

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Paradox in the Quest for Self-Identity in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*

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This thesis entitled “Paradox in the Quest for Self-Identity in Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Gauri Shankar Choudhari has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Woolf through *The Waves* has endeavored to expose the underlying reality, that is, the lack of identity of women and domination and bragging nature of males in almost all aspects of life deep-rooted in the male-dominated society. The female characters, Jinny, Susan and especially Rhoda represent women in patriarchy and male characters Neville, Bernard and Louis carry on the male voice and attitudes. *The Waves* symbolically denote the mental waves constructed in the cultural practices. In addition to all these, Woolf makes it crystal clear that life of women in patriarchy is troublesome since their self suffers a lot and eventually they get to the situation that they feel short of their individual identity as well whereas males proudly allege that they are commendable and their future is bright too. Such speculation is especially made by Neville. Hence *The Waves* indeed portrays the conflicting interrelationship long extant between women and men. The reason for presentation of such social issues is the efforts made by Woolf to awaken the slumbering women in the domain of male chauvinism. Furthermore, the obligatory situations of women seem to have been emphasized in such a symbolic way even common readers feel conducive to assimilate with the fragile plight of females in patriarchy.

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I. Fluidity of Female Characters' Identity

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: Vanessa, 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 her life. Her half sister Stella, thirteen years Woolf's senior, assumed management of the household, a position she relinquished to Vanessa 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 four 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.

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 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 a 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 of 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 the characteristics associated with women.

In *The Waves* Woolf constructs six “characters” that represent competing systems of imposed conscious order. Neville, Louis, Bernard, Susan, Jinny, Rhoda—each voice constructs an internal narrative that shapes the self and orders experience. Jinny, Susan, Neville, and Louis all choose to define themselves and interpret experience through a single artificial system. Each of the four selects a single “story,” a single end to life which serves as a buttress against the waves. As Rhoda says, Jinny, Louis, Neville, and Susan choose to live life “wholly, indivisibly, and without caring in the moment.” Louis is the man of business who “forms unalterable conclusions upon the true nature of what is to be known.” Neville is the limited poet who clings to the words and the myths of the past, believing that “change is no longer possible” (259). Susan chooses a life of unchanging natural happiness; Jinny cries her single sexual call of come, come, and come. Adopting distinctly chronological, teleological views of existence, all four see the end of life even as they live the beginning. All four characters, however, also suffer of their imposed stability. Louis, Neville, Susan, and Jinny lead ordered and focused lives, but they become the static, constricted, dull victims of their own narrow interpretations of self and experience. The imposition of a single narrative

upon random experience creates order and meaning, but, it ultimately destroys life.

The Waves as a symbolic novel has certain properties which represent distinct things. The female issue is much connected with the very symbolic aspect. The paradox of female characters' self identity is much more clarified through metaphors such as a Birdsong which is a metaphor for speech throughout *The Waves*, and birds, whose beaks are described by Woolf as violently piercing the more fluid bodies of snails and as possessors of birdsong/speech, living in the airy realm already associated with language, are frequently presented as masculine creatures. Jinny is at several points described as imitating the birds, or trying (only somehow successfully) to be a bird. For instance, in one passage, "Neville [...] cries 'Love, love,' and [Jinny] answers, imitating the bird, 'Love, love?'" (251), and again, "I sing like the nightingale whose melody is crowded in the too narrow passage of her throat" (192). Although Jinny identifies with the paternal through using language, she never quite possesses the phallus. Either she is only emulating a male bird, or else her throat is inadequate for true song/speech. Susan represents the woman who fully identifies with the mother and rejects language, or the paternal, while Jinny represents the phallic woman who fully assimilates herself into the symbolic, rejecting the maternal and embracing the role defined for her within patriarchy. Finally, Rhoda

represents the woman who is suspended in between. Susan does not trust speech but lives in the realm expressing herself physically, in emotional manifestations, or in moans, cries, laughter, whispers, sighs. Kristeva describes such expression as the mother's voiced breath, a symbiotic communication before language and the mirror stage through which the mother and child understand each other physically, through rhythms of voice and body rather than through the semantics of phrases. Susan identifies with her mother and prefers the emotional music of the maternal voiced breath to paternal signifying phrases.

One of the female characters in *The Waves*, Jinny is virtually unthreatened by the call of the mother which menaces dissolution and fragmentation, death, in each of the other characters, showing that she has even more ferociously identified with the paternal than have the male characters. Interestingly, in a rare moment of crisis, when her sense of being an undivided self is being threatened by silence, Jinny looks in a mirror. The mirror stabilizes her sense of identity. In general Jinny does not worry about fragmentation of identity, about dissolution of the body. She feels in complete control of her body, even as she is giving it to men. Jinny describes herself as able to open and shut her body at will. Her open body is for sexual rapture. Her closed body is a rejection of the maternal, the abject. Jinny loves men, loves social situations, and loves sex. Jinny is both male and female. Although she takes the arguably

passive sexual role of women, she chooses to do so, baring her own breast, letting the spikes pierce her. She allows herself to be stabbed so as to maintain order, so that when she dies, nothing will be out of order. Although accepting even sacrificing her body to the paternal, ordered symbolic, and also accepting her role as a woman within it, Jinny also identifies with the father and so does not merely submit to him, and hence she can understand herself as active. In general women identify with the father in order to attain a degree of power, but this power merely supports the paternal, doing nothing to subvert it, and hence Jinny's metaphors for her own sense of empowerment are all phallic. She has no sense of power as a woman. In fact this is the paradox of women's self identity. Similarly having no father to identify with, Susan can only fall back into the sea. Nevertheless, unlike Susan Rhoda never is the mother, never identifies with either parent, or fixes a stabilizing identity at all. After all female characters in *The Waves* lack identity and suffer a confusing stage of self-association. Their position is the paradoxical.

Critical Reception

Since the publication of Woolf's *The Waves*, it has been responded in many ways and a host of critical attitudes have come up as well. Woolf has heavily used her techniques of writings in the text as well. Most often the novel has been looked at from the perspective of its techniques and the narrative style. Frances Jeater has stated in regard to the individuality:

The Waves presents six characters in monologue- from morning until night, from childhood into old age- against a background of the sea. The result is a glorious chorus of voices that exists not to remark on the passing of events but to celebrate the connection between its various individual parts. (6)

This critic has directly asserted the fact how different characters deal with their life and strengthen the friendship through struggling together.

In the same way another critic, Gianmarco Manzione avers:

Specially *The Waves* reads like the longest prose poem in the history of the language. When read as a novel, it does indeed become every bit as difficult as a lot of readers say it is. Though Woolf attempts to differentiate between characters as though straining to achieve at least the skeletal image of the novel, she does this only superficially by drifting from one to another. (3)

This reader has only dealt with the shape and form of the novel. Along with this he has viewed on the author as well.

