To the Lighthouse Study Guide

To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

The 1927 publication of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* was a landmark for both the author and the development of the novel in England. Usually regarded as her finest achievement, it won her the Prix Femina the following year, and gained her a reputation as one of Britain's most important living authors. Not only was it a critical success, it was popular too, selling in large quantities to a readership that encompassed a broad spectrum of social classes. Since Woolf's death in 1941, *To the Lighthouse* has risen in importance as a focus of criticism concerning issues of gender, empire, and class. Along with James Joyce's *Ulysses,* it continues to be heralded as a milestone in literary technique.

The complexity of Woolf s writing in *To the Lighthouse* has become almost proverbially intimidating, as suggested famously in the title of Edward Albee's 1962 play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Written from multiple perspectives and shifting between times and characters with poetic grace, the novel is not concerned with plot. Instead, it paints a verbal picture of the members of the Ramsay family and their friends. In the first section, the character of Mrs. Ramsay is the lens through which most of the perspectives are focused, and her son's desire to go "to the Lighthouse" is the organizing impetus from which the picture takes shape. In the central section, the Lighthouse stands empty as the narrative marks the passage of time and the death of many of the characters. In the third and final section, with Mrs. Ramsay dead, the remaining family and friends finally get to the Lighthouse, and the novel becomes a meditation on love, loss, and creativity.

Author Biography

One of the greatest literary figures of the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf was born in London in 1882. The daughter of the prominent literary critic Sir Leslie Stephen, she was educated in the literary and intellectual atmosphere of her home. Her mother died in 1895, and after the death of her father in 1904, Woolf moved to the Bloomsbury area of London. Living with her sister, Vanessa, and brothers, Thoby and Adrian, her house became the center of a circle of artists and writers who would become known as the Bloomsbury Group. One of the members of this group, Leonard Woolf, became her husband in 1912. In this unconventional and intellectually charged atmosphere, she began publishing reviews and essays.

Woolf s career as a novelist began in 1915, when she published *The Voyage Out.* Though stylistically conventional, it showed an emphasis on character rather than plot which would characterize Woolf's work. This novel was followed by *Night and Day* in 1919 and *Jacob 's Room* in 1922, books in which her writing became increasingly experimental. The 1925 publication of *Mrs. Dalloway* marked the emergence of Woolf s mature, creative voice, with her use of the free association of ideas in her characters' minds. The novel that many regard as her finest publication, *To the Lighthouse,* came out in 1927. By this time she had honed her techniques of nonlinear narrative style, interior monologue, and impressionistic renditions of life, and the book became an instant classic.

Woolf went on to write *Orlando* in 1928, and the next year *A Room of One's Own,* which is an analysis of the problems women writers face in a male-dominated literary world. This work was followed by her extremely experimental novels, *The Waves* (1931) and *Between the Acts* (1941). Despite her success and burgeoning reputation, Woolf never succeeded in maintaining any but the most transient moments of comfort and happiness. Even at the height of literary productivity, she was troubled by a mental illness that showed itself in periods of creative energy followed by lengthy depressions. In 1941, during a depressed period that followed the completion of her last novel, Woolf committed suicide by drowning herself in a stream.

Plot Summary

The Window

The action of *To the Lighthouse* takes place on two days, separated by ten years. The novel begins on a September evening in the Hebrides before World War I, in the middle of a discussion about the possibility of going to the Lighthouse the next day. Mrs. Ramsay, who is sitting in the window with her son, James, thinks the weather will be fair; Mr. Ramsay, who has been walking back and forth on the path with his student Charles Tansley, says that it most definitely will not be. After a prolonged discussion, Mrs. Ramsay reads "The Fisherman and His Wife" to James, and Mr. Ramsay continues his walking.

Meanwhile, Lily Briscoe is painting Mrs. Ramsay and James; she decides to show what she has accomplished to William Bankes, an old friend of Mr. Ramsay. As they are looking at the picture, Cam Ramsay (daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay) runs past, nearly upsetting the easel. Meanwhile, guests Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley are walking with Andrew and Nancy Ramsay; after the four become separated, Nancy finds Minta and Paul kissing behind a rock. Minta loses her grandmother's brooch in the rocks, and Paul tells her he will search for it the next day, when there is more light.

Minta, Paul, Nancy, and Andrew have not yet returned when everyone sits down to dinner. When they enter, Minta says that she has lost her brooch. Mrs. Ramsay decides that Minta and Paul must have gotten engaged, and Lily uses a salt shaker to remind herself that she will move a tree in her picture the next day. At the end of the meal, another guest, Augustus Carmichael, and Mr. Ramsay recite the poem "Luriana Lurilee" in tribute to Mrs. Ramsay.

After dinner, Mrs. Ramsay finds that Cam and James are still awake. Cam is scared of the boar's head that is hanging on the wall, while James screams when it is touched. Mrs. Ramsay covers the skull with her shawl, so that Cam can't see it, but James will know the skull is still in the room. Mrs. Ramsay assures James that on the next fine day, they will go to the Lighthouse.

With the children asleep, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay sit quietly together. Mrs. Ramsay tells Mr. Ramsay that Paul and Minta are engaged. Mr. Ramsay wants Mrs. Ramsay to tell him she loves him, but instead she tells him that his weather forecast was accurate and they won't be able to go to the Lighthouse the next day after all. She feels she has triumphed by not telling him she loves him.

Time Passes

Time moves forward and the nights become colder and wilder. During one of those cold, wild nights, Mrs. Ramsay dies. Prue Ramsay marries, then dies in childbirth. Andrew Ramsay dies in France during the war. The abandoned house begins to deteriorate, and

the caretaker, Mrs. McNab, decides she can't fight the decay of the house. Ten years after Mrs. Ramsay's death, one of the Ramsay children asks Mrs. McNab to ready the house for guests, expecting it to be the same as it was left. With help, Mrs. McNab restores the condition of the house, and the Ramsays and their guests visit in September.

The Lighthouse

Mr. Ramsay has coerced Cam and James into visiting the Lighthouse. Lily decides to finish the picture she started ten years ago. Before he leaves for the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay goes to Lily demanding sympathy, but she praises his boots instead. After the three Ramsays leave, Lily begins to paint, with Carmichael sitting near her. As Lily paints, she begins to think of Mrs. Ramsay, and cries out for her, wanting her to return. Meanwhile, the three Ramsays are sailing to the Lighthouse, and Cam and James are resentful of their father's tyranny. Macalister tells them stories of disasters at sea, and Macalister's boy catches a mackerel.

Lily has a vision of Mrs. Ramsay sitting on the beach with her, and thinks of the disastrous marriage of the Rayleys, which has only been righted by Paul's affair with another woman, and of her cherished friendship with William Bankes. Lily continues to cry out for Mrs. Ramsay. In the boat, Macalister's boy cuts a square out of the mackerel and throws it back into the sea.

After Mr. Ramsay finishes the book he has been reading, they reach the Lighthouse. James and Cam feel reconciled to their father after he praises James's steering, and James is satisfied with the Lighthouse. On shore, Lily thinks they must have reached the Lighthouse, and she realizes that Mrs. Ramsay isn't there, and that she doesn't want her any longer. Lily adds a line in the center of her painting, completing it at last, and feels that she has had her vision. The novel ends with the Ramsays' successful trip to the Lighthouse and Lily's completion of her painting.

The Window Chapters 1 and 2

The Window Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

As the novel begins, Mrs. Ramsay promises her youngest son James that they can make the trip to a nearby lighthouse tomorrow, provided the weather is fair. James, whose hobby is cutting pictures from an army and navy store catalog, is thrilled because he has never made the trip to the lighthouse in all of his six years and the prospect of doing so as soon as the next day is exciting.

Mr. Ramsay dashes young James' hopes for the lighthouse expedition by telling his son that the weather will not be suitable for such a trip tomorrow. Mr. Charles Tansley, a friend of Mr. Ramsay who has come to the Ramsay household for dinner, joins in this negative proclamation. According to Tansley, the wind is coming in from the west, which will prohibit any safe landing at the lighthouse.

Mrs. Ramsay hides her irritation at the men dashing the small boy's hopes and secretly ruminates on her children's rude behavior toward the offensive Tansley. It is not so much Tansley's physical characteristics that the children do not like, but rather the man himself and his negative and sarcastic comments and attitudes.

Mrs. Ramsay feels responsible for protecting men like Tansley who, in spite of all their achievements in the world, do not engender themselves to people personally. In an attempt to make up for the social awkwardness in which Tansley always finds himself, Mrs. Ramsay asks Tansley to accompany her on a trip into town to complete some errands.

On the way to town, Mrs. Ramsay asks a neighbor, Mr. Carmichael, if she can bring him anything, but the man declines the offer. Mr. Carmichael has the potential to be a great philosopher according to Mrs. Ramsay, but unfortunate events in his life prevented his achieving any significant goal. Tansley is pleased that Mrs. Ramsay has included him in this shared confidence and opens up about his own life, including a troubled childhood of near poverty that did not allow the young Tansley to enjoy the pleasures afforded to most children.

Upon reaching the sand dunes and the bay where the lighthouse sits, Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Tansley see an artist, one of many who flock to this area for its tremendous beauty. Upon reaching the town, Mr. Tansley waits patiently while Mrs. Ramsay visits an old woman shut in with illness. Mrs. Ramsay's compassion toward the woman allows Tansley to see Mrs. Ramsay in a completely different light and when she emerges from the old woman's room, Tansley is quite sure that Mrs. Ramsay is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. For the first time in his life, Tansley feels the pride of accompanying a beautiful woman as they walk through the town.

The Window Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

A sense of restrained tension surfaces immediately in the novel. Mrs. Ramsay's loving encouragement for James is immediately squelched by her husband and his friend, Mr. Tansley. James, who is only six years old, experiences a range of emotions from supreme love to supreme hatred, all in the course of only a few moments.

The author sets up not only an important theme of tension but also the stylistic technique of viewing the scene from the character's perspective through his thoughts and emotions. Woolf is known for stream of consciousness writing as opposed to specific plot formats, as is evidenced by Mrs. Ramsay's and James's freeform thoughts.

The author also sets up a world of contrasts upon which this stream of consciousness may play out. Mrs. Ramsay represents all that is kind and generous in the world, while Mr. Ramsay symbolizes everything scientific and factual. Mrs. Ramsay's compassion extends beyond her own family, as exhibited by her visit to the shut-in woman in town, her offer to Mr. Carmichael and her inclusion of Mr. Tansley on her trip into town. The lighthouse stands as a fixed element between these two conflicting points of view and James is caught in the middle, hoping for some resolution with a symbolic trip to the elusive landmark.

The Window Chapters 3 and 4

The Window Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

The house is suddenly very quiet and Mrs. Ramsay feels a brief moment of terror. She realizes that the lull signals the end of Mr. Ramsay's and Mr. Tansley's conversation. Only when Mrs. Ramsay can hear her husband's voice once more is she comfortable again. Suddenly, though, Mrs. Ramsay calls out "Stormed at with shot and shell" and is relieved that the only person within earshot is Lily Briscoe, who is painting outside on the lawn.

Mrs. Ramsay remembers that Lily is painting the Ramsay house and has asked Mrs. Ramsay to sit in her chair with her head lowered. Mrs. Ramsay quickly returns to this position. Lily is consumed with her painting until Mr. Ramsay and Mr. William Bankes interrupt her. Mr. Ramsay makes Lily uncomfortable and she is thankful that he doesn't want to look at her painting. Lily is perfectly at ease with Mr. Bankes, though.

Mr. Bankes is quite taken with Lily and suggests that they take a walk. Lily is torn because she does not want to leave her painting but she is intrigued by the opportunity to share Mr. Bankes' company. They walk and find themselves in a pleasing scene with all the seaside elements of the bay.

As the conversation continues, Mr. Bankes wonders aloud if he has grown old and shrunken. He compares himself, a widower with no children, to Mr. Ramsay and his brood of eight. Mr. Bankes cannot fathom how the Ramsays manage the household for so many people on such a limited income.

As if reading Mr. Bankes' thoughts, Lily also compares the man to Mr. Ramsay and concludes that Mr. Bankes seems more compassionate and consequently more appealing, in spite of a few outbursts of pettiness. Mr. Ramsay appears out of nowhere. Jasper Ramsay, his son, shoots at a flock of starlings and the birds scatter to the winds.

The Window Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

The author shows the diverse natures of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, who experience their perceptions differently. Mrs. Ramsay is more attuned to outside influences and people around her, while Mr. Ramsay is caught up in intellectual pursuits and musings that keep him very inwardly focused. The disparity between their natures is ironically what draws the two of them together.

We also see the Ramsays through Lily's eyes. She shows more than a little bit of affection for Mr. Ramsay and Lily adores Mrs. Ramsay and the life she has created in the house Lily is painting. Mr. Bankes takes a more clinical view of the Ramsays and wonders what might have become of Mr. Ramsay had he not married and fathered eight

children. The author continues to use stream of consciousness to share vast character insight without dialogue.

The Window Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8

The Window Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 Summary

Mrs. Ramsay pauses in knitting a stocking for the lighthouse keeper's boy and asks James to stand so that she may measure the length against his leg. As James fidgets, Mrs. Ramsay glances around her and notices the shabbiness of the furnishings in the house but consoles herself with its relatively low rent and the fact that the children idolize the summers there.

Mrs. Ramsay bemoans her own inadequacies. She has spent her time raising her gifted children. For all their intellect and creativity, though, her children seem unable to grasp the concept that doors should be closed and windows open. This leads Mrs. Ramsay to thoughts of their Swiss maid, Maria, who loves the open windows and whose father is dying from cancer. For a few moments, Mrs. Ramsay is lost in a swell of despair.

