

**Dusting Off the Classics:  
Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*  
University of Denver Enrichment Program  
Richard Sacks – Winter/Spring 2021 – section#2**



UNIVERSITY of  
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ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

**Update Page for Class of 6/2/21**

Course materials and info page: <https://sacks-richard.com/lighthouse-du-materials-2>

**For our fourth and final class (that of 6/2/21)**, we will dive into the depths of the novel's final part, "The Lighthouse" (pp. 145-209) where it moves back and forth between land and sea. Admittedly, the first section of "Time Passes" warned us that sometimes "One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land" (p. 125). But let's hope we might nonetheless see our way to some kind of landing and some kind of vision. So please complete your reading of the text, and try to come to class armed with evidence and prepared with your conclusion(s) about what you think *To the Lighthouse* is ultimately arguing. Here, one more time, are some questions (beginning with the final item from last week's update page) which you might want to play around with if you have the time:

- 1) What do you make of **section 3 of "The Lighthouse" (pp. 156-162) – the 1<sup>st</sup> of the sections on land after the "little company bound together" (L.2, pg. 155) has departed for its day's sail – when Lily begins painting again** and makes "her first quick decisive stroke.... A second time she did it—a third time.... Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her" (p. 158)?
- 2) What do you make of **section 4 of the "The Lighthouse" (pp. 162-170) – the 1<sup>st</sup> of the sections in the boat with Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam** (as well as old Macalister and his boy) and the scene in which elements of the final three lines of [Cowper's poem "The Castaway"](#) most often surface: "...We perish'd, each alone: / But I beneath a rougher sea, / And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he."
- 3) What do you make of **some of the various scenes from the past in section 5 of "The Lighthouse," scenes which arise in Lily's mind but which we had never witnessed?** For example, **A**) the "scene on the beach" which we first hear of back in L.3 (p. 160) and which returns with Lily "thinking again of Mrs. Ramsay on the beach" in L.5 (p. 171); **B**) the sequence (pp. 172-176) in which Lily "collected her impressions of the Rayleys. Their lives appeared to her in a series of scenes" (p. 172); and **C**) Lily's visits to William Bankes in "Hampton Court ... summer after summer" (pp. 176-177).
- 4) What do you make of **the two sections in "The Lighthouse" (L.6 on p. 180 and L.9 on p. 188) contained completely within brackets or parentheses** (L.6 is in brackets, L.9 in parentheses)?
- 5) What do you make of **section 11 of "The Lighthouse (pp. 191-202)" the last extended scene on land with Lily painting**, including view-altering moments such as: **A**) "the wind had freshened, and, as the sky changed slightly and the sea changed slightly and the boats altered their positions, the view, which a moment before had seemed miraculously fixed, was now unsatisfactory." (pp. 192-193); and **B**) "Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it... [S]omebody had come into the drawing-room;... was sitting in the chair.... [W]hoever it was stayed still inside; ... so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture a little." (p. 201).
- 6) What do you make of **section 12 of the "Lighthouse" (pp. 202-207) – the last scene in the boat – and in particular its final page (p. 207)**, with James and Cam watching their father who was "staring and staring at the frail blue shape which seemed like the vapour of something that had burnt itself away?" Among the questions you might want to consider: **A**) what of the way in which the long full paragraph on page 207 ends – "He sat and looked at the island and he might be thinking, We perished, each alone, or he might be thinking, I have reached it. I have found it; but he said nothing"?; **B**) what about what "James thought" and what "Cam thought" in the final paragraph of the section?; and **C**) how would you paint in your mind's eye L.12's final main clause (with its dependent clauses) – "they both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock"?
- 7) What do you make of **the final section of the novel (L.13, pp. 208-209), on land with Lily and Carmichael, and with "The Lighthouse ha[ving] become almost invisible, ha[ving] melted away into a blue haze" (p. 208)?** Among the questions you might want to consider: **A**) what of Lily's feeling "she had been right. They had not needed to speak. They had been thinking the same things" (p. 208)?; and **B**) what of Lily's "sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second" (p. 209)?