



Female Characters in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*: A Feminist Approach.

الشخصيات الأنثوية في روايات فرجينيا وولف: السيدة دالو واي ، و نحو المنارة و الأمواج من منظور المنهج النسوي.

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Name: Ahlam Abdulfatah Aljihlani

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Dedication

To my father and my late mother

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining and clarifying three main problems appeared in the Victorian era: (i) patriarchal policy, (ii) psychological impact and (iii) sexual abuse as described by Virginia Woolf in her three novels: *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

The population of this study included Woolf's literary works. The sample was restricted to Woolf's novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1930). The views of feminist approach, proposed by Guerin (1992), had been followed as a method of this study to analyze the female characters. These views were as follows:

- (i) Most known societies have used and still use sex and gender although sex and gender systems differ as a structural principle in organizing their both worlds, the actual and conceptual, to the disadvantages of women.
- (ii) Women's position is undermined because of the patriarchal dominance who views women as different in the society.
- (iii) Feminists attempt to examine beliefs and practices from the viewpoint of the "other", treating women as marginalized subjects not objects.
- (iv) Men's practices make women lose their self esteem and individuality. Despite the subjugation, women make efforts to ensure their role and identity in the society.

Throughout applying Guerin (1992)'s views, the study explored certain findings which answered the following questions:

(i) How did Virginia Woolf revolt against the Victorian era?

Virginia Woolf contested the Victorian patriarchal era by focusing on women's inferiority and submission to her male society as depicted in her novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931) .

(ii) What were the psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominant behaviors of Virginia Woolf's female characters found in the selected novels?

The female characters were depicted as insignificant and trivial while they actually sacrificed themselves for other's needs and desires. They drowned in pain, sadness and loneliness. They lost self-image which ended in rising their physical collapse. Because of their depressed psychological impact, they sought a source in order to satiate their sexual desire; their female friends were that source.

(iii) How did the views of the feminist approach of Guerin (1992) tackle such problems?

The researcher referred to Guerin's (1992) views of feminist approach to analyze patriarchal, psychological and sexual images in the Victorian era. The researcher discovered that those views emphasized woman's liberation and revolted against men's harsh practices toward a woman. Throughout the analysis of the female characters, Woolf contested the inferior situation of women in the Victorian age. In other positions, the female characters were showed as warriors; they were independent from their patriarchal society.

The feminist approach accounted that the patriarchal dominant society was one of the reasons for woman's sense of inferiority. The female characters' words, speeches, feelings and interior monologues revealed their fearness, pain, sadness and loneliness because of the patriarchal dominancy.

The approach asserted that woman was forced to perform sexual intercourse against their own wish. Throughout analyzing the women's sexual fantasies, the researcher discovered that women lost men's sentiments, compassion and intimacy which were considered the main reasons for their homosexuality.

This study can be treated as a contribution to the study of English literature and literary criticism.

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى فحص و توضيح ثلاث مشاكل رئيسة ظهرت في العصر الفيكتوري: (1) السياسة الذكورية، (2) الأثر النفسي و (3) الانحراف الجنسي كما صورت في الروايات الثلاث لفيرجينيا وولف: مسز دالو واي ، نحو المنارة والأمواج.

اشتمل المجتمع الدراسي على أعمال فيرجينيا وولف الأدبية، و اقتصرت عينة الدراسة على روايات فيرجينيا: مسز دالو واي ، نحو المنارة والأمواج. و قد تم تطبيق أفكار المنهج النسوي كأسلوب دراسة منقولة عن غورن (1992) من أجل تحليل الشخصيات الأنثوية الموجودة في هذه الروايات، و تضمنت هذه الأفكار ما يلي:

(1) اعتادت معظم المجتمعات المعروفة على استخدام منظومي الجنس و الجنسية و ذلك في تنظيم عالمهما- الحقيقي و الإصطلاحي- لمصلحة الرجل دون المرأة بالرغم من أن كلا النظامين يختلفان من حيث الطبيعة البنوية.

(2) أضعفت مكانة المرأة بسبب السيطرة الذكورية و التي تنظر إلى المرأة في المجتمع نظرة مختلفة.

(3) يحاول المنهج النسوي فحص الاعتقادات و الممارسات التي تهمش المرأة و تعاملها كزراعة و ليس راعيين و ذلك من وجهة نظر الآخرين.

(4) تؤدي عادات الرجال إلى فقدان النساء احترامهن لأنفسهن و شخصهن، و تسعى المرأة- بالرغم من خضوعها لرجل- لصون دورها في المجتمع و هويتها.

و من خلال تطبيق أفكار غورن (1992)، بينت الدراسة نتائج محددة أجابت عن

الأسئلة التالية:

(1) كيف ثارت فيرجينيا وولف ضد العصر الفيكتوري؟

فندت فيرجينيا وولف العصر الفيكتوري الذكوري من خلال تركيزها على دنيوية و خضوع المرأة لمجتمعها الذكوري كما صور في رواياتها: *مسز دالو واي* ، *نحو المنارة* *والأمواج*.

(2) ما هي سلوكيات السيطرة الذكورية و الجوانب النفسية و الجنسية لشخصيات فيرجينيا وولف الأنثوية الموجودة في الروايات المذكورة؟

صورت الشخصيات الأنثوية على أنها شخصيات دون أهمية و لا تجدي نفعاً، بينما هن حقيقة يضحين بأنفسهن في سبيل حاجات و رغبات الآخرين، و انغمست هذه الشخصيات في الألم و الحزن و الوحدة، و فقدان صورتهم الذاتية و التي آلت إلى إعيائهن جسدياً. بحثت الشخصيات الأنثوية بسبب حالتهن النفسية المحبطة إلى مصدر ما لإشباع رغباتهن الجنسية فما كان سوى مثيلتهن من الإناث.

(3) كيف تعالج أفكار منهج غورن (1992) النسوي تلك المشاكل؟

استند الباحث إلى أفكار منهج غورن (1992) النسوي من أجل تحليل الصور الذكورية، النفسية و الجنسية التي كانت في العصر الفيكتوري، و توصل الباحث إلى أن هذه الأفكار أكدت على حرية المرأة و رفض ممارسات الرجل القاسية نحو المرأة، و هذا ما نادى به وولف بحيث فندت الوضع الدنيوي للمرأة في العصر الفيكتوري ، و في مواطن أخرى ظهرت هذه الشخصيات كمحاربات من أجل استقلالهن عن مجتمعهن الذكوري.

اعتبر المنهج النسوي النظام الاجتماعي الذكوري أحد الأسباب لشعور المرأة بالدنيوية و قد ظهر ذلك من خلال كلمات الشخصيات الأنثوية وأحاديثهن، وأحاسيسهن و حوارهن الداخلي ، بحيث كانت تعيش هذه الشخصيات الخوف، الألم، الحزن و الانعزال و هذا كله يعزى إلى الهيمنة الذكورية.

أكد المنهج على أن المرأة تجبر على الممارسة الجنسية ضد رغبتها، فمن خلال تحليل نزوات المرأة الجنسية تبين أن المرأة تفتقد إلى العطف و الحنان و المشاعر من قبل الرجل و التي اعتبرت من الأسباب الرئيسة للمثلية الجنسية لدى المرأة.

يمكن أن تساهم هذه الدراسة بدور في الأدب البريطاني و النقد الأدبي.

Chapter One

Background

Background

This chapter focuses on the Victorian age as a patriarchal society marginalized woman's position. It shows Virginia Woolf as a feminist and modernist novelist through her narrative technique. It also exposes the objectives, the questions, the limitations, the significance and the definitions of literary terms of the study.

The Victorian age introduced various problems related to women. Though it was an era of progression of railway-building, steamships and reforms of all kinds still it was an era of doubt. There were so much poverty, injustice, ugliness and so little certainty about faith and morals. With all its strict ideal and curious puritanical aspects, sex was regarded as a taboo concept. Victorian women were expected to be weak, helpless and fragile delicate flowers incapable of making decisions beyond selecting the menu. The woman also had to ensure that home was a place of comfort for her husband and family from the stresses of industrial Britain. Porter (1983, p. 113) argued that:

All these things meant subordinating their own needs and identity to those of the other members of the family. The fact that she [the Victorian woman] is sacrificing herself to significant others' needs reinforces the loss of her own significance.

It is evident that the Victorian women carried a wide range of responsibilities such as: (i) keeping the household running through the daily round of unfixed but inexorable chores, (ii) feeding the family, (iii) shopping, (iv) cooking, and (v) psychologically and materially sustaining the children, and their

husbands. Although they were the spine of the man's world, they were not allowed to be part of it.

The Victorian age was a patriarchal dominant period in which men were seen physically stronger than women; therefore, men were meant to dominate women by nature. Thus men were the father figures of the household and they had the right to decide women's destiny. The churches were very influential at the time in the society. A church gave instruction to men on how to act towards women and defined the role of a woman in the society. The only way for a woman to get progressed in society was by getting married. Women were treated as slaves because men and women did not have enough education and knowledge to know that freedom and respect were being the keys to the world which is a better world for every one equally. However, Victorian society dictated the idea of proper nourishment which meant stronger people, i.e. men, who were smarter among all species, were to survive because they were fit for the living. Nourishment became a crucial issue in the society after Charles Darwin had published *Origin of Species* in 1859. No rights and freedoms were granted to women and they were treated as slaves as compared to men; they only existed for the satisfaction of men.

By being forced to live in this confinement, women attempted for independence. Gilman (1899), one of the foremost Victorian feminist writers, portrayed sexist qualities that were raised in response to social pressures of the Victorian era. Gilman wrote the short story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, based on a real life incident which happened to her. She had fallen psychologically ill and sought the aid of a male physician. The doctor had limited Gilman's activity to being bed ridden and prohibited her from writing. This didn't sit too well with Gilman as she became even more ill. Eventually, she began to continue writing. As her illness

began to subside, Gilman realized it was not the advice of the doctor that helped heal her illness, but it was her writings and knowledge of her own body. When Gilman published these views in (1899), she raised many eyebrows from women who had experienced the same type of situation she was in such as Virginia Woolf.

Virginia Woolf, a British feminist essayist, critic and author, made an original contribution to the form of the novel. The traditional form of the novel had been restricted to the analogical plot. Foster (1971, p.93) had defined plot as:

a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence, the emphasis falling on causality ... The time sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it.

By contrast, Woolf's novels had evaded chronological plot and they had almost appeared as cinematic in their use of flashbacks, shifting points of view, and montage-like cutting from scene to scene. Showalter (1997, p.18), an American feminist critic, mentioned that:

Woolf's experiments in depicting consciousness in fiction and her conventions for representing character had changed the conventional concept of character and personality. The human personality was not one given fixed monolithic entity, but a shifting conglomerate of impressions and emotions.

In other words, the narrator of a traditional novel often stands in a position to tell us who everyone is and what their actions all mean. This narrator is called omniscient narrator. In contrary, in Woolf's novels each of the main characters is described from many points of view as they are seen and remembered by others. This analysis may reflect the psychological structure of human beings which does

not seem to be a fixed monolithic entity, but a shifting conglomerate of impressions, thoughts, emotions and memories.

