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"MOMENTS OF BEING" IN THE SHORT STORIES OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

A thesis

by

PAMELA DALE EFIRD

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APPROVED BY:

Thomas McLaughlin
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Richard H. Rupp
Member, Thesis Committee

Leon Lewis
Member, Thesis Committee

Loyd Hilton
Chairperson, Department of English

Joyce V. Lawrence
Dean of the Graduate School

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PAMELA DALE EFIRD

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ABSTRACT

"MOMENTS OF BEING" IN THE SHORT STORIES OF
VIRGINIA WOOLF. (May 1985) Pamela D. Efird
B. A., Appalachian State University
M. A., Appalachian State University
Thesis Chairperson: Thomas McLaughlin

Throughout her writing career, Virginia Woolf sought to recreate in her fiction her perception of reality. Woolf was not as concerned, however, with the external reality of day to day existence as with the subjective reality of the mind and the emotions. The inner life seemed to her to be characterized by long periods of semi-conscious existence punctuated by sudden interludes when, for a brief time, the consciousness was sharpened and the essence of life was revealed. She referred to these most precious and evanescent interludes as "moments of being."

These "moments of being" can be found throughout Woolf's fiction. Her novels are often structured by several such moments and reflections on the relationships among them. The short sketches, however, deal with isolated moments and explore those moments not as they are

colored by memory, but as they unfold before the reader. These sketches, collected in A Haunted House and Other Short Stories, allowed Woolf to experiment with forms that would later be assimilated into her longer fiction. Both the brevity and the experimental character of these sketches make them an excellent place to examine Woolf's "moments of being" and their importance to her fiction.

The desire to express her vision of life created in Woolf a profound dissatisfaction with forms of fiction which emphasized external reality. Unable to work within accepted modes of plot, character development, and point of view, she searched for structures that would convey the significance and impact of "moments of being." Though traditional rigid structures might exemplify the "reality" of the social realists, they were not appropriate for the reality that Virginia Woolf wished to impart.

The concept of "moments of being" provided Woolf with both structural and thematic materials. Her sketches, often expressions of just such moments, provide her with techniques and concepts which were to be seminal to her later works and provide students of her work with fertile ground for exploring both her themes and structures.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 1
Chapter Two 8
Chapter Three 27
Chapter Four 46
Conclusion 69
Notes 72
References 76
Vita 79

INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf's challenge in her fiction was essentially that of any artist--to express life as she saw it. Her difficulty in achieving this goal was that her vision of life was unusual and thus could not be expressed using the ordinary tools of fiction. The life that Virginia Woolf wished to express included not only the outer life of words and actions, but also the chaotic, often inexplicable, inner life of thoughts and emotions. Terence Hewet, a character from Woolf's novel The Voyage Out, may well be voicing his creator's desires when he says that he wants to "write a novel about Silence . . . the things people don't say."[1] Woolf indicates in her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" that the artist should be concerned not with the body, but with the spirit. It was not her goal to describe everyday life, but rather to capture "the spirit we live by, life itself."[2]

Woolf felt that the essence of "life itself" could not be found in external descriptions and neatly organized plot structures. In this sense, she was very much like Bernard from her later novel The Waves, who states that he distrusts "neat designs of life that are drawn upon note-paper" and wishes to discover "some design more in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably."[3] This distrust of "designs of life" was common among Virginia Woolf's contemporaries, many of whom were experimenting with new forms of fiction. Woolf observes that modern writers attempt to give a "sense of the human being, his depth and the variety of his perceptions, his complexity, his confusion, his self, in short."[4] It seemed to Woolf that the essence of an individual could best be glimpsed when that individual was experiencing what she called a "moment of being."

Morris Beja argues that although Woolf "mentioned and discussed such moments more frequently than Joyce and even Proust, in contrast to them she never evolved anything remotely like a theory to explain her experience."[5] Virginia Woolf does, however, outline what she claims she might call "a philosophy." In "A Sketch of the Past," she writes:

> Often when I have been writing one of my so-called novels I have been baffled by this same problem; that is, how to describe what I call in my private shorthand--'non-being'. Every day includes much more non-being than being. Yesterday for example, Tuesday the 18th of April, was (as) it happened a good day; above the average in 'being' . . . . These separate moments of being were however embedded in many more moments of non-being. I have

> already forgotten what Leonard and I talked about at lunch; and at tea, although it was a good day the goodness was embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool. This is always so. A great part of every day is not lived consciously. One walks, eats, sees things, deals with what has to be done; the broken vacuum cleaner; ordering dinner; writing orders to Mabel; washing; cooking dinner; bookbinding. When it is a bad day the proportion of non-being is much larger. I had a slight temperature last week; almost the whole day was non-being. The real novelist can somehow convey both sorts of being. I think Jane Austen can; and Trollope; perhaps Thackeray and Dickens and Tolstoy. I have never been able to do both.[6]

This passage indicates Woolf's sense of her inability to capture both "being" and "non-being." What she most wanted to express, however, was the state of "being." "A Sketch of the Past" and other autobiographical writings reveal that Virginia Woolf's personal experiences and visions of life inform her fiction in many ways. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the "moments of being" which so affected her personal life abound in her writing. It is in her short fiction, however, that these moments are the most visible. Each story begins on a normal, seemingly everyday note. Then, unexpectedly, something happens to change the character's perception of the moment.

"Moments of being" often occur at odd moments and do not seem to require any particular stimuli or surroundings.

One can experience such a moment on a train, at a piano lesson, at a party, or sitting at home. When a moment of being or understanding takes place between two people, they may have known each other previously, as in the case of Julia and Fanny of "Moments of Being," but prior acquaintance is not necessary. The narrator of "An Unwritten Novel" feels that she understands Minnie (as she names her) whom she has never seen before; strangers introduced at a party, such as Miss Anning and Mr. Serle of "Together and Apart," feel a brief moment of communion. The term "moment of being," however, includes not only meaningful moments between two people, but times when one person feels suddenly that s/he has somehow moved beyond the mundane and has experienced a deeper understanding or appreciation of life. Mabel, of "The New Dress," often has these moments when she is alone. She reflects that ". . . now and then, there did come to her delicious moments, reading the other night in bed, for instance, or down by the sea on the sand in the sun, at Easter . . . ."[7] A moment can be occasioned by a unidentified mark on the wall or by almost anything; in fact, as Woolf notes, these moments are most often embedded in "non-being." Consider, for example, Mabel's "divine moments," experienced as she is reading or sunbathing or even "with Hubert . . . carving the mutton for Sunday lunch" (HH 55).

In "A Sketch of the Past," Virginia Woolf speculates on why some seemingly trivial events or objects make up memorable moments while others which would seem more significant are forgotten. She writes that,

> there seems to be no reason why one thing is exceptional and another not. Why have I forgotten so many things that must have been, one would have thought, more memorable than what I do remember? Why remember the hum of bees in the garden going down to the beach, and forget completely being thrown naked by my father into the sea? (Mrs. Swanwick says she saw this happen). (69-70)

In the sketches from *A Haunted House and Other Stories*, Virginia Woolf illustrates this principle at work. During "moments of being," for whatever reason, events and objects suddenly appear in a different light. Almost invariably, this new light makes things seem more "real;" it seems to reveal something significant that has not been previously apprehended.

These moments provide not only subject matter for Woolf's fiction, but a structure as well. "Moments of being" are, by their very nature, activities of the mind and the emotions. They are moments of understanding, of empathy, and cannot be expressed by outer action. It is for this reason that the sketches of Virginia Woolf have often been assailed by critics for their "failure" as short stories. Much time has been devoted to proving that these "sketches" fail to provide the pleasures that readers have come to expect from narrative literature. M.C. Bradbrook complains that "Mrs. Woolf's dificulties have always been structural" and maintains that Woolf has been "debarred from a narrative technique, since this implies a scheme of values, or even from the presentation of powerful feelings or major situations."[8] Other critics who are essentially favorable toward the stories also note their lack of narrative structure; Bernard Blackstone accurately observes that "They are not short stories in any recognizable sense."[9] Desmond McCarthy says that A Haunted House and Other Short Stories is "a collection of sketches, rhapsodies and meditations--there is no general name for them."[10] Woolf's unwillingness to work within traditional genres appears not only in her short sketches, but in her longer fiction as well. Woolf was aware of this and searched for a new word with which to describe her literary creations. She writes in her diary: "I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel.' A new ______________ by Virginia Woolf. But What?? Elegy?"[11]

Criticisms of Woolf's work that focus on its lack of narrative structure are essentially valid and sometimes revealing, but they fail to go beyond the short fiction's failure as traditional narrative to an analysis of whether, and if so, why, it succeeds as something else. The stories are admittedly difficult to assign to a genre; they are sometimes poetic and often impressionistic and vague, yet they do succeed in delighting and intriguing many readers. Thus, though admitted failures as narrative, they may be considered successful as *something*. The difficulty in defining what this something is results from the elusiveness of the moments that Woolf wishes to describe. There was no existing literary form capable of expressing these moments without divesting them of their fullness and significance. Virginia Woolf was challenged rather than daunted by this difficulty, and her short fiction reveals her first attempts to overcome it.

CHAPTER TWO
"MOMENTS OF BEING" AS A STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLE

Virginia Woolf's need to evolve a new structure for her fiction emerged from her dissatisfaction with the traditional narrative form represented by such social realists as Bennett and Galsworthy. Looking at the works of her literary predecessors and many of her contemporaries, Virginia Woolf found that the traditional structure used by these writers could not well be adapted to express her desire for a form through which to express her concept of "moments of being." To compound this problem, Woolf did not feel challenged by working within traditional literary structures. In her diary she writes, "as usual I am bored by narrative" (AWD 138). Nor did she feel that the narrative form was her strength; "I can make up situations, but I cannot make up plots" (AWD 116).

