

Chapter I: Introduction

Contemporary Social Attitude towards Women

This research project focuses on the sense of rebellion in women while they are excessively exploited by their male counterparts. In *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf exposes the reaction of women, especially those of the 20th century against the suppressive nature of men. The research unhooks the reality of the sense of protest which burns only when the quantity of such exploitation reaches to its extremity. Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* surfaces the women's psychological state, here Lily Briscoe as a representative of the whole society, that is the outcome of the misbehavior and misunderstanding by men such as Mr Ramsay, Charles Tansley and William Bankes, just a few to mention. In the novel, Woolf presents Mrs Ramsay as the women of yesterday who hardly opens her mouth to protest against the male-chauvinism in her family as representative and Lily Briscoe in the form of the women of today who (in)directly defies the criterion or role a woman should play as set by the men. The novel also gives the glimpse of cause and effect- what makes Lily stand against the contemporary society completely dominated by males.

The two female images that existed are the woman of yesterday, the familiar, and the women of today, the unfamiliar. These images mostly found in literature and art, greatly affected the lives of many women because they created expectations concerning a woman's appearance, speech and activities. The image of the women of yesterday shows a submissive, quiet and domestic woman who finds her sense of worth in her family and familial relationship with other members. In contrast, the women of today is very different, as if the trickery images of a masculine, but uncontrolled woman defying familial and societal expectations in order to seek her own freedom.

These voices of women of today create controversy, since female voices had long been suppressed or ignored. A person's voice provides her medium for expressing herself, without which she must resort to some other, non-verbal form of communication. Developed, rather than assigned, a voice encompasses more than the noises erupting from her throat; it also involves the right of a person to be heard and to be taken seriously. The woman's sphere is at the home, while the man's is public life. If a woman's voice is unruly and not submissive, her life is believed to have the same characteristics, making her unwomanly. In much of the literature, women are portrayed as finding their identities by caring for others, as well as pursuing "relational, internal, and selfless goals" (Cutter 5). This identity for women in literature mirrored the women of yesterday mold.

A woman is expected "to embody and to maintain social stability [...] through the nurturance of her womanhood self, her family, and her sense of virtue" and "to provide a heaven of beauty, grace, and refuge for the makers of this new world: her men" (Papke 10). She should also teach these qualities to her daughters because "daughters of the republic are not to declare their independence; they are to be given dolls and inculcated in domestic values appropriate to their separate spheres" (Cutter 5).

Limited a great deal by the domestic confines placed on her, the woman of yesterday's voice is expected to be submissive and her opinions, if voiced, are not to be defiant or to contradict those of her husband. Woman of yesterday controlled their tongues, spoke "relationally and domestically," and "whenever possible, they were to erase their own voices by being silent in the face of male authority" (Cutter 6). Since she essentially represented an extension of her husband, the women of yesterday needed no voice of her own, because his voice spoke for them both.

Around 1890, a new mold began to gain appeal with women, casting shadows upon the women of yesterday ideal. The women of today, an image that developed as an interchange between literature and art and ordinary women, who resisted expectations, defied many of the foundational concepts of the woman of yesterday. “The general characteristics given to the passionate intellectual range from a puritanical housewife, torn between duty to her family and desire for independence, to a mannish spinster, failed in the duty to produce children and thus desiring to take on masculine qualities”(Banta 55-56).

Observing these rather drastic images of the women of today in literature and art, as well as famous women of achievement, ordinary women began to develop a new sense of independence, by developing and rising their individual identities and voices. Real life models such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony provided encouragement for women to begin breaking out of the often repressed the women of yesterday mold. Freedom and individuality came as a result of the wide variety of characteristics attached to the women of today picture. Due to the lack of a “clearly defined set of virtues characterize[ing] this image, women could pick those attributes that supported a self-defined voice and identity,” which allowed them to find personal, sexual or social freedom as their individual lives called for (Cutter 15). The women of today ideology revealed to the real woman that she no longer needed to find her identity through a man; she saw and utilized opportunities to become educated, to support her, to think and to be independent. Woman of Today ideology allows women to break free from the domestic realm, entering into the public arena previously occupied only by men. Women entered institutions of higher education, worked in more jobs outside of the home with increased wages, as well as continued the movement towards gaining the right to vote. With this liberation, women began

searching for a new voice. Previously, the general female voice was defined by those of husbands and fathers; now, women began to find their own. Yet, almost before women could begin to let their newfound voices be heard in the public realm, they were being criticized. Common belief said that if women adopt the women of today's voice unrest will come upon society; the women of today's voice is not being trusted. Newspapers and magazines published numerous pictures and literary works criticizing this newfound voice, often centering on the women of today's outspokenness. One American periodical printed an article by William Lee Howard in which he labels an outspoken woman as a sexual pervert:

The female possessed of masculine ideas of independence, the virago who would sit in the public highways and lift up her pseudo-virile voice, proclaiming her sole right to decide questions of war or religion, or the value of celibacy and the curse of woman's impurity, and that disgusting antisocial being, the female sexual pervert, are simply different degrees of the same class-degenerates. (Cutter 23)

The stereotyped loud, mainly voice of the women of today came to imply that a woman had selfishly cast aside her domestic roles to move out into the public sphere. This voice also caused her virtue, and sometimes her heterosexuality, to be questioned. Clearly, the biggest fear regarding the women of today's voice was a fear that her unruly language might challenge the theoretical underpinnings of patriarchal society. No longer feeling that she needed a man to tell her what to think, the women of today appeared to have the capability to overturn the familiar society. *Life* magazine printed a cartoon in 1895 showing a group of masculine looking new women, clothed in bloomers, watching a man wearing a ballet skirt dance on stage; the cartoon bore the title, "In a Twentieth Century Club" (Cutter 18). Such an

illustration reveals the fears of some people that these New Women were going to overthrow patriarchal society, causing drastic role reversals. Perhaps attempting to regain the dignity they felt was lost, some men challenged the morality and womanhood of the women of today through written media. Howard's article quoted above represents the belief that an outspoken woman, unable to control her own voice, could not control her sexual desires either. Another essay notes that the average woman "has accepted Nature's discriminations against her" and should spurn the women of today's voice, knowing "that the interests of order and efficiency are best served by [the man] having the final word" (Cutter 23). Since more well-known woman of today images implied a single and childless woman, her voice could not adequately represent the average woman; the essay called for a rejection of her voice as completely unnatural.

Woolf as a Feminist Writer

Woolf was born Adeline Virginia Stephen on January 25, 1882, in London. Her parents were Leslie Stephen, editor of the Dictionary of National Biography and Julia Princes Jackson Duckworth Stephen. Both parents had married before and had children. Together, the Stephens had three other children in addition to Virginia; Venessa, born in 1879; Thoby, born in 1880; and Adrian, born in 1883. Woolf was educated at home where she had free access to her father's extensive library. In 1895 her mother died, and Woolf faced the first of many psychological breakdowns that would plague her throughout life. Her half-sister Stella, thirteen years Woolf's senior, assumed management of the household and moved the family to the bohemian Bloomsbury section of London, where Woolf began her writing career and where the Thursday evening gatherings with Thoby's Cambridge friends constituted the beginning of the Bloomsbury Group. During this time the for Stephen siblings

traveled, in 1904 to Paris and Italy, and two years later to Greece, where Woolf and Thoby both contracted typhoid fever; the illness proved fatal for Thoby that she died there and then.

In 1912, Woolf married Leonard Woolf, one of the original Bloomsbury members recently returned from a seven-year period of Civil War in Ceylon. Soon afterwards she suffered a serious mental breakdown involving another suicide attempt; she remained in severe mental distress for the next three years. During this period, Woolf completed her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, published in 1915. Two years later, the Woolfs established their own publishing company in the basement of their home; the Hogarth Press published not only Woolf's work but those of T.S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield, and Sigmund Freud, among others. In 1920, through a series of letters to the editor of *the New Statesman*, Woolf engaged in a dispute over women's intellectual abilities with Desmond McCarthy, a member of the Bloomsbury Group who wrote under the name "Affable Hawk". She pursued the subject in greater depth at the end of the decade with her feminist essay *A Room of One's Own*. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Woolf continued writing and publishing, producing several more novels and number of essays. In 1941, fearing the onset of another psychological breakdown, Woolf committed suicide by filling her pockets with rocks and drowning herself in the River Ouse.

Virginia Woolf has always been known for her careful, finely crafted prose. Separately, Woolf has always been renowned for her feminist consciousness. Historically, the two have been divorced, as modernists speak of her aesthetic virtuosity, and feminist scholars praise her social agenda. But detaching her beautiful writing from her feminism ignores the most radical aspect of Woolf's effort: the creation of a technically remarkable prose that would help effect social change.

In a famous passage from *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf argues for a new syntax: "The woman writer [must] alter the current 'man's sentence,' which is unsuited for woman's use" (115). As would later feminist critics, Woolf wonders what it would mean to create a social upheaval in syntax. We might ask, then, about the function of socially significant syntax in wedding those two aspects of Woolf that resist unification: splendid prose and feminist principles. To read Woolf's linguistic style as a social project- in the way her speculations about the nature language would seem to require us to do- requires close, careful scrutiny of how her irregular phraseology and her pairing and multiplying of subjects, verbs, tenses, and moods challenge reality, subjectivity, and hegemony. Within her grammatical constructions, Woolf does not re-inscribe epistemology or teleology; neither does she profess truth. Instead, she suggests on a grammatical level that any reliance on posited reality will give way, revealing the fragility and despair of inherited modes of conceptualization, and refuting traditional models of subject construction through complex grammatical game.

Although Woolf wrote a number of short stories, her best-known fiction has always been her novels, particularly *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and to a lesser extent *Orlando* (1928) and *The Waves* (1931). *Mrs Dalloway*, frequently compared to James Joyce's 1922 work *Ulysses*, is an expansion of "Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street," a short story Woolf produced for *Dial Magazine* in 1923. The events of the plot occur over a period of twenty-four hours in the life of society hostess Clarissa Dalloway and culminate in a large, elaborate party. The work is not only a critique of social system, but deals as well with issues of madness and suicide through Woolf's characterization of Septimus Smith, a psychological casualty of the war. *To the Lighthouse*, a family

novel with obvious connections to Woolf's own early life, involves Mr and Mrs Ramsay, thinly disguised versions of her parents.

Notwithstanding the subtitle's claim that *Orlando* is a biography, it is, in fact, a novel featuring an androgynous main character said to be modeled after Woolf's friend and reputed lover, Vita Sackville-West. *The Waves*, a complicated exploration of the inevitable mutability of human life, is perhaps Woolf's most complex work, considered by some, including her husband, to be her masterpiece. Woolf explored issues of sex, gender, and feminism to some degree in her novels, particularly *Orlando*, and in her short stories, particularly "A Society". However, she most thoroughly articulated her ideas on the equality of women in her essays, especially "A Room of One's Own" and "Three Guineas" (1938). Both books explore male power and the injustices associated with it; Woolf especially criticizes the lack of legal rights, educational opportunities, and financial independence for women. Unlike some of her contemporaries, however, Woolf did not believe that women should strive to be like men. She believed, rather, that men should take on some of characteristics associated with women.

