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The Mimesis Of Consciousness In To The Lighthouse: An Investigation Into The Meaning of Symbolic Structure

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ABSTRACT

The Mimesis Of Consciousness In To The Lighthouse: An Investigation Into The Meaning Of Symbolic Structure

James Johnson

This investigation will apply a theory of literature to Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse. The theory will view literature as a process extending from creator to appreciator, through the concrete realm of the text. This process involves the representation of ontological meaning through a symbolic structure. The literary text in other words, functions as a symbol, and the literary process is essentially one of symbolic action. Both the initiation and the fulfillment of this ontological meaning involve a participation in consciousness: a creative engagement with the symbolic medium. In Woolf's poetic novel, symbolic structure works to define an ontological vision that is thoroughly reflexive. A close reading of those passages of the text where poetic diction is dominant will reveal this vision, and demonstrate how the critical action itself extends this ontological vision to poetics. To the extent that literary appreciation is refined into critical recreation, the action of the reader is merged with the action of the author through the medium of the text. Through the ontological meaning of symbolic structure, both creator and appreciator are revealed in process. The critical dialectic of theory and text should serve both the explication of the text and the advancement of the theory, revealing a work of criticism within the work of art.

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But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord(II Corinthians 3:18).

OUTLINE

The existence of literary criticism suggests that the meaning of literature is neither fixed nor given. A text can be isolated in form, but the meaning of this independent artistic product is incomplete without an appreciating consciousness. Because criticism is part of literature, literature must be defined as something that surpasses the literary text, and that involves the text in its dynamic relationship with the reader. The text is one of the poles of criticism. The other pole is theory, the product of the reader's critical participation. The dialectic interaction of theory and text in the mind of the appreciator is the essence of criticism. Thus, literature involves a dynamic process whereby the formal medium of the text finds its telos in the dialectic critical engagement of the reader. The dimensions of this process expand when the source of the formal medium is also considered, for the text points to its fount--to the creative dialectic in the mind of the artist. The beginning and the end of the literary process are one and the same: the dialectic action of human consciousness. The text is the symbolic medium through which ontological truth is eternally conveyed.

To suggest that literature is a process, and that this process is basically one of symbolic action, is a literary theory. To actualize this theory, a textual pole of

criticism is required. Such a text would supply the language for the expression of the theory, and would therefore be a reflexive text, concerned with the paradigmatic significance of symbolic action. In Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse, the symbol is a paradigm for the literary process, and the symbolic action an actualization of the paradigm. A symbolic reading of the text culls an ontological vision of poetics from the work of art. This vision is coexistent with the critic's engagement, and as a result, Woolf actualizes her theoretical concerns. The contiguity of process and symbolic action is clearly suggested in the title of the text, where "To" implies motion towards the "Lighthouse": towards the poetic symbol.

The argument that To The Lighthouse is centrally concerned with the ontological process that defines poetics and symbolic action, suggests a symbiotic relationship between Woolf's text and symbolic criticism. From the theoretical point of view, the reflexive symbolism of To The Lighthouse serves to expand the applicability of symbolic criticism. From the practical point of view, symbolic criticism serves to reveal the poetic core of the work. The text contains a multiplicity of meanings, and sanctions a variety of critical approaches. This vibrant diversity is contained within a poetic core that conveys a unified vision of art and ontology through a symbolic structure. While numerous hermeneutical angles could be applied to the text, the goal of interpretation should be inclusion, not

exclusion. Readings that underestimate the symbolic structure of the text tend toward exclusion, for in undermining the poetic core, the cohesive unity that can synthesize diverse meanings is lost.

Lilienfeld offers a valid feminist reading of the text, but in so doing reduces symbolism to merely biographical and psychological concerns. This is problematic because while Woolf's text clearly sanctions a feminist reading on one level, on a symbolic level the validity of the feminist argument is seriously undercut. To reduce the importance of symbolism is to reduce the importance of a central conflict that animates the work. Burt capitalizes on this problem by positing a central antagonism in Woolf's world vision in both To The Lighthouse and A Room of One's Own--an antagonism between a "progressive" feminist voice and a nostalgic conservative voice. The failure of Burt's argument to subvert Woolf's intent is again related to symbolic structure, for Woolf's symbolism contains the very antagonism Burt ascribes to cultural consciousness. On the symbolic level however, antagonism extends far beyond culture, and enters into the realm of ontology. In A Room of One's Own, the ontological dimension of Woolf's symbolism is suggested in her discussion of the androgynous vision. Marder notes the important connection between this prose work and Woolf's fiction, for the androgynous vision does much to explain the symbolic structure of To the Lighthouse.

Conflict is central to Woolf's text: Lilienfeld

isolates this conflict in the relationship between female protagonists (Lily and Mrs. Ramsay) and the patriarchal society; Burt attempts to apply this conflict to the author herself; Libertin employs semiotic tools to isolate a semantic conflict in the relationship between direct and indirect "speech acts"; Daiches, Haring-Smith, Naremore, Richter, and Auerbach concur on the importance of conflict between inner and outer views of personality. The question is: What is the relationship between semantic conflict and conflict in personality? Libertin reduces semantic conflict to a narrow cultural and historical perspective; Haring-Smith notes on the other hand, that the interior world is largely inaccessible to rational linguistic formulations. Thus semantic conflict implies a certain ontological dimension that dwarfs the implications of a cultural reading. Through symbolic structures the interior world is brought into contact with the exterior world. Semantic conflict is assuaged once again through the synthetic action of an androgynous poetic core. Both Naremore and Auerbach note that semantic conflict is actualized through Woolf's representational technique. The narrative voice, through its multiplicity, aims toward a unified perspective that embraces antagonistic elements. This synthetic perspective has transcendent connotations for Naremore and Auerbach, and along the same lines, for Ruddick, who stresses the "visionary perspective" at the core of To The Lighthouse.

The notion that Woolf's text involves the presentation

and the resolution of semantic conflict is precisely the contention of symbolic criticism. Semantic conflict defined in an ontological context is the source of the symbol and its critical potential. By avoiding or misreading the symbolic structure of the text, the ontological framework could be lost. Troy finds the implications of Woolf's symbolism solipsistic, and reduces the text to the realm of "sensibility":

> when it is used as the vehicle for significant serious thoughts and emotions, as in the larger portion of Mrs. Woolf's work...its charm seems false, its authority invalid, and its beauty sterile(38).

Troy's reading is predicated upon a static view of symbolic meaning. Such a view undermines the semantic conflict that is contained within the poetic core of the text. This core is activated through critical participation--a participation in symbolic action that Woolf maintains is the essence of reading in her essay, "How Should One Read a Book?". Of crucial importance is the dialectic of judgement and impression: what Goldman refers to as the "fusion of critical functions". To this end, through the sophisticated nature of its symbolic structure, To The Lighthouse is wholeheartedly engaged. Any attempt to reduce symbolism to Woolf's unconsciousness, as is the tendency in Temple's study of Woolf's use of the "confessional" mode, and Lilienfeld's feminist study, undervalues the intense degree of crafting that has gone into the text. While symbols can exist in the subconscious, sophisticated symbolic structures

involve the heightened assimilative action of the rational consciousness. Dick's holograph study clearly demonstrates the author's dialectic action--the rewriting process that turns a more "confessional" manuscript into a much more impersonal finished product. Dick notes specific changes in symbolism and point of view, and suggests that these changes tend to tax reader participation. Furthermore, biographical concerns are controlled and toned down in the finished product, highlighting what Daiches notes is the movement from "egotism to impersonality".

Symbolic criticism aids the exegesis of To The Lighthouse by revealing the ontological poetic core of the text. There are two main problems with ignoring or undervaluing this core. Firstly, as the ontological core contains the various meanings of the text, a reduction of symbolic structures serves to weaken the validity of the argument that causes the reduction. Secondly, as the poetic core is one of the greatest testaments to Woolf's artistic genius, a reduction of symbolic structures to psychological, cultural, or biographical concerns, reduces the dimension of Woolf's literary achievement. Symbolic criticism reveals a mirror of the perceiving consciousness, and suggests that the text is a poetic structure that is primed for critical participation. Thus symbolic criticism exposes Woolf's true mimetic purpose: a mimesis of consciousness that sanctions a variety of perspectives within a poetic core. Art and ontology are thoroughly conflated in a literary process in

which the text itself is a participant. As such, the heightened exegesis of the text serves to expand the application of the theory, and dialectic continues.

This investigation will proceed with a critical introduction, formulating a theory of symbolic criticism in ontological terms. This introduction will be followed by a close reading of To The Lighthouse, where the symbolic theory will be applied along with other critical approaches.

THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

This investigation involves an application of a form of symbolic criticism on To The Lighthouse. The text is to be viewed as a symbolic medium within an ontological process. To expand and elucidate this theory, primary works by Shelley, Milton, Keats, and Wordsworth will be discussed. In addition, Frye's Anatomy of Criticism and Barfield's Poetic Diction will be consulted, along with various ontological discussions of human consciousness, including Plato's Timaeus, Jung's Answer to Job, and Eliade's The Myth of the Eternal Return.

The point of contact between literature viewed as a symbolic medium, and ontological process, is the dialectic action of consciousness. Consciousness perpetually moves in two directions: outward towards the unknown and inward towards the known. The product of this dialectic is the ability of consciousness to conceive of and express an understanding of itself. The formulation of self-consciousness occurs through a symbolic medium--a language that can relate the unknown to formalized conceptions of the known. Language is the formal representation of consciousness in a state of eternal flux.

Viewed as a symbolic structure, literature is parallel to language. A most important difference is noted by Frye:

> verbal structures may be classified according to whether the final direction of meaning is

> outward or inward. In descriptive or assertive writing the final direction is outward...In all literary verbal structures the final direction of meaning is inward...In literature, questions of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aim of producing a structure of words for its own sake, and the sign-values of symbols are subordinated to their importance as a structure of interconnected motifs. Wherever we have an autonomous verbal structure of this kind, we have literature. Wherever this autonomous structure is lacking, we have language, words used instrumentally to help human consciousness do or understand something else. Literature is a specialized form of language, as language is of communication (Anatomy 74).

Literature is a specialized form of language because literature is created by consciousness out of the raw materials of language. Thus literature involves the actual process by which language is created: the representation of consciousness in a symbolic medium.

The notion that literature is the symbolic product of an ontological process--of a dialectic in consciousness--has an interesting corollary when the relationship between the poetic symbol and the reader is considered. In the above passage, Frye notes that poetic language contains a greater meaning than its literal value. A symbol involves a connection or an association of meanings, and therefore exists only through the instrumentality of human consciousness. As a result, the creative action and the appreciative action are merged through the symbolic medium. In their engagement with the poetic symbol, both the poet and the reader breathe life into it, animating it through

their participation. On one level, the symbol and its correlatives are of significance. On another level, the symbolic action itself is of significance. It is here, within the dynamic interaction between the creator and the symbol, and between the appreciator and the symbol, that the essence of consciousness--ontological truth--is captured.

Considered ontologically, the symbol participates in a literary process that extends from creator to appreciator. The symbol transmits a vision of ontological truth by reactualizing the essence of the creative moment during the reader's critical engagement. The literary process has two movements. There is the process by which ontological truth is incarnated in the symbolic medium, and there is the process by which ontological truth is reactualized through the reader's participation.

Using the logic of the above theory, a literary text in which the poetic symbol is the cardinal concern, would tend to be reflexive in both ontological and artistic terms. Shelley's Mont Blanc is a classic example. The poet views "Mont Blanc", and creates Mont Blanc. The reader's action is analogous to the poet's action, although the physical setting has been transformed into a symbol by the artist's creative engagement. The first stanza of the poem establishes the ontological basis of the poem's symbolism:

> The everlasting universe of things
> Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
> Now dark--now glittering--now reflecting gloom--
> Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
> The sources of human thought its tribute brings

Of waters,--with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves(1-11).

This passage begins with an abstract concept, expresses this concept through the metaphoric associations of water, then concludes with an actualization of the symbol. As the poem proceeds with the poet's experience, a clear correlation operates with ontological concerns, expressed through the interplay of poetic diction. The poet is overwhelmed by the "ceaseless motion" and the "unresting sound", of the "Arve's commotion" over the waterfall and into the ravine. A dialectic ensues between the poet's consciousness and the perceived scene, and this dialectic is transmitted to the reader through the implications of symbolic meaning established at the outset of the poem:

Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around(34-40).

The poet's "legion of wild thoughts" rests:

In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by--
Ghosts of all things that are--some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!(44-48).

"Mont Blanc appears" as both the symbol and the product of the poet's engagement with the charged setting. The product of the poet's engagement is the source of the reader's

engagement. Thus the parallel meanings of "Mont Blanc" in the poet's experience, and Mont Blanc in the reader's experience, suggest a poetic process whereby ontological experience is transmitted through the poetic medium. The poetic symbol, like the physical environment, is finite, cold, and hard: "How hideously its shapes are heaped around, rude, bare, and high, ghastly, and scarred, and riven"(70-71). Through the participatory engagement of consciousness however, beautiful objects can "teach the adverting mind", suggesting a transcendent vision:

> Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:--the power is there,
> ...The secret strength of things
> Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
> Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!(127-142).

Explicit in the words "inhabits thee!", is the notion that the poem is reflexive. The poet's task and the reader's task are joined through the symbolic medium of the poem. The poem is a reflection of the transcendent vision within the appreciator's consciousness.

In Shelley's poem, the symbol--and the text as symbol--are formal representations of the dialectic process of consciousness. This ontological process is ineffable by its nature, for it is an infinite process. The symbol is the finite accommodation of the transcendent meaning of eternal process. Tillich notes that one of the properties of a symbol is that it:

> opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us. All arts create symbols for a level of reality which cannot be reached in any other way...That which is true ultimate

> transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely. Therefore, no finite reality can express it directly and properly(Dynamics of Faith 42-45).

Davis makes a similar suggestion in a discussion of ontotheology:

> The possession of meaning by religious symbols does not entail that their meaning can be translated into the concepts of metaphysical discourse. Their meaning refers to transcendent realities beyond human understanding; it is glimpsed through the experience evoked by the images. It cannot be disengaged from that experience and transcribed into a conceptuality articulated by theoretical intelligence. In that way it is closer to the meaning found in a work of art than that of a scientific treatise. No doubt the symbols give rise to thought. They call for interpretation, commentary, and criticism; they need to be related to other areas of meaning. But none of this allows for a conceptualization that would replace the symbols as an adequate transcription of their meaning(61).

Ontological symbols work to merge the rational and the tangible with the abstracted and the hypothetical. Symbols spring to life from language, but are invested with meanings and qualities that go beyond the reach of language, for they involve conceptions of the ineffable.

In Paradise Lost, Milton emphasizes the accommodation of divine truth in Raphael's narration to Adam:

> ...what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
> As may express them best, though what if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?
> (V.571-76).

The divine world transcends direct representation, and must

be accommodated in form--"Thus measuring things in Heav'n by things on Earth"(VI.893). Raphael's accommodation to Adam is parallel to Milton's accommodation to the reader. In each case, a divine vision is represented in form. The poet's participation in a divine vision is established through the associations of the poem's symbolic structure. In Book VII, Raphael accommodates to Adam the creation of existence:

> Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the Earth,
> Matter unform'd and void: Darkness profound
> Cover'd th' Abyss: but on the wat'ry calm
> His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread
> And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth
> Throughout the fluid Mass(VII.232-37).

Milton's source is Genesis 1:2:

> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

Because of the poetic structure, the artist's creative task can be correlated with this cosmogonic action:

> Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
> Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
> Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
> And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
> Illumine, what is low raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great Argument
> I may assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men(I.19-26).

The representation of a divine vision is the essence of the poet's task here, and this representation is the result of the poet's experience--his "brooding" creativity that aligns him with the paradigm of creativity: cosmogonic fiat. The poet descends into the darkness of the "Stygian pool", and is enlightened by the "Celestial light". This same dialectic

action is symbolically expressed of God:

> There is a cave
> Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne,
> Where light and darkness in perpetual round
> Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav'n
> Grateful vicissitude, like Day and Night;
> Light issues forth, and at the other door
> Obsequious darkness enters(VI.4-10).

And it is this same dialectic that is the spirit of creation in Book VII and in Genesis. The product of this dialectic is the "Word". In Genesis, the "Word" is fiat.[1] In John 1:1-18, the meaning of the "Word" becomes transcendent, both mover and process, fiat and being. This paradoxical association is made through the figure of Christ.[2] In Uriel's lines to Satan in Paradise Lost, the "Word" is clearly tied to creation:

> I saw when at his Word the formless mass,
> This world's material mould, came to a heap:...
> Light shone, and order from disorder sprung
> (III.708-713).

Likewise in Milton, Christ is the representation of the "Word":

> And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee
> This I perform, speak thou, and be it done(VII.163-64).

Christ is the manifestation and the revelation of god:

> Effulgence of my Glory, Son belov'd,
> Son in whose face invisible is beheld
> Visibly, what by Deity I am,
> And in whose hand what by Decree I do(VI.680-83).

The action by which the "invisible is beheld visibly" is the symbolic action of accommodating the ineffable. Christ is the symbol of accommodation--the symbol of symbolic action--and thus the symbol of the poet's action. Christ is the

"Divine Paradigm"(Answer to Job 114), as Jung suggests, for Christ is the symbol of the synthesis of dialectic in consciousness--the concretization of the ineffable. Thus the "Word" is "word", the "Logos" is "logos". This is explicit in Milton, for the poet's task is concerned with divine accommodation.

