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A STUDY OF THE YEARS AS A POETIC NOVEL

by

John Talvihill

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In the "canon" of the criticism of the fiction of Virginia Woolf is an essay by William Troy, "Virginia Woolf: the Novel of Sensibility," first printed in the Symposium in 1932 and reprinted in Literary Opinion in America, which might be called the jumping-off place of this thesis. Philip Rahv in the essay "Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown" in his book, Image and Idea, calls Troy's essay "brilliant" and "a definitive analysis," an estimate which seems to me to be valid. This thesis can be considered illustrative of Mr. Troy's essay and of the essay of Mr. Rahv mentioned above, which Rahv referred to as a supplement to Troy's essay. The following paragraphs summarize the criticism of these two men, which I consider the key to all of Virginia Woolf's fiction.

Mr. Troy begins his essay with the influence of the philosophy of Bergson on writers of the 20th century, including Virginia Woolf, an influence which is difficult to prove and with which I am not particularly concerned here. He goes on to say that Virginia Woolf possessed one of those "temperaments immersed in their own sensibility, [i.e., in their own sensations and emotions] obsessed with its movements and vacillations, fascinated by its instability" (p. 325). Ten years before Mr. Troy had written this, Clive Bell in an article in Dial had included a similar estimate of his sister-in-law and friend, "Her emotion comes from her

1 New York, 1951.
2 New York, 1949, pp. 139-143.
sense of the scene.... This pure, this almost painterlike vision is Virginia Woolf's peculiarity: it is what distinguishes her from all her contemporaries." Mr. Troy points out that almost all of the characters of Virginia Woolf's novels share in that temperament which Dorothy Heare described as Virginia Woolf's "exceedingly delicate sensibility to impressions." Among the many who have agreed with Mr. Troy in finding Virginia Woolf's preoccupation with sensations in her characters is Herbert Muller, who used her to illustrate the way in which the "impressionists... returned to the immediate naive sensation." Mr. Muller found Mrs. Dalloway an example of how Virginia Woolf stressed all the disorderly particulars, the discontinuous 'quanta' of experience, that had been blurred by the generalizations of the Realist." After a few quotations which demonstrate how Virginia Woolf's characters reflect her own sensibility, Mr. Troy proceeds to the problem of the form of her books. He declares that her books are extended lyrics. Enlarging on this statement, Mr. Troy explains that Virginia Woolf's fiction is essentially description in which poetic symbols, rather than motives and actions of plot, are the elements of unity. This is the key to understanding the form of Virginia Woolf's characteristic fiction: each of her books, from Jacob's Room on, contains one or a group of poetic symbols which is not included in a plot.

3 "Virginia Woolf," LXXVII (December, 1921), 451-465.


but substituted for one. According to Mr. Troy, symbols are the "end result of the effort of the imagination to fix itself somewhere in space" (p. 332). "Spatial," not temporal, their meanings can be grasped in a moment. Consequently, a book composed of symbols lacks entirely "the basis of the appeal which narrative has made through the whole history of fiction, from the earliest fables of the race to the most complex 'construction' of Henry James" (p. 333), namely, "the satisfaction which we seem to take in the representation of reality in a temporal order," satisfaction in "a simple chronological record of action or in an arrangement of action which correspond[s] to an orderly view of life or reality" (p. 332). The use of poetic symbols in fiction, as in all Mrs. Woolf's work since Monday or Tuesday, Mr. Troy reasons, lacking the basis of the appeal of a narrative, "seems to be in direct contradiction to the foundations of our response to that form" (p. 333). Mr. Troy also mentions briefly Virginia Woolf's use of another device "carried over from lyric poetry," a certain "rhythm in consciousness, which is obviously intended to supply a corresponding rhythm to the book as a whole" (p. 329). But the unity which symbols and rhythm give "is merely superficial or decorative, corresponding to no fundamental organization of the experience" (p. 330). A year after Troy's essay appeared, Dr. C. E. M. Joad lent his authority to this denial of organic unity in the fiction of Virginia Woolf when, speaking of that fiction, he wrote in his Guide to Modern Thought: "Brilliantly observed, the separate items recorded are nevertheless unrelated. They are happenings in the same
place at the same time; but beyond the spatio-temporal connection there is no other.6

Mr. Troy also refers to the similarity—with reservations—of Virginia Woolf's writing to the stream-of-consciousness writing of such an author as James Joyce. In his supplement to Mr. Troy's analysis, Philip Rahv points out that this similarity is more apparent than real since, although both Joyce and Virginia Woolf use the device of the interior monologue, the use which they make of it is "totally different."7 While Joyce uses the interior monologue to tell us more about his characters, "in Mrs. Woolf it becomes a means of telling us less about them, of disengaging their ego from concrete situations in life and converting it into a vehicle of poetic memory" (p. 111). "Joyce," he continues, "makes a new selection of material for his fiction, but Virginia Woolf performs what is in the main an act of exclusion. . . ." She keeps only enough fictional material to identify the scene and characters. All the rest of her material has its source in "the general tradition of English poetry and of poetic sensibility" (p. 111).

Virginia Woolf, while apparently telling us in interior monologues what the consciousness of this or that person contains, actually uses the consciousness of a character to present her own poetic images, descriptions, and reflections. Phillip Toynbee, in Horizon, indicated that he had made the same conclusion about her interior monologues


7 "Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown," p. 130.
when he wrote that Virginia Woolf failed as a modern novelist because she did not give a variety of visions (one for each character) in her works.

All of the elements of Virginia Woolf's fiction analyzed by Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv are found in *The Years*. Mr. Troy's essay was written five years before that novel appeared, but in a review of it in *Nation*, he indicated that it contained the same defect he had noticed in her other books: it was lyrical, not narrative. In *The Years*, he wrote, there is no meaning or significance "implicit in the experience."9

This thesis is a comparison of the structure of *The Years* with that of a more familiar form of literature, lyric poetry, a comparison suggested by the essays of Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv and by most of the other criticisms of Virginia Woolf. First, the extraordinary amount of repetition in *The Years* is considered—repetition of words, of identical or nearly identical phrases, of similar scenes, of memories of past scenes in the book, and of memories of scenes which are not themselves in the book. This huge amount of repetition, most of which can only be intentional, links together, accidentally rather than essentially, the scenes and chapters of *The Years*, such as rhythm joins the lines and stanzas of a poem. Then it is shown that *The Years* presents a theme commonly found in lyric poetry; and that this theme is presented, like the theme of many lyric poems, by description which includes images


9 "Variations on a Theme," CXLIV (April 24, 1937), 473.
and symbols, and by comments on that description. In the Conclusion of this thesis, the criticisms of Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv are re-examined in the light of this comparison of *The Years* to poetry.
II

RHYTHM

In The Years, as in poetry, the underlying structural element is rhythm, not the prose rhythm with which it abounds, but a rhythm effected by repetition of words and ideas. Obviously, it is impossible to write at all without repeating, but The Years contains more than ordinary and inevitable repetition. In The Years, repetition becomes conspicuous; it stresses the words and phrases which are part of it, and thus establishes connections between them. Although this repetition does not have the regular beat of poetry, it does fit the definition of rhythm as the "regular recurrence or regular alternation of emphasis." Such emphasis serves a structural purpose in The Years similar to that of the rhythmic beat of a poem. This rhythm in The Years will now be considered in its scenes, in its chapters, and in the book as a whole.

Each of the chapters of The Years is divided into several sections, which I am calling "scenes." These scenes range from two to ten pages in length and there are about one hundred sixty in the book, including twenty prose poems. Only regular recurrences of emphasis are mentioned in this discussion of rhythm within scenes, since the only regular alternations of emphasis—in other words, contrasts—of any importance,

10 Webster's New Intercollegiate Dictionary.
are either between scenes or between chapters.

The prose poems which begin each chapter and occur occasionally within the chapters of *The Years* could be discussed along with the other scenes, for they are like them in many ways. But since rhythm in the prose poems is more obvious than in the other scenes, I will discuss them separately here before considering the rest of the scenes.

There is regularity in the prose poems in that they all follow the same general pattern. Each begins with a general statement of the time of year in which the scene occurs, with some particular word or phrase describing the weather within that scene. Examples of such initial statements are: "The autumn wind blew over England" (p. 89), "It was March and the wind was blowing" (p. 116), "It was January and the snow was falling" (p. 214), "It was a summer evening; the sun was setting, the sky was blue still but tinged with gold" (p. 302), and to take an example from the few clear-cut prose poems within the chapters, "It was raining" (p. 47). In this last example, the time of year is not given, perhaps because it is already known by what went before it in the chapter.

In each of the examples above, I have underlined the words important in the rhythm of the prose poems. Besides being the principal subject of the prose poem in which it appears, each of these words or

group of words invariably occurs or is referred to several times within the rest of the prose poem. One comes to look for a key word or group of words in reading the prose poems at the beginning of the chapters. And since with each repetition the word or group is emphasized, this is a kind of rhythm, a kind of regular recurrence of emphasis. For example, in the five prose poems to which reference is made in the previous paragraph, "wind" occurs four times in the first; "wind" occurs only once in the second but is referred to as "it" or "its" fourteen times within a page; "snow" occurs seven times within the third; "sun" occurs only twice but every sentence describes the effect of its light on things; and "rain" in the last, occurs eight times and in reference six other times. Another characteristic of these prose poems is the regular occurrence of the key words in the last sentence of the poem. The first example is an exception since in it "wind" is found in the second to last sentence; but the rest follow the rule, although "it" is substituted for "wind" in the second example, and "my bounty" for "rain" in the last example. In the third as in several others, the author has gone out of her way, even to the extent of writing an awkward sentence, to make the key word the very last in the passage: the last sentence of this prose poem reads, "But as the night wore on, snow covered the wheel ruts; softened to nothingness the marks of the traffic, and coated monuments, palaces and statues with a thick vestment of snow."

Another form of regularity within the prose poems is the description of key words in terms of their effects on definite things, in which the
tendency is to pass from the general key word to specific things several times during the poem and to return to the key word at the end of the poem. In the example which follows, the key words are underlined; the particulars which they affect are obvious. This example and two other of the prose poems (pp. 3-4, 146) are the only ones in which the key ideas are repeated but not the words themselves. The clause in this example which I have bracketed is also an irregularity, probably added because of the symbolic meaning of the searchlight in the chapter which this poem introduces:

A very cold winter's night, so silent that the air seemed frozen, and, since there was no moon, congealed to the stillness of glass spread over England. Ponds and ditches were frozen; the puddles made glazed eyes in the roads, and on the pavement the frost had raised slippery knobs. Darkness pressed on the windows; towns had merged themselves in open country. No light shone, [save when a searchlight rayed round the sky and stopped here and there to ponder over some fleecy patch.] (p. 279)

In this example, first the influence of the cold becomes more and more specific, passing from air to ponds to ditches to puddles and finally to slippery knobs of frost, and the effect of the night is narrowed to windows; then the general influence of the night, merging towns and country, is returned to: "no light shone. . ." So much for the regular recurrence of emphasis in the prose poems.

The other scenes in The Years have these rhythmic characteristics: identical words or phrases or other similarities, usually found in the opening and closing sentences of each of them; repetition for emphasis of words or groups of words as in the prose poems. Often, paragraphs in
those scenes occur in patterns, like the patterns in poetry, such as ABACA, ABAB, or simply, AA.

Here are some examples of the similarity in the opening and closing sentences of almost every one of these scenes. One scene begins, "It's not boiling," said Hilly Pargiter (p. 10), and ends, "It's boiling," Hilly exclaimed. "It's boiling!" (p. 12). Another scene begins, "Her parents are standing in the Hall" (p. 75), and ends "... for the gentlemen were dining in the Hall" (p. 76). One scene begins, "Rose came in" (p. 165), and ends "... as she went down the stairs" (p. 174). North "screwed his face up into a grin" (p. 371) begins a scene; his face changed to "an exaggerated expression of horror" (p. 373) concludes the scene. Another scene begins with the sound of dance music (p. 425) and ends with the sound of laughter (p. 426).

Although such similarities at the beginning and end of scenes do not always occur, and although those which do occur are not always precisely at the beginning and the end, the scenes on the whole are very regular in this respect; so much so, that if they were not separated, as for instance, the lines in the Beowulf manuscript are not separated, most of them could be separated on this principle alone.

Other repetitions of words and phrases, and the larger rhythmic patterns in the scenes just mentioned, will be cited in the following paragraphs. (The larger rhythmic patterns appear only in the last two of these five scenes and are not considered in a separate section because they are not frequent enough to warrant such attention).
In the first scene (pp. 10-12) of these five, repetitions are unusually common. Among these are references to a kettle. The five people in the scene look at the kettle twice as a group, one or another of them mentions that it is boiling or not boiling five times, Milly frays the wick beneath it three times, the sound it makes is noticed three times, it irritates Delia, and Martin curses it. In addition, there is a description of the kettle interpolated by the author. The scene also contains other repetitions. A picture of a red-haired woman is described, and then a boy enters who has the red hair of the woman in the picture, his mother. His mother is referred to three other times. On four occasions, someone comes into the room, three times it is said that Milly imitates the manner of a grown person. Three references are made to Rose's frock, four to her mother's sick tray. Some of these references come in quick succession; others are separated by sentences or paragraphs.