To the Lighthouse is a landmark novel of high modernism, the text centering on the Ramsay family, their distinguished guests and their visit to the Isle of Skye in Scotland between 1910 and 1920, skillfully manipulates temporality and psychological exploration. It is set in the Ramsays' summer home in the Hebrides, on the Isle of Skye. The Window, the first part begins with Mrs Ramsay assuring James that they should be able to visit the Lighthouse on the next day. This prediction is denied by Mr Ramsay, who voices his certainty that weather will not be clear, an opinion that forces a certain tension between Mr and Mrs Ramsay, and also between Ramsay and his son James. This particular incident is referred to on various occasions

throughout the chapter, especially in the context of Mr and Mrs Ramsay's relationship.

The Ramsays have joined at the house by a number of friends and colleagues, one of them being Lily Briscoe who begins the novel as a young, uncertain painter attempting a portrayal of Mrs Ramsay and her son James Ramsay, finds herself plagued by doubts throughout the novel, doubts largely fed by the statements of Charles Tansley, another guest, claiming that women can neither paint nor write. Tansley himself is an admirer of Mr Ramsay and his philosophical treatises.

This section closes with a large dinner party. Mr Ramsay nearly snaps at Augustus Carmichael, a visiting poet, when the latter asks for a second serving of soup. Mrs Ramsay, who is striving for the perfect dinner is herself out of sorts when Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, two acquaintances who she has brought together in engagement, arrive late to dinner, as Minta lost her grandmother's brooch on the beach.

Time Passes, the second part of the text is employed by the author to give a sense of time passing. Woolf explains the purpose of this section, writing that it was "an interesting experiment that gave the sense of ten years passing" (24). This section's role in linking the two dominant parts of the story was also expressed in Woolf's notes for the novel, where above a drawing of an "H" shape she wrote, "two blocks joined by a corridor" (25). During this period Britain begins and finishes fighting World War I, in addition, readers are informed as to the fates of a number of characters introduced in the first part of the novel: Mrs Ramsay passes away, Prue dies from complications of childbirth, and Andrew is killed in the war. Mr Ramsay is left adrift without his wife to praise and comfort him during his bouts of fear and his anguish regarding the longevity of his philosophical work.

In the final section some of the remaining Ramsays return to their summer home ten years after the events of Part I, as Mr Ramsay finally plans on taking the long-delayed trip *To the Lighthouse* with his son James and daughter Camilla. The trip almost does not happen, as the children had not been ready, but they eventually take off en route, the children give their father the silent treatment for forcing them to come along. James keeps the sailing boat steady, rather than receiving the harsh words he has come to expect from his father, he hears praise, providing a rare moment of empathy between father and son; Cam's attitude towards her father has changed as well. They are accompanied by the sailor Macalister and his son, who catches fish during the trip. The son cuts a piece of flesh from a fish he has caught to use for bait, throwing the injured fish back into the sea.

While they set sail for the lighthouse, Lily attempts to complete her long-unfinished painting. She reconsiders Mrs Ramsay's memory, grateful for her help in pushing Lily to continue with her art, yet struggling at the same time to free herself from the tacit control Mrs Ramsay had over other aspects of her life. Upon finishing the painting and seeing that it satisfies her, she realizes that the execution of her vision is more important to her than the idea of leaving some sort legacy in her work- a lesson Mr Ramsay has yet to learn.

Review of Literature

In the novel, *To the Lighthouse* Virginia, Woolf seeks to come to terms with her parents' stifling Victorian marriage and events of her own childhood as well as to explore such feminist issues as the necessity or even desirability of marriage for women and the hardships for women in pursuing a career in the art. A striking mix of autobiographical elements, philosophical questions and social concerns, *To the Lighthouse* is generally considered to be Woolf's greatest fictional achievement.

Since the publication of the text, *To the Lighthouse*, it has been responded in many more ways by distinct scholars. A keen reviewer of the book, Robert Mathias has stated; "This simple and haunting story captures the transience of life and its surrounding emotions"(32). His short observation to the text exposes Woolf's untiring endeavors in the portrayal of the inner layer of human life and its significance in the promotion of the whole human domain. In the course of time, Paul Fischer asserted:

To the Lighthouse is the most autobiographical of Virginia Woolf's novels. It is based on her childhood experiences, and while it touches on childhood and children's perceptions and desires; it is at its most trenchant when exploring adult relationships, marriage, and, indeed, the changing class-structure of its time. (7)

Fischer seems to have stressed on the sources of the text that the text was the creation out of their author's personal experiences. Furthermore, he has highlighted different stages of human life and their distinct features. His criticism displays the fact that this text has incorporated humane and social, especially, economic phenomena. As a whole, his observation is appreciative and remarkable.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf advocates for the radical changes in the conception of family and social life. She refutes the traditional view about women that they are submissive, and cried for a separate space for women in literature and society because they are also independent human beings just like men. Hazard Adams presents Woolf's view about women:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel, they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation [...]; it is narrow-mindedness in their more-privileged fellow

creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting, stocking, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. (822)

Lily Briscoe is another prominent character in the novel. Lily undercuts the boundary of the male-dominated society and challenges the male-structured society by doing her best in the domain of painting. Mrs Ramsay is much more delighted to see the picture of Lily and further she assimilates her potential in the very field. Due to Lily's physical appearance similar to Chinese people she is committed to not marry forever. However, Mrs Ramsay is much soft and meek towards her. Thus their relations show the fact they co-ordinate with each other in very friendly manner which further strengthens both of them for battles in the male-dominated society. Mrs Ramsay is so clean-hearted that she is always loving and kind as well as positive to Lily which makes Lily firm to achieve her objectives.

To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf's novel, becomes a double-voiced discourse; it provides a glimpse into two ways of thinking. Woolf's work describes both Mrs Ramsay, the essential house wife and Lily Briscoe as the feminist, who blatantly denies male culture. This is to say that Woolf employs both a muted old view and a dominant contemporary view of social and cultural traditions; the ideas of general culture versus unexpressed culture occur. Showalter makes claim that 'gynocritics' a term she coined, assess and evaluate the specialized discourse of women's writing. This discourse contends with "women's language, women's ideas, women's way of communication, and women's careers. The history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women and essentially four different ways of thinking about the differences between men's and women's writing and literature; The biological, the cultural, the psychoanalytic and the linguistic" (Showalter 311)

To the Lighthouse has sustained critical predominance in Woolf's canon since its publication in 1927. It is widely considered her most successful use of stream of consciousness narrative, nonlinear plot and interior monologue, crisply identifying characters without the formal structure of chronological time and omniscient narration, as a passage of time. The novel is often described as an elegy to Woolf's mother, and as such as it is thought to be a complex and poetic character study, incorporating all facets of personality, including emotions dark and hopeless. In her diary, Woolf recorded her many difficulties in writing *To the Lighthouse*, including her fears about reliving her parents' death- events that precipitated two of her most devastating emotional breakdowns. But Woolf evidently realized the greater significance of *To the Lighthouse* beyond its fictional portrayal of her childhood; in a diary entry written during her final revision of the novel in 1926, she wrote, "My present opinion is that it is easily the best of my books," an assessment with which most critics agree.

To the Lighthouse (1927) is concerned with the Victorian arrangement of patriarchal society, and it questions the distinction between men and women's social roles. Throughout the novel, we find that there are two distinctive worlds: the world of men, the masculine and the world of women, the feminine. The masculine is marked by egotism, rigidity, and insistence on intellect over feeling. By contrast, the feminine is marked by imagination, intuition, and compromise. The male-chauvinistic vision of the society has discouraged mixing the characteristics of these two worlds, and thus prevented the creation of a modern society, in which there is balance between the masculine intellect and the feminine emotion.

Mrs Ramsay represents the conventional and the submissive female to patriarchal society. Her medium is emotion and her form is human relationships. Lily

Briscoe is a representative of the unconventional and rebellious against gender boundaries. Her medium is intellect and her form is her painting. Through Woolf's projection of Mrs Ramsay's life and her relationships to men characters, she affirms the female values of fertility, giving and creating harmony, which are associated with Mrs Ramsay; but Woolf criticizes the way she has chosen to subject her positive femininity to masculine definitions. Woolf's projection of Lily's life and her relationships to Mrs Ramsay and other male characters is an attempt to teach women to accept their femininity, cultivate their masculinity, and choose the role that they want to play as independent women. Examining the lives of these two female characters, we find Woolf seeking to integrate the masculine and feminine qualities into a balanced whole that would render men and women the capacity to achieve meaning of life.

Mrs Ramsay thinks of marriage between Mr Bankes and Lily. Yet Mrs Ramsay doesn't succeed in getting them married. She thinks that Lily is unwomanly. Mrs Ramsay can't understand that being womanly means no longer being defined by one's relation to men or one's reproductive system. Mrs Ramsay pities Mr Bankes for being unmarried. Mrs Ramsay succeeds in bringing Mr Bankes to her dinner party, but she fails to fulfill his need for intimacy and unity. Mr Bankes is not satisfied with emotional aspects of Mr Ramsay's life. He feels they have weakened Mr Ramsay's potential. For Mr Ramsay's life vacillates between his sterile thought and fertile wife. In Mrs Ramsay's party, her superficiality bore Mr Bankes. This makes him not attracted to the domestic life of Mrs Ramsay; since it is not satisfactory to his need to fulfillment. Mrs Ramsay herself is stuck by the same questioning of Mr Bankes in the party. At this moment, all affection for her husband is momentarily gone, and all what she wants to believe and create is gone. She comes to question her status as a woman.

As the society is much biased and discouraging for women, Lily gets targeted to make her a victim in the sense that males cannot feel good at her progress and prosperity. This is why there are challenges from outside every time. It is focused in the text: "Such she often felt herself-struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: But this is what I see; this is what I see," and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her" (12). She goes against many challenges and struggles so valiantly for her success by hook and crook. She does not get afraid of any sort of consequence of her deed. Rather she continuously keeps on doing her job with the faith that her every effort will bring about fruition in her life. She is so keen at comparing one person with other and derives satisfaction through such judgment. In fact, she is fair and unbiased in the matter of putting two people into two distinct boxes on the basis of their qualities and human behavior.

Chapter II: Feminism: Search for Gender Equality

The distinction between male and female and masculinity and femininity continues to polarize the relations between the sexes in ways that generally subordinate, marginalize, or undermine women with respect to men. The gender literature has recently challenged the singular and unitary conception of gender identity, arguing that there are a multiplicity of masculinities and femininities that are often fragile, fragmented and fluid. Despite this, the binary relationship between men and women continues to obstruct the development of sexual equality. Hence it tends to focus on the binary and, in particular, its association with hierarchy, where men dominate women and masculinity assigns to femininity a marginal or 'other' inferior status. It suggests that hierarchy is a condition and consequence of the reification of the binary that is difficult to challenge from within a representational epistemology that continues to dominate even studies of gender. Deconstructing the gender binary is simply to challenge the reification of the terms wherein the divisions between male and female, masculine and feminine or men and women are treated absolute and unchallenging. As Hekman has argued:

The history of feminism is one in which one or other of two strategies has been pre-eminent in responding to the gender binary and the hierarchy of evaluation that surrounds it. One solution is feminists to deny the difference between men and women, thus encouraging women to play the 'male game' with as much tenacity of purpose as men. Another is to seek to reverse the hierarchical evaluation, claiming that it is women that are superior because of a whole range of sensitivities and social skills that men lack. (432)

Both strategies can be found in our society and are endorsed, in different degrees, by some men as well as some women. The first strategy reflects and

reproduces the beliefs in equal opportunity, but it can lead ambitious women to emulate men and to manifest many of the characteristics of a particular mode of masculinity sometimes even more exaggeratedly than men themselves.