The notion that Christ is an archetype of accommodation--Jung's "Divine Paradigm"--elevates the poet's task from a Christian perspective, for the poet engages in an accommodation of an ineffable vision. Poetic language is religious language, and vice versa. In a discussion on "Theological Language", Aquinas notes that words can be used neither "univocally" nor "equivocally" of man and god, but only "analogically"(Summa Theologica I,13,5). Analogical meaning embraces both the "univocal" and the "equivocal", and thus merges the infinite and the finite at their point of contact. This point of contact is existence itself--the eternal "I am"--that serves as the paradigm for the "analogy of being".[3] The paradigm is that which explains the "equivocal" in terms of the "univocal":

> In names predicated of many in an analogical sense, all are predicated because they have reference to some one thing; and this one thing must be placed in the definition of them all(Summa Theologica I, 13, 6).

The correlation of plurality and homogeneity is the correlation of the finite and the infinite, the function of Christ as the "Divine Paradigm".

The hypothetical perspective of Christ, of the finite

and of the infinite, the "equivocal" and the "univocal", is the visionary perspective of ontological dialectic. This visionary potential is contained within the paradigm, as are all other symbols that participate in the paradigm. Tillich notes:

> Religious symbols are double-edged. They are directed toward the infinite which they symbolize and toward the finite through which they symbolize it. They force the infinite down to finitude and the finite up to infinity. They open the divine for the human and the human for the divine(Systematic Theology 240).

Furthermore:

> There can be no doubt that any concrete assertion about God must be symbolic, for a concrete assertion is one which uses a segment of finite experience in order to say something about him. It transcends the content of this segment, although it also includes it. The segment of finite reality which becomes the vehicle of a concrete assertion about God is affirmed and negated at the same time. It becomes a symbol, for a symbolic expression is one whose proper meaning is negated by that to which it points. And yet it also is affirmed by it, and this affirmation gives the symbolic expression an adequate basis for pointing beyond itself(239).

The paradox of the religious symbol is analogous to the paradox of the poetic symbol, and thus to literature viewed as a symbolic form. It is the finitizing of the infinite that is seen in Shelley's Mont Blanc. In such a reflexive context, the symbol operates as a paradigm of its ontological meaning.

In considering the meaning of the paradigm, it is useful to consider Plato's Timaeus. In this work, a

fundamental distinction is drawn between the ongoing process and a static mover, between "that which ever is, but never comes to be", and "that which is ever coming to be, but never is"(Taylor 25). The former is the real, the "ever self-same"(25) that serves as the divine "model" or pattern for the latter, which to our senses is the corporeal world. The material world is a "likeness of somewhat"(26), and the "somewhat", the pattern of the divine model. The divine pattern is an "eternal living being"(34), containing the total potential of existence. Thus Plato's pattern is parallel to Aquinas' "analogy of being". It is the "Divine Paradigm" that is the axis of the "univocal" and the "equivocal". This is why it is perilous to assert simply that Plato holds a dualistic system of ontology, for while he clearly distinguishes above between static model and dynamic copy. he also suggests that the two together comprise existence, for they complete each other:[4]

> When the father who had begotten it perceived that the universe was alive and in motion, a shrine for the eternal gods, he was glad, and in his delight planned to make it still more like its pattern; and as this pattern is an eternal Living-Being, he set out to make the universe resemble it in this way too as far as was possible. The nature of the Living-Being was eternal, and it was not possible to bestow this attribute fully on the created universe; but he determined to make a moving image of eternity, and so when he ordered the heavens he made in that which we call time an eternal moving image of the eternity which remains for ever at one(Lee 51).

The copy is the accommodated form of the model. It completes the pattern by representing it in a tangible medium. From

human perception, a visionary perspective is achieved when a point in the copy serves to reveal the dimensions of the model, which by definition are the total existence of the copy. In such a state, the particular reflects the infinite that potentially exists within human consciousness. From the perspective of symbolic criticism, the reflexive literary text operates as a mirror, reflecting the essence of the appreciating consciousness.[5]

Frye's Anatomy of Criticism shows a marked influence of Plato in some of its theory. Frye distinguishes between the "apocalyptic vision"(141) containing the "mythically undisplaced core"(151), and the "displacement"(136) of this vision in narrative. Frye's use of "displacement" is parallel to the concept of accommodation, and as such, is parallel to the ontological dimensions of the poetic symbol. The "apocalyptic vision" is the "eternally unchanging" (Anatomy 158), similar to Plato's "ever self-same"[6]--the "static pattern"(Anatomy 158) that is the abstracted form of eternal process. In literary terms, Frye's label for the "apocalyptic vision" is the "anagogic phase" of symbolic criticism:

> In the anagogic phase, literature imitates the total dream of man, and so imitates the thought of a human mind which is at the circumference and not at the center of its reality(119)...
> The anagogic view of criticism thus leads to the conception of literature as existing in its own universe, no longer a commentary on life or reality, but containing life and reality in a system of verbal relationships(122).

The anagogic vision is the hypothetical perspective of god as achieved by an individual consciousness, the attainment of which involves the paradox of all process contained within a static instant. Such a perception is the essence of epiphanic vision:

> the point at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment...we propose to call the point of epiphany(Frye Anatomy 203).

The anagogic vision is synonymous with the ontological potential of the poetic symbol, for it is the expression of the ineffable. This involves the participation in the "Divine Paradigm" construed as Logos and logos--the total conflation of art and ontology within human consciousness.

The paradox of the anagogic vision is the paradox of Christ when understood as an archetypal symbol, for both involve the correlation of mortality and divinity--the fixed instant containing the entire dynamic whole. This paradox is the ambiguity of the poetic symbol, viewed in ontological terms as containing the infinite within the finite. Paradox is mediated through the instrumentality of human consciousness. A divine vision can be culled from the symbol by a perceiving consciousness, for the symbol serves as a mirror, reflecting the visionary potential of the human mind.

In The Great Code, Frye notes that the "claim to a direct vision of God is one that "the Bible, even in the New Testament, is usually very cautious about

expressing"(197). Yet within the Christian tradition, mystics have held that divine revelation must be personally experienced through a dialectic internal process.[7] The path of the mystic is parallel to the paradox of symbolic action construed in terms of the anagogic vision, for the mystic seeks the static instant of epiphany that is the vision of the infinite revealed in the finite.

The Book of Job supports this mystic view, and to some extent at least, is problematic within the traditional teachings of the Church. At the climax of its narrative action, Job depicts a direct communion with God. Yet the representation of the direct communion occurs through a metaphoric or an accommodated form(the whirlwind). In terms of rational discourse, God's speech from the whirlwind offers only a limited justification of his actions--it is unable in its logic to alleviate the intensity of Job's suffering. Crucially however, Job's experience with God in the whirlwind defies representation, for it is a direct communion with God: a transcendent experience. The narrative presents a "displaced" or an accommodated version of the transcendent experience. Frye notes that God's presence renders Job instantly guilty, and leads to a simultaneous self-abasement: "Job's egocentric perception has disappeared along with its objective counterpart, the leviathan"(197). In the omnitemporal and omnispatial presence of God, Job's self-righteousness changes to self-negation. At the same time however, the very appearance of God refutes absence

with total presence. The operation of dialectic is clear: naive affirmation oscillates to negation, negation is transformed by its very enactment into total presence. Job offers an archetypal expression of negative mysticism. The experience refutes representation in narrative terms, except in a displaced fashion. Job's final restitution--found by many observers to offer little consolation for all that he has suffered--is really a concretization of the redemption that exists within his epiphanic experience:

> a renewal or future restoration is most intelligible as a type of present transcendence...the final vision of presence and the knowledge that in the midst of death we are in life(Frye, Great Code 197).

Ultimately, Job's redemption is his transcendent vision, and not his material situation. The material elements of his loss can be viewed as the symbols of self-abasement that precede the epiphanic communion with God.

In its representation of a transcendent experience, Job goes beyond the bounds of rational and metaphysical understanding. It represents the ineffable through a symbolic medium. The direct communion with God--the transcending of finite conceptions of reality--is an experience that cannot be expressed in rational terms for these terms are finite. By its very nature, the direct communion with God is an experience with the infinite. The bridge between the infinite and the finite, the visionary and the strictly rational, is the accommodated medium of symbolism. In the Bible, the mystical resolution that

concludes the Book of Job finds its greatest expression in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation, the historical narrative of the Bible is abandoned and meaning is expressed symbolically. This is necessary, for the subject matter of apocalyptic vision refutes concretization except in the realm of symbolism, where meaning can operate on an abstracted level within consciousness. Jung's insightful study, Answer to Job, investigates the mystical constants between Job and Revelation, and relates these constants, especially through the symbolic properties of the latter, to the workings of consciousness. For Jung, the male archetype(God as Jehovah) is consciousness, and the female archetype(Sophia, the Virgin Mary) is the "collective unconscious". The transcendent experience, represented by the "Divine paradigm" of Christ, is the hierogamitic synthesis of the sexual archetypes and their correlatives in consciousness. The transcendent experience in Jung is analogous to Job's mystical experience in his direct communion with God. Archetypally, self-abnegation is the submergence of the male consciousness into the female unconscious. Significantly, the God of Job embodies both archetypes as a paradigm of androgyny: "a single hermaphroditic being, an archetype of the greatest universality"(Jung 142).

In his discussion of male and female archetypes, Jung provides a "displaced" formulation of the workings of consciousness. Sexual archetypes function as symbolic

representations of the dialectic nature of the anagogic vision. In literary works where a central concern is the anagogic vision and its accommodation through symbolic means, the use of sexual archetypes is common. In Mont Blanc for example, there are strong sexual implications regarding the relationship between the poet and the scene appreciated, metaphorically rendered through the opposition of the waterfall and the chasm. Hierogamy stands as a type of dialectic synthesis.

Jung is useful precisely because his psychological concerns bring conceptions of divinity into human consciousness. In discussing Plato, there is a tendency to visualize a separate realm of divine truth outside of human consciousness. Yet in Frye's conception, the anagogic vision is centrally dependent on the instrumentality of human consciousness, for the anagogic vision is the potential of human consciousness. In The Myth of the Eternal Return, Eliade locates the transcendent impulse within human consciousness, and specifically within the dialectic action of human consciousness. On the one hand, Eliade isolates the harmonious "ritual" world of the archaic consciousness:

> we might say that the archaic world knows nothing of "profane" activities: every act which has a definite meaning--hunting, fishing, agriculture; games, conflicts, sexuality,--in some way participates in the sacred...Thus we may say that every responsible activity in pursuit of a definite end is, for the archaic world, a ritual(27-8).

On the other hand, there is:

> the secondary character, of human individuality as such--that individuality whose creative spontaneity, in the last analysis, constitutes the authenticity and irreversibility of history(46).

For Eliade, harmony and differentiation are the poles of consciousness. While transcendent awareness occurs as the individual "ceases to be himself"(34), the pull of "historical time"(155) and the "terror of history"(161) constantly ensnare man in the confines of personality. Consciousness never reaches either pole then, and rather exists in the dialectic process between them. For Modern man, in his rational and conscious world, Eliade's key point is that mythic formulations can serve the "abolition of time through the imitation of archetypes and the repetition of paradigmatic gestures"(35). In spite of fragmentation and differentiation in other words, harmony can be regained through "participation"(34) in a medium that reflects the dialectic movement of consciousness:

> Through repetition of the cosmogonic act, concrete time, in which the construction takes place, is projected into mythical time, in illo tempore when the foundation of the world occurred(20).

The correlation of "concrete time" and "mythical time" is the correlation of differentiation and harmony: the paradigmatic action that conceives the intersection of the finite and the infinite. The operative word is "projected", for consciousness can conceive of itself in a heightened context, where the "profane" state of "becoming"(parallel

to Plato's world of process) is contained within a total vision. For Eliade, it is the participation that invokes the visionary perspective, for the participation is the actualization--or rather the "reactualization"(29)--of the dialectic essence of consciousness that is the basis of ontological process.

Eliade gives a clear formulation of the dialectic that is central to the actions of consciousness. Consciousness exists in eternal process, oscillating on its axis between the poles of total unity and total fragmentation. This process defines ontological truth as the search for synthesis, a search that finds its fulfillment in a medium that can accommodate a balance between the two extremes. The symbolic medium--the medium of accommodation--serves as a bridge between the poles of the axis. Barfield notes the essential dialectic of consciousness that is at the root of symbolic action:

> any attempt to unseal the sources of poetry is certain to be abortive, unless the critic can distinguish between the mood of creation and the mood of appreciation(105).

This correlates Eliade's ontological dialectic with a dialectic in the mechanics of artistic creation. The "mood of creation" is akin to the harmonious impulse, while the "mood of appreciation" is akin to the fragmentations and distinctions of rational consciousness. The poles of consciousness are the poles of literature. The transcendent awareness that is attained through the dialectic in

consciousness is manifest in literary expression--the product of dialectic in consciousness:

> The process is from Meaning, through inspiration to imagination, and from imagination, through metaphor, to meaning; inspiration grasping the hitherto unapprehended, and imagination relating it to the already known(Barfield 141).

Ontological process is transmitted through a symbolic medium, for this medium is the synthetic product of ontological experience as it is digested by the rational faculties.

As humankind moves into a state of increasing rational consciousness, the potential for awareness increases despite the loss of the innocence of an archaic world view. While a growing sense of differentiation is part of the advent of rational consciousness, dialectic contact with the transcendent impulse also remains an unavoidable part of human existence. The "fall" into fragmentation is a prelude for heightened awareness--an increasing self-consciousness that can find expression in the literary text: the synthetic product of consciousness. For Barfield, "the poet's power of expression will be dependent on the development of the rational principle in himself"(108). Thus, "where a creative imagination is wedded to an acute intellect", the result is:

> the act of becoming conscious itself. It is the momentary apprehension of the poetic by the rational, into which the former is for ever transmuting itself--which it is itself for ever in process of becoming(178).

The dialectic of the "poetic" and the "rational" defines

poetic action as symbolic action--as the incarnation of consciousness in form. The imagination relates the "hitherto unapprehended" to the "already known" through a symbolic medium, creating meaning through a dialectic process in consciousness. In symbolic terms, the literary work can be viewed as the product of the artist's expanding consciousness, containing the moment of anagogic vision. Frye too notes the importance of dialectic in the incarnation of anagogic meaning in a literary work. In the anagogic phase:

> the dianoia[meaning] of art is no longer a mimesis logou, but the Logos, the shaping word which is both reason and...praxis or creative act(Anatomy 120).

As the meaning of literature becomes the "Logos", its meaning becomes its ontology as a symbolic form, a parallel to the accommodation of the "Divine Paradigm" of Christ.

The poet/author whose literary product is explicitly concerned with his self-consciousness--with the literary process of which he is a part--creates a text that is a testament to the workings of consciousness. Thus Shelley claims, "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth"(A Defense of Poetry 431). And for Barfield, "Great poetry is the progressive incarnation of life in consciousness"(181). In its incarnate form, literature presents the reader with a mimesis of his existence. As the reader evolves into the critic, using the symbolic medium of the particular text as a language for the penetration into

general ontological and aesthetic truths, he reactualizes the workings of consciousness, using the known to assimilate the unknown. In terms of anagogic criticism then, the text is essentially a language that conveys a vision of ontological truth in an artistic context. The engagement of the reader's consciousness with a symbolic structure that leads both inward and outward--towards the particular and the paradigmatic--amounts to a reactualization of the essence of consciousness defined in an ontological context. The poet/author beckons to the reader, inviting participation in consciousness--the axis that conflates art and ontology in the literary medium. To the extent that literary appreciation is refined into critical recreation, the action of the reader is merged with the action of the author through the medium of the text.

Reader participation supplies the appreciating consciousness that serves to reanimate symbolic language, culling from it an anagogic vision of truth. It was already noted that in Shelley's Mont Blanc, the poet's action is explicitly tied to the action of the reader, both of whom are engaged with a beautiful object. The same is true of Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn, for the "Urn" is both the object of the poet's contemplation(hence the creation of the poem), and the object of the reader's contemplation. Like "Mont Blanc", the "Urn" is a symbol for the work of art. During the poet's engagement with the "Urn", his creative imagination breathes life into the sensory data that come to

him from his appreciation. Thus, "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter". Wasserman notes:

> Real things...become ethereal things, symbolic things, by the mind's hallowing act which disengages them from time and space and intensifies them until they are seen as the mortal-immortal, the beauty-truth, which is the mystery that permeates all things and gives them meaning(The Finer Tone 54).

Poetic creation is the offspring of the poet's contemplation with external stimuli: his "imagination" merges sensory, rational, and conscious inputs--those elements of the self normally involved in the "irritable reaching after fact and reason"(Keats, Letters Dec. 21, 1817)--with the transcendent essence of ontological process that is existence. The poetic potential of the imagination derives from the ability to capture or finitize ontological process within the symbolic medium. Cryptically, the poet addresses the "Urn":

> Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
> As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!

The "Urn" is a symbol of the symbolic medium, as is the poem. It is a product--finitized and "silent"--yet it appeals from beyond the realm of the senses, and "dost tease us out of thought as doth eternity" because it contains the anagogic vision within its reflexive symbolic meaning.

Keats' use of what Wasserman calls the "mystic oxymoron"(48), demands reader participation in the essence which was the source of the artistic creation: "Art does not communicate by thrusting its meaning upon the observer but by absorbing him into a participation in

its essence"(51). The oxymoronic quality of "Cold pastoral", or "unravish'd bride", forces a synthesis of different verbal associations--an active participation:

> All things...may be symbolic in proportion to the intensity with which one is engaged in them, for this sensuous intensity is the magic that opens the husk of natural objects to the core and reveals their spiritual essences... But the force that makes the symbol is in the poet, not in the urn; the urn can only beckon and incite the pursuit into its essence. Thus, the formation of symbols is a creative act, not a discovery(Wasserman 53-5).

