

**Virginia Woolf's Apples:
Representational Opposed to Abstract Art
(1918-1927)**



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Let us hold painting by the hand ...
painting and writing have much to tell each other:
they have much in common (WS 21).

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Illustrations

1. Pinta Graphic Design, Compilation of Roger Fry's *Virginia Woolf* (1917, © Bridgeman Art Library) and Vanessa Bell's *Still Life with Apples in a Bowl* (1919, @ AskArt).
2. Paul Cézanne, *Pommes*. 1877-1878. Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge.
3. Duncan Grant, *Duncan Grant's Shutters*. Shutter design for 38 Brunswick Square. 1912, The Courtauld Gallery.
4. Vanessa Bell, *Dust jacket To the Lighthouse*, Hogarth Press, 1927.
5. Vanessa Bell, *Newhaven Lighthouse*, 1938, Charleston Collection.

Abbreviations

Art	Schilderkunst van A tot Z
CF	Character in Fiction
D	Diary of Virginia Woolf
MF	Modern Fiction
OB	Old Bloomsbury
SF	The Sun and the Fish
SK	A Sketch of the Past
SL	Selected Letters
WS	Walter Sickert

Cézanne's Apples

In March 1918, John Maynard Keynes bought *Pommes* by Cézanne. The following month the painting was shown to some of his Bloomsbury friends, among them Virginia Woolf. In her diary she describes the scintillating effects the canvas has on her aesthetic sense.

There are 6 apples in the Cézanne picture. What can 6 apples *not* be? I began to wonder. There's their relationship to each other, & their colour, & their solidity.... We carried it into the next room, & Lord! How it showed up the pictures there, as if you put a real stone among sham ones; the canvas on the others seemed scraped with a thin layer of rather cheap paint. The apples positively got redder & rounder & greener. I suspect some very mysterious quality of potation [?] in that picture (D I 140-141).

[A]nd all of us gloating upon these apples. They really are very superb. The longer one looks the larger and heavier and greener and redder they become (qtd. in Fenton 121).

The *Pommes* (figure 2) has no distracting frills; there is no profusion just simplicity. It is so very *down to earth*. The focus is on the apples for there are no other objects to distract the view; they are presented naturally not artificially, and are no more beautified than reality itself. These are not like the smooth looking apples on earlier still-lives; these do not pose but just lie there on an irregular surface which gives an irregular shadow. There is no false light; sunlight is seen in the orange gold of the apples on the left. "What can 6 apples *not* be? I began to wonder" Woolf asks herself. Seeing these apples she is stunned and realises that they can stand for every symbolic meaning and not just a few. Literally, apples can have a religious or mythological symbol for sin, love, sexuality and temptation; or they can be associated with Eve's temptation, Snow White's stupor and William Tells skill and other legendary folk tales, or with the theory of Isaac Newton. Yet these are not the symbols of which Woolf is thinking. These apples symbolize strength and pureness. She sees their relationship; individual they may be but do not stand alone. Together they are the

focus. Nothing else is disturbing this focal point. Their colours -red, yellow, and green- seem to flow into one another and together, create a unity, form the background. The solidity of the apples is not affected by the fused colour of the setting nor the side where the light comes in or shadows appear. Their sturdiness is only enforced by the fact that they are just simple, ordinary, domestic objects: apples. Cézanne shows the splendour of pure nature, like gemstones. Woolf recognizes this they grow before our eyes. The beauty is not recognizable in one glimpse. One needs to learn how to look, only then do they get “redder and rounder and greener”. Only then their significant form, the artless archetype, comes through. One must discover personally the beauty of plain apples of everyday objects. The Bloomsbury friends were “intoxicated” by and “gloated” at them, were in awe, maybe therefore she miscalculated them as many scholars who quote her do. Nevertheless, in Cézanne she found a kindred spirit. She discovered that his way of painting was how she wanted to write.



Figure 2

It is important to focus on Cézanne and his *Pommes* to discover their analogy to Woolf. The painting was “executed” somewhere after 1877; twenty years later or so, in January 1896 it was “bought by Degas for 100 francs”. In March 1918, it was “acquired in Paris by John Maynard Keynes at the sale of the contents of Degas’ studio” (Fitzwilliam) and whose “disembarkation-tale” has become famous as “A Cézanne in the Hedge” (Bromley 5). To Cézanne, fruit had “spherical forms”. He concentrated his attention on the disposition of the objects, seen from above and other different viewpoints as well together with composition, and studied the fall of light (Art 119-120). He was a man who devoted his life in “search for the reality which he had to draw forth and render apparent” (Fry 38). In his still-life painting he manages to express “the most exalted feelings and the deepest intuitions of his nature” (Fry 39). Cézanne painted numerous still-lives among which many apples. His drive to do so was a “perpetual attempt” to reconcile the mind with the eye (Fry 40). This attempt is recognizable in Woolf’s writing. She connects the process of thought and feeling together in verbal images. This implies that the interior becomes exterior, tangible and perceptive to the reader. She combines two elements that are traditionally complete opposite. Loose parts melt together and even failed images can become a *vehicle* to fuse opponents in order to get perspective (Bromley 2). Using this method, both Cézanne and Woolf claim that not everything we see is certain; that the observer’s own interpretation combines a new picture. *Pommes* harmonizes with Woolf’s idea of images and the cooperation between the “seer and the seen” (Bromley 5): “The longer one looks the larger and heavier and greener they become” (D 140). For the world -which they represent- will not drain away because of the delay of our interpretations. The still-life is based on looking on from different perspectives and their innumerable translations will mount our expectations, despite their humility. By looking carefully the observer will be

connected to the object and realise that to grasp its meaning is as complex as the one who notices (Bromley 5).

For Cézanne the process of looking acquires caution. In his letters (1904-1905) to his friend Émile Bernard, he wrote:

Painters ... should treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere and the cone, their ensemble put into perspective so that each side of an object is directed towards a central point; nevertheless, since nature, for us, is more depth than surface.. The eye needs to summarize, must merge, and the mind will formulate it.... Painting from nature is not copying the object; it is realizing sensations (Cézanne qtd. in Bromley 6).

Simple shapes, like the “cylinder, the sphere and the cone” can become one in what they represent, can share “a central point”. The apples in his still-lives are not presented as mere single objects; it is the consciousness of the viewer together with the image that builds the representation. Cézanne gives the eye a task; it “needs to summarize” and “merge”. The eye needs to cohere between the outer vision and the inner association to build up the picture. In *The Sun and the Fish*, Woolf too instructs the eye: “[o]ne says to the eye Athens ... and one waits ... to see what will happen next”, and “let us see what the eye can do for us ... the mind’s eye is only by courtesy an eye” (SF 188). So the eye needs to cooperate with the mind to discover the real, complete picture. To wrestle with Woolf’s images needs practice. One needs to look at a world in which her approach of illusion is shown; a world build up from relations, not “linear or transparent” (Bromley 2). She “abandoned linear narratives” in her writing for she preferred the inner world of the individual (Norton 2081). Roger Fry said that Cézanne withdraws these apples from any surroundings and places them in a pure spiritual world in which their “harmonies and contrasts achieve a visual symphony endowed with a deep inexpressible eloquence” (qtd. in Bromley 5). Cézanne did not only see light-effect, but solidity, shape and structure interweaved with aesthetic experience that ordinary things can create.