The next example (pp. 75-76), less than one full page long, is composed almost entirely of statements about a man whose name is given in its last sentence. First, he is described as "a tall man," then, in the course of the scene, he is addressed as "Chingachgook," and seven times as "he," and finally, he is called "Sir Richard Morton." In addition, his gown and face are mentioned and a pat on the shoulder is given him.

Since the next example is ten pages long (pp. 165-174), only the most striking repetitions in it are listed:
1. "But don't you find it rather noisy?"
   "Yes, it's noisy," said Maggie. "But very convenient."
   "Very convenient for the theatres," said Sara. (pp. 165-166)

2. "Don't you find it very noisy here?"
   "Yes, but very convenient for the theatres," (p. 167)

2. She wondered what had made her come. (p. 165)

2. Why did I come, she thought. (p. 167)

2. Why did I come? she kept asking herself. (p. 168)

3. The man was crying under the window. She looked out the window. Opposite there was a row of slate roofs. The man bawled in the streets underneath. (pp. 165)

3. She turned to the window. The houses opposite looked very dingy. "Any old iron to sell?" the man was crying under the window, "Any old iron?" (p. 172)

3. Then Sara went to the window a man was passing. He was crying "Any old iron? Any old iron?" (p. 172)

4. She wanted to talk about her past; to tell them something. She paused, gazing at the flowers without seeing them. There was a blue knot in the yellow glaze, she noticed. (pp. 166-167)

4. What is the use, she thought, of trying to tell people about one's past? She stared at the pot with the blue knot loosely tied in the yellow glaze. (p. 167)

5. It made her feel that she was two different people at the same time. (p. 167)

5. Again she had the odd feeling of being two people at the same time. (p. 169)


6. "There's not much of 'my wasted youth' about Edward now," she said. (p. 168)
7. "The Pargiters"—she was holding a fork in her hand, and she drew a line on the tablecloth. "The Pargiters," she repeated, "going on and on and on." (p. 169)

7. "You'd see—the Pargiters in the flesh," she added. She remembered Sara's phrase, "the caravan crossing the desert," she said. (p. 171)

8. "... about the Waterloo Road ..." (p. 171)
8. "... about the Waterloo Road ..." (p. 171)
8. "... about the Waterloo Road ..." (p. 171)

9. "The Campagna ... about the Campagna ..." (p. 171)
9. "... about ... the Campagna." (p. 170)
9. "... about ... the Campagna ..." (p. 171)

10. "I thought you were talking about Italy ..." (p. 170)
10. "Now what are you talking about ... another visit to Italy?" (p. 172)

11. "... a public house at the corner." (p. 172)
11. "... that public house at the corner." (p. 172)

12. "Drunken men ..." (p. 172)
12. "Drunken men following one ..." (p. 173)
12. "Drunken men following one ..." (p. 173)

13. "... to have an ice ..." (p. 173)
15. "... to have an ice ..." (p. 173)
14. "... her ice was melted ..." (p. 173)
14. "... Her ice was melted!" (p. 173)

15. "Sheo," or its plural or a compound of it is repeated six times on page 173.

These are only the most striking rhythmic beats in this long scene.
The next scene (pp. 371-373) also abounds in examples of such repetition. Marriage is discussed in its opening passages, half way through the scene, and again as the scene ends. Passages with their own rhythmic beat separate these sections, one having three occurrences of "bounder," the other "his hand on her knee" three times. This scene is also an example of the larger rhythmic patterns of several of the scenes, for its sections might be diagrammed ABACA, the "A" being those concerning marriage.

The last scene (pp. h25-h26) to be considered as an example of rhythm within the scenes is a little over a page long. The opening paragraph of this scene contains two series of similar word groups: "Feet thudded . . . a siren hooted . . . a van crashed," and "the chorus, the cry, the chirp, the stir." Because these groups of words sound alike, although the words in them are not the same, the series have much the same rhythmic effect as the actual repetition of words. (The same is true of the alliterations in The Years, which are especially abundant in the prose poems). But these observations are more suited to a study of prose rhythm than to this chapter. Returning to the rhythm of repetition, the rest of the scene consists of balanced sections of dialogue. Either section begins with a request for a speech, to which Nicholas replies in the first by telling why he won't give his speech, and in the second by relating the speech to Kitty privately. Both answers of Nicholas contain repetitions, the one: "I begin . . . "
three times, the other: "I was going to . . ." three times; and within each of the two series of repetitions there are other similarities.

This scene is another example of the several which have larger rhythmic patterns, since its two sections have similar parts, giving it an ABAB pattern.

In The Years, repetitions frequently occur in more than one scene in a chapter, extending over the whole of that chapter or the greater part of it. Rhythm in the chapters affected by frequent repetition is to be considered in the following order: repetition of the key weather condition stressed in the prose poem, other unusual repetition of words and identical or nearly identical phrases and sentences, and repetition of contrasts.

To illustrate the part which repetition of weather conditions plays in the chapters, two of the eleven chapters are to be examined: "1908," one of the shorter chapters, and "1914," one of the longer of the chapters.

The key word descriptive of the weather in "1908" is "wind."

Every sentence of the prose poem which opens this chapter (p. 116) speaks of the effect of the March wind on some thing or things in London. The wind appears in the rest of the chapter in the following ways: an old caretaker, huddled in a basement, notices "a rattle of dust along the pavement" which "works its way under the doors, through the window frames; on to chests and drawers" (p. 117), and as the scene ends, she is "huddled closer to the fire," thinking that "this wind made her shoulder ache cruel" (p. 117). On the next page, an effect of the wind is mentioned, "wisps of straw caught in the railings." "The wind is very
cold" (p. 118). Martin, "shivering in the wind" (p. 118), is impatient to get into the house. Martin is admitted and five pages of dialogue follow in which "wind" is not mentioned. Then Eleanor is left alone and the wind enters her thoughts: "The wind was rattling the windows in the back room; it was bending the bushes . . . " (p. 154). A few lines later, "A sound in the hall interrupted her . . . it was the wind. The wind was terrific. It pressed on the house; gripped it tight, then let it fall apart. Upstairs a door slammed; a window must be open in the bedroom above. A blind was tapping. It was difficult to fix her mind . . . "(pp. 154-155). The wind interrupts her thoughts during another dialogue: "There was a great gust of wind; the little bushes blanched and bent under it. And a window banged upstairs in her mother's bedroom. Perhaps I ought to go and shut it, she thought" (p. 157). The wind helps end the chapter; the fifth last line reads, "there was another gust and the sound of glass crashing" (p. 159).

The key weather condition in the prose poem which introduces the chapter "1911" (p. 224), is "brilliant spring." But in this prose poem, another factor shares equal emphasis with the weather: "the clocks striking the hours." I shall therefore consider this clock-time along with the spring weather because of its prominence. In the poem, a connection is made between the brilliance of the spring and the clocks striking—the air seems to "vibrate," to "ripple" in the brilliant sunshine, as it "brushes the treetops;" then, when the clocks strike, the air is described as a "rough sea of sound through which circles travelled." This prose poem is still more eccentric and complex in that
the brilliant spring is related to the "gallant and strident" activity of London thus: "the season was beginning; horns hooted; the traffic roared; flags flew taut as trout in a stream." In this prose poem, there are three factors emphasized instead of the usual single weather condition. This triple emphasis prevails throughout the chapter. Since a detailed account of the many appearances of the three conditions in "1914" would be tedious, I shall simply enumerate these appearances and indicate their nature.

"1914" (pp. 224-278) begins at 11:00 A.M. on one day and ends at about 8:00 A.M. the next day. During the night included in this time period, there is an aristocratic dinner party, a ride through London and a scene in a train compartment. Descriptions of the bright sunlight and freshness of the air tell over and over again of the springtime; in the first twenty-four pages, "sunlight" is mentioned twelve times, "fresh air" five times. Then night comes and the characters go indoors. At the dinner party, the spring breezes cause a draft, and the pleasantness of a walk in the Park that day is recalled. In the last three pages of the chapter, the following day has begun. "Brightness" is mentioned six times, and "air" three times. The clocks, (the second factor of emphasis introduced in the prose poem), are heard striking 11:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M., 4:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M. (pp. 225-264), and fifteen other separate references are made to "clocks" or the time, five of these in the same refrain, "the Round Pond at Four" (pp. 231, 232, 234). References to the activity of London, (the third factor), occur frequently. The first
reference of about one and one-half pages includes one of the few prose poems not introductory to the chapter (pp. 226-227). Twenty-two other references occur in the next twenty pages, including one of one-half page in length (pp. 236-237). Then, at the party, the hooting of horns and noises of the city are heard (pp. 249-251), and the usual people are seen hurrying along the streets (p. 258). The party itself is made to seem part of the activity (esp. pp. 260-261); and, on the trip through London after the party, although it was "close on midnight, it scarcely seemed to be night; but rather some other real disembodied day, for there were so many lamps in the streets; cars passing; men in white mufflers with their light overcoats open walking along the clean dry pavements, and many houses were still lit up, for everyone was giving parties" (p. 263).

Again using "1908" and "1914" as examples, additional repetitions will be considered in the following paragraphs. Besides the key weather conditions, many of the words and phrases repeated in the chapters first appear in the prose poems which preface these chapters. Usually they refer to things affected by the key weather conditions.

For instance, in the prose poem which introduces "1908" of which "wind" is the theme, we are told that the color of a "Rembrandt in the National Gallery" is "blown out by the wind." Six additional references to pictures are made in the chapter, "1908," including one to "some picture" in the "National Gallery" (pp. 152-153) and two similarly-phrased references to a picture which "wants cleaning" (pp. 159, 159). The wind in the
prose poem also blows "papers already blood-smeared, smeared with print . . . against area railings" (pp. 146-147). Further references to "papers" appear in thirteen paragraphs of the rest of the chapter, of which eleven pertain to a group of "newspaper cuttings" of obituary notices which are "already yellowish" (p. 156). One of the other two references is to a "strip of bright red paper" (p. 142), which tells that the house owned by the subject of the obituaries is already sold; the other is to "an old newspaper" on the doorstep of the neglected house. The "area railings" of the prose poem are mentioned twice again within the chapter (pp. 147-148).

In addition to these points of emphasis, which first occur in the prose poem, there are several other repetitive references to tea and to the drawing room in which most of the chapter takes place. Also, Honan's Life of Christ is alluded to eleven times as "a" or "the book" or "Honan" (pp. 142-155), one of these references consisting of a half-page reflection on the book, and the query "Why Honan?" repeated three times. Other multiple references are to chess (pp. 142, 150, 153, 154) and to a door bell ringing (pp. 147, 148, 153).

Lastly, there are nine sentences or groups of sentences which are repeated, with slight variations, in more than one scene; two of them three times, the others, twice. Of these repetitions, one is especially noteworthy because it consists of quite similar reflections by different characters. Martin, hearing his Aunt Eugenia's greeting: "What a pleasure, Martin! . . ." wonders, "What had her private life been . . . her love affairs? She must have had them—obviously, obviously" (p. 153).
Then, only two pages later, the same thought comes to Eleanor as she listens to Martin: "... from the sound of his voice it came over her that he must have had a great many love affairs. Yes—it became perfectly obvious that he had had a great many love affairs" (p. 155).

In "1914," there is diversity of settings and a shifting back and forth of the main characters. For about one-half of it, Martin is the central figure, then the interest gradually shifts to Kitty, and later, Martin leaves the chapter entirely and Kitty is definitely the central figure. The chapter begins on Mary Street, shifts to St. Paul's, then to a chophouse, back to St. Paul's, then to Hyde Park, to Grosvenor Square, to a train-station, a village in Scotland, and finally, to an estate near the village. Although not set off in any way, the chapter seems to be divided into three parts, because of two breaks in the time sequence, coinciding with changes of scene; and because each of these parts has its own set of repeated words and phrases, this chapter is considered here in terms of these parts.

In the three parts (pp. 221-240, 241-271, 272-278), besides emphasis of the dominant characteristics of the prose poem: brilliant spring, clocks and time of day, and London activity, two repetitions are prominent, namely, references to birds and to dogs. Birds are mentioned on nine pages in the first part, five pages in the second, and on four pages in the third part. Of these, three are descriptions of people feeding birds, and two are to seagulls cutting "patterns in the air." Dogs are mentioned on five pages of the first part, on
Flowers are also mentioned throughout the chapter but the repetition is not frequent enough to be emphatic. There are repeated appearances throughout of "glass" or "glasses," "wine," "Mary Street," "Hyde Park," and "the Serpentine."

However, repeated words or phrases confined to the separate parts abound. In the first part, there are ten statements about money, fourteen about St. Paul's Cathedral, seven about pedestrians, eight about people talking to themselves, five about sailboats, and some six or seven less frequent repetitions. The second part contains references to pictures, of which three are to a doubtful Canaletto; a famous Gainsborough is mentioned three times. There are eight observations about a certain old lady, of which three are about her wedge-shaped, stone-colored face, three about her knobbled fingers. Four references are made to a certain lecture on poetry; three to the party and, whether or not it "works," four to a black and white paved hall, and several others. In the third part, "grass," "a castle," "trees," "leaves," and "a certain car" are each mentioned several times.