Feminism as a movement got its impetus within the social history of modern women. The women recognized unequal status and banded together in collective action to rectify the wrong done to them. They dared to come out from behind closed door to tell their plight and their vision without sexual bias. Men had long denied women their right to personhood. They achieved that by not allowing women to own property, or enter into contracts, education and citizenship.

Feminism came into existence with women questioning their place patriarchal society. They examined the control men had on women and established the ground on which women started their concerns of subjugation. A good understanding of a definition of feminism becomes crucial to give a clear-cut concept of the term and its basic premises. Feminism is a doctrine that holds a belief in sex equality and opposes the sex hierarchy. It presupposes that women's condition is socially constructed rather than simply predestined by God or nature. It posits that women perceive themselves not only as a biological sex but a social grouping. Gerda Lerner articulates her opinion regarding a feminist consciousness:

I define feminist consciousness as the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is socially determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally that they must and can provide an alternative vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination. (14)

Feminist consciousness developed over time and challenged the practices that perpetuated notions of superiority of men and inferiority of women. Feminism demands equal rights and opportunities for women in a political, economic, psychological, social and individual sense.

The term 'female' since the initiation of human civilization has reserved its validity and conception as a biological contrast to male 'sex'. Indeed the natural biological contrast parades each individual sex with distinctive features, physical qualities and assertions that are assumed to be essential and vital to sustain the true nature of human evolution and civilization. In fact the sex is the natural creation. Some social and cultural variations lie in terms of their behavior, manners, food habit, education and the attitude of society towards them. However, these discrepancies are apparently based on society. This is how some biased definitions, along with physical assertions are attached to each sex and they are bound to get identified with asymmetrical, hierarchical socio-cultural notions called 'gender'. Nature based female and male relation turns into society based women and men's feminine and masculine relation. The very relation exists as a hierarchical power relation where men dominate women in every social, economic, cultural and religious milieu of human life. The prejudice sustains itself in the form of male domination against female subordination through ideological practices. The patriarchy nurtures the gender based inequalities that present men superior to women and men more powerful than women.

Since race, class, culture and sexuality also affect how people are treated, gender and sex are understood by taking into account cultural practices. Because of the history of male dominance, women in western societies have taken notice and action against the inequality they have historically experienced. Feminism has been

used to create awareness of gender inequality in the society. It has also been used as a jumping off point in taking action to address inequality.

Male dominance was perpetuated by men who determined the history of social life as a male endeavor. As texts were written by men, they assumed or promoted their own superiority. Women were assumed to lack intelligence, but in actuality, women were not allowed to be literate. Taking such issues into historical context one can study some historical literary evolution. Feminism became a dominant approach in literature only in the late nineteenth century with the recognition of women's roles and achievements. It began when women became conscious of their relationship to language and of themselves as writers. Twentieth century writers such Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir laid the groundwork for the development of feminist theory.

Feminism is a divergent collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies, extensively motivated by the bitter and sweet experiences of women. Most feminists are especially concerned with social, political, religious, racial and economic inequality between women and men; some have argued that gendered and sexed identities, such as "woman" and "man", are socially constructed. Feminists differ over the sources of inequality, how to attain equality and the extent to which gender and sexual identities should be questioned and critiqued. Variations in the issues of feminists are because of their distinct belonging and upbringing to and in diverse cultures and societies. Feminism is a theoretical discourse that advocates women's rights based on the equality of the sexes. It is a doctrine redefining women's activities and goals from women-centered point of view and refusing to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex, and a submissive other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination,

oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex, and defend equal rights for women in a political, economic, psychological, and personal and esthetic sense.

It is very much clear that feminism as movement appeared to defend the position of woman race and to create a world of women free from all sorts of male interference and oppression. The level of consciousness in women grew high and they started thinking of their selves which their sisters had hardly thought of before. Consciousness in women did not limit to the West rather it spread its wings to East and African countries as well. Distinct perspectives of females in the non-western countries came in the course of time and they commenced intellectual revolution with the hope that they would be able to create their own identity and milieu that of freedom and humanity where there is no suppression and exploitation.

The present stands on the ideological foundation of the past. The economic, social, religious, and philosophical perspectives of the past pave a distinct avenue for the formation of social concepts, manners, and expectations in the present. Maithreyi Krishnaraj declares: "Rejecting all tradition is neither possible nor advisable because one has to seek validation within one's own culture and history" (27). Accordingly, women in the West and in the East tend to derive the psychological effect from the past while resisting the male-domination. Myriad culture, historical and mythological figures, various movements, and social factors account for the difference in the women's voice against male-oppression on women.

The west has a culture of disintegration, marked by the colonial search for power and material gain. Its root has been set on the always-flowing forces, which are unable to assimilate and reconcile with one another. It was always motivated by self-benefit and self-thinking with sufficient self-confidence to obtain its destination.

Consequently, it has created the type of human morality confined within the pragmatic utility and mechanistic life-style where people compete and acquire the acme of success.

The origin of women's voice against male-domination is a kind of political consciousness of the inferiority of women in comparison to men. Women in the West are economically and academically advanced. They have realized the undervalued position of women imprisoned within the narrow domestic world of mothering and house managing, and the biasness in the field of education and employment. As a result they are demanding for proper place of women in the society. Nancy F. Cott examines the origin of women's movement: "such consciousness of [...] inferiority was the first group-consciousness likely to produce a feminist movement, because it acknowledged cultural and social determinants of women's capabilities as well as divine and natural ones, and thus allowed for the possibility of change" (The Bonds 202). The revolutionary origin has given an impetus to the development of historical feminist figures.

Historical feminist personalities have raised a strong voice for women's liberation from the biased male-tyranny on women. Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century attempted to liberate women from male-dominating motives hidden in the emphasis of feminine features like meekness, humility, and childishness. Unraveling the bases of women socialization whereby they are taught to be feminine, Wollstonecraft indicates the fault in the process of the socialization. She detests the then false education system that inspired women to love at the expense of reason, and encouraged women to study medicine, business, and mathematics. Rosemarie Tong examines Wollstonecraft's views about women's education that they should "be

provided with a real education, one that sharpens and focuses her mind and gives her a chance to develop her national and moral capacities, her full human potential” (15).

Another historical figure, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, directs women towards useful works created by modern industry and profession. Highlighting women’s capability to work in the public world, she focuses on economically beneficial occupation for women she refutes the childcare and housework, which deprive them of opportunity and development of their genuine potentiality. Cott speaks of Gilman: “She proposed [...] the socialization of remaining home employments such as cooking and laundry and argued that housecleaning and childcare would be better performed by specialized paid employees than by housewives and mothers not necessarily suited and not paid for the tasks” (*The Grounding* 41)

Simone de Beauvoir has brought a widespread consciousness on the part of women, pointing to the socio-historical construction of women. She contends the socialization that persuades women to be sexy and to be flesh for the mere entertainment of male ego. Rather, she creates a mentality for women to be self-assertive and determinate to tackle with impediments, and to liberate them from the social construction of femininity. Jane Freedman says that her “distinction between biological sex and the social creation of the ‘eternal feminine’ is a precursor of the distinction between sex and gender that is common in much feminist theory” (14).

Kate Millet has further led the women’s revolution making a connection between the personal and the private world. Maggie Humm presents her remarks: “The personal is political” (195). It is by scrutinizing the personal level, and it is by addressing the collective issues related with men’s power and upper position that we can reconstruct and reform the structure, which ultimately influences women’s life at

personal level. She doesn't find any difference between the personal and the public level. The decisions made by the public sector regarding women, childcare, and family-planning ultimately affects the private life of women.

Shulamith Firestone proposes a world dichotomized by biology: male and female, where women are the unpaid means to social production of offspring. And males are the owners of the labourmarket; females are no more than the workers to the reproductive system. Oppression upon women due to the productive function is a historical act, and the emancipation of women depends on the escape from the biological destiny. Firestone denies the emotional attachment of parents with their children, and spoke for undoing family unit. Freedman further displays her:

“Firestone maintains, to the dissolution of the family unit, with children being brought up by ‘households’ made up of about 10 adults, and set up to bring up children over a period of time. Children would develop no special bonds with their ‘parents’ but would instead form love ties with people to their own choosing, whatever their age and sex” (70). Her revolutionary modification of familial structure throws doubt on the traditional belief in familial unity and solidarity.

It is very much clear that feminism as movement appeared to defend the position of woman race and to create a world of women free from all sorts of male interference and oppression. The level of consciousness in women grew high and they started thinking of their selves which their sisters had hardly thought of before. Consciousness in women did not limit to the West rather it spread its wings to the East and African country as well. Distinct perspectives of females in the non-western countries came in the course of time and they commenced intellectual revolution with the hope that they would be able to create own identity and milieu that of freedom and humanity where there is no suppression and exploitation.

Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own: British Woman Novelist from Bronte to Lessing* is a prominent masterpiece of the theoretical work on feminism. It describes the female literary tradition in the English novels from the Brontes onward as a development of subculture within the framework of a larger society; their work would demonstrate a unity of values, conventions experiences, and behaviors encroaching on each individual. Showalter divides feminist criticism into two distinct modes. The first mode is ideological which she terms 'feminist critique'. It is concerned with the feminist reading of texts which considers the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the exclusion and misconceptions about women criticism, and women-assign in semiotic systems. The second mode of feminist criticism, according to Showalter, is the study of women as writers. She calls it 'gynocritics' and provides the subjects, "the history, styles, themes, genres, and structure of writing by women, the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career, and the devolution and laws of a female literary tradition" (Showalter 248). Showalter, likewise, in her analyses of historical development of feminism presents three important stages of women writing: feminine, feminist and female. First is the female imitation of mainstream (male) literary tradition dated from 1840 to 1880 and it includes the writers like George Eliot and Bronte sisters. The second is the protest against the standards of this dominant tradition concerning social values and right. It is dated from 1880 to 1920 and it includes the writers like Elizabeth Gaskell, and Oliver Schveiner. The third stage is self-discovery which aims at search for independent identity. It is dated from 1920 onward, and it includes the writers like Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* is another brilliantly written massive book on historical study of feminism which stresses especially the psychodynamics of women writers in the nineteenth century. Gilbert and Gubar in this book, according to M. H. Abrams:

Propose that the 'anxiety of authorship' that resulted from the stereotype that literary creativity is an exclusively male prerogative, effective in women writers a psychological duplicity that projected a monstrous counter figure to the heroinesuch a figure is usually in some sense the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage.(236).

Gilbert and Gubar's main argument is that artistic creative of the nineteenth century tradition which is perceived basically as a male quality, is in patriarchal superimposition upon the women writers who are imprisoned within it. They suggest the female writers first to struggle against the effect of socialization that becomes struggle against men's oppressive reading of women. But they further argue that the women can begin such struggle only by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening forces to be denied or killed, proven by examples *The Madwoman in the Attic* profits from the historical emphasis of Showalter. It stresses that in the nineteenth century female-authored text, an important character is the madwoman double that exists in the fantasies and dreams of every decorous spinster, herself often a double of her author. Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar adapted Harold Bloom's reading of male authors. "The anxiety of Influence' to reveal in the work of women writers a narrative that expressed their feelings of being restricted, silenced and dispossessed by an oppressive patriarchal culture. For Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar, and feminist who follow their lead, the practice of feminism is political in that

any criticism which does not take the feminist perspective into account is flamed and deceptive.