He eagerly accepts the most ordinary situations, the arrangements of objects which result from everyday life. ... nonetheless these scenes [still-lives] in his hands leave upon us the impression of grave events ... it is not from lack of emotion that these pictures are not dramatic, lyric, etc., but rather by reason of process of elimination and concentration. They are, so to speak, dramas deprived of all dramatic incident (Fry 42).

In her use of stream of consciousness narration, Woolf presents apples as the fruit of the mind. In her essay *Modern Fiction*, she writes:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there (MF 9).

She too concentrates her attention on the disposition of the *objects*, seen from above and other different viewpoints as well together with composition, and studies the accent, the *fall of light*. Woolf's and Cézanne's concordance lies in the use of combination and therefore the emphasis on *significant form* from daily objects or events to create aesthetic emotion. According to Horace, "painting must be like poetry," his belief was "that there do exist paintings in which the literary element and the plastic element enter into a very intimate [chemical] combination" (qtd. in Bromley 5). The counterpart to this statement is that prose and poetry *must* be like painting.

Significant Form

Already in 1913, Clive Bell, Woolf's brother-in-law, said that significant form is manifest when objects stir aesthetic emotion, and that this is specifically perceptible when a complex form is reduced to a single, powerful image, like Cézanne's apples or Woolf's language. Receiving aesthetic emotion can only be done through the eyes; emotions must be incited by the eye (Bell). Furthermore, significant form is a "combination of lines and colours ... [and] arrangements" that *moves* the viewer. This alone is the "quality common and peculiar to all the works of visual art" (Bell). Since Woolf is aware of the process of painting; she uses "language of painting to describe her own writing" (Benzel). For instance in her essay *Pictures and Portraits* she writes: "after a prolonged dumb gaze, the very paint on the canvas begins to distil itself into words - sluggish, slow-dropping words that would, if they could, stain the page with colour; not writers' words" (qtd. in Goldman 115). The relationship between the verbal and the visual is unmistakable to Woolf and her work; "the arts flirt and joke and pay each other compliments" (Woolf qtd. in Benzel). Bradbury and McFarlane conclude that Woolf's work is "not bound up with historical change" or "intervention", but that she "believed in the aesthetic nature of the opportunity" and therefore creates "significant harmony". They say that Woolf's art ... connects the "means to transcend both history and reality", and they link this to the aesthetics of Fry and Bell, the "significant form" (qtd. in Goldman 8-9). Lewis Hind writes in a review of the Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910 that these painters "were not concerned with recording impressions of colour or light" but only with "the discoveries of the impressionists only so far as these ... helped them to express emotions which the objects themselves evoked" (qtd. in Goldman 125). It is the artist's task to move people by way of this mixture and both Cézanne and Woolf are capable of evoking it. She proves that this property goes beyond the visual art.

Woolf's form as a frame

To get a better understanding of why she was so exhilarated by Cézanne's painting it is important to look at the frame of her childhood. One needs to dive into Adeline Virginia Woolf, née Stephens, her roots and who and what had influenced her. In *A Sketch of the Past*, she claims that one of the difficulties writers deal with in writing memoirs, is that they tend to "leave out the person to whom things happened. Who was I then?" she asks herself. She was "born into a very communicative, literate, letter writing, visiting, articulate, late nineteenth century world" (SK 65); born in 1882 in the last decades of the Victorian Era. She was "a nervous, apprehensive and intensely responsive child ... afraid at night ... the outside world alarmed her" (Lee 104). Furthermore, she was oversensitive, unstable, talented, witty and abused; her mother died when she was thirteen and her father when she was twenty-two. Partly due to her personality and the early circumstances together with genetic predisposition she suffered from manic depressions along with anorexia nervosa (Lee 172). Her first memory takes her back to her mother's lap of which she strongly remembers the colours of her dress: "red and purple flowers on a black ground ... I therefore saw the flowers she was wearing very close; and can still see purple and red and blue, I think, against the black; they must have been anemones, I suppose" (SK 64). Colours, along with waves and light, remain important in Woolf's novels and those of her mother's dress and other incidents at St. Ives reappear especially in *To the Lighthouse*. This first memory leads into another:

The next memory ... was more robust; it was highly sensual. It was later. It still makes me feel warm; as if everything were ripe; humming; sunny; smelling so many smells at once. ... the apples were on a level with one's head ... red and gold ... pink flowers; and grey and silver leaves ... [t]he buzz, the croon, the smell ... such a complete rapture of pleasure. ... It was rapture rather than ecstasy (SK 66).

Noticeable is that together with this memory, two other memories of the same period and place are related to apples (SK 71, 114). While remembering the last apple-image, even while writing it “the light changes; an apple becomes vivid green” (SK 114), says Woolf. Apples seem to have had an impact on her sensibility.

Nevertheless, there is more to discover about the allurements of Woolf to Cézanne’s *forbidden* fruit. According to Rosner, writers deeply understand and reflect the conventions of their time and the freedom and space it allows toward humans (1). “From the late nineteenth century on, many novels portray how Victorian spaces could limit personal ambition and dramatize how individuals were constrained by hierarchical and compartmentalized Victorian spaces” (Rosner 8). Together with her sister Vanessa, Woolf was struggling against these Victorian constraints. During the period after their mother and half-sister Stella had died and their father was still alive, Virginia and Vanessa formed an alliance. “Nessa and I formed together a very close conspiracy” (SK 123). “We had an alliance that was so knit together that everything ... was seen from the same angle” (SK 124). Their brothers away, they were left alone with their father. In this situation, the Victorian and the Edwardian age seemed to be confronted; their father, who could have been their grandfather, was their “most imminent obstacle and burden” who allowed them no “standing place for themselves” (SK 124). Both Vanessa and Virginia liked to explore life and longed for revolutionary changes and reforms. “But our surroundings were at least fifty years behind the times” (SK 126-127). This Victorian life bounded them, thwarted their ambition made them like “cases with glass covers in which one is shown ants or bees going about their affairs” (SK 127). They were only able to escape this pressure from ten to one in the morning when Vanessa went to art school and Virginia reading the classics and acquiring Greek. In the afternoons and evenings they had to be *in*, and be “better

dressed and tidier ... to sit at that table ... having nothing better to do ... to be ready with small talk; ready to take father's trumpet and convey whatever was likely to help; ready to take our part –in what?" (SK 128). The bourgeois boredom drips from the paper. In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. Ramsay's work, and following from this line his character, is compared to a "kitchen table", the unmovable and rational "nature of reality" (28); and the anger the children and Lily show in the last part of the novel can be compared to the frustration of the Stephen sisters who had "to sit at that table ... ready to take father's trumpet" (SK 128), the trumpet of convention and rationality. Furthermore, the overdone scrubbing of neck and arms and dress code was "far more important than pictures and Greek" (SK 130). The parties they had to attend, together with half-brother George, Woolf describes as a circus:

George was the acrobat who jumped through hoops, and Vanessa and I beheld the spectacle. We had good seats at the show, but we were not allowed to take part in it. We applauded, we obeyed –that was all (SK 132).