Although Virginia Woolf was self-educated, she was vivacious, witty and ebullient and a member of the Bloomsbury Group who rejected the oppressive taboos of Victorian moral and sexual life that espouse sexual repression and strong social ethics. Bloomsbury Group started by her brother Thoby and his friends from Cambridge. This group quickly grew to encompass many of London's literary circles, who gathered to discuss art, literature, and politics. During her life and since her death she has been the subject of much debate and discussion surrounding the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her half-brother, her mental health issues and sexual orientation.

Virginia Woolf had encouraged women of the era to revolt against the Victorian morals such as: (i) the patriarchal dominancy, (ii) sexual abuse and (iii) psychological impact. Woolf revolted against those Victorian morals through her literary feminist writings in which she revealed woman's experience, inner conflict, thoughts and feelings. She had much to say about her society and the post-war changes, but feminism, i.e. the roles of women at that time and their seeming insignificance, was a steady underlying theme in her novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

Objectives of the study

This research aims at: (i) highlighting the way men had subjugated women during Victorian era and (ii) attempting to expose the negative impact of Victorian patriarchal society over woman's psychological and sexual conditions at that time.

Questions of the study

This research answers three questions related to the objectives of this study. Firstly, how did Woolf revolt against the Victorian era? Woolf questions the Victorian era through her novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931) which are the basis of this study. Secondly, what are the psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominant behaviors of Virginia Woolf's female characters found in the selected novels? Woolf questions these Victorian psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominance over women. Her female characters are depicted as insignificant, petty and sacrificing themselves for other's significant needs and desires as describing Clarissa a perfect hostess while Mrs. Ramsay as a sponge. Female characters drown in pain and sadness as Clarissa to whom her husband always neglects her as a woman who needs his emotional sensations while Lily in *To the Lighthouse* rejects being flattered and admired through her beauty because that only for man's vanity and self-assertion. Rhoda in *The Waves* lacks self-image which ends in rising her physical collapse. However, being psychologically inferior leads all Woolf's female characters to seek certain source in order to fulfill their sexual desires; their female friends are that source. Thirdly, how do the views of the feminist approach of Guerin (1992) tackle such problems? the views of the feminist approach of

Guerin (1992) relate psychological impact even sexual abuse to the patriarchal dominance who subjugates woman and that clearly appears in chapter four.

Limitations of the study

This research is theoretically limited to the feminist views regarding the female characters in Woolf's novels, namely, (i) *Mrs. Dalloway*, (ii) *To the Lighthouse* and (iii) *The Waves*. Also, the researcher is limited to the analysis of psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominant attitudes of Woolf's characters as per the feminist approach.

Significance of the study

This study may help readers of Virginia Woolf's novels for better understanding and better insight into the unrevealed facts of those novels concerning Woolf's characters, particularly, the Victorian women. The analysis helps the readers value these masterpieces more than before, and help researchers to think of further studies into women's position in that society at that time.

This study may broaden the understanding of the feminist approach, namely, its primary wave which concentrates on liberalization of women from the patriarchal barriers, i.e. Victorian's. It provides a source of experience which will enlighten a special group of scholars, critics and other researchers who share the same feminist concerns with certain insight into the relationship between women and art, women and writing. At the same time, it is evident that women in the arts did achieve a certain freedom from the structures of society that other women

could not, and Woolf herself is a clear example of this as observed throughout this study.

Definitions of Literary terms

1) Feminist approach

Feminist approach has emphatically confirmed woman's role in her society. Feminism comprises a number of social cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophies concerned with gender inequalities and discrimination against women. Vendler (1990, p. 20) has pointed out that:

Patriarchy has defined femininity as a margin or border of patriarchal order and this position has caused women both to be pressed and feared as well as giving their unique position of power.

It is evident that this movement has developed around many problems related to women such as equal protection of the law, equal rights to property, equal opportunity for education, better marriage relationship and the right to engage in professions.

2) Victorian era

It is commonly used to refer to the period of Queen Victoria's rule between 1837 and 1901 in Britain. Buckley (1969, p. 12) has observed that:

Victorian age was a tremendously exciting period when many artistic styles, literary schools, as well as, social, political and religious movements flourished. It was a time of prosperity, broad imperial

expansion, and great political reform... Without a doubt, it was an extraordinarily complex age that has sometimes been called the Second English Renaissance. It is, however, also the beginning of Modern Times.

Generally, Victorian age had shifted through its progress into which its early period had been ruled by conservative religious denominations, its middle period was subject to a democratizing parliamentary reforms and its late period was the flow of flourishing ideas values as a result of industrial revolutionary in Britain.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Literature Review

This chapter primarily presents feminist theory as it is seen by Guerin et al (1992) and some feminist theorists. It presents some feminist views related to Greek, Victorian and modernist authors, essayists, critics and researchers.

The feminist theory at the turn of nineteenth century basically focuses on liberalizing from male oppression and repression through expression. Feminist approach, proposed by (Guerin et al, 1992), is concerned with marginalization of women and believes that the universal culture is a patriarchal culture, that is, one organized in favor of men's interests. His views are developed in response to the continuous discrimination against and relegation of the woman in society. McManus (1997, p. 60) argues that "Feminism is primarily concerned with the liberation of women". Showalter (2001, p.313) says that "all [feminists] are struggling to find a terminology that can rescue the feminine from its stereotypical associations within inferiority."

The feminist views, particularly Guerin's, reveal that feminism attempts to reject the inferiority of woman. It seeks to give the woman a sense of self as a worthy, effectual and contributing human being. Feminism is a reaction to the stereotypes of women, i.e. being angle of the house, weak and trivial, which deny them a positive identity.

Smith (1989) had argued that Aristotle believed in dualities. His dualities are presented in action is superior to inaction, form is superior to matter, completion is to incompleteness, and possession is to deprivation. In each of these dualities, Aristotle has associated the male principle with the superior quality and the female with the inferior. The male principle in nature is associated with active,

formative and perfected characteristics, while the female is passive, material and deprived. They desire male in order to become complete. Men are always identified with virile qualities, such as judgment, courage and stamina; however, women with irrationality, cowardice, and weakness.

Smith had also argued that the male principle, according to Aristotle, had sought always to reproduce itself. The creation of a female was always a mistake; therefore, resulting from an imperfect act of generation. The female was softer and more docile, more apt to be despondent, querulous, and deceitful. Being incomplete, moreover, she craved sexual fulfillment in intercourse with a male. The male was intellectual, active, and in control of his passions.

Aristotle's biology also has had social and political consequences. If the male principle was superior and the female inferior, then in the household, as in the state, men should rule and women must be subordinate. That hierarchy did not rule out the companionship of husband and wife, whose cooperation was necessary for the welfare of children and the preservation of property. Such mutuality supported male preeminence. Unlike Aristotle's belief, Plato (360 B.C.) had suggested that there is no need for the subordination of women. Women may, therefore, be educated to the same level as men to assume leadership. He had argued that the subordination of women has remained the norm and the prescription. One can see that the women in earlier time did not have solid ground to independently express her own situation. They were also rendered weak into which that man may lend them his reason to guide their tottering steps aright.

Women of the Victorian age can be regarded as the first group to do battle for the equality of the sexes. Feminism was not outright spoken of in this time, rather passed through literature such as novels, short stories and essays. Novels,

short stories and essays are accounted as the primary means to communicate information and ideas in that time. The continuity of women's suffrage leads to feminist and Women's Rights movements. Wollstonecraft (1791) had projected the rudiments of the feminist movements. Wollstonecraft argued that women ought to have education equality with their position in society and then proceeded to redefine that position. She claimed that women were essential to the nation because they educated its children and because they could be companions to their husbands, rather than mere wives. Instead of viewing women as ornaments to society or property to be traded in marriage, they are human beings deserving of the same fundamental rights as men.

Fuller (1845) rebelled against placing women in a subservient and inferior position based largely on the Judeo-Christian tradition. She also questioned a definite line between male and female: "There is no wholly man ... no purely women."(p.172) but they were both equal. Like women, men are weak, dependent, and need women's existence and assistance. Like men, women have self-control and self-esteem. However, in both cases men and women have to become equal and that is related to their social affairs and unfixed circumstances.

Bronte (1847) personified the feminist philosophy through the main character of Jane. As Jane matures from child to woman, her strength of character is what makes her memorable. Through her endurance, moral convictions, and intense emotional capacity, Jane is shown as the perfect example of feminism. Jane's strength to endure harsh circumstances is shown throughout the novel.

Bronte explicitly attempted to raise the issue of gender equality. Jane fought for her individuality and refused to be reduced to some mere a machine. She will not act in the manner that custom or conventionalities would deem her to act.

This is vividly a female's attempt to break out of the mold that society has framed for her.

Norton (1854) highlighted the injustice of woman's property rights and influenced parliamentary debates to reform property laws. Norton is prevented from seeing her three sons after being separated from her husband. After her husband's unsuccessful attempt to prove her guilty of an adulterous affair, Norton has filed for divorce on the ground of cruelty. Her claim is rejected, as English law does not recognize cruelty as a just cause for divorce. Norton has no rights to sue for divorce and can not force her husband to maintain her financial support. She is also unable to gain access to any of the marital property. However, because she is still married, her husband is legally able secure much of her earnings for himself. Stetson (2001, p. 31) had argued that "Mrs. Norton suffered all of the worst fates of a *feme covert* [a French term means the woman's existence was *covered* by her husband's] as a result of her separation. Her husband has exercised his legal right to deny her visits to her children". Norton's case has spotlighted the injustice of married women's property rights in England.

Mill (1869) contested the Victorian system against woman at that time into which such unequal patriarchal system won't lead to the progress of civilization, and the improvement of the moral sentiments of mankind. He also disputes the vassalage of the authority of men over women. Accordingly, he asserted that such principle, which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes, the legal subordination of one sex to the other, is wrong in itself and it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality by admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

Ibsen (1879) had been soaked with feminist gratuity. Ibsen cleverly used feminine hero Nora to appear as subservient, fawning, and vulnerable to her husband Torvald. However, it is Nora who concocts a plan: borrowing money from Krogstad in order to finance Torvald's recovery retreat. All the while, Nora lies to Torvald; she tells him the money came from her deceased father. In reality, Nora is passed from the home of her father's home to Torvald's like a doll that is shared between playmates. Torvald sees Nora as a little lark, squirrel, trembling young beauty, frightened little songbird, a hunted dove, bewildered helpless thing, a blind and incompetent child. All the qualities that he associates with Nora are qualities one might assess as childlike, or childish. Torvald sees Nora as someone to protect, to work for, to supply, to shelter, to feed, to clothe, to play with, to be in love with, but not someone who he can sit down and have a serious discussion with her about problems. When Nora asks to be included in the problem solving process, Torvald rejected because her intelligence will not elevate to create ideas. However, Nora, who may not be as knowledgeable about the law, borrowed money from a lender in order to provide a trip to make Torvald feel better.

Gilbert et al (1978) rejected entirely the given, oppressive and male-dominated order of society. They provided a structural scheme for woman's liberation through using of signifiers and signified concepts. One can find the signifier fear as a recurring theme shown as a male demonstrative. They seek to prove a revolt against male dominance is possible. However, a woman can successfully have access to her society through her own female words and continuous logical debates.

Kristeva (1980) offered a change of language to give women more power over rapists, i.e. men. She presented a new script where the female body is born

into a discourse that figures it as potent. Similarly, Kristeva (1993) theorized a connection between mind and body, culture and nature, psych and soma, matter and representation by insisting that drives are bodily discharged in signification. The logic of signification is already operating in the maternal body which is the first source of rhythms, tones and movements for every human being since we all have resided in that body.