French Model of Feminism concerns itself with philosophical and psychoanalytical issues relating to woman and language in the search for writing peculiar to women. It questions the Lacanian assumption that femininity offers a possible procedure for subverting the marginalizing mechanism of power, thereby breaking it up. M.H. Abrams emphasizes the major concern of its theorists:

To establish the very possibility of a woman's language that will not, when a woman writes, automatically be appropriated into this phallogentric language, since such appropriation is said to force her into complicity with linguistic features that impose on females a condition of marginality and subservience or even of linguistic nonentity. (92)

The writings of these French critics such as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva have also interacted with two leading French male thinkers-Jacques Lacan in psychoanalysis and Jacques Derrida in philosophy. Cixous is allied to her French feminist in her emphasis on the unconscious, the deep structures of culture and language, and the usually hidden body. She sees the world as text and using the language of psychoanalysis; she separates the female from the male unconscious and upholds the former as the site of disruption of a dominant patriarchy. Her best known essay, "The Laugh of Medusa: intends to break down the favored status of the rational published text, celebrating the Derridean notion of difference and suggestion a repressed, unsignified feminine which 'defers' meaning while suggesting multiple significance through 'difference'. Julia Kriesteva, as contrasted to Cixous and Irigaray, is much more directly interested in examining the nature of literary discourse. Her *Revolution in Poetic Language* sought to problematize the position of

subject in language, emphasizing language as process. She posited two processes in sign-making-language per se (symbolic) and all those signs which precede or exist outside of language (semiotic). The two modalities are inextricably entangled in Kristeva's view, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse which emerges.

By observing brief scenario of the history of feminist literary criticism, we can divide the development of the entire feminist literary criticism into three distinct phases. The first phase was centered on "the misogyny of literary practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature, and exclusion of women from literary history" (5). The second phase of it was the discovery that women writers had a literature of their own, whose historical and thematic, as well as artistic importance, had been obscured by the patriarchal values that dominate the culture. Hundreds of lost women writers were rediscovered, and the territory of the females plot was constructed in this phase. And, the third phase of feminist criticism demanded a radical rethinking of the conceptual ground of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that have been based entirely on male literary experiences.

Influenced by a great variety of theoretical emergences, the feminism presently has been a broad concept which covers a broader scope and includes different aspects of humanity despite its focus on the entire issues of women. It, now, no more remains a unitary theory or procedure. It manifests a great variety of critical vantage points and procedures, including adaptations of psychoanalytic, Marxist, and diverse post-structuralism theories. The dimension of feminism, which is equally known as English model of feminism, has a closer link with socialism and Marxism.

It analyses the connection between gender and class, emphasizes on popular culture, and provides a feminist critique of Marxist literary theory. Deriving their impetus from the changing socio-economic conditions and changing balances of power between the sexes, the leading Marxist and socialist feminists such as Mary Jacobus, Rosalind Loward, Michel Barrette, Juliet Mitchell and Cora Kaplan combine Marxist theoretical interest in the production and ideology of literature with feminist concerns for women's writing. Marxist and socialist feminists believe that the text is a part of process of the social construction of meanings and subjectivities. And, literature is one of the ways in which gender relations and gender ideology are produced and reproduced. Gender, in their opinion is not produced simply by masculine thought, but rather it is the product of that thought as it related to the particular ways in which women's productive, reproductive and domestic life is organized. They consider the notion of femininity and masculinity as myths or ideologies. Such beliefs, for them, are the values that are not detached from social life but rather are live or embodied in what we say and do, and have no other existence.

Marxist and socialist feminism, therefore, often takes an explicitly and aggressively ideological stance, stressing the important contribution of literature and literary criticism to a radical, even revolutionary reformation of culture.

The socio historic dimension of feminism which is more popularly known as American school of feminism, tries to recover women's historical experiences as readers and wing the awakening feminine consciousness reflected in literature by and about women. By close textual analysis, it often stresses a psychological maturation not only through recognition of gender difference but also through a growing sense of sisterhood with other women .They tend to recover the patriarchal remains in the male author texts through close reader and replace them with their own. The socio

historical feminism has it is two groups practicing two different ways of feminist criticism.

One group practiced 'feminist critique' examining how women characters are portrayed, exposing the patriarchal ideology implicit in the so called classic, and demonstrating that attitudes and traditions reinforcing systematic masculine dominance are inscribed in the literary cannon. Kristeva writes that when men kill themselves, it is to prove their power over life, their power to be God. Their dying is about being. When women commit suicide, on contrary, it is not to be God, nor even to be dead, but in order not to be. Being exists in time and time exists in the symbolic, while women who commit suicide are called by the maternal to go beyond time, being, and language one symptom is that they are sick of words. To stave off the call of the mother, the call beyond time these women, persecuted by voices, madness, hallucinations, try for a time, to cling to the symbolic, identify with the father, compensate with language, but eventually they can no longer hold on. They begin to slip life itself can't hang on: slowly gently death settles in. Kristeva writes:

I think of Virginia Woolf, who sank wordlessly in to the river, her pockets weighted with stomas haunted by voices, by lights, in love with colors blue, green seized by a sort of bizarre gaiety that brought on the fits of strangled, hooting, uncontrollable laughter remembered by Miss Brown. Or I think of the dark corner of the deserted farmhouse in the Russian countryside where a few months later in that same year, 1941, Maria Tsvetaieva hanged herself.....Tsvetaieva, the most rhythmic of the Russian poets. (34)

What Kristeva has to say about women is often melancholic and disturbing and has been much contested by feminist scholars: women, for Kristeva, must forsake their

pleasure for a French passport, but perhaps also for a passport to the symbolic female sexuality is most often depressive; women are more prone to insanity and fanaticism than are men; women's options are silence, identification by Kristeva, is very likely to teeter in to madness and suicide. This dark view of women's options should be and has been problematized; however, the aim of the current essay is the more limited one of exploring the manner in which Kristeva's theoretical framework functions to explain the themes of women's troubled relations to language and the maternal in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

After the publication of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf wrote of her depiction of her parents' marriages, "I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; and writing of them was a necessary act" (12). Her own mother had died suddenly when Woolf was thirteen. Considered a model wife and mother, Julia Stephen was known to exhaust herself regularly to please her demanding husband, the writer and intellectual figure Leslie Stephen. But Mr and Mrs Ramsay are heavily fictionalized portrayals of Woolf's parents, and neither they nor the other characters in *To the Lighthouse* are meant to fully represent the Stephen family; rather, they are extremely complex, symbolic, and, some say mythical figures that are not easily categorized. Literary theorists are sharply divided over the deeper meanings of Woolf's characters. Some interpret Mrs Ramsay as the embodiment of the feminine ideal and Mr Ramsay as that of the masculine ideal, the pure, elemental forces of the tenders.

Feminist critics dispute this notion, positing instead that the Ramsays' marriage is typical of most marriages in the pre-World War I period, forcing the wife into the role of "angel of the house" –unquestioning, supportive, generous, and self-sacrificing at any cost to personal ambition and satisfaction. These critics consider Mr Ramsay an overbearing and domineering patriarch who drives his wife to the brink of

feeble-mindedness still other surmise just the opposite: namely, that Mrs Ramsay is a cold-hearted, social-climbing harpy, and Mr Ramsay, Lily Briscoe is generally considered representative of Woolf's strong painting, despite the urging of others to abandon art. Overriding concerns of *To the Lighthouse* and all of its characters are death, mooring and the inexorable passage of time. When Mrs Ramsay dies, she takes with her the sense of order in the family; children die, Lily and Mr Ramsay fall into abiding grief, and even the house itself declines into disrepair. The consummation of the trip *To the Lighthouse* and Lily's completion of her painting, with a single line down the centre representing Mrs Ramsay, signify the triumph of order over disorder and life over death and grief.

Rebecca West, another noteworthy feminist writer's subjects spanned social issues to book reviews, her writing showed brilliance of intellect and lucidity of style. Virginia Woolf said that, "Rebecca is a cross between a charwoman and gypsy, but as tenacious as a writer." In 1913 West wrote about the suffragist Emily Davidson, who threw herself in front of the king's horse at the Derby. The essay 'The Sterner Sex'(1913) records her thoughts as the wedding of her cousin, her sympathy for the women working for the Army Clothing Employees' Union, and her anger: "I saw a world of women struggling as the American capitalist men of today struggle, to maintain a parasitic sex that is at once its tyrant and its delight..."

Chapter III: Textual Analysis

The novel is set in the Ramsays' summer home in the Hebrides, on the Isle of Skye. The Window; the first section which takes up over half the book; begins with Mrs Ramsay assuring James that they should be able to visit the lighthouse on the next day. This prediction is denied by Mr Ramsay, who voices his certainty that the weather will not be clear, an opinion that forces a certain tension between Mr and Mrs Ramsay, and also between Mr Ramsay and James. This particular incident is referred to on various occasions throughout the chapter, especially in the context of Mr and Mrs Ramsay's relationship.

The Ramsays have been joined at the house by a number of friends and colleagues, one of them being Lily Briscoe, who begins the novel as a young, uncertain painter attempting a portrayal of Mrs Ramsay and James. Briscoe finds herself plagued by doubts throughout the novel, doubts largely fed by the claims of Charles Tansley, another guest, who asserts that women can neither paint nor write. Tansley himself is an admirer of Mr Ramsay and his philosophical treatises.

The second section, Time Passes closes with a large dinner party. When Augustus Carmichael, a visiting poet, asks for a second serving of soup, Mr Ramsay nearly snaps at him. Mrs Ramsay, who is striving for the perfect dinner party, is herself out of sorts when Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, two acquaintances whom she has brought together in engagement, arrive late to dinner, as Minta has lost her grandmother's brooch on the beach.

The second section gives a sense of time passing, absence, and death. Ten years pass, during which the four-year First World War begins and ends. Mrs Ramsay passes away, Prue dies from complications of childbirth, and Andrew is killed in the

war. Mr Ramsay is left adrift without his wife to praise and comfort him during his bouts of fear and his anguish regarding the longevity of his philosophical work.

In the final section, *The Lighthouse*, some of the remaining Ramsays and other guests return to their summer home ten years after the events of Part I. Mr Ramsay finally plans on taking the long-delayed trip *To the Lighthouse* with his son James and daughter Cam(illa). The trip almost does not happen, as the children are not ready, but they eventually set off. As they travel, the children are silent in protest at their father for forcing them to come along. However, James keeps the sailing boat steady and rather than receiving the harsh words he has come to expect from his father, he hears praise, providing a rare moment of empathy between father and son; Cam's attitude towards her father changes also, from resentment to eventual admiration.

They are accompanied by the sailor Macalister and his son, who catches fish during the trip. The son cuts a piece of flesh from a fish he has caught to use for bait, throwing the injured fish back into the sea.

While they set sail for the lighthouse, Lily attempts to finally complete the painting she has held in her mind since the start of the novel. She reconsiders her memory of Mrs and Mr Ramsay, balancing the multitude of impressions from ten years ago in an effort to reach towards an objective truth about Mrs Ramsay and life itself. Upon finishing the painting (just as the sailing party reaches the lighthouse) and seeing that it satisfies her, she realizes that the execution of her vision is more important to her than the idea of leaving some sort of legacy in her work.

