements preparing tea, a reference to the women who nursed the wounded during the Boer War, the Round Pond, the Serpentine, a comparison of the moon and a coin, and description of the passage of time as being like the rays of a searchlight wheeling across the sky. All of these motifs will appear and reappear throughout the course of the novel.

The preludes and interludes, are not, of course, totally detached from the movement of the narration: often they serve as connectives, as when the rain leads us from London to Oxford. (TY, 47-48) In the 1891 chapter the prelude tells what has happened to the characters during the intervening years, information that is necessary because many of them will not reappear in the novel for some time to come. (TY 80-91) Description of specific characters and their

situations brings this prelude somewhat closer to the narrative than most of the other inserted passages, for Woolf does not seem to have restricted herself narrowly in what she can include in them. Many of these passages, and especially the interludes, which are placed between scenes rather than at the opening of chapters, contain a little action, and some even show a character arriving at the scene of the next episode. The most dramatically developed prelude is the one that opens the "1907" chapter, where Eugénie, Digby and Maggie are shown traveling and chatting together in a manner barely distinguishable from the body of the chapter. (TY, p. 129-131) But this prelude does fulfill its structural function, bringing in mention of the man in gold braid who symbolizes the lust for power,[25] and the socially knowledgeable remark that "eight-fifteen means eight-thirty" which will be echoed years later by Martin as he crosses the Serpentine on the way to a party, and tells himself that "eight-thirty means eight forty-five." (TY, p. 131 and p. 248)

For the most part, however, the preludes and interludes serve only to provide a background and atmosphere for the ensuing scenes. Often the time of day, the season and the weather they described complement the mood of the chapter. The hot summer night in 1907 is appropriate to Sara's

[25]See above, Chapter III, page 90, note 27.

restlessness, and the bitter cold of 1917 reflects England in a state of siege. The snow that falls everywhere, "all over England" as Eleanor leaves her family home for the last time and dismisses Crosby buries a way of life that is as dead as the Irish traditions Joyce eulogized in the story that used the same metaphor.[26]

The weather often foreshadows events, as when the "uncertain spring" described in the "1880" prelude (TY, p. 3) sets the stage for the uncertainties of the Pargiter household, as they wait for Mrs. Pargiter to relinquish her tenuous hold on life. Conversely, the "brilliant spring" of 1914 enhances the excitement of the fashionable "London season" which will be the last flourish of a society that will not survive the events of the coming year. (TY, p. 224)

Perhaps the most remarkable of all the preludes are those of the "1908" and the "Present Day" chapters. In 1908, (TY, p. 146-147) the March wind is described in a manner that combines Dickensian personification with an evocation of Eliot's Wasteland.[27] In this "polluted city" an overturned dust cart scatters objects more sordid than the old bones of "Our Mutual Friend:[28] "twists of hair; papers already blood

[26]James Joyce, "The Dead," in Dubliners (New York: The Modern Library, 1926), pp. 224-288

[27]T. S. Eliot, The Wasteland, in Collected Poems(New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930), pp. 69-98.

[28]Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend (New York: R. P. Dutton, 1907.)

smeared, yellow smeared" are sent scudding against lampposts, pillar boxes, and railings. (TY, p. 147) (Considering Woolf's reputation for circumspection and delicacy, it is interesting to note that she is probably the first writer in English to allude even indirectly to menstrual blood--a subject that comes up again when she has Peggy remark that the statue of Nurse Cavell reminds her of an "advertisement of sanitary towels." (TY, p. 336)

In contrast to these unpleasant images, the opening of the "Present Day" chapter is remarkable for its translucent beauty. In one paragraph Woolf has captured the essence of an impressionst painting: on this summer evening, everything is transfused with light. An aura of light from the setting sun surrounds each object, and the atmosphere is such that even the ordinary brick houses are incandescent, as if "lit from within." (TY, p. 306) The process that Eleanor had noticed in 1917, when solid objects became porous, "seemed to radiate out some warmth, some glamour" (TY, p. 287) has advanced to the point where inner and outer space are "permeated" with light. The passage expresses Woolf's metaphor for Eleanor's vision of another world, existing here and now, if we can only see it. Eleanor, whose name means light or sun,[29] is lighted from within by a spirit that has

[29] Jane Marcus notes that "'Eleanor' is 'Helen', from Helios, the sun; she puts the sunflower on the houses she builds. . . . " (Bulletin, p. 282)

become purified as she has learned to live without self-consciousness. Eleanor's continuing meditation conveys Woolf's belief in the spiritual dimension of life and in the validity of an ideal vision of society despite all the counter-evidence she has marshalled against her faith. In these preludes and interludes we have Virginia Woolf's narrative consciousness, unhampered by any need to create character or move events forward. In the final prelude, and in the last sentence of The Years, which was also added at this time, we are given a sense of the meaning she wished to leave with us.

The "1917" chapter of The Years is a central episode that brings together the separate strands of the novel. In Chapter IV of this study I have examined the holograph version of "1917," and described how Woolf attempted to embody its expositions of her themes in dramatic form as she revised. Now we are going to look at the final stage in that process, for I have selected the "1917" chapter for a detail comparison of the proofs and the published version. Since this is the only chapter for which we have a complete set of page proofs as well as galley proofs, the later page proofs will be included in the comparison whereever their difference from the final version seems worth noting. (In general, the differences between the page proofs and the final version are minor.)

Since the prelude had not yet been inserted, the galley proofs of the "1917" chapter open with Eleanor searching through dark, unfamiliar streets for her cousin's house. We experience the effect of the frozen night and the searchlight's rays through Eleanor's consciousness, rather than in a descriptive prelude that is detached from the action. (In the page proofs, the prelude is identical with that in _The Years_ save for the last two words--in _The Years_ "fleecy spot" has replaced "suspected spot." This is typical of the kind of changes one finds between page proofs and published novel.) The prelude which was added provides a more generalized impression of the night; instead of focussing on the neighborhood where Eleanor is walking, it tells us that the "stillness of glass" has spread all over England, both in the cities and the countryside. (_TY_, 279) The eerie conjunction of the frozen weather and the dark isolation of a war-besieged society pervades the entire country.

At the very beginning of the galleys the image that emerges most clearly is that of Westminster Abbey. The galley text reads: "The huge bulk of the Abbey always seemed to brood over the streets here, making them even smaller and darker." (G, 189) In later versions this passage was changed to say only that Maggie and Renny live "in one of the obscure little streets under the shadow of the Abbey." (_TY_, p. 279)

The importance of the Abbey as a powerful institution that dwarfs human beings and invades their very homes will be stressed again later in the galleys when Eleanor notices the crypt-like construction of the cellar of her cousin' house and wonders if it was once "part of the Abbey." (G, 198) In the published text this idea is suggested more subtly when it is remarked that the cellar, "with its crypt-like ceiling and stone walls . . . had a damp ecclesiastical look." (TY, p. 289) In all the versions the Abbey motif is reiterated when Maggie remarks that Eleanor "looks like an abbess." (TY, p. 292)

Westminster Abbey, which is both an important religious institution and the place where English kings are crowned, represents established power, both secular and sacred. And since it is also the burial place of king and poets, its presence is linked with the idea of death and burial, a theme that is present throughout the chapter. Death and burial are evoked in the language that describes the bus passengers as "cadaverous," the lamps as "shrouded," and the cellar as crypt-like, and in the movement which leads the dinner guests from the frozen darkness to the warmth and light of the life-giving fire and then down into the depths to wait for death, to return upstairs once more for what may be a kind of rebirth. In The Years the idea of death is introduced at the

very beginning with the image of the omnibus whose silent "cadaverous" passengers are like new arrivals that have ventured across the river Styx to the land of the Dead. In the galleys the omnibus appears only at the end of the chapter, but Woolf later emphasized this image by inserting it at the beginning as well, so that in The Years the arrival and departure of the mysterious bus brackets and encloses the scene.