Gorham (1982) had asserted that the preservation of Victorian values about family and femininity underestimated women's self-image. They were only expected to be domestic women; therefore, they did not have much time to consider themselves to be anything. A woman has no time or direction to form any image at all.

Murdock (1990) had argued that a woman needs to carry her own sword of truth because much of woman's truth had been obscured by patriarchal myths. New forms, new styles and a new language must be developed by woman to express their own knowledge. Women have to exert all efforts to reveal their truth and to confront the patriarchal myth which has been on the surface.

Eales (1998) had argued that the sexes were created equal but that men had usurped supremacy to themselves and had tyrannized women by using them like children, fools or subjects. This process explicitly enslaves women and dejects their spirits to the point of stupidity whereas women naturally have an understanding as men.

Felski (2003) firmly rejected the view that women are all pretty much the same. They are dismissed as a restricted diet prepared by men whose judgments of beauty were prejudiced and whose languages were full of gendered meanings.

Bowen (2004) examined the phenomenon of women doing autobiography on the Internet and contextualized the phenomenon in the poststructuralist ideologies of three postmodern feminist literary critics, namely, Virginia Woolf, Rachel Blau DuPessis and Helene Cixous. Bowen followed Woolf's space, DuPessis's style and Cixous's medium to demonstrate that women had successfully yielded a new feminine discourse in their online journals. The goal of this study is to provide readers with a theoretical explication of this new discursive tradition. Bowen used the work of Woolf, DuPessis and Cixous, and tied together to introduce and theorize the significance of this new discursive tradition within the context of postmodernist feminism theory.

The findings were couched in recognized ideological standpoints of postmodern feminism, and contextualized in the works of three canonical authors. Obviously, the World Wide Web gives voice to those who could not speak. As women continue to develop individual styles, each one joining in the chorus, women together will be engaging collectively in one of the most important acts of creation possible: the creation of women as selves and selves who are completely able to express themselves as women.

Tomazic (2005) investigated a sense of identity or selfhood through honest and accurate appreciation of the lives of others which were made by several female characters in the fiction of A.S. Byatt and Iris Murdoch. Tomazic believed that Byatt and Murdoch's writing can play a significant role in illuminating the lives of women by means of its portrayal of the resolution of women's struggles. Women's lives, despite the rise of feminism, are still not equitable. While many women strive to attain a balance of independence and intimacy, many do not succeed in this endeavor.

Tomazic asserted that Byatt and Murdoch's fiction is an ongoing exploration of the nature of reality and the nature of selfhood, particularly that of women. According to the feminist theory, women are more constrained than men, and are therefore the focus of this study, but their experience of constraint is a more complex matter than experience of mere undifferentiated oppression.

Tomazic concluded that Byatt's and Murdoch's view of the importance of fiction is a means of commenting on human relationships. The labyrinth and Bildungsroman, according to Tomazic, provided paradigms for the complex experience of Byatt's and Murdoch's female characters. All the female characters in this study struggle to flee from restraint, seeking purpose and agency in the world through interaction with others, i.e. men.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

Methods

Woolf wrote a number of novels, namely, *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), *The Years* (1937) and *Between the Acts* (1941). This study focused on three Woolf's novels, namely, (i) *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), (ii) *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and (iii) *The Waves* (1930). The researcher intentionally chose these novels because they powerfully achieved the central purpose of this study, namely, exposing Woolf's denial of the Victorian patriarchal dominant policy over women in that society at that time.

The researcher accomplished this purpose through analyzing in details Woolf's female characters such as: Clarissa, Mrs. Ramsay, Lily, Susan... etc. in these mentioned novels. The analysis of these female characters was achieved as created in these novels into which Woolf employed her narrative technique, i.e. the stream of consciousness, thoughts, feelings and impressions, to reveal certain truths about a woman's social status in the Victorian era.

The researcher followed the feminist approach proposed by Guerin (1992) as a basic principle of this study to analyze Woolf's female characters. His thoughts assisted the researcher in discussing three main themes explored in Chapter Four of this study. These views, which no doubt denied gender discrimination, are as follows:

- (v) Most known societies have used and still use sex and gender although sex and gender systems differ as a structural principle in organizing their both worlds, the actual and conceptual, to the disadvantages of women.

- (vi) Women's position is undermined because of the patriarchal dominance who views women as different in the society.
- (vii) Feminists attempt to examine beliefs and practices from the viewpoint of the "other", treating women as marginalized subjects not objects.
- (viii) Men's practices make women lose their self esteem and individuality. Despite the subjugation, women make efforts to ensure their role and identity in the society.

The researcher refers to this approach to analyze the following:

- (i) Patriarchal dominancy: The approach rejects the brutality of man's dominance because of the injustice practice of power.
- (ii) The psychological impact: feminist approach is concerned with the woman's biology that affects her psychological impact. The patriarchal beliefs and attitudes, namely, want to subjugate, use, and abuse others, prevent women from recognizing and feeling their dissatisfaction because they were ridiculed. This affected women's psychological well-being by increasing their feelings of anger and depression, and decreasing their state self-esteem.
- (iii) Sexual abuse: the approach will handle the sexual practices against women. Women are forced to perform sexual intercourse against their own wish. Such interactions reflect women's defeat, failure, and deprivation at that time.

Procedures

This analytic study considered the following steps:

(1) The researcher read and collected views, thoughts and beliefs about feminist approach regarding women's social situation in Victorian era in Britain.

(2) The researcher selected Woolf's novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* as samples of this study because they are involved in problems related to women, in particular, (i) patriarchal dominance (ii) psychological impact and (iii) sexual abuse which are the basic issues of this study.

(3) The researcher highlighted these problems by describing and analyzing the main female characters in these novels. The depiction of these female characters is achieved by describing their interior monologues, thoughts, inner conflicts and impressions as explored in Chapter Four which is classified as follows:

(i) Theoretically, it examined patriarchal dominant policy over women in Woolf's novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. In these novels, the researcher focused on the main female characters. Through describing their attributes, thoughts, behaviors, memories and longings, the researcher exposed the novelist's rendering of patriarchal dominant society over them. The feminist approach rejected the marginalization of woman's social role. This theoretical view explicitly appeared through treating the views of others, i.e. men such as Peter, Mr. Ramsay, Louis and Bernard, against women. The female characters embodied the popular image of women in the Victorian era, namely, the ideal women or the perfect hostess.

However, the researcher revealed the patriarchal dominant policy over women by describing some male characters such as: Peter, Mr. Dalloway, Mr.

Ramsay, Percival, Louis and Mr. Tansley. These male characters employed higher social and intellectual status, depriving women to motivate themselves and improve their social status. Women were created for bearing children and holding house in accordance with their depiction in these novels.

(ii) Theoretically, it examined psychological impact as a consequence of men's repressive harsh attitudes against them. This would be achieved by analyzing the impact of external patriarchal realities on internal female characters' psyche. Guerin (1992) had argued that feminist theory mostly criticizes writing strategies including matters of subject, vocabulary, style, imagery and narrative structure. All these literary writing strategies are the keys to understand the female characters' psychological being status. This view is achieved by examining the female characters' psychological reflections such as: words, speeches, feelings and interior monologues. These women suffered pain, sadness and loneliness because of their male-dominant society as represented in the novels.

The researcher related Rhoda's loss of self image to Lacan's mirror stage, semantic and symbolic self to explain the concept of self-image that recursively appeared in *The Waves*, in particular.

(iii) Theoretically, it examined sexual abuse as a consequence of men's brutal selfish desire. This would be done by analyzing female depressive sexual longings. The female characters drown in homoerotic relationship as seeking sexual satisfaction. The researcher examined the female characters' homosexuality through exposing their sexual fantasies. Lack of male sentiments, compassion and intimacy, considered the main reason for existing such homosexuality within the contents of the novels.

In the novels, the female characters , namely, (i) Clarissa, (ii) Mrs. Ramsay, (iii) Rhoda, (iv) Susan and (v) Jinny were portrayed as refugees who sought certain place as well as certain object, whether a man or a woman, to saturate their suppressed sexual arousals. These deprived sexual longings were achieved through their memories, images, feelings and interior monologues towards the other, i.e. a woman.

Throughout analyzing these themes, the researcher focused on Guerin (1992)'s views. These views actually considered the social factor, i.e. patriarchal dominance, the basic obstacle for women's liberation and enjoyment in their life. The researcher abandoned the religious and political factors because they were accounted as the reasons for the emergence of the feminist approach as presented in Chapter One.

Chapter Four

Discussion

Feminist issues :(i) patriarchal dominance (ii) psychological impact (iii)
sexual abuse in Woolf's novels: *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and
The Waves

Patriarchal dominance

This chapter analyzes in details three issues, namely, the psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominant policy. Patriarchal system over Woolf's female characters found in the selected novels is accounted as the basic constraint in defining, directing and formulating woman's social position, psychological being status and sexual desire. These issues are tackled on the basis of feminist views, proposed by Guerin (1992), which are highlighted in Chapter Three of this study.

From a feminist perspective, society has dealt with gender in a way that harms women into which men are trained to believe that they are superior to them and it is their right to punish, discipline or intimidate women. Feminism was part of a free-ranging spirit of rebellion at the turn of the nineteenth century. Victorian society presented social patriarchal dominated values. Woolf's rebellion against Victorian values, namely, psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominated policy over women appeared through her novels, in particular, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

Mrs. Dalloway is a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, who while planning a party, reflects on her life and feels as though much of it has been trivial. Often subtle, a feminist tone is established from the very beginning. Clarissa has decided to go out to buy the flowers for the party herself as her maid has much work to do. She immediately begins to think of Peter Walsh, a past lover.

Woolf shows Peter Walsh as a rival for Mr. Dalloway who appears lacking sentiments and does not have enough courage to tell his wife [Clarissa] that he loves her. Instead of that he just buys flowers for her. Although Clarissa has fond of Peter, she has married another man, namely, Mr. Richard Dalloway. Richard

seems more steady, predictable and able to protect her against the shocks of life as when her dog is injured. However, Peter has not more interest in female issues. Woolf (1925) describes: "it was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's characters eternally" so that he rejects "*the defects of her own soul* [Clarissa's] ..." (my italics):

(i) having a sense of comedy into which she is always apt to make people bring such comedy out, (ii) lunching, (ii) dining, (iv) giving things she does not mean, (v) talking nonsense (vi) and losing her discrimination (Woolf, 1925, p. 67)

All these Clarissa's values lead him to see her as "the perfect hostess". Thus, Walsh's interior monologue indicates within this text that he, as a man especially, has the capacity of mind to be concerned with far more important matter.