***To the Lighthouse* as a Feminist Text**

To the Lighthouse (1927) is concerned with the Victorian arrangement of patriarchal society, and it questions the distinctions between men and women's social roles. Throughout the novel, we find that there are two distinctive worlds: the world

of men, the masculine, and the world of women, the feminine. The masculine is marked by egotism, rigidity and insistence on intellect over feeling. By contrast, the feminine is marked by imagination, intuition and compromise. The patriarchal society has discouraged mixing characteristics of these two worlds, and thus prevented the creation of a modern society, in which there is balance between masculine intellect and the feminine emotion. Mrs Ramsay represents the conventional and the submissive female to patriarchal society. Her medium is emotion and her form is human relationships. Lily Briscoe is a representative of the unconventional and rebellious against gender boundaries. Her medium is intellect and her form is her painting. Through Woolf's projection of Mrs Ramsay's life and her relationships to men characters, she affirms the female values of fertility, giving birth and creating harmony, which are associated with Mrs Ramsay; but Woolf criticizes the way she has chosen to subject her positive femininity to masculine definitions. Woolf's projection of Lily's life and her relationships to Mrs Ramsay and male characters is an attempt to teach women to accept their femininity, cultivate their masculinity, and chose the role that they want to play as independent women. Examining the lives of these two female characters, we find Woolf seeking to integrate the masculine and feminine qualities into a balanced whole that would render men and women the capacity to achieve meaning in life.

Ramsays' marriage is a patriarchal marriage based on middle-class Victorian values. We find inadequacy in this marriage which doesn't allow mature intellectual interchange. The character of Mr Ramsay is based on Woolf's father Leslie Stephen. Marcus comments, according to Leslie, "It was a natural law that a wife should have no legal rights, no right of her own property or money, no training for any job, nor any hope for obtaining one." (126)

Mrs Ramsay is subordinated to his needs and engulfed by his world. She has been badly crippled by her narrow education and trained to be intellectually inferior. Charles Tansley says that women cannot write and paint Marcus comments that "Being trained to be intellectually inferior has desired effect on Mr Ramsay. The stupider the wife appears to the husband, the more desirable she becomes." (152) Yet Mrs Ramsay is not as stupid as her husband thinks of her. She is frightened of her potential of intellectual achievement, but she never had time to read books. His wife's stupidity makes him see her astonishingly beautiful. Yet Woolf expresses her view regarding this matter through Lily's consciousness:

Beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty – it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life - froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flesh, the pallor, some sight or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable ... It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty. (193)

Hypocrisy is evident in Mr and Mrs Ramsay's interaction. Mrs Ramsay subdues herself to her husband because she suspects her husband's intellectual abilities. Mr Ramsay wants to reach the heights of genius, the letter Z, and to be like Shakespeare. He has no questions about the division of social roles which have shaped the relationship between husband and wife in a patriarchal society. Accordingly, his lack of the feminine qualities of creativity denies him an access to the forces of life. He wants to be assured that he lives in the heart of life. His need of sympathy renders him reliant on his wife's femininity. He comes to her not only for sympathy but to feel that he is needed over the world.

Mrs Ramsay looking at the same time be animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating, and into this

delicious fecundity, this foundation and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy. He was a failure, he said.(42-3)

Mrs Ramsay doubts her husband's intelligence, but she doesn't let herself, even for a second to feel finer than him. She doesn't discuss her husband's intellectual problems, but she takes the role fulfiller to his needs and makes him dependent on her femininity.

But it was their relationship, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that anyone could see, that discomposed her, for then people said he depended on her.(45)

Such hypocrisy between husband and wife raises an accusing finger at patriarchy which imprisons the intellectual maturity of their husbands. Mr and Mrs Ramsay are aware of their irremovable barrier which separates them

They had nothing to say, but something seemed nevertheless, to go from him to her. It was the life; it was the power of it. It was the tremendous humour, she knew, that made him slap his thighs. Don't interrupt me, he seemed to be saying, don't say anything; just sit there. And he went on reading. (129)

Woolf emphasizes the separation between Mr and Mrs Ramsay:

He turned and saw her. 'Ah! She was lovely, lovelier now than ever,' he thought. But he couldn't speak to her... He passed without a word, though it hurt him that she should look so distant, and he couldn't reach her... again he would have passed her without a word had she not.(172)

Both Mr and Mrs Ramsay accept the limits of their marriage. In their silence, they want certain barriers to be maintained. Mrs Ramsay has a mania for arranging marriages. She insists that Minta must marry and she wishes to create something that

lasts between Paul and Minta. She succeeds in getting them in marriage, but their marriage fails.

Paul had come in and gone to bed early. Minta was late. There was Minta, wreathed, tinted, garish on the stairs about three o'clock in the morning. Paul came out in his pyjamas carrying a poker in case of burglars... He spoke indignant, jealous words abusing her... she flamboyant, careless. For things had worked loose after the first year or so; the marriage had turned out rather badly.(187-8)

Schartz (1999) comments, "Love need not be the prelude to marriage or even sexual intimacy. The putative marital happiness that Mrs Ramsay had created for the Rayleys is belied by their actual lives." (293)

Mrs Ramsay thinks of another marriage between Mr Bankes and Lily. Yet Mrs Ramsay doesn't succeed in getting them married. She thinks that Lily is unwomanly. Mrs Ramsay can't understand that being womanly means no longer being defined by one's relation to men or one's reproductive system. Mrs Ramsay pities Mr Bankes for being unmarried. Mrs Ramsay succeeds in bringing Mr Bankes to her dinner party, but she fails to fulfill his need for intimacy and unity. Mr Bankes is not satisfied with the emotional aspects of Mr Ramsay's life. He feels they have weakened Mr Ramsay's potential. For Mr Bankes, family life is at odds with intellectual life. He finds that Mr Ramsay's life vacillates between his sterile thought and fertile wife. In Mrs Ramsay's party, her superficiality bore Mr Bankes. This makes him not attracted to the domestic life of Mrs Ramsay; since it is not satisfactory to his need of fulfillment. Mrs Ramsay herself is stuck by the same questioning of Mr Bankes in the party. At this moment, all affection for her husband is momentarily gone, and all what she wants to believe and create is gone. She comes to question her status as a woman.

"But what I have done with my life? ... The room was very shabby... nothing seemed to have emerged. They all sat separate."(90-91)

Mrs Ramsay has sometimes the skill of making feel good. That is because she makes them feel superior. She feels satisfied when they feel proud through her admiration of them. Ironically, men need women's acknowledgement of their worth, and only through their admiration they can feel proud. At the dinner party, Tansley doesn't enjoy Mrs Ramsay's effort and sees through her superficiality. His insecurity, regarding his feelings of his social inadequacy, prevents him from understanding how to socialize effectively. Mrs Ramsay pities him and forces Lily to stop bothering him.

Lily Briscoe is a representative of unconventionality. Her rebellion against the given social roles is demonstrated in her pursuance of truth. Yet, under the expectations of the feminine role in patriarchal society, Lily undergoes self-division. She is divided between her inspiration for the world of self-actualization and the limitations of the maternal world. Consequently, Lily's divided self imprisons her femininity and places restraints on her relationship with men. She finds feminine roles unfulfilling. She is afraid of her femininity and denies it.

Lily feels guilty and insincere about being forced to relieve Tansley in the party. Lily fights these limitations through her art, but she can't achieve fulfillment. She is confused in regard to a romantic relationship with Mr Bankes. She understands its beauty; but on the other hand, she fears its degradation. In the dinner party, she says to herself, "She needn't marry, thank Heaven, she needn't undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution."(111)

Lily Briscoe likes and admires Mr Bankes. She feels ashamed of her impulse towards him and, at the same time, wants to compliment him, but she doesn't say

anything. Unlike Mr Bankes, Mr Ramsay lacks the ability to understand and admire the feminine. Lily criticizes this in Mr Ramsay in comparison with Mr Bankes.

After the death of Mrs Ramsay, Mr Ramsay demands Lily's sympathy. Yet he expresses his need as a desire to give her. Instead of giving sympathy, Lily compliments his boots. Lily associates giving with femininity and she refuses and revolts against men's need of sympathy. Yet Mr Ramsay respects the compliment and smiles. Now Lily has made advance to Mr Ramsay as an equal, not a woman to man, but as a man to man. He can see her now as a person interested in similar things. Mr Ramsay acknowledges that she admires his traits rather than she fulfills his need for sympathy. At this moment, Lily's role is about being an ungendered equal and Mr Ramsay's need for sympathy diminishes.

Lily's confusion drives her to assert her gender through her painting, and to find the truth inside herself. Yet, Lily is unable to define her femininity and yearns to the security of the ideal woman, Mrs Ramsay. She wants to express Mrs Ramsay's idealization of her painting but Lily knows Mrs Ramsay's idealization is an illusion. Her inability to accept her femininity and Mrs Ramsay's idealization prevents her from establishing a vision of truth in art. Ten years after Mrs Ramsay's death, she recalls Mrs Ramsay's life and comes to cherish in herself powers different from those that motivated Mrs Ramsay for imposing harmony and order in life. The memory of Mrs Ramsay is a catalyst for Lily's growth. She realizes that her thoughts about Mrs Ramsay's life have imprisoned her and crippled her talents. She understands that time prevented Mrs Ramsay from creating meaning and intimacy in life,

What is the meaning of life...Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment

something permanent) this was the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and following (she looked at the clouds, going and leaves shaking) was struck in to stability. Life stands still here. Mrs Ramsay said 'Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!' She repeated. She owed this revelation to her. (175-6)

Now Lily achieves a moment of community and a sense of unity. Finally, she is able to get rid of her confusions. She is able to achieve the emotional side of Mrs Ramsay's life. Lily's first inspiration about her painting comes when she thinks about the misguided pity that Mrs Ramsay has for Mr Bankes. She thinks that Mr Bankes doesn't need this pity because he is a whole and that he is fulfilled in his work. This reminds her that she, too, has her work. At this moment, she accepts her masculinity. The first revelation comes when she strays herself away from the given gender roles. She has her concept of the ideal femininity and acknowledges that her work is a pursuance of the truth and a rejection of the illusion of the maternally enclosed world. Lily's acceptance of her work as a masculine and her final of her femininity bring out her vision. She is able to express her mature vision that femininity and masculinity are separate, but equal and personal. Lily draws a line down the middle of her painting. There is a mass on the right which is Mrs Ramsay and a mass on the left which is Mr Ramsay. The line down the middle is a divider into equal halves.

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

Stream-of-Consciousness Technique in *To the Lighthouse*

When we mention Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, it's very natural to talk about her stream-of-consciousness technique. In this novel, the structure of external objective events is diminished in scope and scale, or almost completely dissolved. It is composed of the continual activity of characters' consciousness and shower of impressions to the development of the response to these events. We can also find in this novel the writer as an omniscient narrator has almost completely vanished and almost everything stated appears by way of reflection in the consciousness of the dramatic characters. And the novel does not progress on "what-happens-next" basis, but rather moves forward through a series of scenes arranged according to a sequence of selected comments of consciousness. And the techniques to which Mrs Woolf employs are interior monologue and free association which will be discussed below.