This arrangement of repetition in the chapter, "1914," is typical of the longer chapters The Years.

According to Webster, rhythm can be a movement marked by either regular recurrence or regular alternation of features, phenomena, etc. In considering the alternations within the chapters of The Years, the most obvious are found to be the frequent definite contrasts between scenes. The regular contrasts establish as much of a connection between the parts as that made by repetitions. On this subject, it is
interesting to note the evaluation of contrast found in the text of The Years. North, a poet, is trying to guess what will come next in a book he is reading: "'Comedy,' he said briefly, 'Contrast . . . the only form of continuity'" (p. 346).

Rhythm by contrast is a much more uncertain thing to point out than rhythm by similarities, but I shall give examples which I consider fairly indisputable, taking the chapters in order. In "1880," there are some rather obvious contrasts. Abel thinks of his dying wife, then goes to his mistress. Then the scene shifts to his wife and children at home in Abercorn Terrace, where a contrast is developed between the way they think and the way they speak and act, culminating in Delia's conclusion at the funeral of her mother: " . . . we're all pretending" (p. 87). The shift from the first section of the chapter to the second is a contrast in that it takes the reader from a house permeated with the thought of death, where activity has ceased, to Edward's room at Oxford, where he studies intensely, having parceled out his day into hours and half hours; he thinks of his father, his studies, the rain, the girl he loves, his friends—but never once of the Terrace, where his mother lies dead. In the next series of scenes in "1880," Kitty goes from her very ceremonious and aristocratic household at the Lodge to her tutor, then to see the Robsons, people who live simply and who have very little of ceremony in their homes. The Robsons speak in a Yorkshire dialect and eat potatoes and fried fish for tea. Various other details of this contrast are emphasized, usually by Kitty, who notices them and weighs the merits of each. Two main contrasts run throughout "1891," the first
between Abel's lethargy in his advanced age, and his daughter Eleanor's activities, such as committee meetings and shopping. The second contrast is between birth and death, when Abel visits his vivacious young cousin Maggie on her birthday, and the visit is clouded by the news of Parnell's death. These contrasts are brought out in much detail; first one, then the other, is stressed. They are merged when old Abel, watching his niece toss dead leaves on a bonfire, thinks of how he used to jump over the bonfire for his children. In "1907," which occurs at night, "everyone," including Sara's parents and sister, has gone to some dinner party or dance. Meanwhile, Sara, who is slightly deformed, has remained at home, attempting to sleep or to read; but she is constantly interrupted by the waltz music from a party in the house next door. The contrast between Sara and the rest of the world is stressed by passages in which she is compared to Antigone in the tomb and to a chrysalis, interspersed with accounts of the party next door. As in "1917," first one, then the other, element of contrast is repeated several times and stressed by many details. "1903" contains no important contrasts. Probably the most violent contrast in "1910" is between scenes in a poor section of London, "... this cave ... of mud and dung" (p. 189), and scenes of splendor at an opera house. Various details, such as the man crying "any old iron" in a street of the poor section, and the description in a dingy room of the beauty of one of the opera-goers, are the means by which this contrast is developed. In the chapter "1911," several contrasts are stated between England and Spain or Greece, between the appearance of persons in youth and their appearance thirty years later, and between
the activity and discoveries of travel and the unchanging nature of life in a Dorset country house. In "1913," there is a definite contrast between Crosby's love for her home at Abercorn Terrace and Eleanor and Martin's lack of affection for it. In "1914," the agitated activity of London and the passage of time stressed in most of the chapter are contrasted with the natural tranquillity of the wilds of Scotland and the sense of time almost ceasing. The principal contrast in "1917" is between the constraint normally existing in society which interferes with the honest discussion of serious or personal subjects, and its disappearance under certain friendly conditions, for instance, in the home of Renny and Maggie—influenced also by the proximity of death, for an air raid is in progress. As the chapter begins, Eleanor comes out of the night into the home of Renny and Maggie. There, she receives hope of a new and better world. As the chapter ends, she goes back into the night and is rebuffed by the remark of a man eating on the bus, at which she is absently staring: "Like to see what I've got for supper, lady?" Contrast occurs in "1918" between the grand celebration of the signing of the armistice and Crosby's disinterested attitude on hearing the news, as she goes shopping and, as usual, is troubled by the noise of the guns and the sirens. The principal contrast in "Present Day" is between what is actually known or expressed, and the desire to know and to communicate. Repeatedly in this chapter, a character wishes to know or to explain something or other, and cannot.

The repetitions which remain to be considered are those involving more than one chapter. These repetitions will be discussed in this order:
remembrance scenes, similar scenes, repetitions of characters' distinguishing traits, and simple repetitions. As soon as "remembrance scenes" is read, Proust's 'Remembrance of Things Past' probably comes to mind, and perhaps, along with it, thoughts of all the other authors who have used memories as a device to reveal character, or to aid in the development of plot. Virginia Woolf, no doubt, received the idea of using memories from these authors, especially Montaigne, Sterne, DeQuincey and Proust, each of whom she admired greatly; but she does not use memories as they do in 'The Years.' As will be shown in Chapter III, the memories do not present characters, but rather help state a theme; and they cannot assist in the development of plot, because 'The Years' does not have a plot. Memories do play an important part in the rhythm of 'The Years.' Perhaps the most emphatic of all the repetitions are those passages in which a scene previously presented is recalled by one of the characters. There are a surprising number of such passages; I have listed seventy. This list is not exhaustive, but it is sufficient to demonstrate the abundance of this form of repetition. To give some idea of the passages on this list, the first twelve entries are given here, followed by detail on the first four entries.

In "1910" Rose recalls the scenes of her childhood which were related in "1880" (pp. 12-16, 35-37, 39): "She saw them sitting round a table; and a detail that she had not thought of for years came back to her—how Lilly used to take her hairpin and fray the wick of the kettle" (p. 166). On the same page, she recalls another scene in "1880" (p. 17): "And she saw Eleanor sitting with her account books; and she saw herself go up to her and say: 'Eleanor, I want to go to Lamley's.'" In the third example, Martin remembers a scene from "1880" (p. 17): "He saw her standing with her back to the schoolroom door; very red in the face, with her lips tight shut as they were now. She had wanted him to do something and he had crumpled a ball of paper in his hand and skied it at her" (p. 159). Another scene in "1880" (p. 17) is recalled by Eleanor thus: "A picture—another picture—had swum to the surface. There was Julia standing in the middle of the room: 'Oh my God! Oh my God!' she was saying; a hansom cab had stopped at the house next door..." (p. 335).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Page of Scene</th>
<th>Page on Which Recalled</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>335-336</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>56-58</td>
<td>316</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>67-73</td>
<td>76-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>63-62</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On at least nine occasions a scene not itself in *The Years* which was remembered once is again recalled; and on some one hundred twenty-five occasions, scenes not in *The Years* nor previously recalled therein are remembered. These are not repetitions in the sense of the above-mentioned group; nevertheless, the large number of them warrants considering them as a group. All are memories; all have in common a returning to things past. If one adds to these the seventy memories already mentioned and some fifteen to be mentioned, the total is two hundred ten, an average of about one memory in every two pages of the book, and I am sure this number is not all-inclusive.

Here are a few examples of the passages in which scenes not in *The Years* are remembered. The first, from the opening paragraph of the book, after the introductory prose poem, begins: "Col. Abel Pargiter was sitting after luncheon in his Club, talking... they were reviving with old jokes and stories now their past in India, Africa, Egypt, and then by a natural transition, they turned to the present" (p. 1). Sometimes the memories are general; sometimes, like the following, quite specific: "But who wrote that song, he wondered, as he strolled on, about the King of Spain's daughter, the song that Pippy used to sing him, as she wiped his ears with a piece of slimy flannel? She used to take him on her knee and croak out in her wheezy rattle of a voice, 'The King of Spain's daughter came to visit me, all for the sake of...'. And then suddenly her knee gave, and down he was tumbled onto the floor" (p. 226). A few of the recollections are between one and two pages long, such as those which are told intermittently of some years spent in...
Africa (pp. 308-320), those about a walk along the Strand (pp. 321-322), a visit to a former patron (pp. 340-342), a visit to a suffrage meeting (pp. 186-189), and two children's adventures and quarrels (pp. 157-159), also, old Patrick's recollections of his friends in Ireland (pp. 350-355). But most of this group are less than one-half page in length, such as the two which follow: "Then another picture formed. She was sitting on the same terrace; but now the sun was setting; a maid came out and said, 'The soldiers are guarding the line with fixed bayonets!' That was how she had heard of the war—three years ago. And she had thought, putting down her coffee cup on a little table, Not if I can help it! overcome by an absurd but vehement desire to protect those hills; she had looked at the hills across the meadow . . ." (pp. 285-286).

"...there she was among the Morris wallpapers and the cabinets—his cousin Kitty, as he had seen her last time he dined at the Lodge" (p. 51).

Other memories, generalizations of situations or conditions, of which I have found fifteen, are illustrated in the following passages. In "Present Day," Kitty, considering her life as it has been, the happenings of past years summarized in "1880" (pp. 56-82), in "1910" (pp. 176-185), in "1914" (pp. 243-278), remarks, "Speaking for myself, the old days were bad days, wretched days, cruel days . . ." (p. 401).

In another memory, Delia tells us in "Present Day" what we glimpsed in "1880": "'In the drawing room at Abercorn Terrace . . .' said Delia. She was going from table to table with a great jug. She stopped in front of them—'Abercorn Terrace!' she exclaimed, filling a glass. She flung her head back and looked for a moment astonishingly young, handsome, and defiant.
In *The Years*, there is also repetition of similar happenings or situations, noteworthy because of the frequency of occurrence. Among these repeated scenes, two are outstanding. In the first, a character is interrupted while saying, thinking, or doing something. This happens more than once on every page of the book, on an average. Of course, this is an ordinary and inevitable scene, emphatic only in its extraordinary repetition. The other much-repeated scene is of someone looking out a window at something going on outside. This also is a common enough scene in fiction; but in the four hundred thirty-five pages of *The Years*, it occurs sixty-five times, certainly a greater proportion than one would expect. Two of the window scenes involve about two pages, twelve are more than one-half page long. In most instances, direct statements are made, such as "she went to the window," or "she looked out the window;" the remainder are less explicit, as the account on the last page of Eleanor watching a cab which "stopped in front of a house two doors down." Repetition of similar scenes does not occur more often than ten times in the rest of the examples. Some of these, like the following, are quite ordinary, unusual only in that they happen again and again. Six times someone tells of his experiences in Africa or India; three times people trot in a cab over the Serpentine; on ten occasions, children play in the street, usually a game which involves chalk marks; and about ten times hansom cabs "jingle by." Three scenes occur on a terrace. There are five afternoon-teas, four dinner parties, six scenes in which someone is falling asleep, five of someone being aroused from-
sleep, another six by the fireside, three of the traffic at Charing Cross and again at Hyde Park Corner, two of the crowds approaching the Opera House, ten of a cab or bus ride. Five times a woman is sewing, four times a woman is locking in the mirror, preparing to retire.

There are twenty-two repetitions, notable because of their striking similarities rather than frequency of appearance. On two different occasions, Kitty, wishing to be with Eleanor, says pointedly, "Can't I give you (anyone) a lift?" There are two scenes of "the tea urn sliding by" as a train leaves a station. And, a committee meeting in "1914" and Delia's party in "Present Day," separated by twenty-five years and one hundred pages, take place in the same rented rooms.

Frequently reference is made in The Years to situations or conditions or happenings which occur "often," "always," "for the one-thousandth time," or are described as "usual," which are not, in actuality, recurrent in the book. Because such statements are unusually common, although the only similarity between most of them is something said to be repeated often, connections are established in the reader's mind. On the first page we read, "But in April such weather was to be expected. Thousands of shop assistants made that remark as they handed out neat parcels to ladies in flounced dresses standing on the other side of the counter." On the last page, Eleanor's "And now?" signifies that she is waiting for the next repetition of life's pattern. This latter example, although the interpretation of its significance is certainly justified, is one of the most inferential. The following quotations state in one way or another that this or that happens again
and again: "There's always a public house, a library, and a church," she was muttering" (p. 101); "... these Italian dagoes who always seem to be swallowing macaroni" (p. 118); "The owl ... you can time him," said Peggy, "he's so regular!" (p. 202); "Then guns again," Crosby muttered ... " (p. 304); "As usual, she had lost something" (p. 392).

The next group of repetitions which extend beyond one chapter involves character traits. We shall see in Chapter III that each character in The Years from moment to moment receives impressions, reflects on them, and perhaps associates them with similar impressions recalled. The character is, in function, a receptor conditioned by each new moment, who assists the author in revealing the significance of that moment. These "receptors" are differentiated from one another by distinguishing personal traits which remain with them unaltered throughout the book. The following observation by North in The Years holds true for its characters, at least: "Was there always ... something that came to the surface, inappropriately, unexpectedly from the depths of people, and made ordinary actions, ordinary words expressive of the whole being?" (p. 349). Virginia Woolf attempts in The Years to bring out that dominant trait, that "something ... expressive of the whole being," in each appearance of the character. It is the repetition of these distinguishing characteristics which concerns us here. Typical are the repetitions of the character traits of the seven Pargiter children who are introduced in the first chapter.