As Eleanor enters her cousins' house and meets Nicholas, she begins to ask herself what kind of person he is, and whether she likes him. Most of the phrases describing Eleanor's impressions, and her reactions to Nicholas and the others, are found in the page proofs and in The Years, but not in the galley proofs. In the galleys the scene is presented objectively, mainly through an impersonal narrator, so there is much less identification with Eleanor, and with her point of view. In the published novel, when Eleanor puzzles over her feelings for Nicholas she creates a little drama about the emergence of a friendship that adds interest to the scene, and shows that she is open to new ideas and relationships. This change is part of Woolf's movement away from purely intellectual conversation; by adding these personal comments she is bringing out the emotional connection that makes people want to share their ideas and to reveal themselves to one another.

On the other hand, the galleys provide more details of wartime life, for there we learn that Eleanor's appreciation

of the wine is enhanced because she has not tasted it for months, and that all the guests have brought their own sugar rations. These homely concerns give a more realistic idea of life during the war, as does Eleanor's lowering of the blinds to hide the light, another detail which is missing from the final version.

A sample column from the galley sheets, with Virginia Woolf's handwritten alterations, can be used to illustrate the way Woolf worked. The galley's content corresponds approximately to pages 282-283 of the Harcourt, Brace first edition; it begins just as Nicholas starts to worry about Sara's lateness. I have placed it here juxtaposed with the corresponding pages of the page proofs.

Galley Proof:

and looking round her, "having no servants?"

"We have a woman in to do the washing-up," said Maggie.

"And we are extremely dirty," said Renny. He took up a fork and examined it between the prongs. "No, this fork, as it happens, is clean," he said, and put it down.

Nicholas came back into the room again. He looked perturbed.

Why is he so much interested in Sara? Eleanor wondered. Are they engaged?

"She is not there," he said to Maggie. "I rang her up but I could get no answer."

"Probably she's on her way," said Maggie. "Or she may have forgotten and gone somewhere else."

She handed him his soup. But he sat looking at his plate without moving. Wrinkles had come on his forehead. He made no attempt to disguise his anxiety. He must be engaged to Sara, Eleanor thought; she liked him now that he was silent, and yet he puzzled her. He began gulping his soup in great mouthfuls, making a noise, for he was entirely without self-consciousness. He made no pretence of listening as they talked about servants.

"There!" he exclaimed, interrupting Eleanor, who was saying something about Crosby. She stopped but she could hear nothing. But as she listened she heard somebody coming rather haltingly down the kitchen stairs.

"Here she is!" said Nicholas. He put down his spoon and sat looking at the door. The door opened and Sara came in. She looked pinched with the cold; her cheeks were white here, and red there; and she blinked a little as if the light dazzled her. She hardly smiled at them, as if she were numb still from her walk through the blue shrouded streets. But she gave her hand to Nicholas as she sat down beside him and he kissed it.

"Yes. We are dirty," said Maggie, looking at her sister. She had not changed; she was in her day clothes. "And I'm in rags," she added, for a loop of gold thread hung down from her sleeve, as she handed Sara her soup.

"I was thinking how beautiful it is," Eleanor said, looking at her dress. It was silver with gold threads in it, but rather worn. Her eyes had been rested on it unconsciously with pleasure. "Where did you get it?" she asked.

"In Constantinople, from a Turk," said Maggie.

"A turbaned and fantastic Turk," Sara murmured, stroking the sleeve as she took her plate. "And that's pretty," she added, touching the golden rabbit, whose head made a boss on the soup tureen, "the golden rabbit." She still seemed dazed.

"Yes, and the plates too," said Eleanor, looking at the purple birds of Paradise on her plate. "Don't I remember them?" she asked.

"In a cabinet in the drawing-room at home," said Maggie. "But it seemed silly—keeping them in a cabinet," she added.

"We break one every week," said Renny.

"They'll last out the war," said Maggie.

Eleanor observed a curious mask-like expression fall over Renny's face as she said "the war." Like all the French, she thought, he feels passionately for his country. He was silent. He did something; he was in some works; she could not remember what.

Page Proof:

"But Magdalena," said Nicholas, as they stood in the little low-ceilinged room in which dinner was laid, "Sara said, 'We shall meet tomorrow night at Maggie's . . .' She is not here."

He stood while the others sat down.

"She will come in time," said Maggie.

"I shall ring her up," said Nicholas. He left the room.

"Isn't it much nicer," said Eleanor, taking her plate, "not having servants . . ."

"We have a woman to do the washing-up," said Maggie.

"And we are extremely dirty," said Renny.

He took up a fork and examined it between the prongs.

"No, this fork, as it happens, is clean," he said, and put it down again.

Nicholas came back into the room. He looked perturbed. "She is not there," he said to Maggie. "I rang her up, but I could get no answer."

"Probably she's coming," said Maggie. "Or she may have forgotten. . . ."

She handed him his soup. But he sat looking at his plate without moving. Wrinkles had come on his forehead; he made no attempt to hide his anxiety. "There!" he suddenly exclaimed, interrupting them as they talked. "She is coming!" he added. He put down his spoon and waited. Someone was coming slowly down the steep stairs.

The door opened and Sara came in. She looked pinched with the cold. Her cheeks were white here and red there, and she blinked as if she were still dazed from her walk through the blue-shrouded streets.

She gave her hand to Nicholas and he kissed it. But she wore no engagement ring, Eleanor observed.

"Yes, we are dirty," said Maggie, looking at her. She was in her day clothes. "In rags," she added, for a loop of gold thread hung down from her sleeve.

"I was thinking how beautiful . . ." said Eleanor, for her eyes had been resting on the silver dress with gold threads in it. "Where did you get it?"

"In Constantinople, from a Turk," said Maggie.

"A turbaned and fantastic Turk," Sara murmured, stroking the sleeve as she took her plate. She still seemed dazed.

"And the plates," said Eleanor, looking at the purple birds on her plate, "Don't I remember them?" she asked.

"In the cabinet in the drawing-room at home," said Maggie. "But it seemed silly—keeping them in a cabinet."

"We break one every week," said Renny.

"They'll last the war," said Maggie.

Eleanor observed a curious mask-like expression come down over Renny's face as she said "the war." Like all the French, she thought, he cares passionately for his country. But contradictorily, she felt, looking at him. He was silent. His silence oppressed her. He was a formidable man.

"And why were you so late?" said Nicholas, turning to Sara. He spoke gently, reproachfully, rather as if she were a child. He poured her out a glass of wine.