The "mystic" quality of the oxymoron is that the synthetic action amounts to a participation in the dialectic movement of consciousness. Frye notes:

> Whenever we read anything, we find our attention moving in two directions at once. One direction is outward or centrifugal, in which we keep going outside our reading, from the individual words to the things they mean, or, in practice, to our memory of the conventional association between them. The other direction is inward or centripetal, in which we try to develop from the words a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make(Anatomy 73).

The participation that is solicited by symbolic action is a dialectic participation in ontological truth--Eliade's "reactualization"--that is also the source of the poetic symbol. The complete literary process then, begins and ends at the same point--the dialectic action of human consciousness. The text is the symbolic bridge, transmitting ontological experience in an artistic context from creator to appreciator. The created work leads the reader, through participation, to a recreation of the transcendent moment when "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"--the moment that is the

source of the creation of the work itself. As Shelley suggests, "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man"(A Defense of Poetry 434).

Wordsworth's autobiographical masterpiece, The Prelude, presents the entire literary process within the parallel consciousness of the poet/persona. The subject of this poem is "the growth of [the] poet's mind", and the object--the work itself. The poem documents an internal process of discovery and revelation, and conveys this process to the reader through the symbolic medium. As is the case in Mont Blanc and the Ode on a Grecian Urn, the poet and the reader are aligned in the same dialectic in consciousness. The poet/persona communes with nature and with experience; the reader communes with the text. The poet's ontological experience is his gradual self-awareness, a growing awareness of the hidden potential of the self. In the boating episode in Book I, the poet's idyllic innocence is shattered by the existence of "huge and mighty forms"(I.398). These forms in nature are externalizations of the unknown dimensions of the self:

> A plastic power
> Abode with me, a forming hand, at times
> Rebellious, acting in a devious mood;
> A local spirit of his own, at war
> With general tendency(II.362-66).

The poet recognizes something within, but is unable to penetrate this force.

> Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
> Like harmony in music; there is a dark
> Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles

Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society(I.340-44).

The process of The Prelude however, is the gradual revelation of these unknown qualities. In Book II the poet exclaims:

An auxiliar light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendour(II.368-70).

In Book XIV this "auxiliar light" is fully realized, and hence fully developed to become the quintessential Romantic symbol for the human Imagination--the Moon:

it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege(XIV.66-77).

The expression of this "mind" is the poetic product:

that interminable building reared
By observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To passive minds(II.383-386).

In this sense, the "inscrutable workmanship" is revealed as the synthetic product of expanding consciousness--the recognition of the dialectic in consciousness between the finite and the infinite. This is the "perception of similitude in dissimilitude", that "principle" which is "the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder"(Wordsworth Preface to the Lyrical Ballads 344).

The Imagination is the synthetic power that "reconciles discordant elements", merges past and present into eternity, and resolves rational consciousness into an infinite and a transcendent whole:

> Imagination-here the Power so-called
> Through sad incompetence of human speech,
> That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
> Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
> Halted without an effort to break through;
> But to my conscious soul I now can say--
> "I recognize thy glory": in such strength
> Of usurpation, when the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
> There harbours, whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there;
> With hope it is; hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be(Prelude VI.592-608).

Experience reveals the depth of the self, and reveals the essence of divinity that lies within the dialectic actions of consciousness. Synthesis is symbolically expressed in hierogamitic terms:

> ...the soul...
> Strong in herself and in beatitude
> That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
> Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
> To fertilize the whole Egyptian plain(VI.613-16).

The pinnacle of the transcendent experience is once again anagogic vision, represented through symbolic associations:

> The unfettered clouds and regions of the Heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light--
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end
> (VI.634-640).

The last line recalls the essential paradox of the mystical vision, the paradox of Christ as the "Divine Paradigm". The symbol accommodates the infinite, actualizing that which transcends form in its vision. The poet's ineffable experience is translated into poetic creation:

> To the open fields I told
> A Prophecy: poetic numbers came
> Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe
> A renovated spirit singled out,
> Such hope was mine, for holy services(I.50-4).

The "poetic numbers" are the words of "prophecy", for like the shell in the poet's nightmare in Book V, which serves as an analogue for poetry, they utter a "loud prophetic blast of harmony"(V.95): an anagogic and a visionary perspective of truth. The suggestion that the poet is a prophet is overwhelmingly put forth in the final lines of the poem:

> Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
> A lasting inspiration, sanctified
> By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
> Others will love, and we will teach them how;
> Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells, above this frame of things
> (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
> And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
> In beauty exalted, as it is itself
> Of quality and fabric more divine(XIV.446-56).

The poet's role as a prophet is also proclaimed at the close of Shelley's Ode to the West Wind:

> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,
> Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
> Be through my lips to unawakened earth
> The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
> If winter comes, can Spring be far behind(63-70).

Likewise Blake writes, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell:

> ...the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt...
>
> But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.
>
> If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.
>
> For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern(Plate 14).

The poet's role as a prophet suggests the dimensions of the literary process. Vision both precedes the text and succeeds it. Construed in symbolic terms then, the text is a language of ontology, capturing and extending the dialectic essence of consciousness. For Shelley:

> Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind(A Defense of Poetry 434).

The fulfillment of the prophetic vision of the text is the action of criticism, for criticism serves to animate the anagogic vision through the dialectic action of the appreciating consciousness.

As criticism is a form of writing, it must contend with Frye's distinction between "descriptive or assertive writing" and "literary verbal structures"(Anatomy 74). In "descriptive or assertive" criticism, clarity of expression is gauged by the outward or "centrifugal" movement of ideas

and meanings. In "literary verbal structures" however, criticism can operate "centripetally", generating meaning through the concerted actions of the rational and the creative faculties, thus actualizing critical concerns for the reader. The artistic "autonomy" of the text creates a greater potential for communication than does rational discourse. This is seen in the criticism contained within the reflexive symbolic texts of Mont Blanc, Paradise Lost, Ode on a Grecian Urn, and The Prelude. Symbolic criticism aids in the exegesis of these works by placing them in the greater whole of which they clearly strive to be a part. Frye notes:

> The structural principles of literature...are to be derived from archetypal and anagogic criticism, the only kinds that assume a larger context of literature as a whole(Anatomy 134).

The greater whole is the dialectic action of consciousness that is eternal and ineffable, but accommodated by the symbol, and by the text viewed as an aggregate symbol.

To complete the critical dialectic, a text is required that could be explored in depth with the aid of the theory developed. Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse is a text that is both implicitly and explicitly concerned with an ontological formulation of poetics. Furthermore, as a complex and sophisticated Modern novel, Woolf's text is a restatement of the eternal value of literature in a contemporary(20th century) perspective. This text has been chosen for close analysis as it is thoroughly reflexive,

both in its symbolism and as a symbol. Ultimately, the text functions as a mirror of consciousness, merging the creator and the appreciator through the symbolic action of the literary process.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

A: THE PATTERN OF CRITICAL DIALECTIC

The interrelationship of the preceding theory and To The Lighthouse is best approached through a consideration of the critical dialectic generated by the text. It is both a poetic masterpiece and a classic example of the Modern novel, and this literary dualism shapes its critical fulfillment. The act of reading To The Lighthouse highlights the distinction between poetry and the novel. The narrative and the depiction of reality--those features that are most endemic to the form of the novel--are most obvious on a first reading. While poetic diction emerges from the narrative, its meaning remains largely unintelligible until after the depiction of reality is comprehended. A first reading of Woolf's text actually dislocates the reader's consciousness, for the traditional aspects of the novel are fragmented and displaced. Woolf forces the reader to participate in the synthesis of information, a process that reveals paradigms leading inward to the poetic core. Critical analysis of the text follows a dialectic movement from the narrative and the portrayal of realism towards the meaning harboured in poetic structures. In the poetic core of the work, because the reader/critic discovers a mirror of his participation, this participation and an understanding of its ontological meaning are merged.

B: REDEFINITION OF REALITY AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

The narrative structure and the portrayal of reality in To The Lighthouse are striking. From these perspectives--traditional concerns of the novel--the depiction of characters and situations is of central importance, and symbolism is integrated into a representational context. When for example, Mr. Ramsay is described in James' consciousness, "lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one"(10), the metaphoric implications are translated into a conflict within the consciousness of the character involved(James in this instance). Viewed as a novel, the poetic serves the representational, and the movement is outward or centrifugal. Yet poetic diction is constant and sustained throughout the text, creating unity. As symbolism is subordinated to the centrifugal representation of reality(social realism), the text appears fragmented.

Woolf's narrative technique presents a fragmented world in its representation both of individual perspectives, and the internal and external perspectives of one character. Most critics agree on the importance of the conflict between the inner and the outer representations of character. Haring-Smith distinguishes between the "public" and the "private" consciousness(143), and suggests that the inner modes of awareness are "too highly censored for communication"(143). Symbolic and poetic meaning can easily be reduced to the unconscious in this way. The meaning of

lines like "lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one", can be read as the internal and uncensored products of consciousness. Such a reading highlights psychological conflicts in the text, emphasizing the Freudian innuendo of lines like "lean as a knife", or "had there been an axe handy"(10). Crucially, even the uncensored expressions of consciousness are expressed symbolically, for it is only through accommodation that the workings of consciousness can be rendered. Within the distinction between inner and outer modes of awareness, lies a distinction between the ineffable process of consciousness, and any attempt(linguistic or artistic) to represent this process in a formal medium.

Libertin posits conflict between direct and indirect "speech acts"(163) as central to the meaning of the text, suggesting that society censors the individual's expression(170). This reasoning reduces the ontological to the socio-political. While Libertin is correct in viewing the text as a "a rising speech act which only the reader can enunciate"(179), it is deflationary to reduce this to a "socio-political reinforcement of the meaning of the book"(179):

> The indirect narration of the text implies, because of its indirection, that life should not be lived out like this, that everyone participates in creating and wondering about this "blame", that communication can be direct and meaningful...it illustrates the theme of the lack of direct communication in life(for art is indirection)(Libertin 170).

The ontological basis of semantic conflict is reduced to a

form of misunderstanding that must somehow be worked out in the projected future. By reducing conflict to discernible cultural factors, Libertin, like Lilienfeld in her feminist reading of the text, makes Woolf appear as a radical reformer. This is problematic because there is a side of Woolf's art that suggests that misunderstanding and indirection are the givens of existence, exacerbated by the shortsightedness and the anachronisms of society, but irrevocably associated with the essence of conscious existence. There can be no doubt that Woolf is concerned with the social and political aspects of the "public" versus "private" consciousness, nor can there be any doubt of her concern for the state of women within the capitalist patriarchy. The text clearly supports both these readings as numerous critics have shown. But to make any of these concerns cardinal is to leave oneself--and the text--open for Burt's deconstruction. To emphasize the notion that the conflict between the inner and the outer views of self is the product of cultural circumstances suggests that this conflict can somehow be overcome in the future. This suggests a forward moving and "progressive view of human history"(Burt 193), positing the eventual emancipation of the individual, and especially the emancipation of women, from the vice-like grip of society. This vision of change however, is clearly undercut by what Burt calls the "underargument"(194) of both To The Lighthouse and A Room of One's Own. The "underargument"--dominated by a loss of hope

and a feeling of nostalgia caused by the war--views change as a destructive force that undermines the stability of human society(Burt 194). By reducing conflict to social and cultural concerns, Woolf and her work are opened up for a reading like Burt's, that sets these two movements against each other antagonistically. This reduction seeks to contain artist and reader in a dialectic that is rooted in the socio-political realm. In such a reading, the author is chained to a culture against which she is an antagonist--diminishing her artistic individuality. Her artistic vision is reduced to "nothing more than this dual resistance" against "postwar habits" and "progressive habits"(Burt 206).

The conflict between the inner and the outer modes of representation and perception in To The Lighthouse can be viewed as either a conscious or an unconscious result of Woolf's artistic endeavour. Libertin would side with the former approach, viewing semantic conflict as Woolf's mimetic representation of socio-political conflict. Burt on the other hand, attributes much more of the conflict he isolates to a dialectic with cultural roots, and thus to the unconscious actions of the artist. Lilienfeld's feminist critique comes down on both sides, using Woolf's conscious crafting to suggest a mimesis of her vision of the capitalist patriarchy and the destructive effects of the marriage bond(162),[8] while using psychological and biographical concerns(i.e. the unconscious) to explain aspects of the text's symbolism. Temple's study emphasizes

both Woolf's indebtedness to Proust, and her use of the "confessional" mode: "To The Lighthouse is at once her most confessional and her most Proustian novel"(90). Temple highlights the importance of the shaping of memory into art, but does so by emphasizing the role of the unconscious in the writing process, thus overemphasizing the role of submerged personality in the final product. For a glimpse of Woolf in the confessional mode, the autobiographical "A Sketch of the Past" is informative. This is a highly personal piece of writing: a wealth of material that can be deconstructed and torn apart for psychological and confessional meaning. Portions of this sketch, written in 1939-40, are strikingly similar to portions of To The Lighthouse, both in their more occasional use of metaphoric diction and in their descriptions of Woolf's familial relations. There is even an explicitly biographical reference to To The Lighthouse:

> Until I was in the forties--I could settle the date by seeing when I wrote To The Lighthouse, but am too casual here to bother to do it--the presence of my mother obsessed me. I could hear her voice, see her, imagine what she would do or say as I went about my day's doings...Then one day walking round Tavistock Square I made up, as I sometimes make up my books, To The Lighthouse; in a great, apparently involuntary, rush. One thing burst into another. Blowing bubbles out of a pipe gives the feeling of the rapid crowd of ideas and scenes which blew out of my mind, so that my lips seemed syllabling of their own accord as I walked. What blew the bubbles? Why then? I have no notion. But I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her(80-81).

To The Lighthouse however, is not an autobiographical sketch, but rather a finely crafted work of Modern fiction. The source of the text is one thing, and the modification of inspiration by rational faculties is another. In viewing the text as either too confessional or too personal, Woolf's concerns are undermined. Whatever the source of the text(and the above passage suggests something of this), the finished product has an independent voice, a distinction that is a necessary part of the critical process. As Daiches notes, the text moves from "egotism to impersonality"(88). Temple views the text as flawed(not Woolf's best), for it is blurred and marred by the author's personality. Temple suggests the text began as a personal work about Woolf's parents, but gradually became concerned with the process of remembering her parents(100), and then with the "process of recovering the past and the shaping of memory into art"(98). By suggesting that "Lily is Virginia Woolf"(94), Temple overlooks, as does Burt, the point that the text is not a product of unconscious dialectic as much as it is centrally concerned with this dialectic. The distinction is crucial in terms of the artist's vision and in terms of the work itself, for recalling Barfield, "the poet's power of expression will be dependent on the development of the rational principle in himself"(108). Before it is extended to the reader, unconscious inspiration can be refined by the artist's rational faculties. The extent to which the artist exercises this option can never be known to the reader, or

the critic. Dick makes numerous observations based on a comparison of the manuscript and the final text, but she notes, "one must speculate about the intermediary stages of the book"(16). Even in the first draft, there is no way of telling which lines came directly from Woolf's unconscious, and which lines were modified before being written. The action of the author's dialectic(Dick 24) renders any attempt to pyschoanalyze Woolf through her text problematic.

In a discussion on To The Lighthouse, the tendency to reduce the ontological to the socio-political, and the tendency to reduce the artistic to the psychological and the biographical, must be avoided. Libertin is an example of the critic who reduces ontological concerns to socio-political ones. She notes that the "poly-semantic potential"(168) of the text's layers of meaning is associated with an "indirect discourse between the reader and the narrator-arranger"(168). Yet the subsequent reduction of semantic conflict to the socio-political realm, through the "double-bind situation"(169-70), obscures the ontological conflict that has logical and existential precedence. In Temple, the artistic is reduced to biographical and psychological concerns, as the author is psychoanalyzed through the text, aided by sketchy biographical information. Lilienfeld and Burt supply intermediate readings that combine the supposed primacy of the socio-cultural with the actions of the unconscious. Lilienfeld notes that Woolf "admitted to being

obsessed with her parents"(162), and thus suggests:

> the most deeply felt and less verbally available rages and losses Woolf formed into archetypal images and scenes, thus conveying symbolically what psychoanalysts call 'primary process feelings', those feelings we experience before we attain language, from the most primitive layers of the self and psyche(162).

Like the misplaced emphasis on dialectic in Burt and Temple, this view overlooks the possibility that Woolf is writing about rather than recording an experience. Again the difference is enormous in terms of appreciating the artist's genius. Dick specifically notes, with examples, that various biographical and confessional aspects of the manuscript are limited and toned down in the final product(21), and furthermore, that symbolism(18-19) and point of view(22) are tightened and elaborated in the rewriting process. This suggests an authorial dialectic geared towards an increasingly rational and conscious control over the text as it evolved, and also an increasing concern for the aesthetics of impersonality.

Rather than view the conflict between inner and outer worlds and the conflict in semantic meaning as products of cultural and unconscious sources, it seems more advisable to seek the meaning of conflict within the meaning of the work. Naremore suggests that conflict between inner and outer modes of representation reflects "two varieties of experience":

> an active life which is egocentric and time-bound...and...an immersed passive life without any sense of personality or time...Of these

> two visions of life, Virginia Woolf makes the second predominate(135).