William Bankes reflects on a phone conversation with Mrs. Ramsay in which he was overcome with the thrill of speaking to such a beautiful woman. It didn't matter to Mr. Bankes that the conversation concerned a train schedule; the man was thrilled by Mrs. Ramsay's disregard for her own beauty in every possible circumstance. Her attitude makes his admiration for her that much more poignant.

Mrs. Ramsay senses that her husband is near and looks out the window to watch him nearly run into Mr. Bankes and Lily out on the lawn. Muttering lines from "The Charge of the Light Brigade," Mr. Ramsay finally comes out of his trance and Mrs. Ramsay is relieved that things are back to normal again, at least for a few minutes. Catching sight of Mrs. Ramsay and James through the window, Mr. Ramsay learns that Mrs. Ramsay is knitting a stocking for the lighthouse keeper's boy and reiterates his position that the weather will not permit a trip to the lighthouse tomorrow. Mrs. Ramsay suggests the possibility that the weather may be pleasant and her husband is more than a little irritated and offers to call the Coast Guard. Mrs. Ramsay cannot help but feel overwhelming respect for her husband and the situation resolves calmly.

Mr. Ramsay resumes his intellectual meandering on the lawn. He wonders about his life and whether he would be judged a success or failure. Through the window, Mrs. Ramsay offers her husband the sympathy and dose of confidence he needs and Mr. Ramsay's wellbeing is restored once more.

Mrs. Ramsay wonders if she does her husband good or harm by protecting him from the small details of their life. Not wanting to burden him with minutiae, Mrs. Ramsay manages the household without consulting her husband. She is sensitive to the fact that his last book was probably not his best work.

Oblivious to the invisible protections provided by his wife, Mr. Ramsay continues his intellectual ramblings in preparation for his upcoming lectures to his university students.

Ultimately, his rambling thoughts focus on the truth that men really know nothing and that the sea eats away at the ground man stands upon. This cloud of doom hanging over his head, Mr. Ramsay again turns to look at his wife through the window and feels a sense of calm return although he cannot articulate the reasons.

The Window Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 Analysis

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are further defined through more stream of consciousness. Both husband and wife feel inadequate in their respective roles and neither fully comprehends the other's adoration. Mrs. Ramsay has adopted the role of the dutiful wife and has produced eight intelligent and gifted children, but she seeks the perfection that eludes her in the upkeep of their summer house and lacks time to pursue any intellectual endeavors on her own. The author has established Mrs. Ramsay as the beacon of compassion and love for those in her universe.

In contrast, Mr. Ramsay is the hard-nosed intellectual father who passes out orders without remorse or any hope of leniency. Fortunately, Woolf allows the reader to understand Mr. Ramsay's very human vulnerabilities and insecurities through Mr. Ramsay's perspective during his ramblings on the lawn.

The window has become a vehicle for not only looking out toward something but also for looking in. Through the window, Mrs. Ramsay watches her husband and muses about their life, her protection of her husband and her overwhelming respect for him. Mr. Ramsay can clearly see his own life only by watching Mrs. Ramsay and James through the window, as he stands on the lawn lost in his own thoughts. Mrs. Ramsay is also very aware of the windows of the house, preferring open windows and closed doors. The windows are the vehicles for compassion and sensitivity, which she hopes her children will employ, while the concept of closed doors signifies Mrs. Ramsay's protectiveness for her family's emotional needs and security.

The Window Chapters 9, 10 and 11

The Window Chapters 9, 10 and 11 Summary

As the Ramsays gaze at each other, Lily and Mr. Bankes, who are also out on the lawn, observe them. Mr. Bankes feels that Mr. Ramsay is a hypocrite, but Lily thinks that Mr. Bankes is just a little self obsessed and prefers to think of the love that the Ramsays share.

If Lily were to comment on either one of the Ramsays, it would be Mrs. Ramsay, but Lily stops herself from speaking when she sees that Mr. Bankes is clearly enraptured with the older woman. Lily allows Mr. Bankes a few moments to dote on Mrs. Ramsay and turns for a few depleted moments to contemplate her own failure as an artist, shown clearly in the woeful painting she has attempted this afternoon.

Lily shakes off the negativity for now and returns to thoughts of Mrs. Ramsay, this time engendered with more fondness, although Mrs. Ramsay does have a tendency to be willful and controlling. Lily remembers sitting at Mrs. Ramsay's knee, trying to glean the compassion and inner sense of peace the older woman possesses.

Lily's reverie is interrupted as Mr. Bankes moves closer to inspect her painting. All Lily's feelings of insecurity and inadequacy are kept at bay while Lily endures this close scrutiny for the sake of art. Thankfully, Mr. Bankes asks appropriate questions and Lily is content to share her interpretations of the world around her. The two are rudely interrupted as Cam Ramsay dashes by, slowed only slightly by her mother calling her back.

Mrs. Ramsay asks Cam to ask the cook if Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley, two houseguests, have returned from their afternoon walk. Concerned primarily with the social propriety of Minta's being in public with this young man, Mrs. Ramsay also wonders about Paul's intentions toward the young woman. She toys with the thought of the couple marrying.

James' pleas for his mother to return to reading a bedtime story bring Mrs. Ramsay back to the present and she is caught up in the joy of being near her youngest and brightest child. This great pleasure is mingled with a tinge of sadness that only a mother can feel. She thinks of the tremendous joy that her children feel at this point in their lives and knows that that joy will not last. Reprimanded by her husband for being too melancholy, Mrs. Ramsay tries to push back the sadness, but still it remains.

Before bedtime, James asks one last time about the trip to the lighthouse tomorrow and Mrs. Ramsay has to tell him that the trip is not going to happen tomorrow because Mr. Ramsay has said that the weather will not be favorable. As the maid takes the small boy to his bedroom, Mrs. Ramsay realizes that James will remember this moment of disappointment for the rest of his life.

There is nothing Mrs. Ramsay can do to assuage James' disappointment and she resumes her knitting in the house, which is quiet now as the evening has set in. Imagining herself in a wedge-shaped core of darkness, the wife and mother is now free of demands and can let her mind roam where it will. Soon the lighthouse is lit and Mrs. Ramsay is aware of the rhythmic strokes of light. Her mental monologue tells her that "we are all in the hands of the Lord."

Completely surprised at the interjection of this phrase into her thoughts, Mrs. Ramsay wonders about the pain and suffering in the world and how any loving Lord could have made it this way. Mr. Ramsay passes the window at this time and notices the sad look on his wife's face. He knows that he cannot interrupt or help her in her private thoughts.

With another stroke of light from the lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts take a more pleasant turn. She reminisces on all the joys in her life. Again, Mr. Ramsay passes in front of the window and can't help but notice the marked change on his wife's face. Mrs. Ramsay has not looked up but can sense her husband's presence just beyond the window. She stands to retrieve her shawl and join Mr. Ramsay on the lawn.

The Window Chapters 9, 10 and 11 Analysis

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are again viewed through stream of consciousness, although this time it stems from two other characters, Lily and Mr. Bankes. The author has helped to fill out the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay by providing two other perspectives in addition to their own intellectual musings.

Mrs. Ramsay seems to embody some of the characteristics of the author herself, who was known for her periods of deep brooding and sense of foreboding. Compassionate and concerned for the welfare of those entrusted to her care, Mrs. Ramsay drifts into melancholy. She has a mild sense of dread that their happiness will be short-lived. Mrs. Ramsay delights at the arrival of some quiet time. She is not looking forward to some pleasant activity. Instead, the silence allows her to be alone with her brooding. Mr. Ramsay strolls past the window but does not dare interrupt his wife during this time. Mrs. Ramsay's contemplation may stem from artistic sensibilities rather than a depressed state. Mr. Ramsay is unsure and his love for his wife in her melancholy reveals more sensitivity in his character than originally portrayed.

The Window Chapters 12 and 13

The Window Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

As Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay stroll across the lawn, Mrs. Ramsay comments on the flowers and the state of the greenhouse, not mentioning the cost of the repairs being done to the structure. Mrs. Ramsay doubts the gardener's efficiency and Mr. Ramsay teases his wife about exaggerating the situation and changes the subject to that of her beauty. Mrs. Ramsay declares that their daughter, Prue, is much more of a beauty. The Ramsays disagree about their son Andrew. Mr. Ramsay thinks he should be more studious so he can earn a scholarship, but Mrs. Ramsay will support the boy in any of his endeavors. Somehow, the couple is comforted by the expected positions each holds about the boy.

Mr. Ramsay comments on his wife's melancholy look as he viewed her through the window earlier and Mrs. Ramsay is instantly self-conscious about being watched. She wishes she had been more careful to guard her feelings. Mr. Ramsay suggests that he will take a daylong walking trip tomorrow for some solitude, but Mrs. Ramsay knows he will not do it since his age will no longer permit such an excursion. Mrs. Ramsay knows that Mr. Ramsay wants to take the day trip so that he can brood and contemplate without interruption. Echoing his wife's thoughts, Mr. Ramsay thinks to himself that he would have probably written better books had he not married. He then instantly reprimands himself for thinking such thoughts.

Mr. Bankes and Lily are also strolling the grounds this evening and Mr. Bankes shares some of his European travels with the young woman. He encourages her to go to Europe someday. Lily sees the Ramsays coming into view and thinks the couple looks like the perfect definition of a marriage. Much to her chagrin, Lily also knows that Mrs. Ramsay is thinking that Lily and Mr. Bankes should marry.

The Window Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

For the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay engage in conversation, although it is punctuated with their inner thoughts. Theirs is an unusual relationship because although they have an incredibly tight bond, they both still have an uncomfortable sense of being apart. There is some measure of personal discomfort in all Woolf's characters, as evidenced by Lily's insecurities about her art and Mr. Bankes' melancholy about being a childless widower. It is as if the author has imbued the characters with the vulnerabilities she herself feels in order to make them more human and more realistic.

The Window Chapters 14, 15 and 16

The Window Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Summary

Nancy Ramsay would have preferred an escape from family activities today, but Minta, the family's friend, has convinced her to join Paul, Andrew and herself on an afternoon outing. As the group rambles, Minta's style of dress and her impulsive personality intrigue and frustrate him Andrew.

Nancy and Andrew split off from the group to meander on their own. Eventually, the brother and sister come upon Paul and Minta locked in an embrace. Neither Nancy nor Andrew comment on the scene, but it is clear that they are bothered by the incident. To further add to the afternoon's drama, Minta has lost her grandmother's brooch. She is in near hysterics in an attempt to find it. All four of the young people scour the water and nearby shore, but to no avail. They promise Minta that they will return tomorrow when the tide has receded in order to have a better look.

On the way home, Paul sees the lights of the town below and reflects that they seem to be the lights of his own future on the horizon. Paul's marriage proposal to Minta today has put him in a reflective mood and he is anxious to tell Mrs. Ramsay of the day's events. The older woman has been silently encouraging Paul in his thoughts of proposal all day.

It is dinnertime and the four young people have not yet returned. Mrs. Ramsay is concerned not only for their welfare but for the success of tonight's dinner party. Mr. Bankes will be attending a dinner for the very first time. Rose and Jasper visit with Mrs. Ramsay as she finishes dressing and Rose engages in her nightly ritual of choosing the jewels for her mother to wear. Mrs. Ramsay keeps her own exasperation in check as she muses about the emotional bonds of a girl of Rose's age with her mother. As Mrs. Ramsay descends the stairs with Rose and Jasper, she hears the young people returning. She is at once relieved and annoyed but receives her guests graciously as the dinner gong sounds out.

The Window Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Analysis

Nancy and Andrew reflect their parents' personalities almost exactly. Nancy prefers individual alone time for her reflections and is very in tune with the elements of nature around her. Andrew is quite like his father with his impatience with the giddiness and reactions of girls. He is quite irritated with Minta's outbursts, which punctuate what should be a pleasant afternoon.

The relationship between Mrs. Ramsay and her younger children is very tender and loving, although the woman's thoughts still tend toward melancholy. Rose's infatuation with the nightly jewelry ritual is bittersweet for Mrs. Ramsay, who can only imagine the depth of the child's feelings and realizes that they will disappear all too soon.

The Window Chapter 17

The Window Chapter 17 Summary

A feeling of melancholy descends upon Mrs. Ramsay as she takes her place at the head of the table. Glancing at her husband sitting at the other end, Mrs. Ramsay cannot recall ever feeling any emotion for the man. The assembly of her own children does not lift her spirits in the least and life is at an end as far as Mrs. Ramsay is concerned. The fatigue of maintaining dinner conversation among so many difficult guests preys on Mrs. Ramsay's mind as the dinner progresses.

Mr. Bankes would rather be dining at home alone, but he keeps this thought to himself. He does not understand the value that people place on families. The conversation level is so incredibly boring to Bankes that at the moment, even the lovely Mrs. Ramsay is unappealing.

Lily rises to the occasion and helps ease some of Mrs. Ramsay's social burden by conversing with Mr. Tansley, although Lily despises him because of his demeaning comments about women's lack of artistic abilities. Lily might have saved herself the effort because Mr. Tansley hates the formality and the forced conversations of these dinners. He would much prefer to be reading in his room. In Tansley's mind, Mr. Ramsay has diluted his life by marrying and having eight children when Ramsay could have been an even greater author. Tansley vows one day to reveal this futile household behavior in an expose on the Ramsay family.

Mrs. Ramsay feels that the only hope for saving this disastrous event is her husband, who always knows the perfect thing to say at the perfect time. The feelings she had about her husband just a short while ago seem to have vanished and Mrs. Ramsay looks upon her husband with fondness. She smiles to herself when Mr. Ramsay looks at her from the other end of the table and the two can read each other's minds.