Take care, Eleanor felt inclined to say to her; the wine goes to one's head. She had not drunk wine for months. She was feeling already a little blurred; a little light-headed.

Comparison of the March galley proofs and the December page proofs show how Woolf made her cuts, eliminating redundancies and unnecessary details. (In The Years there are two additions to the page proofs: after noting that Nicholas was "without anxiety" Woolf added, "He was without self-consciousness." [TY, p. 283], and after Eleanor's realization that she is " a little lightheaded," the explanation, "It was the light after the dark; talk after silence; the war, perhaps, removing barriers," has been added [TY, p. 284]. Otherwise the only differences between the page proofs and The Years involve matters of punctuation.)

In the page proofs and The Years deletions and changes in punctuation are used as a way of creating the semblance of casual conversation; by eliminating the final words of a sentence and substituting an ellipsis the unfinished effect of ordinary speech is suggested. For example, in the first proofs Maggie says that Sara is probably coming, "Or she might have forgotten and gone somewhere else." In the page proofs and The Years the last few words have been cut, leaving the end of the remark open. A similar effect is created when Eleanor's remark about Maggie's dress is cut to "I was thinking how beautiful . . . ," leaving out "it is."

The most interesting series of revisions on these pages shows how Woolf worked out a method of introducing the idea that there is something special yet rather unorthodox in the relationship between Nicholas and Sara. Before this

galley begins Nicholas had already expressed his concern that Sara had not yet arrived. Now Eleanor notices that he is perturbed, and like any well-meaning relative, she wonders whether they are engaged. As his agitation increases, she becomes convinced that she is right. Woolf's initial change was to delete Eleanor's first thoughts and move them down in the text to the place where she sees that he is too upset to eat his soup. By eliminating the description of his table manners, Woolf avoided introducing an element of snobbery, and focussed attention on Nicholas' unself-conscious interest in Sara's well-being. By the time the passage was ready for publication, Woolf had decided to present Nicholas' behaviour without Eleanor's surmise, trusting the reader to pick up its implications for himself. Now it is only after Sara's arrival that Eleanor's thoughts are revealed by her glance at Sara's hand to see if she wears an engagement ring. At this point the reader is as puzzled as Eleanor, and it will not be until the end of the chapter that the nature of Sara and Nicholas' friendship will be made clearer.

The careful changes Woolf made in this galley are typical of what one finds throughout the chapter. As the scene continues past Sara's entrance, which occurs at the end of this passage, Eleanor's thoughts give her impression of the new arrival. Her response to her cousin is treated more fully in the galley proofs than in the page proofs or *The Years*:

> She dramatizes things: Just as Eugénie used to, Eleanor thought. But she liked her better than usual; she conveyed an impression of bitterness. She had grown older; she was less affected. (G, 193)

Eleanor too, it seems, has grown, for bitterness is hardly a quality she would have admired in her youth.

In the galleys Sara is more readily understandable than in The Years, and her ideas are treated more seriously. When she tells the others of the scorn with which she greeted her cousin North's enlistment, her attitude is given some support by Nicholas. In the holograph version of this scene, Nicholas is in sympathy with Sara's attack on patriotism, but points out that little else could be expected from a young man brought up as conventionally as North has been.[30] In the galleys, some of the original train of thought is retained; Nicholas asks where North was educated, and Eleanor notes that Nicholas' manner is like that of a doctor questioning the relatives of a patient, a simile that suggests that he regards patriotic fervor as a disease. This is less clear than the holograph, where Nicholas openly sides with Elvira, but it does give the possibility of a different interpretation of Nicholas' criticism of Sara, when he calls her "Prejudiced; narrow; unfair." (TY, p. 286) Nicholas says the same words in the galleys, but there, as in the holograph, it is her lack of understanding of how little chance North had to do

[30]See above, Chapter IV, page 121-122.

anything but conform that Nicholas is castigating. This will be reinforced later on, when the Nicholas of the galleys will ask why we go to war, and theorize that governments want war, but people don't.

In the published version, all the other guests seem to be in opposition to Sara. Eleanor thinks Nicholas favors North's enlistment, and since she is strongly patriotic, she believes that Nicholas feels just as she does. (TY, p. 286) The irony of this misunderstanding is lost in the final version, because there the complexity of Nicholas' attitude has been obscured by the deletion.

As one result of these changes, the anti-war point of view is presented equivocally in The Years, as the capricious reaction of a flighty and peculiar character, who is given no support by the others. Since the section depicting wartime London with its feverish patriotism has also been deleted, repudiation of war is given little support in the final version of the novel. (Since these changes were all made after Leonard Woolf read the galley proofs, they may reflect his growing conviction that that war against the Nazis was becoming inevitable, and his fear that his wife would be subjected to adverse criticism for belittling patriotism at this time.)

As the conversation moves on, Eleanor looks at a familiar chair, and is reminded of Maggie's and Sara's mother, Eugénie.

In their treatment of this passage, comparison of the galleys and the final version provides a fine example of Woolf's skillful revision: I will place the two versions here, side by side.

Galley proofs	The Years (page proofs are identical here)
"I remember your mother so well," said Eleanor, leaning towards her. "She was--" all her good qualities seemed to come before her, not her bad ones-- "so unlike other people," she added, "Everything about her," she said, remembering Eugénie.	"I remember that chair," she said to Maggie. "And your mother . . . " she added. But she always saw Eugénie not sitting but in movement. " . . . dancing," she added.
"She used to dance," said Sara. She drummed on the table, "When I was young," she hummed. (G, p. 195)	"Dancing . . . " Sara repeated. She began drumming on the table with her fork. "When I was young, I used to dance," she hummed. (TY, pp. 287-288)

In the galley version Eleanor's remembrance of Eugénie is vague and general. In The Years her thoughts move more quickly and vividly, and Eugénie is recreated for them both. Woolf has accomplished this through the use of association and repetition, techniques that she relied on to weave together the disparate strands of the novel. In both versions the sight of the red chair that had once stood in the hall of Eugénie's home brings her to mind, which is the same chair that Rose had recognized when she visited the two sisters in 1910. (TY, p. 165) [31] In the published version, when

[31]See above, Chapter III, page 93, note 29.

Eleanor sees the chair she associates it with sitting, but immediately realizes that when she thinks of Eugénie she thinks of her moving--dancing. The word "dancing" becomes a refrain, for Sara repeats it once, and then again, in a slightly different form, as part of the song, adding the line, "I used to dance."

As Sara sings, she and Maggie remember the night their mother waltzed for them. The prelude to the "1907" chapter, which opens with this remembered scene, adds the information that the waltz being played all over London at that time was "After the Ball was Over," a song whose lines,"Many the hopes that have vanished/After the ball . . . after the break of dawn" are related thematically to The Years. At this point they would be appropriate to the feelings of the gathered guests, for whom the war has destroyed so much. In the galleys it is this song which Sara sings in "1917," but Woolf might have felt that the allusion was too obvious, and so substituted the less significant, though equally nostalgic, "When I was young," and moved the first song title back to the earlier chapter.