But Naremore also notes that the two voices together comprise "one voice"(123), the voice of the narrative. In between the various perspectives in the text, there is "an apparent absence of transition, as if everything belonged to the same place and time"(116). Woolf's narrative technique serves a two-fold purpose. As the narrative moves around various conscious perspectives, it presents a fragmented picture of reality to the reader. For Haring-Smith, the "unique contents of their private consciousnesses" prevent the characters from adopting a "consensual, objective view of reality"(155). This engenders a sense of isolation and solipsism, a sense of personality trapped within itself. Daiches notes:

> The stream of consciousness of one character enables us to see the individual actions of other characters in their proper symbolic meaning(91).

The key word is "us", for by this, Daiches implies the reader, suggesting that whatever the potential solipsism of individual characters, the reader can synthesize diversity within a unified context that is supplied by the creative genius of the author. For Naremore:

> there is a clear feeling that the language of the novel has been formed by an omnipresent narrative voice which can take the raw materials of thought and develop from them the poetic motifs which serve to comment on the whole design(133).

The two-fold nature of the narrative is its movement towards

diversity and unity. This embodies a chaos/order dialectic that is activated by the reader, who pursues the structures that are left partially synthesized by the author through her textual proxy, the narrator.

The importance of Woolf's narrative technique is that it is the source of all the diversity of the text, as well as the source of the unity that gives this mass cohesion. Woolf's narrative technique is quintessentially dynamic. It involves a synthetic participation that differentiates Woolf's use of the novel from that of her predecessors. Auerbach notes:

> Goethe or Keller, Dickens or Meredith, Balzac or Zola told us out of their certain knowledge what their characters did, what they felt and thought while doing it, and how their actions and thoughts were to be interpreted. They knew everything about their characters...And what is still more important: the author, with his knowledge of an objective truth, never abdicated his position as the final and governing authority(535).

In the traditional novel, there is a great degree of narrative stability that develops from a sustained objective point of view. Narrative stability is tantamount to the author's sanction of the narrator. In Woolf's text however, there is a noticeable absence of an objective point of view delivered through a reliable narrator. The narrative moves swiftly from one perspective to another, but does not offer comments on these perspectives as much as the perspectives offer comments on themselves. Lacking is a sense of narrative stability. Various perspectives are joined by

exterior events, insignificant in themselves, but significant precisely as they join interior streams of consciousness:

> In Virginia Woolf's case the exterior events have actually lost their hegemony, they serve to release and interpret inner events, whereas before her time (and still today in many instances) inner movements preponderantly function to prepare and motivate significant exterior happenings(Auerbach 538).

At first this situation dislocates the reader's engagement with the text. Along with the decline in the importance of exterior events comes a perceived decline in the portrayal of objective reality. Instead, the text seems comprised of a host of highly subjective perceptions. In the specific passage Auerbach analyzes (chapter 5 of "The Window"), he comments:

> The continuity of the section is established through an exterior occurrence involving Mrs. Ramsay and James: the measuring of the stocking...This entirely insignificant occurrence is constantly interspersed with other elements which, although they do not interrupt its progress, take up far more time in the narration than the whole scene can possibly have lasted. Most of these elements are inner processes, that is, movements within the consciousness of individual personages(529).

The narrator's traditional role as reliable story-teller is dramatically reoriented, for the "story" is concerned with the inner workings of consciousness, not with the depiction of events. Seemingly absent is an objective standard through which the narrative can be stabilized. In a more traditional novel, the presentation of an objective external reality

serves to place character within a moral framework. In To The Lighthouse, where the narrative is concerned with the depiction of subjective perspectives, there is no obvious placement of character within a moral system. Judgements can be made about individuals, for example, Mr. Ramsay and Charles Tansley are both arrogant and egocentric. Yet the actual presentation of these characters' points of view undermines the ability to pass judgement by displaying the inner workings of consciousness. In such a context, it is very difficult to narrowly ascribe a social or a political motivation for either narrator or author, for the magnitude of Woolf's achievement is her embracing of various concerns within the greater whole of the text. It is precisely the sense in which diversity is contained within unity that makes the text an artistic triumph.

What Woolf is up to here is not just a move to upset the traditional forms of representation, but rather an attempt to redefine contemporary conceptions of representation and reality. Literature involves the creation of a world through the action of the human imagination, and thus involves the necessary creation of a fictive or an artificial world. This premise throws an interesting light on the potential objectivity of the reliable narrator in a traditional novel. In an infinite universe, an objective point of view does not exist except from the hypothetical perspective of god. Hence the objectivity of the reliable narrator is actually an elaborate illusion, for it is only

objective within the finite realm of the text's heterocosm. The attempt to render an objective point of view through a reliable narrator is really only a disguised form of subjectivity, emphasized in Auerbach's term for this form of representation: "unipersonal subjectivism"(536).

The reason a reliable narrator can provide merely a disguised objectivity is that he has but one point of view. Even if this one point of view were the sum total of the various perspectives in the text, for the reader, all data is screened through this one source, and hence stripped of much of its potential objectivity. One point of view, no matter how embracing, cannot represent the infinite, unless of course it embodies the hypothetical perspective of god. In an infinite universe there are infinite perspectives. Each individual perspective becomes limited within the greater whole, and is relative to its own degree of consciousness. The use of any one point of view places all other points of view in a certain light. As E.H. Gombrich suggests in his Art and Illusion, in a section suggestively entitled "The Ambiguities of the Third Dimension":

> Now perspective may be a difficult skill, but its basis, as has been said, rests on a simple and incontrovertible fact of experience, the fact that we cannot look round a corner. It is due to this unfortunate inability of ours that as long as we look with one stationary eye, we see objects only from one side and have to guess, or imagine, what lies behind(250).

An individual perspective is like the eyes looking through the window in Henry James' "House of Fiction"--it is only

one point of view. A different set of eyes or a different window reveals a whole new angle.[9] While one point of view is always limited, two points of view, even if each one is limited, serve to generate a sense of objective reality in the mind of the observer. This reader/beholder is able to examine the similarities and differences between various points of view and recognize certain constants, thereby generating a sense of objective reality. The redefinition of reality that occurs in To The Lighthouse operates in just this fashion, although instead of one or two perspectives, the reader must assimilate dozens of perspectives. "The Window" functions in Woolf's text as it does in Henry James' metaphor of the "House of Fiction". Thus narrative is merged with the concept of perspective, and art is functionally merged with ontology . Auerbach's term for this technique is a "multipersonal representation of consciousness": the "design of a close approach to objective reality by means of numerous subjective impressions received by various individuals"(536). The actual presentation of subjective perspectives forces the reader to create a sense of objective reality. Thus, rather than dictating through the guise of a reliable persona, Woolf (re)defines reality by soliciting reader participation--invoking the dynamism of dialectic.

Perspective is at the core of the narrative technique in To The Lighthouse. The reader becomes aware of this as he becomes conscious of the "multipersonal representation of

consciousness" that is at work. In stepping back from the text, large segments of the narrative are revealed to be structured like a perspective painting. In chapters 1-11 of "The Window", James and Mrs.Ramsay are sitting in the window of the house looking out over the garden and into the bay. In their field of vision, Cam and Prue are playing cricket in the garden. Lily Briscoe and Mr. Bankes are situated at the opposite end of the garden looking towards the drawing room window and the house. As well, Mr. Ramsay and Charles Tansley pass by occasionally. Beyond the depiction of this physical situation, the bulk of the narrative is concerned with Auerbach's "inner processes". These processes, or streams of subjective consciousness, come from the various individuals in the group as they look out upon each other and the natural environment. In other words, the narrative flows from the verbalization of a perspective picture. In their interior monologues, all characters reveal themselves and the others in their view. The reader, removed from the situation, sees the gradual revelation of a variety of interconnected perspectives, and can therefore slowly piece together a composite picture that encompasses them all. "The Window" is an operative metaphor, suggesting the openness and the variety of human perception.

Woolf has painstakingly worked to avoid having the "multipersonal representation" of perspective create a nihilistic or solipsistic final vision for the reader. The figurative chaos presented by the deluge of subjective

processes is part of the vision, but only part of it, for process is contained within an ordered narrative structure. This structure uses exterior events as an anchor to stabilize the depiction of consciousness. The narrative instability that occurs when the text is viewed from a traditional perspective, is offset by the finely crafted structure that unifies Woolf's work.

Much of the narrative of To The Lighthouse operates in a parenthetical manner. Consider for example, the narrative sequence from chapter 12 to chapter 16 of "The Window". The narrative of chapter 12 begins in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness as she strolls along with her husband, and then moves back and forth between the two of them. Various objective details--the "red-hot pokers" that Lilienfeld notes--merge their points of view into a larger perspective that comments on their marriage. At the end of the chapter, Mrs. Ramsay sees Lily Briscoe and William Bankes, and she decides that they must marry. For the reader this is highly ironic, for chapter 12 raises doubts about the institution of marriage. Chapter 13 begins in William Bankes' consciousness as he talks to Lily, and then the perspective moves inside Lily's mind. She sees the Ramsays, and considers their marriage, and in so doing repeats the reader's point of view in chapter 12. From Lily's consideration of Mrs. Ramsay, the narrative returns to Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness. Chapter 13 ends with Mrs. Ramsay's question to Prue, "Did Nancy go with them?". Chapter 14

begins with an unknown perspective, probably Prue's, reflecting on Mrs. Ramsay's question. This perspective modulates into a view of Nancy, Minta, Andrew, and Paul, that continues for the rest of the chapter, concluding in Paul's consciousness with a consideration of Mrs. Ramsay. Chapter 15 is Prue's verbal response to her mother's question, while chapter 16 returns to Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness. These parenthetical digressions in perspective dislocate the reader. Yet virtually every instance of this technique in the text involves a dovetailing from some level of digression back to its source. In this fashion, the dislocations of narrative are resolved into a flow of associations that return to their fount.

The first eleven chapters of "The Window" facilitate the narrative movement of parenthesis and dovetail. The actual setting in this sequence emphasizes the interplay of perspectives rendered by the narrative. The objective serves to unify and coalesce internal processes, suggesting that meaning moves centripetally. A specific instance of the use of external objects as signposts within the narrative is seen in chapter 4 of "The Window". The stream of Lily's consciousness depicted in this section focuses on the question of reality and imagination. In thinking about Mr. Ramsay, Lily remembers Andrew's description of his father's interest: "Subject and object and the nature of

reality...Think of a table then, when you're not there"(38). As her consciousness grapples with this question, she sees a pear tree, and proceeds to imagine the table in the pear tree. During the next several paragraphs, a variety of impressions are rendered within her consciousness, and the pear tree is mentioned periodically as an objective detail. This objective detail--charged with philosophical meaning in its connection with the table--serves as an objective anchor in the external world around which Lily's mind freely wanders:

> All of this danced up and down, like a company of gnats, each separate, but all marvellously controlled in an invisible elastic net - danced up and down in Lily's mind, in and about the branches of the pear tree, where still hung in effigy the scrubbed kitchen table, symbol of her profound respect for Mr. Ramsay's mind(40).

Within the ostensibly spurious narrative, there is actually an immense degree of crafting and ordering that is expressly directed towards engaging the reader's consciousness. The relationship between the objective detail(the pear tree) and the philosophical meaning(the kitchen table) is correlated by the reader. The "each separate, but all marvellously controlled" is a description of both Lily's stream of consciousness, and of the narrative technique. In each, the objective detail of the pear tree focuses diversity into unity, through the instrumentality of the perceiving consciousness.

On a superficial level, the narrative of To The Lighthouse dislocates the reader's consciousness. Absent is a presynthesized flow of information. Woolf's purpose is a redefinition of reality--she does not dictate objective reality to the reader, but rather induces the the reader to use the raw materials of the text to synthesize a view of objective reality. Through the "multipersonal representation" of subjective perspectives, the reader achieves a heightened awareness of perspective.

The ambiguity of perspective flows naturally from the existence of particular consciousness within an infinite whole. As the reader synthesizes the representation of subjective consciousnesses, the ambiguity of perspective becomes a gateway, leading to a perception of the infinite. To pave the road for the reader's participation, Woolf has carefully and subtly crafted the text so that it appears diverse, but is actually highly unified. Thus while diversity causes the reader's consciousness to expand, structure and substance provide a hook for this expanding consciousness to grasp on to. The text's narrative structure mirrors the centrifugal and centripetal movements of consciousness. The narrative transcends finitude, and strives for a heightened awareness where plurality is contained within unity. As Ruddick notes, Woolf's text aspires towards the inculcation of a "visionary

perspective"(10), by actualizing the reality of infinite perspective within a unified core:

> The visible human world and the infinite reality behind it in Woolf are the same world viewed from different perspectives(10) ..."Reality", then, is the realm, revealed by "vision", in which everything has intermingled to the point of unity and stasis(11).

The conflict between inner and outer modes of character resolves into the "one voice" of the narrator, containing all perspectives, and each perspective. As the narrator is the voice that the reader hears, the visionary perspective that is contained within the narrative is presented to the reader.

In concert with an appreciating consciousness, Woolf's text moves from a highly fragmented to a highly unified presentation of reality. Woolf employs narrative to redefine reality on a heightened level. The reader's assimilative action reveals the paradigm of multiplicity contained by unity, a paradigm that is the fulfillment of the narrative structure. This paradigm marks the continuing centripetal direction of critical engagement with the text. Centrifugal or temporal concerns--social and political concerns--are contained within a greater ontological vision of human existence that is expressed paradigmatically through a centripetal engagement with the text.

C: THE POETIC CORE

Readings that emphasize aspects of the novel in To The

Lighthouse, tend to place the poetic elements in a subordinate role. Temple reduces symbolism to psychological and biographical concerns, in order to support her thesis on the interplay of the "confessional mode". Lilienfeld does the same in order to support her thesis on the questioning of the marriage bond. Viewed from a poetic perspective however, it becomes apparent that the text's symbolism functions paradigmatically in relationship to the narrative and its representation of reality. The text's symbolism forces a correlation of sameness and difference, an action that quintessentially involves the synthetic action of the reader's consciousness. The reader's formulation of paradigms is a dialectic process, a "fusion of critical functions"(Goldman 158). In her essay, "How Should One Read a Book", Woolf discusses the critical qualities of judgement and impression, and cites the importance of their mutual interaction in reading:

> The first process, to receive impressions with the utmost understanding, is only half the process of reading; it must be completed, if we are to get the whole pleasure from a book, by another. We must pass judgement upon these multitudinous impressions; we must make of these fleeting shapes one that is hard and lasting. But not directly. Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and the questioning to die down; walk, talk, pull the dead petals from a rose, or fall asleep. Then suddenly without our willing it, for it is thus that Nature undertakes these transitions, the book will return, but differently. It will float to the top of the mind as a whole. And the book as a whole is different from the book received currently in separate phrases. Details now fit themselves into their places. We see the shape from start to finish(8).

The act of appreciating is the action by which experience seeks fulfillment in understanding, and understanding is a process involving both the rational and the inspirational faculties. Woolf actualizes this in To The Lighthouse through symbolic meaning. For the reader of the text, participation is merged with an understanding of its ontological meaning.

The act of reading the text follows the narrative towards a participation in a redefinition of reality. Out of the reader's participation, the paradigm of the "one voice" is created. From this point, other paradigms become evident in the text, leading centripetally towards the poetic core. Woolf's redefinition of reality, wrought through her narrative technique, primes the reader for paradigmatic significances harboured in symbolic associations. Indeed, the "one voice" of the narrative forces a reconsideration of the poetic diction in the text. From a narrative point of view, symbolism can be explained within the description of character and within the description of reality. From a poetic point of view however, the text's symbolic structures operate centripetally, leading inward towards a poetic core where increasing levels of paradigmatic meaning find their telos in a reflexive archetype.

THE FORMULATION OF EMBLEMATIC PARADIGMS:

The first level of symbolic meaning that the reader penetrates is emblematic meaning. Emblemization is here

defined as the condensed representation of a given situation within another situation, description, or occurrence. Emblemization therefore involves the creation and discovery of paradigms that work to inform the meaning of the text. The single most striking instance of emblemization is undoubtedly the famous "Boeuf en Daube" sequence. The dinner sequence, chapter 17 of "The Window", repeats the perspective painting situation of the first movement, but this time increases the intensity of individual perspectives by aligning them across from each other at the dinner table. While in the earlier sequence(chapters 1-11), each chapter delivered one or two perspectives generally, in the "Boeuf en Daube" sequence, there is a constant shift amongst the perspectives of a dozen or so individuals. One way of viewing Woolf's intent here, is to posit the "Boeuf en Daube" as an actualization of the perspective portrait outlined in the preceding sequence. This is useful, for while in the preceding section synthesis is left to the reader, in the "Boeuf en Daube" section the reader's synthesis is assisted by the emblematic synthesis wrought by Mrs. Ramsay.

As the dinner commences, a view of uneasiness and fragmentation is presented in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness:

> Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her(126).

This sense of dislocation actualizes the dislocation of the

narrative in its "multipersonal" presentation of perspectives, for such a presentation overwhelms the reader with a sense of isolation and subjectivity. The dinner itself, especially in its depiction within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness, amounts to the creation of a social unity--the recognition that despite their alienation, the individuals who comprise the dinner all "had their common cause against that fluidity out there"(147). This recognition occurs within the reader's consciousness, but is externalized or emblemized in Mrs. Ramsay's social function as hostess. The "triumph" of the dinner represents Mrs. Ramsay's successful ordering of existence--the forging of a social community, a compact against the tyranny of nature:

> here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily(147).

Mrs. Ramsay's role is akin to that of a priest, presiding over an emblematic communion. Within her consciousness, the engagement of Paul and Minta is the token of her "triumph"(149). For the reader, this engagement is an emblematic hierogamy.