Wellek Penn has opined in the reference to the novel's thematic aspect: "The book is a series of dramatic monologues that blend indistinguishably into one another. Woolf was preoccupied here with morality, transience, loneliness and the meaning of friendship, not with

telling a story” (9). It gets clear that Woolf has conveyed a strong moral lesson that is to say the value of friendship into human life. The similar vision pervades through the text itself. In the same vein Connie Monson asserts: “The novel is that the trickiness of distinguishing one speaker from the next is an expression of group identity in tension with individual identity” (13). He shows the identity crisis in the characters’ lives and their life is the matter of search. Kitsi Mitakou writes:

The magic of *The Waves* lies in its celebration acceptance of women’s fluidity, flowing body that carries the reader away with it. The uncontrollable flux of voices, bodies, fluids, images, waves, initiate the reader into an intra-uterine bliss. The body of the sea fuses identities and bodies all into one, and celebrates the fluid nature of the female body and identity, which the French feminists Irigaray and Cixous came later to emphasize in their works. (166)

Fluidity, the fusing of identities, and the body of the sea, are however not celebrated in *The Waves*. In his other passages Mitakou describes the sea as appeasement, enormous peace, satisfaction and perhaps happiness but this is the appeasement of death. This critical remark on *The Waves* makes it clear that metaphorically he has attempted his level best to cope with the female characters and the identity they lack and are in the confusing state.

Herta Newman regards *The Waves* “to be a novel of psychology that will be subdued and the image of the self, radically recorded” (55). She notes that various critics have come to view the six figures of *The Waves* as prototypes, patterns of consciousness, and aspects of a single, symbolic psyche.

This researcher has raised a distinct issue in the text that is to say how characters struggle a lot to define them in order to create meaning of their lives. But ultimately all female characters fail to get a certain definition of self since their self is divided; their identity is in the paradoxical state. Furthermore female characters lack self identity simply because they are dependent in almost all aspects of their life. They are economically and socially paralyzed in such a way that they are compelled to depend on males while seeking their self identity and to associate their bodies with males to get defined and identified. After all female characters in *The Waves* are not free to define them independently and separately. Their identity comes in association with male counterparts.

II. Feminism as a Politico-cultural Critique

The distinction between male and female and masculinity and femininity continues to polarize 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 as 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 for 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 in 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 woman'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 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 pervades 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 largely 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 society. It has also been used as a jumping off point in taking action to address inequality.

Male domination 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, 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 discards the education system of the time that inspired women to remain romantic and read and create books of love and romance and at the same time discouraged them to study medicine, mathematics, logic, business and other practical disciplines which indeed enable human beings to become self dependent. 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 rational and moral capacities, her full human potential”(15).

Similarly Virginia Woolf advocates for the radical change 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 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, too 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 stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. (822)

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 the 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 Millett 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 internally at home that we can comprehend suppression on women at broader 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 labor market; 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.

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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.

Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own: British Woman Novelists 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 Bronte 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 as reader and it offers feminist reading of texts which considers the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the exclusion and misconceptions about women in 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” (Showalter248). 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 rights. 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
heroine...such 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 creation of the
nineteenth century tradition which is perceived basically as a male quality
is in fact 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 that a revolt against patriarchal authority is possible. *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 critics 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 can only be seen from the point of view of phallic culture. It believes that femininity offers a possible procedure for subverting the marginalizing mechanisms 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 phallic-centric 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 other 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 the Medusa” intends to break down the favored status of the rational published text, celebrating the Derridean notion of difference and suggesting a repressed, unsignified feminine which ‘defers’ meaning while suggesting multiple significance through ‘difference’. Julia Kristeva, 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 angles or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature, and the 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, Michele Barrette, Juliet Mitchel and Cora Kaplan combine Marxist theoretical interest in the production and ideology of literature with feminist concerns for women's writing. Marxist and Socialist feminist 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 lived 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 writers. It focuses on exploring 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 its 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 into the river, her pockets weighted with stones. 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 into 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 *The Waves*. However, disturbing Kristeva's theory may offer insights into the characters, plot, and writing of *The Waves* in a manner which the more positive theories of Irigaray and Cixous are applied to read through *The Waves*. Kristeva provides an accurate account of women's roles and prospects and that this is affirmed by her theory's applicability to Virginia Woolf's novel; rather, whether accurate or not, feminist or otherwise there is a shared understanding of gender and of maternity in Kristeva and Woolf, and that reading Woolf with Kristeva sheds lights on the complex plot, characters, imagery, and symbolism of *The Waves*.

Jane Marcus notes, *The Waves* "exposes the cult of the hero and the complicity of the poet in the making of culture as he exudes cultural glue in the form of an elegy for nationalism, war, and eventually fascism" (142). Loyalty to Percival entails not only personal friendship, but also links to the entire conglomerate of literary and political systems he represents. Bernard's pledge to carry on Percival's vision guarantees that Percival's ideals will be resurrected in Bernard's writings: "If I discover a new vein in myself," Bernard promises, "I shall submit it to you privately. I shall ask, 'What is your verdict?' You shall remain the arbiter" (155). Bernard connects his aesthetic mission with "assuming command of the British Empire" and is proud to be "the inheritor," "the

continuer,” of this militaristic tradition (253-54). As Percival’s successor, Bernard is aligned with “Alcibiades, Ajax, Hector” (181), “Plato and Shakespeare” (179) all named in *The Waves* as perpetrators of heroic traditions. The class and woman hatred underlying this deceptively benign humanism is repeatedly exposed throughout the novel. For example, Nevile establishes his superiority over “shop-girls” by reminding himself that he is one of the “masters of tranquility and order” (86). However, Joplin notes, Nevile’s “outward posture of defiance” masks his “deep craving to be dominated into meaing”(96). In Neville’s erotic enslavement to Percival, Woolf explores the nature of desire and its relation to authority, the sacred, and violence.

In her focus on three types of women Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda in *The Waves* may be imitating the tripartite maiden goddesses. While Susan and Jinny remain stuck in the degrading female archetypes embodied by the Olympian versions of, for example, Hera (Susan) and Aphrodite (Jinny), Rhoda, as lesbian outsider, seeks a life outside existing female paradigms. As Annette Oxindine notes, Rhoda “runs from heterosexual romance” because of her lesbianism, not any intrinsic fear of sexuality or her own body, as many readers have claimed”(205). For example, Rhoda’s characteristic gesture rocking her brown basin from side to side suggests an auto and homoeroticism. The sexual meaning of Rhoda’s

back and forth motion becomes clearer in a later passage when she says that she “rocked from side to side by the violence of her emotion” when a woman she admired sat opposite drinking tea. Her repetitive motion is a ritual-like repetition that calls up like the ancient ritualists imitating Demeter’s longing for her lost daughter-buried objects of devotion”(Ancient Art 79). Rhoda’s masturbatory rhythm liberates lesbian desire as counter-magic against the seduction of patriarchal loyalties.