Interior Monologue Defined

Edouard Dujardin, who claims to have used interior monologue first in his novel *Les Lauriers Sont Coupés* (1887), once gave us his definition of the technique. But his definition is not standard and accurate enough to be relied on, because he defined interior monologue as: "the speech of a character in a scene, having for its object to introduce us directly into the interior life of that character, without author intervention through explanations or commentaries; ... it differs from traditional monologue in that: in its matter, it is an expression of the most intimate thought that lies nearest the unconscious; in its form, it is produced in direct phrases reduced to the minimum of syntax." (173)

Particularly, it should be noted that it is a technique of representing the psychic content and processes at various levels of the conscious control; that is, of representing consciousness. It should be emphasized that it may deal with

consciousness, however, at any level (it is not necessarily, even rarely, “an expression of the intimate thought that lies nearest the unconscious”); and that it is concerned with the contents and the processes of consciousness, not with just one of these. It should be noted also that it is partly or entirely unuttered, for it represents the content of consciousness in its inchoate state before it is formulated for deliberate speech. (Yanxia Sang 171)

Therefore, the following definition, coming from Robert Humphrey, is simpler and more accurate: “Interior monologue is then, the technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content and processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious control before they are formulated for deliberate speech.” (Yanxia Sang 172)

It is important to distinguish between two basic types of interior monologues, which can be conveniently designated as “direct” and “indirect”. Direct interior monologue is that type of interior monologue which is represented with negligible author interference and with no auditor assumed. An examination of its special methods reveals: that it presents consciousness directly to the reader with negligible author interference; that is, there is either a complete or near-complete disappearance of the author from the page, together with his guiding such as “he said” and “he thought” and with his explanatory comments. It should be emphasized that there is no auditor assumed; that is, the character is not speaking to anyone within the fictional scene; nor is the character speaking, in effect, to the reader (as the speaker of a stage monologue is, for example). In short the monologue is represented as being completely candid, as if there were no reader. This distinction is not easy to grasp, but it is a real one. Obviously, every author is writing, finally, for an audience. The interior monologue proceeds in spite of the reader’s expectations of conventional

syntax and diction in order to represent the actual texture of consciousness—in order to represent it finally, however, to the reader. (Yanxia Sang 173)

In practice, indirect interior monologue is usually combined with one of the techniques of stream-of-consciousness especially with description of consciousness. Often, it is combined with direct monologue. This latter combination of techniques is especially suitable and natural, for the author who uses indirect monologue may see fit to drop out of the scene for a length of time, after he has introduced the reader to the character's mind with enough additional remarks for them to proceed smoothly together. (Yanxia Sang: 174)

From their definitions, we learn that these two techniques differ greatly, both in the way they are manipulated and in their possible effects. The basic difference between the two techniques is that indirect monologue gives to the reader a sense of the author's continuous presence; whereas direct monologue either completely or largely excludes it. This difference in turn admits of special differences, such as the use of third or second person point of view instead of first person; the wider use of descriptive and expository methods to represent the monologue; and the possibility of greater coherence and of greater surface unity through selection of materials. At the same time, the fluidity and sense of realism in the depiction of the states of consciousness can be maintained. (Yanxia Sang 174)

Indirect Interior Monologue in *To the Lighthouse*

Virginia Woolf, among the stream-of-consciousness writers, relies most on the indirect interior monologue and she uses it with great skill. In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf succeeds in producing a much subtle effect through the use of this technique. This novel contains a great deal of straight, conventional narration and description, but the interior monologue is used often enough to give the novel its

special character of seeming to be always within the consciousness of the chief characters. Virginia Woolf says in her essay, *Modern Fiction*: “Let us record the atom as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearances, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.” This is the best description in her method. Let us examine the following passage in the First Chapter of Part One:

...For how would you like to be shut up for a whole month at a time, and possibly more in stormy weather, upon a rock the size of a tennis lawn? She would ask; and to have no letters and newspapers, and to see nobody; if you were married, not to see your wife, not to know how your children were, --if they were ill, if they had fallen down and broken their legs or arms; to see the same dreary waves breaking week after week, and then a dreadful storm coming, and the windows covered with spray, and birds dashed against the lamp, and the whole place rocking, and not be able to put your nose out of doors for fear of being swept into the sea? How would you like that? She asked, ... (4)

The passage above is represented in the manner of straight narration by the author, but it is clearly what the character feels and thinks, and it reflects the character's consciousness and inner thought. In this passage, Woolf facilitates the indirect interior monologue with her unique skills. Firstly, she uses the conjunction “for” as an indication of the beginning of this monologue and produces an easy and natural shift from objective description to the character's interior monologue. Secondly she presents Mrs Ramsay's consciousness by the guiding phrases “she would ask” and “she asked” to make the reader wonder about unhurriedly in Mrs Ramsay's consciousness. Thirdly, here she employs semicolons to indicate the

continuation of the consciousness. Yanxia Sang quotes the use of semicolons characterizes Woolf's skill in dealing with indirect interior monologue, as also shown in the following excerpt:

Yes, he did say disagreeable things, Mrs Ramsay admitted; it was odious of him to rub this in, and make James still more disappointed; but at the same time, she would not let them laugh at him; Andrew, Jasper, Roger mocked him; even old Badger without a tooth in his head had bit him, ... (4)

The above passage illustrates the occasionally baffling similarity between a narrator's utterance and omniscient-narrator commentary. It demonstrates, however, how punctuation can wonderfully signal the continuation of consciousness sometimes. The extraordinary subtlety of her skill here is located in the use of the semicolons after "they called him". Had she not placed a semicolon there, the reader might easily be misled to think that the sentence "but at the same time, she would not let them laugh at him" is an omniscient-narrator commentary. So in this passage, with the help of semicolons, the reader can easily discern what the character's interior monologue is and when it begins and halts.

In the case of indirect interior monologue, the omniscient author's continuous intervention is essential to guide the reader in reading the character's mind. The use of frequent parentheses is the pet device of Virginia Woolf's intervention in her novels which exerts several functions. Parentheses can be signals of digression and of simultaneity as this one, "Teaching and preaching human power, Lily suspected. (She was putting it beyond away things.)" (33) Parentheses can also be little asides, explanations, pointers to what is going on. Lily in this passage is thinking about Mr Banks:

I respect you (she addressed him silently) in every atom; you are not vain; you are entirely impersonal; you are finer than Mr Ramsay; you are the finest human being that I know; you have neither wife nor child (without any sexual feeling; she longed to cherish that loneliness), you live for science (involuntary, sections of potatoes rose before her eyes); praise would be an insult to you; generous, pure-hearted, heroic man! (18)

Here the parentheses signal sudden and momentary switches in perspective.

The narrative is thrown backwards and forwards between Lily's voice, with its intonation mimicked exactly. Lily's dwelling on the austerity of Bankes' life indicates not only Bankes' desire for solitude, but also hers---and at the same time shows her resistance to her own loneliness. She wants at once to extend and to limit, to see more of Bankes and less of herself. This conflict is represented in the simultaneous development of two registers: the succession of main clauses inscribing Lily's voice, and the little interruptions of the parentheses, at the corner of Lily's eye. The final set of brackets describes a sudden obstruction of her vision: the rising of potatoes before her eyes. Yet this material objects ("She always saw, when she thought of Mr Ramsay's work, a scrubbed kitchen table.") (17) obviously the parentheses help render the inner world of Lily more exactly clearly and help present us with the exact condition of consciousness. (Yanxia Sang: 176)

Free Association

The chief technique in controlling the movement of stream-of-consciousness in fiction has been an application of the principles of psychological free association. Among all the writing techniques in *To the Lighthouse*, the most confusing and difficult to follow may be the free association, for the consciousness of the characters in the fiction has no order and no regular pattern. However, the application of the free

association in the stream-of-consciousness novel has much aesthetic significance. First, the free association technique extends the scope and the levels the writing expresses and makes it possible for the writers to deal as much as possible the characters' subjective experience within fairly narrow objective time-space scope. Second, the free association technique breaks out the traditional narrative structure. By the help of this technique, the characters may think about others upon seeing related things, recall old memories at familiar sights and think of another thing or person upon seeing one; the consciousness may shift freely among present, past and future, or from one place to another. During the process of the association, the objective time and the psychic time intermingle; the past memories, the future expectation and the present consciousness exist alternately; the result of which is a structure of confusion in space-time and disorder in sequence. Third, the free association technique may have the effect of contrast and satire through the writers bringing together the instances happening at different time and different places. Therefore this technique is essential for the writers to depict the real world of the consciousness.

Free Association in *To the Lighthouse*

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf usually encloses free association into the indirect interior monologue to represent the psychic processes of her characters. The essential characteristic of the technique represented here by Virginia Woolf is that we are given not merely one person whose consciousness (that is, the impression it receives) is rendered but many persons, with frequent shifts from one to the other... in our text, Mrs Ramsay, Mr Ramsay, Lily and Mr Bankes. The multiplicity of persons suggests that we are here after all confronted with an endeavor to investigate an objective reality, that is, specifically, the "real" Mrs Ramsay. She is, to be sure, an enigma and

such she basically remains, but she is, as it were, encircled by the content of all the various consciousness directed upon her (including her own) and there is an attempt to approach her from many sides as closely as human possibilities of perception and expression can succeed in doing.

The last part in the twelfth chapter of *To the Lighthouse* can be taken as a remarkable example of free association. In this chapter, Lily Briscoe, the artist, while watching the sea, feels her mind ebb and flow with it. When she paints the picture by the seaside, her mind exhibits an exuberance of vivid pictures and sights: she seems to see Mrs Ramsay and later she sees somebody in the drawing room set an odd-shaped and triangular shadow over the step. From the triangular shadow over the step to the shadow on her canvas and to the meadow under the canvas and finally to the faraway in the sea, all the fragments of life are put together and reflected. According to Yanxia Sang, we may trace her free association as follows:

Looking at the sea

1. think about Mr Ramsay and his children

She laughed, hearing Mr Carmichael suddenly grunted, and

Looking at the house

2. think about some common feeling held the whole

Seeing the brown speck of Mr Ramsay's sailing boat

3. thinking of her picture

Sitting down and examining with her brush a little colony of

Plantains, seeing Mr Carmichael

4. thinking of Mr Carmichael and his poems

The squeak of a hinge drawing her attention

5. thinking of Mrs Ramsay

Stirring the plantains with her brush

6. thinking of Charles Tansley

Raising a little mountain for the ants to climb over

7. thinking of Mr and Mrs Ramsay

Screwing up her eyes and standing back

8. thinking of Mrs Ramsay

Seeing an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step,

Dipping her brush

9. thinking of Mrs Ramsay

Crying Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!

(178)

The above outline just displays a bird's eye-view and does not produce a minute description of the flow of Lily's consciousness; it does not endanger a full appreciation of the free association technique. The actual occurrence is too thin to be called a plot: Lily stands by the sea drawing. The information Woolf offers here makes us feel that the traditional narration is too inferior to bear comparison at this point. Wherever Lily's eyes cast a look, there sprung some bygone memories, present meditation or future expectations concerning what she sees. Her consciousness just flows freely and naturally among present, past and future, or from one thing or person to another. Therefore, the time-space limitation vanishes here and we readers enjoy such free conscious activities very much.

By analyzing these two typical stream-of-consciousness techniques, we can find indirect interior monologue makes Woolf express the character's inner world in such a great coherence and surface unity. Her presentation of the characters' interior monologue is not only coherent in meaning, but also conventional in appearance. Her

use of indirect interior monologue allows the narrator to reveal the characters' flow of thoughts and takes the reader into the consciousness of the characters in the novel.

And free association makes the readers step into the inner worlds of her character by their feelings, thoughts, memories, etc. So there is no question that Virginia Woolf is at her best when she is writing her stream-of-consciousness novels which deals with the conscious, subconscious and even unconscious part of her characters. It is her emphases on the experiences and inner lives of her characters that lead to her elevation as a master of the stream-of-consciousness novel.

Lily Briscoe's Relationship with other Characters in the Novel

Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay

Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay work as foils because they occupy opposite sides of a question Virginia Woolf is interested in: what is the appropriate sphere for womanly creativity? While the two women seem to be entirely different from one another, Lily Briscoe actually finds a lot of inspiration in Mrs Ramsay. Mrs Ramsay becomes a kind of spiritual mother for Lily Briscoe, in a way that contrasts interestingly with Mr Ramsay's relationships to James.