As Sara sings she is interrupted by a "wrong note," the air raid siren. The guests descend to the cellar as the war comes closer to their lives. Here the galleys are somewhat grimmer than either the page proofs or The Years. More attention is paid to the process of bringing the sleeping children downstairs, and Maggie tells the others that she

wishes them with her, so that if they are hit by a bomb they will all die together. (G, 197) Eleanor too is more fatalistic in her thinking. As she hears the bombs she looks at the trembling of the stone arches and thinks," That stone will fall." (G, 198) In The Years the line has been changed to "That stone may fall." (TY, p. 291: emphasis mine)

Beginning on page 292 of The Years we find an important addition to the text that is missing from both the galleys and the page proofs, so that it must have been brought in just before publication. In the galleys and page proofs, Sara's suggestion that they drink a toast to the "New World" is not taken up and repeated by the others, as it is in The Years. (TY, p. 292) Nor does Sara suggest that Nicholas make a speech in the galleys, so that his opening salutation, "Ladies and Gentlemen!" is missing, and there is no prefiguring there of the interrupted speech in the "Present Day" chapter. Here too, in the published version, the speech is interrupted, and one can see that even as the novel went into print Woolf was continuing to tie its threads together, working backwards and forwards in the text to turn the novel into a series of echo chambers.[32]

[32]The phrase "The New World" is used here once in the galleys and three times in The Years; it is one of the triple repetitions that Allen McLaurin has pointed to as a structuring device in The Years. (McLaurin, pp. 121-124 and pp. 162-165) This shows that much of the patterning of the novel was worked out in the final stages of revision. Other repeated phrases, "A Speech! A Speech!" and "Ladies and Gentlemen!" which appear both in the "1917" and "Present Day" chapters, were also added after the March 1936 galley proofs.

The idea of Nicholas as a speechmaker, which is brought in here in The Years, will serve as an opening for Eleanor, who regrets the interruption and will question him later about what he had planned to say. Although the designation of his talk as a "speech" is missing from the galleys, they do include more of his opinions as to why the war is not very important than can be found in The Years. In the final version all that is retained is Nicholas' remark about "children letting off fireworks in the back garden," (TY, p. 293) which is said in private to Eleanor rather than to the group as a whole. This sounds facetious and condescending in the context of the air raid, but he is actually alluding to his theory of evolution, which posits that man is now in a primitive or infantile stage of development.[33] It is related to Sara's remark, in 1910, when she predicted that

> " In time to come . . . people, looking into this room--this cave, this little antre, scooped out of mud and dung, will hold their fingers to their noses" . . . and say, 'Pah! They stink!'" (TY, p. 189)

Here, in 1917, she repeats this image, calling the cellar they have been hiding in a "cave of mud and dung . . . "(TY, p. 293; the ellipsis is the author's) [34] Sara's remark immediately precedes Nicholas' comment about the children playing

[33]See above, Chapter IV, page 127.

[34]Jane Marcus notes that "The traditional materials for pargetting were lime and cow dung; Sara calls their houses 'caves of mud and dung.'" (Bulletin, p. 281)

with fireworks, but it would require a very sophisticated reading of the text of The Years to see their connection. In the galleys, the remarks are given more support. There Nicholas' words are preceded by his comment that they are all acting as if " . . . this war were of any importance whatsoever . . ." (G, 199) And Eleanor continues his train of thought, placing it in the context of her own experience:

> Eleanor was not certain what he meant, but it hitched on to something in her own mind, and, as the usual transitions were broken, as it did not matter much what one said, she hazarded:"Because people didn't live very nice lives before the War, you mean, so why make all this fuss? I've often thought that myself," she added. (G, 199)

This carefully qualified remark is a vaguer version of Eleanor's speech in the holograph, in which she suggests that one reason for the war is that it provided some relief from the dull and impoverished lives most people led in peacetime.[35]

In the galleys, Nicholas follows up on Eleanor's words:

> "We didn't live very nice lives before," he repeated. "No. and even now"--he stretched his hand out; it almost touched the other wall of the cellar--"we don't live very nice lives." (G, 199)
> . . . .
> "In this cellar," said Sara, "this cave of mud and dung." (G, 199)

The placement of Sara's remark in the galleys clearly ties it to Nicholas' and Eleanor's remarks, while in The Years it seems rather gratuitous, except as an echo of her 1910 statement.

[35]See above, Chapter IV, page 125.

In rewriting Woolf apparently saw a need to cut this passage. In the galleys some of the original sentiments of the holograph are retained, but in such an abridged form that they are difficult to decipher. The further cuts in The Years meant that the idea of evolution, which is so prominent in the holograph, is given little attention in The Years.

After the group returns upstairs, Renny sits smoking a cigar. In the galleys, he offers one to Eleanor, and she begins to smoke too. This incident was present in the holograph as well, where it played a part in a discussion of women's new-found freedom to explore a variety of pleasures, both sexual and social.[36] Its deletion from the text removes yet another theme from the novel.

In the galleys this passage is followed by a meditation in which Eleanor reflects on the way people affect her, and on the feelings that lie beneath the surface of ordinary conversation. The removal of these thoughts is justifiable, since its purpose is better met in The Years by the insertion of the descriptions of the shifts and changes in Eleanor's responses that are scattered through the chapter.

When Nicholas begins to tell Eleanor about his theories of the human soul, Eleanor's reaction is to feel a new sense of the possibilities of life, and of her own powers. These

[36] See above Chapter IV, page 130.

thoughts are present in all three versions, but they come through with greater strength and lyricism in the page proofs and the published novel. It is in the final version that the phrase "cripples in a cave" makes its first appearance. (TY, p. 297) The image brings to mind Plato's parable of the shadow world inhabited by those who cannot see the light of truth, and also refers back to Sara's cave allusions. Moreover, it gives concrete expression to the theme of crippling and deformity, both physical and spiritual, that runs through the novel.

As Nicholas talks quietly with Eleanor, he expounds a theory of the soul which suggests that without society's strictures it could expand and develop into a higher form of consciousness. Like Plato, he sees the life of the individual as a spiritual quest and a process of development which can lead to the fulfillment of his highest potentialities. But, unlike Plato, Nicholas locates truth in this world, not in a higher realm, and believes that full development includes all aspects of human experience, the material and sensual as well as the intellectual and spiritual. Nicholas' philosophy will become the basis for Eleanor's vision at the end, when she will see that happiness exists " in this world . . . with living people." (TY, p. 38) What Woolf has borrowed from Plato is his metaphor of the cave and of the light that is there if only one can see it. His

cave dwellers are chained in their positions; hers are too crippled to move. The images derived from these metaphors will pervade the last chapters of the novel, as the characters move from the cavelike basement to the light and warmth of the drawing room, and then, at the end, into the light of sunset and dawn that frames the final chapter.

In her final version of this discussion, Woolf has managed to convey more optimism and immediacy than is present in the galleys. There is added conviction in The Years, where Eleanor thinks," We shall be free, we shall be free," a sentence which does not appear in the earlier version. (TY, p. 297)

In the galleys it is made clear that Nicholas does not expect that his ideal world will be achieved in their lifetime. He answers Eleanor carefully when she asks him how long it will take for the world to change. When he tells her that it will be five hundred or a thousand years before the change becomes noticeable, she is quite disappointed, as if she expected some miraculous transformation to take place.