The pressure of Victorian society was like a 'competent machine' which crushed girls into married women. It had no doubts, no mercy; no understanding of any other wish; of any other gift (SK 135).

The opulent Victorian frame shows surface and decorum; Leslie Stephen raised his children rationally, metaphysically; in his work *The Science of Ethics* (1882), he separated "ethics from religion" (Lee 232). Philosophy and aesthetic emotion had no existence in his view and upbringing. The picture is clear, two talented young women who, despite their intellectual family, felt that within the family, downstairs, life was "pure convention". Upstairs in their own rooms in the little space that was given to them, there was "pure intellect" (SK 135). There they could discuss the art of painting and writing for those worlds fitted them. Together they could drift away "like ships in an immense ocean" and experience "great satisfaction from impersonal things ... smells of flowers and dead leaves and chestnuts, by which you distinguished the seasons, and each had innumerable associations, and power to flood the brain in a second" (Reminiscences 29). No "small

talk” but self-reflexive attention; not bodily surface but inner beauty. Their way to survive resonances the Victorian time as the “age of split personalities who solve their social and sexual problems by neatly separating mind and body, good and evil, upstairs and downstairs” (Showalter qtd. in Rosner 53).



Figure 3

Vanessa's & Bloomsbury Influences

Doubtless Victorian society had left its marks on her, and so did the new era. “[O]n or about December 1910 human character changed” (CF 38) is probably one of her most quoted remarks. Yet for her, radical changes started earlier when, in 1904, after her father died, she, Vanessa, Thoby and Adrian moved to Gordon Square. “It was exhilarating,” Vanessa recalled, “to have one’s own rooms, be master of one’s own time” (qtd. in Rosner 130). Finally they could shake off the suffocating Victorian frame and have their own space literally and figuratively. Vanessa did her utmost to break with Hyde Park Gate by selling furniture and introducing light colours. Woolf was exhilarated: “we were going to do without table napkins ... we were going to paint; to write; to have coffee after dinner instead of tea at nine o’clock. Everything was going to be new; everything was going to be different. Everything was on trial” (OB 163). They had freedom of space and time, freedom of behaviour and speech, brightness instead of heavy dark colours. Woolf has witnessed and written about the eclipse of 1927, but this must have been a figurative eclipse. Now they could experiment and discuss their arts not only upstairs but also downstairs. Their new environment contributed to their artistic development, *their* Victorian bondage had finally come to an end. The sisters had a great influence on each other’s work, which they admired and compared (Lee 286). In 1911 Virginia wrote to Vanessa: “You *are* a painter. I think a good deal about you, for purposes of my own” (SL 67), and around 1913 she wrote: “I’m going to write an account of my emotions towards one of your pictures, which give me infinite pleasure, and has changed my view upon aesthetics” (qtd. in Goldman 149). Almost all dust-jackets (figure 4) of Woolf’s novels were designed by Vanessa, however, Woolf “considered her sister’s work at a deeper level

than that of mere illustrations” (Goldman 150). In a foreword of the second Post-Impressionist exhibition Woolf says about her painter-sister:

She is reported ... to be the ‘most considerable painter of her own sex now alive’. Berthe Morisot, Marie Laurencin, Vanessa Bell – such is the stereotyped phrase which comes to mind when her name is mentioned and makes one’s predicament in front of her pictures all the more exacting. For what ever the phrase may mean, it must mean that her pictures stand for something, are something and will be something which we shall disregard at our peril (qtd. in Goldman 152).

According to Gillespie, Vanessa was the “primary influence from the visual arts upon Woolf’s literary aesthetic” (qtd. in Goldman 115). Throughout her life and career, writing and painting cohabited, and the bond with her sister Vanessa Bell and her painter-friends created a “cross-fertilization” (Patey). Woolf often wondered what she would do “if I were a painter” (SK 66), or “[o]h to be a painter!” (qtd. in Benzel) In her Sickert essay she continues with: “[t]he novelist is always saying to himself how can I bring the sun on to my page? How can I show the night and the moon rising? And he must often think that to describe a scene is the worst way to show it“ (WS 21). Exploring their new world, the sisters visited galleries: ““Oh lord, the lucid colour –the harmony- the perfect scheme’ Virginia exclaimed of a Whistler exhibition” (Lee 216). Next to Vanessa and the galleries, the Bloomsbury group had its impact. ““Bloomsbury’ behaviour ... looks as if it travesties and sabotages the conventions of Victorian life” (Lee 54). In rebellion against social ideas and the bourgeois habits they knightly battled against the norms of their previous generation which preference was the exterior, outward appearances instead of the inner self, thoughts and emotions. It embedded “[p]oetry and promiscuity,” by encompassing experimental creativity and sexual behaviour (Rosner 131). *The Voyage Out*, illustrates in a way how Virginia Woolf experienced the radical changes in herself and in contemporary society; she could “be a person on her own account” (90). The world around her developed and so did she; the challenge was to discover what to do “with her life, [and] how and what

she writes” (Lee 258). Bloomsbury members shared “methodologies and interests that cross disciplines” (Rosner 128), and as a group represented “a particularly vivid and influential embodiment of some of those shifts” (Lee 258). Despite their provocations, rebellions and bohemian attitude, they dared to challenge the world so that “on or about December 1910 human character” *did* change (CF 38); at least for Woolf. The emergence of the innovative Post-Impressionist movement was an impetus to her to work more abstract, to focus on the interior the depth instead of the surface. At the opening for the 2nd Post-Impressionist exhibition Clive Bell stated: “[w]e have ceased to ask ‘What does this picture represent?’ and ask instead, ‘What does it make us feel?’” (qtd. in Goldman 130). Post-Impressionist art –and writing- is not about the underlying idea of the artist alone but about the emotions of the creator and the spectator. For Woolf and her sister, the movement constituted to expose “one’s own instinct and ideas” (Rosner 162) and encouraged them to dress as Gauguin girls for the exhibition ball. Duncan Grant’s provocative decorations at Brunswick Square (figure 3), the utterance of ‘semen’ by Lytton Strachey in the drawing room – “[w]ith that one word all barriers of reticence and reserve went down” (OB 173)- and all the modern art that the Bell’s, Fry and Keynes acquainted her with, offered Virginia confidence to express and develop her own Post-Impressionistic style. According to Gillespie, “Woolf’s equation of the [artistic] world with color is close to the view of modern painters like her sister and like Cézanne” (qtd. in Goldman 115). Woolf did not “gloat” on a Cézanne just once, in 1925 in her essay *Pictures* she says of him: “no painter is more provocative to the literary sense, because his pictures are so audaciously and provocatively content to be paint that the very pigment, they say, seems to challenge us” (qtd. in Goldman 139). She was moved by his colours and his strokes; his work provided the spur of ambition to develop her own style, to express and stir exalted feelings, which culminate in *To the Lighthouse*.