Milly, the first of the seven children introduced, fusses over the afternoon tea, and warns the other children, "It's papal!" as their
father approaches (p. 12). The most unreflective of the seven children, Milly is content to live within the ordinary conventionalities of society in her circumstances. She appears several times in "1880," busy with household chores, aware of her own dullness in comparison with her sisters' attractiveness. In "1891," Milly is living in Devonshire, married to Hugh Gibbs, a plain, hulking country squire who loves to hunt. She has a basket on her arm and is with child (pp. 90-98). Rose, in "1910," recalls how "Milly used to take her hairpin and fray the wick of the kettle" (p. 166). Milly and Hugh do not reappear until "Present Day," when they come to Delia's party. Very fat and talking of food and their children, they bore North with their tedious and dull conversation and by their very presence. Hugh says, "Chew, chew, chew," as he seats himself, and Milly says "Tut, tut-tut," North observes (p. 374). They remind Peggy that "Supper's ready downstairs" (p. 391); Milly's trait is her artlessness of mind and simplicity in the performance of her duties. Delia, another daughter, is introduced seven lines after Milly (p. 10). Unlike Milly, Delia does not fall into step with conventional formalities; she becomes peevish when Milly frays the wick to enlarge the flame and make the tea boil: "'But that doesn't do any good,' Delia said irritably, as she watched her. She fidgeted. Everything seemed to take such an intolerable time... How can I put a stop to that fiddling and trifling, she said to herself, tapping a knife on the table" (p. 10). Delia is seen often in this chapter, always with the same intolerance of convention. Parnell is her idol (p. 23). She exclaims aloud, "Oh my God!" in aversion to confinement at home during her mother's illness (p. 19), and at her
mother's funeral, everyone seems to her to be pretending (p. 87). In "1891," we learn that Delia has a room in a poor section of town and has been working for Parnell's cause. She does not reappear until "Present Day," where we learn that she has married an Irishman. She takes pride in having "promiscuously" drawn together many classes of people at her party in rented rooms of an office building (p. 404). When reminded of Abercorn Terrace, "It was hell," is her reaction (p. 417). She is annoyed with her husband: "For the thousandth time he had dashed her dream. Thinking to marry a wild rebel, she had married the most King-respecting, Empire-building of country gentlemen . . . " (p. 390). Rose, the third of the Pargiter children, is introduced on the same page as her sisters in "1880" thus: " . . . but here the door burst open again and a little girl in a stiff pink frock came in. 'I think Nurse might have put you on a clean pinafore,' said Milly, imitating the manner of a grown-up person. There was a green smudge on the pinafore, as if she had been climbing trees." Rose is the adventurous one. Later on in "1880," she leaves home after dark, without permission, on a "desperate mission to a besieged garrison," namely, to buy a box of ducks at Lanley's Toy Shop. An ugly man frightens her on the way to and from the shop, but she eludes him (pp. 26-29). Unattractively dressed in "1908" (p. 156), she has just returned from speech-making in behalf of women's rights at a by-election, and Eleanor, noticing her manner of throwing her head up to meet a challenge, thinks that "she is exactly like the picture of old Uncle Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse" and should have been a soldier (p. 157). We learn in "1911" that she was arrested for throwing a rock (p. 264), and in "1914," that she is
in jail (p. 231). In "Present Day" Rose raps a knife on a table and calls for a speech (pp. 415-416), and is toasted by Kitty for having the courage of her convictions (p. 420). Thus the little girl with a smear on her frock has become a stout old woman, but her adventurous spirit has remained with her unchanged. Martin, the quarrelsome member of the family, is the next of the children introduced: "The door slammed; books were slapped down on the hall table, and Martin, a boy of twelve, came in. He had the red hair of the woman in the picture, but it was rumpled. . . . 'Blast that kettle,' said Martin, turning sharply away" (p. 11). In "1880" (p. 17), "1891" (p. 297), and "Present Day" (pp. 353, 416, 420), he quarrels with Rose; in "1910" (p. 179), he quarrels with Kitty, and in his only other appearance, in "1921," he loses his temper with a waiter who tries to short-change him (p. 233) and speaks irritably to Kitty (pp. 262-263). I shall mention only the peculiar characteristics of each of the other children and omit most of the details in the remainder of the examples. Eleanor's character is represented by a little doodle she either draws or thinks about whenever she appears—a dot with lines going out from it, a symbol of her habitual desire to know and to communicate. Another characteristic quality brought out in "1880," "1891," "1907," and "1910," is her patient acceptance of the burden of remaining with her father until his death at Abercorn Terrace. Morris is the lovable and never-quite-successful member of the family. In "1880," he is losing his boyish look. In "1891," he is recalling his childhood as he shuffles his feet through leaves "on his way to his chambers" (p. 90), and we see him
at his daily grind in the Courts of Law. He drags a chair by the window, and looks bald and thin in "1911," and his worn shoes and scarred hand arouse pity and a loving solicitude in his daughter Peggy in "Present Day." Edward, the last of the seven Pargiter children to be introduced, first appears at Oxford, becoming a classical scholar (p. 18), and is still a scholar forty years later. He is gifted, and his dominant trait is vanity, symbolized by the way he brushed up his crest before the looking-glass, a mannerism attributed to him three times in "1880," and also in "1910" and "Present Day"—the three chapters in which he appears. Kitty Malone, a cousin of the seven Pargiter children, also introduced in "1880," has a constant longing for the simplicity of country life. Maggie and Sara are the other two cousins of the Pargiters; Maggie’s trait is passivity and Sara’s is day-dreaming.

In conclusion, this remark by Sara is quoted from "1917": "... people always say the same thing," she laughed. She roused herself and sat up. 'There’s Maggie—she says nothing. There’s Kenny—he says, 'What damned rot!' Eleanor says, 'That’s just what I was thinking,' ...

'...and Nicholas, Nicholas!'—she patted him on the knee—who ought to be in prison, says 'Oh my dear friends, let us improve the soul!'" (p. 297).

The remainder of the repetitions occurring in two or more chapters, termed "simple repetitions," consist of distinctive words and phrases, a few sentences, and descriptions of similar emotions. The definition of rhythm which I have applied to repetition in this chapter is
"regular recurrence or regular alternation of emphasis." To apply the term "regular" to these repetitions is, admittedly, to stretch "regular" a long way until it means little more than "usual"--and then it will fit, for it is usual in The Years that practically everything turns up at least once again, and often, several times. Still, whether or not "rhythm" is applied to these repetitions, the effect of stress and connection is similar to that which rhythm produces in poetry.

Many of the simple repetitions occur frequently. There is at least one reference to "flower" on seventy different pages of The Years, to "glass" on seventy-one pages, to "birds" on sixty pages, to "death" on fifty-five pages, to a "clock" or "time" on fifty pages, to "money" on twenty-seven pages, and to "wine" on twenty-six pages. There are also references to "leaves" and "light" on more than twenty-five pages of The Years. The names of characters are not included, since it is usual in novels that the characters' names be frequently repeated; but they might have been included, for in a book containing as many repetitions as The Years, they also seem to take on the function of rhythm.

The way these frequent repetitions are connected with the conclusion of the book is noteworthy. Most of the long final chapter is about a party, and the book ends when the party ends. Each of these frequent repetitions occurs a final time within the last four full pages of the book, most of them being closely connected with the end of the party. Taking them in order of appearance, we find one last mention of "money" in the sentence, "She gathered together her gloves, her bag and two or
three coppers, and got up." Eleanor has had trouble keeping up with these coppers all through the party. "Light" occurs four times on these pages, linked with the appearance of the dawn which comes as the party ends, and is implicit in a number of references to the dawn and to color. There are seven references to "flower." In one of them, Maggie tosses a flower at Sara to wake her so they can go. "Time" last occurs when Maggie tells Sara that "It's time to go," and Sara answers, "Time, is it?" "Time" and "glass" occur on an average of every four and one-half pages of The Years and are repeated in the description of the room at the end of the party. "There were the smeared plates and the empty wine-glasses; the petals and the bread crumbs," and in the third last sentence of the book, when Eleanor looks at Morris who is "drinking the last drops of a glass of wine."

"Death" is alluded to: "the old brothers and sisters" stand against the window in the "cadaverous but brilliant" light of dawn, looking "statuesque . . . for a moment, as if they were carved in stone."

"Birds" are mentioned when Eleanor notices pigeons "shuffling on the tree tops" . . . and twelve lines about them follow. "Leaves" are in Eleanor's thoughts as she recalls the leaves falling in "1891." Leaves, closely associated with death in "1891," again, at the party's end, carry a foreboding of finality and completion.

Among these repetitions appearing on less than twenty-five pages of The Years (but always appearing in at least two chapters) are identical or similar phrases, such as "grubby little ruffian," twice said by Abel in "1880" (pp. 12-16), and once by Digby in "1891" (p. 126),
each time to a daughter in a pink frock; "But you don't go to parties
..." spoken by Eugenie in "1907" (p. 142) and by Eleanor in
"Present Bay" (p. 365); "Eleanor's broody," spoken by Abel and
included in the thoughts of Billy in "1880" (pp. 31, 35); "I help
then to make shells," a statement of Rene in "1917" (p. 236),
repeated by Sara in "Present Bay" (p. 347). There are about three
times this many examples of such repetition, not considering the great
number limited to single chapters. Then there are repetitions of
place names: Abercorn Terrace occurs on twenty pages, Westminster on
twelve, the Serpentine on six, St. Paul's on twelve. References
occur on at least eight pages to "blue eyes" and on thirteen pages
to "red hair" (and never any other color for eyes is mentioned
and twice only another hair color). In three chapters, including
the first and last, reference is made to two of Abel's fingers which
have been mutilated. Eleanor's vacation tan is mentioned on seven
pages in three chapters. There are at least one hundred fifty
additional repetitions just as obvious as those cited. A few of
these are listed below, with the number of pages on which they occur:

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>umbrella</td>
<td>twelve</td>
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<tr>
<td>tweed</td>
<td>three</td>
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<tr>
<td>tight shoes</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>pail</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>necklace with spots</td>
<td>six</td>
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</table>
Most of these repetitions have more in common than the repeated words. For example, the gilt chair is always the same one and is a symbol for Digby's house on Brona Street each time it appears; and a out half of the references to "knots" are to knots in handkerchiefs.

Many of these words, phrases and sentences occur at least once near the end of the book and nearly all of them somewhere in the final chapter. In the closing pages of that chapter, they are especially common.

The following quotations from the last chapter of The Years, as indicated, are similar or identical repetitions of quotations cited from previous chapters:

1. "It's time," said Maggie. Sara pulled herself up.
   "Time, is it?" she sighed. (p. 247)

2. "It's time," said Maggie, touching her on the shoulder.
   "Time, is it?" she sighed. (p. 332)

3. "Well," said Kitty, turning away, "I must be off. But can't I give anyone a lift?" (p. 300)

4. "Can't I give you a lift back, Nell?" Kitty Lasswado was saying. "I've a car waiting." (p. 432)

5. She fell down into a chair. . . . Curled round, with her hair falling over her face and her hands screwed together she looked like some great ape. . . . (p. 189)
1. She had folded herself like a grasshopper with her back against the tree. (p. 244)

2. There she was curled up in a corner with her head against a table. . . .

(This set of reflections is tied in with the comparison of Sara in bed to Antigone in the tomb.)


4. Upstairs they were playing "God save the King." (p. 233)

5. Jugs of milk with bills under them stood in the deep window-seats. . . . She stood for a moment watching the leaves fall. . . .

6. She saw an empty milk jug and leaves falling. (p. 233)

7. Far away pigeons were cooing—Take two coos, Taffy. Take two coos. Tak . . .

7. The pigeons were cooing Take two coos, Taffy. Take two coos . . .

7. . . . pigeons crooning in the treetops. Take two coos, Taffy, take two coos, Taffy, tak . . .

7. Take two coos, Taffy, take two coos . . . tak . . . they were crooning.

(This song of the pigeons was described on the first page of the book as "the lullaby that was always interrupted," and might be said to sum up the theme of The Years.)

8. . . . they watched a young man in a top-hat get out of the cab. He stretched his hand up to pay the driver.

8. . . . she was watching the cab. A young man got out; he paid the driver.

In addition to these repetitions which involve more than one chapter, there are as many more in the five pages from which the above quotations are taken; repetitions of phraseology originating within "Present Day." The thirty-five pages preceding are as concentrated
with repetitions words, phrases or sentences. Thus, the end of 
The Years, like the finale of a symphony, is crowded with references 
to what went before.