> "Then we shall never know what it is like," she said. She could not prevent her disappointment sounding in her voice, absurd though it was.
>
> "Not in the body," he said. "No."
>
> "But I don't believe in the life after death," she murmured, "Do you"--she hesitated. (G, 203)

Nicholas strokes his head, but tells her he does not believe in "our life here on earth. . . . My life, no; our life, yes,"

he said. (G, 203) Eleanor thinks vaguely that he must be quoting someone; perhaps she is remembering the night at Celia's so many years ago when she had opened an edition of Dante to the words, "For by so many more there are who say 'ours'/ So much more of good doth each possess," (TY, p. 212)[37] for these words express the same idea of human life as communal rather than individual that Nicholas is trying to convey.

Earlier, Eleanor had felt "robbed by the presence of death of something personal"; the shared danger has broken down the bounds of the self. In the galleys this idea is repeated when she looks at a painting on the way upstairs and feels "Immune . . . from my self in some way." (G, 200) In The Years only the word "Immune" remains, which suggests a sense of personal safety after the experience that brought her so close to death. The earlier version is closer to the feeling the old lady had as she left the train in the first deleted episode, which would have preceded this chapter, when the sight of the young officer and his girl made her feel at one with the English people, and temporarily freed from petty personal concerns. In this scene Eleanor realizes that the experience they have shared has broken down the barriers that held them "Each in his own cubicle," as Nicholas

[37]Dante Alighieri, La Divina Commedia, ed. H. Oelsner, trans. J. A. Carlyle, Thomas Okey. and P. H. Wicksteed (London: Dent, 1933), Purgatorio (XV, 56-57)

puts it. (G, 203) The possibility of a future with a new sense of community, of openness and sharing, opens up before them. Then the breakdown of barriers between people makes it possible for Sara to reveal that Nicholas is a homosexual, to which she adds, in the galley version, that his honesty about his sexual nature is "The one thing I respect him for." (G, 205)

As the guests prepare to leave, the galleys describe Sara spilling out the contents of her purse while looking for her key, so that the coins scatter, an incident that prefigures Eleanor's fumbling search for a coin in the "Present Day" chapter. We know from Woolf's diary that she originally intended to have Sara be the one to clutch her coins at the end, and this detail may be a relic of that intention, which would explain its deletion. (AWD, 30 Aug. 1934, p. 222) Its appearance in the galleys does, however, provide a parallel between Sara and Eleanor, and harks back to Eleanor's father, who fumbled in his pocket for a coin to reward his son. (TY, p. 13)[38]

Although the coin incident was discarded, another, Eleanor's brief enounter with an old man on the bus who is eating his bread and meat, is included in the galleys, deleted in the page proofs, and inserted once again in the published novel. Without this anecdote, we have a rather melodramatic

[38]See Herbert Marder for an extensive discussion of coin symbolism in Virginia Woolf's work. (Marder, pp. 98-103)

ending for the chapter, as Nicholas is left standing alone in the gloom; its re-insertion adds a humorous and humanizing touch that seems a fitting end for the episode.

Looking back over the galley proofs, it is clear that they are far closer to The Years than to The Pargiters, as would be expected since they were printed only a year before The Years was published. Yet the changes made during that period are a continuation of the process that began early in the writing of the holograph, when Woolf first asked herself how she might write "intellectual argument in the form of art." (AWD, 31 May 1933, p. 208) Intellectual argument, by its very nature, lacks the color and liveliness of fiction, and what we find in the proofs is that as Woolf developed her characters, her scenes, her dramatic contrasts, many of the arguments were reduced to scraps of conversation, half-expressed and barely comprehensible. What Woolf had to decide, as she reworked the galleys to ready the novel for publication, was whether to delete the arguments altogether, or to bring back enough explication from earlier drafts to make them clearer. In many cases, it seems, she chose to delete them altogether, or leave them in the text as barely intelligible fragments.

At the same time, the introduction of the preludes and interludes gave her a means of gathering together the symbols and motifs scattered through the body of the novel, so that the chronological narrative would be balanced against a series of static, detached set pieces that create a mood and provide

a connective tissue between the nearly autonomous episodes. By studying the changes between the first proofs, the page proofs and the published novel, we can understand the contradictions that Woolf attempted to reconcile as she worked. On the one hand, she was struggling to transform a series of intellectual arguments into a work of fiction; on the other, she was trying to provide a coherent symbolic framework for a novel whose original form was loosely structured and discursive.

Woolf worked toward these goals until the end of 1936, and the extent of the changes she made leaves little doubt as to the intensity with which she could work when she was in full gear. By December 31, 1936, the final proofs were ready to go back to the printer to be published.[39] For Woolf, the long struggle to pull her novel into shape had come to an end.

[39] On December 31 she writes: "There in front of me lie the proofs--the galleys--to go off today, a sort of stinging nettle that I cover over." (AWD, 31 Dec. 1936, p. 274) It is not clear why she calls these the "galleys" since the page proofs dated December 15, 1936 are more likely to be what she was readying for the printer at this time. There probably were a further set of proofs, since the December 15 page proofs do not correspond with the Hogarth Press first edition or the Harcourt, Brace first edition. (Punctuation varies between the Hogarth and Harcourt Editions, and occasionally wording varies as well. The Uniform Edition published in 1940 by the Hogarth Press is a second impression of the Hogarth Press first edition, and is identical with it. [B. J. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf*, 2nd edition, revised (London: Hart Davis, 1967: Oxford University Press, 1968).])

Conclusion

Looking back over the whole course of Virginia Woolf's work on The Years, we can begin to understand how her original conceptions were modified as the work evolved. She had begun with an impulse to write an essay which would explore women's sexuality and their role in society. Then, seeing the value of fictionalizing the biographical material she had been reading as background for her essay, she decided to create a new form, an Essay-Novel" which would alternate interpretative essays with episodes in the lives of an ordinary middle-class English family.

Although the "Essay-Novel" format was soon discarded, the dual nature of the novel remained. Virginia Woolf had announced that she intended to write a novel based on "fact," replete with the kind of detailed description of people, places and objects that she had previously rejected as outdated and antithetical to the spirit of the modern novel. Now she was trying to "face facts," giving herself the same advice she had offered young poets in an essay written just before beginning work on The Years.[1] But facts alone could not hold her interest for long; soon Woolf began feeling "the tug to vision," the need to imbue her narrative of "ordinary waking Arnold Bennett life" with a visionary spirit, to lift her reader's eyes above the sordid London streets so they could

[1]"A Letter To A Young Poet," Collected Essays, II, 196. See above, Chapter III, pp. 73-77.

see the stars as well. (AWD, 2 Nov. 1932, p. 189; 31 May 1933, p. 208) Thus it was that Woolf took on the ambitious task of combining fact and vision, of creating a multi-leveled novel that would include everything: the personal and the familial, the political and the spiritual dimensions of human life.

When Woolf began to search for a novelistic structure that would allow her to develop her dual vision, she hit upon the idea of using contrasting, alternating episodes to convey two different perspectives. The two cousins, Eleanor and Elvira, became the centers of these contrasting sections, with Eleanor's scenes presented, for the most part, with the straightforward narrative technique of the conventional realistic novel, and Elvira's given a fragmented, external treatment that requires the reader to make his own connections. It is mainly Elvira, whose peculiarities and circumstances place her outside the mainstream of society, who becomes the vehicle for the visionary impulse in the novel, for her mind soars beyond the concerns of daily life, and her speech incorporates fragments of song and scraps of poetry as it leaps from one image to another. But Eleanor too, though her mind is more prosaic, searches for vision in her own way, trying to find pattern and meaning in the profusion of events and searching for a philosophy that will help her see beyond the grim realities of modern society.