“I have had my vision” (226)

Until I was in the forties ... when I wrote *To the Lighthouse* ... the presence of my mother obsessed me.... It is perfectly true that she obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four. Then one day ... I made up *To the Lighthouse* ... I wrote the book very quickly ... I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her (SK 80-81).

What image can I reach to convey what I mean? Really there is none... Life is, soberly and accurately, the oddest affair; has in it the essence of reality.... all I mean to make is a note of a curious state of mind.... I want to trace my own process (D III, 112).

To the Lighthouse can be seen as an elegy, a lamentation and a description of the shift from Victorian to Edwardian era, where European art got a greater influence, and of reconciliation and development from childhood to maturity seen from Woolf's perspective. Its structure can be compared to a modern triptych where three stadia or stages form a unity. Although a triptych is most famous from sacral altarpieces, contemporary modernist painters, like Piet Mondrian (1910), Max Beckmann (1943) and Francis Bacon (1944), created them outside this context (Art 508, 47, 30). Woolf's triptych is about the loss of people, through useless and unfair death, that drags away a person's safety and anchor. By connecting her own grief to the atrocious losses of scores of people during the Great War, the canvas serves as a pathologic investigation to visualize restoration of peace, hers and society. Its style shifts somewhat from Impressionism to Realism and then to Post-Impressionism (Banfield). The technique Woolf uses is like a *mise en abyme*, a frame within a frame, a story within a story. Narration of memory, acceptance and reconciliation is mirrored in Lily's paintings. Realism is recognised in the "spatial relation" where "time passes not as *durée* but as a series of still-lives" (Banfield). Time is conceived by Woolf as psychological by which she follows a path leading from obsession to grief to liberation.

The First Frame

The central piece, 'Time Passes', is the bridge between Victorian and Edwardian, memory and understanding, convention and freedom, and between stroke of light and brushstrokes. This transition she shows through painting, not writing (Lee 283). The interlude "transforms story into novel by relating past to future in a time-series, creating a Post-Impressionist 'modern fiction'" (Banfield). Besides alluding to WW I, when refugees had to leave their homes and many men had to leave their loved ones to defend them and never returned, it is also an allusion to other leviathan battles. For instance, the struggle of society which she describes in her essay *Character in Fiction* where "the Victorian cook [who] lived like a leviathan in the lower depths" and changed into to "a creature of sunshine and fresh air" (38). Altering social relations is mostly like fighting a Megalosaurus. 'Time Passes' is also "a description of physical reality of the character's life" (Moise 234) and of the psychological struggle for survival of Woolf herself after the death of three of her beloved family members.

One of the striking differences of the central piece compared to the adjacent pieces is the use of colour. The piece is nearly black and white with a few pastel shades here and there. Of the four visual primaries, blue, red, green, and yellow (Stewart 4), abundantly used in the other parts, only two are mentioned here: green and yellow. The green, referring to femininity, sea, distance, transcendence and illusion (Stewart 3) and the important green shawl, imagery of a mother and/or nature, has become "faint" (139) and is "suffused through leaves" (154). The green shawl (142,145) has lost its colour here for death has taken the *Madonna*. The yellow, alluding to (masculine) eyes, moon and light (Stewart 3), is slightly only connected to "haze" (145) and a "beam" in remembering Mrs. Ramsay (149). Furthermore, the piece sets off with "darkness" that "swallowed red and

yellow dahlias” (137) and the minimum of light it shows is “random” and “pale” (138) and is just enough to channel through obscurity (143). Even in spring, the violets and daffodils seem to have no colour and “were as strange as the chaos and tumult of night” (147).

Darkness is in the environment and in the inner self.

A first detail of the central painting shows the uninhabited rooms that represent hollow emptiness and severe losses of people.

So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left--a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes—those alone kept the human shape....

So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted; solitary like a pool at evening, far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen. Loveliness and stillness clasped hands in the bedroom, and among the shrouded jugs and sheeted chairs even the prying of the wind, and the soft nose of the clammy sea airs, rubbing, snuffling, iterating, and reiterating their questions--"Will you fade? Will you perish?"--scarcely disturbed the peace, the indifference, the air of pure integrity, as if the question they asked scarcely needed that they should answer: we remain.

Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence (140-142).

The quotidian objects correspond to Cézanne's *cylinder*, *sphere* and *cone*, and therefore abstracted. Woolf paints a still-life and the effect of time she portrays in objects to give the seer different perspectives and numerous translations of the interior. The rooms are abandoned, not just for a few nights or a season. The house is *homeless*; its residents are snatched away by enemy forces without resistance. Nothing was stable and solid anymore but in a “furred” and “tarnished” state. The objects are hollow and seem so abruptly left behind that they give the impression of sudden, unexpected and unprepared. No space and time for love, no life remained just a dark, lifeless pool in which nothing seems to survive.

Underneath the lifeless, trivial matters the emotions “loveliness” and “stillness” are personified and despite the lamentable, solitary situation they present they will not fade, not perish. They clasp hands to remain, to survive. Peace is disturbed cruelly but the image is not a broken one only a silent one. Life seems forgotten, yet is not completely vanished. This picture is a silent witness of hope and survival despite the “far distant, vanishing pool at evening”. It is only veiled, not completely consigned to oblivion. The united fragments and the deserted home represent the effect of unexpected horror, fallen down abruptly, but are not destroyed completely.

The second detail of the central piece in the triptych is an illustration of the house and surrounding garden.

Night after night, summer and winter, the torment of storms, the arrow-like stillness of fine weather, held their court without interference. Listening (had there been any one to listen) from the upper rooms of the empty house only gigantic chaos streaked with lightning could have been heard tumbling and tossing, as the winds and waves disported themselves like the amorphous bulks of leviathans whose brows are pierced by no light of reason, and mounted one on top of another, and lunged and plunged in the darkness or the daylight (for night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together) in idiot games, until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself.

In spring the garden urns, casually filled with wind-blown plants, were gay as ever. Violets came and daffodils. But the stillness and the brightness of the day were as strange as the chaos and tumult of night, with the trees standing there, and the flowers standing there, looking before them, looking up, yet beholding nothing, eyeless, and so terrible (146-147).