These references, coming so close together, effect in The Years 
a kind of finality. This idea of a climax in the rhythm of The Years 
was suggested by a similar analysis of the ending of Jacob's Room included 
by Miss Jean Sudrann in a dissertation on the form of Virginia Woolf's 

The next and final group of repetitions which extend throughout 
The Years is the most basic and the most common, so obvious that it is 
likely to be overlooked: the repetitions of contrasts between examples 
of continuity (endlessness and solidarity) and examples of discontinuity 
(mortality and separation). Many of the repetitions mentioned above 
are also part of this group of contrasts. These contrasts and the 
frequencey with which they occur will be illustrated in Chapter III. 
Since they are not discussed in that chapter from the viewpoint of 
rhythm, attention is called to the fact that they are part of the rhythm 
of The Years.

Perhaps the device of rhythm is used and relied upon more extensively 
in The Years than in the other novels of Virginia Woolf, because, as 
Jean Bennett has observed in Virginia Woolf, Her Art as a Novelist,

13 The Sea, the City and the Clock: A Study in Symbolic Form in the 
Novels of Virginia Woolf, (Ph.D. Dissertation Columbia, 1951).
The Years lacks other unifying factors which those books possess. The Years, according to Miss Bennett, is the only book after Jacob's Room (and Jacob's Room is unified by the central character of Jacob) "not planned within a narrow framework . . . achieved either by confining the action to a brief period of time, or by limiting the foreground characters to a small number, or by employing both devices."

But even if employed less in the other novels, the device of rhythm is important in them. Many critics of Virginia Woolf have written of rhythm in her other novels. E. M. Forster, R. L. Chambers, Bernard Blackstone, E. K. Brown, and others have noticed a kind of rhythm in the relation between the three parts of To the Lighthouse. In the first part, using Mr. Blackstone's terms in Virginia Woolf: A Commentary (London, 1948), "integration" of the several characters is achieved by Mrs. Ramsey at the summer house on the sea; in the second part, "disintegration" results from Mrs. Ramsey's death and the neglect of the deserted house; and in the third part, "reintegration" comes about when the remaining characters return to the house and remember Mrs. Ramsey. Mr. Brown called these movements of To the Lighthouse, "rhythm modified by variations." In Mrs. Dalloway, another kind of rhythm has been found; both Mr. Troy and Miss Sudrann refer their readers to David Daiches' analysis of the rhythm in Mrs. Dalloway in his chapter on Woolf.


(Brown supports his analysis of this rhythm by presenting the similar analyses of Forster and Blackstone).
in Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction. Mr. Bachs states that connection is established between consecutive scenes of Mrs. Ballyony, containing the reflections of several characters, because they occur at the same hour of day, while other sets of scenes which differ in time occurrence are linked together because they are composed of the memories and immediate experience of a single character.17 These larger rhythmic patterns are not found in The Years, as Mr. Bachs has observed, and The Years is not divided into distinct parts, as is To the Lighthouse.18

The larger rhythmic patterns resemble the larger rhythmic patterns of poetry, whereas the rhythm of The Years is like the continuous beat of motor—the smaller rhythmic patterns of poetry. But the type of rhythm in The Years supports and is implied in these larger rhythmic patterns. Jean Sudrann indicated that she had found the smaller rhythmic patterns in Jacob's Room,19 and Virginia Woolf's The Waves also resembles The Years in this respect as well as in its prose poems, in the repetition of personal traits of its six characters, in the repeated images which represent them, and in their memories of Percival. In addition, The Waves contains the continuous beat of "he said . . . " "she said . . . " in the sets of formal monologues, distinguishing it from the rest of Virginia Woolf's novels, which Dorothy Pound compared, in Some Studies of the Modern Novel, to subtle counterpointing. (p. 62) Of Virginia Woolf's last novel, Between the Acts, Joan Bennett wrote in her Virginia Woolf, "But the full significance of the book depends, as in all her characteristic work,

18 Virginia Woolf (Norfolk, Conn., 1942), p. 112.
19 Sudrann, op. cit. (above note 13).
upon the sequence of scenes, the juxtaposition of experiences which throw light on one another, the recurrent images of symbols and (even more here than elsewhere) the variations of rhythm" (p. 131).

It is apparent, from the observations of these critics, that each of the novels of Virginia Woolf after *Night and Day*, is bound together by recurrent patterns of emphasis similar to those discussed in *The Years*.

The significance of the repetition examined in this chapter along with the further comparison of *The Years* to poetry in Chapter III will be related to the criticisms of Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv in the Conclusion of this thesis.
III

THEME

The manner in which the theme of The Years is presented suggests further comparison to poetry. According to David Daiches in his Virginia Woolf, the theme of The Years is "the flux of experience" (p. 112). The statement of theme by Basil de Selincourt, whom Virginia Woolf commended in her Diary as one of the first to grasp her intention in The Years, after she had read his review in the Observer, is most informative.

"In general," wrote de Selincourt in that review, "the guiding motive is . . . a sense of the paradox of Time, of our consciousness in Time, the paradox of equally affirmable continuity and discontinuity." Characters in The Years experience this paradox—continuity: in the endless rebirth of the seasons, of men, in the many relationships existing between people and things; discontinuity: in changes and death, in the separation of individuals from friends and family. The characters are made aware of the paradox in the realization that each new moment of their lives isolates them from the moments past (discontinuity), and yet, through memories, contains these moments (continuity). David Daiches noted the external and internal manifestations when he enlarged upon his "flux of experience,"


21 "Infinity in Experience, Virginia Woolf's New Novel" (rev. of The Years), March 11, 1937.
as follows: "The Bargiter family, from Colonel Abel waiting for his wife to die in "1800," to his children grown old in the 1930's, ... constitute a unity and yet a diversity, like the disparate and individually experienced moments of time which nevertheless flew inevitably into a single stream in which past and present condition and indeed constitute each other, so that memory is the faculty that makes life real." Mr. Daiches called this Virginia Woolf's old theme, and according to Mr. de Selincourt, it is the same theme as that of her previous novel, The Waves. Mr. Troy in his review of The Years in the Nation called it "another celebration of the flux."

The following statements concerning theme in Virginia Woolf's novels, closely related to the theme of The Years stated above, assist in the understanding of the nature of that theme. In the essay on Virginia Woolf in Modern Fiction, Daiches wrote of "one theme which dominates her fiction ... the theme of time, death, and personality, and the relations of these three to each other and to some ultimate which includes them all" (p. 492). R. L. Chambers in his book, The Novels of Virginia Woolf, attributed to her a "passion for unity," a "passionate desire to merge the personality with all that surrounds it and especially with the personalities of those it loves" which "is the constant ground bass" beating in her novels (p. 35). This desire emerges in The Years in the examples of continuity to be examined. Bernard Blackstone wrote in Virginia Woolf: A Commentary, "Virginia Woolf is constantly occupied with the problem of the One and the Many." For Blackstone, her novels reveal the "progress of her
search for a unifying talisman." Such a talisman appears in *The Years* as the possibility, discussed below, of a recurring pattern in which every experience of human consciousness has its place.

It might be observed in this comparison of *The Years* to poetry that, if indeed there is a division of subjects into those suitable for poetry and those which are not, the theme of *The Years* is acceptable. For many poets have written about the paradox in its external manifestations, a theme which was especially popular with poets among Virginia Woolf's immediate predecessors in the 19th century. Many poems have been written about the paradox in one's consciousness, although its treatment is not widely popular.

Since each chapter and scene of *The Years* expresses the theme in its own way, the analysis which follows with relation to theme embraces the scenes, chapters, and the book in its entirety, in that order.

Each scene illustrates an aspect of the paradox of continuity and discontinuity in experience, as on a smaller scale, an image illustrates the theme of a poem. The chapters have been divided into scenes consisting of the prose poem which usually prefaces the chapter, and the remaining divisions called "ordinary" scenes. The prose poem presents the setting of the scene in which experiences of the characters take place; the time of year, place, and state of weather prevalent are told in a highly pictorial manner. The prose poem also introduces


23 This paradox is implied in the very titles of Tennyson's "Nothing Will Die" and "All Things Will Die," Arnold's "The Youth of Nature," and Hopkins' "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire;" it is an element of such popular 19th century poems as *In Memoriam* (cf. stanzas LIV,LVII), and *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam* (cf. second last stanza).
the theme of that chapter. Three examples are given below, each preceded by a summarization of the theme of its chapter, in order to analyze the effectiveness of the prose poems in presenting their themes.

The paradox of continuity is represented in "1880" by the routine of customary activities in the lives of an upper-middle class, late-Victorian family, the Pargiters. Through detailed description and in the reflections of several of the characters, this routine of life is developed. Discontinuity is represented by repeated references to Mrs. Pargiter, whose illness ends in death as the chapter progresses. The emphasis is on the constant routine; even Mrs. Pargiter's illness and death stress that, for her husband and children resent the restrictions placed upon them because of her illness, and her very funeral is made to appear an imposition, another of the ceremonies of life, like afternoon tea.

The prose poem (pp. 3-4) in the course of stating the time, place, and weather condition, introduces the two sides of the paradox by description which includes many instances of the "universal" routine of life in the 1880's in England, as well as intimations of discontinuity in that routine. As it begins, the weather is "perpetually changing." It is "an uncertain spring." The routine of this day in London develops as follows: farmers and Londoners were apprehensive about the weather, and thousands of shopkeepers handing neat parcels to ladies in flounced dresses at Whitley's and the Army and Navy Stores remarked, "in April, such weather was to be expected." Interminable processions of shoppers ... paraded the pavements like caravans
perpetually marching—so it seemed to those who had any reason to pause. ... The stream of landaus, victorias and hansom cabs was incessant; for the season was beginning." The reader finds himself in the midst of the never-ending round of London activity, listening to the street musician, the twitter of sparrows, the sudden outbursts of the amorous but intermittent thrush, pigeons crooning the "lullaby that was always interrupted," and observing the gates of Marble Arch and Apsley House "blocked in the afternoon by ladies in many-colored dresses, wearing bustles, and by gentlemen in frock coats carrying canes, wearing carnations." The Princess passes and hats are lifted. The scene changes and one envisions "the long avenues of residential quarters"where servant-girls prepared tea and virgins and spinsters "carefully measured out one, two, three, four spoonsful of tea."

Then, the sunset and "a million little gaslights" appear, reflected in the Round Pond and the Serpentine. Diners-out admire the charming vista. "Then the moon rose and its polished coin, though obscured now and then by wisps of cloud, shone out with serenity, with severity, or perhaps with complete indifference," depending upon the viewer's attitude toward the routine of life described. The final sentence of the prose poem extends its scope considerably, "Slowly wheeling like the rays of a searchlight, the days, the weeks, the years passed, one after another across the sky." Thus, this prose poem is an introduction not only to the first chapter but to the entire book which traces the passage across the sky of some forty-five of those years.
The reader perhaps will have noticed no element of discontinuity in the above account of the prose poem; indeed, there is very little of it. Continuity is stressed in this prose poem and in the rest of the chapter. The only discordant notes are very faint—the season's beginning, the intermittance in the thrush's song, and the always-interrupted cooing of the pigeons. These allusions to discontinuity might be fortuitous in most description, but here, precisely because of the care taken to emphasize continuity, they seem intentionally included as contrasts, like the death of Mrs. Pargiter later in the chapter. The principal part of this chapter's theme, continuity, is aptly introduced by this prose poem, which David Daiches quotes in his *Virginia Woolf*, as an example of the subtly suggestive prose by which Virginia Woolf repeats her theme in each passage of *The Years* (pp. 113-117).

The second example is the prose poem which prefaces the chapter "1911" (pp. 192-193). Its theme is summarized at the end of the chapter in a reflection by Eleanor, "things pass, things change" (p. 213). She has observed, through travel, the differences apparent in one country and another; the changed appearances of people as they grow old; the change in the countryside as the sun goes down. Frequent allusions are made to these observations throughout the chapter.

The prose poem opens at sunrise on a very hot day in August and countless changes resulting from the sun's action are noted. Through this description, the particular changes which are the subject matter of the rest of the chapter are introduced and given scope.
In the first paragraph, the sun moves over Africa and the Continent; in the second it crosses the Channel and reaches England. "The sun was rising. Very slowly it came up over the horizon shaking out light. But the sky was so vast, so cloudless, that to fill it with light took time." The personification of sun, world, etc., seemingly effect more extensive and essential changes than is actually the case. "Very gradually the clouds turned blue; leaves on forest trees sparkled; down below a flower shone; eyes of beasts—tigers, monkeys, birds—sparkled. Slowly the world emerged from darkness." The sea glittered, and in France, vines turned purple and yellow; "the sun, coming through the slats of the blinds striped the white walls," and Maggie, a character of the book who lives in France, "saw her husband's book cracked across with shadow from the vine above; and the glass that stood behind him glowed yellow. Cries of peasants working came through the open window." In this and the following paragraph, people are linked with things as subject to change. The truth of Eleanor's observation, "things pass, things change" is further demonstrated. "The sun, crossing the channel, beat vainly on the blanket of thick sea mist. Light slowly permeated the haze over London; struck on statues in Parliament Square, and on the Palace where the flag flew, though the King, borne under a white and blue Union Jack, lay in the caverns at Frogmore." This reference to the King, besides being an historical reference, brings death to support the picture of change. Due to the sun's heat, "horses' noses hissed as they drank from troughs; their hoofs made ridges hard and brittle as plaster on the country roads. Fires tearing over the moors left charcoal twigs behind them."
It was the holiday season, and the sun’s light made the glass roofs of railway stations incandescent. Travellers watched clocks and followed porters. Trains were ready to go. The guard dropped his flag and off the trains swung. Men looked up, "horses cantered, women came to the doors and shaded their eyes; the shadow of the smoke floated over the corn, looked down and caught a tree." The final sentence of the prose poem expresses the theme of the chapter: "And on they passed."