Virginia Woolf surveyed the traditional tools of plot, point of view and realistic character development and found them unsuited to express her vision of the inner life. As J. K. Johnstone notes, "since the sequence of events in the inner life is not logical, and even thoughts themselves are often discontinuous and inconclusive the old apparatus of story and plot will not serve her."[12] Unable to work within those structures provided by her literary predecessors, Woolf found it necessary to experiment with forms that could express those "moments of vision" that were an integral part of her vision of life. The short stories included in A Haunted House and Other Short Stories are some of Virginia Woolf's first attempts to evolve methods which could capture the vividness of these evanescent moments and provide for them an aesthetically pleasing structure as well. Virginia Woolf's challenge as a writer was to "remain true to her vivid impressions, sensations, and emotions--which are inevitably chaotic--and yet order them in a work of art."[13]

To Virginia Woolf, the requirements of storytelling seem "harsh; they demand that scene follow scene; that party shall be supported by another party . . . that the same values shall prevail" (CE II: 63). In A Writer's Diary, she rebels against "this apalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional" (AWD 136). And again, in "Modern Fiction," she complains that "The writer seems constrained . . . to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, an air of probability embalming the whole . . ." (CE II: 106). Woolf's choice of words in this comment reveals her true feelings concerning traditional narrative form. For her, the devices of plot and character are much too restrictive; they "constrain" and limit the writer of fiction. Rather than giving a sense of life and of vitality as one would hope, the traditional tools of fiction "embalm" that life which they seek to convey.

Woolf expresses the reason for her dissatisfaction with the current form of fiction when she writes:

> . . . for us at this moment the form of fiction most in vogue more often misses than secures the thing we seek. Whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide. (*CE* II: 105)

Virginia Woolf consequently struggled to find a structural form that would not only use her own inherent talents but also express life as she saw it. In an essay entitled "On Re-reading Novels," Woolf indicates the direction in which she feels she must move to find a form that will allow expression of "the essential thing." She writes that a book is "not a form which you see, but emotion which you feel" (*CE* II: 127). The sketches contained in *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* are Woolf's first attempts to capture in her fiction the emotional and subjective quality so absent from the traditional "well-made novel." She writes in "The Art of Fiction" that if the English critic were less "domestic," the novelist might also be bold enough to challenge traditional realistic formulas. "But then" she states ironically, "the story might wobble; the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters. The novel, in short, might become a work of art" (CE II: 55).

One of Woolf's most obvious departures from established narrative form is the absence of physical action in the sketches. Often her characters are immobile, never moving from their seats throughout the sketch. Their gestures and facial expressions are not recorded; instead, mental action is the focus. "The Mark on the Wall" best illustrates this focus on mental activity; the "action" of the story consists of the movement of a mind at work. Though the narrator never moves from her seat, her mind is extremely active. Her thoughts move rapidly and capriciously over a myriad of topics in a mental dance that never falters, though changing pace and direction at will.

Two other sketches in which mental activity is the focus are "Moments of Being" and "An Unwritten Novel." James Hafley, commenting on "Moments of Being," says that "the 'action' of the short story . . . is not at all the past life of Julia Craye, but the mind of Fanny Wilmot engaged in the composition of that life . . . ."[14] The physical movement in the sketch consists of only three actions: the dropping and retrieving of a pin, the crushing of a flower, and a kiss. Fanny's thoughts, however, are extremely active as she speculates on Julia's past and present life.

Physical activity is minimal in "An Unwritten Novel" as well. Though there is some movement--the folding of a newspaper, the scratching of an itch, etc.--the emphasis is not on the physical action of the two characters; the focus is on the mental exercise of the narrator as she creates a fictional life for the woman across from her on the train.

Woolf's emphasis on metal action contributes to another notable departure from realistic tradition; Woolf's sketches are not maintained by the "cause and effect" principles that readers of realistic fiction have come to expect. A good plot, so traditional critics since Aristotle say, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In addition, these critics suggest that the events which make up these three distinct parts should be motivated; both their source and their outcome should be apparent. When one sets out to detail the workings of a mind, however, such a logical approach is not only difficult, but inaccurate. Virginia Woolf, in fact, began to question whether such a sequence was even desirable. She queries:

> . . . is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (CE II: 106)

In an attempt to capture this "uncircumscribed spirit," Woolf not only rejects traditional plot structures, but experiments with point of view as well. Morris Beja points to Woolf's departure from the established uses of point of view when he points out that an epiphanic structure enables a writer to "overcome some of the barriers he has forced himself to accept."[15] Unlike many writers concerned with the minds of her characters, Virginia Woolf does not often make use of the omniscient perspective to reveal the workings of her characters' minds. In most of the sketches she remains in the first person, revealing the thoughts of only one character and often leaving unanswered our questions as to the validity of that person's speculations. Woolf, by allowing herself to present the perceptions of only one character, explores other characters from the outside as they are colored by the perceptions of the first person narrator. As Guiguet notes, Virginia Woolf "takes up her position where all of us, readers and author alike, are ineluctably condemned to remain: outside, equipped with only our senses to apprehend the aspects of things and of people."[16]

Thus, in "Moments of Being," the reader never knows what Fanny's speculations actually reveal about Julia Craye. Miss Craye, who is Fanny's piano teacher, seems to Fanny to possess some unidentifiable secret. It may not seem likely to mature readers that Miss Craye really had a buried past like the one that Fanny imagines for her, but no external evidence is presented to either confirm or deny Fanny's theory. The reader has access only to Fanny's perception of the moment and can interpret Julia's actions only in light of those perceptions.

Similary, in "The Lady in the Looking-Glass," the reader is limited to seeing Isabella through the eyes of the first person narrator. The reader is given the "facts" about Isabella; she is unmarried with a fine home and precious furniture from the Orient. But the story posits two very different interpretations of these facts. In the first interpretation, Isabella is seen as a happy woman with many friends, whereas in the second she is perceived as a lonely woman with a dull, unimaginative existence. The narrator accepts the second, negative picture of Isabella as "truth." Whether a reader chooses to accept either of the images of Isabella suggested by the narrator depends entirely on the reader's faith in the narrator's perceptions.

Upon closer analysis, it becomes apparent that Woolf's point of view in these sketches is not easy to categorize. Though her point of view at first appears to be the traditional "first person," she uses this vantage point in an unusual way. While perceptions are ostensibly being revealed by a character with a limited perspective, certain details that should only be known by an omniscient narrator are related. It often seems that the character has become omniscient, or that the author has become the character. Auerbach comments on this technique when he writes that,

> The writer as narrator of objective facts has almost completely vanished; almost everything stated appears by way of reflection in the consciousness of the dramatic personae . . . . there actually seems to be no viewpoint at all outside the novel from which the people and events within it are observed.[17]

Woolf's dismissal of traditional point of view and her emphasis on the workings of her characters' minds breaks down the barriers that often inhibit a reader's identification with fictional characters. Several critics note that readers of Woolf's fiction often feel a very strong identification with the narrators of the sketches and argue that this identification creates a new type of point of view. Harvena Richter suggests in her preface to The Inward Voyage that Virginia Woolf disregards the device of conventional point of view and creates a participatory fusion between the reader and the character. Richter writes that in Woolf's work, "the traditional frame of point of view may be said to dissolve in participation; analytical structure into synthetical experience" (Richter's emphasis). Richter also maintains that "The reader, placed within the mind of the character, becomes to some extent that mind, receiving certain of the emotional stimuli and sharing in its response."[18] This idea is compatible with Virginia Woolf's desire to bring alive the present moment--to capture "life itself." In "Moments of Being" the reader participates in Fanny's vision of Julia; s/he is led to believe Fanny's hypothesis that Julia rejected her chance at love and was immensely relieved at her decision.

Similarly, in "An Unwritten Novel," the reader begins to believe in the life that the narrator has imagined for Minnie and, like the narrator, is surprised to find the fiction proven false. Manly Johnson describes the way in which the reader comes to believe in the "reality" of Minnie's lonely existence:

> We are persuaded of the actuality of 'Minnie' and 'Moggeridge' as the narrator builds their fictitious lives. We are also persuaded of the actuality of the woman in the train compartment. But as Woolf develops the imagined existence of an unattractive, lonely, dependent woman, we come to believe more and more in the reality that is imagined. Rather than being asked to suspend our disbelief, we are reminded from time to time that this is the 'actual' Minnie and this the 'other.' Woolf tells us each time the two are brought together that both are 'real,' thus using real life to validate imaginary life.[19]

Virginia Woolf's rejection of the traditional devices of plot and point of view are not so radical as her departure from the accepted emphasis on the external creation of character. In her famous debate with Arnold Bennett, Woolf accepts Bennett's premise that "The foundation of good fiction is character creating, and nothing else."[20] Though Woolf agrees with Bennett that character creation is essential to fiction, she takes issue with the methods of character delineation employed by such social realists as Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells. The characters of these writers, Woolf claims, are understood externally and in relation to the social and material world which influences them, rather than emotionally and subjectively. In "Modern Fiction" she complains that "It is because they |Bennett, et. al.| are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us" (CE II: 104).

In A Writer's Diary, Virginia Woolf specifically states her radical departure from received opinion on character development. She maintains that "Characters are to be merely views: personality must be avoided at all costs . . . . Directly you specify hair, age, etc. something frivolous, or irrevelant gets into the book" (AWD 66). Woolf outlines in her criticism a new mode of character creation and tries to find forms in her fiction within which to develop character according to her theories.

