NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-84). References to Woolf's diary will be indicated by *D* followed by the date of the entry; in this way entries may be found in any edition of the *Diary*.


3. See, for example, S. P. Rosenbaum, "The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf," in S. P. Rosenbaum, ed., *English Literature and British Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); Avrom Fleishman, "Woolf and McTaggart," *ELH* 36, 1969: 719-38; Graham Parkes, in an insightful essay on the philosophical implications of Woolf's fiction, suggests that philosophers "(almost all male)" have "failed to touch the heart" of Woolf's "poetic truth" because, "uncomfortable with a woman novelist's having disclosed some profound truths about human existence, they have supposed that if these truths are in any way philosophical, they must be due to the influence of professional philosophers within her range of acquaintance" ("Imagining Reality in *To the Lighthouse*," in *Literature & Philosophy* 6, 1 and 2 [October 1982]: 33).


8. Georges Poulet, *The Metamorphoses of the Circle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 95. Subsequent references will be made in the text to *Circle*.

9. As far as I know, only Graham Parkes (see note 1 above) and Lucio P. Ruotolo in his *Six Existential Heroes: The Politics of Faith* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) have drawn attention to the remarkable similarities in the contours of Woolf and Heidegger's thinking about being. As they do, I would stress that there is absolutely no question of "influence" raised here.
10. In her diary for 22 September 1928, Woolf wrote: "We don't belong to any 'class'; we thinkers: might as well be French or German. Yet I am English in some way—"


15. Hume's famous description of the mind is as follows:

[It is] a kind of theatre where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propension we have to imagine that simplicity and identity. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented or of the materials of which it is composed. (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 1 [London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1936]: 239-40).

**CHAPTER ONE**


2. Descartes begins his project thus:

I shall now close my eyes, stop up my ears, turn away all my senses, even efface from my thought all images of corporeal things, or at least, because this can hardly be done, I shall consider them as being vain and false, and thus communing only with myself, and examining my inner self, I shall try to make myself, little by little, better known and more familiar to myself. (*Discourse on Method and the Meditations*. Trans. F. E. Sutcliffe. [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979]: 113).


"There was the moment of the puddle in the path; when for no reason I could discover, everything suddenly became unreal; I was suspended; I could not step across the puddle, I tried to touch something the whole world became unreal" [dots in original]. For a full exposition of the implications of this and other correlations between the lived experience of the writer and her fiction, see Roger Poole, *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). The question of embodiment—"lived subjective reality"—is comprehensively discussed in this book which opens an avenue of approach to Woolf that has yet to be traveled; see especially chapter 15, "Virginia's Embodiment," to which my chapter must owe a great deal.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Heidegger, in *Being and Time* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), writes that the "Self of everyday Dasein is the *they self,* which we distinguish from the *authentic* Self—that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way. As *they-self,* the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the 'they,' and must first find itself" (167).


6. A parallel might be drawn here with Heidegger's complex idea of the "call of conscience" (*Ruf*) that "discourses solely and constantly in the mode of *keeping silent*" as it reveals Self in its authenticity. Those interested in pursuing these similarities between Woolf and Heidegger should refer to paragraphs 54-60 of *Being and Time.*


10. Samuel Butler, *The Notebooks of Samuel Butler* (London: Cape,


   So naming and the problem of identity cannot be dissociated. So literature and the problem of identity cannot be dissociated. Literature is at once onomatopoeic (name-making) and onomatoclastic (name-breaking). The true name of a writer is not given by his signature, but is spelled out by his entire work. The bad or empty name or nickname may be countered by the melodious or bardic magic of art. (128)

12. In conversation with Georges Duthuit, Samuel Beckett said he felt "that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express together with the obligation to express."

### CHAPTER THREE

1. See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*:

   But this is precisely the question: how can the word "I" be put into the plural, how can a general idea of the I be formed, how can I speak of an I other than my own, how can I know that there are other Is, how can consciousness which, by its nature, and as self-knowledge, is in the mode of the I, be grasped in the mode of Thou; and through this, in the world of the "one"? (348)

2. Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse: The Original Holograph Draft*, transcribed and edited by Susan Dick (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 295. Subsequent references are to Dick, giving her pagination. Deletions in quotations from manuscript sources throughout the text are indicated by crooked brackets < >.