The third example is the prose poem which begins "Present Day," the final chapter of The Years. Although allusions are made to the interior side of the paradox in every chapter, the dominant theme of "Present Day" is the paradox of the continuity and discontinuity of the present moment in consciousness. There are frequent passages in which a character recalls experiences through something he perceives, and the theme of the one hundred thirty pages of "Present Day" is the endowment of each new experience with rich significance through memories.

This theme is presented in the prose poem by imagery; the light of the sun makes each thing it touches glow, as memory gives significance to each moment of consciousness. The prose poem is quoted in full:
It was a summer evening: the sun was setting; the sky was blue still, but tinged with gold, as if a thin veil of gauze hung over it, and here and there in the gold-blue amplitude an island of cloud lay suspended. In the fields the trees stood majestically caparisoned, with their innumerable leaves girt. Sheep and cows, pearl white and parti-coloured, lay recumbent or munched their way through the half-transparent grass. An edge of light surrounded everything. A red-gold fume rose from the dust on the roads. Even the little red brick villas on the high roads had become porous, incandescent with light, and the flowers in cottage gardens, lilac and pink like cotton dresses, shone veined as if lit from within. Faces of people standing at cottage doors or padding along pavements showed the same red glow as they fronted the slowly sinking sun. (p. 306)

This prose poem differs from most of the others in that it is an image of the theme in its chapter. It's function is not altered, however.

The internal side of the paradox illustrated in "Present Day" is introduced through imagery without departing from the impersonal description characteristic of the prose poems.

The chapters of The Years are composed of scenes, ranging in number from one to thirty-six, apart from the prose poems which introduce the chapters and the several within the chapters. Each scene illustrates in some way the theme of its chapter. In the prose poems just examined, description of externals presents the theme. In the remainder of the scenes, description is more specific, more concerned with particular characters. Virginia Woolf uses the reflections of her characters to comment on what she has described. Not a single thought expressed fails to perform this function. This is the contribution of the characters in presenting the theme of the scenes of The Years.
To show the manner in which each scene participates in the illustration of the theme of its chapter, the five scenes used as examples in Chapter II will be analysed. The first scene in "1980" portrays the Pargiters troubled about the kettle. It is symbolic of the daily routine at tea-time and contributes in the presentation of the theme, introduced in the prose poem depicting the interminable processions of people on the streets of London. The unvarying cycle and routine of Victorian life is one aspect of the theme of *The Years*, the paradox of continuity and discontinuity in experience.

This scene takes place at tea-time in the drawing room of the Pargiter family mansion in Abercorn Terrace. Its characters are the sons and daughters of Colonel Abel and Rose Pargiter, and the family servant, Crosby. The kettle occupies the center of attention. It is symbolic of routine in the lives of the characters. In its several appearances later in the book, it retains this significance. Everything else in the scene is carefully chosen to emphasize this routine of which the kettle is the chief symbol.

The scene opens with Milly saying, "It's not boiling." She repeats this observation. A feeble flame flickers beneath the well-worn kettle. Delia, Milly's sister, replies idly, "Must a kettle boil?" Then they are silent. Places are set for tea, the room is full of furniture, and the evening sun stains the glass of the china cabinet. From a portrait, their mother, who also represents routine, smiles down on them. Milly takes a hairpin and frays the wick beneath the kettle to increase the flame.
"But that doesn't do any good," Delia says irritably, watching Milly; she fidgets and thinks that everything seems to take such an intolerable time (the first thought expressed by a character in the scene; summarizing the significance of the rest of the scene). Watching Crosby enter the room and offer to boil the tea in the kitchen and hearing Milly's refusal to allow it, Delia asks herself, "How can I put a stop to this fiddling and trifling, and tap a knife on the table?" (This, the second comment in the scene, also points to its purpose in depicting routine). A feeble voice begins under the kettle. The door opens and Rose, a third sister, enters, wearing a stiff print frock. Milly tells Rose, imitating the manner of a grown person, that her frock has a stain on it; Rose answers "grumpily" that her other dresses are at the laundry. Thos Rose observes that tho tea isn't ready yet and Milly frays the wick another time. Delia leans back again, looks out the window, and says gloomily, "How there's Martin." Tho door slams, books hit the hall table, and Martin enters. His hair, red like his mother's, is rumpled and Delia tells him severely to go tidy up; adding that he's got time, for tho kettle's not boiling. The four children look at tho kettle which continues its "faint melancholy singing." "Blast that kettle," says Martin, turning sharply away. Milly reminds him that "Mama wouldn't like that language," imitating their mother's tone of voice. Mrs. Pargiter has been ill so long that her older children have adopted her manner speaking to the younger brother and sister. Tho door opens again. This time it is Crosby with their mother's sick tray. Again Milly emulates an older person as she asks who will take the tray up to their mother. Martin is chosen and instructed not to stay longer than necessary for the kettle
will boil soon. Milly frays the wick again, and from the kettle, a thin puff of steam appears, which gradually becomes more powerful. Milly exclaims "It's boiling . . . it's boiling!" And the scene ends.

The second scene is very brief, also from chapter "1880."

To understand how this scene projects the theme of the chapter, namely, the punctilious observation of formalities in Victorian life, it is necessary to know of Kitty's resentment of all that is ceremonious in her life. The only child of an Oxford professor, her strongest desire is to live on a farm. The characters include her parents, who represent in her mind, the formalities of Oxford, and a nobleman whose title implies to Kitty that he, too, is part of the dignified formality of the time. The events in this scene build up to her enthusiastic recognition of this old friend, and the point of the scene is contained in its last sentence in which she is rebuffed in her enthusiasm by her mother.

As the scene begins, Kitty has heard the dinner bell, and is coming downstairs. She sees her parents with a tall man, wearing a gown and a ray of sunshine lights up his face. She cannot recall his identity. He greets her, presses her hand, tells her she has grown, and looks at her as if looking at his own past. "You don't remember me?" he asks. Suddenly she recognizes him and exclaims, "Chingachgook!" . . . recalling some childish memory. Then her mother says sharply, "But he is now Sir Richard Norton," giving him a proud little pat on the shoulder; and they turned away, for the gentlemen were dining in Hall." The foregoing scene illustrates the theme
of routine, contrasting Kitty's rebellion with her mother's quiet enforcement of it.

In "1910," a long scene (pp. 165-171) tells of Rose's visit to her cousins Maggie and Sara. The theme is separation: of persons from each other, and from their former selves. The characters are separated by differences of opinion and misunderstanding, and on several occasions, a character feels that he is "two people at the same time"—that he is separated from the person that was himself years ago. In this scene, reflections of characters revealing its significance are frequent. It is a good illustration of the manner in which characters' thoughts assist in presenting the theme. They are underlined in the following account of this scene:

Rose enters the rooms of Maggie and Sara. Immediately, the past, an important element of the theme in this scene, is introduced with the commonplace remark of Rose: "It's ages since we met." She wondered what had made her come. Everything was different from what she had expected. Then Rose notices an old chair: she recognizes it with relief. She asks if the chair and mirror had not been in her father's house and is told that they had. She remarks that the rooms are nice, and upon hearing a street singer and noticing a factory through the window, she asks if they find it noisy living there. They agree that it is so, but very convenient for the theatres which, of course, they do attend. The conversation continues with Rose's reply that she, too, had noticed the noise of the streets when living nearby. Sara says
that she understood Rose lived at Abercorn Terrace, and Rose, irritated, asks if she could not live in more places than one. She ponders upon the fact that she had lived in many places, felt many passions, and done many things. Maggie recalls happenings at Abercorn Terrace, Rose's childhood home, and Rose is encouraged to talk about things past. Then there is silence until Sara says, "And then," like a child asking for the rest of a story. Rose begins again, looking at Maggie and remembering a frightening experience as a little girl in "1880," which she had concealed. She wanted to talk about her past: to tell them something about herself that she had never told anybody—something hidden. She notices a knot design in a vase (which knot suggests, because of its proximity to it and connotation, the suppressed story Rose wants to tell). They talked as if Abercorn Terrace were a scene in a play. They talked as if they were speaking of people who were real, but not real in the way in which she felt herself to be real. It puzzled her; it made her feel that she was two different people at the same time. She was a little girl wearing a pink frock, and here she was in this room, now. A dray passes, glasses jingle on the table.

Rose starts, roused from her thoughts, and separates the glasses, an action which visually represents the separation of her thoughts of the past from those of the present moment. She comments again on the noise and receives the same reply. She realizes that she has repeated herself. She thinks no an old fool, Rose thought, making the same remark twice over! Blushing, she stares at the vase with the blue knot loosely tied in its yellow glaze, and thinks: what's the use of trying to tell people about one's past? What is one's past?
And seeing Sara rise and clear the plates she thinks, why did I come when they only laugh at me? Maggie, while she arranges flowers, asks Rose about one of her sisters. But Rose can see that Maggie is thinking her own thoughts. When Sara belittles her brother, Rose again asks herself, why did I come? ... Why had she broken up her morning, and interrupted the day's work when it was clear to her that they had not wished to see her? Maggie asks to hear more about the Pargitera, and Rose responds that they are quite ordinary. Sara talks of the Pargitera and of Rose in particular, and again Rose has the odd feeling of being two people at the same time. Again the poverty which has separated her cousins from the associations in the past is described. Next Rose asks Maggie if the dress she is making is for a party. Maggie, in replying that it is, raises her hand to her face as if she wanted to conceal something. Rose thinks: she wants to hide herself from me, as I want to hide myself from her. Maggie begins to sew, and Rose talks of her past life, much as a patient would express thoughts and desires to an analyst. When Sara interrupts Rose with her own recollections of the past, Rose wonders: what had she been talking about? Not simply about the Waterloo Road. Perhaps she had been talking nonsense. She had been saying the first thing that came into her head. "All talk would be nonsense, I suppose, if it were written down ... " Rose remarks. "And even if it isn't," says Maggie. She decides to leave, and on an impulse, asks them to accompany her. Maggie asks, "Where?" and after a pause, Rose answers, "To a meeting." She had hesitated because she wanted to conceal the thing that interested her most (i.e., the reason for the meeting,
women's suffrage). But although she feels "extraordinarily shy,"
she still wants then to come. Sara decides to go, singing a tune at
the window, "Go search the valleys, pluck up the rose . . ." (as if
there were a chance to search. Rose notices again the wretched neighbor-
hood and asks if drunken men ever bother them coming home at night.
Sara says she is never bothered, and Rose believes it, for Sara is
"sallow, angular and plain." Then Sara rather pathetically complains
of her unattractiveness. Rose again invites Maggie, but she replies,
"No, I won't come . . . I should hate it."
She smiles at Rose
"with a candor that was baffling." The scene ends with Rose wondering
as she descends the stairs, did she mean me? Did she mean that she
hated me? When I liked her so much?

The next scene to be examined is taken from "Present Day"
(pp. 371-373), the long final chapter introduced by the prose poem
which tells of the sun's glow, transforming everything it touches;
an image of the way in which everything in the present is illuminated
by memory. The setting is a party; the characters—North, who has
recently returned from India, and his old aunt, Eleanor—are seated
together watching the dancing. North, who had been lonely at the
party, has just met a young woman to whom he is attracted, and she
extends an invitation to her home. Memories give significance to
his experiences in this scene. In the description of the scene below,
and in the last example from the same chapter, the memories which
give significance to the present are underlined to emphasize their
importance in presenting the theme of "Present Day."
As the scene begins, North remarks to Eleanor that two of their friends dancing together are "an odd looking couple." He asks why they don't marry. (They had been interested in each other for some time). Eleanor asks "Why should they?" and North answers "Oh, everybody ought to marry, ..." (p. 372). Then he is critical of one of them and Eleanor contradicts him. "But North was not attending. He was looking at a couple at the further end of the room. They were standing by the fireplace. ... They seemed held still in that position by some powerful emotion. As he looked at them, some emotion about himself, about his own life, came over him, and he arranged another background for them or for himself—not the mantelpiece and the bookcase, but cataracts roaring, clouds racing, and they stood on a cliff above a torrent. ..." Eleanor interrupts his thoughts by saying that marriage isn't for everyone and he agrees. "He looked at her. She had never married. Why not? He wondered. Sacrificed to the family, he supposed—old Grandpapa without any fingers. Then some memory came back to him of a terrace, a cigar and William Whatnay. Was not that her tragedy, that she had loved him? He looked at her with affection. He felt fond of everyone at the moment." He puts his hand on Eleanor's knee and she exclaims, "Dear North!" She notices the excitement which remains with him since his meeting with the young woman and warns him, "... don't marry the wrong woman!" Had she seen him, he wondered, shepherding the girl downstairs. Eleanor begins to question North about his plans for the future. But they are interrupted, and the scene ends.
The final example is the scene in "Present Day" which explains Nicholas' interrupted speech (pp. 425-426). It further illustrates the function of memories in uniting past and present, important in the development of the theme of the chapter. The setting is the same party, but later.