In the sketches in A Haunted House and Other Stories, characters, as traditionally understood (e.g. externally and objectively), are secondary to two other concerns: the delineation of the mind's functioning, and the evocation of a sense of the present moment. As we have seen, exploring the nature of perception and the way in which the mind works are central motifs in many of Woolf's stories. Unlike other writers who reveal their characters' thoughts in order to provide motivation for their actions, Virginia Woolf explores a character's thought pattern as an end in itself. Chapman, discussing Woolf's use of interior monologue, observes that Woolf is "interested in the processes of perception for their own sake and not for the sake of 'character.'"[21]

In addition to, and often congruent with, this interest in the mind's functioning, Woolf exhibits a desire to capture the sharpness, the "feel," of the present moment. In these sketches, character delineation is limited to those details necessary to give the reader a sense of what the characters are feeling, thinking, and experiencing at the present moment. Their pasts and futures are unimportant. Even the factors that brought them to this moment are irrelevant. What is relevant is the sense of the reality and intensity of the moment, the recognition that this is "life itself." In her diary Woolf writes:

> The idea has come to me that what I want to do is to saturate every atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes . . . . Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that don't belong to the moment. (AWD 136)

In her diary and her criticism, Virginia Woolf often writes of capturing "life itself." Commenting on several of the sketches that she has written "to amuse" herself, she writes:

> I am not saying . . . that these sketches have any relevance. I am not trying to tell a story. Yet perhaps it might be done that way. A mind thinking. They might be islands of light--islands in the stream that I am trying to convey; life itself going on. (AWD 140)

Unsure as to how to express the essence of "life itself," Woolf says that modern writers, among whom she includes herself, continue to construct fiction "after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds" (CE II: 105). She questions the symmetry and precision with which the social realists construct novels. Life, she maintains, "is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (CE II: 106).

In these sketches, Woolf has not yet determined how to structure her works so as to express this vision of life, but two patterns do emerge. In many of the stories, a central person or object is the center of the narrator's attention. This structural technique of "focusing" allows Woolf to wander through a variety of topics, yet always return to the person or object serving as a focal point. In other stories, the person experiencing a "moment of being" is impressed by the feeling of unity with others that these moments often bring. Almost inevitably, however, this sense of unity quickly passes and is followed by a sense of emptiness or loss. The patterns of "focusing" and "unity followed by dissolution" provided Woolf with a structural basis on which to build her sketches.

In "A Mark on the Wall," the reader follows the narrator's thoughts as they encompass a wide variety of subjects, using the spot on the wall as a point of focus and as a springboard for further speculation. While ostensibly speculating on the nature of the mark, the narrator's mind moves from musings on the former owners of the house to the nature of life, the possibility of an afterlife, the impossibility of knowledge, and the imagined life and death of an antiquary whose life's work is to determine whether certain mounds are tombs or camps. Woolf's use of "focusing" is most apparent in this exploration of the processes of perception. Though the snail on the wall is not really related to the thoughts that it evokes, it serves as a catalyst and as a continual point of reference. Shulkind point out that a "moment of being" is one of "recognition and then revelation--the value of which is independent of the object that is catalyst" (Intro to "Sketch" 19). The idea that a single ordinary object or idea can suddenly, for no apparent reason, elicit the creative or emotional spark that constitutes a "moment of being" is central to an understanding of these sketches.

Virginia Woolf writes in her diary about this concept of developing a number of ideas with a central focus. She speculates that she could write "a book of characters; the whole string being pulled out from some simple sentence" (AWD 101). For Fanny Wilmot, the simple phrase "Slater's pins have no points" carries with it a wealth of insight into the life and desires of her piano teacher, Julia Craye. This statement initiates a speculative flight in which Fanny invents for Julia a spurned lover and a lonely, but independent, life. Woolf's concern here is not in telling the story of Julia's life, but in imparting to her reader a sense of "a mind thinking" (AWD 138).

In A Writer's Diary, Woolf comments on the number of stories that spring into her head as a result of a single idea. She writes, for example, "Ethel Sands not looking at her letters. What this implies. One might write a book of short significant separate scenes. She did not open her letters" (AWD 114). This simple idea is the basis of the story "The Lady in the Looking Glass" and it is on the basis of the fact that Isabella doesn't open her letters that the narrator reverses her opinions. The structural technique of focusing emphasizes the power of one apparently trivial detail to change totally one's perception of a situation.

Woolf's second structural pattern has been noted by both C.B. Cox and Jean Guiguet. Cox especially observes the pattern of unity and dissolution in Woolf's writing:

> Life is seen as a continual progression towards moments of creativity, the rounded drop of water, but, as time moves on, the moment loses its roundness, tapers to a point, and drops, ready for the process to begin again . . . . A movement towards order and certainty followed by inevitable dissolution seemed to Virginia Woolf typical of the flow of the mind.[22]

An example of this movement from unity to dissolution can be found in the story "The New Dress." While at a party Mabel Waring reflects on an earlier moment with a dressmaker who was making her party dress. As she stands to be fitted for her new dress, she has a moment when she seems to see the essence of herself:

> Suffused with light, she sprang into existence. Rid of cares and wrinkles, what she had dreamed of herself was there-a beautiful woman. Just for a second (she had not dared look longer, Miss Milan wanted to know about the length of the skirt), there looked at her, formed in the scrolloping mahogany, a grey-white, mysteriously smiling, charming girl, the core of herself, the soul of herself; and it was not vanity only, not only self-love that made her think it good, tender, and true.(HH 50)

But this moment of certainty and self-awareness is followed by a return to a state of normalcy and a descent to despair and self-loathing. Upon reaching Mrs. Dalloway's party, Mabel thinks:

> And now the whole thing had vanished. The dress, the room, the love, the pity, the scrolloping looking-glass, and the canary's cage-all had vanished, and here she was in a corner of Mrs. Dalloway's drawing-room, suffering tortures, woken wide awake to reality. (HH 55-51)

Mabel`s self-image has dissolved; she is unable to recreate the feeling that she had in Miss Milan's room. She attempts to "acquire new strength and resolution" through reflection on happier moments, but as she leaves Mrs. Dalloway's house, she "mumbles a conventional falsehood" about how much she enjoyed the party.[23]

It is clear from Mabel's comments that the dissolution of her sense of the "reality" of her moment with the dressmaker is not her first experience of despair. Mabel has had "moments of being" in the past, and she is bothered by the fact that they always slip away. She even wonders if perhaps she is becoming too old to have such moments at all:

> Then in the midst of this creeping, crawling life, suddenly she was on the crest of a wave. That wretched fly--where had she read that story that kept coming into her mind about the fly and the saucer?--struggled out. Yes, she had those moments. But now she was forty, they might come more and more seldom. By degrees she would cease to struggle any more. (HH 55-56)

Mabel's fear that she will cease to struggle results from her inability to maintain a belief in the reality of "moments of being." Her sense of unity with Miss Milan and the sense of self-worth that "moments of being" give her dissolve into nothingness and she, like the fly, descends once more into "non-being." Mabel uses the analogy of a wave to express the pattern that "moments of being" have in her life. This analogy, like Cox's reference to the rounded drop of water, emphasizes that the pattern of life punctuated by "moments of being" is constant and cyclical. No sooner has one reached the crest of the wave than s/he must prepare to descend once again. Then, just as the lowest point of the wave's ebb has been reached, the movement towards the top begins again.

Woolf was personally strengthened by the certainty that "moments of being" would continue to occur and by her belief that these moments, and not the long stretches of "non-being" that separated them, were tokens of the true "reality." These moments, then, were what she felt that she as an artist must try to express. The structural patterns of both "focusing" and "unity followed by dissolution" highlight the importance of "moments of being." These two patterns, though early efforts to structure experiences which inherently defy expression, provide a means for Woolf to express the themes that underlie much of her artistic work.

CHAPTER THREE
"MOMENTS OF BEING" AND THE NATURE OF REALITY

Woolf's fiction is largely an exploration of her vision of reality, but her definition of the term "reality" is not the usual one. She intimates that by "reality" she means something more than the observable present when she observes that certain moments ". . . in the nursery, on the road to the beach--can still be more real than the present moment" ("Sketch" 67). She indicates in her diary that she sees reality as divisible into two distinct types. She writes that she hasn't "that 'reality' gift. I insubstantise, willfully to some extent, distrusting reality--its cheapness. But to get further. Have I the power of conveying the true reality" (AWD 63)? In exploring Woolf's "moments of being," it is helpful to examine the two types of reality that are present in Woolf's writing.

One type of reality is the reality of ordinary, day-to-day existence, the external reality of the moment. This "apparent" reality is the reality depicted by the social realists; it is "an accumulation of facts and data which provide no real insight into the life they are supposed to illuminate."[16] This is the type of reality that the narrator of "The Mark on the Wall" says novelists will, in the future, leave more and more out of their stories (HH 41). In terms of Virginia Woolf's distinction between "being" and "non-being", apparent reality is the expression of "non-being;" it is the "cotton wool" that our lives are embedded in.

The second type of reality--the "true" reality--corresponds to the state of "being." This reality can be designated as "essential" or "perceived" reality and is characterized by its emotional quality. Woolf complains in her criticism that modern novelists waste their skill "making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring" and laments the fact that "Whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on" (CE II: 105).

In A Haunted House and Other Short Stories, Woolf's narrators express their eagerness to discover the "essential" reality of the characters whom they meet. The narrator in "An Unwritten Novel," for example, wishes to capture "life, soul, spirit, whatever you are of Minnie Marsh" (HH 15). This narrator is searching for "the entombed soul, the spirit driven in, in, in to the central catacomb; the self that took the veil and left the world" (HH 19). The narrator of "The Lady in the Looking-Glass" expresses a similar desire; she comments that "It was her

[Isabella's] profounder state of being that one wanted to catch and turn to words, the state that is to the mind what breathing is to the body" (HH 91).

During "moments of being," a pattern can be perceived behind the "cotton wool" of apparent reality. During such moments, the person who experiences the revelation transcends the mundane reality of facts and objects and apprehends the essential reality that lies beyond. The precise nature of this reality is difficult to interpret, but it is clearly mental and emotional. Richter observes that "The concept of emotional life as reality . . . is of foremost importance in understanding the principle underlying Virginia Woolf's fiction."[24]

Woolf writes in "A Sketch of the Past" that "moments of being" are "a token of some real thing behind appearances" (72). Later in the same work she writes that she has an "instinctive notion . . . that we are sealed vessels afloat on what it is convenient to call reality; and at some moments, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality . . ." (122). These comments highlight the fact that, to Woolf, essential relity is the true fabric of life, but that there is so much trivial "non-being" obscuring true reality that essential reality seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

Often, characters who experience "moments of being" in Woolf's sketches feel that they have discovered this second type of reality. Miss Anning in "Together and Apart" feels while talking with Mr. Serle about Canterbury that she has "struck accidentally the true man, on whom the false man was built" (HH 137). In "The New Dress," Mabel has a similar insight when, at a party, she reflects that she "saw in a flash to the bottom of Robert Haydon's heart; she saw through everything. She saw the truth" (HH 49).