Woolf's powerful personality has inscribed her revolt against women as prisoners of Victorian age. She resists the invisible barrier of Victorian patriarchal society and exposes the subversion of traditional male construction. Woolf depicts Clarissa by the frame of Peter's vision: "And it was awfully strange, he [Peter] thought, how she [Clarissa] still had the power, as she came tinkling , rustling, still had the power, as she came cross the room which he detested, rise at Bourton on the terrace in the summer sky." (p.40) Elaborating on Clarissa's character, Peter says:

There was always something cold in Clarissa, he thought. She had always, even as a girl, a sort of dimity, which in middle age becomes conventionality, and then it's all up, it's all up, he thought. Looking rather drearily into the glassy depths, and wondering whether by

calling at that hour he had annoyed her; overcome with shame suddenly at having been a fool; wept; been emotional; told her everything, as usual, as usual. (p.41)

Through Peter's interior monologue, Woolf illustrates Clarissa as a powerful guide woman into which Peter, who is supposed to control his emotions and decisions, is still under Clarissa's mercy. However, throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's refusal writing conventional format contends her rejecting traditional male techniques of writing at that time. Woolf, as a member of the Bloomsbury group and a peer of James Joyce, does not feel a need to prescribe to traditional organization, thus allowing for a much more loose form in terms of syntax, plot, and narrative voice. Simon (1992, pp. 96-180) stipulates:

It is just the purpose of Virginia Woolf to abolish the distinction between dream and reality; she affects this by mixing images with gestures, thoughts with impressions, visions with pure sensations, and by presenting them as mirrored on a consciousness.

Hence, Woolf's language too is moment to moment, short, and dense. She writes in a flow of consciousness, floating from sensation to sensation and from the mind of one character to the next.

However, the names used when referring to Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway* signify different meanings. Mrs. Dalloway, who has responsibilities and power, is used in the novel to signify a distinguishable lady of class. She is also her husband's wife when this term is used as if she is the other half of her husband. This is displayed on the first page when she says that she will buy the flowers herself. Not only she attempts to show herself but also plans for a party to advance

her husband's career. As such, of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf writes in her diary: “In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity” (p.56). Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf presents contradicting issues and paradoxical experiences in the lives of her characters. Perhaps more than any other, Clarissa personifies Woolf’s desire to show the multifarious nature of identity. Clarissa, looking into a mirror, ponders her identity:

She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self—pointed; dart-like; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one center. (p. 37)

Clarissa seems not one thing, but many. Obviously, she chooses which facet of her self to present to the world. The image in the mirror changes; Clarissa’s identity adjusts depending on her environment. This point stresses the woman's powerlessness which is enforced by male power. Thus, one cannot find real women, namely Victorian's, since they have only embodied their patriarchal mores. Women fail to show their own image which they desire; they are compelled to that Great Man, which is a concept has spread at Victorian age indicating the superiority for men.

Woolf (1927) in *To the Lighthouse* seems to be narrated by women, as the perspectives of Mrs. Ramsay and Lily are the most fully developed narratives within the text. In this novel, Woolf asks the question about sexuality of women, and questions the woman's role within the family. Mrs. Ramsay is portrayed as the angel of the house. It is regarded as the popular Victorian image of the ideal woman who is expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband. The angel

itself indicates passive, powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and pure. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Ramsay is described as "flashing her needles, confident, upright; she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow; bade him [Tansley] take his ease there, go in and out, enjoy himself". (Woolf, 1927, p.38)

Woolf questions the connotative meaning of words, attitudes, emotions, and value judgments. She illustrated how man's word can create internal conflict for women. Thus, Gilbert (1978) has noted how difficult it was for women to break free from the eternal types imposed upon them by centuries of masculine writers:

Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass toward literary autonomy . . . , she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face . . . (p.17).

The internal and external descriptors of Mrs. Ramsay serve as excellent examples of this conflict. Throughout the novel, one can see Mrs. Ramsay's struggle with the concept of the universal mother. Woolf (1927, p.32) writes:

They came to her, naturally, since she [Mrs. Ramsay] was a woman. All day long with this and that; the children were growing up; she often felt she was nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions.

The woman is considered nothing in this male-dominated society; she has to endure and cope with all various situations, especially those are related to man's position.

Throughout the novel, Mrs. Ramsay was seen as the epitome of feminine devotion, the perfect mother and wife. Mrs. Ramsay has been "drunk and quenched

by . . . the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again” until she is left with “scarcely a shell of herself for herself”. (p. 38) Unlike Lily, whose internal conflict arises from her defiance of male definitions. Mrs. Ramsay’s internal conflict arises from her attempt to fulfill them.

The stream of consciousness technique which fragments the plot of *To the Lighthouse* is unified through Mrs. Ramsay's efforts to bring the whole family and guests together in a pleasant atmosphere. Variable internal focalization, where focalization changes from one character to another, foregrounds Mrs. Ramsay's domesticity and her unifying role in part one, "The Window". Focalization passes from Mrs. Ramsay to the other characters. The focalized becomes Mrs. Ramsay in most instances. The realistic and sterile philosopher, Mr. Ramsay, thinks that his wife is not very clever and well-educated: He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Mr. Ramsay's ideas about his wife suggest the stereotypical male view of the woman as an object of beauty. He represents the patriarchal dominance.

However, Woolf (1927) shows how the priority of the domestic space has repressed women and prevented them from taking part in everyday activities – commerce, travel, work and education. This is seen when Mrs. Ramsay and Lily find that oppression in the public realm is linked to that of the private. This also illustrates how Woolf can deal with material and economic, historic conditions, which affect men and women's lives, and their ways of viewing the world, their perceptions and imaginative response that differ. This is highlighted with the constant comparisons between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. This is also shown through the inner monologue of the characters and the inter-subjectivity. Woolf investigates gender and the power of men and women; she explores the way in which people

are constructed as gendered beings, and how culture and society restrict our actions, opportunities, and speech. Mrs. Ramsay eases us into this: "...For the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance, finally for an attitude towards herself which no women could fail to feel or to find agreeable...pray heaven it was none of her daughters!" (p.13)

Although at times Mrs. Ramsay does appear to be an idealized version of a woman as being the angel of the house. Throughout her inner monologue, it is seen that inwardly she questions male and female roles and that in her inner thoughts an independent thinking woman is trying to eradicate the presence of the Victorian female ideal. Although as an idealized perfect mother figure, she has greater aspirations for her female daughters, namely, Prue, Nancy and Rose. They could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other; for there was in all their minds a mute questioning of deference and chivalry.

Woolf also laments her oppressive masculine society by which Mrs. Ramsay's gender role is shown in soft response to Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Ramsay emerges as a heroic tyrant and appears to represent the typical male who is compared to sharp instrument, knife, axe and poker with which his son wants to hit him.

The language which Mr. Ramsay uses is assertive, opinionated and slightly patronizing. It shows his philosophical prowess. He has reached the level of ordinary experience; as Lily calls it: he feels simply:

"That's a chair, that's a table", however in Mr. Ramsay's term he has managed to reach Q, but not R. The use of the alphabet shows the male

mind; logical, chronological and linear but also childlike: "Still, if he could reach R it would be something. Here at least was Q". He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate... Then R. He braced himself. He clenched himself. (p.54)

Furthermore, Woolf highlights male dominance through Mrs. Ramsay's intimate feelings towards her husband.

It did not matter, any of it, she [Mrs. Ramsay] thought. A great man, a great book, fame- who could tell? She knew nothing about it. But it was his way with him, his truthfulness - for instance at dinner she had been thinking quite instinctively, if only he [Mr. Ramsay] would speak! She had complete trust in him. And dismissing all this, as one passes in diving now a weed, now a straw, now a bubble, she felt again, sinking deeper, as she had felt in the hall when the others were talking. There is something I want-something I have come to get, and she fell deeper and deeper without knowing quite what it was, with her eyes closed. And she waited a little, knitting, wondering ... (p. 105)

Mrs. Ramsay's interior monologue, which is amalgamating with Woolf's voice, declares her full authenticity, loyalty, appreciation and full dependency on her husband as if she favorably copes with his attitudes and thoughts. This speech discloses a certain male dominance. When Mrs. Ramsay raises her husband's attributes, Woolf hides her presence. Mrs. Ramsay becomes 'she' indicating Mrs. Ramsay's suppression by the force of a masculine culture which forbids her to speak in the name of herself. Reflexively, Mrs. Ramsay cannot have enough courage to speak her inner thoughts and becomes like a "weed", "bubble", and "straw". Through her patriarchal milieu, Mrs. Ramsay is suffocated and is unable

to catch what she really wants as if she relentlessly sinks into an endless space ... "wondering".

In *The Waves* (1931), her six characters are presented in a vacuum of family and wholly in relation to each other, even in their early youth. For the most part, they are also presented in a vacuum of contact. Woolf shows them not acting and interacting, but instead providing ongoing accounts of their actions and interactions:

I pad about the house all day long in apron and slippers, like my mother who died of cancer ... 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. (Woolf, 1931, p.96)

Far from being disembodied, however, these "speeches" are preoccupied with visceral sensation, from the synesthetic rendering of Jinny's first sip of wine-- "Scent and flowers, radiance and heat, are distilled here to a fiery, to a yellow liquid" (p. 103)--to Bernard's account of individuation as the "bright arrows of sensation" produced by a wet bath sponge squeezed over a young body (pp. 26, 157, 239). But the sensations are confined to the individual bodies.

The novel can be seen as a verbalization of a mystical vision which Woolf refers to as "that fins the waste of water which appeared to me over the marshes out of my window at Rodmell". (Woolf, p.169) The fin may represent a feeling or intuition about her male dominance reality which cannot be described but rather must be. Mulas (2005, p.1) asserts *The Waves's* complex images: "it is this

mystical awareness of Reality or Being [capitalized are original] that Virginia Woolf tries to evoke through the lives of the six characters in *The Waves*".

However, Woolf, by her critical spectator self, has managed to evade the psychological pull of society. In other words, she has to fight conventional identity forming influences in order to be who she is, and she is, in a sense, living beyond society and gender. The reader may wonder if Woolf thinks men are especially disposed toward investing their identities in society as her father and brother has done, or that men are simply inept when it comes to understanding emotions. This seems doubtful, however, for many reasons, but primarily because Woolf has such an acute understanding of the complexity involved in personality.

One might also cite the great pressure that Victorian men face to become particular, consistent, logical and social contributors: "Every one of our male relations was shot into that [patriarchal] machine at the age of ten and emerged at sixty a Head Master, an Admiral,..."(Woolf, 1931, p. 153). One may also cite Bernard's psychological acumen and self-awareness in *The Waves* as evidence of Woolf's open mindedness toward men on this issue; "she is in love with words, like Bernard" (Woolf, 1931, p.9" ; and an exhausted man in an another situation:

I, who had been thinking myself so vast, a temple, a church, a whole universe, unconfined and capable of being everywhere... am now nothing but what you see—an elderly man, rather heavy, grey above the ears, who (I see myself in the glass) leans one elbow on the table, and holds in his left hand a glass of brandy. That is the blow you have dealt me. I have walked bang into the pillar-box. I reel from side to side. I put my hands to my head. My hat is off—I have dropped my

stick. I have made an awful ass of myself and am justly laughed at by any passer-by. (Woolf, 1931, p.207)

Woolf also exposes the rigid, stiff and taut patriarchal dominance through Percival character. Patriarchy is any system of organization in which the overwhelming number of upper positions in hierarchies is occupied by males. According to this, Percival has been taken as the silent patriarchal "hero" figure in *The Waves* whom Bernard, Louis and Neville meet at school. Neville first describes Percival as remote person and he is hopeless in love women. These six characters would not endure such suffering if they did not have some aspiration of fulfillment. Woolf embodies this objective in the character of Percival. Percival, a silent character whom Woolf describes only through the views of the six characters, enters the novel with an immediate sense of leadership and heroism. However, the descriptions of Percival all lead to a quizzical assumption that he is an easily-mocked leader with no real substance other than what others perceive in him. Regarding Percival, Hackett (1999, p.269) believes: "With this construction of a hero, Woolf parodies the archetypal male hero". This can be seen from the first mention of Percival when Neville comments:

"Now I will lean sideways as if to scratch my thigh. So I shall see Percival. There he sits, upright among the smaller fry." He breathes through his straight nose rather heavily. His blue and oddly inexpressive eyes are fixed with pagan indifference upon the pillar opposite. He would make an admirable churchwarden. He should have a birch and beat little boys for misdemeanors. He is allied with the Latin phrases on the memorial brasses. He sees nothing; he hears nothing. He is remote from us all in a pagan universe. But look—he

flicks his hand to the back of his neck. For such gestures one falls hopelessly in love for a lifetime. (pp. 35-36)

The absurdity enclosed within this first brief description of Percival is abundant. Immediately, Neville has fallen in love with him, but only for the way he flicks his hand to the back of his neck. Other boys attempt to mimic this ridiculous gesture, but fail. Neville claims that Percival sees nothing and hears nothing. He is oblivious to the world around him. He is the epitome of the capitalistic soul; he is totally revered for doing so. Louis also notices the conformity Percival inspires in others:

Look now, how everybody follows Percival. He is heavy. He walks clumsily down the field, through the long grass, to where the great elm trees stand. His magnificence is that of some mediaeval commander. A wake of light seems to lie on the grass behind him. Look at us trooping after him, his faithful servants, to be shot like sheep, for he will certainly attempt some forlorn enterprise and die in battle. My heart turns rough; it abrades my side like a file with two edges; one, that I adore his magnificence; the other I despise his slovenly accents—I who am so much his superior—and am jealous.(p.37)

Through Louis's voice, Woolf presents Percival as a clumsy style of a leader, but she also fortifies the contempt Louis feels for the successes of society that will come to fruition within her character later in the novel. Louis's jealousy for Percival's popularity exists because of the lack of inner substance in Percival that Neville notices earlier. Percival is forever shadowed, while the six characters in the novel either join the pursuit or are left to the wayside.

Up to this point, one may translate Woolf's thinking into the Victorian society. The Victorian society is oppressive to Woolf's self, namely, Woolf's identity who is incommensurate with such oppression as in the case of *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942):

I'm an ignorant old woman. I can't read or write, and every morning when I crawls down stairs, I say I wish it were night; and every night, when I crawls up to bed, I say, I wish it were day. I'm only an ignorant old woman. But I pray to God: O let me pass. I'm an ignorant old woman—I can't read or write.(p. 14)

By this speech, Woolf fiercely rejects the Victorian society at all which has obliged women to be "ignorant old - can't read or write." However, one of the readers may gratefully thank Victorian restricted, oppressive masculine age which explores such great influenced prosaic writings.

Psychological impact

For psychological symptoms that are yielded as a result of the violent patriarchal dogmas, feminists deny men's oppressive attitudes which ridicule their individuality. Thus, the impact of external patriarchal realities on internal female psyche makes women weak, dependent, submissive, controlled and depressive. Zaiden (1982) has argued that depression in woman creates: (a) sadness and panic because their vital, life-long struggle for security has been lost, (b) low self-esteem and hopelessness because they have lost everything or they do not deserve anything and (c) anger and resentment because they have been deserted.

Woolf (1920) responds to the novelist Bennett (1908), who has asserted that women are inferior to men. In contrast to Bennett, Woolf maintains that "women should have liberty of experience" and "should differ themselves from men without fear and express their differences openly."(p.38) She warns her readers, "a man has still much greater facilities than a woman for making his views known and respected. Certainly I cannot doubt that if such opinions prevail in the future we shall remain in a condition of half-civilized barbarism".(p.39) Woolf does not deny that masculine supremacy has prevailed all the way through history, conditioning and restraining women's rights in relation to education, economy, politics, and artistic production. It is a difficult task to dissociate the traditional role that women have occupied, even in Woolf's time, from the patriarchal establishment and, even more, to propose a new system of ideas as the ultimate goal of the dissociation, a break from the already known and tacitly approved values to a new conception.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa is repeatedly described as upright; she is stiffened and is waiting for a van to pass; she slices like a knife through everything. She recalls the phallic symbol associated with Peter. She thinks that she would have been interested in politics like a man. She sees her face in the mirror as pointed, dart-like, definite and her own personality as rigid. When Peter brandishes his pocket knife, she counters with a sequence of two rival phalluses: scissors and then a needle, for mending her dress (pp. 41-44). These images represent only the negative male oppressive impact on woman. Thus, Clarissa attempts to derive her greatest joys from attending to the domestic sphere: shopping, organizing a party, receiving flowers from her husband. She loves, in turn, or wonders whether she loves—three people: two men and Sally. Moreover, Sally is interested in politics

like a man; her interest in Plato and Shelley, and her teacherly guidance of Clarissa's reading. All of these romantic relations cast Clarissa in a feminine light.

Woolf highlights the feelings of Victorian male dominance regarding emotional acknowledgement. One can observe that man, at that time, had found it was not suitable to express his feelings towards his woman concerned, so Mr. Dalloway: "holding out his flowers, 'I love you' why not? Really it was a miracle thinking ...; it was a miracle. Here he was walking across London to say to Clarissa in so many words that he loved her. Which one never does say, he thought. Partly one's lazy, partly one's shy."(p.99) Mr. Dalloway's interior monologue may render the superior male authority which does not allow him to be weak, soften, crispy and crackly. So, Richard cancels his words and does not confess his real emotions towards his wife, Clarissa. Such act rages certain female depression and agony because lacking of love creates sadness and pain: "why she [Clarissa] suddenly feels desperately unhappy"(p. 103):

It was a feeling , some unpleasant feeling [...] combined with some depression of her own , in her bedroom, taking off her hat; and what Richard had said had added to it, but what had he said/there were his roses. Her parties! That was it ! her parties! Both of them *criticized* her *unfairly*, laughed at her very *unjustly*, for her parties. That was it! That was it! (p. 104; italics added).

Clarissa's parties can be considered as her own private domain into which she can show herself as a woman. These parties may enable her to express her feelings and attitudes, leave herself out her rigid male dominance and be more sociable. Both, Richard and Peter, have criticized her "unfairly" and "unjustly". By these words; in contrast, Woolf criticizes the male circle for using, exploiting and

decreasing woman's ease. Certainly, Woolf rejects such restricted outlook against woman; woman is the slave. That ridicules woman's self-esteem. Littleton (2001, p.36) argues that: "Clarissa's parties are her art, her attempt to change the world by celebrating the aspects of humanity in a common culture as well as in Clarissa's more developed scheme of life". Though this may very well be Clarissa's intent, it is a far cry from her original hopes of "founding a society to abolish private property"(Woolf,1925, p. 33) making it very difficult for ignorance to be Clarissa's excuse .

However, in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf has been strong enough to reject masculine demands. Lily embodies Woolf's opinion by which she rejects the female desire for beauty adhered to by the Ramsay girls. She does not want to be admired or told she is beautiful. Thinking of Mrs. Ramsay, she muses, "Beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty-it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life"(p.177). Equally she does not give admiration, although she lives among men and women who need it. Mr. Ramsay, for example, openly asks to be admired and flattered, but Lily refuses to say anything to him that betrays admiration. She refuses to relieve Mr. Tansley in his desire to assert himself, in protest to the phallogocentric code that demands that women should be at the service of all men irrespective of their moral merit. Charles Tansley has no moral merit, and in addition, sneers at women. So Lily Briscoe swears to do nothing for him despite the convention that a woman should "go to the help of the young man opposite so that he may expose and relieve the thigh bones, the ribs of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself"(p.91).

Laurenson et al. (1972, p.146) pointed out that:

After the war, Lily resumes her painting, for the war had put a halt to her work. One meet her again sitting alone as ever, feeling cut-off from the others, watching, questioning, wondering about all that has happened during the war. The house, the place, and the morning all seem strangers to her. She has no attachments there, no relations with anyone, and just like the war, anything might happen again. To her, everything looks aimless, chaotic and unreal.

Faced with this sense of not belonging, she feels she must escape somewhere and be alone.

As has been shown, Lily fights against social demands, as she begins to paint other things that force themselves upon her, including "her own inadequacy, her insignificance, keeping house for her father off Brompton road" (Woolf, 1927, p.19). Becoming an artist means that Lily excludes other demands. She never accompanies Mrs. Ramsay for shopping. She does not cook and has stopped keeping house for her father, the duties expected of her. That is to say, Lily alienates herself from the common chores of humanity and the normal, common things that men are mindful of. She refuses to be pressured to do anything against her will. As an artist, Lily has perfect control over herself. She defies established institutions such as love and marriage, family life, social etiquette and gender roles, and stands apart from the rest, a non-conformist.

In *The Waves*, Bernard and Neville, in silence, allow the fin of their thought to sink back into the depths and they think that the unlimited time of the mind is superior. The "wide and dignified sweep of [their] mind" (p.194) contracts as they hear a clock tick. These new ideas about the mind implied an entirely different conception of the self, which has shifted from being built round a hard and

changeless core, from being a monolithic, stable and seizable entity, and has turned into a dynamic process and a heterogenous, unstable and elusive entity. *The Waves* is probably Woolf's most experimental and daring novel in this sense. Trotter (1999, p.94) indicates that Woolf "sets in parallel series the reflections of six characters, in such a way as to suggest the permeability or friability of selfhood". Obviously, *The Waves* consists of a stream of continuous impressions; of the patterns of consciousness of six characters in which mental states flow into one another. Trotter has added that in *The Waves*, one may experience the "dissipation or streaming away of identity ... its accumulation, accretion, acceleration, augmentation and sedimentation"(p. 94), as Bernard explicitly conveys it: "I could not recover myself from that endless throwing away, dissipation, flooding forth without our willing it" (p.198).

The Waves also examines the discord of the semiotic and the symbolic self. Pierce (1998, p.54) pointed out that:

Every sign stands for an object and stands to an interpretant, so one manner in which we might address the nature of the self is to examine the connection between the sign and object with respect to the self, this relation is symbolic.

On the other hand, Pierce defined the semiotic self as: "Our feelings, actions and habits as they are expressed build upon and reach out to make our conception of who we are more determined" (p. 331) Both concepts can be applied to the lives of two fictional characters, Louis and Rhoda into which these characters have, respectively, a repressively strong and an impossibly weak self-image, i.e. semiotic self. The certain ideas about ourselves and our basic worth as a person can be called self-image. As Fernando et al (1985, p.67) have stated "Your self-image is

your picture of yourself. It is your opinion, your value of judgment". Louis, for example, is overly aware of his self-image and how he appears in the eyes of others; he is fixed in the "symbolic", the alienated self that is inaugurated in the mirror stage. His obsession with his social background and his unusual accent is betrayed by his repeated refrain, "My father is a banker and I speak with an Australian accent" (p.13). However, normally, each character is extremely aware of how different or separates him or her from the others. Furthermore, self-image is explicitly revealed when Rhoda has an unbearably fragile sense of her own identity while Louis "looks at himself in the looking-glass as he comes in" (p.31), Rhoda wishes to avoid her own image, which suggests that she does not see herself as a stable, ontological entity:

"That is my face", said Rhoda, "in the looking-glass behind Susan's shoulder – that face is my face. But I 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...Whereas I shift and change and am seen through in a second" (p.31).