As the first draft of the novel progresses, Woolf began to try to bring the separate threads together, so that in the

"1917" chapter the two cousins meet, and Nicholas forms a link between them, through his friendship with both, and through his philosophy, which articulates Eleanor's vague yearnings, and provides a vision of a future in which an artistic spirit like Elvira would not be impeded by social values that constrict and distort the free development of the individual.

The "Present Day" chapter brings these separate strands even closer together. It becomes a reprise in which all the themes and issues of the novel are raised once more, and all the characters convene at Delia's party, a casual, heterogenous affair that provides a contrast to the stilted gathering around the tea table with which the novel began. In the holograph version Elvira reluctantly gives up her role as outsider to join her relatives, while all the family gathers around Eleanor, making her a kind of matriarch. Each family member in turn recalls the important moments of his life, and Eleanor has her vision.

After the holograph had been completed, the revision process began in earnest. When the first draft is compared with the published novel one becomes aware of the extent to which feminist, pacifist and sexual themes have been deleted, obscured, or attenuated. This seemed to stem in part from Woolf's desire to avoid one-sidedness or polemic, a concern she expressed frequently in her diary as she revised. As she rewrote she undercut the credibility of the two main

proponents of radical views, Elvira and Nicholas. Elvira, who becomes Sara, is made to seem even more capricious and fanciful in The Years than she is in the holograph, and she is deprived of Nicholas' support for her anti-war stance. Nicholas' philosophical expositions are cut drastically, and his tendency to repeat himself is given more emphasis in The Years, making his ideas appear little more than a clever lecturer's stock in trade.

The deletion of most of the discussion of female sexuality is probably indicative of Woolf's personal ambivalence about exploring this theme in print, but the removal of so much of the anti-war argument is more puzzling, since she had no scruples about presenting similar views in Three Guineas. Possibly it seemed easier to argue against war in general while strongly opposing fascism in all its forms, as she does in Three Guineas, than to give a sympathetic treatment to a character who is advocating pacificism in wartime, as Elvira does in the "1917" chapter. And since the novel had been started in 1932 and was being revised in 1936, the changing times may have given a different color to the issue.

Aside from these considerations, it appears that the main reason for the deletion of much of the ideological material was the need to cut and compress a long unwieldy draft, and to embody its arguments and ideas in imagery and dramatic incidents. And in order to express her ideas through

her art Woolf continued her development of a reverberative structure, using a pattern of repeated motifs and reminiscences to connect the episodes and heighten their significance.

As the lengthy dialogues that can be found in the holograph were compressed and dramatized, Woolf developed a technique for mimicking actual conversation, using interruptions, hesitations, and ellipses. Woolf's diary entries in the months before she began to write The Years show that she was carefully noting down the chatter of friends who visited her. (AWD, 31 Jan. 1932, p. 178)[2] This experiment was probably the source for Rose's comment that "All talk was nonsense . . . if it were written down." (TY, p. 171) and in The Years we find talk that can almost be called "nonsense"--conversation that is carefully structured to seem inconsequential, but which has embedded in it the significant phrases that create the pattern of the novel.

Some of the ideas that could not find full expression in conversation were expressed in soliloquys, through the thoughts of Eleanor, Kitty, Martin, and later, Peggy and North. In The Years these interior monologues provided the best opportunity for developing themes coherently, since the conversation has been fragmented and there is little direct action. Yet Woolf chose to delete two of Eleanor's long soliloquys when she made her final revisions, a decision

[2]See above, Chapter III, page 77, note 10.

which further diminished the presentation of anti-war views, and limited the reader's understanding of Eleanor's development.

The March, 1936 galley proofs, which provide documentation for the final stages of revision, show that as Woolf moved away from her first draft her text became blander and less angry, and that some of the details and ideas that had been cut during revisions were reinserted in the text just before publication. Comparison of the galley proofs and the later page proofs reveals that the descriptive preludes and interludes we find in The Years were also added at the very end.

As one compares the holograph and proofs and final version of The Years one wonders whether another novel might have emerged if she had reworked her material differently. A reading of the first chapter in the holograph reveals that it is a fascinating document, a lively portrait of a family and a period that is nearly complete in itself. But as one moves on to the rest of the holograph the text thins and in many places becomes repetitious and polemical. It appears that Woolf's imaginative powers began to wane as she left

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the vivid memories of her childhood behind.[3] The evidence of the holograph suggests that Woolf turned to her techniques of fragmentation and repeated recollection not because of some preconceived intention, but because she could no longer invent with the spontaneity with which she had begun her novel. But, in one sense, the format Woolf seems to have resorted to out of necessity reflects a truth about her own experience.

Despite her talk of drawing on many biographies, it can be easily demonstrated that the source of much of the material for The Years was Virginia Woolf's own family life, and as with many people, her memories of childhood were richer and clearer than her recollections of later years. In her case, the death of her mother made a particularly sharp break, which is reflected in the structure of both To the Lighthouse and The Years.[4] But where the earlier novel attempts little

[3]Charles Hoffman suggests that the reason that the "1880" chapter of The Years is more substantial is because the fact-filled essays were "compacted" into the text: "This careful detailing of the Victorian period in contrast to the sketchiness of the later periods is undoubtedly directly related to the fact that the essay portion of the manuscript covers the 1880 section only. Thus a solid basis in fact was achieved for the Victorian period by compacting the essay into the novel, but this process was not followed for the other historical periods." (Hoffman, p. 89) Of course, since the later chapters take place during Woolf's own adult life she may not have felt the need for historical research--she tended to rely on her own diaries and recollections for details.

[4]In Moments of Being Woolf writes: "With mother's death the merry, various family life which she had held in being shut for ever. In its place a dark cloud settled over us; we seemed to sit all together cooped up, sad, solemn, unreal, under a haze of heavy emotion." ("A Sketch of the Past," in Moments of Being, p. 93)

beyond a reunion and resolution after the mother's death, The Years continues through many subsequent episodes. What both the form and content of The Years seem to be saying, then, is that later life is a reliving and reshaping of experiences firmly rooted in childhood, and that the familial ties based on those shared memories are the most meaningful we will have in our lives.

Although the later episodes of The Years are less vivid than the first chapter, they are far more successfully realized than the chapters in the holograph from which they are drawn. It is here that Woolf's skill as a writer manifests itself, for she literally transformed her raw material, giving drama and color to scenes that are mere strings of dialogue in the original. Yet, despite her skill, it is unlikely that Woolf could have created a fully integrated novel unless she had completely abandoned her draft; the final version is still shaped by the form the holograph took, which in turn was shaped by Woolf's own special way of experiencing her life.