One of Woolf's most interesting sketches dealing with reality and truth is "The Lady in the Looking Glass." This story opens with a woman sitting in the drawing-room of an acquaintance, Isabella. The opening descriptions of the drawing-room and the summer day outside emphasize the contrast between the stillness outdoors and the movement of lights and shadows in the room. This contrast presages another contrast that develops as the guest, who is the narrator of the sketch, contemplates the emotional life of her hostess.

The narrator is frustrated at the difficulty of knowing the truth about Isabella. Initially it seems that the narrator wishes to discover an objective truth about Isabella; she wants something solid, something one can "fix one's mind upon" (HH 91). This narrator wishes to believe that truth is fixed and that it can be discovered. She asserts "There must be truth, there must be a wall" (HH 89). But as the narrator tries to determine the truth about Isabella, she must face the extreme difficulty of discovering an objective reality. She observes that in the absence of verifiable truth, ". . . one must prize her [Isabella] open with the first tool that came to hand--the imagination . . . one must put oneself in her shoes" (HH 91). Through an admittedly imaginative process, the narrator pursues the reality of the mind; she creates a picture of Isabella as a very romantic and fulfilled person. The narrator observes that it seemed:

> . . . obvious, surely, that she [Isabella] must be happy. She was rich; she was distinguished; she had many friends; she travelled--she bought rugs in Turkey and blue pots in Persia. Avenues of pleasure radiated this way and that from where she stood with her scissors raised to cut the trembling branches while the lacy clouds veiled her face. (HH 92)

When Isabella returns to the house, however, the narrator reverses her position and decides that Isabella's life is devoid of any pleasure or emotion. This second picture of Isabella is accepted as truth by the narrator. This perceived reality is the reality of the narrator's emotions; she feels that she has discovered the true Isabella. In this story, the looking-glass is the agent that reveals the narrator's "truth":

> At once the looking-glass began to pour over her [Isabella] a light that seemed

> to fix her; that seemed like some acid to bite off the unessential and superficial and to leave only the truth. Here was the woman herself. She stood naked in that pitiless light. And there was nothing. Isabella was perfectly empty. She had no thoughts. She had no friends. She cared for nobody. As for her letters, they were all bills. (HH 93)

Guiguet comments on the use of the looking glass as a symbol distinguishing two types of reality; "That reality is distinct from our image of it is suggested . . . by the distinction between the real scene and its reflection in the looking glass."[25] But the apparent realities of Isabella's jewels and the lines on her face are contrasted against two essential or perceived "realities". Both of the narrator's images of Isabella are reflections which are to some extent based on observable fact. That such widely differing interpretations can be based on the same set of facts recalls the claim made by the narrator of "The Mark on the Wall" that "There is not one reflection but an almost infinite number" (HH 41). The narrator of "The Mark on the Wall" believes in not one but many "realities," and speculates that future novelists will explore these multiple realities, "leaving the description of [apparent] reality more and more out of their stories . . ." (HH 41).

"The New Dress" makes a similar distinction between "realities". While having her party dress made, Mabel feels a brief moment of communion with her dressmaker, Miss Milan. Looking down at the dressmaker crawling on the floor with her mouth full of straight pins, Mabel feels "suddenly, honestly, full of love for Miss Milan, much, much fonder of Miss Milan than of anyone in the whole world, and could have cried for pity that she should be crawling on the floor with her mouth full of pins, and her face red and her eyes bulging . . . " (HH 50). The essential reality that Mabel feels at this moment creates in her a sense of happiness and of unity with Miss Milan.

After arriving at the party, however, Mabel begins to doubt the validity of her "moment of being" at the dressmaker's. Now she feels that the party is more real than her moment at Mrs. Milan's and complains that she is "suffering tortures, woken wide awake to reality" (HH 51). Clearly, the reality that Mabel is awakened to at the party is apparent reality. Mrs. Dalloway's party is in the realm of daily life; to Mabel the central truth of this reality is the "fact" that she is inferior to those around her.

Mabel wishes to believe in the reality of her "moment of being" with Miss Milan, but her "odious, weak, vacillating character" stands in her way. She tries to convince herself that "Miss Milan was much more real, much kinder. If only one could feel that and stick to it always" (HH 52). Mabel's ambiguous use of the word "real" indicates her problem in determining which reality to place her faith in. She would prefer to believe in the essential reality she perceived at Miss Milan's, but lacks the strength and faith to believe in it when faced with apparent reality.

The narrator in "The Mark on the Wall" suffers no confusion over which reality to embrace. She consciously seeks the elusive essential reality of the imagination and must constantly change the fancies with which she occupies her mind; she cannot be sustained by "an old fancy, an automatic fancy," but must always find new ideas on which to focus her attention (HH 37). In this sketch, she focuses on an unidentified mark on the wall, and throughout her entire speculative adventure is unaware of the precise nature of the object. It is precisely this absence of knowledge that allows her mind such scope and which gives her the sense of freedom that unrestrained flights of the imagination can provide. It is clear from the narrator's thoughts that her reverie is not merely idle diversion; it is an active effort to escape the apparent reality that she finds so tedious.

In escaping from the apparent realities of the war, Whitakers' Almanac, and man's mortality, this narrator finds "an intoxicating sense of illegitimate freedom" (HH 42). She longs to escape permanently,

> to think quietly, calmly, spaciously,
> never to be interrupted, never to have
> to rise from my chair, to slip easily
> away from one thing to another, without

> any sense of hostility, or obstacle . . . to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. (HH 39)

This narrator demonstrates that facts are precisely what one must transcend if one is to experience a "moment of being." Historical fiction, due to its solid foundation in fact, is dull and unappealing to her. When her mind wanders to Shakespeare, she thinks, "But how dull this is, this historical fiction! It doesn't interest me at all" (HH 40). It is the absence of constraining, limiting facts, allowing the liberation of the imagination, that appeals to this narrator. She reflects that the previous owners of the house are "very interesting people, and I think of them so often, in such queer places, because one will never see them again, never know what happened next" (HH 38). "Because" is a significant word in this statement; it is because there are so few facts to limit the imagination that the house's prior tenants are such irresistible topics for speculation.

On the basis of "The Mark on the Wall" and other stories, many critics have maintained that Woolf totally rejects external reality in favor of mental and emotional reality. Although Hintakka cautions against attempts to reduce Woolf to "a mystic who denied empiricism and the reality of the everyday world,"[26] there is in fact much evidence to support the view that Woolf totally rejected external reality for a time. This rejection, however, appears to be at least partially a direct result of her reaction against social realism. During the earlier years of her career, she rebels against "this appalling narrative business of the realist" and complains of Arnold Bennett's "shopkeeper's view of literature" (AWD 136, 162). These stories, as some of Woolf's earliest attempts to define and utilize her own conceptions of reality, reflect this rebellion against the traditional emphasis on externality. Her diary indicates that she is even aware that her position may be somewhat extreme; even while rejecting narrative, she writes in 1928, "no doubt I should be more interested, come 10 years, in facts" (AWD 127).

While writing The Pargiters (which was published as The Years) Woolf expresses her wish to give "the whole of present society-nothing less: facts as well as the vision" (AWD 186). Again commenting on The Pargiters, she writes, "I think the next lap ought to be objective, realistic" (AWD 197). In her diary she frequently indicates that she views some externality as acceptable, even necessary, in order to achieve a sense of balance. In 1928 she writes: "And what is my own position towards the inner and the outer? I think a kind of ease and dash are good--yes: I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible" (AWD 136).

As she becomes more secure in the viability of her own fictional structure, Woolf does become more comfortable with facts. In December of 1932, while writing Flush, she notes, "Of course this is external: But there's a good deal of gold-more than I'd thought-in externality" (AWD 180). And, again late in her writing career, she writes that The Years has "more 'real' life in it" (AWD 254).

In one of her most unusual sketches, Virginia Woolf opens with descriptions of external reality and moves inward to the reality of the imagination. In the story "Solid Objects," Woolf concentrates on a young man "who is standing for Parliament upon the brink of a brilliant career" until he becomes obsessed with collecting odd shaped pieces of broken glass and china (HH 82). The story opens as this young man, John, strolls down the beach loudly discussing politics with his friend Charles. As the two stop to rest on the beach, John begins absent-mindedly burrowing in the sand and finds a green lump of glass that has been smoothed by the sea. Inexplicably attracted by the piece of glass, John slips it into his pocket and takes it home to rest on his mantlepiece. Fascinated by the object, John begins to watch for others that are similar to it. One day he spots another, very different, object which attracts his attention. This object is "a piece of china of the most remarkable shape, as nearly resembling a starfish as anything--shaped, or broken accidentally, into five irregular but unmistakable points" (HH 83).

John's attempts to obtain this object, which is caught behind a railing surrounding a legal building, constitute the turning point of the story, for by taking the time to construct a tool with which to secure the piece of china, John misses an address to his constituents. John, however, is unconcerned. As the clock strikes, indicating the time for his address to begin, he wonders, "But how had the piece of china been broken into this remarkable shape" (HH 83)? From this point forward, John focuses his energy on collecting other intriguing objects and, not surprisingly, is not elected to Parliament.