Like Louis, Rhoda cannot function completely successfully in the world because of her self-image. In her case, however, her difficulties stem from her lack of Lacan's *mirror stage*. Lacan's *mirror stage* (2004, p.444) is: "a drama ... which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armor of an alienating identity". In other words, the mirror stage establishes the ego as fundamentally dependent upon external objects. As an individual matures and enters into social relations through language, this other will be elaborated

within social and linguistic frameworks that will give each subject's personality its particular characteristics. Rhoda's aversion to her mirror image is evocative of an incident that Woolf (1976) recalls in *A Sketch of the Past*:

There was a small looking-glass in the hall at Talland House . . . When I was six or seven perhaps; I got into the habit of looking at my face in the glass. But I only did this if I was sure I was alone. I was ashamed of it. A strong feeling of guilt seemed naturally attached to it (pp.67-68).

In *The Waves*, Rhoda's failure to progress through the mirror stage successfully means that she is also incapable of differentiating herself from the world around her. The most telling example of this is when she "came to the puddle. I could not cross it. Identity failed me. We are nothing, I said, and fell" (p.47). The absence of what Lacan refers to as an "alienating identity" means that Rhoda cannot distinguish between herself and her surroundings, and an anxiety that leads to the rise of her physical collapse. This is another episode that echoes one of the "moments of being" that Woolf (1976, p.78)) recalls: "the moment of the puddle in the path; when, for no reason I could discover, everything suddenly became unreal; I was suspended; I could not step across the puddle".

Strictly speaking, Woolf gestures towards an ideal strength of self-image, between the extremes of the semiotic and symbolic. While Rhoda's fragile sense of self represents the former, and Louis's inflexible, restrictive identity signifies the latter; the other four characters in the novel are situated between these two poles. Bernard echoes Woolf's view of the multiplicity of the self, in his statement, "There are many rooms – many Bernards. There was the charming, but weak; the strong but supercilious"; Bernard lists many more of the personalities that he

presents to the world, and concludes: "What I was to myself was different; was none of these" (p.200). This uncertainty about the veracity of the public self is sustained throughout Woolf's writing. Walker (1988, p.293) views this concern as also a major issue in Woolf's life: "That Woolf was conscious of human role-playing—of the deliberate selection of a self to present to others—is clear from numerous comments in her letters and diaries. In her worst moments, she felt that all life was a façade. "

Bernard also suggests that his self is a social construction; that his identity is something dynamic that is irretrievably merged with his friends. "And now I ask", he states, "Who am I? I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know". (p.222) Warner (1987) suggests that the characters that feature in *The Waves* might be interpreted as discrete facets of the author's own character. Warner's reading is supported by a letter that Woolf wrote to G.L. Dickinson, in which she told him that "The six characters were all supposed to be one. I'm getting old myself . . . and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect myself in Virginia" (quoted in Warner, p.83). Warner proceeds to forge links between each of the characters and Woolf's complex personality. He reads Jinny, for example, as "a projection of Woolf's love of clothes and social occasions" (p.83).

However, Warner may understate the importance of Bernard's characterization of his group of friends as a "seven-sided flower". Such description may imply that "the self is definable in relation to others, rather than through anything intrinsic to the individual subject" (Warner, 1987, p.95). Throughout the novel, Woolf distinguishes the characters through their differences, and they often refer to how others would react in a given situation. Bernard, for example,

establishes a sense of his own identity by distinguishing it from that of Neville: " 'Therefore', I said, 'I am myself, not Neville', a wonderful discovery"(p.185). Furthermore, Bernard sees the group as having been unified, then splitting, saying, "We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies" (p.186)

Woolf's rejection of the single and omniscient narrator and of fixed multiple narrative points of view asserts her rejection of the male orthodox certainty and psychologically and deliberately seeks liberation. Thus, later in the novel, she feels like she is everywhere: "So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter – even trees, or barns." (pp. 199-200)

Sexual abuse

From feminist perspective, sexual abuse functions as part of a large process of female socialization. The sexual abuse of girls and women is continuous with their cultural abuse including repression, oppression, denigration and marginalization. Woolf questions woman's sexual abuse which is the consequence of Victorian harsh male standards. Clarissa's sexual abuse suggests that her extreme feelings of isolation which are to be understood partly as the result of a deleteriously suppressed homosexuality. As Jensen (1983, p.163) explains this view: "No simple girlhood crush, Clarissa's love for Sally Seton is a profound reality that permeates her adult life." Woolf reveals the devastating effects of cultural expectations and personal isolation. Clarissa's "suicide" blurs the

boundaries of her identity, clearing a space for the articulation of the lesbian woman without overtly inscribing a homoerotic relationship.

Clarissa's relationship with Sally Seton is perhaps the most intriguing in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Their kiss has provoked question after question regarding Clarissa's sexuality. The kiss serves as a sort of symbol of their affections, of their camaraderie. They were once "in league together ;"(p.34) they shared a pure friendship—a friendship with a "quality which could only exist between women" (p. 34). Yet, at the party, Sally seems of no more significance than an acquaintance. Their interaction is brief, and simply small talk, but Clarissa "[kindles] all over with pleasure at the thought of the past" (p. 172)

Clarissa's sexuality reflects a sort of an ever-changing woman. She, in the beginning of her life, is very confused. She can choose either to be with men or women. She has strong feelings for her best friend at the time, who is a female, Sally. Sally is the one girl that Clarissa has mad feelings for. She has respected everything about her, not just her physical features. She sat on the floor with her arms round her knees, smoking a cigarette. She says many times how Sally is amazing. Clarissa makes the reader wonder if she really is going after the same sex or not. Clarissa envies Sally: "Sally's power was amazing, her gift, her personality. There was her way with flowers, for instance" (p.27). Clarissa always wants someone to comfort her and Sally was that one to be. For Clarissa, Sally has represented freedom and rebellion as she is a bit in love with Sally, as well, sharing an almost lesbian bond.

Clarissa Dalloway should have been with Sally, or should have been with Richard – she is right in one scenario. Clarissa is not entirely happy in the life she

is living, yet she realizes that her dreams of full idealism of unhappiness would not have worked out either.

Clarissa admires Sally for her daring. The latter is a sort of abandonment in which she could say anything, do anything. Clarissa values Sally not only for the daring that inspires her to run naked through the hall after forgetting her bath sponge, but also for her smaller violations. In one instance, Clarissa admires Sally's willingness to experiment with flowers, to cut their heads off and make them swim on the top of water in bowls in a fashion that horrifies stodgy.

Yet, the concept of “sharing”—of giving and taking—is central to Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa has feared open, total involvement with a man. The concept is foreign and frightening; to her, sharing meant surrender. Marriage to Peter may have been a dangerous and immoral one-sided contract. Compare, however, the give-and-take aspect of Clarissa's memory of Sally Seton. Clarissa has given her soul absolutely and exclusively to Sally. Sally has given her “soul” to Clarissa—but she has offered, freely, just as much of herself to everyone else. When Sally has kissed Clarissa, she gives the kiss impulsively. Clarissa, however, does not accept the kiss as an impulsive gesture. Clarissa has accepted Sally's kiss as a treasure; she has accepted it as though a ceremony has been performed and a gift had been bestowed. Nevertheless, Clarissa does not seem to see anything unjust or wrong in this disproportionate exchange.

Sexual abuse, in *To the Lighthouse*, flourishes in Part Two, "The Window". Mrs. Ramsay seeks Lily out in her bedchamber late at night, and she acts seductively toward Lily, teasing her with confidences; she takes Lily's hand lightly for a moment while she delivers her advice about marriage. Lily, by turns, lays her

head in Mrs. Ramsay's lap and leans against Mrs. Ramsay's knee. They are physically and emotionally intimate. Moreover, the emotional tone of this moment, for Lily, is very intense; the intensity raises the question in the novel of whether Lily avoids marriage because she does not desire men, she desires women. It is enough that Lily's mind puts a lot of exclamation points after nothing happened. In this way the novel probes, questions and images the nature of erotic satisfaction as it centers on the mother.

However, Lily perceives that Mrs. Ramsay wants women to get married. In contrast, Lily wants her own exemption from the universal law. She liked to be alone; she liked to be with herself. Lily's definition of marriage is a man and a woman are looking at a girl throwing a ball. This indicates her criticism of such social institutions. This shows the difference between the two types of women: Mrs. Ramsay likes company and cannot think of a life without the protection of men, while Lily prefers loneliness. As Moi (1985, p.13) has observed:

To the Lighthouse illustrates the destructive nature of a metaphysical belief in strong, immutably fixed gender identities, as represented by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, whereas Lily Briscoe [. . .] represents the subject who deconstructs this opposition, perceives its pernicious influence and tries as far as is possible in a still rigidly patriarchal order to live as her own woman, without regard for the crippling definitions of sexual identity to which society would have her conform.

Although Woolf describes Lily as an ideal woman, she is non-conformist. For example, in Mrs. Ramsay's party, she is unhappy with Tansley because he sneers at women. While in conversation with him, she thinks:

"on occasions of this sort it behooves the woman to help the young man opposite so that he may relieve his vanity and his urgent desire to assert himself, just as I should certainly expect Mr. Tansley to get me out if the Tube were to burst into flames."(p. 80)

However, she continues "But how would it be if neither of us did either of these things?"(p.80)

Lily's unconscious monologue depicts woman as a relief for man's vanity and his urgent desire to assert himself. It can be evolved that the convoluted interaction between the man and woman is related to the male sexual desire which simmers and agitates "the tube", his phallic object, into female flames. Male sexual desire, which is responsible for male outmost sexual brutal intercourse, disputes and banishes female befitting sexual desire. In balking such compelled male desire, woman succumbs and man keeps transcending remorselessly upon woman.

In the novel, Woolf exposes sexual arousal as a furtive but insistent reappearance. Impulsively, Woolf ejects the words "the sea tosses itself and breaks itself" (1927, p.27) which seem to betray secret recoil in front of the sexual body. They may suggest not only confusion in nature, but more covertly a negative view of sexual excitation, as a prefiguration of section 7 where:

chaos [...] could have been heard *tumbling* and *tossing*, as the wind and waves disported themselves like the *amorphous* bulks of leviathans [...] and mounted one on top of another, and lunged and *plunged*, until it seemed as if the universe were *battling* and *tumbling*, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself. (1927, p. 147)

The adjective “amorphous” signals that the coupling creatures [man and woman] are reduced to a gross mass of indistinct form. Sexual activity becomes associated with disorder and confusion. Also, the lexical echoes (tossing, plunged, battling, confusion) are presented as clearly the actual sexual depict occurring between spouses. In this respect, “confusion” may point to vacillation between lesbian and heterosexual practices.

In other positions, one may see Lily seek a balance to her painting in which Mrs. Ramsay is portrayed by a “triangular, purple shape” (p. 52). One reason she is having difficulty is that her feeling for Mrs. Ramsay is very confusing; is it the love of a daughter for a mother or is it the love of a woman for a woman? “[Lily] had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself . . . at Mrs. Ramsay’s knee and say to her but what could one say to her? ‘I’m in love with you?’” (p.19) A little later, the narrator says, “For it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself . . .”(p. 51). However, Lily seemingly attempts to get hold of something that evaded her: “It evaded her when she thought of Mrs. Ramsay; it evaded her now when she thought of her picture” (p.193). But what she has wished to get hold of is “that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything.” (p.193) Lily cannot get hold of the thing if it has already been made a “jar on the nerves,” if it has already been made aesthetic. How does one hold on to something, touch something, without feeling it? Heidegger (1994) uses a piece of chalk as an example of a specific thing that one can take in hand but not know intrinsically either through eliminating frames or rearranging them. When one wants to understand the “thingness” of the chalk, Heidegger observes that “The moment we wanted to open the chalk by breaking it, to grasp the interior, it had

enclosed itself again" (p.19). This elusiveness is for Lily rendered as her impossible yet necessary mourning of Mrs. Ramsay. Her mourning of Mrs. Ramsay ultimately identifies with the severance that actuated her desires which crave a unity with the lost maternal desire. Such Lily's imbalanced feeling may represent an inner, personal need to determine her feeling towards Mrs. Ramsay.