3. On 25 October 1920, Woolf wrote in her diary, "I dont like time to flap round me." On 28 September 1926, we find: "It is so strange to me that I cannot get it right—the depression, I mean, which does not come from something definite, but from nothing. "Where there is nothing" the phrase came <back> to me, as I sat at the table in the drawing room." It is interesting to look once more at Heidegger. In "What is Metaphysics?" he writes of the experience of anxiety that reveals nothingness:

   Anxiety robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that just the nothing crowds round, in the face of anxiety all utterance of the "is" falls silent. That in the malaise of anxiety we often try to shatter the vacant stillness with compulsive talk only proves the presence of the nothing. That anxiety reveals the nothing man himself immediately demonstrates when anxiety has dissolved. In the lucid vision sustained by fresh rememberance we must say that that in the face of which and for which we were anxious was "really"—nothing. Indeed: the nothing
Lucio Ruotolo, in *Six Existential Heroes*, remarks, "Heidegger's assertion that man must face nothing in order to be something, and Virginia Woolf's literary treatment of the dilemma she acknowledged in her own life, characterize the ontological reformation that with Schelling and Kierkegaard had begun to transform Western culture" (13).

CHAPTER FOUR

1. In "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," (1908), Marinetti wrote: "We will glorify war—the only true hygiene of the world—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of the anarchist, the beautiful Ideas which kill, and the scorn of woman" (Herschel B. Chipp, ed. *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968]: 286).


3. Van Gogh wrote from Arles in September 1888 to his brother, Theo: "But I have got back to where I was in Nuenen, when I made a vain attempt to learn music, so much did I already feel the relation between our color and Wagner's music" (Chipp, 38).


12. See, for example, *Mrs. Dalloway*: "'K... R... ' said the nursemaid, and Septimus heard her say 'Kay Arr' close to his ear, deeply, softly, like a mellow organ, but with a roughness in her voice like a grasshopper's, which
rasped his spine deliciously and sent running up into his brain waves of sound, which concussing, broke" (25). In *The Waves* the synaesthetic perception of the children seems to suggest that it is only with the development of individual identity that the senses are separated: the cock’s crow, to Bernard, is "a spurt of hard, red water in the white tide" (7). The work is, in Harvena Richter’s words, "a poetic-encyclopedic reconstruction of the creation and development of man and his mind, moving from his earliest awareness of objects...to a perception of the world, death and time" (80).

13. In view of what Quentin Bell says in *Virginia Stephen, 1882-1912* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), 149, and the following remarks of Woolf’s in a letter to Ka Cox (16 May 1913): "the bawling sentimentality [of the Ring] which used once to carry me away, and now leaves me sitting perfectly still" (1, 668).


For instance, this music seemed to me to be something truer than all the books that I knew. Sometimes I thought that this was due to the fact that what we feel in life, not being felt in the form of ideas, its literary (that is to say an intellectual) translation in giving an account of it, explains it, analyses it, but does not recompose it as does music, in which the sounds seem to assume the inflexion of the thing itself, to reproduce that interior and extreme point of our sensation which is the part that gives us that peculiar exhilaration which we recapture from time to time. (232).

18. For discussion of this, see Allen McLaurin, *Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved* (especially chap. 7).

19. Gauguin, in "Notes Synthetiques" (ca. 1888), wrote that painting is "a complete art which sums up all the others and completes them.—Like music, it acts on the soul through the intermediary of the senses: harmonious colors correspond to the harmonies of words" (Chipp, 61).


22. Ibid.

23. The house is full of "unrelated passions," and it seems that Lily must bring order to this chaos. Her first attempts fail because she is too close to her object: her relationship with Mrs. Ramsay is the core of this object, and it is only ten years later, when Lily can hold the object at a distance, that she achieves a form for it.

24. In "Some Questions in Aesthetics," Roger Fry wrote about the unconsciousness of artistic creation and emphasized rhythm in discussing Rembrandt's "Boy at Lessons":

If for a moment Rembrandt had thought about his picture he was undone; nothing but complete absorption in his vision could sustain the unconscious certainty and freedom of the gesture. Each touch, then, had to be an inspiration or the rhythm would have broken down. (Transformations; critical and speculative essays on art [Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968]: 40)

25. Dick, To the Lighthouse. See chap. 3, note 2, for bibliographic details. Dick's transcription is sometimes dubious, but I reproduce it without variant readings to avoid confusion.