The lesbian connotations in *The Waves* are further discernible when imagery associated with Rhoda is traced through the diaries to the novel. Woolf uses similar language to describe her love for Vita and Rhoda’s sexual fantasies about, for instance, her teacher, Miss Lambert; other associations are secrets and evening. By recalling Woolf’s comparison of herself to a ball bubbling up and down on the spray of a fountain that is Vita (Diary 3: 540), Rhoda’s identification as the “nymph of the fountain always wet” (117) takes on lesbian as well as festival connotations. According to Harrison, the son/lover serving the goddess was sometimes called “lord of all that is wet and gleaming”; and rituals sometimes included a May bough” drenched with dew and water that it may burgeon and blossom” (Ancient Art 115). Woolf frequently associated Vita with flowers, and Rhoda is rapturous about flowers when she thinks about her teacher, Miss Lambert: green cow bind, water lilies,

moonlight colored may, wild roses, and ivy serpentine-to name but a few. When Woolf adopts Harrison's ritual formula for *The Waves*, she exploits this ancient link between female sexual desire and flowers in order to associate lesbian desire with natural, life promoting impulses. In turning to images from nature to express lesbian feelings, Woolf draws not only on Harrison but on a long-standing lesbian tradition. In both the private writings and her novels, Woolf's descriptions of lesbian desire recall the feelings of life enhancement and transformation associated with fertility festivals and the sexual emotion of comic structure. Repeatedly, Woolf speaks of Vita's power to transform any scene she enters, while Rhoda feels that "when Miss Lambert passes [...] everything changes and becomes luminous" (45).

In depicting Rhoda's rejection of Percival's world as both a flight and a descent, Woolf links Rhoda with Kore, who is called up by the desire of the older great goddess, Demeter. Therefore, it is significant that Rhoda's courage to turn her back on Percival's value system is precipitated by the promise in the valedictory movement of the good woman with a face like a white horse at the end of the bed who beckons Rhoda to follow her. In the matriarchal rituals celebrating the reunion of mother and maid, women were the drawers up reenacting Kore's descent into the underground dwelling and her resurrection. In a similar way, the

women in Woolf's narrative at the women's college are the drawers up beckoning Rhoda to continue beyond her descent, exile, and loneliness into a better future.

III. Pursuit of Identity and its Irony

The novel, *The Waves*, is entirely symbolic since it embodies a number of images that represent distinctly meaningful things. At the same time it contains a vivid description of the relation of violence between the air creatures and the earth creatures, much as there is a certain antagonism between the paternal and air-identified Jinny and the maternal, earth-identified Susan, over Susan's dirty fingernails, for instance, and over Jinny's silver mirror. The birds, like, are described as light, beautiful creatures, though not entirely sympathetic. In contrast, the earth and its creatures are heavy, damp, and repellent, abject, but also innocent, defenseless, evoking pity. The earth creatures are blind and

slow, while the birds are highly observant and cruel. They are attentive to what is occurring on the ground. Their golden-eyed sight like their singing, their accuracy, and their cruelty, is emphasized.

The relations to language of Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda, therefore align with Kristeva's reflections on the possibilities for women of negotiating with language and patriarchy. Susan listens only to the mother's voiced breath, has become her mother, urging her children to sleep as she leans over the cradle, sewing in silence at one with the hand, abject, alienated by words. Jinny never questions language, nor does she hear the mother's voiced breath. Rhoda grasps for words, the moon's hand, but is swept under by the sea's crashing waves, its whispered rhythms, and is driven mad, leaps, proving, it would seem, the dangers Kristeva notes for women who listen to the call beyond time of remembering the mother's voiced breath without, like Susan, identifying with it.

The male characters of *The Waves*, in contrast, because they are securely established within the symbolic, can afford, from time to time, to listen to that maternal voice. They remember an infancy in which they speak their emotions and needs without meaning, purely through rhythms, through their bodies, their cries, laughter, sighs, murmurs like Woolf's hoots, screams, babble-is apparent when, throughout *The Waves*,

they, and especially Bernard, express a longing for a different language, the semiotic, a language of small words or no words, and express frustration with the symbolic language available to them. For instance, Bernard, who carries around a notebook in which he records observations.

Woolf chooses a male character to articulate most persistently the value of and desire for the semiotic, and to negotiate most successfully a position between the semiotic and symbolic realms. As seen, the ambivalence between maternal and paternal identification on the part of a female character, Rhoda, comes at a much higher cost-her sanity and, ultimately, her life and the two other female characters who survive have opted for secure positions in one realm or the other, and there is no question of their being poets.

Woolf's novels elaborate on the implications of their titles as they explore how individuals must continually work to form themselves in a world devoid of linguistic and by extension, philosophical correspondences. In *The Waves*, this concern with the relationship between the grammatical and the ontological emerges most clearly when Louis claims: "I know my cases and my genders; I could know everything in the world if I wished" (20). Louis's optative assertion that knowing cases and genders would enable him to know the world materializes in

several registers, most significantly through puns on the words gender as both sex and grammatical classification, and case as both circumstance and grammatical category. Since gender carries this dual implication, Louis is in part claiming that if he can make sexual distinctions, he can know the world. Epistemological composition based on gender dichotomies is that of traditional society; patriarchy is built on the ability to distinguish between male and female. Yet as Woolf makes clear with her second pun, that on case as circumstance or situation, gender is not the sole marker of social position. By linking gender to case, Louis's statement suggests that gender distinctions are inseparable from the cases in which they appear, and consequently that knowledge of gender must also be accomplished by knowledge of the circumstance within which that gender functions: class, education, social status.

To Neville, Rhoda was in slumbering state and her sleep was broken by males and they brought her to the awakened position. The males woke her and now they dominate and torment her since she hates them. In the name of revenge they exploit her and leave some sort of radiance. They indeed batter her so that she can be reformed in their sense. Rhoda says:

I have a short space of freedom. I have picked all the fallen petals and made them swim. I have put raindrops in some. I

will plant a lighthouse here, a head of Sweet Alice. And I
will now rock the basin from side to side so that my ships
may ride the waves. Some will founder. Some will dash
themselves against the cliffs. One sails alone. That is my
ship. (17-8)

Rhoda's image such as swimming implies the dynamism which does mean the progress and transformation are connected with her life and its value. Her each effort purposefully made, is oriented to her existence in the male dominated society wherever she is short of freedom and fulfilling of desires. In the beginning she states that she has a short space of freedom does have a crucial meaning that is to say she wants freedom and lives in full-fledged state so that she can feel comfortable and commendable. In the same way she expresses her anxiety as; "They have no meaning for her. She has no answer for them. She has no body as the others have. And I, who speak with an Australian accent, whose father is a banker in Brisbane, do not fear her as I fear the others" (21). Hence Rhoda lacks something what the society seeks in her. This is why she feels that she does not have any meaning to them. She is different from others, which refers to her unique quality or the minority. It means she surpasses the social boundary and remains away from them. And this is the reason they are indifferent to her. People having handsome payment

earning relatives differ from her and they do not take notice of her. After all she is alone even if she is physically among many of the people. It shows the crisis of her existence and lack of identity. Rhoda meditates:

As I fold up my frock and my chemise, so I put off my
hopeless desire to be Susan, to be Jinny. But I will stretch
my toes so that they touch the rail at the end of the bed; I
will assure myself, touching the rail, of something hard. Now
I cannot sink; cannot altogether fall through the thin sheet
now. Now I spread my body on this frail mattress and
hang suspended. I am above the earth now. I am no longer
upright, to be knocked against and damaged. All is soft, and
bending. (27)