The house is occupied territory. Natural elements are in charge without showing any differences. Whichever season it might be is of no importance the situation is unchangeable. Not even nature has any influence on the grieving situation outside, the war, or inside, Virginia Stephen’s own lament. Both are depicted as “gigantic chaos” from the “upper rooms”. They refer to the war as a dire fate which is inevitable and no individual has any influence in stopping it, as if loud-thundering Zeus’ hackles are raised and not

even Demeter is able to avert the evil. Besides that, they refer to Woolf's mental breakdowns. She had the first in 1895 after her mother died and the second in 1904 when her father died. Furthermore, she had one almost after publication of every new novel until the last one after *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1925 (Chronicles xxxiii-xxxvii). *To the Lighthouse* seems to be the first important event in her life which did not arouse a mental breakdown. Nevertheless, the loss of parents and siblings which triggered the collapses, and the war, are unreasonable *leviathans*, monsters that bring destruction and grief and pain "one on top of another". Even spring flowers cannot prevent the chaos; they behold nothing. The house is at the mercy of natural phenomena, such as winds and waves and the seasons, and personifies the lives of the people who used to live in it. This hostile take-over by nature links the state of affairs of the house to that of the world during WW I and Virginia's mental struggles. It mirrors Virginia's lament and psychological wrestle, and of society at war.

The whole middle part of the novel depicts the inevitable connection, yet it is shorter than the other parts and ranges ten years compared to the one and a half day of the other parts. It is also divided into ten chapters, ten separate details which form one piece. This last detail is from chapter ten which enlightens the parts seen so far. Seen through the eyes of Lily Briscoe the character that is also an autobiographical close-up of Woolf herself.

Then indeed peace had come. ... as Lily Briscoe laid her head on the pillow in the clean still room and heard the sea. Through the open window the voice of the beauty of the world came murmuring, too softly to hear exactly what it said--but what mattered if the meaning were plain?... [I]f they [the house was full again] would not actually come down to the beach itself at least to lift the blind and look out. They would see then night flowing down in purple; his head crowned; his sceptre jewelled; and how in his eyes a child might look... Gently the waves would break ... tenderly the light fell (it seemed to come through her eyelids)....

Indeed the voice might resume, as the curtains of dark wrapped themselves over the house, over Mrs. Beckwith, Mr. Carmichael, and Lily Briscoe so that they

lay with several folds of blackness on their eyes, why not accept this, be content with this, acquiesce and resign? The sigh of all the seas breaking in measure round the isles soothed them; the night wrapped them; nothing broke their sleep, until, the birds beginning and the dawn weaving their thin voices in to its whiteness, a cart grinding, a dog somewhere barking, the sun lifted the curtains, broke the veil on their eyes, and Lily Briscoe stirring in her sleep... Her eyes opened wide. Here she was again....Awake (154-155).

A portrait of a woman, recovering from the disasters that had wounded her and her world, is sensitive to the peace that has come at last. The room is clean - Woolf's mental situation is recovering- there are no more traces of chaos neither in the natural world outside as in her inner world. The window is open now since the tensions are eased. Virginia's memories go back to the nursery at St. Ives where she hears the breaking of waves and seeing the light through the blinds that give her a "feeling of the purest ecstasy" (SK 64-65). After the horror of the Great War, the dark times are behind. Night has altered from dark to purple and is no enemy anymore it adds a new colour to the picture (perhaps the child's sweet memory of the mother's purple dress (SK 64)) and looks victoriously. Virginia the child was "afraid at night" (Lee 104), the mature Virginia has conquered her fears. The waves of life are audible again and now gently and tender, no more storms, no more darkness. The house, the world, the now mature woman is ready to accept the losses, to "acquiesce", and to have faith in the times to come. This time the singing birds are true signs of "the sun lift[ing] the curtains". The spell of death, literally and figuratively, worldwide and in Virginia's life, is broken. According to Mrs. McNab "[i]t was too much for one woman" (149); "[i]t was beyond the strength of a woman" (150). Yet she (Lily, Woolf, mankind) survived and was wide awake. The sun had returned just like the solar eclipse in her essay *The Sun and the Fish*: "never was there such a sense of rejuvenescence and recovery" (SE 191). 'Time Passes' is not only a passage of time that fills the gap created by the war it is also a bridge between Woolf's "shadowed by suffering" youth (Norton 2080) and the acceptance and victory of maturity.

The Second Frame

The left panel of the triptych is composed of the house, occupying about three-fifth of the panel, its hedged garden and the sea at the background fill the other space. All primary colours are used in this part and occur in several varieties. The picture could be impressionistic yet the use of words and the free indirect discourse goes beyond this. Each character associates with its own colour: the masculine red, the feminine blue or green and the neuter yellow (Stewart 3). Through the stream of consciousness narration which stems from different characters, colours mix and overflow; their “interactions recall the Post-Impressionism of Cézanne”, who wanted to use “colour in its original significance” while representing “interrelationship in space” (Stewart 4). Furthermore, the stream of consciousness is a realist mode “achieving the illusion that what appears on paper is not of the language-world but of the object-world: they purport to be the direct transcriptions of the author’s, not the character’s mind” (Segal 95). “The role of central narrator is replaced by the internal monologues. Her concept of space and time remains relative” (Brown 40). The jumping from one mind into the other is fragmenting, creates collages, and gives no single source of conception; things can happen simultaneously. Woolf also uses the characters minds to transport ideas and has the reader concentrate on innumerable things that exist underneath, the unconscious desires and the contrast between the rational and emotional. She has chosen not to write “constrained ... not by some unscrupulous tyrant ... to provide a plot ..., and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccably ... in the fashion of the hour” (MF 8). No, she said: “[I]ook within and life, it seems, is very far from being ‘like this’” (MF 9). Consider the myriad impressions of the mind and recognize the free writer who writes this work upon feelings and not upon conventions. A mind receives fragmented information and all these scraps together build up this picture in its Victorian-

window-frame. Through the un-curtained windows of the lively house full of children, adults, guests and attendants random events are disposed. The frames influence the view on the fading Victorian family and social conventions dream-scene. In her novel *The Voyage Out*, windows too have an important role as frame of society. People look out and into windows at and into houses and other people's lives. The frame indicates the point of view, the focalisation; it is more important than the picture. In 'The Window', the rooms are "sparely furnished" (106) they "got shabbier summer after summer" and "the mat was fading; the wall-paper was flapping" (32). The high hedge around the garden had a gap illustrating that the Victorian frame "had blundered" (30) and is flaking off.

One of the central windows shows the drawing room in which Mrs. Ramsay, drawn from Mrs. Julia Stephen, is portrayed. This was not an easy task for Woolf. In *A Sketch of the Past* she writes: "if one could give a sense of my mother's personality one would have to be an artist. It would be as difficult to do that, as it should be done, as to paint a Cézanne" (85). The portrait is twofold visualized through her words and her mind. She who is "like a queen" (11) and compared even to "Queen Victoria" (18) wants her daughters to lead "a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other" (10).

She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband. A sort of transaction went on between them, in which she was on one side, and life was on another.... There were the eternal problems: suffering, death and the poor.... She had said to her children, you shall go through with it.... Why must they grow up and lose it all? ... Nonsense. They will be perfectly happy. And here she was, she reflected, feeling life rather sinister again ... to say that people must marry; people must have children" (66-67).

For this reason, it was so important what one said, and what one did, and it was a relief when they went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of--to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others....