Minta and Paul finally arrive and Mrs. Ramsay can tell by Minta's effusive behavior that Paul must have proposed to the young woman today. Minta's happiness is tarnished a little by the loss of her grandmother's brooch. Mr. Ramsay teases Minta into better spirits. As Mrs. Ramsay witnesses this interaction, she feels a twinge of regret that her youth has slipped away, but she delights in the happy demeanor the girl can elicit in Mr. Ramsay.

The specially prepared dinner is served to the satisfaction of everyone at the table and even Mr. Bankes returns to his normal good humor. Mrs. Ramsay notices that Lily seems to pale in comparison to the vibrant Minta tonight. She makes a mental note that at age forty, Lily will be the better person because Lily has some unseen qualities that Minta does not possess. Perhaps it will benefit Lily to marry and Mrs. Ramsay toys with the thought of matching the young woman to Mr. Bankes. Mrs. Ramsay decides that a picnic tomorrow will be delightful. Once the dinner has ended, Mrs. Ramsay feels

optimistic again, as if anything in the world is possible. She even joins Mr. Carmichael in a little ditty as the group leaves the dining room.

The Window Chapter 17 Analysis

The author has metaphorically set up the emotions of the people at this table to coincide with the ebb and flow of the water that surrounds the island. In the course of an hour's meal, Mrs. Ramsay has moved from feeling utterly hopeless to being filled with optimism and the belief that anything is possible. All the main characters at the table experience similar feelings and seem to come out at the end with a better mindset than when they started.

The table also serves a symbolic purpose. It not only feeds the Ramsay family and their friends, but it also nourishes the spirits of all those who partake. Even the most jaded characters are filled with optimism and goodwill, as if their souls have received some much-needed fortification as well.

The author introduces the concept of nature and sensuality into the austere setting with the voluptuous bowl of fruit and the lighting of the candles. The candlelight seems to bring everyone in the room closer together and can be related back to the illumination of the lighthouse. These additions to the dinner party are an expression of Mrs. Ramsay's artistic nature and they buoy her up. She extends herself once more to those around her table, even determining to play matchmaker with Lily and Mr. Bankes.

The Window Chapters 18 and 19

The Window Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

After dinner, Mrs. Ramsay separates from the guests to go upstairs and the others break off into little groups. The night's events run over in Mrs. Ramsay's head and she wonders if the evening was a success because she knows that everyone will always remember this night.

Mrs. Ramsay's good mood is broken, however, when she arrives at the nursery to find that Cam and James are still awake. Cam is frightened of the shadows cast when the light hits an old pig's skull nailed to the wall. Simply turning out the light is not a solution, since James cannot sleep without a light on. Mrs. Ramsay simply removes her shawl, wraps it around the skull several times and convinces Cam that it is a great bird's nest that the fairies will adore. At last, Cam is asleep and James asks once more about the possibility of going to the lighthouse tomorrow. Mrs. Ramsay replies that they will go on the next fine day.

Prue watches her mother descend the steps and is frozen in place for a moment at her beauty. Prue feels her own good fortune to have this woman as her mother. Prue tells Mrs. Ramsay that the older children are going to the beach to watch the waves and Mrs. Ramsay excitedly agrees that it sounds like a fine idea. She wishes she could join them but is pulled into the room where Mr. Ramsay sits alone reading.

As Mrs. Ramsay enters the room, she is filled with the longing for something she cannot name. She dare not disturb Mr. Ramsay whose posture shows that he is not interested in anything but the book he is reading. When the light hits the title of the book, Mrs. Ramsay can see that her husband is reading Sir Walter Scott. She knows that her husband is comparing himself to the man and wondering if his own books will be read with such relish.

Mrs. Ramsay drifts in and out of sleep as she tries to knit. She is only vaguely aware of her husband across the room. Periodically, Mr. Ramsay chuckles at the book and his wife catches his gaze. Neither one speaks. Finally Mr. Ramsay lifts his head from his reading and watches his beautiful wife as she sleeps. He is grateful for this time they have alone. Slowly becoming conscious of her husband's stare, Mrs. Ramsay returns to her knitting and wonders what information about today's events she should share with Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Ramsay only wants to hear one thing, that his wife loves him. Although Mr. Ramsay is sure of the fact, Mrs. Ramsay has never spoken the words.

Realizing what Mr. Ramsay wants, Mrs. Ramsay moves to the window to view the scenery. She is poignantly aware of her husband's intensity, but she cannot bring herself to say that she loves Mr. Ramsay. All Mrs. Ramsay can do is turn her head and smile at her husband. Mr. Ramsay knows that she loves him and Mrs. Ramsay is still in control.

The Window Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

Mrs. Ramsay's constant inner turmoil in spite of her outward beauty and composure seems to mirror the author's own emotional vulnerabilities and struggles with interpersonal relationships. Like Woolf, Mrs. Ramsay is inclined toward the artistic and, although she is not formally educated, has an inner knowledge of the essence of people and their struggles to communicate.

The biggest struggle, yet the biggest bond, occurs between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. They silently battle each other in spite of the devotion they share. This conflict keeps the relationship active as it ebbs and flows even in the course of a few minutes. Woolf accurately portrays the volatility and precarious nature of intimate relationships and masterfully shows the dynamic of these two people against whom the rest of the characters are projected.

In spite of her devotion to her husband, Mrs. Ramsay will not utter the words that he most wants to hear from her. This ultimately gives her the upper hand in the relationship and the two of them are very well aware of this dynamic. Mrs. Ramsay is completely tender and sentimental in regards to her children, though and the tender moments with Cam and James in the nursery show a side of Mrs. Ramsay that not everyone has witnessed. Mrs. Ramsay is painfully aware of James' disappointment about not going to the lighthouse and reminds herself that James will never forget this day because of it.

Windows, light and water have all functioned as important symbols throughout this section. It is fitting that this portion of the work, titled The Window, ends at the window as Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay gaze out at the scenery, content in their love and their life despite all its flaws and foibles.

Time Passes Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Time Passes Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Summary

A few years have passed and Mr. Bankes, Mr. Carmichael, Lily, Andrew and Prue have returned to the Ramsay's big house by the sea. Mr. Bankes comments that they must wait for the future to show and the characters extinguish the lights and head for their rooms for sleep. The night sets in like so many nights before it and the darkness and the wind creep along halls and poke into crevices and even blow some sand onto the floor. Nature has taken over the house during the years it has sat empty and the characters are the intruders now. The seasons have come and gone and the sea continues its restless motions.

In the years since the first section, Mrs. Ramsay died unexpectedly one night. The circumstances of her death are not clear to the reader. The house is merely a shell now, with remnants of the people who used to live here touched briefly by the darkness and wind. The light from the lighthouse remains constant on these nights. It casts an eerie specter on common ordinary items that by day pose no threat or cause for alarm. Mrs. McNab is the only human to break the spell cast by nature, as she opens the house for cleaning. She hums along in her weary seventy-year-old body.

Finally, it is spring once more and Prue Ramsay walks down the aisle on her father's arm. It is the most beautiful wedding ever seen in the town. The family's happiness is short lived, since Prue dies from a childbirth-related illness that summer. Nature continues to roam the house and grounds each night and the wind loosens Mrs. Ramsay's shawl from its hook a little bit more each night. More tragedy falls upon the family when Andrew is killed in the war later on that summer.

Time Passes Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Analysis

This new section of the book is shocking in its simplicity, as opposed to the first section where there was much activity and an unending stream of consciousness from the main characters. The author wants the reader's attention and succeeds not with violence but with the facets of nature. Nature has become the main character now and slips in and out of the rooms at night, changing color with the seasons and taking its toll on the Ramsay family.

Everything about the family and the house is in a state of demise and the darkness especially symbolizes the sadness that creeps up every night to move the characters one day closer to another tragedy. The darkness seems to take Mrs. Ramsay's place in controlling the events for the house. The other characters are lost without the woman's direction.

Historically, the world was enveloped in the First World War at the time of this work. Woolf mirrors the desperation and futility experienced by this family with the events occurring on the worldwide stage.

Time Passes Chapters 8, 9 and 10

Time Passes Chapters 8, 9 and 10 Summary

Mrs. McNab is filled with melancholy as she attempts to keep up the Ramsay home. There have been no improvements to the house in ten years. As the old woman wages a war with mold and decay, she remembers Mrs. Ramsay's presence in the house and in the yard. She can even see Mrs. Ramsay with one of the children when they were small. The old woman fingers some of Mrs. Ramsay's clothes and toiletries, which look as if the woman intends to return tomorrow. Mrs. McNab is filled with a sadness that is exaggerated by the emptiness and destruction of the war that is invading every house all over the world.

Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the house's need for repairs, Mrs. McNab locks up and leaves. Nature has her way again with this deserted structure and the salt air and overgrown plants invade. If there is no human intervention soon, the building will collapse and there will one day be no evidence that it even existed. The weight of a feather would push the house toward ruin or rebirth. The slats of light from the lighthouse continue to shine in their old patterns despite the house's state of decay.

One day, Mrs. McNab receives a letter from one of the Ramsay girls asking Mrs. McNab to set the house in order as quickly as possible. The family plans to return for the summer. Mrs. McNab, now joined by Mrs. Bast, launch into cleaning and bolstering the house and its dilapidated furnishings. Mrs. Bast's son tends the yard and soon the house is restored to a miraculous state of possible habitation once more.

Lily Briscoe and Mr. Carmichael are the first summer guests to arrive. The war has ended and there is a newfound sense of peace that permeates the house. Lily revels in the comforting sounds of the sea as she drifts off to sleep in the newly cleaned bedroom.

Time Passes Chapters 8, 9 and 10 Analysis

The author lovingly creates the scenario in which the old house is falling to ruin and the house itself becomes a character. The imagery of the damage done by the sea air and the lack of upkeep projects the reader into each room. One by one, each space in the house is examined. Ultimately, there is not a feeling of disgust but one of hope that someone or something will intervene in time to save the structure and the contents.

The house symbolizes life now that the war has come. Darkness falls on every room and there is destruction among personal items with no hope of redemption. Symbolically, Mrs. Ramsay's shawl still hangs from its hook. It has not fallen despite the winds that have blown through the house all these years. Mrs. Ramsay still seems to be protecting her home in some way. The shawl provides an element of foreshadowing that Mrs. Ramsay's ability to set things right will return.

Finally, the war is over. With the return of peace, it is significant that Lily and Mr. Carmichael are the first to return to the house. These two characters represent art and literature and the return to civility after the exhaustion and depletion of war.

The Lighthouse Chapters 1 and 2

The Lighthouse Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

The following morning Lily sits at her old place at the breakfast table. She is alone, since Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam have planned an excursion to the lighthouse. Lily is frightened of her own lack of feeling. Since her last visit here, ten years ago, Mrs. Ramsay, Prue and Andrew have died. Lily feels nothing. Mr. Ramsay paces on the terrace, waiting for his children to assemble for the lighthouse excursion. Lily is out on the lawn, not trying to paint but trying to avoid an encounter with Mr. Ramsay. She has always found him unpleasant. She wishes Mrs. Ramsay were here to act as a buffer.

Lily senses that Mr. Ramsay needs to say something before he will let her in peace with her canvas. She resists making contact with him because of his demanding nature. She thinks that perhaps all Mr. Ramsay needs is a mention of some sympathy. Lily thinks she should make the gesture so that she can return to her painting.

The Lighthouse Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Lily's sense of aloneness even in the midst of the Ramsay family symbolizes the emptiness all the characters feel upon returning to this house. All at once, it seems as if everything has changed; yet nothing has. Mrs. Ramsay, the key figure in the household, is no longer there, but everything else is the same right down to the tablecloths.

Each family member is coping with grief and loss in his own way and Lily seems unable to manage through it until she remembers the painting that she began ten years ago. Lily's canvas symbolizes completion, picking up life after years of death, despite the lag in time from its beginning. Lily will be the catalyst to bring some closure to this family broken apart in its sadness.

The Lighthouse Chapters 3 and 4

The Lighthouse Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Mr. Ramsay makes his way over to where Lily stands at her easel and decides that she is not unattractive. He hopes that Lily can give him the sympathy he desperately seeks. Pleasant conversation leads to Mr. Ramsay's heavy sighs at the mention of Mrs. Ramsay. Lily cannot bring herself to console the man. Lily realizes that her behavior probably marks her as an old maid, but she is unmoved by Mr. Ramsay's dramatic attempts for sympathy.

Lily notices the fine pair of boots that Mr. Ramsay wears and compliments them. This is the catalyst for the conversation and Mr. Ramsay lights up as she validates his ability to acquire such fine footwear. Lily secretly chastises herself for commenting on Mr. Ramsay's boots when clearly he had wanted some mention of the grief he still feels.

Mr. Ramsay's petulant behavior now gone, Lily feels able to supply the man with the support he needs. She is interrupted by the arrival of James and Cam. They are finally ready to make the trip to the lighthouse. Feeling somehow cheated by the interruption, Lily finds some consolation in the fact that she is able to give Mr. Ramsay something finite to focus on instead of the endless chasm of grief.

The Lighthouse Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Time and grief have changed Mr. Ramsay from a demanding forceful figure to a small child desperately needing some attention. The author plays with the characters' gender roles. Mr. Ramsay displays the negative female characteristics of petulance and pouting, while Lily's inability to validate the behavior shows her masculine side of dismissing vulgar shows of emotion.

Instead of leaning into her natural inclinations, Lily overanalyzes every thought and action, She thinks of herself as an old maid when in actuality she is an artist with an intellect. Woolf presents Lily as a symbol for the emerging women's movement of the early 1900s. Lily is the new woman in reaction to Mrs. Ramsay, the ultimate wife and mother. Lily lives an unmarried life with dedication to her art instead of succumbing to the societal pressures to be married and dependent on a man.