Her meditation implies her mental state that she is not more satisfied with her present plight and wishes to be Susan and Jinny. Again it shows some sort of scarcity that she is fond of fulfilling at any cost. She makes a number of efforts that is to say she folds up her shirts and frocks in order for preparing to get assimilated with them whom she is seeking for. She does not see any meaning in her life that always torments her mind and makes her much desirous and curious for the new being that she thinks is possible only through transformation and fluctuation. The male character Bernard is distinct from Rhoda in many ways as his life is a bit more

meaningful and praiseworthy. He says: “Now that ceremony is over. Heaven be praised, all ceremonies are over. I am alone; I am going to school for the first time” (31). He seems to be unhappy but hopeful for the future since he surmises that his days to come will bring brightness and fruitful meanings into his further life. This is why he is unhappy and at the same time he is pleased to some extent while leaving home and heading towards school. Hence his dynamism does appear carried positive consequence. His heading towards school shows the sign of hope and success which really pleases him to a greater extent. Louis says: “Here is Bernard. He is composed; he is easy. He swings his bag as he walks. I will follow Bernard, because he is not afraid. We are drawn through the booking-office on to the platform as a stream draws twigs and straws round the piers of a bridge” (32). Louis takes Bernard as a model since he gets committed to following the way paved by Bernard. He finds Bernard easy and composed. Hence his inclination towards Bernard reflects the male dominance and their superiority in the society. Louis is no more interested in female characters but only in males. In fact it invites a critical perspective that is to say a male figure hardly follows the females and their ideas in male dominated society. Just opposite to these male characters, Rhoda’s life is very much hopeless and critical in the

sense that she suffers the lack of individuation in her worldly life. It can be justified with her expression about herself:

But here I am nobody. I have no face. This great company,
all dressed in brown serge, has robbed me of my identity.
We are all callous, unfriended. I will seek out a face, a
composed, a monumental face, and will endow it with
omniscience, and wear it under my dress like a talisman and
then I will find some dingle in a wood where I can display
my assortment of curious treasures. I promise myself this. So
I will not cry. (35)

Rhoda feels short of her identity. She is nobody in the sense that she is ill-treated and overlooked in the society she lives in. It is the males who have looted her identity and made her suffer the identity crisis. She takes death better than the present life as it is very much miserable and painful. Her belief in the magical charm and godly greatness is much powerful and strong. After all, these things make it clear that Rhoda seeks for alternative so that she can become happy and enjoy the moments in the forth coming days. In contrary to her position, Louis has got reformatory life that is the process of recovery and betterment. His life is oriented to the hope and success. It is clear when Louis avers:

I recover my continuity, as he reads. I become a figure in the procession, a spoke in the huge wheel that turning, at last erects me, here and now. I have been in the dark; I have been hidden; but when the wheel turns I rise into this dim light where I just perceive, but scarcely, kneeling boys, pillars and memorial brasses. (36)

He takes life in the circular orbit since it moves on and changes its shapes and sides. Despite the fact that he has been in the darkness before, he sees in the life the glimpses of hope and recovery. He reminds of the time when his identity was missing and hidden. It was not exposed earlier. But now it is in the process of concretization and recognition. Hence his progress is rapid in the regard of existential matter. It is the matter of surprise that each character regardless to their sex and gender faces the existential crisis and lack of freedom in the text. Neville's narration makes it sure that he is also hungry in the sense that he wants to become released from some sort of boundary and to be so he prays the unseen power. His expression of inner feeling is as he says:

The brute menaces my liberty when he prays. Unwarmed by imagination, his words fall cold on my head like paving-stones, while the gilt cross heaves on his waistcoat. The words of authority are corrupted by those who speak them. I

gibe and mock at this sad religion, at these tremulous, grief-stricken figures advancing, cadaverous and wounded, down a white road shadowed by fig trees where boys sprawl in the dust-naked boys; and goat-skins distended with wine hang at the tavern door. (37)

After all, the above extract tells us the innermost feeling of Neville, one of male characters who does seek for liberty and sees that one in peril. He tends to protect it from the probable dangers. The further description and expression of his attitudes towards different things such as religion is very much revolting and bold. Hence he takes religion as the matter of laughter and mockery. He seems very bold and strict in his confidence about life. Moreover he opposes any sort of power that carries out authority through words. He indeed despises words used by the authorized personalities. Neville says: "But Bernard goes on talking. Up they bubble-images. Like a camel, a vulture. Bernard is a dangling wire, loose, but seductive" (40). He opines about Bernard in very much critical and rude manner. Whatever the reality, it is beyond tolerance and assimilation. The term seductive negates the humanly quality of Bernard. He is seductive, really downplays Bernard's moral character on the one hand and on the other it discloses the fact that he dominates females

sexually and morally. He compares Bernard with a camel and a vulture. Hence he loathes Bernard as well.

Rhoda finds herself quite different from other characters such as Susan and Jinny and thus she says:

But I will duck behind her to hide it, for I am not here. I have no face. Other people have faces; Susan and Jinny have faces; they are here. Their world is the real world. The things they lift are heavy. They say Yes, they say No; in a second. If they meet a housemaid she looks at them without laughing. But she laughs at me. They know what to say if spoken to. They laugh really; they get angry really; while I have to look first and do what other people do when they have done it. (45)

The above extract makes it clear that Rhoda's world is far more distinct than Susan and Jinny. The people who come in touch behave with her differently and badly. They mock at her and humiliate her. But whoever the person is does not treat badly with Susan and Jinny. Rhoda suffering is because of her fluid nature of identity and moreover she suffers since her life lacks charm, pleasure and respect. After all, life without human dignity does not tend to bring happiness and brightness any longer. Rhoda says she does not have face. Hence she intends to say that she does not

have any recognition and social status. She lacks separate identity that an individual requires to feel good and living. Furthermore Rhoda is not emotionally complete and satisfied. There is a sort of her emotional looting as well. Thus she states:

I am rocked from side to side by the violence of my emotion. I imagine these nameless, these immaculate people, watching me from behind bushes. I leap high to excite their admiration. At night, in bed. [...] I excite their complete wonder. If they should say, or should see from a label on their boxes [...] therefore I hate looking-glasses which show me my real face. Alone, I often fall down into nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness. I have to bang my hand against some hard door to call myself back to the body. (46)

Her role is here instrumental in the sense that she keeps on jumping symbolically for the admiration of others in the surrounding and excites them and pleases them with her constant jumps. When she gets transformed into some sort of instrument, her emotion is violated and her body remains without feeling and emotion. Again her human identity seems missing and she is much afraid of her real face and appearance. This is the reason she does not prefer to look at her through looking into

the glass. She is indeed in much complicated situation in the sense that she is on the mouth of complete disappearance. She calls the people watching her behind bushes nameless and clean who without appearing in front keep on watching her as if she is different even physically from them. The activity of such onlookers does prove that her world is different from theirs. Another female character, Jinny's statement makes it clear that women are trained in such a way that they think that males are the determining factors that evaluate women whether they are good or not. Thus she says:

He will like me better than Susan or Rhoda. He will find in me some quality, some peculiar thing. But I shall not let myself be attached to one person only. I do not want to be fixed, to be pinioned. I sit dangling my feet, on the edge of the bed, with a new day to break open. I have fifty years; I have sixty years to spend. I have not yet broken into my hoard. This is the beginning. (59)