The "Boeuf en Daube" sequence emblemizes the reader's synthetic action, with Mrs. Ramsay serving as the paradigm for the reader's creativity. Standing between the reader and Mrs. Ramsay in emblematic terms, is Lily Briscoe. Lily follows Mrs. Ramsay's urge for synthesis, and likewise feels the pull of separateness:

> Such was the complexity of things. For what happened to her, especially staying with the Ramsays, was to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time; that's what you feel, was one; that's what I feel, was the other, and then they fought together in her mind, as now(154).

As an external parallel to this stream of consciousness, Lily is moving the cutlery and the salt shaker around on the table, wrestling with her problems in the spatial context of painting. Lily relates Mrs. Ramsay's synthesis--what could be called an ontological paradigm--to the realm of art. As the reader is engaged with a work of art, Lily relates Mrs. Ramsay's ontological paradigm to the actuality of the reader's critical engagement with the text.

The emblematic dimensions of To The Lighthouse flow from the portrayal of realism and its concomitant stresses on the reader. The emblematic significance of the "Boeuf en Daube" sequence that arises from the "multipersonal representation" of reality, animates the reader with a desire to synthesize. Interestingly enough, as the reader penetrates emblematic significances, he leaves the realm of realism, even in its redefined context. This poses no problem for the reader, for Woolf has so skillfully wrought her product that the emblematic and symbolic meanings emerge from the realistic portrait of the text, and as such come to life through the reader's engagement. While To The Lighthouse is both a novel and poetry, the testament of Woolf's artistic genius lies in the total integration of these forms, a dynamic integration in which meaning evolves

from aspects of the novel towards the symbolic mode of poetry during the reader's critical engagement. There is a magnetism in the text that pulls the reader from the ambiguity of perspective to the realm of emblematic significances. Once these more fictional concerns come to life, they work to develop the meaning of the text beyond the redefinition of reality.

The "Boeuf en Daube" sequence emblemizes synthesis. Yet near the end of the dinner, the question "Ah, but how long do you think it'll last?"(161) intrudes itself on the fictional order. Mrs. Ramsay's vision that "This would remain" is undercut, and along with it, emblematic synthesis is threatened. As Mrs. Ramsay departs after the dinner, Lily feels in her consciousness, "directly she went a sort of disintegration set in"(168). This sense of fragmentation sets the mood for the second section of the text, "Time Passes", where the questions at the end of the dinner are repeated emphatically in the narrative:

> Will you fade? Will you perish?(195)...How long shall it endure...What am I? What is this?(197).

In "Time Passes", the disruption that is heralded by Mrs. Ramsay's departure from the dinner is amplified in her death. This is manifest for the reader through the impersonal manner of the narrative:

> [Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty](194).

The chaos of "Time Passes" is very much predicated on death, and on the ephemerality of all human achievements. This is seen most notably in the death of human consciousness that animates the narrative of "The Window".

The narrative in "Time Passes" reverses the emphasis that is evident in "The Window". In the first section, human consciousness animates the narrative, while external reality is subservient to the portrayal of consciousness. In "Time Passes", human concerns are reduced to mere descriptives, generally delivered in impersonal parenthetical digressions: a total retreat from the perspective portrait narrative. There are no subjective perspectives for the most of "Time Passes", and instead there is the point of view of a non-human or non-conscious environment. This external reality is personified by nature, the agent of death and destruction: the "winds" are the "advance guards of great armies"(194) that herald the passage of time that is oblivious to man.

Parallel to reading the "Boeuf en Daube" sequence as an emblem of the synthesizing potential of consciousness, is a reading of "Time Passes" as an emblem of the chaos and disorder that reign in the absence of consciousness. Such emblematic significances suggest the Christian myth of innocence and fall, a reading that is supported archetypally through the setting of the garden in "The Window" that is disrupted in "Time Passes": "the garden was a pitiful sight now, all run to riot"(204). DiBattista notes, "the novel's

most powerful symbol of this human debacle is the ruined garden. Cast out of Eden, man falls into history"(98).

The granting of emblematic significances leads the reader towards a consideration of the meanings harboured in the non-real or fictive levels of the text. To view "Time Passes" as an emblem of the "fall" follows naturally from the portrayal of perspective in "The Window" that is so lacking in the second section. The perspective of external reality is present in "The Window", but submerged within the depiction of inner processes. With the eradication of inner processes in "Time Passes", an amplification of the world of objective reality ensues. As such, the "fall" of "Time Passes" is actually contained within the depiction of reality in "The Window", for the variety of subjective perceptions necessarily implies a hypothetically objective perspective that encompasses them all, a perspective that the reader aspires towards in his creative synthesis. The suggestion that "Time Passes" operates as an emblem of the chaos and disorder of the "fall" is valid, yet ironic. From the reader's point of view, "Time Passes" assists in the synthesizing process, for it actualizes the synthesis of perspective that is embodied in the existence of an objective reality. In the world of the text, this reality is objective precisely because it has no perspective, for it lacks the torch of human consciousness. For the engaged reader however, the objective reality of "Time Passes" is personified by nature, and hence is embellished by the

poetic consciousness that created it, as well as by the appreciating consciousness that interprets it. "Time Passes" in other words, embodies an enormous illusion: literally it suggests fragmentation, whereas subtly it is part of the general move towards synthesis that animates the entire text.

Most profoundly in "Time Passes", it becomes evident that the move from realism to emblemization pulls the reader further and further into the world of the text. The irony of the emblematic significances of this section demands an even greater participation with the text. The personification of nature works both to highlight the "fall" as a retreat from subjective consciousness, and to suggest the presence of the consciousness of the author(through her narrative proxy). This paradox leads the reader directly into the realm of poetic diction--the oxymoronic world of the symbol that lacks consciousness but reflects the consciousness of both creator and appreciator. Emblematically, the concern with the poetic symbol leads to the third section of the text, "The Lighthouse".

The narrative of "The Lighthouse" embodies a return to the "multipersonal representation" of "The Window". In this section there are a variety of subjective impressions structured around a perspective portrait as was the case in the first section. The dimensions of the reformed perspective portrait are defined by Lily, the Ramsays' boat(James, Cam and Mr. Ramsay), and the

lighthouse. Lily looks across the bay to the boat and to the lighthouse, and also back across the garden to the house. The characters on the boat, each separately, look both to the lighthouse and to the island. It is the interrelationship of these subjective perspectives that structures the narrative of the final movement of the text.

In emblematic terms, "The Lighthouse" embodies two parallel quests. These external manifestations of the search for order--Lily's quest to complete her painting and the physical quest for the lighthouse--are reflexive. The reason for this is that both quests revolve around the lighthouse, the third element of the perspective portrait that operates on a symbolic level in each quest and throughout the text. Paradoxically, each quest is an actualization that is wholly dependent on symbolic associations that work to integrate both the two quests and the entire novel. As such, the meaning of "The Lighthouse", and with it the meaning of the whole work, remain largely unintelligible without a consideration of poetic diction. While the narrative depicts the achievement of both quests, these actualizations are so interwoven with symbolic elements that the reader sees only a poetic actualization: intelligible only after the meaning of the text's symbolism is glimpsed. The reader, beginning with the narrative and the portrayal of realism, is pulled into emblematic significances, then further still into the realm of poetic diction. Ultimately, the emblematic achievements of the parallel quests operate as paradigms for

the achievement of the reader's quest: understanding.

THE FORMULATION OF SYMBOLIC PARADIGMS:

Both the redefinition of reality and its emblematic significances, create a unity that contains plurality. This unity places the overwhelming diversity of life within a single pattern. As Woolf writes in "A Sketch of the Past":

> Perhaps this is the strongest pleasure known to me. It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we--I mean all human beings--are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. And I see this when I have a shock(72).

This recalls the anagogic vision, and its medium--the word as symbol. In its ultimate conception, To The Lighthouse defines a paradigm through its symbolic structure, a paradigm that is the visonary pattern for the operation of the work of art, and its dialectic within the reader's consciousness.

In To The Lighthouse, there is a total integration of the portrayal of realism and the use of poetic diction. Poetic diction is constant and sustained, unifying the entire text regardless of internal or external perspective.

Poetic diction is an element of the "one voice" of the narrative. Symbolism emerges from the narrative, and has an objective place within the realistic world of the text. The physical setting--an island in the Hebrides--provides a realistic basis for the central symbolic dialectic: land surrounded by the sea. Symbolic constructs operate in an abstract world of their own, a world where dialectic opposition is existence. This meaning corresponds to Frye's concept of the mythically "undisplaced core"(Anatomy 151). In Frye's theory there is a constant tendency towards the "displacement" of myth within narrative and within realistic contexts. In To The Lighthouse, the poetic structures operate in a displaced context within the narrative. It is in their displaced connotations that symbols are used to support socio-political or centrifugal readings of the text. The centripetal pull towards the undisplaced core tends towards an ontological reading.

The text's undisplaced mythic core is defined by the consistent correlation between poetic diction and sexual archetypes. These sexual archetypes define an ontological dialectic that is parallel to the real sexual conflict in the more representational aspects of the novel. Sexual conflict emerges at the outset of the narrative. Mrs. Ramsay's "Yes, of course, if it's fine to-morrow"(9), suggests a mood of optimism that excites James' consciousness. This positive mood is just as quickly disrupted by Mr. Ramsay's eternal pessimism: "But, it won't

be fine"(10). Sexual conflict between husband and wife is actualized within James' consciousness:

> Had there been an axe handy, or a poker, any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it(10).

The Freudian connotations are unmistakable, especially when the narrator describes Mr. Ramsay, "lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one"(10). Poetic diction can lead either centrifugally or centripetally. As meaning moves outward from symbolism towards external reality it can be integrated into a socio-political argument supported by Freudian psychology. Yet there is also a movement inward, establishing an archetypal dimension to poetic meaning. Phallic imagery is picked up in Mr. Ramsay's "uncompromising" rigidity that reflects his penchant for truth--his archetypal maleness:

> What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children(10).

Mr. Ramsay's archetypal maleness is in turn expressed through the symbolic dialectic of the text:

> It was his fate, his peculiarity, whether he wished it or not, to come thus on a spit of land which the sea is slowly eating away, and there to stand, like a desolate sea-bird, alone(68).

The dialectic of land and sea places Mr. Ramsay and his undisplaced(archetypal) correlation with rational consciousness in an existential landscape. The ultimate

symbolic correlative for Mr. Ramsay's maleness becomes the lighthouse, the fulfillment of all phallic imagery in the text. This connection is made explicit through a simile in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness:

> she looked up and saw him standing at the edge of the lawn...as a stake driven into the bed of a channel upon which the gulls perch and the waves beat inspires in merry boat-loads a feeling of gratitude for the duty it is taking upon itself of marking the channel out there in the floods alone(69).

Again, the opposition of a chaotic and an impersonal sea against a point of stability is suggested by the stake. In displaced terms, the phallic nature of the stake represents Mr. Ramsay's qualities as a character--his egocentrism and his rigidity that are also the hallmarks of the patriarchal structure of Woolf's society. In undisplaced terms, the phallic nature of the stake corresponds to rational consciousness in its constant struggle against the seas of the unconscious and oblivion.

Opposite the archetypal male stands the archetypal female: Mrs. Ramsay in her abstracted state as earth mother and protector of all around her. In undisplaced terms she is the eternal female element, presiding over the communion of the dinner, and giving life. In displaced terms however, Mrs. Ramsay's constant process of giving is a constant self-sacrifice--she covers the pig's skull(death) with her own shawl(172). While Mr. Ramsay is associated with the lighthouse and the phallic stake in the midst of the sea, Mrs. Ramsay is associated with images of water: she is like

a "sponge sopped full of human emotions"(51), and a "column of spray"(58). The symbolic dialectic of land and sea both expresses and is expressed by the relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. The dualistic nature of symbolism is that it operates on both displaced and undisplaced levels. Consider the lines:

> into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare(58).

On a displaced level, these are a goldmine for the feminist critic. On an undisplaced level, the meaning can be quite different. The male dominates the female in the capitalist patriarchy(a "progressive" reading). Yet archetypally the female contains the male. As a "column" and a "fountain", Mrs. Ramsay partakes of female and male attributes. Phallic imagery is expressed through water imagery, instead of against water imagery(the "sea-bird", the "stake"), as is the case with Mr. Ramsay. Thus there is a kind of androgynous dualism in the poetic description of Mrs. Ramsay. There is also a dualism attending her archetypal correlation with the sea:

> the monotonous fall of the waves on the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again as she sat with the children the words of some old cradle song, murmured by nature, "I am guarding you - I am your support", but at other times suddenly and unexpectedly, especially when her mind raised itself slightly from the task actually at hand, had no such kindly meaning, but like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat the

> measure of life, made one think of the destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea, and warned her whose day had slipped past in one quick doing after another that it was all ephemeral as a rainbow(27).

The waves are both a shelter and a deluge, for poetic meaning operates on two levels. Mrs. Ramsay is correlated with the sea; the waves with their "measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts" suggest an affinity between her consciousness and the symbolic properties of water--the unconscious and the eternal. Yet the waves can also suggest the "ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat", and intimate the "destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea". In the latter sense, Mrs. Ramsay is viewed existentially like her husband, for her self is eroded by the constant sacrifice of her individuality.

Amongst the Romantics, but certainly not exclusively to the Romantics, a consistent emphasis on dialectic and synthesis is evident. Furthermore, there is a frequent tendency amongst the Romantics to symbolize dialectic and synthesis in terms of sexual opposites and hierogamy. It is in this context that Woolf's use of sexual dialectic should be viewed. Although the realistic level of the text unquestionably embodies a vision of real sexual conflict, the notion that sexual dialectic operates symbolically within all consciousness undermines its external applications on a displaced level. In A Room of One's Own, Woolf clearly states the hypothetical sexual dialectic within consciousness, and cites Coleridge--surely of the

great Romantics the one with the most consistent and explicit use of sexual archetypes:

> ...in the man's brain, the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain, the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine(136).

Marder suggests, in his study on Woolf and feminism:

> If only one could reconcile the masculine, critical side of the mind with the feminine, intuitive side, light with dark--thus the problem is presented in her books...Her novels are a kind of record of this search for wholeness; each new experiment is an attempt to embody and express this elusive unity of being. She had no single name for the ideal condition she sought, but at times she called it the androgynous mind(108).

Symbolic androgyny suggests both sexual dialectic and its hierogamitic resolution. The concept of androgyny embraces the ironic potential of symbolism. The sea operates dualistically in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness. This same dualism is emblemized in "Time Passes" when the narrator asks, "What power could now prevent the fertility, the insensibility of nature?"(207). The juxtaposition of "fertility" and "insensibility" recalls the oxymorons of Keats. The oxymoron functions to invoke dialectic and synthesis around a reflexive poetic symbol. Like the "Urn",

nature in "Time Passes" has two meanings: one objective, the other symbolic. Androgyny serves as an analogue for the ironic potential of the poetic symbol, for androgyny embraces both the essence and the telos of the oxymoron. For Burt, "Woolf's concept of androgyny comes down to nothing more than this dual resistance" of "postwar habits" and "progressive habits"(206). While Woolf's concept of androgyny can provide the paradigm necessary to embrace Burt's thesis, to reduce Woolf's concept to Burt's thesis is to lose the entire operation of the ontological paradigm embracing the ironic potential of the poetic symbol. In terms of writing, Woolf suggests:

> it is fatal for any one who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly(A Room of One's Own 145).

The movement of androgyny is to overcome dialectic in synthesis, at least temporarily. This movement is extended to the reader through the ironic potential of the accommodated medium.

In To The Lighthouse, the lighthouse functions ironically as a symbol. On the one hand it is associated with Mr. Ramsay--the phallic symbol of his aggressive masculinity. On the other hand, the lighthouse is closely aligned with Mrs. Ramsay. She has absorbed its essence in "The Window", while James, Mr. Ramsay, and Lily are only confronting it ten years later in "The Lighthouse". This duality of the symbol is made most obvious in James'

consciousness near the end of the text:

> James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the whitewashed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too. It was sometimes hardly to be seen across the bay. In the evening one looked up and saw the eye opening and shutting and the light seemed to reach them in that airy sunny garden where they sat(277).

The distinction between the two lighthouses is manifest in the narrative itself. The first lighthouse is the concretized or real lighthouse--"stark and straight"--described above in strictly visual terms devoid of poetic diction. The second lighthouse is the abstracted or imaginative lighthouse--"sometimes hardly to be seen"--belonging to consciousness and expressed with the aid of poetic diction. Marder views the two lighthouses as representatives of the masculine and feminine principles(Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay), together embodying Woolf's concept of androgyny(144). Mrs. Ramsay reaches symbolic androgyny in "The Window" as a "column of spray". Mr. Ramsay--the abstracted sterility of the male principle--must journey "to" the lighthouse for completion. This completion is emblemized in James' consciousness, in the recognition that nothing is "simply one thing". As Marder points out, this recognition leads to the resolution of the fierce opposition in James' mind between his mother and his father(145)--an

emblematic hierogamy.

The dualistic properties of the lighthouse reflect a crucial point about reality, for both lighthouses are real. The dualistic potential of the symbol lies in the fact that it can be both at once within an animating consciousness. As in Shelley's Mont Blanc, the object is cold and hard, but filled with life when consciousness "renders and receives fast influencings". Thus there is a concrete lighthouse and a conceptual lighthouse, the former independent of the latter, the latter intimately connected with the former. Rosenbaum suggests:

> If nature is independent of man, he is not independent of her...In other words, the nature of reality is such that objects are not dependent upon subjects but subjects are affected, at least, by their objects(343).