The obvious difference between Lily and Mrs Ramsay is their feelings about marriage. For Lily Briscoe, marriage represents "a dilution" (a reduction), something from which she wants to protect herself using her painting. For Mrs Ramsay, it's an inevitability that she, "still always laughing, insist that [Lily] must, Minta must, they all must marry [...] (but Mrs Ramsay cared not a fig for her painting)" (33).

Mrs Ramsay, with her investment in Mr Ramsay's intellect and her faith in the importance of maintaining social norms, really cannot take Lily's painting seriously. Lily's painting is a subtle challenge to the institution of the family that Mrs Ramsay prizes.

However, like William Bankes, Mrs Ramsay has the sensitivity of mind to appreciate that Lily's painting does mean *something*. Maybe she doesn't admire Lily's work as Mr Bankes does, maybe she feels that Lily should give up the painting and be married, but she nonetheless bows her head to be painted by Lily when Lily asks it of her (10). She knows that Lily's painting has significance to Lily and, as such, should be respected, which is more than either Mr Ramsay or Charles Tansley give Lily.

Even though they occupy opposite sides of the marriage question, Lily and Mrs Ramsay love each other. Mrs Ramsay is a kind of surrogate mother for Briscoe (who is motherless, and looked after by her father); Mrs Ramsay loves Lily's independence and thinks, secretly, that Lily's looks will wear well into age. Lily, for her part, adores Mrs Ramsay's investment in the everyday happiness of her family, and admires the love and affection she shares with the rest of the Ramsay family and the world.

In some ways, Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay become two sides of the same coin. They each focus on the small stuff that makes everyday experience valuable and worth having:

The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs Ramsay saying, "Life stand still here"; Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)- this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability. Life stand still here,

Mrs Ramsay said. "Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!" she repeated. She owed it all to her. (118)

Mrs Ramsay works her art with the materials of social life: she draws together men and women into dinner parties and outings to the Isle of Skye. In doing so, she's making her own version of Lily's paintings. Mrs Ramsay sets scenes that will fix themselves in everyone's memories in the same way that Lily's work catches the essences of moments in time. And perhaps their differences in choice of medium- Mrs Ramsay's social relations and Lily's paints- has more to do with generation than with any real difference between the two of them. Maybe if Mrs Ramsay had been born in another time, she would have seized a paintbrush or a pencil rather than a husband in her pursuit of making "life stand still here."

Mrs Ramsay and Lily do show up one another's differences. But they also set up a kind of matriarchal lineage, something to compare with Mr Ramsay's passing on of power to his son.

Mrs Ramsay (and James) are all about domination (to mask personal insecurity?) and intellectual ambition. Mrs Ramsay and Lily center their lives around revelations of everyday happiness and small truths. This desire to get at the essence of normal life is a project that Lily learns from Mrs Ramsay ([Lily] owed it all to her"), and it's also project that Virginia Woolf herself pursues.

Lily and Men

Mrs Ramsay can't stand for a woman of her acquaintance to stay unmarried. She's a total matchmaker, and Lily isn't immune. The guy Mrs Ramsay thinks Lily should marry is William Bankes, an older widower of Mr Ramsay's acquaintance who becomes one of the greatest friends of Lily Briscoe's life. What's really interesting about Lily's relationship with Mr Bankes is the way that it models a totally

non-sexual and mutually supportive relationship between a man and a woman—something that as a woman artist in the 1920s, Lily seems cynical about.

This relationship stands in contrast to Mr Ramsay's incredibly domineering, oppressive influence on Lily's painting. Mr Ramsay makes it impossible for Lily to paint as she chooses: "Let [Mr Ramsay] be fifty feet away, let him not even speak to you, let him not even see you, he permeated, he prevailed, and he imposed himself. He changed everything" (110). Mr Ramsay's intellectual and social authority as the Head of the Ramsay Family gives him an arrogance that squeezes the life out of his social subordinates: his children, his wife and even Lily Briscoe.

But where Mr Ramsay stifles Lily's creativity, Mr Bankes respects it – even if he doesn't entirely get what she's going for. Mr Bankes's contrast with Mr Ramsay underlined by his own internal monologue in Part One:

He was anxious for the sake of this friendship [with Lily Briscoe] and perhaps too in order to clear himself in his own mind from the imputation of having dried and shrunk – for Ramsay lived in a welter of children, whereas Bankes was childless and widower – he was anxious that Lily Briscoe should not disparage Ramsay (a great man in his own way) yet should understand how things stood between them.(13)

What Mr Bankes wants from Lily is the recognition that yes, he belongs to Mr Ramsay's generation (they know each other as boys), but they have each developed along different tracks. Mr Ramsay has become a family man as well as a philosopher, but Mr Bankes who does not occupy the kind of traditional family structure Mr Ramsay prizes (he's "childless and a widower"), can talk to Lily about her painting without becoming hostile, competitive, or patronizing. And this degree of free-thinking reassures Lily that her painting can be meaningful across gender lines:

She remembered how William Bankes had been shocked by her neglect (in her painting) of the significance of mother and son. Did she not admire their beauty? He said. But William, she remembered, had listened to her with his wise child's eyes when she explained how it was not irreverence [...] Thanks to his scientific mind he understood – a proof of disinterested intelligence which had pleased her and comforted her enormously. One could talk of painting then seriously to a man.(128-9)

Bankes cares about the “significance” of mother and son (both as real people, such as James and Mrs Ramsay, but also as social categories). Still, he is capable of overcoming his own prejudices to admire Lily's work according to her own reasoning. They can have a conversation about painting that would be impossible between Lily and Mr Ramsay, with the latter's real cave man views on women.

As far as cavemen go, though, Charles Tansley is pretty far up there. He's the one who comes right out and says, repeatedly, that women can't paint and can't write. The thing about Charles is that he's jockeying for position in a social world that he feels should be controlled by men – and specifically, by intellectual, philosophical men like Mr Ramsay (and himself). He doesn't feel that he should be forced to compete with Lily Briscoe in conversation, and he gets all frustrated during the dinner when she doesn't play along with him at first.

The thing that prevents Lily from being oppressed by Tansley is that she has her work to fall back on:

She had done the usual trick – been nice. [Lily] would never know [Charles Tansley]. He would never know her. Human relations were all like that, she thought, and the worst (if it had not been for Mr Bankes) were between men and women [...] And she remembered that next morning she would move the

tree further towards the middle, and her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr Tansley was saying.

Let him talk all night if he liked it. (64)

Lily is feeling embarrassed because she's "done the usual trick". Tansley's being a total jerk at this party, but even so, Lily falls back onto her social training as a woman of the 1920s and smoothes everything over. She submits to him socially so that he'll stop hating life, even though he's been a creep to Lily and everyone else around him. But then Lily recalls that she has something of her own to fall back on—that painting with a tree that she'll be moving further towards the middle. And even though she still has to deal with social hierarchy on a daily basis, it's a huge relief to Lily that she also has this private, emotionally meaningful place to speak her own mind.

So, Lily doesn't care what Tansley is nattering on about at the dinner table: he has no power over her. Lily's work and Mr Bankes are the two things that convince her that social relations between men and women aren't hopeless: there are decent men out there, and even when Lily happens not to be seated next to one of them at the dinner table, she's carved out an intellectual identity for herself that can protect her.

Lily Briscoe's Protest against Male-Chauvinism

Lily Briscoe is another prominent character in *To the Lighthouse*. Lily undercuts the boundary of the male-dominated society and challenges the mega-structured society by doing her best in the domain of painting and thus the writer discloses the fact that Briscoe in this way: Lily's picture! Mrs Ramsay smiled. With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; but she was an independent little creature, Mrs Ramsay liked her for it, and so remembering her promise, she bent her head" (10).

Mrs Ramsay is much delighted to see her picture by Lily and further she assimilates her potential in every field. Due to Lily's physical appearance similar to Chinese people, she is committed not to marrying forever. However, Mrs Ramsay is much soft and meek towards her. Thus their relations show the fact they coordinated with each other in very friendly manner which further strengthens both of them for battles in the male-dominated society. Mrs Ramsay is so clean-hearted that she is always loving and kind as well as positive to Lily.

As the society is much biased and discouraging for women, Lily gets targeted to make her a victim in the sense that males cannot feel good at her progress and prosperity. This is why there are challenges from outside every time. It is focused in the text: "Such she often felt herself-struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say. But this is what I see, and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her" (12). She goes against many challenges and struggles so valiantly for her success by hook and crook. She doesn't get afraid of any sort of consequence of her deed. Rather she continuously keeps on doing her job with the faith that her every effort will bring about fruition in her life. She is so keen at comparing one person with other and derives satisfaction through such judgment. In fact, she is fair and unbiased in the matter of putting two people into two distinct boxes on the basis of their qualities and human behavior. Thus Lily compares and says:

I respect you (Mr Bankes) (she addressed him silently) in every atom; you are not vain; you are entirely impersonal; you are finer than Mr Ramsay; you are the finest human being that I know; you have neither wife nor child (without any sexual feeling, she longed to cherish that loneliness), you live for science

(involuntarily, sections of potatoes rose before her eyes); praise would be an insult to you; generous, pure-hearted, heroic man! (15)

Lily compares Mr Bankes with Mr Ramsay and says he is far better than him. He is not a vain person. Rather he is the finest model of humanity and further tells us about his sexual life which is idiosyncratic and this idiosyncrasy really differs him from other males who dominate opposite sexes and seek for their selfishness. Though Mr Bankes is not married and doesn't have any children, he knows the feelings of others. He feels more than he thinks. Hence he is upgraded in a very charismatic way that he is at par excellence and there is nothing as a mischief on his past. She balances her remarks by stating that he is pure-hearted and heroic in nature which is not false praise in any way. Thus Mr Bankes' position is heightened in much decorated manner. It further implies that his distinct quality makes him prominent in the eyes of others. Perhaps he is a bit away from the world of tyranny and despotism cultivated by male figures.

To the Lighthouse is a deceptively short book that covers a wide range of themes, subjects and acerbic social commentary. Not only is Woolf's style of writing hugely original and the fact is admirable that she triumphed as partly of the 1920s Modernism a predominantly male canon. The word 'feminist' is often bandied around too much about any literary female but Woolf really did set a standard to which a lot of subsequent women are writing aspired. The similar theme is dominant in *To the Lighthouse*. Further Lily aspires and decorates Mr Bankes' personality saying:

You have greatness, she continued, but Mr Ramsay has none of it. He is petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs Ramsay to death; but he has what you (she addressed Mr Bankes) have not; a fiery

unworldliness; he knows nothing about trifles; he loves dogs and his children.

He has eight. You have none. (16)

Woolf through Lily speaks out the character of Mr Ramsay, a typical male who embodies all dominating features of males of the time. Hence it becomes pretty clear that Mr Ramsay is totally a spoilt character in the sense that he is despotic in nature and imposes his views on his wife, Mrs Ramsay despite the fact she is much sacred and loving. The woman without any flaw is exploited at his hands. He tortures her mentally and makes her do something beyond her wants and desire which is indeed inhumane and cruel. He boasts unnecessarily and thinks of himself that he is superior to others. As a matter of fact flaws stand for the features of males of the time. Further it indicates the interrelations between males and females and how women are victimized in the male-dominated culture. It also becomes clear that Mr Ramsay loves only his possessions for his temporal benefits and has some sort of inclination towards them for his selfishness.