Jinny compares herself with Susan and Rhoda in the sense that she thinks she is better and more qualitative and feminine than Rhoda and the person she loves will get interested in her a lot since she has possessed the quality others have not. Hence she further adds that she will remain obedient to one male and play her very diligently and dedicatedly. After

all, her thought and desire prove that she is a woman she sees her existence in the acceptance of her beauty and personality by males. Again she succumbs before the patriarchy that overpowers the society she lives in. The narration of Louis about him and his colleagues tell us something more about his male mentality. He says:

Neville, Bernard and I shall not meet here again. Life will divide us. But we have formed certain ties. Our boyish, our irresponsible years are over. But we have forged certain links. Above all, we have inherited traditions. These stone flags have been worn for six hundred years. On these walls are inscribed the names of men of war, of statesmen, of some unhappy poets. (62)

The above extract clarifies the fact that Louis is very much proud of his lineage and the things he has inherited from the past. Now he thinks that the boys turn into mature personalities and they are responsible now. His focus on the males' capability and responsibility as well as duty

makes it confirmed that he is in the favor of the entire domain dominated by males in different forms such as poets, statesmen and warriors. He emphasizes on the history more than on the present in order to bring about the males into light and exposure. Similarly Jinny, a female character's trouble is with her own existence in patriarchy. She seems

much conscious of the males' life as she is about her own. Hence she avers in this regard:

My body instantly of its own accord puts forth a frill under his gaze. My body lives a life of its own. Now the black window glass is green again. We are out of the tunnel. He reads his paper. But we have exchanged the approval of our bodies. There is then a great society of bodies, and mine is introduced; mine has come into the room where the gilt chairs are. (67)

Her decoration is under the gaze of a male character. However, she thinks that she lives her own life separately and independently from others' interferences. The idea of her separate identity comes since she is already worried about her existence and might have seen it in the danger under the gaze and dominance of males. We are out of the tunnel symbolically means she along with other similar people is out of darkness and crisis. Her statement carries out the fact she is awakened and now thinks of her being in very distinct way. Her concern with body exchange does emphasize on the fact that she tends to get introduced among people and her life needs approving so that she can feel satisfied and can enjoy the moment of life in a very soothing manner. As a female she does see her

life very vulnerable patriarchy. In the same way, Rhoda seems much concerned with her being and its recognition:

I came to the puddle. I could not cross it. Identity failed me. We are nothing, I said and fell. I was blown like a feather. I was wafted down tunnels. Then very gingerly, I pushed my foot across. I laid my hand against a brick wall. I returned very painfully, drawing myself back into my body over the grey, cadaverous space of the puddle. This is life then to which I am committed. (69)

Rhoda as the central female character in the text seeks her identity in the male-dominated society and is worried when she finds it in danger. Her view about her life about others who are of her level and degree in most of the ways is much critical in comparison to other characters. She says that she failed to cross the pond makes it clear that she lost her identity as a strong and capable human being. Her failure in the physical matters does seem to discourage her and make her worry and question her identity and being. She finds herself not as much capable as males in the sense that she could not get capable enough of crossing the puddle. Hence even a very trifle matter seems to touch and make her sentimental about the life and its significance in the society. Just opposite her life, Bernard is much proud of his life's value and multiplicity. He says: "I am not one

and simple, but complex and many. Bernard in public bubbles; in private, is secretive. That is what they do not understand, for they are now undoubtedly discussing me, saying I escape them, am evasive” (81).

Hence he takes him much more significant and valuable than other people and emphasizes on the versatility and fluidity of his life. He is complex enough for people to comprehend him and his secrets. He is confident and thinks they cannot understand him. Furthermore his boastful nature does reflect in his expression about himself:

I begin to suspect, when I am with you, that I am among the most gifted of men. I am filled with the delight of youth, with potency, with the sense of what is to come. Blundering, but fervid. I see myself buzzing round flowers, humming down scarlet cups, making blue funnels resound with my prodigious booming. How richly I shall enjoy my youth. (90-1)

He says that he is not a commoner. Rather he belongs to the group of highly dignified and respectful people. He differentiates him from commoners in the sense that he wants to upgrade and expose his superiority in the society. His existence is very much praiseworthy and durable since he sees much hope in the days to come which are very much fruitful and pleasant. Susan is in dilemma whether she is a

complete woman. She is not sure and confident about her actual life and its significance in society. Rather she fluctuates here and there in the search of her real identity as well. Her saying about her womanhood:

But who am I, who lean on this gate and watch my setter
nose in a circle? I think sometimes I am not a
woman, but the light that falls on this gate, on this
ground. I am the seasons; I think sometimes, January,
May, November; the mud, the mist, the dawn. I cannot be tossed about,
or float gently, or mix with other people. Yet now,
leaning here till the gate prints my arm, I feel the
weight that has formed itself in my side. (105-6)

Susan compares her with seasons and months. As they come in circular way and never stops their journey, she does keep on moving in the circular way. She is not confident enough that she is really a complete woman as she finds her identity in peril and fluctuating constantly. Furthermore she thinks that as seasons and months do not mix with others, she does not tend to mingle with other people as well. This uniqueness and separate identity shows her fragmentation which shrieks her most of the time.

More or less almost the female characters suffer similar types of problems and difficulties. Rhoda indeed suffers much more than

others and she is humiliated and ridiculed a lot as well. Rhoda is a conscious being; therefore, she contemplates much regarding her life and people responses towards her life. Hence Rhoda says:

I hate all details of the individual life. But I am fixed here to listen. An immense pressure is on me. Scorn and ridicule pierce me. I, who could beat my breast against the storm and let the hail choke me joyfully, am pinned down here; am exposed. The tiger leaps. Tongues with their whips are upon me. (114)

Rhoda's problem is related with her life and daily existence. There is a lot of pressure on her life that she feels heavy enough to carry on. She hates all details of individual in the sense that people take notice of each aspect of the person and finds flaws regarding one and another. On the basis of that they ridicule and scold individuals. It is indeed confirmed that no one is free from mischievous acts and behavior. At the same time every one does have some sort of personal weakness. When people take account of them, individual become victims of such severe criticisms. Hence Rhoda does suffer such severe responses from people and this is why she is anxious and hates them. In fact she finds ridicule and scorn that are because of her gender and sex very much troublesome and killing.

When Rhoda sees her life in danger, she cries for her protection. She is

unsafe since she is the youngest. She expresses her feelings in very sad and pathetic manner: “Hide me, I cry, protect me, for I am the youngest, the most naked of you all. Here she thinks that the reason for her vulnerability is her sex that is to say she is female and at the same time her body is naked. Nay male can take advantage of her unsafe position. By age she is very young and at the age of full-fledged sexual intercourse. Again her existence is in peril that is only because of her sex in the male-dominated society. Rhoda further says:

Each time the door opens I am interrupted. I am not yet twenty one. I am to be broken. I am to be derided all my life. I am to be cast up and down among these men and women, with their twitching faces, with their lying tongues, like a cork on a rough sea. Like a ribbon of weed I am flung far every time the door opens. I am the foam that sweeps and fills the uttermost rims of the rocks with whiteness; I am also a girl, here in this room. (115-6)

The above extract focuses on her girlhood that she is not fully mature by age. She is almost twenty, the age which indeed attracts the males a lot. This age is very much pleasing and charming. She is alone in the room which door keeps on opening and closing. The degree of her fear and non-protection heightens and she feels frightened enough as well. She

compares her with so many images such as foam, cork that really add the spice to her situation. After all, Rhoda in the patriarchy is not safe and her identity is in crisis. She does not feel protected and furthermore her virginity is vulnerable.