The imaginative lighthouse is both created from and sanctioned by the actual lighthouse, reflecting the dependence of the subject on the object. Parallel to the partial dependence of the subject on the object, is the symbolic dependence of the lighthouse on the sea:

> keep the total setting in mind--sea, as well as tower. Whatever the nature of the light source...the surrounding chaos is an integral part of the image. The lighthouse, in effect, is compounded of light and dark(Marder 134).

The lighthouse should not be construed separately from the water that surrounds it: the two together--sea and lighthouse, chaos and order, ultimately darkness and light--are parts of one androgynous symbolic construct that reflects both dialectic and its resolution. Resolution is

obvious as consciousness synthesizes the dualistic potential of the actual and the imaginary. James does this emblematically as he grapples with the meanings of the two lighthouses. For the reader, the same resolutory action follows from the synthesis of the ironic qualities of the symbol.

In a preceding discussion of Keats, Wasserman's term "mystic oxymoron" was used to express the poetic portrayal of dialectic and synthesis. The importance of the term "mystic" is that it implies that the resolution of dialectic involves a non-tangible or transcendent action. Woolf's concept of androgyny--the statement and resolution of dialectic in consciousness expressed through sexual archetypes--actualizes the "mystic oxymoron" through the ironic properties of the displaced symbol. Frye suggests:

> Irony descends from the low mimetic: it begins in realism and dispassionate observation. But as it does so, it moves steadily towards myth(Anatomy 42).

The reason that irony moves towards myth is that as the degree and intensity of irony increases, it naturally moves to establish a paradigm of itself, thereby leaving the world of realism and moving towards the realm of emblematic meaning. In To The Lighthouse, the undisplaced mythic core is rendered ironic in its displacement within the text's portrayal of realism. While the former exists in the abstracted archetypes of sexual dialectic, the latter exists in the depiction of external reality. As the reader's

engagement correlates the two, he perceives the "pattern...behind the cotton wool": the anagogic vision.

Androgyny is a paradigm of dialectic and synthesis, and androgyny in the text's symbolic structure serves to actualize the dialectic movement of the whole text. This can be viewed in the poetic core of the work. While poetic diction is constant and sustained throughout the text, there are three specific movements where poetic diction becomes so dominant that the meaning of the section is inseparable from the symbolism. These three movements: Mrs. Ramsay's experience in chapter 11 of "The Window"; the narrator's experience in chapter 6 of "Time Passes"; and Lily's experience spread out over chapters 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 of "The Lighthouse", are merged through action and symbolism. In each movement there is a process of self-awareness. The reader becomes aware of this through his synthesis of the meaning of the poetic diction that animates all three movements. The poetic core actualizes reader participation in the ontological action of the text. As the reader penetrates the meaning of the text, he penetrates his interpretive action--peering into a mirror of consciousness. The mirror presents the sharpest image at the poetic core, where an understanding of poetic meaning is an understanding of critical participation.

In all the three movements that comprise the poetic core, a mirror action is involved. This mirror action

reflects the infinitude of the appreciating consciousness, ultimately reflecting an anagogic vision. The reader's participation reactualizes this experience, for the three movements serve as paradigms for the reader's critical action. The relationship between the paradigm and the reader, that is, the relationship between the evolving text and the reader, is the artistic process as it extends to the reader's recreative action. Within the paradigm is anagogic vision, represented in the symbolic medium. The relationship between the poetic core and the reader is analogous to the relationship between the poem and the reader in a work like The Prelude or Mont Blanc. The reader recreates the vision of the artist, as the artistic process flows through the text.

The first movement of the poetic core occurs in chapter 11 of "The Window". This movement is introduced at the end of chapter 10 by the first actualization of the lighthouse in the text, an actualization that occurs within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness:

> Turning, she looked across the bay, and there, sure enough, coming regularly across the waves first two quick strokes and then one long steady stroke, was the light of the Lighthouse. It had been lit(94).

This passage displays the symbolic dialectic of the sea and the lighthouse, along with the corollary dialectic of darkness and light. Within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness however, symbolic dialectic is blurred, for her affinity with the lighthouse seems to undercut her archetypal

correlation with the sea. Ultimately, the paradox of symbolic associations within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness serves to define a transcendent experience:

> ...it was a relief when they went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of-to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. Although she continued to knit, and sat upright, it was thus that she felt herself; and this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures(95).

The present progressive tense of "The Window" does not change here--Mrs. Ramsay is still sitting in the window knitting her stocking. Yet within her consciousness the present tense temporarily changes: "when they went to bed" becomes "now". As such, the experience juxtaposes two different time sequences within one instant of consciousness. Temporal juxtapositions free the self from the grip of the present, and hence from the tyranny of the conscious faculties that seem to gauge the passage of time. The freedom of self is a kind of abnegation, manifest in the paradoxical usage of poetic diction. In shedding her external awareness, Mrs. Ramsay is likened to the surface of the sea: "expansive", "glittering". The self that emerges after this shedding is "a wedge-shaped core of darkness". According to the symbolic dialectic isolated already, the sea corresponds to darkness,

the lighthouse corresponds to light. The irony of Mrs. Ramsay's experience is that the road to her freedom lies in the chaos of the sea, symbolically expressed in her "wedge-shaped core of darkness":

> When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless...Her horizon seemed to her limitless...This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability. Not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience (she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles), but as a wedge of darkness(96).

Troy finds in this passage only an "abdication of personality"(29), because he has not approached the text with a theory of symbolism that will embrace the interplay of oppositions and dialectic. The "wedge-shaped core of darkness" must be viewed as a highly ironic state. The "core of darkness" within the chaos of the sea is associated with the order of a "platform of stability". This "platform" is an externalization of the anagogic potential within the self, containing all opposites in synthesis. Within Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness, symbolic dialectic is integrated. The "wedge of darkness" is directly related to what should be its archetypal antithesis, the lighthouse:

> Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet the stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this

> mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke(96).

Here the escape from personality is active, whereas Troy's view of imagery reflecting solipsism is at best founded upon a consideration of symbolism in a static pose. The "wedge-shaped core of darkness" oscillates towards the light of the lighthouse. The "platform of stability" at the base of the "core of darkness" suggests a presence within the externalized or projected unknown. This is a powerful and dynamic reaffirmation, for within the externalized unknown lies the eternity of the soul: the presence within absence. The move to darkness and the loss of self catapults consciousness from total absence to its dialectic opposite--total presence. This embodies the movement of negative mysticism. For Davis:

> The presence of faith is not the immediate presence of a luminous reality or self-authenticating truth but the presence of a hidden God in the darkness or void at the heart of human existence(76).

Mrs. Ramsay's loss of self, parallel to the self-abnegation of Job, precedes the transcendent experience by bringing the self into contact with the infinite presence of god that can only be construed as an "absence on the human level"(Davis 76). After her loss of self:

> There rose, and she looked and looked with her needles suspended, there curled up off the floor of the mind, rose from the lake of one's being, a mist, a bride to meet her lover"(98).

The image of hierogamy supports the mystical experience,

both in terms of the text's emphasis on marriage, and through the Christian framework of Revelation, where the "bride" and the "bridegroom" are the central symbolic manifestations of the dialectic that is transcended in the apocalypse. Woolf's concept of androgyny, embracing sexual dialectic and hierogamy, expresses mystical fulfillment in accommodated terms. The "mist" is a presence that rises from the depths of consciousness to its surface, becoming known.

Immediately following the image of hierogamy, Mrs. Ramsay is pulled back to exterior reality. With his "Hume stuck in a bog"(98), Mr. Ramsay personifies the perpetual "antagonist" that interrupts the flow of her consciousness. This interruption is heralded by a character who functions as an element of the mystical experience on an undisplaced or an archetypal level. While hierogamy is suggested abstractly in the image, "a bride to meet her lover", Mr. Ramsay's intrusion both disrupts this image and works to reform it in more tangible terms, by encouraging the ongoing action of dialectic process:

> With some irony in her interrogation...she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call...but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotized, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes

> and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!(99).

On a realistic level, this passage describes how the beam of the lighthouse transforms the darkness of the waves. Symbolically, this can be read as a fulfillment of the mystical movement--with the beam of presence resolving the darkness of absence. The rhythm and the diction create a poetic orgasm that consummates the abstracted image of hierogamy with overwhelming emotion. The water imagery of the "floor of her mind" is restated in the "sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood...". The "pure delight" actualizes the hierogamitic potential within consciousness, for it actualizes the image of the "mist". Troy would be correct in asserting the appeal to "sensibility" in this passage, but the crucial point is that the emotion fulfills, and is fulfilled by, the ontological meaning of the poetic symbols in relationship to Mrs. Ramsay's experience. Her engagement with the lighthouse and the sea externalizes the dialectic action of her consciousness. The "waves of pure lemon...broke upon the beach", suggests the synthesis of conscious and unconscious modes of self. The resolutory "It is enough!" reverberates throughout the text, and throughout the reader's participatory engagement, as meaning is correlated with emotion through an integration of critical modes. Woolf skillfully overcomes the essential incommunicability of the mystical experience by using emotion to fulfill and actualize the framework that is

suggested by symbolic structure. The contemporaneity of meaning and feeling extends to the engaged reader a "polysemous"(Frye Anatomy 72) sense--a vision of the infinite within the finite. It is the reader's participation that culls the infinite from the finite.

A close analysis of the above passage demonstrates how Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience is outlined through Woolf's oxymoronic symbolic constructs. The light embodies an antagonist, but one that reacts sympathetically with her consciousness. It is "so much her, yet so little her", "stroking with its silver fingers" the essence of her soul, the "wedge of darkness". As noted earlier, Mrs. Ramsay's "wedge of darkness" corresponds to her abnegated self, and is aligned with the darkness of the sea. Dialectic within is accommodated through the symbolism: the light from the lighthouse "silvered the rough waves a little more brightly", correlating the symbolic structure in its internal and external manifestations. The light of the lighthouse transforms the "wedge of darkness" into a mystical state of ecstatic awareness, for it confronts the abnegated self with the overwhelming reality of its own consciousness, deflecting abnegation into a positive affirmation of all life and existence. Daiches agrees in the essential ambiguity of the lighthouse as symbol:

> The lighthouse itself, standing lonely in the midst of the sea, is a symbol of the individual who is at once a unique being and a part of the flux of history. To reach the lighthouse is, in a sense, to make contact

> with a truth outside oneself, to surrender the uniqueness of one's ego to an impersonal reality(86).

Mrs. Ramsay reaches the lighthouse within her consciousness: a type for events to come. The "daylight faded" prior to her triumphant "It is enough", for the fading of daylight is the fading of the sun--the egocentric consciousness that Mrs. Ramsay sheds to enter into the core of her being, her darkness. Following the abnegation of the self--the disappearance of the sun--the darkness of the sea is lit by the lighthouse, the light of consciousness that is obscured by the ego, but revealed as the ego subsides and darkness approaches. The symbolic action reflects Mrs. Ramsay's internal movement, and thus her experience is directly extended to the reader, and actualized within the literary medium.

Virtually all of the characters in the text look to Mrs. Ramsay as a figure of order and synthesis. What these characters do for the most part unconsciously, the reader does consciously. The emblematic synthesis of the "Boeuf en Daube" section, presided over by the priest-like figure of Mrs. Ramsay, gains mystical significance in relationship to the poetic diction of chapter 11. This serves to make the emblem of the communion pregnant with meaning:

> There it was, all around them. It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced

> at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today, already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain(158).

Both sides of the symbolic dialectic are unmistakably invoked here. There is the "coherence" that "shines out", and "the flowing, the fleeting". The dialectic recalls Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience, an event that is literally connoted in the line, "she had already felt...once before that afternoon". The permanence of "This would remain" is the permanence of the product of the mystical experience--the "It is enough" that is the moment of revelation for the self. Naremore suggests:

> This suggests there is a priori an eternity, and that such moments of inner peace are a part of that eternity, or at least demonstrate the individual's awareness of his relation to it(146).

While the actual state of transcendence fades quickly, as does the Rayleys' marriage, it remains permanent within the memory of perceivers, and thus lives on in the memories of those at the dinner table. The "Boeuf en Daube" sequence emphasizes the ordering action of consciousness, emphasizing the resolution of the mystical experience in chapter 11.

In emblematic terms, "Time Passes" calls into question the potential for synthesis and order, and thus conditions the synthesis of both the "Boeuf en Daube" sequence, and Mrs Ramsay's transcendent experience in chapter 11 of "The Window". Yet "Time Passes" is not simply a "fall", for its

chaotic properties are evident in "The Window", albeit obscured by the presence of consciousness. As the sun of the egocentric consciousness goes down, the subjective perception of consciousness fades into the "wedge of darkness", associated with the sea and the loss of self. Ironically, it is after the dissolution into otherness, that the light of consciousness shines out, for the sun of the subjective consciousness obscures the essence of consciousness: that essence that is apparent only in dialectic opposition with otherness. In this formulation, the objective world exists as a mirror of consciousness, for as consciousness grasps the objective, it eventually proclaims itself more forcefully than ever before, having achieved that mystical vision of presence that is coexistent with absence. In "Time Passes", Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience is repeated by the narrative voice, externalizing for the reader even more clearly the anagogic vision within. Like Mrs. Ramsay's experience, the narrator's self-discovery is developed through poetic diction.

In "Time Passes", Woolf animates objective reality, using nature as an ontological symbol. Striking are the various suggestions of mirrors and reflected images:

> Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its sharp image on the wall opposite(194).

The relationship of subject and object is expanded in the simile, such that the projection of light's image is likened to a reflection in a mirror. As light and water are

correlated in ontological terms with the symbolism of "The Window", the above description metaphorically repeats Mrs. Ramsay's transcendent experience, with the mirror image capturing anagogic vision.

Mrs. McNab, the main character in the depopulated setting of "Time Passes", is described "rubbing the glass of the long looking-glass and leering sideways at her swinging figure"(196). After a brief passage personifying the destructive effects of time through nature, and asking the question "how long shall it endure?", the image of Mrs. McNab is repeated:

> ...looking sideways in the glass, as if, after all, she had her consolations, as if indeed there twined about her dirge some incorrigible hope(197).

Although Mrs. McNab has no conscious understanding of the meaning of the mirror, the reader is privy to revelations. The "twined" recalls Mrs. Ramsay's knitting, and suggests the creation of order that is central to her actions, defined both literally and symbolically. Furthermore, the mirror is parallel to nature within the symbolic structure: it reflects the essence of consciousness--the "incorrigible hope" captured in the reflected image. As in the Timaeus, the mirror is the point of contact between the finite and the infinite. As Mrs. McNab peers into the mirror, she sees her reflection. For the reader, this serves as a repetition of the action of Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience, where participation leads to an abnegation that is finally

resolved by the essence of the infinite within.

The notion that a mirror reflects the infinite potential of the self is made explicit in chapter 6 of "Time Passes":

> As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to the wakeful, the hopeful, walking the beach, stirring the pool, imaginations of the strangest kind - of flesh turned to atoms which drove before the wind, of stars flashing in their hearts, of cliff, sea, cloud, and sky brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within. In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools uneasy water, in which clouds for ever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted, and it was impossible to resist the strange intimation which every gull, flower, tree, man and woman, and the white earth itself seemed to declare...that good triumphed, happiness prevails, order rules(199).

The sense of vision--accommodated vision, is powerfully expressed in this poetic passage. The line, "brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within", is the process of accommodation as enacted within the symbolic medium. The narrator is engaged in a dual process of externalization and contemplation of the essence of consciousness as reflected in a medium. The narrator's medium--poetic diction--extends the vision to the reader. The water imagery, "walking the beach, stirring the pool", is applied to the mind. The conflation of water imagery and human consciousness is the locus that defines the mirror image: "In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools uneasy water". The mirror image suggests that the imagination animates external or objective reality--a

quintessentially Romantic vision. It is in the mind that "dreams persisted" and "order rules", for order is the product not of nature or of objective reality--which simply is--but rather of consciousness: the source of all conceptual shape.

In the manuscript of the text, the mirror image is not explicit in the above passage:

> ...and the tree's strength and the cliff's nobility and the cloud's majesty were so brought together purposely, to body forth a might and beauty which was in them; and now, being expressed outside of them, signified the pattern of the whole: its purpose, its design(217)...were so brought together to assemble the scattered parts of the vision within them. Now displayed in cliff and sea, in sky and wind the thing seemed manifest, and what was outside, and inside, miraculously made one(218).

This suggests an anagogic vision. The "pattern of the whole" recalls the "pattern...behind the cotton wool" from "A Sketch of the Past". In the final version of To The Lighthouse, the whole passage is condensed and the mirror image is added, completing the suggestion that the anagogic vision lies within consciousness, wherein lies divinity.

Objective reality (nature for the persona, poetry for the reader) serves as a mirror of consciousness. In this mirror there is death. The "purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath"(201), reflects the death of human consciousness, and echoes the question "How long shall it endure?". The image of death reflected in nature disturbs

the reflection of "walking along the beach":

> This intrusion into a scene calculated to stir the most sublime reflections and lead to the most comfortable conclusions stayed their pacing. It was difficult blandly to overlook them; to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within(201).

The narrative itself oscillates in its consideration of consciousness. While on the one hand a mirror reflects the infinitude of consciousness, on the other hand, there is something distorted in the image--it is finite and silent. The paradox that the narrator moves towards is the recognition of the complementary power and isolation of consciousness--the ability to accommodate the ineffable, side by side with the need to accommodate the ineffable:

> Did Nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence she saw his misery, his meanness, and his torture. That dream, of sharing, completing, of finding in solitude on the beach an answer, was then but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence when the nobler powers sleep beneath? Impatient, despairing yet loth to go...to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken(202).