CHAPTER FIVE


2. The hopelessness of Bernard's endeavor is prefigured in Orlando's last chapter, where the narrator repeatedly admits that life cannot be summed up, e.g.:

Having asked then of man and of bird and the insects, for fish, men tell us, who have lived in green caves, solitary for years to hear them speak, never, never say, and so perhaps know what life is—having asked them all and grown no wiser, but only older and colder (for did we not pray once in a way to wrap up in a book something so hard, so rare, one could swear it was life's meaning?) back we must go and say straight out to the reader who waits a tiptoe to hear what life is—alas, we don't know. (244)

3. "Point of View in The Waves" (see note 1, above) and "The Caricature Value of Parody and Fantasy in Orlando" (see chap. 2, note 5).

4. Iser, "The Current Situation of Literary Theory" (see Introduction, note 10), 17

5. Ibid., 18

6. Quoted by A. McLaurin (see chap. 2, note 10), 7.


9. The imagery of the "world seen without a self" almost certainly derives from Woolf's experience of a solar eclipse in 1927. She gives a long description of it in her diary for 30 June 1927. It also forms the substance of an eccentric essay, "The Sun and the Fish." The image of the skeleton of the world is found as early as *The Voyage Out* and appears in nearly all the novels. The following extract from "The Sun and the Fish" demonstrates the enormous scope the eclipse had in Woolf's imagination as she appropriates Christian terminology for cosmic significance:

So the light turned and heeled over and went out. This was the end. The flesh and blood of the world was dead: only the skeleton was left. It hung beneath us, a frail shell; brown: dead; withered. Then, with some trifling movement, this profound obeisance of the light, this stooping down and abasement of all splendour was over. Lightly, on the other side of the world, up it rose; it sprang up as if the one movement, after a second's tremendous pause, completed the other, and the light which had died here rose again elsewhere. (*CDB*, 215)

10. For example, Yeats's "Among School Children":

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

or Blake's "The Crystal Cabinet":

I strove to seize the inmost Form
With ardor fierce and hands of flame,
But burst the Crystal Cabinet,
And like a Weeping Babe became—

**CHAPTER SIX**


2. Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went, upstairs, paused at the window, came to the bathroom. There was the green lino—
leum and a tap dripping. There was an emptiness about the heart of life; an attic room. (MD, 35)

3. Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over—the moment. (MD, 36)


5. Parkes, in “Imagining Reality in To the Lighthouse” (see Introduction, note 1), writes:

In the earliest documents of our culture, the Homeric epics and the fragments of the “presocratic” philosophers, the ancestor of our word “psyche” (the Green psuchē) connotes the “world soul”—the anima mundi—as much as the soul of the individual. And even Plato, whose thinking has perhaps been the greatest single influence on the Western conception of the psyche, rarely thinks of the human soul apart from its relation to the soul of the universe. Subsequently, the idea that there is a faculty in man that links him at a preconscious level with the world reappears in Kant’s reflections upon the transcendental imagination, which in its productive rather than merely reproductive capacity prefigures a priori all experience. (36)

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. In A Room of One’s Own, ‘reality’ is said to be found now “in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper” (165). ‘Beauty’ and ‘reality’ seem almost synonymous to Woolf, as the following passage suggests: “Then, at a top-floor window, leaning out, looking down, you see beauty itself; or in the corner of an omnibus; or squatted in a ditch—beauty glowing, suddenly expressive, withdrawn the moment after. No one can count on it or seize it or have it wrapped in paper” (JR, 14).

2. In Studies in Human Time (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), Georges Poulet writes of Montaigne’s search for solutions:

Neither God nor nature gives being to thought; they give it only a momentary form. Only one thing remains: never to look for a phantom being outside the human condition, but to accept the situation for what it is, an existence which is not being, which is only “flux, shadow, and
perpetual variation”: “I do not depict being,” says Montaigne; “I depict passage.” (42-43)

3. In a letter to Paul Engelmann in 1917, Wittgenstein wrote: “And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then nothing gets lost. But the unutterable will be—unutterably—contained in what has been uttered!” (Paul Engelmann, ed., Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein [New York: Horizon Press, 1968], 7).

4. Poulet, Studies in Human Time, 45 (my italics); see also Woolf’s “Moments of Being”: “She saw the very fountain of her being spurting its pure silver drops” (AHH, 95).

5. Of this passage, Robert Kiely writes:

The passage sums up better than almost anything else of the period the artist’s complex and troubled relation to the natural universe. She is drawn to the real and imagined beauty of nature, to the color and movement that have inspired painters and poets for ages, but she is unable to separate that beauty and rhythmic motion from the random, destructive and ugly shifts that are part of it. She is perfectly capable of reading the literature of the sea, but she cannot read the sea itself and will not, though frequently tempted, pretend that she can. Her struggle for honesty, then, is first of all a struggle with artistic representations that charm and move but do not persuade her. (Beyond Egotism: The Fiction of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980], 43).