The Lighthouse Chapter 5

The Lighthouse Chapter 5 Summary

James and Cam do not want to be on this boat on this excursion today. They have made a pact against their father that they will not enjoy the day in any way. James attends the boat's sail as Cam sits in the back and observes Mr. Ramsay talking with Mr. Macalister and Mr. Macalister's boy's attempts at fishing.

Sensing Cam's resistance to the trip, Mr. Ramsay attempts to draw her into conversation by asking her to point out their house on the hill. Cam is confused and cannot tell the house from any others. Mr. Ramsay chides her for not realizing that their house is none of those they are passing. Mr. Ramsay will never understand the vague qualities of women's minds.

When Mr. Ramsay asks about the family's new puppy, Cam almost breaks her vow of resistance and James thinks he will have to maintain the pact on his own. Cam does not know how to explain to James how she feels about her father. She adores Mr. Ramsay at the same time that she despises some of his traits.

The Lighthouse Chapter 5 Analysis

Mr. Ramsay and his children are in this small boat which symbolizes their transport to another life. As the boat moves further away from the shore, Cam realizes that nothing is familiar anymore and the only thing that is real is what is immediately in front of her. The author has brought the characters back to the house to confront the reality of the grief they suffer as a result of all the deaths in the family over the last few years. The trip to the lighthouse is a symbol of an attempt to reach something that does not change and will remain long after they are gone from this place. On the surface, James and Cam resist this trip, signifying a transition to mental stability and clarity once more.

The Lighthouse Chapters 6, 7 and 8

The Lighthouse Chapters 6, 7 and 8 Summary

Lily periodically looks up from her painting to search for the Ramsays' boat out on the water. While she scans the scene, Lily's mind wanders to Minta and Paul Rayley, who have married and have two children. Their marriage has not worked out. Paul is involved with another woman with Minta's consent and the marriage is more of a solid friendship. Lily feels a twinge of smugness at the thought that the proposal Mrs. Ramsay championed has not worked out successfully.

Allowing thoughts of Mrs. Ramsay to now enter her mind, Lily determines that the dead are at the mercy of the living. All the thoughts and traits of the dead can be swept away without debate. For a brief moment, Lily feels triumphant over Mrs. Ramsay, since Lily did not fulfill Mrs. Ramsay's other matchmaking venture and marry Mr. Bankes. Following her own path, Lily is perfectly happy.

Lily did love Mr. Bankes and considers the relationship one of the finest pleasures of her life. Lily remembers how Mr. Bankes would recall with intense clarity the first moment he had laid eyes on Mrs. Ramsay's astonishing beauty at nineteen years old. Lily can imagine how Mrs. Ramsay must have looked as a young woman because the woman was still stunning many years later.

Suddenly, Lily is overwhelmed with all her questions about life and how Mrs. Ramsay seemed to have been a critical catalyst in her own life. She begins to cry and call out Mrs. Ramsay's name. Lily recovers and is glad that no one has seen her outburst. Mr. Carmichael is either sleeping or ignoring her on the lawn. Lily senses Mrs. Ramsay's presence with her as Lily returns to the painting. In Lily's mind, Mrs. Ramsay holds a wreath of white flowers on her forehead. It is an image she has had from the moment Lily heard of the older woman's death. Lily's gaze fastens on a brown spot on the water and she imagines that it is Mr. Ramsay's boat. She still wonders where the Ramsays are now.

The Lighthouse Chapters 6, 7 and 8 Analysis

Lily still feels compelled to compete with Mrs. Ramsay even though Mrs. Ramsay has been dead for ten years. Only in Mrs. Ramsay's absence can Lily conquer the woman who was such a commanding presence. Through a poignant stream of consciousness technique, Woolf allows Lily to work through the conflicts she had with Mrs. Ramsay and realize that the older woman is the key to her own artistic freedom. That realization releases Lily from the mental bonds that have held her. Lily cries for Mrs. Ramsay for the first time, showing her sadness and relief of recognition within herself.

Woolf further advances Lily as a symbol for the emerging Women's Movement of the period. Lily has never married and is happier than Minta who did marry Paul but

endures a loveless bond. Lily is the voice for women who are complete in their artistic pursuits, just as the author was at this period in her own life. Lily's question about the Ramsay's whereabouts signifies the broader question about the emotional states for each person in the family. This is a sensitive topic due to the author's own volatile mental state during this time.

The Lighthouse Chapters 9, 10 and 11

The Lighthouse Chapters 9, 10 and 11 Summary

The wind has stopped and the boat is calm. Cam drags her fingers in the water and thinks that the whole world must be at a standstill. Mr. Ramsay is curled up at one end of the boat reading and James is sullen with his own thoughts of hatred and resentment toward his father. James has never understood why Mr. Ramsay had such power over everyone in the family. Mr. Ramsay's wishes were always superior to anyone else's. James comes to the conclusion that the urge to kill is not directed at his father but at some black creature with wings and talons that descends on him sometimes.

Cam's melancholy lifts when suddenly the wind picks up, sending the boat speeding along as she watches the island drift out of view. To Cam, the island looks like a leaf and she is reminded of a story about a shipwreck at this spot. The legend instills a thrill in her and she is amazingly happy to be alive and on this boat.

Cam only wishes that she could help James understand Mr. Ramsay's true goodness as all the children have witnessed from time to time. The thought of the shipwreck surfaces again, but Cam feels safe with her father on board. Still, she can't help but murmur "how we perished, each alone."

The Lighthouse Chapters 9, 10 and 11 Analysis

James and Cam are stalled in their emotional growth related to their father as symbolized by the lack of movement of the boat at the moment. When the wind picks up and the boat moves, Cam's thoughts also pick up speed and she comes to the conclusion that Mr. Ramsay is kind hearted and a good man in spite of the difficulties Mr. Ramsay has in communicating with his children.

James' mood will not lift as easily. His childhood thoughts of stabbing his father through the heart resurface. Somehow, James is able to distinguish between killing his father and killing the black demon that attacks him, which the author uses as a symbol for James' depression, a subject with which Woolf is intimately aware.

The Lighthouse Chapters 12, 13 and 14

The Lighthouse Chapters 12, 13 and 14 Summary

As Lily watches the boat in the far distance, she realizes that everything about relationships depends on distance and whether people are far away or close by. There is some disturbance in the arrangement of the boats now that upsets Lily. She tries to focus on her painting to avoid any more distressing thoughts.

Lily's thoughts turn to Mr. Carmichael, who is now a world famous poet and who just happens to be napping in the chair not far from where she paints. Lily also recalls Mr. Tansley and remembers hearing him speak at a rally once during the war. If only Lily could see Tansley with the same perspective Mrs. Ramsay had, she might have been able to tolerate him better.

The small boat is quickly approaching the lighthouse and Mr. Ramsay looks up from his reading. He congratulates James on his fine steering. Cam silently urges James to accept this compliment, for which James has waited so long. James' demeanor shows no sign of softening.

Mr. Macalister points out the spot where three men died in a big storm last winter and Mr. Ramsay seems nonplussed by the information to the amazement of James and Cam. As the two men of the lighthouse emerge to greet the small boat's passengers, Mr. Ramsay buttons his coat, rolls up his trousers and bounds onto the rocks like a young man.

At that moment, Lily senses that Mr. Ramsay has reached the lighthouse and says "He has landed" and "It is finished." Returning to her painting, Lily muses that the art will probably hang in some attic, but she does not care because all that matters is the effort and the vision. She has now completed both.

The Lighthouse Chapters 12, 13 and 14 Analysis

The author encourages the reader to apply some perspective to personal relationships when Lily says that everything depends upon distance. It is wise to view a person or a situation from several angles and vantage points before declaring a position. Cam is beginning to understand this message in relationship to her father during the lighthouse excursion and she hopes that James will be able to apply some perspective too, to see the full picture of Mr. Ramsay.

The lighthouse symbolizes the family's goal of reaching the point of being able to communicate with each other on an emotional basis. As Mrs. Ramsay predicted, James never forgot Mr. Ramsay's denial of the trip to the lighthouse when James was a small boy. The anger and hatred James felt that day has never diminished until this day, when father and son reach the lighthouse together and Mr. Ramsay reaches out positively.

Their relationship will be viewed in a different light now, although they had to endure many years of alienation. The lighthouse did its work all those years, but the family's distance and perspective was never correct until today. Lily intuits the release from emotional bondage for the family and knows now that the struggle is over and all the characters are released.

Characters

Andrew the Just

See Andrew Ramsay

William Bankes

William Bankes is an old botanist friend of Mr. Ramsay's who has come to stay at the Ramsay home. The years since the two first became friends have changed both men, and Bankes is jealous and resentful of Mr. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay senses Bankes's loneliness and wants to pair him off with Lily Briscoe.

Bankes is a childless widower, and tries to assuage his envy of the Ramsay household by suggesting that his old friend's philosophical work is secondhand and past its prime. He is, however, drawn to Mrs. Ramsay's beauty and the warm domesticity of the Ramsays' lives. Rejected by little Cam, he hides his loneliness by denigrating marriage and children to Lily. Lily, on the other hand, realizes that he is isolated and that he carries a torch for Mrs. Ramsay.

Bankes is intellectually open, willing to understand and appreciate Lily's abstract painting, which suggests the essentially positive character that is hidden beneath his bitterness. The two become very good friends. He dies during the middle section of the novel, and Lily looks back on her friendship with him and remembers him as a good and profoundly lonely man, whom she will always love.

Lily Briscoe

Lily is an artist who stays with the Ramsay family in the first section of the novel, and returns with them to their Scottish summerhouse in the final section. She is a Post-Impressionist painter, descendant of a poor family, and has spent most of her life taking care of her father. In many ways, Lily is the chorus figure of the book□providing the histories of the characters and commenting on their actions. The beginning and completion of her painting form the frame of *To the Lighthouse,* and her final line, "I have had my vision," is the final line of the novel, acting as Woolf s own comment on her book.

Lily, a lonely character who never marries, is both consumed by her art as well as in need of love and connection. She is "in love with the Ramsays," seeing them as the embodiment of the affection that is missing from her life, and especially adores Mrs. Ramsay. Just as she is unable to show love, she is phobic about allowing her art to be seen. When William Bankes sees her painting, they form a connection, and talk about the Ramsays. Both of them find things to fault about the family because they are so jealous of them, but both secretly understand each other's feelings. Lily does not like Mr.

Ramsay because of the way he treats his wife, and she sees him as emotionless and too logical. She is taken aback when she and Bankes run into Mr. Ramsay spouting poetry on the lawn. Later, she realizes that she has misjudged him and that he is a man of strong emotion who adores his wife.

In the final section of the novel, Lily stands watching the Ramsays sail to the Lighthouse. While she tries to paint, memories and intense emotions surface. The desolation of the Ramsays that has occurred and the years of loss overcome her, and she cries out for Mrs. Ramsay. As Mr. Carmichael joins her, Lily realizes that Mr. Ramsay must have reached the Lighthouse. With this resolution achieved, she puts the final line on her painting and says, "It is finished." She has had her vision.

Cam the Wicked

See Cam Ramsay

Augustus Carmichael

Augustus Carmichael is a charismatic man who stays with the Ramsays when the family is in Scotland. He has had a bad marriage, and has spent time in India. Mrs. Ramsay was there when his wife threw him out, and she thinks that he doesn't like her because he's had bad experiences with women. Initially offering to teach while at the Ramsays, he ends up lounging about on the tennis courts instead, and Mrs. Ramsay thinks of him as a "great cat" with green eyes. Between his two stays with the Ramsays in Scotland, he becomes an important poet. Later, Lily thinks of him as "old pagan god." At the very end of the novel he stands with Lily looking out over the sea and says, "He has landed ... It is finished," and Lily feels that he has "crowned the occasion."

Minta Doyle

Daughter of the Ramsays' upper-class acquaintances, Minta is a guest at the Ramsays' summer home. Her parents are stuffy and very traditional, the subjects of many jokes between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Minta, however, is very different□an energetic, scruffy young woman whom Mrs. Ramsay calls "a tom-boy." She wonders what Minta's parents make of this modern girl who gads about with holes in her stockings. Minta and Paul Rayley get engaged and celebrate with the Ramsays. Ten years later, when the Ramsays return to Scotland, Lily thinks about Minta and Paul. Their marriage has not been wonderful, for Paul is a bohemian man who spends his time in meetings and coffeehouses. Since Paul obtained a mistress, however, he and Minta have settled into a comfortable marriage of friendship, not love.

James the Ruthless

See James Ramsay

Mrs. McNab

Mrs. McNab is the housekeeper of the Ramsays' summer home. She is the only person who is actively in the "Time Passes" section, tending to the house as it gradually fills with dust and the Ramsays meet their fates. She is the only character who takes some of the flowers home with her. The family has simply been sending money to her to clean, and never write or visit. Mrs. McNab often thinks of Mrs. Ramsay, and when she hears that the house may be sold, she locks the house and leaves. After receiving a letter stating that the family may be coming for the summer, she cleans the house from top to bottom.

Prue the Beautiful

See Prue Ramsay

Andrew Ramsay

Andrew, one of the Ramsay sons, is killed in the trenches of World War I. He is a brilliant young man, with a genius for mathematics and an interest in zoology.

Cam Ramsay

Cam, the little Ramsay daughter, is a "wild and fierce child" at the beginning of the book who refuses to give William Bankes a flower. When the family returns after the death of Mrs. Ramsay, she has conflicting emotions about being at the summer home. Cam is bitter about Mr. Ramsay' s "crash blindness and tyranny of which had poisoned her childhood and raised bitter storms, so that even now she woke in the night trembling with rage and remembered some command of his."