Not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience ... but as a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke (69-70).

One side of the portrait is the beautiful, lovely Victorian mother who sets herself aside for her family and their “eternal problems”, and whose children must “go through with”. What people see is only the surface. This is the romanticized view the child Virginia Stephen had; the one that had obsessed her for what was underneath was invisible first. The vision of the adult Virginia Woolf has changed. She recognizes now the other side of life, the dark deep beneath the surface, the private “core of darkness”, the “wedge of darkness” indicating that the edges of what one sees are not the true ones. “Mrs. Ramsay protects her private self” hiding her darkness that being and doing are different identities (Nussbaum 739). Her account of herself is a true account of the Victorian time; her “making of a non-self” is her escape (Nussbaum 740). Mrs. Ramsey’s identity is represented by her public affairs. Nevertheless, she likes “to be silent”, alone” and “invisible to others”. The ‘split personality’ is just like Virginia and Vanessa felt at 22 Hyde Park Gate where “the division ... was curious” (SK 135). Furthermore, the stroke of light, ”the last of the three ... her stroke” indicates relativity, another kind of ambiguity. “Time is frozen” in this moment; time and light are fused (Brown 45).

A part of the portrait of Mrs. Ramsay, or Mrs. Stephens, is reflected in the garden in the *myse en abyme* of Lily’s painting. Lily’s view is twofold as well: the Victorian mother seen through the adult eyes of a daughter who adores and admires her yet cannot conform to the mother’s ideas. Lily’s picture represents the struggle of breaking free of cutting

loose ties, and a critique too to a world who does not think that women can write or paint. What she paints is an abstract image of a Madonna, a mother and child combination both solid and ethereal.

[A]s she sat in the wicker arm-chair in the drawing-room window she wore, to Lily's eyes, an august shape; the shape of a dome. This ray passed level with Mr. Bankes's ray straight to Mrs. Ramsay sitting reading there with James at her knee... Mr. Bankes tapped the canvas with the bone handle. What did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, "just there"?

Mother and child then--objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty--might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence.

But the picture was not of them, she said. Or, not in his sense. There were other senses too in which one might reverence them. By a shadow here and a light there, for instance. Her tribute took that form if, as she vaguely supposed, a picture must be a tribute. A mother and child might be reduced to a shadow without irreverence. A light here required a shadow there (58-59).

Woolf had chosen to write an elegy on her parents. 'The Window' starts off with memories, of her childhood and particularly of her mother. Her fiction is intertwined with lament, regret and longings. Emotions from events mixed with artistic craftsmanship. Here again is a connection to Cézanne in "the emerging necessity of tangibility, plasticity... on the primordially flat surface of paintings" along with "the sensibility of the visual artefact" (Moise 231-232). Woolf and Cézanne "searched for the invisible layer underneath the ... familiarity of reality, for something solid ... that could be embodied in the consciousness of others.... the seer and the seen" (Moise 232). As Lily says: "the picture was not of them" not in the sense of tangibility alone but interacting with the hidden emotion of the author/painter and the reader/seer. She explains that "other senses" of the artist are shown through the combination of strokes, colours and light fall. Furthermore, "the shape of a dome" is an example of interaction between events, memories and emotions. After Julia Stephen died, just before the funeral, Virginia was taken to Paddington station. This small interval in a huge melodramatic atmosphere of mourning shaped her memory. "I have one memory of great beauty.... It was sunset and the great glass dome at the end of the station

was blazing with light.... I walked along the platform gazing with rapture at this magnificent blaze of colour.... It impressed and exalted me” (SK 93). Where there is shadow there must be light as well; oppositions intensify the aesthetic power to get at the emotions, through the eyes, and make recognizable a work of art. Lastly, the purple shadow, again the memory of the mother, shows the respect and admiration for the Madonna, Woolf’s tribute to her mother.

Another window of the vivid house depicts the family and guests all dressed up at the “infinitely long” (90) dinner table. The table is set with a white tablecloth and napkins (118) and glasses (108), and “the plates making white circles on it” (90). “Eight candles were stood down the table ... and in the middle a yellow and purple dish of fruit” (105). Mrs. Ramsay sits at the head of the table and her husband on the other side. She directs everyone according to her seating plan. Her “greatest achievement of unification is relativistic and like a large body of mass influencing the curvature of space time” (Brown 44).

‘Sit there, please,’ she said ... And meanwhile she waited, passively, for some one to answer her, for something to happen. But this is not a thing, she thought, ladling out soup, that one says.

Raising her eyebrows at the discrepancy--that was what she was thinking, this was what she was doing--ladling out soup--she felt, more and more strongly, outside that eddy; or as if a shade had fallen, and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly... Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her (91).

Pulling her shawl round her, Mrs. Ramsay felt that something was lacking. All of them bending themselves to listen thought, ‘Pray heaven that the inside of my mind may not be exposed,’ for each thought, “The others are feeling this. They are outraged and indignant with the government about the fishermen. Whereas, I feel nothing at all’ (102).

The atmosphere of these details is tense. Everyone is occupied with his or her own affairs and “sat separate”. Mrs. Ramsay feels lonely and responsible for the communication and

socializing. She realizes that social communication suppresses individual meditation and prevents people to reveal what is on their mind (Nussbaum 735). “So, when there is strife of tongues, at some meeting, the chairman, to obtain unity, suggests that every one shall speak in French.... French may not contain the words that express the speaker's thoughts; nevertheless speaking French imposes some order, some uniformity” (98). The contrast between this tableau and Woolf's use of *style indirect libre* in which the characters minds are exposed cannot be bigger. Mrs. Ramsay and Lily, who helped her out by doing “the usual trick – been nice”, (101) mirror the petty circumstances of women in the Victorian era where they were meant to feel what they did not feel and certainly not to feel differently. Their mien was to be demure and to a certain aspect to act taciturn so that the social conventions would not be perturbed. The painting of the family dinner table should represent unity, but instead, this one represents masked characters in an abstract opposition.

A last detail of the dining-room-window is, again, Lily's painting albeit only in her mind. According to Paul Tolliver Brown, in ‘The Window’ women are “affiliated with trees as objects exemplifying the interconnectedness of people and places. Mrs. Ramsay and her conventions “acts as a catalyst for Lily's obsession with moving a tree” (Brown 43). Awkwardly enough this incident is mentioned three times in this part of the novel.

In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me. She took up the salt cellar and put it down again on a flower pattern in the table-cloth, so as to remind herself to move the tree (92).

Then her eye caught the salt cellar, which she had placed there to remind her, and she remembered that next morning she would move the tree further towards the middle (101).

For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle (111).