An English critic Joseph Brown states his reaction entirely focused on Rhoda here as such:

Rhoda is the most beautiful and simplest female character whose activities pervade *The Waves*. Woolf does seem to have inculcated her inner vision in this character very minutely. After all, the intention and underlying message of the whole text lies and is found through Rhoda's narration. Despite all these, she does represent females who are vulnerable in patriarchy and suffer a lot because of their gender and attempt to create their existence even in much unfavorable circumstance. (43)

Brown response to the text seems much feminist and his entire emphasis is on single character, Rhoda. It is felt that his reading is for the sake of criticality and feminist issues. He seems much concerned with the existence of females and how they go through different ups and downs in patriarchy. However, he is not indifferent to the message conveyed to the intended readers through the character, Rhoda. No doubt

she is the central figure in the text as well as she stands for the women.

The crucial male character who seems to have dominated the text says being concerned with his own identity as such:

But I do not wish to be first through the gate, to assume the burden of individual life. I, who have been since Monday, when she accepted me, charged in every nerve with a sense of identity, who could not see a tooth brush, now wish to unclasp my hands and let fall my possessions, and merely stand here in the street, taking no part, watching the omnibuses, without desire; without envy; with what would be boundless curiosity about human destiny if there were any longer an edge to my mind. But it has none. I have arrived; am accepted. I ask nothing. (121-2)

Bernard focuses on his relationship with the woman who charged him a lot. Though she accepted him, she disdained his mannerism as well. In fact he has faced a number of ups and downs, he feels pleased since his goal to get accepted by the girl is attained and now he does not have any query to ask with anyone. He is not fragmented simply because the wholeness of his wants and desires gets completed. The reason for this is his gender and sex. A male in the patriarchy does not face as many difficulties to create their existence as women do. Those who are anxious

a lot to get identified and have separate identity remain unidentified because of being females but those who are unaware and do not make any effort to do so, get recognized very soon in simpler and more normal manner due to the fact that they are males and they control the society as well. After all, this is the paradox of quest for identity in the text. The similar pride is there in Neville. He feels dissatisfied. However, he sees some sort of meaning into his life simply because he is a male in patriarchy. He says: “That is his strange mixture of assurance and timidity. He looks at himself in the looking-glass as he comes in; he touches his hair; he is dissatisfied with his appearance. He says, ‘I am a Duke-the last of an ancient race’” (129). His appearance is not so solid and recognizable which displeases him.

But he has the sense of superiority since he thinks that he belongs to the ancient race and as the last Duke he still remains as a relic of the most civilized age and race. His thought carries some arrogance regarding gender and lineage. The male characters like Neville think that they really comfort and ease the females’ life such as the life of Rhoda. In this regard, Neville says: “We wake her. We torture her. She dreads us, she despises us, yet comes cringing to our sides because for all our cruelty there is always some name, some face, which sheds a radiance, which lights up her pavements and makes it possible for her to replenish her

dreams” (130). Hence it gets crystal clear to Neville, Rhoda was in slumbering state and her sleep was broken by males and they brought her to the awakened position. The males woke her and now they dominate and torment her since she hates them. In the name of revenge they exploit her and leave some sort of radiance. They indeed batter her so that she can be reformed in their sense.

Likewise other male character like Louis boasts and goes back to the history in order to make his existence prominent and indispensable to other people. He says:

I was an Arab prince; behold my free gestures. I was a great poet in the time of Elizabeth. I was a Duke at the court of Louis the Fourteenth. I am very vain, very confident; I have an immeasurable desire that women should sigh in sympathy. I have eaten no lunch to-day in order that Susan may think me cadaverous and that Jinny may extend to me the exquisite balm of her sympathy. (138).

He calls him an Arab prince and compares him with a poet of the Elizabethan age. Furthermore he is proud of him since he thinks that he was a Duke at the court of Louis the Fourteenth. Hence his metaphorical expression is much oriented and targeted to the male ego and the gender concept inculcated in characters like Louis. The excerpt above focuses on

the immense desire Louis has got that women should sigh in sympathy. He associates subsidiary actions to females and thus in one sense he dominates them and worsens their existence. Because of such male thoughts and attitudes towards women, Rhoda the central female character expresses her fear and agony says:

I am afraid of you all. I am afraid of the shock of sensation that leaps upon me, because I cannot deal with it as you do-I cannot make one moment merge in the next. To me they are all violent, all separate; and if I fall under the shock of the leap of the moment you will be on me, tearing me to pieces. I have no end in view. I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole and indivisible mass that you call life. (141)

Rhoda seems apologetic to all the males and says she is much afraid of them in the sense that she thinks she is not as capable as males. She confesses that she cannot mingle a moment into another because all moments are violent and oppressive. She is not confident that she can do anything. She sees them fragmented which seem to be impossible to get concretized and joined together. She confides on life that is whole. She can deal with the whole but cannot do anything when things are scattered and fragmented. After all, she discloses her inability.

Just opposite the Rhoda's views, Louis expresses his own philosophy in the concern of human life and the qualities they carry on.

He says:

Pain and jealousy, envy and desire, and something deeper than they are stronger than love and more subterranean. The voice of action speaks. Listen, Rhoda (for we are conspirators, with our hands on the cold urn), to the causal, quick, exciting voice of action, of hounds running on the scent. They talk a little language such as lovers use. (155)

Louis's voice is much oppressive and commanding. He orders Rhoda to concentrate her mind on his statements and with force tells her about life and the human potentials. He says that the negative qualities such pain, jealousy, envy and desire are deeper and stronger than positive qualities such as love, compassion, and immeasurable things. After all his focus on the fact that women possess love profundity and compassion whereas males are envious, jealous and desirous and this is why they are stronger than women. To him women are cowardice and cannot bear pain and other challenges. He thinks that males are much practical and acting which is the reason he calls themselves conspirators. On the whole his statement seems much gender-based and boastful.

Despite the vital and indispensable role of Bernard, he does face complications regarding his identity and existence a lot. This is because of his dominant and obligatory presence everywhere in the text as well.

Hence Bernard says:

Too soon the moment of ravenous identity is over, and the appetite for happiness, and happiness, and still more happiness is glutted.