Because the Lighthouse holds such harsh memories for them, neither she nor James wish to go to it, but they agree to their father's wish out of duty. As they drift out she looks back at the house and feels love and pride for her father, but cannot help thinking about the past and the people that are now gone. Mr. Ramsay teases her about not knowing the points of the compass, but sees that she is frightened. He wants to make her feel better, and Cam knows this. She remembers the good things about him, the times she felt safe with him, but is still torn by bitterness. She looks at the shore and feels that the people that used to be there are now free. As they reach the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay finally praises his son James. Cam knows that this is a point that James has been waiting for his whole life, and with a greater sense of hopefulness they step ashore.

James Ramsay

James Ramsay is the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. As a little boy he is an extremely sensitive child who idolizes his mother. Wracked by intense emotions, he fantasizes about killing his father in order to have Mrs. Ramsay to himself. His desire to go to the Lighthouse is the focus of the novel's first section. His mother tries to make his wish come true, while his father and Charles Tansley insist that the weather will prevent them. He does not get his wish.

When they return to the summer home ten years later, James is bitter. He feels it is too late to get to the Lighthouse now, and Mr. Ramsay's need to make the trip seems to James to be a fruitless endeavor. He still hates his father for the way he perceived his mother was treated. Though James tells himself he feels nothing for his father, it is clear he desperately wants his approval. As they wait for another breeze to get them to the Lighthouse, James remembers feeling angry with his mother, and then is consumed by rage for his father when he looks at him reading. While he thinks about his mother, the wind picks up, and they move on.

As the group gets closer to the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay opens up the lunch, and James finally realizes that his father is lonely, "which was for both of them the truth about things." When they pass over where three men drowned, Cam and James expect Mr. Ramsay to spout bombastic poetry, and when he doesn't they realize that he has changed. James steers the family to shore, bitter that his father will not praise him. As their voyage ends, Mr. Ramsay compliments him on steering them like a born sailor. With his father's approval finally given, James is full of an overwhelming, fierce happiness that is too great to share, and a new hopefulness fills the surviving family members.

Jasper Ramsay

A son of the Ramsays, Jasper likes to shoot birds in his free time.

Mr. Ramsay

Mr. Ramsay is the father of the family. He is the most misunderstood character in the book, a man whose children hate him because they think he is viciously unemotional and cold. They and Lily think of him as stern and sarcastic□a man who "never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all his own children." Mrs. Ramsay has a very different picture of him. She knows how insecure he is about his abilities as a philosopher and a provider. He is a man who acknowledges the shortcomings of his own skills, knowing that he will never be able to go beyond "Q" in the "alphabet" of great thinking. He is also possessed of many more emotions than his children give him credit for, and is not the exclusively rational man that Lily Briscoe first sees. Her view of him is turned upside down when she runs into

him on the lawn reciting poetry and acting it out. Later at the dinner table, Mr. Ramsay talks to Minta and everyone is able to see the charming, attractive man that he can be.

When the Ramsays return to Scotland in the last section of the book, Mr. Ramsay is broken and alone, though neither Lily nor his children can acknowledge this. His need to go to the Lighthouse with Cam and James is an attempt to reconcile himself with them, to share their loss of Mrs. Ramsay, and to make amends for his past behavior. When he finally gives James the praise he has always withheld from him, the process of forgiveness is complete.

Mrs. Ramsay

Mrs. Ramsay is the mother of the Ramsay family who dies during the middle section of the novel. A beautiful, caring woman, she means all things to all people, and each character of *To the Lighthouse* has a different perception of her personality. Lily sees her as a mother, and doesn't think she has ever inspired romantic passion. William Bankes and Charles Tansley adore her, and think she doesn't realize how beautiful she is. The children see her as the "Lighthouse" of their lives□the stable, warm force that protects and guides them. Mr. Ramsay adores and resents her because of her huge capacity for love. Sometimes he feels he would have been a greater thinker if he had no wife or children, but underneath he knows that he is utterly dependent on her.

In her own mind, Mrs. Ramsay is far more complex. She loves her husband, but alternates between pitying and reverencing him, knowing that his intellectual powers are waning and that people will eventually realize that he depends on her too much. She loves to make other people happy and is constantly encouraging love matches, expediting the engagement of Minta and Paul, and trying to match Lily and William Bankes. At the same time, she becomes jealous when attention is focused on others, feeling resentful and left out when Minta and Paul celebrate their engagement. She is used to being loved and relies on it, but is aware of this, and it is balanced by her generous impulses and love. She is happiest when loving, and wishes that she could "always be holding a baby." Her compassion leads her to worry about the plight of the poor, and she is constantly doing charitable things□knitting stockings for the Lighthouse keeper's sick child and taking food to poor people in the area.

After her death she remains the "Lighthouse" of the Ramsay family, the most powerful force in the lives of Lily, Cam, James, and Mr. Ramsay. As they begin to accept the loss of her, the surviving Ramsays finally make the trip to the Lighthouse that Mrs. Ramsay had desperately wanted them to be able to make. While Lily breaks down and cries out for her, James, Cam, and Mr. Ramsay make their symbolic voyage to the emotional center that is Mrs. Ramsay. When they arrive they have finally done what she wanted□ceased fighting and recognized their equal love for her and for each other.

Nancy Ramsay

Nancy is one of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's daughters. She witnesses a kiss between Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle.

Prue Ramsay

One of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's eight children, Prue dies in childbirth.

Roger Ramsay

Another Ramsay offspring, Roger is referred to as a "wild creature" by his mother.

Rose Ramsay

Rose is a daughter of the Ramsays, who "had a wonderful gift with her hands."

Minta Rayley

See Minta Doyle

Paul Rayley

Paul Rayley is a guest of the Ramsays who is courting Minta Doyle. Mrs. Ramsay does not respect his intelligence much, and thinks that he's a "boobie." He and Minta get married, and he is irresponsible, spending his time in meetings and coffeehouses. He begins an affair with a "serious woman, with her hair in a plait" who shares his interests. Because of this, he and Minta develop a comfortable marriage.

The Atheist Tansley

See Charles Tansley

Charles Tansley

Charles Tansley is a student of Mr. Ramsay, visiting the Lighthouse while he does his dissertation. The product of a lower-middle-class home, he has worked himself up the educational and social scale, and remains uneasy about his status. This makes him overeager to prove himself, and the Ramsay children think of him as a pompous prig. Inclined always to agree with whatever Mr. Ramsay says, it is really Mrs. Ramsay who becomes the focus of Charles's attention. He, like all of the characters, is in love with

her. She pities him the poverty of his childhood—he has never even been to a circus—but dislikes him for his thoughtless behavior to her son James. Tansley's insecurity often leads him to be unnecessarily harsh, and he tells Lily that women have no business being painters.

Themes

War

In *To the Lighthouse,* the Great War takes place during the "Time Passes" section. The structure of the novel reflects the impact of World War I on European society. Part One is set in the golden haze of prewar innocence and love. Mr. Ramsay entertains himself by reciting Lord Tennyson's poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade,* a poem about death during the Crimean War, which valorizes the heroism of the then-unprecedented loss of a cavalry unit. Tennyson's celebration of patriotism and glorious death would be rejected by the traumatized survivors of the Great War who had witnessed death on a scale unimaginable to the Victorian poet. As Wilfred Owen wrote, World War I ended "that great lie□Dulce et decorum est pro pa-tria mori [it is sweet and proper to die for one's country]." Owen himself would not make it home from the war.

During the middle section of Woolf's novel, the scarifying time period of 1914 to 1918 is represented by the death that comes to many of the characters, including Mrs. Ramsay and Andrew, who is killed in combat by a shell. Part Two is concerned with survivors, with a shell-shocked culture attempting to come to terms with its losses. The war marks an end to many of the old ways of life, a change in social climate and the first rumblings of collapse for the British institutions so important to the older characters, especially the Indian Empire. Britain would not grant control to India until 1947, but as Woolf s novel shows, the younger, postwar generation was already beginning to question the culture of empire building.

Philosophy

Debates about philosophy, particularly theories about visual reality, figure prominently in *To the Lighthouse.* In the first section of the novel, "The Window," Mr. Ramsay, an Oxford philosopher, does his work on the three main philosophers of British empiricism, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. The basic argument of Empiricism is that human concepts and beliefs apply to a world outside oneself, and that it is by way of the senses that this world acts upon the individual. The question that is debated is just how much the mind itself contributes to the task of processing its sensory input. One of the points that Mr. Ramsay's philosophy debates is whether or not a person can be empirically certain that objects have a distinct and continued existence apart from our perceptions of them. Andrew Ramsay sums this philosophy up to Lily in mundane, domestic terms, saying "Think of a kitchen table then ... when you're not there."

Throughout the novel, the characters reflect on objects and people that are "not there," especially Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay's effect on everyone and everything is like the imaginary "kitchen table" of Andrew's explanation. Her continuing impact even after death is contrasted with the cold logic of Mr. Ramsay's philosophy, which denies these kinds of connections between reality, mind and personality. Lily's painting style shows a

different kind of reality in which objects and perception can be different for every person. As she explains to William Bankes, her view of Mrs. Ramsay does not look like its subject because it is abstract. However, it is still "like" Mrs. Ramsay because she is trying to paint the emotional and spatial impact of the woman.

Like Woolf's stream of consciousness narrative style, Mrs. Ramsay's reality changes depending on how she is feeling□making William Bankes either a tyrant or a pitiful person according to her emotions at the time. While Mr. Ramsay blindly wrestles with skepticism on masculine philosophical grounds, Mrs. Ramsay and Lily show maternal and painterly domestic eyes at work, creating a distinctly female "epistemology"□or theory about the nature and limits of human knowledge.

Freudian Psychology

The character of James Ramsay is central to the narrative impetus of *To the Lighthouse.* His desire to go on the trip, and the conflicting reactions of parents form the structure and title of the novel, and are drawn in patterns established by Freudian theories. As a child, James is very hostile to his father and adores his mother. His mother promises that the day will be pleasant enough for them to sail, while his father promises that it will rain and make sailing impossible. James wishes for an "axe ..., or a poker, any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then." Every time that his father distracts Mrs. Ramsay's attention from him, James feels similar homicidal urges.

This desire to kill his father to keep his mother's attention corresponds to Freud's Oedipal complex. This famous theory is based on the Greek myth of Oedipus, who accidentally murdered his father and wed his mother. Freud said that all males go through an Oedipal stage in which they want to kill their fathers and marry their mothers. In order to grow to emotional maturity, they must get over this impulse and embrace their fathers, as James eventually does.

Perception and Consciousness

In *To the Lighthouse* Woolf uses a "decorated process of thought" in which the physical world around a character takes on their form of thought.

As a result, the world that surrounds the characters has a symbolic status with different and specific meanings for each character. Throughout the novel, the personality and consciousness of each person expresses itself in the way that the world seems when they stand in it. The most important symbol of the book is the Lighthouse itself. Just as it dominates the bay, the Lighthouse dominates Woolf's novel, both physically and symbolically. The characters each see it differently, depending on their emotions and needs.

For Mrs. Ramsay, the Lighthouse represents her isolation as well as warmth and comfort, an integral part of the rhythm of her days that allows her to nurture and be

nurtured. The Lighthouse is not just a building, it is "something immune which shines out." For Lily Briscoe, the true "lighthouse" of the novel is Mrs. Ramsay herself□a beacon that casts an organizing light on the whole family and continues to illuminate and connect them even after her death. Mr. Ramsay's presence makes the Lighthouse a "stark tower on a bare rock," which symbolizes his unemotional logic. For James, the Lighthouse is a shifting symbol that seems to represent his mother, even as it is representative of the stark rationalism of his father. His analysis of the situations sums up the thematic point: "So that was the Lighthouse, was it? No the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing."

Style

Stream of Consciousness

The narrative technique that Woolf uses for most of *To the Lighthouse* is normally called stream of consciousness. This technique was a product of Modernism, a literary movement characterized by introspection, self-awareness and an openness to the unconscious. Associated primarily with Woolf and James Joyce, this technique was a way of representing the whole mind of an individual, not just conscious thought. It is based on the psychological theory that human minds are made up of many layers of awareness, from highly articulated rational thought, to emotional responsiveness, all the way to the animal pre-speech level of need and instinct. The basis of the technique is the notion that all of these layers are present in the mind of a human at any given moment□a "stream of consciousness" composed of the flow of sensations, thoughts, memories, associations, and reflections. If the exact pattern of the mind ("consciousness") is to be described, then these varied, disjointed, and illogical elements must find expression in a flow of words, images and ideas similar to the unorganized flow of the mind. In *To the Lighthouse* Woolf describes the technique while talking about Lily Briscoe:

To follow her thought was like following a voice which speaks too quickly to be taken down by one's pencil, and the voice was her own voice saying with out prompting undeniable, everlasting, contradictory things

Woolf's characteristic version of the stream of consciousness puts a new spin on the technique. Instead of being an attempt to capture the complexities of one individual mind, her novel is an attempt to capture the minds of a large group of people as they interact over time. This is achieved by the constant shifting of point of view and narrative chronology□often within the same paragraph or line.

Free Association

Part of the stream of consciousness style of Woolf's novel, free association is a term that describes the connections, or associations, that a person's mind makes between seemingly random things. A major part of the Freudian method of analysis is to ask people to say the first thing that comes to mind when they are given a word or object. By looking at the kinds of associations that occur, the analyst can find patterns in the randomness that reveal much about the character of the patient.

In *To the Lighthouse,* Woolf uses this free association style to reveal her characters. Charles Tansley, for example, sees Mrs. Ramsay next to a picture of Queen Victoria and realizes that she is beautiful. From that he thinks of flowers, bouquets and Mrs. Ramsay "stepping through fields of flowers ... with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair" gathering "fallen lambs" to her breast. The patterns of his thoughts reveal his character

in ways that an analyst would be able to see. Mrs. Ramsay is the "queen" of his life, because he thinks of her after seeing a real queen. He associates her with flowers because his studies shut him off from the natural world, and she brings him out of his studious mind-set. He imagines her gathering "lost lambs" because he feels orphaned, and sees her as a Christ-like parental figure.