In "Solid Objects", John creates his own reality for the objects that he collects. He does not wish to know definitively how such objects were created; to know the facts about the origins of his treasures would deprive him of his greatest joy in amassing them, the joy of speculating on the many possible and fantastic ways in which such objects might have come to exist. John speculates on the origins of his objects and also ponders such metaphysical questions as ". . . how the two [the broken piece of china and the lump of glass] came to exist in the same world, let alone to stand upon the same narrow strip of marble in the same room" (HH 83).

As John becomes more and more preoccupied with the objects that he studies, so the narrator of this story becomes absorbed in creating a projected "reality" for Charles. As the story develops, the narrator changes from a relatively disinterested and objective observer to an absorbed and subjective critic of John's inner life and feelings. Thomas McLaughlin points out that Woolf shifts from a first person to an omniscient narrator in order to illustrate the movement from "a character's behavior to his hidden essence."[27] The narrator, in an attempt to discover the "core" of John, sheds her objectivity and engages in the same obsessive process of projection for which she ridicules John.

"Solid Objects" clearly illustrates a distinction between the definition of perceived reality that can be found in Woolf's autobiography and the interpretation of it that is active in her fiction. In her autobiography, Woolf speaks of "moments of being" as times when "reality floods in," when one can see the pattern behind the cotton wool. In the fiction, however, the reality that the characters experience during such moments is not so much perceived as created.

In this story, the characters who are developing projected realities are unaware that they are doing so. The process of creating a reality--John for his objects and the narrator for John--results from the creator's desire for knowledge. McLaughlin sees the desire for knowledge, on the part of both John and the narrator, in light of the interpretive process. He points out that Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" are characterized by "an awareness of the limits of knowing even/especially at the time of extreme closeness."[28] This awareness of the limitations of knowledge is occasionally possessed by the observer or interpreter (as in "An Unwritten Novel"), but is more often expressed by one who is outside of the process, observing the observer.

This "observing of the observer" occurs on two distinct levels in "Solid Objects." First, the narrator's tone of mock seriousness regarding John's collection indicates her recognition of John's foolishness. The narrator comments that if John,

> had not been consumed by ambition and convinced that one day some newly-discovered rubbish heap would reward him, the disappointments he had suffered, let alone the fatigue and derision, would have made him give up the pursuit . . . . As his standards became higher and his taste more severe the disappointments were innumerable . . . . He never talked to anyone about his serious ambitions; their lack of of understanding was apparent in their behavior. (HH 85)

On a second level, the reader of the story watches as the narrator creates an illusion of her knowledge of John.

Once an objective narrator describing the two men walking down the beach, the narrator gradually becomes omniscient, exploring John's thoughts and motivations while still taking a cynical attitude towards his quest. So, in "Solid Objects," the realities perceived by both Charles and the narrator are not as much discovered as projected. The image of John that the narrator creates is as much a projection as the histories that Charles creates for his objects.

Harvena Richter comments on this concept of projection in the process of perception. She writes: "Mirroring the state of mind of the perceiver, the reality of the object, in psycho-analytical terms, is subsumed in the 'projections' of the viewer."[29] In other words, persons involved in the process of perception, of seeking to know another person or object, create for the person or object of their study a "reality" that conforms to their needs or desires. Such a created reality is not based on objective, verifiable truth, but on the subjective, emotional desires and/or needs of the observer. Thus, the narrator of "An Unwritten Novel" sees in Minnie Marsh a woman with a sin to expiate. It is significant that the narrator, like Minnie, is female and that she identifies closely with Minnie's imagined sin, even to the point of exhibiting the same physical manifestations of discomfort. The following passage illustrates the narrator's physical identification with Minnie:

> All she [Minnie] did was to take her glove and rub hard at a spot on the window-pane. She rubbed as if she would rub something out forever--some stain, some indelible contamination. Indeed, the spot remained for all her rubbing, and back she sank with the shudder and the clutch of the arm I had come to expect. Something impelled me to take my glove and rub my window. There, too, was a little speck on the glass. For all my rubbing it remained. And then the spasm went through me; I crooked my arm and plucked at the middle of my back. (HH 10)

Again, the narrator has not discovered the truth about Minnie; she has created a truth for her. In these sketches, Woolf expresses the idea that "moments of being" do not lead one to an objective truth; rather they allow one to escape from the necessity of finding such a truth. In "An Unwritten Novel," the narrator creates an entire life for a stranger whom she sees on a train; she supplies the stranger with a sin to expiate, a sister-in-law to be her scourge, a dog, a family, and a concept of God. We are even reminded that the narrator is inventing; when envisioning Minnie's past life, the narrator observes, "I have my choice of crimes" (HH 12).

This attitude on the part of the narrator is analogous to her vision of Minnie in a store fingering a large multi-colored collection of ribbons; there is "no need to choose, no need to buy, and each tray with its suprises" (HH 13). The unimportance to this narrator of knowing "truth" of a factual nature can be seen when, at the end of the story, the narrator's fiction of Minnie's lonely spinster's life is invalidated by the appearance of a son. The narrator at first seems crushed by the destruction of her illusions and exclaims, "Well, my world's done for! What do I stand on? What do I know? . . . Who am I? Life's bare as bone." The narrator quickly recovers, however, and begins to create another fiction, this one based on the relationship between mother and son. She is exhilarated by this new opportunity to allow her mind to roam: "Oh, how it whirls and surges-floats me afresh." For this narrator, it is the act of creation rather than the discovery of a fixed "reality" that is the sustaining force. The last few lines of the sketch are religious in tone; they express the passion of one who would be unable to survive without such creative moments: "If I fall on my knees, if I go through the ritual, the ancient antics, it's you, unknown figures, you I adore; if I open my arms, it's you I embrace, you I draw to me-adorable world" (HH 21).

For this narrator, what McLaughlin calls the "interpretive process" provides a sustaining "reality" for which external fact serves only as a catalyst. Guiguet hypothesizes that Virginia Woolf suggests that:

> between the flesh and blood figure, opaque, unknown, and the character elaborated by imagination on the strength of certain details, an

> autonomous reality intervenes, dazzling and far purer, the reality of artistic creation.[30]

This concept of an *artistic* reality which is independent of the "realities" from which it evolves does much to illuminate not only Woolf's sketches, but her conception of herself as an artist. In the sketches, "artistic reality" is operational both in Woolf's artistic synthesis of the "facts" and in the similar handling of facts by her narrators. The narrators of "Solid Objects" and "An Unwritten Novel" create "realities" which are based to a great extent upon their desire to impose order and symmetry upon the lives of the persons who are the objects of their scrutiny.

The distinction between the artistic reality which Woolf wished to create and the reality of the social realists touches the very roots of the function of fiction and a writer's perception of his work. If a writer seeks to create a work of fiction which simply mirrors the facts of life, his function can be seen as that of a reporter. If, however, the writer sees himself not as a reporter, but as an artist, i.e. a molder of facts, he must strive to impart in his fiction a picture not of the mere facts of day to day existence, but a picture which transcends those facts and makes of them a coherent and aesthetically pleasing whole. Woolf clearly saw herself as the latter, and her vision of reality as shaped by the artist's consciousness was a reflection of this self-concept. "Moments of being," as they could not easily be described with the tools of a reporter, provided Woolf with thematic and structural challenges that could be overcome only by a writer who was also an artist.

CHAPTER FOUR
CHARACTERISTICS OF "MOMENTS OF BEING" AND THE INDIVIDUALS WHO EXPERIENCE THEM

Virginia Woolf's interest in the nature of reality and her sense that the author should express this problem in his work was common among her contemporaries. Her feeling that reality could best be expressed through the structural and thematic use of revelatory moments was shared by other writers and intellectuals of her time. Of the related ideologies developed by writers of the 1900's, the most notable concept, and one that closely resembles Woolf's theory of "moments of being," is James Joyce's theory of "epiphany." Conrad and Hardy also developed similar concepts and called them "moments of vision."

Joyce's "epiphanies" and the "moments of vision" discussed by Conrad and Hardy share certain elements of the moments which Woolf termed "moments of being." The most noticeable of these characteristics are the triviality of the catalysts which trigger "moments," their suddenness, their evanescence, and their ability to create impressions of significance and of arrested time.

Virginia Woolf felt that it was the author's task to:

> catch and enclose certain moments which break off from the mass . . . to arrest those thoughts which suddenly, to the thinker at least, are almost menacing with meaning. Such moments are of an unaccountable nature; leave them alone and they persist for years; write them down and they die beneath the pen.[31]

In spite of the tendency of "moments of being" to "die beneath the pen," Woolf and her contemporaries were committed to capturing them. James Joyce also felt that it was the writer's task to record impressions similar to "moments of being." The closest direct definition of Joyce's "epiphany" is found in Stephen Hero:

> By an epiphany he [Stephen] meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.[32]

Beja, in his analysis of the preceeding passage, stresses the triviality of epiphanic moments. He writes that Stephen Daedulus uses the word "epiphany" to refer to "sudden illuminations produced by apparently trivial, even seemingly arbitrary causes."[33] The trivial and commonplace nature of the event or object that triggers a moment of revelation emerges in the works of other epiphanic writers as well. Woolf, in an essay on Conrad, refers to Conrad's concept of the "moment of vision." Conrad's character, Marlow, has just overheard a French officer comment "Mon Dieu, how the time passes!" Marlow's reaction (as quoted by Woolf) follows:

> Nothing |he comments| could have been more commonplace than this remark; but its utterance coincided for me with a moment of vision. It's extraordinary how we go through life with eyes half shut, with dull ears, with dormant thoughts . . . . Nevertheless, there can be but few of us who had never known one of these rare moments of awakening, when we see, hear, understand, ever so much-everything-in a flash, before we fall back again into our agreeable somnolence. I raised my eyes when he spoke, and I saw him as though I had never seen him before.[34]

Conrad's description of "moments of vision" has much in common with the "moments of being" that we find in Woolf's fiction. The commonplace nature of the remark which occasions Marlow's "moment of vision" is evident and is remarked upon by Marlow. Woolf's "moments of being" are often triggered by commonplace characteristics as well. In Woolf's sketches, the most obvious example of a trivial catalyst to a "moment of being" is found in the sketch entitled "Moments of Being." Here a casual comment, "Slater's pins have no points," is the occasion for a moment of union between a student and her piano teacher. In other of Woolf's sketches, apparently inconsequential objects such as a snail or a piece of colored glass serve as access to "moments of being." The mention of Canterbury in "Together and Apart" initiates a series of associations for both characters, and though their individual experiences of Canterbury are very personal, the images and feelings aroused by the name create, if only for a brief moment, a closeness between Mrs. Anning and Mr. Serle.