Lily has an extensive pluck and she feels everything is possible though complicated and challenging. Therefore she suspects the grand design of males that teaching and preaching is beyond human power. Thus it is said: "Teaching and preaching is beyond human power, Lily suspected. (She was putting away her things.) If you are exalted you must somehow come a cropper. Mrs Ramsay gave him what he asked too easily. Then the change must be so upsetting, Lily said" (30). Lily doubts the very statement since males might attempt to keep women in ignorance about the matter. Their plan might be to separate intellectual domain for only males. They perhaps fear that once women get aware and knowledgeable about the practical life, they may revolt against. After all, to suspect such unfair statement is appreciative.

Lily is portrayed as a competent painter in the text, *To the Lighthouse* which is the bitter truth to men. Thus the text exposes the fact about them:

Lily Briscoe went on putting away her brushes, looking up, looking down. Looking up, there he was-Mr Ramsay- advancing towards them, swinging, careless, oblivious, remote. A bit of a hypocrite? She repeated. Oh no-the most sincere of men, the truest (here he was), the best; but, looking down, she thought, he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust; and kept looking down, purposely, for only so could keep steady, staying with the Ramsays. (31)

Lily Briscoe is a young woman in her early thirties at the beginning of the book. She is unattractive: too thin and with slanted eyes that remind her friends of Chinese eyes. She is deeply sensitive to the feelings of those around her and their reaction to her; as an artist, she is upset by Charles Tansley's suggestion that women cannot paint (or in fact, do much at all). As a single woman, if she cannot paint, then she is left with no purpose in life-her art is to her what Mr Ramsay's scholarly work is to him. She admires Mrs Ramsay for her powers at keeping everyone together, but at the same time finds her somewhat overbearing. As for the somewhat short-tempered Mr Ramsay, she finds it hard to tell what he is thinking. As a matter of fact she is the character in *To the Lighthouse* to whom everything and everyone is related. Her reactions to the others seem very natural. She is not necessarily married, but happy with her lot. To her Mr Ramsay is a hypocrite and pretends to be what he is not. In one sense she is against Mr Ramsay's character which further implicates that she opposes the entire male-dominated society which often undermines women's potential and capability.

Lily, the popular and competent painter remarks that to stay idle is absurd and meaningless. She reacts in much grave way and says:

How childlike, how absurd she was, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables. There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought. Now she had brought this off-Paul and Minta, one might suppose, were engaged. (70)

When Minta behaves childishly, Lily does not like simply because she thinks every woman should be active and energetic. They should have some purpose of life in order to promote them economically and socially. She comments on the cheap purpose of Minta that is to say marriage. To Lily marriage is the end of women's life since this institution is miserable, oppressive and exploitative. She does not confide in this institution that is overtly the source of misery and pains. Minta's engagement with Paul is the mark of the very institution.

The question Lily Briscoe raises here is: what is best in life for a woman: what she chooses or what the society imposes her because of her gender? Does a woman have to give up her artistic vision in favour of becoming a perfect wife and mother? Does a woman miss the best in life if she chooses not to confront to these prejudices? Her answer is, as nothing is certain in this world, no marriage can promise a sublime happiness; no Victorian moral or standard can actually guarantee happiness. Art, on the other hand, is immune from change, it can capture the essence of those intense moments of vision, it can transcend time and human life, it has power to satisfy such a restless searching soul as Virginia Woolf's, and Lily Briscoe will help us realize this by the end of the novel. (Online Source)

By portraying Lily Briscoe, the struggling artist, who had failed to become herself a mother, a wife, a lover, Virginia Woolf stresses the fact that art would assist her in compensating all of the above. White writes that "outwardly timid, awkward, and unprepossessing, Lily carefully guards the secret of how much her art means to her (86). She tosses off a "little insincerity" when she tells Mr. Bankes that "she would always go on painting, because it interested her" (72), but three times during the dinner party scene- once when Tansley offends her, once when she decides to abandon her experiment; not to be "nice" to him, and once when she is disturbed by the presence of the engaged couple- Lily's thoughts turn to her art as a means of emotional survival. Lily wonders as she paints, going on to speculate that she, had Mrs Ramsay lived, might have ended up married to William Bankes. "Mrs Ramsay had planned it. Perhaps, had she lived, she would have compelled it" (175), and marriage, as Lily sees it, would have put an end to her painting. To assure herself that Mrs Ramsay's vision for her was unwise, Lily calls up a number of witnesses. First, her quite satisfactory relationship with William Bankes as it is, not as his wife but as an affectionate friend. Second, the failure of Paul and Minta's marriage, in which Mrs Ramsay had placed so much hope. In contemplating how life has changed and about what time has done to the Rayleys, Mrs Ramsay's prime exhibit in the marriage arcade. Their coming together was among the triumphs celebrated at the dinner ten years before. Yet we are told, in a metaphor that carries a special meaning in this book, that "things had worked loose after the first year or so; the marriage had turned out rather badly" (173). What Lily is implying is, I think, to remember that marriage is not time-proof,. Lily tells us how separate and bitter the Reyleys' lives have become, how they went through a phase of misery and violence, and are now "excellent friends" but no longer "in love". All these serve to strengthen Lily's

belief that she has everything she needs in life, her art mostly, as she imagines saying to her: "It has all gone against your wishes. They're happy like that; I'm happy like this. Life has changed completely. At that all her being, even her beauty, became for a moment, dusty and out of date" (175). Realizing her own values in life, her priorities and her concerns, Lily gets free from the influence Mrs Ramsay had upon her, an influence representing the Victorian concept of women and their role in the society.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Lily's Protest Yields Successful

Feminism focuses on existence with women questioning their place in patriarchal society. It examines how males control women and keep them on margin and moreover, make work as subordinate to men in patriarchy. A good understanding of a definition of feminism becomes crucial to give a clear-cut concept of the term and its fundamental premises. Feminism is a doctrine that holds a belief in sex equality and opposes the sex hierarchy. It presupposes that woman is not predestined by God or nature but she is made 'woman' by nurture; women are made by the society; not born.

To the Lighthouse is the most autobiographical of Virginia Woolf's novels. It is based on her own childhood experiences, and while it touches on childhood and children's perceptions and desire, it is at its most trenchant when exploring adult relationships, marriage, and, indeed, the changing class-structure of its time. The book, *To the Lighthouse* touches on many vital topics, from the battle and personal cost of artistic creativity for women as opposed to their expected roles of wife and mother, to remembrance and struggle to escape the tyrannies of the past/ the author highlights Lily's intrapersonal affairs as well as her interpersonal relationships with the members of the Ramsay Family and their guests.

There is a good great deal about Lily Briscoe, one of the two central female characters and her internal as well as external state of relation. Lily is a good and reliable agent to bringing change in the society which has been male-dominated since the time immemorial. Virginia Woolf not only shows the traditional women, like Mrs Ramsay, who can hardly contribute to have a look at the social hierarchy from a different perspective; but the modern women, like Lily Briscoe, who is the central

figure of this research. Lily, since the beginning of the story, is steadily attempting her best to challenge the stereotypical social perspective; and to lead the society, especially women towards a new era of social development. Lily undertakes a mission of altering the social phenomena: bringing social and sex equality; mutual and harmonious relationship between male and female.

Lily does a great deal of attempt to protest the male-chauvinism existing in the contemporary social arena. She challenges the social norm that woman must marry for her secure future by not doing so. She even politely and silently defies her surrogate mother, Mrs Ramsay, who is a good matchmaker, by not marrying William Bankes. Similarly, another belief that “women can’t write; women can’t paint” is also demolished when Lily finally accomplishes her painting (with her vision). Due to her rock-steady determination, Lily Briscoe in the end becomes totally successful in her conviction i.e. to bring change in attitude and perspective regarding the woman remnant in the contemporary society. “Any work of art or literature is regardless the sex”; this hypothesis has come to be true through the painting of Lily Briscoe who also gives a bittersweet slap to the contemporary male-dominated society. Through the employment of Mrs Ramsay, the representative of the “woman of yesterday” and Lily Briscoe, the representative of the “woman of today”, Virginia Woolf envisages the model of the “woman of tomorrow” who is the fusion of the former two models.

Works Cited

- Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory since Plato*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992.
- Banta, Martha. *Imaging American Women: Ideas and Ideals in Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of Medusa" *Signs* 14 (Summer 1975): 875-93.
- Cutter, Martha J. *Unruly Tongue: Identity and Voice in American Women's Writing 1850-1930*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1999.
- Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: The Women's Press, 2003.
- Fischer, Paul. *A Glance on Virginia Woolf*. London: Western Publication, 2003.
- Freedman, Jane. *Feminism*. New Delhi: Viva Book Private Limited, 2002.
- Gaarder, Jostein. *Sophie's World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy*. Rev. ed., New York: The Berkely Publication Inc., March 1996.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. 1979. 2nd ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Hekman, Susan J. *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault (Re-Reading the Canon)*. New York: State University Press, 1996
- Howard, William Lee. *The Perverts*. G.W. Dillingham Company, 1901.

Humm, Maggie. *Feminists Approaches*. Mississippi: Sotto Publication, 2000.

Humprey, Robert. *Stream- of- Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954.

Khadka, Anup. "Selma's Desire for Freedom in "The Broken Wings." M.A. thesis Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, 2008.

Krishnaraj, Maithreyi. "Permeable Boundaries". *Ideals, Images and Real Lives*. Eds. Alice Thorner and Maithreyi Krishnaraj. Mumbai: Orient Longman, 2004.

2-27.

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. ed. Leon S. Roudiez. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jordine nad Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Lerner, Gerda. *Fireweed: A Political Autobiography*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003.

Marcus, Jane. "Brittania Rules The Waves: Decolozing Tradition". *New Voices of Twentieth-Century British Literary Canons*. Ed. Karen Lawrence. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Marcus, Jane. *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*. London: Macmillan.

Mathias, Robert. *Feminism*. Alabama: Fast Publishing House, 1999.

Millet, Kate. "*Feminist Literary Criticism*". *Modern Literary Theory*. Ed. Jefferson and Robery. London: Basford, 1988.

Papke, Mary E. *Verging on the Abyss: The Social Fiction of Kate Chopin and Edith Wharton*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990.

- Munca, Daniela. "Virginia Woolf's Answer to "Women Can't Paint, Women Can't Write" in *To the Lighthouse*". *Journal of International Women's Studies* Vol. 10 #4 May 2009.
- Rajbanshi, Karna Bahadur. "Exploration of Women's Potentials in "To the Lighthouse". M.A. thesis Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, 2009.
- Sang, Yanxia. "An Analysis of Stream-of-Consciousness Technique in *To the Lighthouse*." *Asian Social Science* 6.1(2010): Web 15 Dec,2012.
- Schartz, D.R. *The Transformation of the English Novel, 1890-1930*. London: Macmillan, 1999.
- Showalter, Elaine. *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness*, *Critical Inquiry* 8. University of Chicago: Winter, 1985.
- The Bonds of Womanhood: Women's Sphere in New England 1780-1835*. London: Yale University Press, 1977.
- The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*. London: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Tong, R. *Feminine and Feminist Ethics*. Belmont, California: Wordsworth Classics, 1993.
- White, Roberta. *A Studio of One's Own: Fictional Women Painters and the Art of Fiction*. Maddison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. "Vindication of the Rights of Woman". *Critical Theory Since Plato*. ed. Hazard Adams. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1957.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Cumberland House, Crib Street, UK: Wordsworth Classics, 1994.