6. See Woolf’s “On Being I” (1930):

It is only the recumbent who know what, after all, Nature is at no pains to conceal—that she in the end will conquer; heat will leave the world; stiff with frost we shall cease to drag ourselves about the fields; ice will lie thick upon factory and engine; the sun will go out. Even so, when the whole earth is sheeted and slippery, some undulation, some irregularity of surface will mark the boundary of an ancient garden, and there, thrusting its head up undaunted in the starlight, the rose will flower, the crocus will burn. But with the hook of life still in us still we must wriggle. We cannot stiffen peaceably into glassy mounds. Even the recumbent spring up at the mere imagination of frost about the toes and stretch out to avail themselves of the universal hope—Heaven, Immortality. Surely, since men have been wishing all these ages, they will have wished something into existence; there will be some green isle for the mind to rest on even if the foot cannot plant itself there. The co-operative imagination of mankind must have drawn some firm outline. (M, 16-17)

7. It is interesting to note here the conclusion to a review of H. Fielding Hall’s The Inward Light that Woolf wrote in 1908.

The continued metaphors in which their philosophy is expressed, taken from the wind and light, waters, chains of bubbles and other sustained forces, solve all personal energy, all irregularity, into one suave stream. It is wise and harmonious, beautifully simple and innocent, but, if religion is, as Mr. Hall defines it, “a way of looking at the world”, is this the richest way? Does it require any faith so high as that which believes that it is right to develop your powers to the utmost? (CW, 46)
8. See also the holograph draft of The Waves: “Her [nature’s] effort is to make us acquiescent as she is; ours, to fling off, to get up, to explore, not to be overcome. And I will not fail I said: I will not acquiesce. I will not lose my sense of the enemy” (Graham, 698).

CHAPTER EIGHT


2. See also The Waves: “ ‘There is the puddle,’ said Rhoda, ‘and I cannot cross it. I hear the rush of the great grindstone within an inch of my head. Its wind roars in my face” (113).

3. For example, Orlando:

   But Time, unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality, has no such simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time. An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the timepiece of the mind by one second. This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind is less known than it should be and deserves fuller investigation (91).

4. See Langer, *Feeling and Form*:

   Time exists for us because we undergo tensions and their resolutions. Their peculiar building-up, and their ways of breaking or diminishing or merging into longer and greater tensions, make for a vast variety of temporal forms. If we could experience only single, successive organic strains, perhaps subjective time would be one-dimensional like the time ticked off by clocks. But life is always a dense fabric of concurrent tensions, and as each of them is a measure of time, the measurements themselves do not coincide. This causes our temporal experience to fall apart into incommensurate elements which cannot be all conceived together as clear forms. When one is taken as parameter, others become “irrational,” out of logical focus, ineffable. (112-13)


6. See Woolf’s diary for 15 October 1923, and note also the following correspondence:

   I’ve had some very curious visions in this room too, lying in bed, mad, & seeing the sunlight quivering like gold water, on the wall. I’ve heard the voices of the dead here. *(D, 9 January 1924)*
Septimus Warren Smith lying on the sofa in the sitting-room; watching the watery gold glow and fade with the astonishing sensibility of some live creature on the roses, on the wall-paper. (*MD*, 152)

7. See *Orlando*:

For what more terrifying revelation can there be than that it is the present moment? That we survive the shock at all is only possible because the past shelters us on one side and the future on another. (268)


9. For example, see “A Sketch of the Past:”

Those moments—in the nursery, on the road to the beach—can still be more real than the present moment. At times I can go back to St Ives more completely than I can this morning. I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there. That is, I suppose, that my memory supplies what I had forgotten, so that it seems as if it were happening independently, though I am really making it happen. In certain favourable moods, memories—what one has forgotten—come to the top. Now if this is so, is it not possible—I often wonder—that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence? And if so, will it not be possible, in time, that some device will be invented by which we can tap them? I see it—the past—as an avenue lying beyond; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions. There at the end of the avenue still, are the garden and the nursery. Instead of remembering here a scene and there a sound, I shall fit a plug into the wall; and listen in to the past. I shall turn up August 1890. I feel that strong emotion must leave its trace; and it is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves again attached to it, so that we shall be able to live our lives through from the start. (*MOB*, 67)

10. See above, chap. 3, (p. 54) referring to *D*, 8 August 1928, where Woolf wrote of her memory of a friend’s visit “making a work of art for itself.”