The preceding passage from Stephen Hero contains the significant words "sudden spiritual manifestation." Of the suddenness of epiphanic moments, Beja writes, "the epiphany may be prepared for over long periods of time; but when the experience does come, it is not gradual but immediate."[35] The suddenness with which a moment of being can occur is evident in Woolf's story "The Lady in the Looking-Glass." In this sketch, the moment of truth is prepared for over a substantial period of time, but the actual moment of revelation comes quite abruptly. As the agent of truth in this story, the mirror quickly reverses an image that has been carefully developed from the story's outset.

Conrad also notes the suddenness of these experiences when he says that " We see, hear, understand, ever so much-everything-in a flash." In Woolf's sketch "Together and Apart," the two characters feel that they see the essence of one another "quite suddenly, like a white bolt in a mist" (HH 141). Fanny Wilmot's altered perspective of her piano teacher in "Moments of Being" also occurs suddenly. As Fanny thinks of Miss Craye buying pins, an idea that is unfathomable to her, she is transfixed and instantly sees Julia Craye from a different perspective.

Woolf, in her fiction, attempts to capture both the suddenness and the evanescence of "moments of being." These moments vanish as suddenly as they occur. In "The New Dress," Mabel seems particularly unable to sustain the pleasure and sense of self-worth that she finds in a "moment of being." Her feelings of unity with her dressmaker, Miss Milan, vanish when she arrives at Mrs. Dalloway's party. Commenting on Woolf's epiphanal technique, Desmond MaCarthy writes, "It is these iridescent, quickly-pricked, quickly-blown-again bubbles, made of private thoughts and dreams, which the author is an adept at describing."[36]

The evanescence of "moments of being" is highlighted in Woolf's longer fiction due to the fact that, in the novels, the story continues after the moment has vanished. The sketches in A Haunted House and Other Stories, however, usually end when the moment does. This stylistic quality of the sketches is indicative of the fleeting nature of "moments of being" and of the difficulties inherent in expressing them. It is probable that Woolf, in these experimental stories, had not yet determined how to continue beyond the moment that she was so eager to express. In her fear that these moments would "die beneath the pen," she described them with a lightness and sketchiness which is evidence of their evanescence. The loose structure of these stories indicates that in dealing with such transitory moments, the writer cannot structure his work too tightly or the moment will disappear.

In a passage quoted earlier in this paper, Woolf writes that the artist "must arrest those thoughts which suddenly, to the thinker at least, are almost menacing with meaning." Here Woolf refers to the necessity of art to arrest life, to the never-ending struggle to capture what MaCarthy calls "these iridescent . . . bubbles." Because of their capacity to create an aesthetically pleasing image, "moments of being," like art, freeze time. During these moments, it seems as if time stops for an instant, allowing one to see beyond the nondescript fabric of "non-being." When characters experience a "moment of being," life seems fixed and temporarily arrested in its flow. Marjorie Brace comments that in Woolf's fiction, one sees reality with a "traveller's eye;" it is "something glimpsed as one tears past, something arrested, timeless . . . ."[37]

The idea that epiphanic moments freeze time is also inherent in Conrad's work. Conrad writes that the artist must seek:

> To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and color, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile-such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve . . . when it is accomplished-Behold! All the truth of life is there: a moment of vision . . ."[38]

The ability of a "moment of being" to arrest life is illustrated by Woolf most effectively in "The Lady in the Looking-Glass." In this sketch, the looking glass is a symbol of the capacity of art to to halt life and invest it with meaning. This power is first revealed when the mailman slips the mail through the door and the letters land on a table in front of the looking-glass. The narrator cannot at first "relate these tablets to any human purpose," but then the letters are "arranged and composed and made part of the picture and granted that stillness and immortality that the looking-glass conferred. They lay there invested with a new reality and significance" (HH 90).

In a similar way, the mirror fixes the narrator's perception of Isabella at the end of the story. The mirror "performs the function of formalizing the flux of experience into significant pattern, of imposing order upon the ceaselessly changing."[39] The story's narrator enforces her vision of "significant pattern" on Isabella; the true

Isabella can be neither the totally happy woman of the narrator's first musings nor the completely empty woman of her final vision. These patterns have been "imposed" upon Isabella by the narrator's desire to make of the many details of Isabella's life an aesthetically complete picture.

Robert Chapman, in a study of Woolf's "The Lady in the Looking Glass," indicates that the process of selection used by this narrator is inherent in the creative act; "What this story describes is the primary process basic to all aesthetic creation: the perception of significant form in life."[40] The artist must not only perceive "significant form" in the apparently trivial details of his existence, but must also impart to his audience that perceived significance. Such is Woolf's aim in her use of "moments of being" as both structural and thematic foci. She must select the details of the "moments of being" she describes in such a way as to give them a unified creative impact.

"Moments of being," though they come in many forms, share common characteristics; not surprisingly, the individuals who experience these moments also exhibit certain similarities. The persons who can experience moments of being are not limited to those of a particular age or social standing, for as Conrad notes, "there can be but few of us who had not known one of these rare moments of awakening." Both Conrad and Joyce write of men experiencing epiphanic moments, but in Woolf's sketches, feminine characters experience "moments of being" much more often than masculine characters. Many of the narrators in Virginia Woolf's short fiction are female, and in those stories where the narrator's sex is not specified, the tone is often so recognizably feminine that critics and readers almost unanimously declare that a feminine consciousness is speaking. The fact that Joyce and Conrad chose male narrators while Woolf choses female narrators is obviously influenced by the sex of the writer, but in Woolf's fiction, the reasons for her choice of feminine narrators seem deeper than her familiarity with a feminine perspective.

The qualities that Woolf associates with masculine and feminine minds are not unlike those noted and accepted by many writers and thinkers. She observes men to be concerned with factual information and to be ruled by the intellect. Women, on the other hand, are more emotional and are often ruled by intuition rather than logic. Woolf writes that in the novels of men, "intellect seems to predominate," and maintains that books with "not a spark of the woman" in them "lack suggestive power"(A Room 107-8). She indicates that the female mind is intuitive and suggestive, concerned not with facts themselves, but with what they imply.

Chapman notes that "Virginia Woolf's portraits of the masculine intellect usually compare unfavorably with her feminine intuitives: the one is analytical, cold, rational, unfeeling; the other unifying, loving, and all-embracing."[41] Woolf's distinction between masculine and feminine qualities does not reflect a negative view of men, but is rather her attempt to record life as it appeared to her. The fact that many of the sketches appear to favor the feminine perspective is, at least in part, a reaction to the fact that in Woolf's society, the prevailing tendency was for the masculine to predominate. In A Room of One's Own, Woolf writes:

> . . . it is obvious that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so. Yet it is the masculine values that prevail. Speaking crudely, football and sport are "important;" the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes "trivial." (76-77)

Thus, Woolf's emphasis on the feminine is an attempt to achieve a balance between two forces that are normally present in very unequal proportions. She writes that "Proust was . . . perhaps a little too much of a woman. But that failing is too rare for one to complain of it" (A Room 107). More often, masculine values and ways of thinking are so powerful that an intuitive, feminine nature must constantly struggle to assert itself.

The reverie of the narrator in "The Mark on the Wall" is repeatedly disturbed by the intrusion of ideas that she associates with the masculine intellect. This narrator feels that men devise and enforce the rules of apparent reality. She comments on the "masculine point of view that governs our lives, which sets the standard, which establishes Whitaker's Table of Precedency" (HH 42). Whitaker's Almanac is a book of facts; it details in order of importance the levels of dignitaries in the House of Lords and indicates how each should properly be addressed. In addition, it describes the orders of chivalry and outlines proper Parliamentary procedure. Throughout the narrator's meditation, Whitaker's Almanac is a symbol of the masculine desire to rigidly order and systematize reality.

Whitaker's Almanac is, to this narrator, an attempt to pin down truth, to reduce it to a question of who follows whom in the ranks of the British nobility. She expresses her contempt and her frustration with this attempt when she says:

> who will ever be able to lift a finger against Whitaker's Table of Precedency? The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York. Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker; and the great thing is to know who follows whom. (HH 44)

Such a futile attempt to circumscribe truth, she feels, should be "laughed into the dustbin where the phantoms go" (HH 42). To the narrator of "The Mark on the Wall," the Almanac and all that it represents are a burden and restriction that she longs to escape. She cannot escape, however, and is forced back into apparent reality by the presence of a man who points out that the mark that has occasioned her reverie is a snail. This masculine presence, "by defining the mark . . . limits its infinite possibilities of spiralling expansion and puts a final stop to the dynamic relation between the narrator and the object."[42] This is not to suggest that only women can achieve moments of insight, but to point out that women, or men with intuitive (feminine) natures, seem to be most receptive to such moments.

In A Room of One's Own, Woolf suggests that it is in fact the androgynous mind that is the happiest and the most capable of creation. The sight of a man and a woman meeting and leaving in a taxi leads her to "ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness."[43] Woolf would certainly maintain that persons in which masculine qualities predominate can benefit from a feminine perspective. She does not suggest, however, that a totally feminine outlook is desirable. She writes that "It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly" (A Room 108). The limitations of a strictly feminine way of knowing are expressed in several of Woolf's stories.