The stone is sunk; the moment is over. Round me there spreads a wide margin of indifference. Now open in my eyes a thousand eyes of curiosity. Anyone now is at liberty to murder Bernard, who is engaged to be married, so long as they leave untouched this margin of unknown territory, this forest of the unknown world. (155-6)

He submits himself before people that they are free enough to murder him. His delight and hope for life seems finished and deteriorated. As a matter of fact he is getting married soon. However, he alleges that anyone can do and behave with him as they wish. In fact he knows better that there is no one who can go against him and his life. Because of being confident about the things that may happen he tactfully makes this kind of allegation. Indeed this is a male trick to dominate the society and domain of women. He is not an exception in doing so. At the same time Neville

does make similar remark that is concerned with the women's position and their identity. Neville states: "Women shuffle past the window as if there were no gulf cut in the street; no tree with stiff leaves which we cannot pass. We deserve then to be tripped by molehills. We are infinitely abject, shuffling past with our eyes shut. But why should I submit?"(164). He seems to have focused on the women's deeds and behavior that they are carelessly walking on the road and they do not take notice of things that are there. At the same time he highlights men's position and tells us further that he does not want to submit before anyone at any cost since he does not see significance and greatness in women.

Rhoda as a conscious woman character talks about her homage for Percival on his demise and offers flowers so that his soul could get peace and satisfaction in the heaven. She says:

I will pick violets and bind them together and offer them to
Percival, something given him by me. Look now at what
Percival has given me.

Look at the street now that Percival is dead. The houses are
lightly founded to be puffed over by a breath of air.
Reckless and random the cars race and over by a breath of air.
Reckless and random the cars race and roar and hunt us to

death like bloodhounds. I am alone in a hostile world. The human face is hideous. This is to my liking. (172-3)

Her material and emotional aspects are connected as if it were a garland. Her emotional aspect gets exposed when she is committed to offering violets to Percival in his respect. She seems much sad on his death and rather makes his demise public. But she suffers a lot when she heeds on her own existence and plight and finds it redundant in the absurd world where humans are valueless and their every moment is unpleasant. Her identity is the matter of building a house out of sand over there. Similar case is of Susan as well. She does express her agony in very pathetic manner and further shows her womanly duty in the male dominated society. She states:

I stoop; I feed my baby, I, who used to walk through beech woods noting the jay's feather turning blue as it falls past the shepherd and the tramp who stared at the woman squatted beside a tilted cart in a ditch, go from room to room with a duster. Sleep, I say, desiring sleep to fall like a blanket of down and cover these weak limbs; demanding that life shall sheathe its claws and gird its lightning and pass by, making of my own body a hollow, a warm shelter for my child to sleep in.(186-7)

It gets crystal clear how women suffer and face challenges while doing her motherly duty. She feeds her baby and further brings about the shepherd and the tramp that look at women in very unusual way. Her concern is here with the life that her body is hollow and warm shelter for her child. Her life is directly connected with her life. In contrary to her life, Bernard's is much better and he expresses that he is the person of distinct nature. He says:

The truth is that I am not one of those who find their satisfaction in one person, or in infinity. The private room bores me, also the sky. My being only glitters when all its facets are exposed to many people [...] I have outlived certain desires; I have lost friends, some by death- Percival-others through sheer inability to cross the street. I am not so gifted as at one time seemed likely. Certain things lie beyond my scope. I shall never understand the harder problems of philosophy.

(202)

He is different from other people in the sense that he does not feel commendable when he is alone and rather he needs companionship and his identity is lively when he is with many people. Hence it gets clear that

he sees his identity in wholeness and completeness. After all, he does show his boundary that certain things are beyond him and his capacity.

The female character, Jinny finds her life very much valueless and futile. She sees no meaning into it as it is solitary and aged. She expresses her miserable plight in this way:

I am in the heart of life. But look-there is my body in that looking glass. How solitary, how shrunk, how aged! I am no longer young. I am no longer part of the procession. Millions descend those stairs in a terrible descent. Great wheels churn inexorably urging them downwards. Millions have died. Percival died. I still move. I still live. But who will come if I signal? (210)

Hence Jinny sounds much philosophical and loving to life. She laments on her old age that she is not young as such a woman should be to please others and this is why she cannot participate in the procession of the modern people. Thus she finds her unfit. Despite her old age Jinny is happy since she is still alive and breathing in air and feels rejoiced in the human world. Her concern is also with life and existence. Louis seems repenting and wants to have been born without fate like Percival. She thinks Percival's death is much significant since he does not have to face the terrible and burdensome life anymore. She compares her life with

Percival's death and finds his better. In the light of his death, she speaks as such: "It would have been happier to have been born without a destiny, like Susan, like Percival, whom I most admire. Life has been a terrible affair for me. I am like some vast sucker, some glutinous, some adhesive, some insatiable mouth" (219). She is not happy with her life anymore and wishes she died as Percival. But it does not happen and rather she further despises herself and calls her a vast sucker having greater glutton and greedy mouth. After all, her superficial and meaningless life has become a burden to her and she feels tired to carry it on. She does not take life any more significant which is without identity and human decency. In this way Rhoda is fed with human world and especially human behavior and their thought that is much corrupted and biased and she expresses disgust towards them:

Oh life how I have dreaded you, oh human beings now I
have hated you! How you have nudged, how you have
interrupted, how hideous you have looked in Oxford Street,
how squalid sitting opposite each other staring in the
Tube![...] How you chained me to one spot, one hour, one
chair, and sat yourselves down opposite! How you snatched
from me the white spaces that lie between hour and hour and
rolled them into dirty pellets and tossed them into the

wastepaper basket with your greasy paws. Yet those were
my life. (221-2)

She calls life and complains against human deeds and further says that life had frightened her in such a way that she now feels upset and disappointed with life itself in the human world. Her complaints against human beings and their mischievous behavior and other tricks are the matter of great significance. She finds her looted and snatched and made empty. She has been interrupted in very despising way and now she feels that she is just a dangling woman whose existence is in dire situation and however she agrees with the fact life is life that she belongs to.

Bernard is true in the sense that human beings are indeed born free but once they come in the process of socialization and get battered in such a way that they become bound to follow certain things in the society. This is the way their freedom is snatched from them and they remain slaves to the human society where a number of unwanted rules and restrictions are imposed on them. Bernard's analysis about human custom makes it clear: "Custom blinds your eyes. At that hour your relationship is mute, null, duncoloured". (232) He further talks about relations that exist among human beings mute and dump. Bernard is much confident in the sense that he is successful and forwarded in the field of self discovery.

His zealous attitudes and description of himself tells us something more about the male chauvinism. He suggests:

Think scarcely ever of I or of you; freedom from friction and part the weeds that grow over the mouths of sunken channels.[...] But it is only my body-this elderly man here whom you call Bernard-that is fixed irrevocably-so I desire to believe. I think more disinterestedly that I could when I was young and must dig furiously like a child rummaging in a bran-pie to discover my self. (236)

Hence it becomes crystal clear that he is in the opinion that his life has ever been spent in better way and others should learn some lessons from him since he has proven successful in discovering his identity and creating his existence in very firm manner. He further means to say that his life is worthy and has lived life with full zeal and emotion without any fixed mechanical purpose. In this way his gain in the matter of identity is far better than females' in the text particularly of Rhoda who indeed suffers both mental and social problems. There is overturn of her identity and need. As a matter of fact her identity should have been created but that seems to have got suppressed due to the male hegemony and she remains unrecognized and dependent despite her innumerable efforts.