11. In her diary on 19 September 1934, Woolf wrote: “But then, next day, today which is Thursday, one week later, the other thing begins to work—the exalted sense of being above time & death which comes from being again in a writing mood.”

12. See “A Sketch of the Past”:

One must get the feeling of everything approaching and then disappearing, getting large, getting small, passing at different rates of speed past the little creature; one must get the feeling that made her press on, the little creature driven on as she was by growth of her legs and arms, driven without her being able to stop it, or to change it, driven as a plant is driven up out of the earth, up until the stalk grows, the leaf grows, buds swell. That is what is indescribable, that is what makes all images too static, for no sooner has one said this was so, than it was past and altered. (*MOB*, 79)

13. See Poulet, “Timelessness and Romanticism”:

Paramnesia seems to bring forth before our eyes a past which is still real, still alive. It is as if, abruptly, we were projected into a timeless world or
into a world where time does not flow but stands still. The incredible idea that all the past we thought we had left for ever, continues to stay here, at our very feet, invisible but intact, and in all its forgotten freshness, shoots forth in our minds.

Of course, paramnesia is merely an illusion. It does not bring back the past. It just makes a perception look like a recollection. Generally our memory grows gradually fainter; it tends to disappear. But sometimes association may revivify the past sufficiently to make it flash after a long oblivion into our consciousness; and if those associations are very potent, the flashing may be so intense that it has the vividness of the present. (4)


CHAPTER NINE


2. See chap. 4, note 16 for bibliographic details.

3. See, for example, "The Moment: Summer's Night," a sketch written as Woolf began composing Between the Acts: "But that is the wider circumference of the moment. Here in the centre is a knot of consciousness" (M, 4).

4. In "On Not Knowing Greek," Woolf wrote:

For words, when opposed to such a blast of meaning, must give out, must be blown astray, and only by collecting in companies convey the meaning which each one separately is too weak to express. Connecting them in a rapid flight of the mind we know instantly and instinctively what they mean, but could not decant that meaning afresh into any other words. (CRT, 48-49)


6. See note 5.

7. See "The Humane Art" (1940): "Instead of letters posterity will have confessions, diaries, notebooks, like M. Gide's—hybrid books in which the writer talks in the dark to himself about himself for a generation yet to be born" (DM, 61).


9. One critic who has done much to make clear the political nature of Woolf's writing is Jane Marcus; see, for example, "Liberty, Sorority, Misogyny,"

10. "All books are now rank with the slimy seaweed of politics; mouldy and mildewed." Virginia Woolf to Vanessa Bell, 24 October 1938 (L, 3, 460).


13. In her diary for 15 September 1934, Woolf wrote about the funeral: "Then Desmond came up: said why it be nice to walk in the garden? 'Oh we stand on a little island' he said. But it has been very lovely I said. For the first time I laid my hand on his shoulder, & said don't die yet. Nor you either he said. We have had wonderful friends, he said."

14. Brenda Silver quotes this in her introduction to "'Anon' and 'The Reader'" (see note 5 above), note 13, 367.

15. Still I see Lytton's point—my dear old serpent. What a dream life is to be sure—that he should be dead, & I reading him; & trying to make out that we indented ourselves on the world; whereas I sometimes feel its been an illusion—gone so fast, lived so quickly; & nothing to show for it, save these little books. But that makes me dig my feet in, & squeeze the moment. (*D*, 29 June 1939).

16. A fascinating account of the nexus of emotions arising, initially, from Julia's death, and the "legend" of Herbert Duckworth, is given by Mark Spilka in *Virginia Woolf's Quarrel with Grieving* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

17. One element of the matrix I am not developing here is the novel's concern with matriarchal mythology and the rituals associated with the Egyptian Isis; see Evelyn Haller, "Isis Unveiled," in Jane Marcus, ed. *Virginia Woolf, A Feminist Slant*.


19. See note 5, above.

20. The relevance and foresight of Woolf's political thinking is endorsed by the following statement by a woman at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp:

I don't see this situation being resolved by parliamentary means. . . . maybe if there's enough extra-parliamentary pressure we could do it that
way but there’s more to it. I don’t think disarmament is one little thing that you can achieve without other bits of society changing. You won’t achieve disarmament unless you remove the desire and need for men to fight. I think the future rests on women. (Shushu Al-Sabbagh in Barbara Harford & Sarah Hopkins, eds., Greenham Common: Women at the Wire [London: Women’s Press 1984]: 24 (my italics; dots in original))

On 11 December 1983, fifty thousand women encircled the USAF Base at Greenham Common in England, reflecting it back on itself with mirrors; perhaps Miss La Trobe inspired this!