The idea that too much (feminine) receptivity to the inner life can be detrimental is demonstrated in "Solid Objects." At the story's outset, both John and Charles represent the masculine world of "documents, leading articles, [and] cabinet ministers."[44] But as John becomes immersed in the psychological world that he creates for his collected objects, he loses touch with the masculine world of politics. In John's case, the masculine realm of addresses to constituents and declarations of policy had become "so profoundly inimical to the interests of the other, inner reality . . . that the two realities cancelled each other out."[45] John is living proof of Woolf's premise that "the mind which is most capable of receiving impressions is very often the least capable of drawing conclusions" (CE I: 263).

In "Solid Objects," neither inner nor outer "reality" emerge as desirable. Thomas McLaughlin observes that,

> Although the reader is asked to approve of John's impractical but fascinating concern over against his friend Charles' cloddish, blind functionalism, he is also brought to see the pathetic and foolish distance between the object and the explanation that it generates.[46]

The message of this sketch is that an excess of either the "blind functionalism" of the factual male world or the creative vision of feminine intuition can be dangerous. John is a clear example of one of the "limitations inherent in the feminine way of knowledge--beauty is not necessarily truth"[47]

The inadequacy of a purely feminine perspective is also implied in "The Mark on the Wall." This narrator requires some solid, external "reality" in order to stabilize herself. As her mind wanders to a vision of a more pleasant world, she feels the need to focus on the mark, which she calls "a plank in the sea" (HH 44). Chapman observes, "It is as though the feminine mind cannot bear too much reality: concrete, external facts only having validity as stimuli to reverie."[48] According to Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, the mark serves to bring the narrator "back to her own separate and finite self and prevent her from dissolving in the general flux."[49]

Another instance of the feminine mind's inability to bear too much apparent reality is found in "Lappin and Lapinova," the only story in this group that provides a glimpse of married communication. In this sketch, a young couple shares a fantasy in which they are rabbits ruling a forest kingdom. They are King Lappin and Queen Lapinova and together they explore and rule a woodland domain. The wife first conceives of the fantasy world which she and her husband Ernest inhabit for a time, and their shared fantasy sustains her through tortuous visits with Ernest's family. It is a limitation of Woolf's point of view that we are unable to know why Ernest first joins the fantasy and then negates it, but there is no question that it is his masculine refusal to continue this shared illusion that destroys the young couple's closeness. This shared illusion can be seen as an extended "moment of being" which strengthens the marriage and, for a time, allows it to transcend the limits of apparent reality. When the husband refuses to participate in the illusion any longer, the communication between husband and wife is broken. When King Lappin once again becomes Ernest, the authorial presence states flatly: "so that was the end of that marriage" (HH 78). Rosalind cannot bear Ernest's rejection of their shared fantasy and is unable to return with him to apparent reality.

In addition to the fact that the feminine mind is usually most receptive to "moments of being," other factors allow some people to experience "moments of being" more often than others. The attitude that an individual has towards epiphanal experiences is one determining factor. In "The Mark on the Wall," "An Unwritten Novel," and "The Lady in the Looking-Glass," the narrators are eager to catch a glimpse of something beyond external reality. In "An Unwritten Novel," for example, the narrator exclaims:

> Life's the tyrant; oh, but not the bully! No, for I assure you I come willingly; I come wooed by heaven knows what compulsion . . . to lodge myself somewhere on the firm flesh, in the robust spine, wherever I can penetrate or find foothold in the person, in the soul, of Moggeridge the man. (HH 17)

In this story, it is clear that simply being receptive to epiphanic experiences and allowing oneself to become engaged in a "moment of being" is much more significant than any "truth" that may be discovered. When the narrator of "An Unwritten Novel" finds her fiction proven false, she uses the facts which negate her first fiction as a basis for a new creation. It is the creative process on which this narrator thrives--the apparent reality of the situation is immaterial. As Morris Beja argues, "it is the experience of revelation that matters, not what is revealed."[50]

The speculative process is also fascinating for John, the collector in "Solid Objects," whose musings focus on the items which he collects. From his comments on the types of objects that he prefers to collect, it is clear that John favors objects whose origins and existence are unknown, as they provide the most fertile ground for his created histories. John's preference for objects about which he can say "the question remained unanswered" indicates that questions, not answers, sustain him.

Characters who are not receptive to "moments of being" are not excluded from them, but may not be able to enjoy or benefit from them. The two characters in "Together and Apart," Mr. Serle and Mrs. Anning, are unable to appreciate a shared "moment of being" due to their fear of vulnerability. The two are introduced at a party, and when a moment of understanding comes unsolicited, they immediately shrink from the intensity of the experience. Mr. Serle is an accomplished flirt, engaging the affections of numerous women who find his melancholy appealing. Though we are told that Mr. Serle often goes out every night during the season, there are indications that his encounters with people at the parties he attends are emotionally shallow. Miss Anning also has a difficult time responding emotionally to people, but (unlike Mr. Serle) she has no talent for idle conversation. In fact, she finds it difficult to maintain a conversation at all and must constantly encourage herself with her watchword, "On Stanley, on!"

The "moment of being" described in "Together and Apart" is unusual in that two unwilling subjects are participants in it. When Mr. Serle and Miss Anning are unexpectedly attracted to one another, they react with a mixture of pleasure and terror:

> Their eyes met; collided rather, for each felt that behind the eyes the

> secluded being, who sits in darkness while his shallow agile companion does all the tumbling and beckoning, and keeps the show going, suddenly stood erect; flung off his cloak; confronted the other. It was alarming; it was terrific . . . there it had happened; the old ecstasy of life; its invincible assault; for it was unpleasant, at the same time that it rejoiced and rejuvenated and filled the veins and nerves with threads of ice and fire; it was terrifying. (HH 141)

Mr. Serle and Miss Anning are not prepared for this encounter and are not willing to seek the pattern of being of which they have shared an unbidden glimpse. They are not receptive to this shared "moment of being" due to their fear of the moment's intensity. They consequently take refuge in middle life's "automatic devices for shielding mind and body from bruises . . . " (HH 141-2). Unlike other of Woolf's characters, who cherish and eagerly seek such moments, Miss Anning and Mr. Serle purposefully turn away from this encounter. Miss Anning senses Mr. Serle's wish to withdraw and assists him in doing so:

> . . . seeking some decent acknowledged and accepted burial form, she said:
>
> 'Of course, whatever they may do, they can't spoil Canterbury.'
>
> He smiled; he accepted it; he crossed his knees the other way about. She did her part; he his. So things came to an end. (HH 142)

The unwillingness of these two characters to engage in a "moment of being" prevents them from benefiting from the unifying effect that such a moment can have.

"Together and Apart" raises the issue of people's differing reactions to what Virginia Woolf describes as "the sledge-hammer force of the blow" which a "moment of being" brings. Woolf writes in "A Sketch of the Past" that she personally sees these shocks as:

> welcome; after the first surprise, I always feel instantly that they are particularly valuable . . . but it is not, as I thought as a child, simply a blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order. (72)

For Woolf, the ability to see "moments of being" in a positive light is a result of her ability to "explain" them. By explaining these moments, she can take away their power to hurt her; she can then accept them as a part of a greater whole and can attempt to discern the pattern of reality behind the cotton wool. The characters in the sketches who cannot see these moments as valuable and as "real" cannot profit from them.

In other sketches, Woolf creates characters who, though receptive to "moments of being," are unable to gain the maximum benefit from them. Mabel, in "The New Dress," is not afraid of "moments of being;" she treasures them and longs to believe in them. This story recounts a moment when Mabel's dressmaker, Miss Milan, is altering Mabel's party dress. For a brief period of time, Mabel sees herself as beautiful and feels full of affection for Miss Milan. Later, however, Mabel is unable to grasp the significance of her moment with Mrs. Milan or to see the hidden pattern of reality that it reveals. Though Mabel wishes to believe in the "reality" of her "moment of being," she is unable to.

An examination of Mabel's character discloses some qualities which limit her capacity to benefit from "moments of being." Mabel is selfish and requires constant attention from others in order to maintain her feeling of importance. In a conversation with Mrs. Holman, who wishes to elicit Mabel's sympathy for her constantly ailing family, Mabel has no sympathy to give; "she could not wring out one drop more; she wanted it all, all for herself" (HH 53). It seems to the guilt-ridden Mabel that "the yellow dress was a penance which she had deserved, and if she had been dressed like Rose Shaw, in lovely, clinging green with a ruffle of swansdown, she would have deserved that" (HH 54). Mabel's repeated comments on her inferiority and her apparent desire to feel equal or superior to her peers may explain why Mabel can experience "divine moments" while at the dressmaker's and not at Mrs. Dalloway's party. When Mabel experiences her "moment of being," Miss Milan is not only in a subservient role as Mabel's dressmaker, but is crawling on the floor with a mouthful of pins.

Jeanne Shulkind illuminates Mabel's problem in a comment on the types of people who can benefit from "moments of being":

> Although Virginia Woolf never believed that these moments of being were reserved for an elite she did believe that they were withheld from some. Such figures are so encrusted with the trivia of daily life, so attached to objects and values which are in the last analysis irrelevant, or so imprisoned by their egocentricity, that they are incapable of cutting themselves free from the material world.[51]

Mabel is not so "encrusted with the trivia of daily life" that she can never experience a moment of insight, but she is unable to find a meaningful pattern in these moments or to use them as a source of strength and sustenance. Though she is willing to experience "moments of being," Mabel is incapable of adequately removing herself from the social world of apparent reality. She is too concerned with her appearance and with others' opinions of her to trust in her instincts.

John, from "Solid Objects", goes to the opposite extreme and seeks too much freedom from the material world. John is too willing to remove himself from the pressures of his society and thus loses his sense of perspective. Similarly, Rosalind ("Lappin and Lapinova") immerses herself in fantasy until she can no longer face reality.