Turner (1998, p.8) contended that everyone should marry to have children. No doubt, getting married and having children are assumed to be the woman's comfortable shelter in which she feels that she has her own kingdom and she is the Queen who has enough judicial right to rule her own kingdom.

Throughout *The Waves* (1931), Woolf's use of stream-of-consciousness diametrically entrenches within each character, particularly females, to enfranchise their depressive sexual longing. As such, Woolf implicitly raises her characters' sexual abuse to male societal protocols, perspectives and attitudes.

In the novel, Woolf loomed the most nearly direct representation of female sexual arousal. In this account, the adolescent Rhoda reads a poem that provokes a longing at first pressing to the point of pain, then released in a burst of liquidity:

I will pick flowers; I will bind flowers in one garland and clasp them and present them--Oh! To whom? There is some check in the flow of my being; a deep stream presses on some obstacle; it jerks, it tugs, some knot in the center resists. Oh, this is pain, this is anguish! I faint, I fail. Now my body thaws; I am unsealed, I am incandescent. Now the stream pours in a deep tide fertilizing, opening the shut, forcing the tight-folded, flooding free. To whom shall I give all that now flows through me, from my warm, my porous body? I will gather my flowers and present them--Oh! To whom? (p. 57)

In these lines, Rhoda finds in Shelley's poem "The Question" her own cry of longing, "Oh! To whom?" This cry suggests that her object of desire is as yet undiscovered and, in context, that she is attracted primarily to women. These longings not only dare not speak their name but are culturally unintelligible in the fictional universe Rhoda inhabits. Within content of the text, Woolf raises Rhoda's sexual hidden desire, "some knot in the center"(p.57). "Some knot in the center" can be the sexual thoughts which reflect her apparent sexual dissatisfaction. These sexual fantasies or sexual thoughts agitate her sexual dissatisfaction which fell into "pain" and "anger". One can see the same sexual arousal disorders portrayal in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf immerses Clarissa into such painful sexual longing:

It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster!
to hear twigs cracking and feel hooves planted down in the depths of
that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul; never to be content quite secure,
for at any moment the brute would be stirring, this hatred, which,
especially since her illness, had power to make her feel scraped, hurt in
her spine; ...as if indeed there were a monster grubbing at the
roots(p.9)

The quotation illustrates that Woolf offers a striking depiction of the sexual female body. In these two novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*, the two female figures, their erotic appetites may suggest that their social mores produce sexual frustration into which Woolf herself attempts to use in rebellious situation against Victorian values which have been mentioned earlier.

Graham (1976, pp.122-123) contended that in Woolf's *The Waves*, in particular, gender dichotomies are far more rigid and is defined materially than in any other of Woolf's novels. For example, all the male speakers have public lives--

and all are writers. In contrast, not one of the female speakers tries to occupy a place in the public sphere or to be any sort of artist. Rather, each to some extent embodies a stereotype of conventional femininity: Susan as earth mother, Jinny as seductress, and Rhoda as neurotic.

Unlike Clarissa Dalloway, Rhoda in *The Waves* cannot reconcile her homoeroticism to the conventional notions of femininity such as passivity, dependence, and weakness. It can be seen that her love is never defined. She does not know "to whom" she wants to give herself. She turns to her imaginary landscapes especially when pressed by the heterosexual social obligations attendant on her status as a middle-class woman: "I must take his hand; I must answer. But what answer shall I give? I am thrust back to stand burning in this clumsy, this ill-fitting body, to receive the shafts of his indifference and his scorn, I who longed for marble columns and pools on the other side of the world where the swallow dips her wings" (p. 105). Her terror at the gendered requirements of an evening party, and particularly her discomfort with her "clumsy" and "ill-fitting" body, emphasize that her private erotic yearnings have social consequences. Unlike Clarissa Dalloway's metaphorized and memorialized relationships, and unlike Mrs. Ramsay's intimacy with the inanimate "third stroke" of the Lighthouse, her ardent and anguished cry, "Oh, to whom?" reaches out for present intimacy with another body.

Like Rhoda, Jinny, in *The Waves*, wishes one man to tell her what he has told no other person. He will like her better than Susan or Rhoda. He will find in her some quality, some peculiar thing. Jinny actually does not find the man who can share her own sexual pleasure yet she:

" meet the eyes of a sour woman, who suspects me of rapture. My body [Jinny's] shuts in her face, impertinently, like a parasol. I open my body, I shut my body at my will" ... "Consume me." ... "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." (p.34)

Absence of the mutual natural sexual intercourse drowns her in an agitated rapture that tortures her so she seems to be attracted to a woman.

In the novel, Susan is the only female of the group to engage in the societal trapping of marriage. This is likely linked to her representation as the natural mother of the group. Her first lines read as "I see a slab of pale yellow...spreading away until it meets a purple stripe" (p.9). Describing the awakening world in terms of the colors of a sunrise, Susan immediately aligns herself with natural beauty. This love will evolve into the attributes of nature and motherhood which set her apart from her friends, particularly the women. Susan also imagines herself in highly physical terms. Susan's bodily speculations result in a sense of herself as internally divided, as a woman who carries a baby in her womb. She creates her life out of a prefabricated mold. She fashions her role to the pattern of her mother's: "I shall be like my mother, silent in a blue apron locking up the cupboards" (p.99). The blue apron of maternity guards private property and the social order by locking up the cupboards. In spite of Susan's hatred for the regulatory functions of patriarchal cities and schools, she feels that she inwardly embraces a container for those same institutions through her reproduction of children for the state. She herself valorizes her position as a reproductive body which manufactures sons. Furthermore, her love for motherhood and nature

continue to set her far apart from the others, as seen at the dinner party where the others view Susan as a creature not unlike an animal that may roam the countryside. Susan loves so dearly. She, herself, claims:

I peered about like an animal with its eyes near the ground. The smell of carpets and furniture and scent disgust me. I like to walk through wet fields alone, or to stop at a gate and watch my setter nose in a circle, and to ask, Where is the hare? I like to be with people who twist herbs, and spit into the fire and shuffle down long passages in slippers like my father...I shall never have anything but natural happiness. It will almost content me. (p.131)

Louis also describes her entrance: She does not see us. She has not dressed because she despised the futility of London. She stands for a moment at the swing-door, looking about her like a creature dazed by the lights of a lamp" (p.119). In this description, Louis offers not only an image of Susan as a creature of a nature, but reveals her intense love for the natural as viewed through her disgust for the urban.

Further, Susan places great worth in her qualities of motherhood, which results in a terrible relation to Jinny, the anti-mother of the group. The two women are almost polar opposites, but Susan, like all the others, chooses to notice the differences and be weakened rather than taking strength from others' assets. During the dinner party, she says of Jinny,

"I...feel her derision steal around me, feel her laughter curl its tongues of fire round me and light up unsparingly my shabby dress, my square tipped finger-nails, which I at once hide under the table cloth" (p.121).

She fortifies their opposition, retreating further and further away from a close friend simply because she does not share a love for nature and motherhood. Woolf agitates a certain conflict between Susan and Jinny to show Susan's dissatisfaction of sexual desire and her longing to be a mother satisfying her sexual conation and lust.

Rhoda acquires a similar pattern of flight when her qualities are not understood by the others in the group. In the first section of the novel, Rhoda first says, " 'I hear a sound...cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down' " (p.9). Obviously describing a bird, she differs from Bernard and Susan in that she does not describe what she sees, but what she hears. She is essentially concerned with that which she cannot see and, therefore, is initially coupled with the spirit and the soul of the world. As with the qualities of the others, Rhoda's sense of spirit and soul noticeably come to fruition during Percival's dinner. Bernard describes, "...Rhoda the nymph of the fountain..."(p.117) which introduces a classical myth that suggests Rhoda's sexual deviancy. The myth of Arethusa's escape from Alpheus into the ground as fluid water helps us understand Rhoda's resistance to society's desire for codified sexed and sexualized beings. Therefore, She is consistently describing it as this mythical creature that is something not of this world. Louis remarks, "Rhoda comes now, from nowhere, having slipped in while we were not looking" (p.120), commenting on Rhoda's seemingly spectral qualities, as though she were without an earthly body.

Her disassociation from a static sexual and social subject position is extremely frightening. Part of this fear derives from her observation that nothing persists. Being fearful and insecure as a result of the patriarchal society, Rhoda is unable to collect herself and uncover her real desire. Thus, she feels that she is not

as others, owning a real body with entire satisfied longings. Again, she must physically exert herself. The exclusion, Rhoda experiences, recalls her notable absence from the early scenes of the novel; she feels solitary because she is no longer connected to the artificial unity that Percival created.

One may learn late of Rhoda's love connection with Louis, perhaps her last desperate attempt to assume a socially sanctioned female role. Moreover, one may hear as much about Rhoda leaving Louis as one does about their relationship. Louis initially briefly states that "Rhoda left me," but he soon elaborates: "Rhoda, with whom I shared silence when the others spoke, she who hung back and turned aside when the herd assembled and galloped with orderly, sleek backs over the rich pastures, has gone now like the desert heat" (pp.202-203). Louis and Rhoda have shared the conspirator status as outsiders as Bernard terms them: "conspirators" (p.276). Rhoda also returns to this denotative marker, "conspirator," (p.227) as a way to describe both herself and Louis. However, there is a sense at this point in the story that Rhoda has accepted her disembodied status in her universe.

Rhoda appears to resist even this codifying identity. Kramp (1998) has argued that: "Rhoda dismisses her association with compartmentalized humanity by removing herself from mutual heterosexual romance." (p.44) Rhoda is deprived to have natural sexual relationship so she isolates herself. On the other hand, she critiques the social machine for chaining her "to one spot, one hour, one chair." She explains that she initially "yielded" to the force of the social desires: "What you did, I did. If Susan and Jinny pulled up their stockings like that, I pulled mine up like that also" (p.204). She acknowledges that she has tried to satisfy the produced desires of her society; she has endeavored to act like a mother and like a sensual seductress. She will, however, no longer strive to create an artificial subject

position from which to act and speak. Again, this is a risky and frightening move for Rhoda. She feels rolled over the waves and notes how "Everything falls in a tremendous shower, dissolving me." She seems formless and permeable, but this does not prevent her from acting. She says: "Putting my foot to the ground I step gingerly and press my hand against the hard door of a Spanish inn" (p.206). Rhoda opts against a static social/sexual identity, and her multiplicity involves action.