21. See also her diary for 22 September 1928: “And I felt this is the heart of England—this wedding in the country; history I felt; Cromwell; The Osbornes; Dorothy’s shepherdesses singing; of all of whom Mr & Mrs Jarad seem more the descendants than I am; as if they represented the unconscious breathing of England.”

22. For example:

She was haunted by absurd jumbled ideas—how, if one went back far enough, everything perhaps was intelligible; everything was in common; for the mammoths who pastured in the fields of Richmond High Street had turned into paving stones and boxes full of ribbon, and her aunts. (TVO, 73)

Through all the ages when the pavement was grass, when it was swamp, through the age of tusk and mammoth, through the age of silent sunrise—the battered woman stood singing of love. (MD, 90)

See also Gillian Beer’s excellent essay “Virginia Woolf and Pre-History,” in Eric Warner, ed., Virginia Woolf: A Centenary Perspective (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984). Beer writes that “the idea of origins and the idea of development are problematically connected in that of prehistory. And in the twentieth century the unconscious has often been presented in the guise of the primeval.”

23. Compare the following:

“It is the burden of lies” she thought to herself, as she withdrew; “We carry the burden of lies.”

Meditating on the burden deposited hundreds of years ago upon the shoulders of all of us, she did not stop to consider the particular case. (Metambrosia, 14; see also TVO, 25)

A blankness came over her. Where am I? she asked herself, staring at a heavy frame. What is that? She seemed to be alone in the midst of nothingness; yet must descend, must carry her burden—she raised her arms slightly, as if she were carrying a pitcher, an earthenware pitcher on her head. (TY, 44-5)

“How am I burdened with what they drew from the earth; memories; possessions. This is the burden that the past laid on me.” (BTA, 182)

24. Reading over Roger Fry’s Vision and Design (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920) when preparing her biography, Woolf must have seen the fol-
lowing passage from Fry's "An Essay in Aesthetics," which explains the effect of framing:

A somewhat similar effect to that of the cinematograph can be obtained by watching a mirror in which a street scene is reflected. If we look at the street itself we are almost sure to adjust ourselves in some way to its actual existence. We recognize an acquaintance, and wonder why he looks so dejected this morning, or become interested in a new fashion in hats—the moment we do that the spell is broken, we are reacting to life itself in however slight a degree, but, in the mirror, it is easier to abstract ourselves completely, and look upon the changing scene as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances, which would have escaped our vision before, owing to that perpetual economising by selection of what impressions we will assimilate, which in life we perform by unconscious processes. The frame of the mirror, then, does to some extent turn the reflected scene from one that belongs to our actual life into one that belongs rather to the imaginative life. (19-20)

Selection was important to Woolf. Writing in her diary of her hopes for what would eventually be *The Waves*, she said:

Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that don't belong to the moment; this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional. Why admit anything to literature that is not poetry—by which I mean saturated? Is that not my grudge against novel[s]—that they select nothing? (D, 28 November 1928)

25. "Why leave out the British Army? What's history without the Army, eh?" he mused (*BTA*, 18+).

26. Again uncannily, this idea is prefigured on the last page of Woolf's 1903 diary (the holograph manuscript of which is in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library; apparently it is being edited for publication). She writes there of returning to "that particular act of our drama" which is life in London; although the actors may change, she says, the sameness of the scene lends a "certain continuity" to the whole.

27. For example:

All passes, all changes, she thought, as she climbed up the little path between the trees. . . . Then, 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. She lay there listening. She was happy, completely. Time had ceased. (*TY*, 299-300)

28. This passage, marked "silence" in the margin, is from "[BTA] Typescript with author's corrections, unsigned. 2 April '38—July 30 '39 (earliest dated draft)" in the Berg Collection. I have cited the transcription from Mitchell A. Leaska, ed., *Pointz Hall* (New York: University Publications, 1983), 61-62, which differs from the typescript only in minor matters of punctuation.
29. See letter to Judith Stephen, 29 May 1940: "We’re acting village plays; written by the gardener’s wife, and the chauffeur’s wife; and acted by the other villagers. Also we’re doing this that and the other about an air-raid shelter" (L, 3610).