Poor “independent” Lily feared and envied at the same time, statue of a strong individual who is not afraid to map out her own route. Her quest is a strong resemblance of Virginia and other modernist post-war artists. “Such was the complexity of things. For what happened to her, ... was to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time; that's what you feel, was one; that's what I feel, was the other, and then they fought together in her mind, as now” (111). A conflict Woolf had to deal with was to be torn between sympathies for the blood relation (Lee 50) and to follow her talent and personality. Equally important is the tree as a metaphor. In *A Sketch of the Past*, Woolf describes a scene of her childhood where a tree stands for agony. “And the tree, outside in the dark garden, was to me the emblem, the symbol, of the skeleton agony to which her death [Stella] had reduced him [Jack]; and us; everything” (121). She had lost three relatives in ten years; Lily’s triple flashes of the tree resemble them. Noteworthy is that on the original dust jacket of *To the Lighthouse* (figure 5), painted by Vanessa, three prominent interpretations can be seen. The first could be a lighthouse, the second a fountain, and the third a tree. The sisters drew together, grew together.

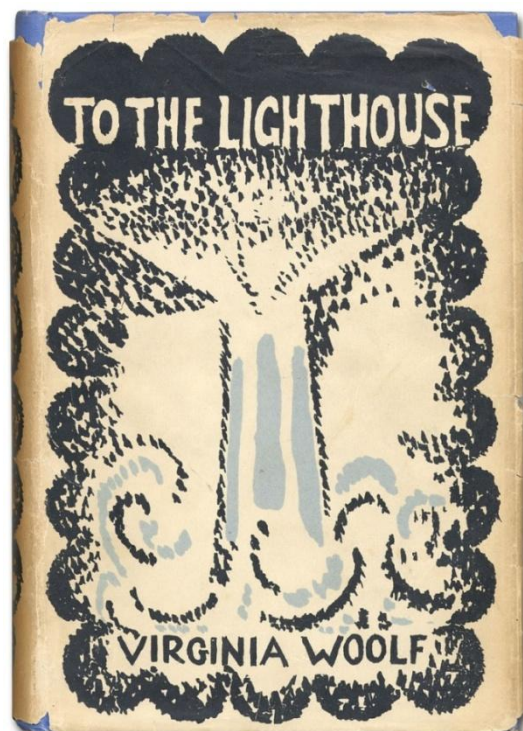


Figure 4

The Third Frame

On the third panel, at the left, one sees an almost invisible small and faded image of the house with a larger and clearer part of the hedged garden where Lily stands painting again and behind that is the sea with boats and the lighthouse. Nevertheless, this is not a descriptive painting which does not touch aesthetic emotions. Woolf has carefully chosen the point of view of the painter Lily Briscoe who starts off with thinking “how aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal... [A]nd like everything else this strange morning the words became symbols.... Perished. Alone....The empty places.... [B]ut how to bring them together” (160-161). The painter struggles with disconnected images, symbols, colours and space and how to merge one image into another to create an entity. However, Woolf, the writer, attempts to form a specific language to merge “the deep and apparently unabridged dichotomy between the fragmented inner world of the self and any sense of coherent order of the world beyond the self” (Johnston, par. 1). The right panel shows the “painful expeditions” (166) of the “fragmented self” (Johnston, par. 4) to reconcile with the modern, post-war world. The first detail is closely connected to a Post-Impressionist still-life: Mr. Ramsay’s boots; isolated from any surrounding the objects are symbolic for character, emotion and inter-relationship; the inner self versus the external consciousness.

Remarkable boots they were too, Lily thought, looking down at them: sculptured; colossal; like everything that Mr. Ramsay wore, from his frayed tie to his half-buttoned waistcoat, his own indisputably. She could see them walking to his room of their own accord, expressive in his absence of pathos, surliness, ill-temper, charm.

"What beautiful boots!" she exclaimed. She was ashamed of herself. To praise his boots when he asked her to solace his soul; when he had shown her his bleeding hands, his lacerated heart, and asked her to pity them, then to say cheerfully, "Ah, but what beautiful boots you wear!" deserved, she knew, and she looked up expecting to get it, in one of his sudden roars of ill-temper, complete annihilation.

Instead, Mr. Ramsay smiled. His pall, his draperies, his infirmities fell from him... He would have her observe (he lifted his right foot and then his left) that she had never seen boots made quite that shape before. They were made of the finest leather in the world, also. Most leather was mere brown paper and cardboard. He

looked complacently at his foot, still held in the air. They had reached, she felt, a sunny island where peace dwelt, sanity reigned and the sun for ever shone, the blessed island of good boots (167-168).

A striking feature of the style and structure of this detail is that the story time and discourse, of the original text, are almost equal in length. In a moment of approximately three minutes, 298 words are exposed to the reader while the models, Lily and Mr. Ramsay, exchange just fifteen words. They “cannot complete a simple and coherent thought without a host of other impressions, memories, feelings ... crowding in upon the mind” (Johnston, par. 2). They know what the other is hoping to receive but their “succession of thoughts” is not in control; they fear that their unstable safety can alter into “dread” any moment (Johnston, par. 2). Lily expects “one of his sudden roars of ill-temper, complete annihilation” while her inner self knows how much he has suffered. Even the allusion of the bleeding hands to the sacrifice of Christ for mankind is not strong enough for her to pity him; she is in agony too and he acknowledges that through his smile. With the depiction of the symbolic objects, the boots, “walking ... of their own accord”, Woolf shows, again, her Post-Impressionistic technique by demanding the eye to see through meaningful objects from different perspectives, as Mr. Ramsay does to Lily, to realize sensation.

The second leading image on this panel is Lily’s new painting based on the one “[s]he had never finished.... [Which] had been knocking about in her mind all these years. She would paint that picture now” (161). Lily’s quest for truth is not accomplished yet; she still had to “move the tree”.... [T]here was the wall; the hedge; the tree. The question was of some relation between those masses... she knew now what she wanted to do” (161). By means of the process of painting, compared to the process of writing, Lily uses a “brush, the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin, chaos” (164) she wrestles with the past,

with the truth, her buried feelings, the squandered losses and facing reality. This detail is simultaneously intertwined with the detail of Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam on their journey to the lighthouse. Woolf writes in her diary about having problems with bringing them, Lily and Mr. Ramsay, together “[s]o that one had the sense of reading the two things at the same time” (D III 106). Both are arduous journeys into acknowledging the truth. While Lily is painting, “she attain[s] a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses [are] one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all [are] related” (172). Her strokes represent her feelings, the interior; they are like waves which “she saw ... towering higher and higher above her” (172). She knows that her *Leviathan* is not conquered yet:

[D]rawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers - this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention. She was half unwilling, half reluctant (172-173).

Like most of the other characters, Lily wants to know the meaning of life and in particular hers. Her desire is to become “the autonomous individual” and not to have a “traditional social identity” (Johnston 7); she wants to live a chosen life not one that is imposed, as Mrs. Ramsay wanted her to have. Yet, the modern, fragmentized person still needs recognition of the other. Finding the balance between the person and society is necessary; sweet are the uses of adversity. Therefore, “as she dipped into the blue paint, she dipped too into the past there” (187) or else it could never be completed. The buried pain must be dug up before it can heal; the “odd-shaped triangular shadow” (218) must find its place; the tree must be replaced.