Psychology

The theories of the new Freudian psychology are used throughout the novel. The narrative structure is a literary version of the emphasis that psychology places on the subjective reality of emotions and desires. Freudian psychology suggests that emotions, needs, and instincts are more important in understanding personality than rational thoughts. In keeping with this theory, rational thought is shown to be useless to describe characters throughout *To the Lighthouse.* When, for example, William Tansley tells himself that he doesn't like Mrs. Ramsay because she is "fifty at least," his "freely-associated" emotions tell the real story. Also part of Freudian theory is the emphasis placed on childhood experiences and emotions in the formation of adult personality. Mrs. Ramsay sums this up when she says, "Children never forget."

Historical Context

World War I

World War I began in 1914, the result of an unresolved and perilous series of Balkan Crises. When Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, the intense territorial dispute between Austro-Hun-gary and Serbia intensified, quickly spreading through the rest of Europe. Great Britain, Russia, and France joined together as the Allied Powers against the Central Power Alliance of Austro-Hungary and Germany. After Russia dropped out of the Allied forces, and the *Luisitania* was sunk, America eventually entered the fray. The war, known in Europe as the Great War, took place on a scale never before seen in history. It lasted four years, cost $350 billion, and took the lives of 22 million people. In *To the Lighthouse* Andrew Ramsay becomes one of the victims of the war.

World War I revealed a new and horrifying form of warfare that took place in the trenches and the air, both innovations. It was also the most technologically advanced war, relying on a number of new inventions, such as machine guns, mortar bombs, and barbed wire. Most scarring was innovations in biological weaponry. Death by mustard gas in the bunkers and trenches created a profound sense of shock in the surviving troops and horrible deaths for the fallen. Movingly documented by English War Poets like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, the Great War sent thousands of emotionally and physically shell-shocked men back to their homes.

Modernism

Modernism is a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement that began at the end of the nineteenth century. Modernists feel that earlier forms of art have reached their goals and become uninteresting, and they reject the realism of the nineteenth century. In response to older forms, the new art and literature was consciously nonrepresentational and experimental, refusing to portray significant action, and emphasizing human reactions and interpretations instead of physical realities. Freudian psychology was often incorporated into the new writing and art, since it overturns previous philosophies and makes the internal life of a person the most important aspect of reality.

The new art exploded into an unwelcome world in 1913, at The Armory Show. This international exhibition of modern art took place at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York City, opening in February and then travelling to Chicago, and Boston. It drew crowds of more than 100,000 people, and brought Postimpressionism and Cubism to international attention. The Armory Show, or Armory Circus, as some preferred to call it, was the first exhibition of modern art in America and the catalyst for many of the major modernist movements. In *To the Lighthouse,* this new and shocking art is the kind that Lily Briscoe attempts to create.

The Twenties

The Twenties were characterized by what Joseph Wood Krutch called the "Modern Temper." This was the new intellectual and social climate that rejected many of the traditional beliefs in progress, patriotism and art, at the same time as it looked for new forms of politics. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, Marxism and socialism had gained a new importance in European thought. With Lenin in power and the genocidal legacy of Stalinism still unimaginable, the Soviet Union was taken as a model for many young idealists. Labor relations in Britain reached conditions bordering on class war. The coal miners led the Trade Union Congress in a general strike, paralyzing the country. They demanded, "Not a penny off the pay; not a minute on the day." Changes in social climate fostered new freedoms. In 1918, the Women's Suffrage movement triumphed, and British women over the age of thirty were granted the right to vote. Those between the ages of twenty-one and thirty were allowed to vote starting in 1928.

The Wall Street Crash plunged the World into economic depression in 1929 and exacerbated social divides. In 1927, however, Europe had finally begun to recover from the Great War, and there was a sense of optimism among the privileged "bright young things" of the British social scene. Writers like Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh represented the new kind of young person□dashing, daring, and flippant. The scandalous young women of this social set were the British equivalent of the American "flappers." Like the younger Ramsay daughters, they refuse to take anything too seriously, and wear their hair and skirts short.

Critical Overview

To the Lighthouse was a critical success as soon as it was published, and won Woolf the *Prix Femina* in 1928. Initial reviews and criticism focused on the novel's stylistic innovations, praising Woolf s artistic refinement of the stream of consciousness narrative. Louis Kronenberger, for example, announced in *The New York Times,* "here is prose of an extraordinary distinction in our time: here is poetry." Woolf's death in 1941 prompted a flood of books and articles that celebrated her mastery of prose style. Eric Auerbach's important 1946 study of art and literature *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* elevated Woolf's novel to the status of great literature and gave her the tag "Brown Stocking" (a play on the phrase "bluestockings" which was used to describe a group of intellectual women authors in the eighteenth century). Putting *To the Lighthouse* at the top of the modern literary canon, he praised the achievements of its narrative style over the works of her contemporaries, calling it the "creation of something new and elemental."

In the 1950s and 1960s, critical focus centered on symbolism, looking at myth, philosophy, and history as the unifying strategies of the novel. In *The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist,* James Halfley suggested that both Mrs. Ramsay and the Lighthouse were, "cosmic symbols" that represented a "vital synthesis of time and eternity." Along the same lines, Joseph L. Blotner's essay, "Mythic Patterns in *To the Lighthouse,"* argued that Mrs. Ramsay should be understood as a "primordial goddess" composed of "the major female characters of pagan myth." He also made a case for the importance of Freudian thought in the novel.

The 1970s and 1980s marked a revolution in Woolf studies□a move away from quasi-Jungian analysis based on her symbolism, and a new focus on the role of gender and art in *To the Lighthouse* instead. Where the older critics found unity in the work, these new voices found disharmony and conflict. Emphasis was placed on the roles of gender and class, reflecting the general critical trends of the late 1970s and 1980s. Irene Dash, Deena Kushner, and Deborah Moore looked at the novel from a sociological stance, examining the challenges women face between "being mothers and being artists," from the perspectives of a mother, daughter, and artist, in "How Light a Lighthouse for Today's Women?" Jane Lilienfeld, in "'The Deceptiveness of Beauty': Mother Love and Mother Hate in *To the Lighthouse"* performed a biographical reading, suggesting that the relationship between Lily Briscoe and Mrs. Ramsay is an outlet for Woolf s feelings about her relationship with her mother, Julia Stephen.

Another critic, Elaine Showalter, caused controversy by arguing that the novel reveals Woolf s abandonment of feminism for a retreat into mysticism, in A *Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing.* Claiming that Showalter's analysis revealed her tendency to "traditional humanism," Toril Moi's hugely influential 1985 book *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* countered this by suggesting that Woolf s novel, "rejects the metaphysical essential-ism underlying patriarchal ideology, which hails God, the father or the phallus, as its Transcendental signified," both in its shifting-consciousness narrative style and in the rejection of Mr.

Ramsay's logic. Rachel Bowlby's important study, *Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations,* used Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories to read the novel, suggesting that, "To *the Lighthouse* makes evident the mapping of human subjectivity in terms of figurations inseparable from sexual difference."

Reflecting the general shifts in academia, the 1990s has seen a stronger emphasis on post-colonial and historically contextual readings of *To the Lighthouse.* These approaches stress the novel's relationship to the major historical contexts of its setting□World War I, the General Strike, and the British Empire. Characteristic of this approach is " 'Something Out Of Harmony': *To the Lighthouse* and the Subject(s) of Empire" by Janet Winston. Picking up on the scene in which Charles Tansley compares Mrs. Ramsay to Queen Victoria, Winston suggested that the novel, "invites us to read not only with attention to codes of imperialist representation but to Mrs. Ramsay's role as Queen in a text of imperial allegory." The images of "sinking" that appear throughout the novel become□in this argument□evidence for authorial anxiety about the imminent collapse□"sinking"□of the British Empire.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Dougherty is a doctoral candidate at Tufts University. In the following essay, she examines the characterization of Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse.

In an essay, Virginia Woolf wrote, "[e]xamine 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." Woolf s character Lily Briscoe struggles with the myriad and momentary nature of reality throughout Woolf s fifth novel, *To the Lighthouse.* As Suzanne Raitt notes in *Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse,* Lily shares "the novel's strange obsession with solutions." Lily tries to find a shape within the chaotic nature of existence and achieve an artistic vision that will give her a sense of the meaning of life. In the course of her struggle, many of the novel's themes are illuminated: the nature of reality, the search for completion, the role of women, and the relationship of art and life.

As an artist, Lily struggles to express herself creatively. Her creativity is hampered by the continued interruptions of the outside world, which occur both within her physical space and within her mind:

She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr. Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semi-transparent. Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so com-mandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself□struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: "But this is what I see; this is what I see," and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her.

Among the "thousand forces" which try to "pluck" Lily's vision from her is the conflict between the experience of living and the theory of existence, which is represented by the Ramsays. Mrs. Ramsay is a character who seems comfortable with the ebb and flow of daily life; as Thomas A. Vogler comments in his introduction to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of To the Lighthouse,* "the 'life' character (like Mrs. Ramsay) lives or represents the human reality of the story." By contrast, Mr. Ramsay tries to come to "objective" truths about the nature of reality. As A. D. Moody writes in the same volume, Lily's "abstract aesthetic problem becomes an analogy for her main concern, and the novel's, which is to bring Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, and the worlds they represent, into a harmonious relation." As an artist, Lily tries to find larger truths about human existence, as does Mr. Ramsay, but as a woman, she is confronted with the subjective and personalized nature of existence, as is Mrs. Ramsay. Appropriately, Lily feels that when she stays with the Ramsays, she struggles to find harmony between opposites:

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 dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle.

Such was the complexity of things. For what happened to her, especially staying with the Ramsays, was to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time; that's what you feel, was one; that's what I feel, was the other, and then they fought together in her mind, as now. It is so beautiful, so exciting, this love, that I tremble on the verge of it, and offer, quite out of my own habit, to look for a brooch on the beach; also it is the stupidest, the most barbaric of human passions, and turns a nice young man with a profile like a gem's (Paul's was exquisite) into a bully with a crowbar (he was swaggering, he was insolent) in the Mile End Road. Yet, she said to herself, from the dawn of time odes have been sung to love; wreathes heaped and roses; and if you asked nine people out of ten they would say they wanted nothing but this□love; while the women, judging from her own experience, would all the time be feeling, This is not what we want, there is nothing more tedious, puerile, and inhumane than this; yet it is also beautiful and necessary.

Lily's own thoughts and perceptions are interrupted by, and in conflict with, the expectations of her society. In particular, she feels inadequate both as a woman and as an artist, because it is not expected that she can be both. She knows that as a woman she is supposed to be fulfilled by love and marriage, yet in her experience that is never the case. She appreciates Mrs. Ramsay's ability to be nurturing, but does not feel that she can fulfill Mrs. Ramsay's role. As Raitt states, Lily "experiences her conflicts over femininity primarily in the context of her relationship to Mrs. Ramsay." Yet she also feels inadequate as a painter, because men like Charles Tansley tell her that "women can't paint. Women can't write." Lily struggles to define herself as a creative woman in a culture that does not acknowledge that women can be creative.

As a female artist, Lily longs to bring together seemingly opposed forces and to find a "solution" to the problem of life's incoherence. For example, she asks how is it possible to analyze all the conflicting information that one gets about another person and decide that one likes or dislikes that person. As Thomas Matro explains in *PMLA,* "Lily's ambivalence, suspension and subsequent 'explosion' stem from her felt inability to know another person and from the necessity she yet feels to form a clear, consistent opinion." After dinner, for example,

[s]he felt rather inclined just for a moment to stand still after all that chatter, and pick out one particular thing; the thing that mattered; to detach it; separate it off; clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things, and so hold it before her, and bring it to the tribunal where, ranged about in conclave, sat the judges she had set up to decide these things. Is it good, is it bad, is it right or wrong? Where are we all going to? And so on. So she righted herself after the shock of the event, and quite unconsciously and incongruously, used the branches of the elm trees outside to help her stabilize her position. Her world was changing: they were still. The event had given her a sense of movement. All must be in order. She must get that right and that right, she thought, insensibly approving of the dignity of the trees' stillness, and now again of the superb

upward rise (like the beak of a ship up a wave) of the elm branches as the wind raised them.

Lily longs to see things without emotion, objectively. She is able to reorient herself by situating herself in relation to the trees outside, which she sees as objective because they are unchanging. In the passage, she progresses from thinking abstractly about "the thing that mattered," which she cannot identify and about which she asks, "is it right or wrong?" to righting herself by focusing on the unchanging nature of the trees, to deciding she must get them right in her painting. By using the word "right," the narrator shifts Lily, and the reader, from abstract conceptions of rightness to natural, eternal rightness to an aesthetic rightness in which rightness is defined as the ability to see clearly. But that is not the final step on Lily's artistic quest; though she says that she must get what she sees on canvas, the narrator shows how, through her use of the word "right," Lily is still clinging to a kind of aesthetics based on objectivity, an unchanging and universal "truth." Lily thinks the natural world is unchanging, but in the second section of the novel, "Time Passes," the narrator shows us how the natural world slowly encroaches on, and nearly destroys, the house. Lily thinks that she must get what she sees "right," but in the third section, "The Lighthouse," she discovers that what she sees is her own particular vision, not a universal truth.

In the section called "The Lighthouse," Lily decides to finish the picture she had started ten years earlier, but is interrupted by Mr. Ramsay:

Yes, it must have been precisely here that she had stood ten years ago. There was the wall, the hedge, the tree. The question was of some relation between those masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed as if the solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do.