A description of the present moment opens the scene, a moment in which the sounds are heard which "salute the dawn," sirens on the river, a van in the street, "... a rush and quiver of sound."

Kitty, realizing that the party is about to end, and wishing to end it properly, turns to Nicholas who has attempted to give a speech but has been repeatedly interrupted. She asks what his speech "was going to have been about." "'My speech?' he laughed. "'It was to have been a miracle!' he said. 'A masterpiece! But how can one speak when one is always interrupted? I begin: I say, Let us give thanks. Then Delia says, Don't thank me. I begin again: I say, Let us give thanks to someone, to somebody..." And Benny says, "What for? I begin: I say, and look—Eleanor is sound asleep." (He pointed at her.) "So, what's the good?" Kitty urges him to tell it to her at least; "She still wanted something—some finish—some fillip—what, she did not know. And it was getting late. She must go." So Nicholas tells her:

"'First I was going to have thanked our host and hostess. Then I was going to have thanked this house—' he waved his hand round the room hung with the placards of the house agent, '—which has sheltered the lovers, the creators, the men and women of goodwill. And finally—' he took his glass in his hand, 'I was going to drink to the human race, The human race,' he continued, raising his glass to his lips, 'which is
now in its infancy, may it grow to maturity!" Nicholas drinks to this, and brings down his glass with such a thud on the table that it is broken.

In *The Years*, Virginia Woolf develops her theme principally through the thoughts and impressions of characters conditioned by circumstances described in the scenes which collectively form the chapters of the book. Each scene illustrates some aspect of the theme of its chapter, as was shown in the examination of five scenes in the foregoing paragraphs. Following is an examination of the chapters in relation to theme. Each chapter is composed of an introductory prose poem and a varying number of scenes. All have in common some particular expression of the paradox, such as the endless routine of life described in "1880," or the continuity or discontinuity in each new moment of consciousness in "Present Day." The chapters "1908" and "1914" which were examined in Chapter II are used in this analysis.

The chapter "1908" (pp. 146-159), one of the shorter chapters in the book, is composed of eight scenes. The theme is represented in this chapter by separations between people with the passage of years: separations of brothers and sisters when they reach adulthood, of friends and relatives by death, and separations from associations of one's youth when old age is reached. Discontinuity is emphasized in this chapter.

Martin visits his sister Eleanor at Abercorn Terrace, the family home, on a windy day. Late in the chapter, they are joined by another sister, Rose. Eleanor has remained at home to care for their father in his advanced age, but Martin and Rose have gone their separate ways; thus the three children have been apart for some time. News is received
of the death of beloved relatives, Aunt Eugenio and Uncle Digby.

The three kinds of separation, represented by the separate dwellings of Martin and Eleanor and Rosa, by the death of Eugenio and Digby, and by the aged father from his associations of the past, are interwoven and repeated.

The prose poem at the beginning of the chapter (pp. 146-147) introduces this theme of separation in the course of describing the March wind on the day of its setting. The wind's action represents the effect of the passage of the years. "... there was no roundness, no fruit in it. Rather it was like the curve of a scythe," which "destroys, reveling in sheer sterility... uncreative, unproductive, yelling its joy in destruction." It "drove old gentlemen further and further into the leather-smelling recesses of Clubs, and old ladies to sit eyeless, leather-cheeked, joyless, among the tassels and antimacassars of their bedrooms and kitchens. Triumphing in its wantonness, it emptied the streets; swept flesh before it..."

In the next scene (p. 147), the subject of separation by death is introduced obliquely: Matty Styles, caretaker of Digby's vacant house on Brown Street provides news of the death of Digby and Eugenio. Matty is disgruntled for the house has sold quickly and she will soon be out of a job. She is pondering upon those things in the basement of the house when someone rings the doorbell. This scene also contains a description of the dirty, tight-shut house, which accentuates the death of its owner.

In the next scene (p. 148) we learn that it is Martin who rings at the house, but since it is already sold, Matty won't answer. On his
way to Abercorn Terrace, Martin who has detoured by Digby’s old house
is struck by the fact that with Digby only three months dead, the
house has already been sold. Viewing the big house, he recalls how
proud Eugenie had been of it and how much he had liked going there.
He walks off and begins to whistle a tune for “he disliked brooding
over unpleasant thoughts.”

Martin’s thoughts are revealed again in the next scene (pp. 148–
149), while he stands on the steps of his childhood home waiting for
Crosby, the servant, to answer the door. The house in which he had grown
up has become only “a large, architecturally insignificant, but no doubt
convenient family mansion.” Old Crosby looks “the same—more shrivelled,
more gnat-like, and her blue eyes . . . more prominent than ever”;
Crosby is showing the effect of the passage of many years. Then
Martin notices the picture of his mother, which has become for him only
a work of art which is dirty. The house and his mother no longer have
a special place in his life.

The next scene (pp. 149-150) shifts to old Mr. Pargiter’s study,
to the musings of Eleanor who is with her father. He wants her to save
Digby’s obituary notices, and she thinks, “that was a sign that he had
grown very old . . . he had grown inert and ponderous after his stroke;
there were red veins in his nose and in his cheeks. She too felt old, heavy
and dull.” She tells her father that Martin has called and wonders if
he wants to see him (Martin and his father have quarrelled). She thinks
again of her father’s feebleness.
In the scene following (pp. 150-153) Martin and Eleanor are having tea and their conversation and reflections are related. The separation between the once-intimate brother and sister is emphasized. Eleanor becomes shy at Martin's discovery that she is reading Renan. He sees signs of her aging. Noticing the obituaries, he tells Eleanor that Digby's house has been sold. They talk of their aunt and uncle. Martin finds fault with Digby and praises Eugenio, while Eleanor takes opposite sides. Martin thinks, "it is more difficult to be open with his sister than with other women, because she treats him as a small boy still."

Eleanor is alone in the next scene (pp. 153-155), meditating upon several things related to the theme of separation: "of old age, checking off all one's faculties," leaving her father only "a game of chess, a drive in the park, and a visit from Old General Arbuthnot in the evening"; that "Digby was not like that in the least" (the description of him in the obituaries); that "it was odd how different the same person seemed to two different people"; and that perhaps what the evangelist says (she is reading Renan's Life of Christ) "is just as false as what this man ... says about Digby." She becomes conscious of the great gaps in her knowledge; she wonders why Martin had said "we can't tell a lie to save our souls," and why Martin had had love affairs with, and why men think love affairs so important. Martin might better have been an architect than a soldier, she decides.

In the final scene of this chapter (pp. 156-159), Martin, Rose, and Eleanor converse and Eleanor's thoughts are disclosed during the conversation. Martin and Rose quarrel and recall their childhood quarrels. Rose scarcely pauses at the news of the sale of Digby's house.
which had deeply affected Martin and Eleanor. Eleanor thinks that Rose ought to have been a soldier. Then she becomes conscious of the wind. Rose and Martin continue to disagree. Martin notices the dirty picture. The wind breaks some glass. Eleanor tells Martin that Miss Pym has "been dead these twenty years"—and that ends the chapter.

The objects of description in this chapter are closely associated with separation: the effect of the wind represents the destruction of things through the passage of time; the obituary notices mentioned in eleven paragraphs, Matty Stiles, and Digby's house, all associated with the separation of Eleanor and Martin from Digby and Eugenia; Renan's *Life of Christ*, mentioned several times, associated with Martin's separation from Eleanor, and Eleanor's from Christ; and Abercorn Terrace and the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter representing Martin's separation from his mother and family. Even tea-taking is representative of Martin's separation from Eleanor, and Rose's from both of them; for Martin criticizes Eleanor for fraying the wick of the kettle and for not buying a new kettle, and Rose refuses tea. It is the same in the case of the other, less-prominent objects in the chapter—all are made to sup ort the theme of separation.

In "1911" (pp. 224-270), one of the longer chapters of fourteen scenes, the emphasis on continuity is represented principally by three kinds of recurring activities: the procession of people on the streets of London, clocks striking, and the rebirth of spring. These happenings are related in the prose poem which begins "1911" and again in the prose poem within the chapter. It is to these things the characters' response is shown in the other scenes of this chapter.
In the opening prose poem, it is "a brilliant spring," a radiant
day, the air has "a burr in it"—it vibrates and ripples, and the newly-
opened leaves are "sharp and green." The clocks rasp the hour, sending
"rusty sound over fields red with clover," sending rooks up to wheel
around and settle again. In London all is "gallant and strident," with
the season beginning, horns hooting, traffic roaring and flags flying
"taut as trout in a stream;" and from the church spires the hours strike,
making the air seem "a rough sea of sound through which circles travel."
The clocks are "irregular, as if the saints themselves were divided."
There are pauses and silences; "then the clocks strike again," and
the prose poem is ended. The lack of synchronisation among the clocks
introduces the theme of separation which occurs from time to time
in contrast with the ceaseless activity which pervades the chapter.

In the second scene (pp. 224-226) Martin's observations on his
way to the city are told. To him "everybody seemed light-hearted and
irresponsible, sallying out of their houses, flaunting along the
streets with pennies for the organ-grinder and pennies for the bagnets.
Everybody seemed to have money to spend. Women clustered around the
plate-glass windows..." Then he comes to Hyde Park Corner which is
"extremely animated." A description of the people, cabs, and newly-
sprouted leaves ends the scene.

The next scene (pp. 226-227), a prose poem which pictures the
activity in front of St. Paul's and is typical of several passages
within this chapter, tells of "Omnibuses... in perpetual current,
... doors of the cathedral opening and shutting," a circle of
fluttering pigeons, and the cathedral clock and all the clocks striking one, making the sparrows flutter and even frightening the pigeons.

The fourth scene (pp. 227-236) begins with Martin's appearance in front of the cathedral where people "knocked against him and brushed in front of him. It was the rush hour, of course, when city men are making for their luncheons." Pigeons are swarming; doors opening and shutting. Martin sees his cousin Sara on the steps of the cathedral and greets her. They stand there for a moment "looking down at the crowded street beneath," and hear the "faint, ecclesiastical murmur within the church." He asks her to lunch and they pass along an alley "blocked by carts into which packages [are] being shot from the windows."

The chophouse to which he takes her is very full; people are passing them on all sides and Sara sits watching. Martin asks her what she thinks of the services at St. Paul's, and she answers by asking him what "they think of it . . . the woman praying and the man with a long white beard." Sara watches like a child the city men who keep brushing past her. They cannot talk freely because of the crowd. Several times this thought comes to Martin. After lunch they pass the city men still eating; on the street the carts are waiting still, the packages sliding. Returning to St. Paul's they see the same old man feeding pigeons. They cross the crowded road and begin to walk, but cannot chat because of the roar of the traffic and because Martin is forced to step off the pavement intermittently to let pedestrians pass.

Carts and people block them. Charing Cross is like the "piers of a bridge," where people are "sucked in instead of water." They have to stop. Newspaper boys hold placards, men buy papers and some of them
loiter. " Omnibus after omnibus stops, then swoops off again"—
the endless activity continues as the scene ends.

The following scene (pp. 236-237) begins at Hyde Park Corner
with clocks striking; "more cars; more women in pale summer dresses;
more men in pale coats and gray top hats." There follows an account
of typical occurrences in the Park. As the scene closes, the clocks
are striking four.

Martin and Sara's sister Maggie converse in the next scene
(pp. 237-238), a yacht race takes place, a nice little breeze is
blowing. Gulls scream as they rise and sink, swooping round and
round. The boats sail again, men walk, little boys dabble in the
pond, and waters ripple. Everything is "full of the stir, the
potency, the fecundity of spring." Off go the boats, and the clocks
strike again. A stout lady is being tugged along by a small dog.

In the next scene (p. 238) we see Martin in a cab on his way
to a dinner party. His cab "joined the long line of cabs that were
streaming toward Marble Arch. People in evening dress are going to
plays and parties," and "the cab is held up in a block by the Marble
Arch."

The next three scenes (pp. 238-266) describe the dinner party.
The theme of endless activity is stated toward the end of the second
of these scenes and in the following account of the men joining the
ladies after dinner:
were so many lamps in the street; cars passing; men walking; and many homes still lit up, for everyone was giving parties." The typical activity at the train station is also described.

The scene following (pp. 270-271) is filled with the movement and vibration of the train, the movement of the world outside the train, and with Kitty's passing from the city into another world.

The last scene (pp. 272-277) tells of Kitty's arrival at her husband's estate. Lord Lasswade has given her a new car and she has had quite a fast ride in it in the early morning through the village. Going through the town, she sees women scrubbing doorsteps, milk carts, and dogs, and she passes a few lumbering wagons on the road. At the castle, she finds a different kind of activity—bees buzzing, the river murmuring, and the pigeons—the voice of early morning. A tortoise-shell butterfly flaunts, settles, opens and shuts its wings. A chow stalks in; a lawnmower squeaks; birds are singing, starlings feeding, and the tips of grass blades are trembling. The sight of spring flowers saddens Kitty and evokes the thought, "all passes, all changes." She walks to where she can see "billowing land . . . rising and falling away and away. . . . As she watched, light moved and dark moved, light and shadow went travelling over the hills and over the valleys. A deep murmur sang in her ears—the land itself—singing to itself, a chorus, alone. Time has ceased."