Rhoda's struggle to resist social pressures continues in the final group-scene of the novel. During the reunion dinner at Hampton Court, Rhoda no longer hides her body from the group, but she explains that "it is only that I have taught my body to do a certain trick" (p.222). Rhoda seems to have accepted her disembodied status as a resister of social pressures. She also understands the socially produced desires of her friends -- "children, authority, fame, love, society" -- and continues to insist that she "has no face" (p.223). Moreover, Rhoda is now concerned with the world, extending her vision of multiplicity beyond her childhood community. She feels that she "must undergo the penance of Hampton Court," but she has a larger sense of interconnectedness in mind. She longs to "embrace the entire world," but knows that she still "must go through the antics of the individual" (pp.223-224).

Furthermore, Rhoda sees the artifice of the individual subject and wants to incorporate the global community. She ultimately claims that "The still mood, the disembodied mood is on us ... and we enjoy this momentary alleviation when the walls of the mind become transparent." She concludes that "This is our dwelling-place. The structure is now visible. Very little is left outside" (p.228). The absence of "self-serving" bodily borders facilitates relief and the absence of tension. There

are no more borderlines to cross or blur; the dichotomies between sexual identities and social subjects have dissolved and all is enclosed within Rhoda's vision of a fantastic communal subjectivity. Rhoda hears the "suffering of the world" (p.230), wants very much to embrace the multitude, but observes how "light falls on them again. They have faces. They become Susan and Bernard, Jinny and Neville." She terms this artificial process of individualization "shriveling ... an humiliation" (p.232). Rhoda's dreams of communion are not realized completely; yet one ought not forget her mystical image of integration, which resists the pressures of society that demand individually folded sexual subject positions.

Bernard describes her as "always so furtive, always with fear in her eyes, always seeking some pillar in the desert," and indicates that "she had killed herself" (p.281). While the exact method of her suicide remains unclear, she does ultimately resist society's desire for her to establish a static social and sexual identity through death. This is an ambiguous and incomplete resistance. Her death leaves her vision of global integration unfulfilled; and yet it does lead Bernard to relate immediately that "this is not one life; nor do I always know if I am man or woman, Bernard or Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny or Rhoda -- so strange is the contact of one with another" (p.281). He recognizes that he has "been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know." He "cannot find any obstacle separating us." He now believes that "There is no division between me and them," and he concludes that "This difference we make so much of, this identity we so feverishly cherish, was overcome" (pp.288-289). Rhoda's suicide may curtail her earthly pursuit of this vision of communal subjectivity, but Bernard quickly resumes her struggle and reminds us of her image of multiplicitous sexual/social subjectivity.

Although, Rhoda is being further closest to the utopian society that embraces communism of the soul, her internal resistance exposes expansive sexual longing. Depressive sexual desire is so related to amalgamated male social, political and cultural parameters. As soon as the human physical material is sexually being dissatisfied, the internal fiery soul will end in pain, fatigue, wander, and endless interior monologue which result in the suicide. Thus, Rhoda is the least likely to survive in the decrepit reality of capitalism of the soul. Her society's condemnation of her sexual desire to exist results in her suicide.

Chapter five

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that the researcher questioned three key issues prevailed at the Victorian age, namely, the psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominance over women. The researcher examined these issues in accordance with Woolf's feminist intellectual perspective which is presented through her novels, in particular, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931). Guerin (1992)'s views achieved Woolf's feminist trend. Guerin (1992)'s views, on one side, displayed certain beliefs showing how patriarchal society looks at women, how women actually live under the patriarchal standards and attempting to improve women's social situation. Woolf's female characters expressed certain inferiority, submission, marginalization as results of their male-dominant society which affected their psychological being status and sexual desires, on the other side. Women were described as inferior, petty, trivial, dependent, imaginative and abusive. They sought liberation, independence, self-assertion, self-esteem and having satisfactory desires.

The results showed that the researcher agreed with the views of some feminist critics, namely, Gilbert & Gubar (1978), Guerin (1992), Showalter (1997) and (2001), one can get that the foremost axe of Woolf's thinking is her outright feminist trend. The feminist critics' views acknowledged that the patriarchal dominancy has been a severe social protocol which severs woman's character including her physic, psyche and sexual whim for men's benefits. These three main issues clearly mentioned in Woolf's novels, namely, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* and they labeled judgment and hierarchy generally as masculine while submission and acceptance as principle feminine. Reflexively, this study confirmed that women must say "no" to what she actually disapproved

and that could be done by her belief of her potentialities and efforts. This also could be done by: "diffusing her spirit of affection, of self-restraint, self-sacrifice and purity...as mother, as wife, as sister, as daughter, as purifier, as an example, in a word—as woman."(Stuubs, 1979, p.7). Woman should have fought, as Lily in *To the Lighthouse*, against male-dominated beliefs.

However, Woolf lived in late Victorian period, a patriarchal society. In that period, as it has been observed, the woman was dependent on man, not only in economy but also in sexual relations. According to this view, Woolf definitely renders her sexual and psychological apprehension through a succession of female characters differing greatly in age, appearance, intellectual capacity, and sexual proclivity. Mrs. Dalloway, for example, has no fear whatsoever of sexual intimacy, but she was profoundly concerned with the changed social expectations following her physical transformation and she longed sexual act with her closer friend, Susan Seton. Lily was terrified of the sex act itself rejecting male existence in her life. Susan and Rhoda's wonder with whom they hopefully experience sexual intercourse indicates a fear of forced sex, although they seem to welcome consensual intimacy. The aspect that united those different characters was the sexual abuse. This act caused fear of male sexual passion, fear of patriarchal domination and fear of anything in society. In short, sex was considered as an abuse work against them as they try to fulfill their human desires.

Throughout this study, Woolf severely revolted against the patriarchal behavior that considered women as prisoners of that era. Patriarchal dominance was one of the worst conducts related to the Victorian women. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf resisted the barrier of patriarchal society and rejected the subversion of traditional male construction. Clarissa was depicted by the frame of Peter's vision.

Although Peter was supposed to control his emotions and decisions, he is under Clarissa's mercy. Mrs. Dalloway is presented to signify a distinguishable lady of class and has responsibilities and power. In her portrayal of Clarissa, Woolf presents her a woman who tries to show her own image which is compelled to the man. However, Clarissa shows the multitude nature of her identity.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. Ramsay appeared to represent the 'typical man'. Despite the fact that Mrs. Ramsay appears to be an idealized version of a woman, she tries to eradicate the presence of the Victorian female ideal in her inner thoughts. Undoubtedly, Mrs. Ramsay plays the unifying role bringing the whole family and guests into a pleasant atmosphere during the dinner scene.

In *The Waves*, Woolf exposed the rigid patriarchal dominance. This is embodied in the character Percival. Percival is described through the views of the other six characters. He enters the novel with an immediate sense of leadership and heroism.

The other two issues related to the Victorian women are psychological impact and sexual abuse. Clarissa rejected the negative male oppressive impact on woman. The best and most appropriate situation for Clarissa to be herself as a woman is in her parties where she expresses her feelings and attitudes, leaving her rigid male dominance. When both Richard and Peter criticized Clarissa as unfairly and unjustly, Woolf, in fact, rejected that attitude directed toward a woman as she was treated to be a slave.

Woolf also rejected strongly the masculine demands in the novel, *To the Lighthouse*. Lily, for example, rejected the female desire for beauty and she does

not want to be admired or told that she is beautiful. That was evident as she refused to relieve Mr. Tansley when asked her to practice his desires with her.

The characters Louis and Rhoda in *The Waves* have enjoyed repressively strong and impossibly weak self image. Rhoda cannot function successfully in her world because of her self image. Rhoda also failed to progress and this means that she is incapable of segregating herself from the world around her.

Woolf also revolted against sexual abuse and related such discreditable and furtive act to the Victorian harsh male desire. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa always wanted someone to comfort her and Sally was that one to be: " Sally it was who made her feel, for the first time ... she knew nothing about sex"(p.27). Although Clarissa has married Richard and owns a lover, Peter, they seem to neglect her and that compels her to gain a refuge, her attic, where she can freely express and satisfy her depressed sexual desire. To Clarissa, Sally has represented freedom and rebellion, and Clarissa seems to be a bit in love with Sally, as well, sharing almost lesbian bond.

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf explored sexual abuse with reference to Mrs. Ramsay's homosexuality practice with Lily as a result of the superiority of her husband sexual longing. Mr. Ramsay could not speak to her and was not be able to interrupt her while talking. He wanted urgently to speak to her and to tell her that James was no more and she was left alone. Mrs. Ramsay's sexual rapture works as a force that stalled the masculine will to interruption. Once it did so, Mrs. Ramsay could with dignity give him "of her own free will what she knew he would never ask, and called him and [took] the green shawl off the picture frame, and [went] to him" (p.100). Reflexively Mrs. Ramsay sought Lily out in her bedchamber late at night, and she acted seductively toward Lily, teasing her with confidences; and she

took Lily's hand lightly for a moment while she was delivering advice about marriage in general. Lily responded and laid her head in Mrs. Ramsay's lap and touched her knee. They were physically and emotionally intimate.

In *The Waves*, the female's insecurity and fearness of sex prohibited them to be sexually satisfied. They needed to practice it, but because of men's brutal intercourse styles they were agitated and attracted to women, instead.

Thus, Woolf's novels presented a Victorian style life which was full of interior thoughts, dreams and memories to solve the women's problems. Via the female characters, Woolf struggled to eliminate the Victorian male dogma that intended to subjugate a woman as a human-being. She loudly asked the society to free a woman and share her counterpart's aspects of the life such as education, career, finance, recreation, and spirituality. Having prohibited of those aspects, Woolf's female characters suffer sexual and psychological senses as a result of the male oppressiveness, stiffness, unfairness and brutal beliefs.

To sum up

The researcher referred to Guerin's (1992) views of feminist approach to analyze patriarchal, psychological and sexual images in the Victorian era. The researcher discovered that those views emphasized woman's liberation and revolted against men's harsh practices toward a woman. The female characters showed the inferior situation of women in the Victorian age; they were perfect hostess or ideal ones. In other positions, the female characters were showed as warriors; they were independent from men's oppressive system as Lily in *To the Lighthouse*.

The feminist approach accounted that literary writing strategy was the key to understand the female characters' psychological being status. The female characters' words, speeches, feelings and interior monologues revealed their fearness, pain, sadness and loneliness because of the patriarchal dominancy.

The approach asserted that woman was forced to perform sexual intercourse against their own wish. Throughout examining the women's sexual fantasies, the researcher discovered that women lost men's sentiments, compassion and intimacy which were considered the main reasons for their homosexuality.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following are the main recommendations:

1) Other researchers should examine other Woolf's literary works, in particular, *A Room of One's Own* and *Jacob's Room*. These argumentative literary works question women's inferior situation and their submission to the patriarchal society in general and the Victorian's in particular.

2) A study further interpretations and readings is recommended to investigate Woolf's feminist trend in terms of all relevant aspects of her literary texts, namely, (i) form, (ii) structure, (iii) figurative language, (iv) illusions, and (v) connotative words.

3) Conduct other practical studies regarding certain comparison and contrast between stories related to other Victorian feminist authors to highlight

some similarities or differences which lead to a better understating to the situation of woman at that time.

Suggestions for further studies

This study was restricted to analyze three main problems, namely, the psychological, sexual and patriarchal dominance over women. These issues were explicitly exposed in Virginia Woolf's novels, in particular, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931).

The political conflict and religious dominance could be tackled in a further research. These problems can be investigated as main obstacles that impeded women in the Victorian era to gain her liberation and hear her voice saying: I am a woman... I am a human being.

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