But with Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her, she could do nothing. Every time he approached he was walking up and down the terrace ruin approached, chaos approached. She could not paint.

Lily associates chaos with being unable to paint, unable to hold things in their proper places. Mr. Ramsay makes her unable to paint because, with his insatiable demands for sympathy, he makes it impossible for Lily to listen to her own feelings. She is once again confronted with the "dilution" of other people, with the attempt to hold together two opposing forces: her own feelings and those of another person. It is only when Mr. Ramsay leaves that she can return to her painting.

As she paints, Lily falls into a kind of trance in which she imagines Mrs. Ramsay, for whom she has been crying out, is sitting beside her. She remembers how Mrs. Ramsay united her with her "opposite," Charles Tansley:

The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, 'Life stand

still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)□this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said. 'Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' she repeated. She owed it all to her.

Whereas earlier Lily had thought that her artistry depended on "getting it right," and that the natural world was unchanging, she now sees, with Mrs. Ramsay's help, that the job of the artist is to make a moment permanent by capturing it in art. In coming to this realization, Lily is able to see her resemblance to Mrs. Ramsay, to see that she really is a woman, as Mrs. Ramsay was, but a woman whose female identity is expressed in art rather than in relationships. Lily is at last able to mourn for Mrs. Ramsay, realizing that the "solution" to the problem of "wanting and not having" is to understand that all of life is momentary and that the best that humans can do is to say "life stand still here" and capture a moment in memory or in art. At the end of the novel, Lily feels that she is able to unify opposing forces, achieve completion, express her own personal truths, and to be both a woman and an artist. Through Lily, Woolf shows that in creative self-expression, humans may achieve a sense of completion and unify the disparate elements of life.

Source: Jane Elizabeth Dougherty, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, McNichol presents an overview of To the Lighthouse.

To the Lighthouse is generally considered to be Virginia Woolf's most accomplished work. It is certainly her most popular one. It was this novel, together with *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves,* that established her reputation as a modernist writer. What makes *To the Lighthouse* a modernist novel is its experimental form. It has no traditional plot structure and no characterisation in the accepted sense. Instead the novel is organised into three parts that are thematically and symbolically connected with each other. Part I ("The Window") covers only a few hours, Part II ("Time Passes") a period of 10 years, and Part III ("The Lighthouse") part of two days. Most of the "action" of the first and final sections of the novel takes place in the minds of the characters and is conveyed through a succession of interior monologues, as the perspective of the novel shifts from character to character. The central section is written in an abstract poetical style and its underlying authorial voice is impersonal. The events of the first part of the novel are evoked through memory in the final section when there is a return to the house in the Hebrides. The first part, which is essentially a celebration of the life generated creatively by Mrs. Ramsay, is shot through with images of light. The second part covers the "dark" years of war and death, and in the final section there is a restoration of the light. This light-dark-light pattern resembles the pattern formed by the beams from the lighthouse, which functions centrally in the novel both as a literal place and as a symbol. The novel begins with a desire to visit the lighthouse and concludes with the journey to it, so the lighthouse is bound up with the journey theme of the novel.

At the centre of the novel are the complementing and contrasting characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay (based on Woolf's parents). Mr. Ramsay, who is a philosopher, searches for intellectual truth with a rigour that makes him difficult to live with. Mrs. Ramsay grasps truth intuitively through her sensitive response to the people she comes in contact with. He needs her warmth to convince him that he lives at the "heart of life"; she relies on his sureness of judgment. Their opposing characteristics are reinforced imagistically, Mr. Ramsay being associated with images of hardness and assertion ("arid scimitar of the male") and Mrs. Ramsay with symbols of softness and warmth ("a column of spray" or a "rosy-flowered tree"). Within this symbolic framework Woolf probes the profound tensions at the core of all relationships between men and women. This is what underlies the verbal exchange at the beginning of the novel, when the youngest child, James, asks to visit the lighthouse: "'Yes, of course, if it's fine to-morrow,' said Mrs. Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark,' she added...." "'But,' said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, 'it won't be fine.'" Mrs. Ramsay's words are followed by a long paragraph which reveals the inner feelings of delight in the child. A similar passage of stream of consciousness writing follows his father's words, this time expressing feelings of anger and hatred. The authorial gloss on this situation is: "Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence." The same kind of complex exploration and analysis continues throughout the book as character relates to character and as inner thoughts are revealed in solitude.

The most important of the friends who visit the Ramsay family at their holiday house in the Hebrides (really St. Ives in Cornwall where the Stephen family spent their summer holidays) is Lily Briscoe, who, in the first part of the novel, is painting a picture of Mrs. Ramsay and her son. She is an onlooker figure whose function in the novel is to observe life and recreate its reality in her art. She suddenly grasps the meaning of marriage in a moment of awareness, for instance, when she catches a glimpse of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay walking across the lawn. In that moment they become for her symbolic figures, as their particularity is transcended to reveal a universal truth. In this way they contribute to her journey in awareness and to her painting which embodies it, both of which are completed at the end of the novel.

The party which is the climax of the first part of *To the Lighthouse* is a symbolic occasion. It will be remembered as a moment of stability in the midst of chaos after Mrs. Ramsay's death. That chaos is conveyed poetically in the central section of the novel. Here there is no coherence in life which seems full of suffering and death, war and anguish: Mrs. Ramsay dies, Andrew Ramsay is killed in the war, and Prue dies in childbirth. The personal anguish and the general sense of disintegration are figured in the decline of the house, which is finally rescued from its dereliction and restored.

The vision of the book is, then, an optimistic one. Out of the multiple oscillations between life and death, joy and sorrow, light and dark, the ebb and flow of the sea, there is an expressed belief in the survival of the human spirit: Mr. Ramsay springs like a young man onto the rock of the lighthouse, and Lily Briscoe draws a line in the centre of her canvas thus unifying, as Mrs. Ramsay did at the dinner party, the separate forms that had been resistant to her attempts to unify them. She has learned from Mrs. Ramsay that life "from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave."

Source: Stella McNichol, *"To the Lighthouse,"* in *Reference Guide to English Literature,* second edition, edited by D. L. Kirkpatrick, St. James Press, 1991.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Stewart examines the idea that "Woolf s search for spiritual essences is expressed in light and color " in To the Lighthouse.

According to Virginia Woolf, "painting and writing ... have much in common. The novelist after all wants to make us see.... It is a very complex business, the mixing and marrying of words that goes on, probably unconsciously, in the poet's mind to feed the reader's eye. *All great writers are great colorists.*." While "sound and sight seem to make equal parts of [her] first impressions," Woolf stresses their painterly quality.

In *To the Lighthouse,* Woolf s search for spiritual essences is expressed in light and color. Johannes Itten's metaphysic of light and color illuminates the relation between creative source (Mrs. Ramsay/the Lighthouse) and creative artist (Lily Briscoe/the painting) in Woolf s novel. Itten further affirms that "the end and aim of all artistic endeavor is liberation of the spiritual essence of form and color and its release from imprisonment in the world of objects." Woolf s art does not reach so far toward abstraction, but she does imply that the "luminous halo" of consciousness should be conveyed through equivalents of "plastic form," and notes that "fiction is given the capacity to deal with 'psychological volumes.' "

Roger Fry thought literature should parallel painting: "The Post-Impressionist movement ... was by no means confined to painting.... Cézanne and Picasso had shown the way; writers should fling representation to the winds and follow suit. But he never found time to work out his theory of the influence of Post-Impressionism upon literature"□as Woolf ironically remarks. She herself accepted the challenge of designing a literary art closer to the plastic values of painting. While Fry championed the post-impressionists' "'attempt to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences'," Woolf urged novelists "to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit...." Fry's emphasis on formal relations merges fruitfully with Woolf's pursuit of being, as her art advances from the fragmentary impressionism of *Jacob's Room* to the luminous structure of *To the Lighthouse.* There revolving lights and colors play on the reader's sensibility like light waves on the retina, and characters come to be known as their *auras.*

The impressionists did not confine colors within the outlines of objects (as the rationalizing mind does), but observed how light spills over from one object to the next. Thus they gave objects a "luminous halo" or aureole of color. As a verbal colorist, Woolf desires "to paint men and women with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolize, and which we seek to confer by the actual radiance and vibration of our coloring." But in *To the Lighthouse* her art goes beyond impressionism and symbolism toward a flexible form that "does not shut out." The consciousness of each character tends to overflow individual boundaries, mingling its colors with those around it, as it modifies the total pattern. These interactions recall the post-impressionism of Cézanne, who wished "to represent things in their interrelationship in space," while still using "colour in its original significance."

While color in the novel expresses individual qualities, color/character associations are not reducible to one-to-one symbolic equations. Woolf wanted to find literary equivalents for "that pleasure which we gain from seeing beauty, proportion, contrast, and harmony of colour in the things around us"—and which Delacroix considers the exclusive property of painting. Beyond the sensuous immediacy of impressionism lay the constructive color of Cézanne, whose art symbolized nothing in particular, but "turned all external appearances of real things into a symbol of 'being, "which is eternal'." *To the Lighthouse* shares with Cézanne's painting a vital duality of aesthetic image, that mirrors actual sensations and emotions, and symbolic form, that mirrors its own "process of construction." When Badt speaks of blue as a "symbolic form," he is concerned with a structural quality and not with symbolic meaning. Blue, in Cézanne's painting, does not stand for something outside itself, but locks other colors together in harmony.

The experience of color relations is more than an optical sensation: it is a complex experience hard to put into words, a stimulus and a revelation.

Color is a sensitive medium for expressing both individual and universal experience. While color in literature inevitably gravitates toward symbolic associations, Woolf manipulates rhythmic interrelationships to create an overall plastic design, inwardly mirrored in the image of painting. Lily Briscoe is one of those post-impressionist artists who "do not seek to imitate form, but to create form, not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life." While the novel illuminates life, it completes its significance within the magic circle of art. Woolf accomplishes this condensation by seeking out "plastic equivalents" and constructing a virtual space that incorporates many of the subtle properties of color contrast. Color in the novel is not only an equivalent of feeling, it is also a component of form. The variously tinted streams of consciousness interconnect, so that "geometric colour" becomes a structural principle as in Cézanne's painting.

What Cézanne says of shape and color applies to *To the Lighthouse:* "The outline and the colors are no longer distinct from each other. To the extent that one paints, one outlines; the more the colors harmonize, the more the outline becomes precise.... When the color is at its richest, the form has reached plenitude." Merleau-Ponty's comment on Cézanne's portraiture can be applied, with slight modifications, to Woolf's characterization: "One's personality is seen and grasped in one's glance, which is, however, no more than a combination of colors." In the novel, the single "glance" becomes a series of subjective reflections, and "personality" a complex of sense perceptions, memories, verbal rhythms, and color.

Just as white light refracted through a prism produces the seven colors of the spectrum, so being refracted through self produces the psychological spectrum of the novel. *To the Lighthouse* is built on a nexus of light and color. Its Neoplatonic theme is the relation of the One to the many, the noumenal to the phenomenal. What Itten says of his students' "color combinations" applies to Woolf's characters: "Intrinsic constitution and structures are reflected in the colors, which are generated by dispersion and filtration of the white light of life and by electromagnetic vibrations in the psycho-physiological medium of the individual." Objects do not *have* colors, but for the eye all objects exposed to light absorb some rays and reflect others. Only Mrs. Ramsay, as she

identifies with the light, or enters the "wedge-shaped core of darkness," transcends colorific diffraction and becomes pure being. After "burning and illuminating," she sinks back through the violet end of the spectrum (Lily's "purple shadow") to achromatic invisibility. "If the light which falls on a body is completely absorbed by that body," says Chevreul, "so that it disappears from sight, as in falling into a perfectly dark cavity, then the body appears to us black...." Mrs. Ramsay's absorptive powers are seen in her withdrawal into darkness, but she is also a powerful reflector of light, who illuminates other lives. In this oscillation she emulates the lighthouse with its revolving beams. Her powers of absorption and reflection relate to a rhythmic embrace of light and darkness symbolized in the Tao, and ultimately to the "white light" of cosmic being.

If Mrs. Ramsay relates to *Light* as essence, Lily relates to *Color* as the contingent substance of reality and art. Part I, "The Window," is dominated by the transcendent symbol of the Light, Part II, "Time Passes," by darkness and silence, and Part III, "The Lighthouse," by the refraction of Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual light into action (the voyage) and form and color (Lily's painting). At one end of the spectrum, Mr. Ramsay's intellectual vision dissolves in infrared rays; at the other, Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual vision dissolves in a blue haze bordering on ultraviolet. In his discussion of "Coloured Spaces in the Prismatic Spectrum," Ogden Rood observes that "the space out beyond 0 is occupied by a very dark red ... and outside of the violet beyond 1,000 is a faint greyish colour, which has been called lavender." Rood adds that "the eye seems far more sensitive to changes of wavelength in the middle regions of the spectrum than at either extremity." A similar blurring at the ends and sensitivity in the middle can be observed in *To the Lighthouse,* where green and yellow are associated with the androgynous, aesthetic vision of Lily and Carmichael. A synthesis of blue and red extremes appears in the "triangular purple shape" on Lily's canvas, a momentary negation of the entire spectrum in James's close-up view of the lighthouse as a "black and white" structure.