The realization that impersonal nature is inanimate, only reflecting consciousness, immediately suggests that what the appreciator sees in nature reflects his own consciousness. The existence of the "nobler powers" sanctions existence. Dreams and imagination confirm the existence of an infinite consciousness within the self, a consciousness that is contacted in the state of transcendence as actualized by

Mrs. Ramsay in "The Window". The same revelation is evident in The Prelude, where the young poet ascribes infinitude to the "huge and mighty forms" of nature(I.398), but gradually realizes that infinitude belongs not to nature, but rather to the animating force of consciousness:

> the mind of man becomes a thousand times more beautiful than the earth on which he dwells ...of quality and fabric more divine(XIV.450-6).

For Wordsworth, the "moon" is the "type" of the imagination, the "auxiliar light...which on the setting sun bestowed new splendour"(II.368-70). In To The Lighthouse, the lighthouse is parallel to Wordsworth's moon, leaving its imprint, its reflected image, on the medium of the sea.

DiBattista finds the line "the mirror was broken" of significance, fulfilling the "fallen" reality of "Time Passes" in relationship with "The Window":

> when the mirror breaks, the imagination suffers an apocalyptic night in which all Nature reverts back to that "gigantic chaos" in which no shape, form or light presents itself to the inquisitorial mind searching for semblances, orderings, meanings in and for itself(DiBattista 98).

This state is parallel, from the narrator's point of view, to the "wedge-shape core of darkness", the abnegated state of Job and the mystics. Thus DiBattista is suggesting that the point of crisis in "Time Passes"--where the "mirror was broken"--is the narrator's moment of self-discovery: a reactualization of Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience. The broken mirror, like the "fall", is a necessary prelude to heightened vision. Lee notes the correlation of

the broken mirror and artistic vision, and specifically notes this motif in Woolf's writings on Coleridge(24-25). The broken mirror is part of the ongoing process of consciousness. In "Time Passes", immediately following the "mirror was broken", a parenthetical voice informs the reader that Mr. Carmichael has brought out a new volume of poems(202). This parenthesis is not in the manuscript(Dick 223), which suggests that Woolf felt it an important addition, highlighting her conscious concern with the role of art in the fragmented modern world.

For the reader, the reflexive symbolism of "Time Passes" actualizes the mirror by presenting an irony that is parallel to the symbolic irony of Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience. Mrs. Ramsay's mystical movement is towards an abnegation of self, an absence that is finally resolved through the revelation of hidden presence. This mystical movement is a mirror action in itself. By projecting the self into objective reality(Keats' "negative capability"), a reflection is obtained within a tangible medium. Within this reflection the light of consciousness appears, captured within a moment shorn of its temporality. The narrative of "Time Passes", personifying nature, actually renders the infinitude of consciousness within the symbolic medium, thereby extending an anagogic vision. As the reader is engaged with those symbols with which the narrative voice is exploring on an ontological level, the text becomes reflexive. The product of the narrator's experience is the

source of the reader's experience. Critical action therefore, extends an ontological vision to poetics. The broken mirror is forged anew in its very representation.[10]

The notion that symbolism operates as a reflection of consciousness is brought to a conclusion in "The Lighthouse". What is implicit in "Time Passes" becomes explicit in this final section, where the mystical process and the artistic process are merged in a triumphant resolution. The broken mirror is the gateway to the heightened awareness of infinitude. Emblematically, "The Lighthouse" depicts the completion of two parallel quests--attempts to reforge synthesis after the chaos of "Time Passes". Of these quests, Lily's painting is unquestionably the most striking, for with the depiction of her artistic endeavour lies the paradigmatic creation of the ironic and reflexive symbols that are the text. Through Lily's painting, To The Lighthouse becomes thoroughly reflexive. This point is independent from any kind of biographical correlation between Woolf and Lily Briscoe that critics find so appealing. The text's reflexive nature becomes apparent through the artist figure engaged in making symbols that capture ontological process, and that act as mirrors of consciousness.

The object of each of the parallel quests is the lighthouse, although in each quest the lighthouse is something that requires a different translation. Lily is in the garden painting, the Ramsays are in the boat going

towards the lighthouse. Superficially then, the Ramsays' journey serves as an actualization of Lily's artistic journey. Yet the reverse is also true, for the object of the Ramsays' quest is the lighthouse as symbol, and in this context, Lily's artistic quest actualizes the physical quest.

Lily's artistic task is fundamentally problematic. It is an emblem of the search for order in the midst of chaos. Her task is a perpetual conflict that is a repetition of Mrs. Ramsay's action translated into artistic terms. The consistency between the struggles of Mrs. Ramsay and Lily is highlighted by Mr. Ramsay, who represents dialectical opposition in the latter case as well:

> But with Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her, she could do nothing. Every time he approached - he was walking up and down the terrace - ruin approached, chaos approached. She could not paint...he permeated, he prevailed, he imposed himself(221-3).

Mr. Ramsay is not the problem however, for he represents a problem that exists within Lily's consciousness and within her artistic drives. After Mr. Ramsay departs for the lighthouse, Lily's opposition to him is transferred to her artistic task:

> Where to begin? - that was the question, at what point to make the first mark? One line placed on the canvas committed her to innumerable risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions. All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests. Still the risk must be run; the mark

made(235).

Lily is both artist and swimmer: "Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her"(236). There is a conflation of artistic and ontological experience, as the water imagery that dominated the poetic core in sections I and II, is in section III applied to Lily's painting. Through the poetic diction, Lily's experience is directly related to Mrs. Ramsay and to the narrator. While Mrs. Ramsay operates on an ontological level, and the narrator extends this ontology to art, Lily fulfills the quest for the essence of art by merging ontology with artistic creation. Lily's quest is "to" the lighthouse--the symbol for the poetic symbol. Hence her quest is "to" the symbol. The reader's quest is also towards an understanding of the poetic property of words, a dynamic realization that involves a participation in the poetic process, for understanding is the fulfillment of participation in ontological terms.

The reader's synthesizing consciousness is subtly but firmly enlisted by the text's diction in its description of Lily:

> Always...before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt(237).

Privy to Mrs. Ramsay's earlier experience, the language of mysticism is recognizable to the reader who is able to

appreciate the dialectic action of symbolic meaning. Translated into an artistic context, the "unborn soul" is the solid core of selflessness that follows the shedding of exterior concerns, and precedes the burst of inspiration. This is parallel to the mystical dialectic oscillating between absence and presence. For Lily, ontological dialectic is translated into artistic dialectic. Her experience serves to actualize the theories of Barfield and others, who emphasize the role of ontological dialectic in poetic creation:

> [She] subdued the impertinences and irrelevances that plucked her attention and made her remember how she was such and such a person, had such and such relations to people, she took her hand and raised her brush. For a moment it stayed trembling in a painful but exciting ecstasy in the air...With a curious physical sensation, as if she were urged forwards and at the same time must hold herself back, she made her first quick decisive stroke. The brush descended. It flickered brown over the white canvas; it left a running mark. A second time she did it - a third time. And so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all were related; and so, lightly and swiftly pausing, striking, she scored her canvas with brown running nervous lines which no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space(235).

Dialectic emerges as an opposition between the conscious and the unconscious mechanics of artistic creation. Together, the "pauses" and the "strokes" form a "rhythm", something that possesses Lily beyond her conscious control. The "space" is significant in precisely this sense, for it is a

non-conscious product of her artistic creation--it is enclosed by the lines she creates in her rhythmic trance. Both the "space" and its contained meaning emerge after the egocentric consciousness begins to wane["she was...drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people"(236)]. The "space" becomes problematic for Lily as it is a product of her loss of personality, and as such is an externalization of otherness within her self. It "roused one to perpetual combat"(236):

> the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers - this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention(236).

Lily's problem with the "space" is similar to the reader's problem with Mrs. Ramsay's "wedge of darkness". That the two are related seems implicit. Also corollary is the narrator's experience in "Time Passes". The problem in each case is the ironic axis of absence and presence. Lily's "space" externalizes--or reflects in the language of mirror images--an element of her self of which she is unaware. This element is the essence of consciousness that is released only after the escape from personality. Recalling negative mysticism, this essence of consciousness redeems the abnegated self with the incontrovertible truth of its own presence--becoming total presence from the point of view of the abnegated self. Through Lily's artistic consciousness, Woolf depicts the creative potential of such an experience.

Dialectic conflict, akin to the movement of negative

mysticism, dominates the entire operation of Lily's painting. The "space" epitomizes this conflict. As well, there is the constant questioning of her artistic actions: "Why then did she do it?", "What was the good of doing it then?"(237). Rather than hindering the artistic process however, these self-doubts seem to nourish and stimulate it. Recollecting Tansley's "Can't Paint, can't write"(237) in concert with her attempt to concentrate, she suddenly experiences an exhilarating burst of inspiration:

> Then, as if some juice necessary for the lubrication of her faculties were spontaneously squirted, she began precariously dipping among the blues and umbers, moving her brush hither and thither, but it was now heavier and went slower, as if it had fallen in with some rhythm which was dictated to her...by what she saw, so that while her hand quivered with life, this rhythm was strong enough to bear her along with it on its current. Certainly she was losing consciousness of outer things. And as she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, and whether Mr. Carmichael was there or not, her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues(237).

In this passage, surely one of the most significant in the entire text, symbolic constructs and ontological concerns are explicitly merged within a formalized expression of artistic creation. The language that expresses Mrs. Ramsay's transcendent experience in Chapter 11 of "The Window" is employed here to express a similar experience that is translated into artistic expression. The correlation of a

loss of personality with artistic inspiration recalls Keats' "negative capability", as well as Eliot's "Impersonal Theory" of poetics:

> Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality(Tradition and the Individual Talent 529).

Lily is clearly absorbed by the "rhythm" that moves her creation--in itself problematic precisely because she is losing control. The "juice" in Lily's brain corresponds to the "bursting flood" from the "sealed vessel" in Mrs. Ramsay's mind that is the imagistic basis of her ecstasy in chapter 11 of "The Window". For Lily, the "juice" merges with the "rhythm" that bears her on its "current" and culminates in the orgasmic "fountain spurting" that fills the problematic "space". It is easy to recall Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" here, and to postulate that Woolf had this image in mind.[11] The inspiration does not solve the dialectic, but temporarily synthesizes it into an overwhelming burst of feeling and expression. Dialectic continues, as does Lily's conflict, for the conflict is between the conscious and unconscious modes of artistic creation: the poles of ontological truth. The product of the dialectic--artistic expression--is a testament to the workings of consciousness.

Lily's conflict, emblemized by the problematic "space", is the conflict within her consciousness between the "spontaneous overflow" of inspiration, and the modifications

of thought. Her inspiration is constantly interrupted by her rational consciousness, asking questions that are profoundly ontological:

> looking from her canvas to the drawing-room steps and back again, she must rest for a moment. And, resting, looking from one to the other vaguely, the old question which traversed the sky of the soul perpetually, the vast, the general question which was apt to particularize itself at such moments as these, when she released faculties that had been on the strain, stood over her, paused over her, darkened over her. What is the meaning of life? That was all - a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years. 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...Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, 'Life stand still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent) - this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing...was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said. 'Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' she repeated. She owed this revelation to her(240).

The "illuminations" are the redemptive pulsations of the lighthouse beams, the pulsations of consciousness that separate man from and elevate him above his environment. The dialectic of chaos and order, the "eternal passing and flowing" and the "shape...struck into stability", recalls Mrs. Ramsay's role as emblem and paradigm of synthesis. In that "in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent", the artist's task is explicitly aligned with Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience that so

animates the latter's paradigmatic significance. A correlation of Lily and Mrs. Ramsay is also relevant considering that the synthesis embodied by Mrs. Ramsay in the above passage--"in the midst of chaos there was shape"--recalls Mrs. Ramsay's "wedge of darkness" as well as Lily's problematic "space". The "space" is an external manifestation of Lily's consciousness, and like the "wedge of darkness", harbours the essence of existence: the dialectic movement of consciousness.

As Lily continues painting, she remembers the past, and gradually Mrs. Ramsay comes to dominate her consciousness. Through symbolic associations, these recollections are tied both to painting and to a loss of personality:

> It was an odd road to be walking, this of painting. Out and out one went, further and further, until at last one seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea. And as she dipped into the blue paint, she dipped too into the past there. Now Mrs. Ramsay got up, she remembered(256).

As is the case with Mrs. Ramsay's mystical experience in "The Window", the remembered past becomes the present in the remembering consciousness: "Now Mrs. Ramsay got up, she remembered". The coexistence of past and present within consciousness leads to the potential realization of what Auerbach calls the "symbolic omnitemporality of events"(545). This state embodies both the mystical loss of self involved in giving one's self over to the rememberance of the past, as well as the conscious contemplation of the past that redeems the abnegated self. As the past flows

through Lily's consciousness, she submerges herself in the sea, the "blue paint" that is the emblem of the sea as a loss of personality. Lily's loss of personality is strongly suggested as she becomes virtually possessed by the memory of Mrs. Ramsay. Offsetting this loss of self is Lily's resolute consciousness that refuses to be totally absorbed by Mrs. Ramsay, and that is constantly working on a host of other perspectives, especially the actual present of her painting. Eliot suggests:

> The difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show(Tradition and the Individual Talent 526).

Likewise Auerbach:

> A consciousness in which remembrance causes past realities to arise, which has long since left behind the states in which it found itself when those realities occurred as a present, sees and arranges that content in a way very different from the purely individual and subjective. Freed from its various earlier involvements, consciousness views its own past layers and their content in perspective; it keeps confronting them with one another, emancipating them from their exterior temporal continuity as well as from the narrow meanings them seemed to have when they were bound to a particular present(542).

Lily's recollection of the past frees the past from its particular present and allows her to develop it in her own present consciousness. As she does so, she steps "off her strip of board into the waters of annihilation"(269), submerging the egocentric present with the flow of the past. The past fills her, so that in her own "core of darkness"

she finds peace:

> One need not speak at all. One glided, one shook one's sails...between things, beyond things. Empty it was not, but full to the brim. She seemed to be standing up to the lips in some substance, to move and float and sink in it, yes, for these waters were unfathomably deep. Into them had spilled so many lives...some common feeling held the whole. It was some such feeling of completeness perhaps which, ten years ago, standing almost where she stood now, had made her say that she must be in love with the place(285).

Submerged in the waters of the unconscious, Lily merges her self with the flow of the past. The poetic diction is inseparable from her ontological action. The problem of the "space" remains however, for what Lily feels in experience she is unable to actualize in understanding. The present consciousness, in its digestion of the past, disrupts Lily's vision:

> But the wind had freshened, and, as the sky changed slightly and the sea changed slightly and the boats altered their positions, the view, which a moment before had seemed miraculously fixed, was now unsatisfactory...The disproportion there seemed to upset some harmony in her own mind(286).

This disruption is part of the artistic process, for without the exertion of the rational consciousness, the flow of the past and with it the flow of emotion and inspiration, are only a flow.

Temple is correct in asserting the importance of memory and thought in the flow of consciousness, especially artistic consciousness. The unconscious is a important factor in Lily's artistic endeavour, but it is careless to

extend this to the author, for such claims can never be sanctioned if one accepts the independence of the literary medium. It is not the unconscious that is the creative force, but rather it is the dialectic interaction of the conscious and the unconscious. As Goldman notes, the emotion and the impression come first, immediately followed by the thought and the judgement. Artist, reader, and critic seek:

> a creative balance between reason and emotion, sense and sensibility, the individual critic and the impersonal method(Goldman 156).

For the reader, Lily's recollections of the past are extremely significant, for not only is she remembering the past, but she is remembering a part of the past that the reader has seen in "The Window". Furthermore, as the water imagery and the use of paradox explictly tie Lily's experience to Mrs. Ramsay's, the reader is forced to see the constant between these two parts of the text, and "Time Passes", the three movements together comprising the poetic core. In this sense, the reader actualizes the text's concerns, for Lily's recollections correspond to the reader's synthesis of the earlier portions of the text. While Lily's rational consciousness tries to cull meaning from existence, the reader's rational consciousness does the same with the text. The ontological experience that is manifest in the text through the poetic diction, is reactualized through the reader's engagement with the text. The poetic theory defined by the text as symbol suggests a literary process by which the dialectic action of

consciousness is extended to the reader, through the literary medium, in concert with an understanding of the ontological meaning of this action.

Through the interaction of the rational consciousness, the flow of the past is captured and concretized in a finite instant, and hence rendered permanent. Immediately following his oft-quoted "spontaneous overflow" in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth proceeds in an equally important passage to discuss the importance of the rational consciousness in the action of poetic creation:

> For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings(337).

The act of expressing the ineffable demands the interaction of the rational consciousness, for even if this consciousness is unable to grasp the infinite, its services are central to man's evolution in consciousness. Through the rational consciousness, participation is merged with an understanding of its ontological meaning. In Lily's painting process, the importance of the rational consciousness is obvious in her continuing struggle with the "space".

The product of Lily's ontological dialectic is heightened awareness. As she paints she moves back and forth both in time and in perceptual space, viewing her easel, the house, and the Ramsays' boat on its way to the lighthouse. The ability to move around in time and space is the ability to give oneself temporarily to the object. The awareness

that flows from this "negative capability" is an awareness of perspective. This awareness directly serves both Lily in her painting, and the reader in his assimilation of multiple perspectives and oxymoronic meanings:

> So—much depends then, thought Lily Briscoe, looking at the sea which had scarcely a stain on it, which was so soft that the sails and the clouds seemed set in its blue, so much depends, she thought, upon distance: whether people are near us or far from us; for her feeling for Mr. Ramsay changed as he sailed further and further across the bay. It seemed to be elongated, stretched out; he seemed to become more and more remote. He and his children seemed to be swallowed up in that blue, that distance; but here, on the lawn, close at hand, Mr. Carmichael suddenly grunted(284).