The characters in the short stories who emerge in the most positive light are those who are receptive to "moments of being" and perhaps even prefer these glimpses of essential reality to apparent reality, but who are not so removed from apparent reality that they lose their stability and their perspective. The narrator in "The Mark on the Wall" is also aware of apparent reality even while revelling in the freedom of her "moment of being." She notes that sometimes, when "waking from a midnight dream of horror," she must turn on the light and lie "quietly worshipping the chest of drawers, worshipping solidity, worshipping reality, worshipping the impersonal world which is a proof of some existence other than ours" (HH 44-5). The narrator of "An Unwritten Novel," though she much prefers her imagined stories to the dull facts of apparent reality, does not crumble when faced with the disparity of her vision of Minnie and the existence of Minnie's son. Instead, she takes the new "facts" and builds a story around them. The creative mind must never be daunted by apparent inconsistencies; the work of art cannot remain static, but must evolve in response to the demands of apparent reality.

The key once again appears to be balance. One must achieve a balance of the masculine and the feminine, a balance between fantasy and reality, and a balance between one's existence as as a social being and the recognition of one's essential isolation. Individuals who are able to achieve these delicate balances will be most likely to experience "moments of being" and will be best able to benefit from them.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

In an essay entitled "How it Strikes a Contemporary," Virginia Woolf cautions her fellow writers that it would be wise for them to "renounce the hope of creating masterpieces" (CE II 160). This suggestion follows a discussion of the difficult task that the present day writer faces in his attempt to transmute life into literature and yet remain true to the differences which separate him from his predecessors. Woolf suggests that the contemporary writer should view his works as "notebooks" from which future writers will draw and as a foundation for a vast building that will only later be completed.

The sketches of A Haunted House and Other Short Stories stand in a comparable relationship to Virginia Woolf's more mature fiction; the sketches are "notebooks" which provide ideas and structures for later works. Thus, "Together and Apart" and "The New Dress" pave the way for Mrs. Dalloway, while Rachel (The Voyage Out) and Mrs. Ramsey (To the Lighthouse) both experience transcendent moments similar to that of the narrator of "The Mark on the

Wall." Each of these sketches can be seen as a "brief excursion from which, in her unremitting quest for reality, Virginia Woolf brought back some slight quarry--slight indeed but revealing of the depths in which it was discovered."[52]

The depths that Woolf mined to discover her literary treasures were not topical social issues, but the enduring question of the nature of reality. Woolf's concept of reality as it is outlined in her criticism and diaries proposes that reality is divisible into "being" and "non-being." In the early part of her career, Woolf rebelled against the social realists, who seemed to her to place too much emphasis on "non-being." Thus, her early sketches emphasize "being" and often completely ignore "non-being." Later, however, Woolf began to combine these two aspects of reality to create more balanced works of art, and also began to explore the ways in which an individual's perception and subjective desires color the reality that s/he apprehends. Though Woolf was very concerned with expressing her vision of life, she did not allow her fiction to become simply a vehicle for expressing this concern; her fiction was first and foremost to be a work of art. Her aim was to express her thematic concerns and her vision of life while still preserving her artistic integrity.

It was as a result of this goal that Woolf invested so much energy to find an artistic structure which could express her vision of "life itself." "Moments of being" provide for Woolf a structural device that allows infinitely more freedom than the traditional structures of the social realists. The structures provided through use of "moments of being" are not rigid; they are very fluid and cyclical in nature. The images of a wave cresting and then ebbing and of a drop of water gathering fullness until it finally tapers and drops are apt metaphors for Woolf's structural technique. Though her fiction encompasses a wide range of structural shapes, "the technical device of the moment of vision appears in all her work, from first to last."[53] The importance of these sketches to Virginia Woolf's development of a structural foundation for her novels is indicated in her diary when she speculates, "Suppose one can keep the quality of a sketch in a finished and composed work? That is my endeavor" (AWD 71).

NOTES

[1] Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, n.d.), p. 216.

[2] Virginia Woolf, Collected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1925), I, 337; hereafter cited as CE I. The following articles from this volume are cited: "The Captain's Death Bed (173-180)," "The Russian Point of View (283-246)," "Joseph Conrad (302-308)," "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown (319-337)," "The Novels of E.M. Forester (342-351)," "The Death of the Moth (359-361)."

[3] Virginia Woolf, The Waves (London: n.p., 1955), p. 169.

[4] Virginia Woolf, Collected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1925), II, 158-59, hereafter cited as CE II. The following articles from this volume are cited: "Modern Fiction (103-110)," "On Re-reading Novels (122-130)," "The Anatomy of Fiction (137-140)," "How it Strikes a Contemporary (153-161).

[5] Morris Beja, Epiphany in the Modern Novel (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), p. 114.

[6] Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," in Moments of Being, ed. Jeanne Shulkind (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976), pp. 70-72; hereafter cited as "Sketch."

[7] Virginia Woolf, A Haunted House and Other Short Stories (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), p. 55; hereafter cited as HH. The following short stories from this volume are cited: "An Unwritten Novel," "The Mark on the Wall," "The New Dress," "Lappin and Lapinova," "Solid Objects," "The Lady in the Looking-Glass," "Moments of Being" and "Together and Apart."

[8] M.C. Bradbrook, "Notes on the Style of Mrs. Woolf," Scrutiny, (May, 1932), pp. 33-38; rpt. in Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage, ed. Robin Majumdar & Allen McLaurin (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 309 and 311.

[9] Bernard Blackstone, *Virginia Woolf: A Commentary* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1949), p. 51.

[10] Desmond MacCarthy, "'Affable Hawk' Review," *New Statesman*, 18(April 9, 1921); rpt. in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 89. For additional criticism related to Woolf's lack of narrative structure, see J.K. Johnstone, *The Bloomsbury Group* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1954), p. 327 and E.M. Forster, "Virginia Woolf," *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.,1942), pp. 242-58; rpt. in *Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Claire Sprague (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. 14-25.

[11] Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: The New American Library, 1953), p. 83; hereafter cited as *AWD*.

[12] J.K. Johnstone, *The Bloomsbury Group* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1954), pp. 327-28.

[13] Johnstone, p. 327.

[14] James Hafley, "On One of Virginia Woolf's Short Stories," *Modern Fiction Studies*, II, (1956?), 13.

[15] Beja, *Epiphany*, p. 23.

[16] Jean Guiguet, trans. Jean Stewart, *Virginia Woolf and Her Works* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1965), p. 370.

[17] Erich Auerbach, trans. William R. Trask, "The Brown Stocking," *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 525-53; rpt. in Sprague, p. 77.

[18] Harvena Richter, Pref., *The Inward Voyage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. ix and vii, Richter's emphasis.

[19] Manly Johnson, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), p. 41; see also Richter, p. 32.

[20] Arnold Bennett, "Is the Novel Decaying?," *Cassell's Weekly* 47(March 28, 1923); rpt. in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 113.

[21] Robert T. Chapman, "'The Lady in the Looking-Glass': Modes of Perception in a Short Story by Virginia Woolf," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 18 (Autumn, 1972), p. 331.

[22] C.B. Cox, "The Solitude of Virginia Woolf," Critical Quarterly, I (1959), p. 334.

[23] Guiguet, p. 337.

[24] Richter, p. 30.

[25] Guiguet, p. 335.

[26] Jaakko Hintakka, "Virginia Woolf and our Knowledge of the External World," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 38(Fall, 1979), p. 11.

[27] Thomas M. McLaughlin, "Fiction and Interpretation in Virginia Woolf," Essays in Literature, VIII (Fall, 1981) p. 177-78.

[28] McLaughlin, p. 181.

[29] Richter, p. viii.

[30] Guiguet, pp. 335-36.

[31] Virginia Woolf, Contemporary Writers, ed. Jean Guiguet, (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), p. 75.

[32] Beja, Epiphany, p. ; quoted from James Joyce, Stephen Hero.

[33] Beja, Epiphany, p.13.

[34] Woolf, CE, I, 305; quoted from Joseph Conrad.

[35] Beja, Epiphany, p.14.

[36] MaCarthy, p. 91.

[37] Marjorie Brace, "Worshipping Solid Objects: The Pagan World of Virginia Woolf," Accent, 4 (1944), pp. 246-51; rpt. in Critics on Virginia Woolf: Readings in Literary Criticism, Ed. Jacqueline E.M. Latham (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1970), pp. 120-21.

[38] Joseph Conrad, Pref., The Nigger of the Narcissus, (Heritage Press: New York, 1967), p. xi.

[39] Chapman, p. 336.

[40] Chapman, p. 336.

[41] Chapman, p. 334.

[42] Jeanne Delbaere - Garant, "'The Mark on the Wall': Virginia Woolf's World in a Snailshell," Revue des Langues Vivantes, 40 (   ), p. 459.

[43] Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich: New York and London, 1957), p. 102; hereafter cited as A Room.

[44] Brace, p. 122.

[45] Brace, p. 123.

[46] McLaughlin, p. 179.

[47] Chapman, p. 334.

[48] Chapman, p. 334.

[49] Delbaere-Garant, p. 461.

[50] Beja, Epiphany, pp. 114-15.

[51] Jeanne Shulkind, Intro. to Moments of Being, by Virginia Woolf (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976), p. 20.

[52] Guiguet, p. 343.

[53] Beja, "Matches Struck in the Dark: Virginia Woolf's Moments of Vision," Critical Quarterly, 6, Summer 1964, p. 138.

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VITA

Pamela Dale Efird was born in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 25, 1956. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. James Worth Efird, also of Charlotte. She attended school in that city and graduated from South Mecklenburg High School in the Spring of 1974. The following September she entered Appalachian State University to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in English. She completed that degree in May of 1978 and accepted a teaching position at Cherokee High School in Gaffney, South Carolina.

In the fall of 1979, Ms. Efird accepted a teaching assistantship in the English Department at Appalachian State University and began study towards a Master's degree. Her Master's degree was awarded by the Department of English in the Spring of 1985.

Ms. Efird is currently living in Washington, DC and is employed as a technical support representative by WHY Systems, a microcomputer firm based in Fairfax, Virginia. Her permanent address is:

1933 Edgewater Drive
Charlotte, North Carolina 28210