The problem Woolf faced in The Years when her initial enthusiasm began to wane was not new to her. She had experienced it before, notably in 1920, when she had barely begun work on Jacob's Room before noticing a similar falling-off of interest:

> It is worth mentioning, for future reference, that the creative power which bubbles so pleasantly in beginning a new book quiets down after a time, and one goes on more steadily. Doubts creep in. Then one becomes resigned. Determination not

> to give in, and the sense of an impending shape keep one at it more than anything. (AWD, 11 May 1920, p. 26)

But when she was writing The Years the sense of "impending shape" that had sustained her in the past was never completely secure. Her first structuring device, "The Essay-Novel," proved unworkable, and the techniques of alternation, repetition, and contrast were never comprehensive enough to bring together all the disparate elements in the novel.[5] Even in the published novel the continual shifts, from representational narrative to fragmented speech, from static detached descriptions to dramatic scenes caught in medias res, from one center of consciousness to another, create confusion in the minds of many readers.

Woolf's diary comments as she wrote and rewrote the novel show that she was fully aware of this problem; she was continually preoccupied with the need to shape, compress, and integrate its heterogenous material. As Jean Guiguet points out, it was unusual for her to focus so exclusively on this problem:

> Whereas after each of her books she questions the value of what she has written, we must note that here, contrary to her usual habit, she is preoccupied by one very precise aspect; composition and unity.[6]

[5]In Jean Guiguet's view, "the synthesis of the two orders of reality, that of fact and that of vision, to use the author's own terms, remains insecure and intermittent and consequently fails to convince the reader." (Guiguet, p. 312)

[6]Guiguet, p. 308.

It may be that Woolf's failure to unify The Years stemmed from her decision to avoid the use of the extended interior monologues that characterize the novels of her middle period. The flexibility of this technique, which allowed her to move with her character from the sensation of the moment, through a series of associations, to a level of narrative consciousness where the thought of the individual merges with a kind of universal thought, gave Woolf the ability to connect the one with the many, the moment with the flux of time.[7]

In The Years no such fluidity is possible. The soliloquys in this novel are fairly conventional, and moments from the past are introduced mainly through the meetings of relatives and friends who reminisce together, rather than through Proustian associations. As James Hafley has noted, in The Years it is " . . . social behaviour instead of exclusive symbolism, that prompts and explains individual response.[8]

[7]James Hafley writes: "Beneath the diverse points of view presented to the reader, there is an impersonal narrator--the central intelligence--of which, in and after Mrs. Dalloway, the reader is never allowed to become immediately aware, but which extends the idea of a common impulse beneath diversity. . . . The reader moves with confidence from one character to another, always conscious of a single point of view beneath, but never offensively so, since it is completely impersonal; thus he strings his impressions upon the very thread that is essential for their comprehensive significance." (Hafley, p. 74) In The Years the central intelligence is much less in evidence,except in the preludes and interludes.

[8]Hafley, p. 133.

Elvira-Sara, the one character who might have provided a more wide-ranging consciousness, whose literary inclinations and agile mind might have served as an effective balance to Eleanor's rather prosaic musings, is seldom allowed to soliloquize. In "1907," when Sara lies in bed reading Antigone and imagining herself a tree, she is able to provide an imaginative perspective on the social scene she is observing. In the holograph, where Elvira aspires to be a writer, this role is even more pronounced. But after "1907" Sara is seen only from the outside--we can follow her thoughts only by following her spoken words which are often nearly unintelligible.

Elvira is by far the most interesting character in the holograph, and even as the somewhat more subdued Sara her eccentricity is a welcome contrast to the ordinariness of the others. But Elvira is shrill and angry--her character seems to have its source in the less stable elements in Woolf's own personality. It may be that Woolf was trying to keep these tendencies within herself under control by limiting Elvira's role in the novel.

The holograph hints at other possible solutions to the problem of unity, particularly in the final chapter. There we see Elvira moving away from her separatist position and joining Eleanor, who has absorbed some of her cousin's visionary tendencies. As the family gathers around Eleanor, she becomes a matriarchal figure and a prophetess. Later, as Woolf

reworked this material, she de-emphasized the movement toward Eleanor, and planned to center the chapter on Nicholas' speech. (AWD, 17 July 1935, p. 252) It is possible that in some interim version of the novel Nicholas was allowed to make his speech, but in the final version it is interrupted by the others, each of whom expresses his characteristic point of view. This is exactly opposite to the tactic Woolf adopted at the end of The Waves, where she decided at the very end to " . . . merge all the interjected passages into Bernard's final speech and end with the words O solitude. . . ." (AWD, 22 December, 1930, p. 162) The decision to create a reverse effect in The Years, to break up a single speech into a series of fragments, suggests a fundamental difference in intention, a move away from unity and closure.

Ultimately, then, the lack of unity in The Years is much more than a question of technique. In a novel which attempts to include everything, to face the facts of life in this world, the only possibility for an integrated point of view lies in finding some perspective that transcends daily life. In one sense The Years describes a quest for such a perspective; in moments of solitude and in conversation, the characters search for some philosophy, some way of looking at life that can provide a sense of order and meaning in the face of burgeoning events.

At different times both Eleanor and Sara look to the Christian tradition for some glimpse of meaning. Eleanor

puzzles over a passage from Dante and reads Renan to learn about the origins of the faith; Sara reads Job and goes to St. Paul's, trying to understand how people feel when they pray. (TY, pp. 154-155 and pp. 229-230) We know from Woolf's diary that she herself was exploring Christianity as she wrote The Years, reading Renan and the Old Testament and thinking of renaming Elvira after St. Theresa. (AWD, 1 Jan. 1935, p. 236; 23 Jan. 1935, p. 238) Religious themes are introduced into the novel in many ways: the figure of an old man or woman feeding sparrows, a kind of St. Francis, appears here and there, and Eleanor is described as an Abbess as she sits in a cellar like a Roman catacomb. Woolf's attitude toward Christianity, if not towards the Church, seems to have shifted in the years since The Voyage Out, when she wrote, with apparent approval, of Mrs. Dalloway's efforts to make her children think of God as a "kind of walrus." [9]

Woolf's growing interest in Christianity would become even more pronounced in Between the Acts, where, as James Hafley notes, for the first time in her novels a devout Christian, Mrs. Swithin, is presented sympathetically.[10] Yet despite these intimations of interest in a traditional system

[9]Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out, (1915; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1948) , p. 27.

[10]Hafley, p. 149.

of belief, nothing in The Years suggests a firm acceptance of faith. As in Woolf's earlier works, the moments of vision her characters are granted are intermittent. Woolf's own position at the end of The Years seems much the same as that expressed by Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse:

> 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. . . .[11]

For Eleanor, one such match was struck by Nicholas, who showed her that even in the midst of an air raid the events of their time could be placed in the long perspective of man's history on earth. Through Nicholas' exposition of his theory of the development of the soul another way of looking at daily life is presented. His evolutionary view suggests that what can be experienced in one lifetime is insignificant, since the progress of civilization is so slow that it is barely perceptible to the individual, who sees only confusion. In the holograph Elvira shares his long-range point of view; her remark about the way men of the future will look back on us with disgust (TY, p. 189) expresses her belief in man's progress--so that the way we live now will seem as brutish and bleak to the people of the future as the lives of cave-men seem to us now.[12]

[11]Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1927) p. 240.