Within a given band of the spectrum, the dominant color serves to express related qualities of several characters. In the novel, color permeates the various streams of consciousness and is also an element in the overall design. As in Cézanne's painting, "the whole canvas is a tapestry where each color *plays* separately and yet at the same time fuses its sonority in the total effect." The various *reds* form a masculine complex including Mr. Ramsay's red-hot pokers, red geraniums, and reddish-brown hedge; the reddish-brown stocking that Mrs. Ramsay is knitting for the lighthouse-keeper's son; her image of James "all red and ermine on the Bench"; Paul Rayley's blaze of amorous passion; and Charles Tansley's red raucousness. The feminine/intuitive wavelengths are more flexibly varied than the dense red glow of male egotism. *Blue* and *green* are frequently combined□blue associated with sea, distance, transcendence; green with "flowing grasses," green shawl, illusion, and imagination. *Yellow*□Mr. Carmichael's eyes and opium, the "yellow eye" of the lighthouse, the "pure lemon" of its beams, the harvest moon□is associated with meditation and intoxication. As for specific auras, Paul is associated with "a reddish light," Cam with a "green light," James's memory of his mother with "a blue light," and Mrs. Ramsay with "the light of the Lighthouse" itself. In "Time Passes," the shade of Mrs. Ramsay's spirit is *gray*□which lies outside the spectrum. Physiologically, "neutral gray" is appropriate to this visionary, transitional phase, as it combines *"dissimilation"* and *"assimilation,"* "consumption" and

"regeneration" of the optic substance. Thus, when Mrs. Ramsay's spirit revives to reanimate the voyage and the painting, the "essence" of "that woman in grey" is a paradoxical fusion of presence and absence, fullness and emptiness, color and colorlessness□just as gray is the "abstract" of all com-plementaries and of all colors combined....

In tracing Woolf's use of the four visual primaries, blue, red, green, and yellow, I have, in each case, discovered patterns of reaction and integration that function aesthetically as well as psychologically. Instead of being tied to fixed symbolic meanings, Woolf's colors vibrate together, causing dramatic tension before achieving what Fry calls "a harmonious plastic unity." McLaurin suggests that "some sort of keyboard of colours can be constructed, some 'system of relations' as in Cézanne's art," and that "language might be able to create a relation similar to that established by colours in a painting." The sense of interaction is particularly significant in literature, where direct effects of light and color on the retina must be replaced by imagined responses. In *To the Lighthouse,* each character has, as it were, its own frequency, and is know by its own range of color associations. Moreover, each character modifies and is modified by a complex "system of relations"□involving virtual color, mass, and line□that helps to unify the novel as "a psychological poem" and as a self-reflexive work of art. The language of color is integral to Woolf's vision and design, as she explores the interface between fiction and painting. Only through color interactions□complementing, but transcending, psychological relationships□can Woolf's reader pass beyond printed words and experience that "luminous silent stasis," in which aesthetic contemplation and human understanding become one.

Source: Jack F. Stewart, "Color in *To the Lighthouse,"* in *Twentieth Century Literature,* Vol. 31, No. 4, Winter, 1985, pp. 438-58.

Adaptations

The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) produced a dramatization of *To the Lighthouse* for British television in 1983. Kenneth Branagh, Rosemary Harris, Michael Gough, and Suzanne Bertish star. It is available from Magnum Entertainment Inc.

An audio book edition of *To the Lighthouse* is available from Naxos AudioBooks Ltd. The 1996 recording is read by the British actress, Juliet Stevenson.

Penguin Audiobooks also released a recorded edition of the novel in 1997. Their edition is read by Eileen Atkins.

Topics for Further Study

Virginia Woolf summed up James Joyce's writing style as "the work of a queasy adolescent fingering his pimples." Look at the different versions of stream of consciousness to be found in Woolf s *To the Lighthouse* and Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in light of this assessment. What are the differences between the two narrative techniques? What do you think led Woolf to see Joyce's style as immature and self-absorbed?

Feminist critiques of *To the Lighthouse* have drawn very different conclusions about its gender politics. Elaine Showalter suggests that the novel is a retreat from feminism into mysticism, while Toril Moi argues that it is a radical feminist attack on the logic of patriarchal male society. Which assessment seems to you better supported by Woolf s book? What textual evidence can you find for either of these viewpoints?

"Had there been an axe handy, or a poker, any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it." Many critics have suggested that James Ramsay has an Oedipal complex. What is Freud's concept of the Oedipal complex? Do you think James is suffering from it? Research the history of the idea and make a case for or against.

To the Lighthouse ends when Lily Briscoe puts the final stroke on her picture. Many critics have suggested that Woolf s novel is an attempt to create writing that is conceptually identical to Lily's Post-Impressionist painting. Research the history of experimental art in the first decades of the twentieth century. What is the theory behind abstract art like Lily's? How is it similar to Woolf s novelistic style?

The Ramsay children have views on British society that are very different from those of the older generation. They question the value of "the Bank of England and the Indian Empire." Investigate the political and social reform movements of the twenties and thirties. What was new about the younger generation? Why had they begun to question Victorian values?

Compare and Contrast

1910s: Unrest grows in Tsarist Russia as the oppressive state cracks down on reformers and activists.

1920s: The Bolshevik revolution has taken place, and Lenin is in power. His New Economic Policy is being instituted, which allows greater economic freedom and a measure of controlled capitalism.

Today: Communist Soviet Union has collapsed, and Russia is in ruins following a disastrous attempt to switch to a U.S.-style free market economy.

1910s: After World War I the 1919 Treaty of Versailles establishes an international body that will arbitrate disputes. It also demands that Germany pay reparations for the war.

1920s: The League of Nations has been formed, but its powers are very limited. America refuses to be involved, and has not ratified the Treaty of Versailles. The League is powerless, and fails to prevent the events that lead to World War II.

Today: The United Nations has been in place since 1945, and has learned from the fate of the League of Nations. The UN provides a working arena for international diplomacy, peacekeeping, and aid.

1910s: The British Labour Party is a new creation, struggling to find a support base. Many members of the British intellectual scene are in sympathy with its socialist ideology. After the Russian Revolution, the ruling classes of Britain become obsessed with the possibility of a similar British uprising.

1920s: Britain is brought almost to the brink of class war in a series of major industrial actions that culminate in the great General Strike.

Today: The Labour Party, led by Prime Minister Tony Blair, is the governing party in Great Britain.

1910s: The British Women's Suffrage movement demands the right to vote.

1920s: British women over thirty are granted the right to vote in 1918. American women win their battle in 1919. It is a long struggle that is resisted by many men□Switzerland will not accept women's suffrage in full until 1971.

Today: Generations of legal rights have still not resulted in equality between men and women. In Britain and America, women's pay averages less than 70 percent of men's, and women still make up a tiny proportion of CEOs and politicians

What Do I Read Next?

Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf's 1925 novel about a day in the life of the titular character, is not only a personality study, it is also a commentary on the ills and benefits society gleans from class. We spend a day with Clarissa as she interacts with servants, her children, her husband, and even an ex-lover, as she plans and executes one of her celebrated parties. *Mrs. Dalloway* shows the full emergence of Woolf's distinctive writing style that she would refine to greater heights in *To the Lighthouse.*

A Room of One's Own is Woolf's 1929 essay about the difficulties facing women authors. Woolf uses the constrained economic choices that women face to explain why "Shakespeare's sister" failed to write any plays, and to argue that creativity is dependent on independence.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce's 1916 novel about the development of Stephen Dedalus, is told in a groundbreaking stream of consciousness style. Reading this book along with *To the Lighthouse* provides a clearer picture of Woolf's important literary innovations.

E. M. Forster's 1924 *A Passage to India* is a major novel that addresses issues of nationality and empire. An intellectual peer and friend of Woolf, Forster writes in a style very different from hers, keeping to the realist/naturalist traditions of the English novel.

Michael Cunningham's 1998 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Hours,* is about Virginia Woolf. Cunningham tells the story of three women, including Woolf, as their lives are threaded together by the novel *Mrs. Dalloway.*

One gray suburban London morning in 1923, Woolf awakens from a dream that will soon lead to her book.

In the present, on a beautiful June day in Greenwich Village, fifty-two-year-old Clarissa Vaughan is planning a party for her oldest love, a poet dying of AIDS. In Los Angeles in 1949, Laura Brown, pregnant and unsettled, does her best to prepare for her husband's birthday, but can't seem to stop reading Woolf.

Portrait of a Marriage is Nigel Nicholson's 1973 account of the marriage of his parents, Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West. Vita was one of Woolf's closest friends, and, like her, was bisexual. She caused scandal when she became involved with another woman. Nicholson's biography provides an intimate picture of the domestic and social pressures facing the artistic women of the Bloomsbury circle.

Hons and Rebels is Jessica Mitford's 1961 autobiography about her early childhood (also published in America as *Daughters and Rebels).* The Mitford sisters were internationally notorious from the twenties onward. Jessica was a Communist, and ran off to the Spanish Civil War before moving to America, where she became an important activist and journalist for the left. Diana married Oswald Mosely, the founder of the

English Fascist Party, and was actively involved with Fascist campaigning. Unity went to Germany, where she became close to Adolf Hitler, shooting herself when the war broke out. Nancy was a glittering novelist of English high society. Mitford's autobiography provides a fascinating picture of the social and political climate of the twenties and thirties.

Further Study

Quentin Bell, *Bloomsbury Recalled,* Columbia University Press, 1997.

Bell, Woolf s nephew, portrays the literary figures and visual artists he knew so well through a series of vignettes. Reminiscence is key to Bell's prose portraits of his parents, Vanessa and Clive Bell, as well as Leonard Woolf, Ottoline Morrell, and other luminaries and lesser-known members associated with Bloomsbury.

Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual,* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Goldman offers a revisionary, feminist reading of Woolf s work. Focusing on Woolf s engagement with the artistic theories of her time, Goldman traces Woolf s fascination with the aesthetic possibilities of the Postimpressionist exhibition of 1910 and the solar eclipse of 1927 by linking her response to wider literary and cultural contexts.

Paul Goring, "The Shape of *To the Lighthouse:* Lily Briscoe's Painting and the Reader's Vision," in *Word & Image,* Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 222-29.

This essay shows how Lily's creation of her painting parallels Woolf s creation of the novel itself.

Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf A to Z: A Comprehensive Reference for Students, Teachers and Common Readers to Her Life, Works and Critical Reception,* Oxford University Press, 1996.

An alphabetical reference guide to Woolf s life and work. It includes detailed synopses of all the major and most of the minor works with an overview of their critical reception; all characters, both fictional and factual; contemporaries of Woolf□family members, friends, lovers, and all the Bloomsbury Group members; literary terms associated with Woolf; and place names from both her life and fiction.

Mitchell Leaska, *Granite and Rainbow: The Hidden Life of Virginia Woolf,* Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998.

Accepting the theory that Woolf was afflicted with manic-depressive psychosis□not a neurotic condition, but a genetically transmitted affective disorder□Leaska's book assesses the extent to which this disorder shaped Woolf s genius as a writer.

Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf,* Knopf, 1997.

Often regarded as the best modern biography of Virginia Woolf, Lee extricates her subject from cliches about madness and modernism to reveal a vigorous artist whose work is politically probing as well as psychologically delicate.

Jane Lilienfeld, "Where the Spear Plants Grew: The Ram-says' Marriage in *To the Lighthouse,"* in *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf,* edited by Jane Marcus, The University of Nebraska Press, 1981, pp. 148-69.

Lilienfeld uses the tools of feminist criticism to examine the Ramsays' marriage. She attempts to prove that Woolf both celebrates and criticizes it while she makes the urgency for creating new modes of human love and partnership clear.

Nicholas Marsh, *Virginia Woolf: The Novels,* St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Marsh uses excerpts from three of Woolf s novels to show how Woolf s writing style illuminates her subject matter.

Annis Pratt, "Sexual Imagery in *To the Lighthouse: A* New Feminist Approach," *Modern Fiction Studies,* 1972, pp. 417-31.

Pratt's article examines the sections of eroticism in *To the Lighthouse,* suggesting that Mrs. Ramsay shows the "pseudo-sexual adaptation" imposed upon her by her marriage and culture.

Panthea Reid, *Art and Affection: A Life of Virginia Woolf,* Oxford University Press, 1996.

Reid makes a case for the crucially formative relationships Virginia Woolf had with several women in her life, especially with her sister Vanessa, and sees Woolf s art as bound up with a play for the "motherly affection" she felt she was losing or had lost from her sister.

Bibliography

Eric Auerbach, "The Brown Stocking," in his *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* Princeton University Press, 1946, pp. 16-34.

Joseph L. Blotner, "Mythic Patterns in *To the Lighthouse,"* in *PMLA,* Vol. 71, 1956, pp. 547-62.

Rachel Bowlby, *Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations,* Blackwell, 1988, p. 79.

Irene Dash, Deena Kushner, and Deborah Moore, "How Light a Lighthouse for Today's Women?" in *The Lost Traditions: Mothers and Daughters in Literature,* edited by Cathy Davidson and E. M. Broner, Ungar, 1980, pp. 176-**55.**

James Halfley, *The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist,* The University of California Press, 1954, p. 80.

Louis Kronenberger, *The New York Times,* May 8, 1927.

Jane Lilienfeld, "'The Deceptiveness of Beauty': Mother Love and Mother Hate in *To the Lighthouse,"* in *Twentieth Century Literature,* Vol. 23, 1977, pp. 345-73.

Thomas Matro, "Only Relations: Vision and Achievement in *To the Lighthouse,"* in *PMLA,* Vol. 99, No. 2, March, 1984, pp. 212-24.

Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory,* Methuen, 1985, p. 12.

A. D. Moody, *"To the Lighthouse,"* in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of To the Lighthouse,* Prentice Hall, 1970, pp. 53-8.

Suzanne Raitt, *Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse,* St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Elaine Sho walter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing,* Princeton University Press, 1977.

Thomas A. Vogler, introduction to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of To the Lighthouse,* Prentice Hall, 1970, pp. 1-39.

Janet Winston, " 'Something Out of Harmony': *To the Lighthouse* and the Subject(s) of Empire," in *Woolf Studies Annual,* Vol. 2, 1996, pp. 39-70.

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* Harcourt Brace & Company, 1927.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Novels for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535