The last detail on the right panel is the boat scene: “[d]own there among the little boats which floated ... there was one rather apart from the others” (176). Woolf portrays Mr. Ramsay in the middle reading his book and smoking pipe, perfectly content (178).

James is at the helm and Cam in the bow; both united in their pact to “resist tyranny” (179). Tension is tangible and the waves are, like Lily’s brushstrokes, searching for a way to heal the pain in each one of them and to find new cohesion in a mutilated family.

According to her diary “this last lap, in the boat, is hard.... I am forced to be more direct and more intense. I am making more use of symbolism” (D III 109-110). The trip to the lighthouse, similar to Lily’s process of painting, forces every member to analyze love, affection, anger, grief and sorrow. One example of Woolf’s use of symbolism is ‘painted’ on the mind of James:

Suppose then that as a child sitting helpless in a perambulator, or on some one's knee, he had seen a wagon crush ignorantly and innocently, some one's foot? Suppose he had seen the foot first, in the grass, smooth, and whole; then the wheel; and the same foot, purple, crushed. But the wheel was innocent. So now, when his father came striding down the passage knocking them up early in the morning to go to the Lighthouse down it came over his foot, over Cam's foot, over anybody's foot. One sat and watched it.

But whose foot was he thinking of, and in what garden did all this happen? ... [A]nd over all those plates and bowls and tall brandishing red and yellow flowers a very thin yellow veil would be drawn, like a vine leaf, at night. Things became stiller and darker at night. But the leaf-like veil was so fine, that lights lifted it, voices crinkled it; he could see through it a figure stooping, hear, coming close, going away, some dress rustling, some chain tinkling.

It was in this world that the wheel went over the person's foot. Something, he remembered, stayed flourished up in the air, something arid and sharp descended even there, like a blade, a scimitar, smiting through the leaves and flowers even of that happy world and making it shrivel and fall (200-201).

The pact James and Cam have is against the hypothetical tyranny of their father. The foot is crushed, but whose foot? They project their own anger on the father. He is the tyrant the one that loses his temper not them. “But the wheel was innocent” he suddenly realizes; the foot was already crushed in a “garden” ages ago in Eden where mankind lost its paradise. The wheel is not the father but the mother the “leaf-like veil” in a “rustling dress”. Her death was the “scimitar” and his father was not to blame. While sailing nearer to the lighthouse, for only in light does one see things clearly, the lighthouse seems altered from

“a silvery misty-looking tower with a yellow eye” to clear “black and white” with “windows in it” (202). His view has changed “[f]or nothing was simply one thing” (202). This time in the “rustle” he identifies that “[i]t was his father now” (202). Immediately, he realizes that “[a] rope seemed to bind him there, and his father had knotted it and he could only escape by taking a knife and plunging it.... the relief was extraordinary (203). The umbilical cord was cut and so was the Oedipus complex. Now he could allow his love for his father. Meanwhile, at the lawn, Lily experiences the same revelation expressed by Woolf in the “stain[less]” and “silk” sea (204). Stepping back from her painting creates distance just like the boat trip. “Distance had an extraordinary power ... part of the nature of things ... the steamer itself had vanished ... smoke ... like a flag mournfully in valediction” (204). She too loses her prejudices and her preconceptions. Simultaneously Cam feels she is “escaping from a sinking ship” (204) and feels relieved like a “fountain of joy” (205) and knows they all “have perished, each alone” (207). “So coming back from a journey, or after an illness, ... [one] felt something emerge. Life was most vivid then. One could be at one’s ease.... empty it was not, but full to the brim” (208) is Lily’s conclusion which is shared by the others because they are now able to reconcile. The “balance between two opposite forces” had necessarily come together.... Phrases came. Visions came” (209).

"He must have reached it" ... Ah, but she was relieved. Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last.

‘He has landed,’ she said aloud. ‘It is finished.’... He stood there as if he were spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly and compassionately, their final destiny. Now he has crowned the occasion (225).

With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision. (226).

The relief is shared by all characters, by the people of post-war world and Woolf herself. They can stand up and start afresh. In writing this elegy Woolf has had her vision as well. She's no longer obsessed by her mother or haunted by inexplicable events. She has rearranged her memories by noticing that a tree can have many representations. The vision she shared with Cézanne is that there is an "invisible layer underneath the filmy conventionality ... something solid ... that could be embodied in the consciousness of the other" (Moise 232). The work of art is often to assimilate to and to handle with psychological experiences. This process enables them to receive and to translate their vision. In this consciousness is the interaction between the objects and the onlooker, the verbal and the visual, the writers/painter and his/her work.



Figure 5

Conclusion

In exploring Post-Impressionistic characteristics in the visual arts, as well as the verbal arts, the most eye-catching element is the significant form which objects can communicate together with their composition, lines and colours, and light fall. Ordinary everyday-life *apples* show reality and express and stir emotions. To separate loose items from their environment, or look into the minds of individual people, is to see the world behind the surface, the spiritual world, and to realize that life has different views. This can only be achieved by an interaction between the object and the seer (or reader). The objects are the focalizers but the seer is the interpreter who reconciles the eye with the mind. Post-Impressionism has developed from its frames to create new ones. In *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot calls this “a principle of aesthetics” that the creation of new art is based, “simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it” (2320). Cézanne and Woolf have unconsciously built upon their predecessors, and they had the talent and sensitivity to express exalted feelings and to create aesthetic emotions. Woolf’s work has become more ‘showing’ than ‘telling’; her visual images, the myriad-of-mind-impressions and her eye for details have significant form. Virginia Woolf, the painter-writer, creates her *apples* in writing and, for the reader, the experience of them is as overwhelming and awesome as was her taste of Cézanne’s *Pommes*.

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Acknowledgements

On a beautiful Indian summer day Red Riding Hood's mother asked her to bring a basket of fresh picked fruit and delicious homemade pies to grandmamma. So up she went over the hill through the forest to visit her grandmother. While walking in the hills and passing some copse she bumped into a wolf. "Well hello there", said the wolf, "how are you today?" "Fine thanks. How are you?" returned Red Riding Hood politely and on full alert. "Heading for grandmamma are you?" asked wolf. "Yes I am to bring her some food". "Oh, and what'll she get today?" asked wolf eagerly. Now Red Riding Hood had some experience with wolfs so she said: "listen wolf, I have no time to waist for granny is waiting for me and will be worried sick if I don't come right away. Is there something I can do for you?" "Well, admitted he, "I happened to notice some apples in your basket and wondered if you were willing to give me some". Red Riding Hood thought very hard on his request and this is what she decided: "If I were to give you say six or seven of these apples would you do me a favour too?" "Oh, anything you ask", said wolf while gloating on the apples. "Well, before you eat them I want you to look at them very intensely and write down what you see and after that you make a nice colourful drawing of what you have seen. This description and picture then you will send to me." Wolf was surprised but so lustfully wanting the apples that he agreed.

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