[12]See above, Chapter VII,

But Eleanor, whose personal search for order and meaning provides one of the threads of continuity in the novel, cannot long accept either an other-worldly religion or a Utopian dream. She wants to believe in happiness here and now, with living people, and Woolf, who once thought of calling the novel Here and Now, seems to agree. (AWD, 16 Jan. 1934, p. 215) Thus it is that in The Years one finds many moments of quiet celebration of ordinary things. Eleanor delights in technological advances: lights that go on in an instant, and hot water that gushes from her taps. She has lived long enough to know the discomforts of the past, when rooms were dim and chilly, and servants struggled up steep backstairs with buckets of hot water for their masters' baths. The modern world has freed her from the difficult master-servant relation; it has downed barriers so that subjects no-one dared broach around the Victorian tea-table are bandied back and forth between friends.[13]

Eleanor and Rose have seen women move out of the confines of the drawing room into the professions; they have watched Maggie and Renny work out a marriage unlike any their parents could have known.

[13]In Moments of Being Woolf describes the liberating effect of Lytton Strachey's use of the word "semen" in mixed company: "Can one really say it? I thought and we burst out laughing. With that one word all barriers of reticence and reserve went down. . . . Sex permeated our conversation." ("Old Bloomsbury," in Moments of Being, pp. 173-174.)

Even in the midst of the tumult of the final party one finds these quiet moments when people, speaking in their natural voices, effect changes more meaningful than any that can be found in a program blared from loudspeakers.[14] North, who went off to war because it was the "thing to do," has learned to despise ambition and empire-building--he wants to find a new way to live, and turns to his cousins for advice. Peggy, fearing that marriage will trap him into conformity, tries to warn him. At first he misunderstands her, but their common childhood proves a bond that transcends their differences. And Eleanor, holding on to her knotted handkerchief, manages to remember to talk to Edward about a university education for the porter's son.

But in the context of the novel as a whole, these hopeful incidents seem to fade in comparison to the powerful images of despair and disintegration that are scattered throughout.[15] Though the Pargiter family is comfortably middle-class, they live within the sights and smells of poverty,

[14]Margaret Comstock has used the contrast between the demagogue's loud-speaker and people talking in their natural voices as a basis for her interpretation of _The Years_. (_Bulletin_, pp. 252-275.)

[15]As Nancy Topping Bazin puts it, the "tone of horror coexists with but prevails over the tone of naive optimism." (Nancy Topping Bazin, _Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision_ [New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1973), p. 180].)

sickness and decay. Unlike the Ramsay's sea-side house or Mrs. Dalloway's drawing room, the stuffy house on Abercorn Terrace is not a sanctuary of beauty and serenity. And when the children try to escape its confines, they are apt to find themselves forced to deal with the most unpleasant facts of city life, with grease-ringed bathtubs, conniving workmen, and undercooked, slimy food. And though the holograph and proofs are generally more grim than The Years, an ominous note remains--the face of the dictator gesticulating on the front page of the newspaper.

Along with sickness and decay, death plays a prominent role in the lives of the Pargiters. The figure of death has always been a presence in Virginia Woolf's novels, as it had figured so often in her life. But the form of death is different in this work; it is a death that comes with a slow deterioration of body and mind, wholly unlike the romantic end that Clarissa Dalloway had imaged as a "defiance," an "embrace."[16] When people die in The Years they die slowly, in pain and loneliness; they do not leap from windows or perish in their youth of exotic tropical fevers.

This gloomy realism reflects the atmosphere in which Virginia Woolf lived at the time when she was writing the novel, for this was a period which took its toll of those she loved most dearly. Leonard Woolf recalled that

[16] Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925),pp. 280-281.

> The erosion of life by death began for Virginia and me in the early 1930's and gathered momentum as we went downhill to war and her own death. It began on 21 January 1932 when Lytton Strachey died of cancer. This was the beginning of the end of what we used to call Old Bloomsbury.[17]

Lytton's death and the suicide of his companion, Dora Carrington, soon after left Virginia with a profound feeling of emptiness and despair. When she wrote her novels and essays she was often stimulated by the thought of her friends' responses to her work, so that with the disappearance of these lifelong intimates her sense of communication was diminished.[18] Lytton Strachey, whom she had loved and admired for so long, seemed to have disappeared without a trace. In her diary that February she wrote:

> I wake in the night with the sense of being in an empty hall. Lytton dead and those factories building. What is the point of it--life--when I'm not working--suddenly becomes thin, indifferent. Lytton is dead, and nothing definite to mark it. Also they write flimsy articles about him. (AWD, 8 Feb. 1932, p. 179)

The death of friends marked the growing turmoil in her world; ugly factories were springing up to block her beloved view of the Sussex hills, and the ominous rumbling of Fascism abroad and economic depression at home compounded her feeling

17 DAW, p. 250.

18 When she learned of Stella Benson's death, Woolf wrote: "A curious feeling when a writer like S.B. dies, that one's response is diminished: Here and Now won't be lit up by her: it's life lessened." (AWD, 7 Dec. 1933, p. 214.)

that something had gone wrong.

In the face of these fears, Woolf had begun to work on The Years, hoping that writing the novel would bring "order and speed" again into her world. (AWD, 25 May 1932, p. 181) But in the context of her experiences during these years a question arises as to whether it was possible for Woolf to create the kind of synthesis she had been struggling to achieve, whether in fact the novel's stubborn refusal to cohere came from a deep division within herself and within the society she was trying to come to terms with.

In Woolf's earlier works she had enclosed a portion of the world in a private vision, limiting her concern to a few people, a few events, a few memories. The first part of To the Lighthouse, which is, in my opinion, more complete within itself than anything else she has written, was in fact an elegy, a recapitulation of the past. It represented the sunlit world of her childhood, a world no longer available to her by the time she wrote The Years. Leonard Woolf tells us that at the time she was struggling to complete The Years he took her to St. Ives, hoping that a return to that familiar scene would soothe her jangled nerves.[19] But Talland House and Godrevy Lighthouse could no longer weave their spell--too much had happened in the intervening years.

[19] DAW, pp. 153-154.

What had happened was partly Woolf's own growth as a writer, her determination to break the mold of her earlier work, to include more of life in her novels. This greater openness is responsible for many of the problems in The Years, and she was not able to solve all of them. Yet the very uneveness of The Years, its lack of resolution, reflects a willingness to take risks, a growing maturity. Later, as she looked back on her struggle with The Years, Woolf was able to see that whether or not it had succeeded as a novel, her struggle with it had had a profound effect upon her. She wrote:" I also know that I reached my point of view, as writer, as being." (AWD, 7 March 1937, p. 277) For her the writing of The Years had been more than a creative process; it had been a road to self-discovery.

Despite the many difficulties it presents, The Years deserves a place as one of Virginia Woolf's great novels. Its dignity, its quiet, unadorned language, have a felicity all their own. The Years is in many ways a courageous novel: it eschews all easy victories. Its heroines are homely spinsters, its romances take place offstage, its scenes are set in the most ordinary of surroundings. Yet it manages to convey the excitement of life as it is lived by people who struggle to understand the meaning of what is happening to them, and to face the realities of war and poverty, ugliness and death.

And throughout one hears a quiet voice that may be Virginia Woolf's own, telling us that happiness is possible, that life is interesting and worth living, that one must be open to the future, and that against all odds, one must not despair.

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