As already suggested, the awareness of perspective is a gateway to an awareness of the infinite. Lily's spatial awareness in the above passage is an explicit awareness of perspective. The synthesis of perspective leads to the parallel awareness of unity and fragmentation, for these are universal constants that structure the operations of consciousness. Lily serves as a paradigm for the reader's synthesis of the text. Once again, the imagery associates this section with the ontological dialectic expressed in the poetic core of sections I and LI. The scene for Lily's painting is the sea and the lighthouse--the realistic basis of ontological dialectic as conveyed in the symbolic structure. Her epiphanies are expressed poetically, and charged with ontological significance for the reader:

> For in the rough and tumble of daily life...one had constantly a sense of repetition - of one thing falling where another had fallen, and so setting up an echo which chimed in the air and made it full of vibrations(295).

Here diversity coexists with harmony, sameness with difference. Repetition embodies the eternal constant, the cyclical process of chaos and shape, shape and chaos: the action of consciousness itself in its dynamic oscillation from subjective to objective perceptions. The eternal constant is the "wedge of darkness", the projected form of the self-abnegated consciousness that resolves itself into the beams of the lighthouse--transforming reality. The eternal constant is the dialectic process that defines consciousness. While the external manifestations of consciousness are wonderfully varied, all consciousness contains the same archetypal constructs, those of the anagogic vision, of sameness and difference integrated harmoniously. In the above passage, harmony is both a musical metaphor and an ontological concept. The anagogic construct is mirrored in the symbolic structure of the text. Indeed, the aesthetic corollary to Lily's realization of harmony and difference applies as much to her painting as it does to Woolf's text:

> Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron(255).

The diversity of the surface level of Woolf's text is offset

by the ironclad symbolic structure that coalesces its transcendent meaning into a poetic core. As is the case with consciousness, the diversity of the surface is anchored within the "wedge" of meaning. For the reader, the interpretation of the symbolic structure involves a penetration into the mechanics of poetic creation defined in the synthesis of modes of consciousness. As such, the interpretation of symbolic structure--revolving around the reflected image of the consciousness of the reader who breathes life into it--involves a participation in consciousness.

The culmination of Lily's experience occurs as Mrs. Ramsay actually appears within her consciousness. This point is preceded by a total interaction of past and present so that Lily's recollection of Mrs. Ramsay is simultaneous with her artistic action. Consider the interplay of verb tenses in the following passage:

> She let her flowers fall from her basket, scattered and tumbled them on to the grass and, reluctantly and hesitatingly, but without question or complaint - had she not the faculty of obedience to perfection? - went too. Down fields, across valleys, white, flower strewn - that was how she would have painted it. The hills were austere. It was rocky; it was steep. The waves sounded hoarse on the stones beneath. They went, the three of them together, Mrs. Ramsay walking rather fast in front, as if she expected to meet someone round the corner(299).

The first sentence involves Lily's contemplation of Mrs. Ramsay, and noticeably conflates past and present tenses to highlight the alignment of past and present perspectives.

There follows a descriptive sentence in the conditional tense("Down fields...she would have painted it"), that relates the past action of the previous sentence to the present action of Lily's painting. Suddenly the conditional is realized: "The hills were austere. It was rocky; it was steep". As the "waves sounded hoarse on the stones beneath", this realization becomes existential. In the final sentence, the movement is completed as Lily actually joins the action, participating in its recreated vision. Lily's revelation here is expressed directly in the context of her painting:

> One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy(300).

A simultaneity of perception allows the temporary coexistence of the past and the present within the instant, the instant that is captured in artistic expression. "Symbolically, the past returns and shapes the present"(Daiches 95). Lily's participation in her painting, "dipping her brush deliberately", is a participation in the action of her consciousness. Her consciousness of the past allows her to reactualize the past, symbolized in the overpowering suggestion that Mrs. Ramsay actually appears for her: "There she sat"(300). As was the case in "Time Passes", consciousness reflects itself in an externalization. That Mrs. Ramsay appears for Lily suggests overwhelmingly the presence of Lily's own consciousness within the abnegated experience of the loss of personality.

Mrs. Ramsay's appearance then, is analogous to Lily's creation of the "space". It is the external manifestation of the infinite potential of consciousness, a reflection of the anagogic vision within.

What Lily actualizes is essentially a mystical experience. As Mrs. Ramsay appears in her mind, Lily is overwhelmed by the uncontrolled flow of her own consciousness, tantamount to the abnegation of her self. At the core of this abnegation however, consciousness shines forth, leaving its imprint on the external world through its irrefutable presence. Lily's ability to actualize the memory of Mrs. Ramsay speaks of the infinite potential of self. Like the "space", Mrs. Ramsay is a reflection of Lily's consciousness. As Lily fills the space she asserts control over her self, a heightened awareness of the potential of self. Like the poet/persona in The Prelude, Lily's conflict with the "space" is the struggle to become aware of the hidden elements(and especially the creative elements) of the self. Lily's recollection of Mrs. Ramsay, and the relationship of this recollection to her artistic creation, is analogous to the reader's relationship to the text--Woolf's accommodated vision. The reader recreates the text even as Lily recreates the memory of Mrs. Ramsay. The process in memory in Lily's consciousness is analogous to the literary process in the reader's reception and assimilation of the text through dialectic interaction with its meaning.

Lilienfeld views Lily as a "psychological paradigm for women who seek autonomy"(164). For DiBattista however, Lily is instead a paradigm for the autonomy of the self through expanded self-awareness, especially in terms of the imagination and artistic creation(108). The latter assertion is infinitely more appealing, for it is more open, containing the former in its meaning. Especially problematic for a feminist reading at this point is mystical reference to the number "3". The reference to the "three of them together" in the above passage is somewhat dd, for while Lily and Mrs. Ramsay are clearly two, the third party is hardly explicit. Lily's participation in her own imagination is heralded by the inclusion of some indefinable other force. As her imagination animates the shadows within the house, Lily sees "an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step"(299). In terms of dialectic and hierogamy, "3" could be viewed as the two elements of dialectic plus synthesis. "3" in other words, is the symbolic representation of dialectic in synthesis. In relationship to Woolf's concept of the "androgynous mind", "3" reflects the existence of dualism alongside ~~its~~ synthesis. "3" can also be related to mysticism, where egotism, abnegation, and transcendence reflect dialectic and synthesis. This works to explain the third presence in the above passage with Lily and Mrs. Ramsay. As the appearance of Mrs. Ramsay in Lily's consciousness marks the mystical experience, Lily's consciousness is ~~catapulted~~ from abnegation to total

presence. To emblemize this oscillation, immediately after Mrs. Ramsay appears, Lily is catapulted towards Mr. Ramsay, the displaced form of the male archtype of rational consciousness: "Where was that boat now? And Mr. Ramsay? She wanted him"(300). The third presence is that of Mr. Ramsay, archetypally associated with consciousness, and actually engaged in a quest "to" the lighthouse. This need for Mr. Ramsay does not subvert a feminist argument, as Burt would suggest, but rather places the whole scheme in a higher context where Mr. Ramsay operates in both displaced (masculinity) and undisplaced(rational consciousness) contexts.

Lily's quest "to" the lighthouse is a quest for the ontological dimensions of the poetic symbol, and hence for poetic and artistic action. The ontological dimensions of symbolic action are those of the creating and the appreciating consciousness. Thus Lily's quest "to" the lighthouse--to the symbol--is a quest for self-consciousness. As Lily is catapulted towards a consideration of Mr. Ramsay, the emblematic action of Lily's painting finds its resolution in the other emblematic action of "The Lighthouse", the physical quest. The physical quest is thoroughly ironic, for it is an actualization of a symbolic quest, and as a symbol is its telos, it cannot be actualized beyond the symbolic medium. Lily's quest for self-consciousness is to be read in Mr. Ramsay's case as a quest for consciousness itself: as a quest for ontological truth

without its explicit poetic implications made relevant through Lily's artistic experience. For the reader, the quest of the whole text is for the ontological dimensions of art, reflected in the poetic core, where the symbol clusters--lighthouse and sea--point towards the animating power of the consciousness that breathes life into them. As Ruddick suggests:

> If the lighthouse symbolizes anything, it might in all seriousness be said to symbolize its own function as a symbol...The symbol, a core of silence at the center of the novel, is the one possible bridge between the finite, temporal, factual world of language, and the infinite reality that language cannot penetrate(23).

For the reader then, the parallel quests of "The Lighthouse" are to be read as reflexive quests that render the text reflexive: the text is a poetic structure that mirrors an appreciating consciousness, ultimately extending the process of self-awareness enacted by Mrs. Ramsay, the narrator, and Lily to the reader through the dialectic interaction of text and experience. Critical action extends the text's ontological vision to poetics.

Of the actual, or rather the physical quest to the lighthouse, it is worth noting the archetypal threesome in the boat: Cam, James, and Mr. Ramsay. Cam and James become aligned with the female and male archetypes. While Cam is "hypnotized" by the "sea with all its treasure in it"(246), and "wandered in imagination in that underworld of waters where the pearls stuck in clusters to white sprays"(272),

James is "god-like", the "lawgiver, with the tablets of eternal wisdom laid open on his knee"(251). Cam is pulled to the sea, James is pulled towards the abstract of the boundless "horizon"(246). Together Cam and James embody the sexual dialectic that exists between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in "The Window". Mr. Ramsay, with his archetypal correlative of consciousness, becomes the figure of synthesis, the only character to actually land at the lighthouse. That Mr. Ramsay makes a poor figure of synthesis serves to emphasize that this actual quest for the lighthouse cannot be realistically depicted, for it is quintessentially symbolic.

Mr. Ramsay reaches the lighthouse, but the narrative does not even attempt to express the significance of this experience, for its meaning lies within the symbolic realm. Thus, while Lily's painting looks to the quest to the lighthouse for actualization, this quest looks back to Lily's painting for actualization. The reader is confronted with a reflexive situation that focuses his attention on the meaning of the poetic symbol, and specifically his own interaction with it--a dialectic action that reveals the anagogic potential of consciousness.

The triangle in the boat presents the emblematic dialectic of James and Cam, and the hypothetical synthesis of Mr. Ramsay. On the shore, the triangle exists in the symbolic dialectic within Lily's consciousness, between male and female archetypes(personified by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay), representing the opposition of consciousness and the

unconscious. Lily's mystical experience is the synthesis of dialectic, a transcendent experience that is incarnated or translated into art. What Lily manifests in art is a reflection of the essence of her consciousness as revealed during epiphanic awareness. The artistic product is the symbol, the mirror of consciousness that is the lighthouse in Woolf's text, projecting its essence onto the sea. The completion of Lily's artistic quest, her "Yes...I have had my vision"(310), completes the novel by creating the symbol that defines both quests. As the text spirals inward towards the poetic core, meaning reverberates outward, embracing the whole in an anagogic movement. The reader's engagement with the text reactualizes the ontological experience that is contained within the text. Lily's vision is analogous[12] to Woolf's vision, and is extended to the reader through the mirror action of the symbolic structure of the text. Ultimately, the symbol stands as the reflected product of consciousness that leads the reader, through a participation in its essence, to a recreation of the vision that is its creative fount. This vision is the anagogic vision of the total potential of human consciousness conceived as the perception of the "pattern...behind the cotton wool", the point of contact between the finite and the infinite. The dynamic action spawned by the symbol, and spawned by the text as symbol(which its reflexive character makes it), lead the reader to the perception of infinitude that is the ontological basis both of existence and of art.

CONCLUSION

To The Lighthouse finds its telos in critical appreciation. The centripetal nature of the text guides the critical consciousness inward, where narrative, emblematic, and symbolic structures enlist reader participation in the formulation of ontological paradigms that transcend literal representation. At the poetic core of the text, ontological meaning is inseparable from poetic diction. Three transcendent experiences, one in each section, define the poetic core. For Mrs. Ramsay, the narrator, and Lily, the unknown within is externalized. This externalization is then culled for anagogic vision. As the reader synthesizes the ontological dimensions of the symbolic constructs, he reactualizes the experiences presented, and participates in the symbolic process. Poetic diction actualizes a participation in consciousness, a participation that is accompanied by an understanding of its ontological meaning. Critical action extends the ontological vision of the text to poetics, and specifically to the poetics of the work itself. The reader's quest for the lighthouse is a penetration into the essence of creative action--the dynamics of consciousness through which artistic symbols are invested with ontological truth. The reader finds a reflection of consciousness in the symbolic structure of the text, a reflection of both his and the creator's

consciousness. The communication of anagogic vision occurs through the mirror of the text--distorting the clarity of the vision at the point of contact--but moving towards greater clarity within the dialectic action of the reader. The symbol is a medium between the author and the reader, a transcendent language that conflates art and ontology by capturing infinite process within a finite medium. The reader's engagement culls the process from the artistic product, for the product reflects the action of an appreciating consciousness through its crafted centripetal structure. As literary appreciation is refined into critical recreation through participation in its reflexive symbolic structure, To The Lighthouse offers a mimesis of consciousness. The text moves from that which is, towards that which is becoming, a dynamic mirror reflecting anagogic vision through the partipatory action of the author and the reader in the symbolic medium.

NOTES

1. The "Word" as fiat in Genesis is "Let there be light"(1:3). This is repeated in Paradise Lost, VII.243.

2. The paradox of John 1:1-18 is that the "Word" is both the creator and the creative action--"the Word was with God, and the Word was God"--both part and whole, process and fount. The figure of the mediation of this paradox is Christ, who is both man and god. While "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son...he hath declared him". The paradox is the expression of the ineffable, which is the essence of incarnate existence, and for which Christ is the paradigm.

3. V.J. Bourke summarizes Aquinas' "analogy of being":

> In some sense, all beings, from the highest to the lowest, are alike in the fact that they are. However, beings differ in their essences and as individuals. Since every finite being is the actualization of some essence, we may think of what is common in all beings as the real relation between essence and existence. These relations vary, because many different essences exist, but they are not entirely dissimilar...Being, then, is analogical; it represents a widely varying plurality of ratios (of essences to existence), which are in turn related to each other in some understandable proportion. God is the limit case; His essence is related to His existence by way of identity. This is being at its fullest(The Pocket Aquinas 144-45).

4. I have substituted Lee's translation here as I prefer his wording of this passage.

5. Plato writes of mirrors in Timaeus:

> It will now be easy to understand the facts about the formation of images in mirrors and those about smooth reflecting surfaces in general. From the combination of the one fire with the other, of that within with that without, and the formation in this case also, at

> the smooth surface, of a single fire, which is deformed in various ways, all such reflections necessarily arise as the fire of the figure seen coalesces with the fire of the beholder's eye at the smooth bright surface(Taylor 44).

The mirror reflects the total vision of the whole, for the mirror is the point of contact of the "two fires"--of infinitude and finitude, and of the model and the copy. The accommodating properties of symbolism also function as a mirror, reflecting consciousness.

6. It is interesting to note, in terms of Frye's Platonism, that Lee translates "ever self-same" from the Timaeus as "eternally unchanging"(41).

7. The nature of negative mysticism is well documented in Underhill's study. For the purposes of this investigation, the main point is the internal dialectic between positive and negative modes of consciousness--the two parts of the whole that is activated through their dialectic interaction. Davis sheds light on the dialectic of consciousness in negative mysticism in a discussion on faith, one of the animating principles of the mystic:

> Faith is the drive toward transcendence, the thrust of human beings out of and beyond themselves, out of and beyond all the limited orders and human certainties under which they live, in an attempt to open themselves to the totality of existence and reach unlimited reality and ultimate value...Faith has a paradoxical character. It is a presence that is at the same time absence, because no positive experience can lay hold of the Transcendent. At the heart of faith is a negative experience, an experience that seems like a nonexperience, because it is the breakdown of every finite experience, of all our concepts, images and feelings...the presence it mediates is as transcendent an absence on the human level, its plenitude is a void or emptiness of finite reality and meaning, its love coexists with a sense of abandonment(76).

8. Lilienfeld writes of the portrayal of marriage in To The Lighthouse:

> [Mr. Ramsay's] needs coalesce with [Mrs. Ramsay's] role restraints, and thus each

is a lesser being than together and separately they might have become. It is an unfair bargain, finally, this marriage bond, and it needs to be reformed(162).

9. In his "Preface" to The Portrait of a Lady, Henry James discusses the author's use of perspective and ambiguity through the metaphor of the "House of Fiction":

> The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million-a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still piercable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on; there is fortunately no saying on what for the particular pair of eyes, the window may not open; "fortunately" by reason, precisely, of this incalculability of range. The spreading field, the human scene, is the "choice of subject"; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the "literary form"; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher-without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has been

conscious. Thereby I shall express to you at once his boundless freedom and his "moral" reference(Riverside Press, 1963. 7).

10. While this part of my argument essentially deconstructs "Time Passes", it should be noted that the narrator and not the author is being deconstructed. Woolf's symbolic intent is to have the narrative deconstruct itself, as an externalization of anagogic meaning within.

11. In this context, it is interesting to note that the original dust jacket of the novel featured a drawing of a fountain.

12. Analogous in that Lily's vision and Woolf's vision are neither "univocal" nor "equivocal", neither equal nor totally different. The analogy lies in the communication of ontological meaning through an artistic medium.

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