The chapter "1911" is dominated by the theme of endless activity. In contrast, the theme of separation is depicted by the loneliness of Martin, by class distinctions made between servants and employers, and many others; between the clock-governed city of London and the timelessness of an untouched Scottish countryside.
They filed in, and the distinguished old man moved across the room with the air of a ship making port, and all the ladies stirred without rising. The game was over, the battledores and shuttlecocks put away. They were like gulls settling on fish. There was a rising and a fluttering. The great man let himself down slowly into a chair beside his old friend, Lady Warburton. He put the tips of his fingers together and began, "Well? . . ." as if he were continuing a conversation left unfinished the night before. They all sat talking as they had talked for the past fifty years . . . They were all talking. They had all settled in to add another sentence to the story that was just ending, or in the middle, or about to begin.

(p. 261)

According to this passage the stories and conversation at the party recounted in the three scenes are part of a never-ending chain of talk, of a never-ending round of parties. This party is "only the prelude to another party" (p. 261). In addition, the constant activity of the city is mentioned in each of the three scenes—the horns hooting, the usual policemen, the curious passersby.

The scene following (pp. 266-267) is enacted in Kitty's bedroom where she is preparing to leave town, changing hurriedly to make a train. She glances at the clock on her dressing table and notes that she just has time. As she leaves, she looks in at the drawing room where "the fire [is] still blazing; the chairs drawn out in a circle still seem to hold the skeleton of the party. But the car [is] waiting. . . ."

The next scene (pp. 268-270) tells of her trip through London to the train station: "Although it was close to midnight, it scarcely seemed to be night; but rather some ethereal disembodied day, for there
It has been shown that each scene in *The Years* supports the theme of its chapter, and that the various aspects of theme combined in the chapters demonstrate the theme of the book as a whole.

The theme of the book is arrived at through the summation of the many instances in its scenes and chapters which exemplify the continuity and discontinuity of life. This paradox of continuity and discontinuity is represented by the recurrent themes of endlessness, solidarity, separation, and mortality. I have made an estimate of the number of times each of these concepts appear in *The Years*.

Although these figures must be approximate, since one reader might receive the idea of endlessness, solidarity, separation, or mortality from a certain incident, and another might not; they demonstrate, at least, the consistency and intensity with which the theme is stated. There are about five hundred seventy-two examples of "endlessness," four hundred twenty-one of "solidarity," seven hundred eighteen of "separation," and nine hundred fifty-four of "mortality" in the book.

About five percent of these examples are characters' reflections on these aspects of the theme (approximately half of which are found in the final chapter). The rest present the theme by description of characters and of surroundings.

The use of the structural device of repetition discussed in Chapter II is another means of presenting the theme in *The Years*, for this tremendous amount of repetition implies that everything is involved in a never-ending cycle, a concept explicitly stated in the concluding chapter of *The Years*, in the following passage:
suddenly it seemed to Eleanor that it had all happened before. So a girl had come in that night in the restaurant; had stood, vibrating, in the door. She knew exactly what he was going to say. He had said it before, in the restaurant. He is going to say, she thought, in the restaurant. He is like a ball on the top of a fishmonger's fountain. As she thought it, he said it. Does everything then come over and over again a little differently? she thought. If so, there is a pattern: a theme, recurring, like music; half remembered, half foreseen? a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible? The thought gave her extreme pleasure: that there was a pattern. But who makes it? Who thinks it? Her mind slipped. She could not finish her thought.

In addition to the aspects of theme stated in each scene and chapter, and to support the theme by repetition, there are certain statements of the theme in The Years which extend beyond the bounds of a single chapter. One of these is the idea of year following year, "one after another, across the sky." The endlessness of the cycle of spring, summer, fall, and winter, stressed in the prose poems, is a perfect background for The Years with its theme of the paradox of continuity and discontinuity. The opening prose poem presents this seasonal setting immediately; it states that year follows year, and describes an ordinary day in April. But the author of The Years does not simply state that this is the case, she demonstrates it by depicting in each chapter some particular kind of day of a particular season of the year. By thus showing the cycle of the seasons, Virginia Woolf emphasizes the lesson of the years throughout the book—an important addition to her theme. This cycle of seasons, since it represents the theme and is so often repeated in the book, might be called a symbol.
Closely associated with the seasons in the prose poems, references to London and the countryside provide another statement of theme which extends beyond the bounds of a chapter. These locations are the sites of the days described in the prose poems, and like the seasons, are symbols of the theme, especially of the continuity in the theme. Several passages containing examples of the manner in which city and country are made symbols of continuity have been considered, such as the prose poems which introduce "1880" and "191h" (pp. 146-148, 65-70). Similar passages can be found in almost every prose poem, and are scattered throughout the other scenes. In her dissertation, *The Sea, the City and the Clock*, Miss Jean Sudrann says that the city is a symbol in *The Years* and that it seems to share that designation with the country (p. 140).

The third statement of theme extending beyond any one chapter is the description of another obvious unending cycle of birth and rebirth, the generations of man. This cycle and that of the seasons were in Virginia Woolf’s mind when she wrote *The Years*. She had intended at one time to call the book *The Pargiters*, and at another time, *The Caravan*, presumably from the comparison in the book of the Pargiters to a caravan crossing a desert. Still another tentative title was *Sons and Daughters*. To present the cycle of birth and death, many births and deaths occur in the book. Mortality is ever

2h *Writer’s Diary*, pp. 189, 226, 237. (Other tentative titles were *Here and Now* (p. 212), and *Ordinary People* (p. 234).
present or around the corner. Death or advanced age, or youth
contrasted with advanced age, are mentioned nine hundred fifty-four
times in The Years. Of the four divisions of the theme, mortality
is the most prominent and the most frequent, undoubtedly one reason
why several commentators called The Years a drab, dreary book. Each
chapter gives to death either considerable attention or a key
position. And the characters associated in these references to
mortality grow old as the book progresses. The Years begins when
Eleanor Pargiter and her brothers and sisters are aged seven through
twenty; as it ends, they are still living and over sixty years. All
of them appear in the first chapter and all attend the party in the
last. In the intervening chapters, one or the other of them appear
during a few hours of his or her life on some day of the years.
The outline of their lives is traced in passages like the following:

"Tell me about the family. Martin and Eleanor, Hugh and Milly,
Morris and . . ." she hesitated; he suspected that she had forgotten
the name of Morris' wife . . . He told her about the family: Hugh
and Milly; Morris and Celia. And Edward. "They seem to think a lot
of him at Oxford," he said gruffly" (p. 123). In another passage
from the chapter "1914" casual reference is made to a rather
surprising situation: "And what are doing this afternoon?" she
asked. "'Caught to see my sister in prison," Martin said, lighting
a cigarette. "'In prison?" she asked. "'Rose. For throwing a
brick,' he said" (p. 231). In such ways, the reader is made aware of
the happenings in the lives of the six Pargiter children. Their cousins
Kitty, Sara, and Maggie, introduced in "1880," were also present at
the party in "Present Day."
The last group of statements of theme extending beyond one chapter consists of memories experienced by characters in the latter chapters of events related in the earlier scenes of the book. Since *The Years* comprises some fifty-five years of the lives of Eleanor and of nine others in her generation, these characters are enabled to base their realization of the paradox of continuity and discontinuity upon their own experiences recalled and narrated in the beginning of the book.

For example, in "1910," Eleanor, who is attending a committee meeting, recalls a meeting described in the chapter "1891": "Miriam Parrish was reading a letter. Eleanor was blackening the strokes in her blotting paper. I've heard all this, I've done all this so often, she was thinking. She glanced around the table. People's faces even seemed to repeat themselves. There's the Judd type, there's the Lazenby type, and there's Miriam, she thought, drawing on her blotting paper. I know what he's going to say, I know what she's going to say..." (p. 175). As stated in Chapter II, where this group of memories was considered as repetitions, there are about seventy instances of this type of remembrance in *The Years*.

In this chapter, the theme in *The Years* has been shown to have been expressed through description, in which imagery and symbols are employed. The theme has been expressed also through comments on the description. In these ways, the presentation of the theme in this poetic novel is comparable to that which is found in lyric poetry.
Conclusion

Much misunderstanding and harsh criticism of Virginia Woolf’s fiction might have been avoided if readers and critics had judged her novels not as ordinary novels but as poetic novels. In the mind of Virginia Woolf, the poetic novel was the goal of modern fiction. Elaborating on her concept of the poetic novel, she wrote, “Poetry, it would seem, requires a different ordering of the scene; human beings are needed, but needed in their relation to love, or death, or nature rather than to each other.” Her novels are serious attempts to restate certain time-honored themes of poetry, namely, the relations of man to time and eternity, life and death, through the medium of the thoughts and sensations of characters, using the poetical devices of symbols and rhythm for unity.

Several reviewers of The Years, although at least partially aware of its theme, were very disparaging of it, because they judged it as if it were a traditional novel. W. H. Mellors wrote of The Years in a review in Scrutiny, “The book is a document of purposelessness. Either life is supremely meaningless, or, as the years go by, there is perhaps a pattern (what has been will be), yet there is no point in the pattern.” According to the reviewer in the Literary Digest.

25 “Phases of Fiction.” Bookman, LXIX (June, 1927), 410.

"In this book, a far-famed woman author who ought to know better writes a completely meaningless story. . . . What the book is about beyond a family that never grows old . . . is impossible to decide." The review in the New Yorker stated that "its title suggests the book's theme—and its themelessness. A novel whose subject is no more and no less than the flight of the years can have no particular point save this: men alter, time passes, leaves fall." In contrast to the above voices of discontent, other reviewers acknowledged this lack of development in The Years, but accepted its theme, as they would the theme of a lyric, and approved it on that basis. The essays of Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv clearly indicate the essential difference of intention in the traditional novel and the poetic novels of Virginia Woolf, which, apparently, certain critics and readers have not grasped.

The analysis of The Years in this thesis affords further illustration of this difference as explained by Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv. It was stated in the Introduction that Mr. Troy found Virginia Woolf's intense interest in her own sensations and consciousness to be reflected in almost all her characters. In Chapter III, it was shown that the thoughts of characters in The Years are always associated with an awareness of their immediate surroundings. Even when distracted from this awareness, by memories, these memories have been evoked by stimuli in the present moment, such as a street sound, a greeting, or the sight of leaves falling, and are soon interrupted by other sense impressions.

27 April 10, 1937, p. 76.

In his discussion of the form of Virginia Woolf's novels, Mr. Troy declared that they were "essentially extended lyrics." In support of this, he advanced the proposition that in each of her novels, poetic symbols are substituted for plot. Throughout The Years, by her vibrant use of words, the author shows her ability to force a sometimes ordinary word or phrase to convey her symbolic images. The symbols of theme in The Years are the seasonal cycle and the activities of London and the country. These symbols span the book, its prose poems and other scenes, connecting its several chapters, as the plot does in an ordinary novel, but in a totally different way. If one approaches the theme from the viewpoint of this symbolism, as does Mr. Troy, then all of the references to and examples of the theme pointed out in Chapter III of this thesis illustrate its development in these two symbols. For example, the Pargiter family is symbolic of the many families who reside in the City of London; each character is a symbol of the numberless throng who pass in front of St. Paul's; each birth and death represents the unending life-death cycle in the city, each reference to the weather is an instant in the endless cycle of the seasons. If the presentation of theme in The Years is so considered, with relation to these symbols, then indeed, Mr. Troy's statement that symbols replace plot in Virginia Woolf's novels is borne out by Chapter III of this thesis.

Mr. Troy also refers to Virginia Woolf's use of rhythm in his discussion of the form of her novels. He mentions specifically the larger rhythmic patterns which David Daiches found in Mrs. Dalloway. As demonstrated in Chapter II, The Years has instead the shorter
rhythmic beat implied by Mr. Daiches in his analysis, and evident in all Virginia Woolf's novels after *Night and Day*. This rhythm, woven together in many patterns, establishes connections between the chapters of *The Years*.

Mr. Rahv, in his supplement to Mr. Troy's essay, advanced the opinion that the interior monologues of Virginia Woolf's characters present insights and images of the same nature as those traditionally found in poetry. The theme, the paradox of continuity and discontinuity in experience, is a poetic device or concept. As was shown in Chapter III, it is through the thoughts of her characters in *The Years* that Virginia Woolf injects her own comments on its scenes. These thoughts are invariably reflections on the descriptive passages in which they are embedded, and like comments included in lyrics, help the reader to understand the significance of the description. These interior monologues assist in clarifying an aspect of the theme presented in a given scene.

Thus it has been demonstrated that the criticism of Mr. Troy and Mr. Rahv is sound; the construction of *The Years* is, indeed, comparable to that found in lyric poetry.
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