The life of Jinny is also of the very nature and that is by virtue of being female. Her agony and complaints are much noteworthy since they add the detail of her problems and scarcity of her existence in the male-dominated society. She says:

Men and women, in uniforms, wigs and gowns, bowler hats and tennis shirts beautifully open at the neck, the infinite variety of women's dresses with them, in and out, in and out, into rooms, into halls, here, there, everywhere, wherever they go.[...] I am never alone. I am attended by a regiment of my fellows. My mother must have followed the drum, my father the sea. I am like a little dog that trots down the road after the regimental band. (241)

Women in the male-dominated society do go outside to deal with outer business alone since males think that they remain unprotected. So they are attended by a group of people. In fact it is a way to make women dependent and subservient. Here Jinny associates her with her family members and tells us that she is taken notice of much keenly and attentively. The reason for this is unknown to her. Thus her identity and life seems to have been embedded with others. After all, she feels she is not alone. However her life is futile and meaningless. Further she decorates herself to look beautiful in the eyes of males. Hence she avers

describing her physical appearance and her efforts made to judge her
bodily limbs:

I have sat before a looking-glass as you sit writing, adding
up figures at desks. So, before the looking-glass in the
temple of my bedroom, I have judged my nose and my chin;
my lips that open too wide and show too much gum. I have
looked. I have noted. I have chosen what yellow or white,
what shine or dullness, what loop or straightness suits. [...]
Now I turn grey; now I turn gaunt; but I look at my face at
midday sitting in front of the looking-glass in broad daylight.

(242)

It is women's compulsion to beautify themselves right from the beginning
of their birth and that beauty directly gets linked up with their limbs and
complexion not with the capability and mental status. To Bernard women
like Susan and Rhoda are of distinct qualities and nature. He says:

Rhoda was wild-Rhoda one never could catch. She was both
frightened and clumsy. It was Susan who first became
wholly woman, purely feminine. It was she who dropped on
my face those scalding tears which are terrible, beautiful;
both, neither. She was born to be the adored of poets, since
poets require safety; someone who sits sewing, who says 'I

hate, I love, who is neither comfortable nor prosperous, but has some quality in accordance with the high but unemphatic beauty of pure style which those who create poetry so particularly admire. (271)

He describes Rhoda as she is clumsy and frightened but does not make any attempt to say why she is so. Hence he is much biased in the sense that he looks at her from male perspective and alleges that she is a good subject for poets since they can create a lot on her. Similarly, to him Susan is purely feminine as she has done her level best to meet the demand of the males and been successful to please males and satisfy their taste. His relationship with Susan is that of a master and slave where he sympathizes and consoles her when she falls on his face. He finds her tears in very much terrible condition and thus gets convinced that she is purely feminine. He thinks women like Susan, are good only when they are dependent and subsidiary in human society. He considers them grateful and obedient to males and further implies that they should continue this trend ahead. In the same way he says:

Louis, the attic dweller; Rhoda, the nymph of the fountain always wet; both contradicted what was then so positive to me; both gave the other side of what seemed to me so evident (that we marry, that we domesticate); for which I

loved them, pitied them, and also deeply envied them their
different lot. (283)

This extract makes it clear the attitude Bernard has towards women is much biased and vain since his consolation and pity for them is perfunctory and redundant. He should not show such fake sympathy for them, for they are equally capable and endowed with fundamental rights by nature that they can face challenges of life and problems that frequently come on the path ahead. He says he loves them and pities them which are indeed pretentious words and such terms implicitly embody domination and superiority complex.

The Waves portrays the plight of both females and males that stand opposite and seek their existence in the human world. Females such Jinny, Susan and Rhoda struggle a lot to discover their self in their life but fail to get to that but their counterparts Neville and Bernard succeed in attaining their decent human identity in their life much more easily which is indeed a paradox of the quest of their identity. In fact those who make a great many efforts get successful in attaining the identity and enjoying human life in the common cases but here the males who have made nominal attempts to get identified prove victorious in doing so. This is much unpleasant and unbeneficial to females especially to Rhoda who has undergone a number of tribulations. However, she remains

suppressed and neglected in the society. After all, the waves of their life prove different despite the fact that they are fellows in the same stream.

IV. Conclusion

Woolf through characters, Neville, Bernard, Jinny, Rhoda and Susan has made efforts to show how the rift between males and females is getting far-fetched due to biased and preoccupied concept of segregation and gender discrimination. Louis voice is much repressive and authoritative. He orders Rhoda to ponder her mind on his statements and with force tells her about life and the human potentials. He says that the negative qualities such pain, jealousy, envy and desire are deeper and stronger than positive qualities such as love, compassion, and immeasurable things. After all his focus on the fact that women possess love, insightfulness and compassion whereas males are envious, jealous and desirous and this is why they are stronger than women. To him women are coward and cannot bear pain and other challenges. He thinks that males are much practical and acting this is the reason he calls themselves conspirators. On the whole his statement seems much gender-based and bigheaded.

Her beautification is under the gaze of a male character. However, she thinks that she lives her own life separately and independently from others' interferences. The idea of her separate identity comes since she is already worried about her existence and might have seen it in the danger under the gaze and governance of males. We are out of the tunnel symbolically means she along with other similar people is out of darkness and crisis. Her statement carries out the fact she is awakened and now thinks of her being in very distinct way. Her concern with body exchange does emphasize on the fact that she tends to get introduced among people and her life needs approving so that she can feel satisfied and can enjoy the moment of life in a very soothing manner. As a female she does see her life much fragile and lacking her individual identity.

Women in the male-dominated society do go outside to deal with outer business alone since males think that they remain unguarded. So they are attended by a group of people. In fact it is a way to make women dependent and subservient. Here Jinny associates her with her family members are tells us that she is taken notice of much keenly and attentively. The reason for this is unknown to her. Thus her identity and life seems to have been embedded with others. After all, she feels she is not unaccompanied. However her life is futile and worthless. Further she decorates herself to look beautiful in the eyes of males. Hence she avers

describing her physical appearance and her efforts made to judge her bodily limbs in very susceptible patriarchy.

To Neville Rhoda is in slumbering state and her sleep is broken by males and they bring her to the awakened position. The males wake her and now they govern and torture her since she hates them. In the name of revenge they exploit her and leave some sort of radiance. They indeed batter her so that she can be reformed.

The Waves reveals the quandary of both females and males that position opposite and seek their subsistence in the human world. Females such Jinny, Susan and Rhoda thrash about a lot to discover their self in their life but fail to get to that but their counterparts Neville and Bernard succeed in attaining their civilized human identity in their life much more easily which is indeed a irony of the quest of their identity. In fact those who make a great many efforts get successful in attaining the identity and enjoying human life in the common cases but here the males who have made nominal attempts to get identified prove triumphant in doing so. This is much unpleasant and unprofitable to females especially to Rhoda who has undergone a number of troubles. However, she remains suppressed and neglected in the society. After all, the waves of their life prove diverse despite the fact that they are fellows in the same watercourse. Woolf herself being a female has experienced a lot how

women are deprived of diverse genuine rights and made subservient in such a way that their identity gets lost in the names of males and life becomes a burden on the fake responsibility of males. Hence the search of identity to females gets blurred with the perfunctory consolation made by males. Consequently every positive fruitful thing women are short of as Rhoda, Jinny and Susan in *The Waves*. Their quest for identity overturns in very ironical way that each expectation remains unfulfilled.

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