

CHAPTER - II

**VIRGINIA WOOLF :
HER ART AS A NOVELIST**

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CHAPTER - II VIRGINIA WOOLF : HER ART AS A NOVELIST

2.1. VIRGINIA WOOLF AS A NOVELIST :-

The year 1900 was the year of transition. There was change on all levels, from the historical to the personal. Also there was a philosophical shift in man's concept of himself and reality. Virginia Woolf was more sensitive to this spirit of her age than her contemporaries. She sought the emotional perspective by which the reality of this new era could be viewed. She took the 20th century art, especially novel into areas where it had never been before.

Virginia Woolf was of the opinion that if the character had changed the form of the novel also should be changed. To depict the transition from the old to the new, from a stable world dealing in absolutes to one committed to the present moment of feeling, she felt, the writer must renounce his old methods and former tools. In her essay on Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown she affirmed that the Edwardian novelists had made use of "tools and established conventions which do their business; and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools death." The consequence of this belief was her continuous experiments with the form of the novel. She felt that as a novelist her business can not be only to communicate human experience but to record what ^{life felt} like to living beings. She was not satisfied with the record of a single mind, she wanted to communicate the impression made by

one individual upon others and to reveal human personality partly through its own self-consciousness and partly through the picture projected by it upon other minds. With the changed view man was seen to be a complex of personalities consisting of separate states of awareness. This changed view offered the novelist areas of experimentation. To depict the complexity of emotions and experience, became the main current in modern literature. According to Virginia Woolf, "The novel is not a form which you see, but emotion which you feel."² She adopted the new form because she felt that the old forms of literature were inadequate to express this complexity of emotions.

The technique she invented is called "the stream of consciousness technique" and her novels are "stream of consciousness" novels. Her new form verbalises the stream of memories, experiences, contacts and imagination which runs below the conscious thought and which bear a direct relation to external facts. This new form gives a total view of man, his mind and his emotions. She depicts the real life of the moment, the response of individual to the impressions. Her novels do not have chronological stories. They have plots. She provides plot to illumine the mind. She records not events but moments. In her essay "Modern Fiction" she expresses her view of life. "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged, life is a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelop surrounding us from the beginning of

consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien & external as possible"³ She deals with the process of recording the impressions, "as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall"⁴ She felt this method is "deeper and more suggestive, for conveying not only what people say, but what they leave unsaid, not only what they are, but what life is"⁵ .

Besides the changed character of the times, there were two other factors involved in giving shape to Virginia Woolf's novel. The first factor was her own temperament and the second was intellectual milieu. She was fascinated by the curious working of mind, its whims and oddities. She had the habit of observing her own conscious or unconscious being. Her delicate health as a child, her nervous, brooding father, the early loss of her mother produced a hyper-sensitive and acutely feeling writer. She found the most absorbing material in her mental and emotional experience. Her main women characters Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay have their origin in Virginia Woolf and her novels may be seen as ways of exploring the unknown element in herself, as well as in others. Her each novel is an attempt to understand her multi-level relationship with reality. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen's home and the "eminent victorian" visitors fostered her perception and scientific outlook. Her friends, who

formed a Bloomsburry group, stirred in Virginia a sense of masculine competition. These are some of the influences which contribute to the nature of Virginia Woolf's work. The novel as a poem, the novel as an emotion, characters as aspects of the self, all these were the characteristics of the new psychological fiction in general and Virginia Woolf's in particular. Critics have labelled her novels as "Psychological". Some others as "lyrical" or even "impressionistic".

In the traditional novel, one character is at the centre and it stands in some significant relation to the other characters and their stories, episodes are interwoven to compose a story. But Virginia Woolf rejects conventions because it is her desire to discover and record life as it is felt by those who live it. She eliminates narration and makes comments. She communicates the facts, the passage of time, the point of view through the characters in the novel. Subtle and complex reflections are projected through a particular consciousness. A number of persons become momentarily very prominent. Each of them calls to mind vivid moments of experience and distinct personalities. Each character in her novel is a riddle of human personality which Virginia Woolf attempts to solve by uncovering each character's past and showing its relationship, to the immediate present. In the novels "To The Lighthouse", "Mrs. Dalloway", "The Waves", "Between the Acts" a small group of people is presented. The

reader receives his total impression through their closely inter-related experience. In each case certain images, phrases and symbols bind the whole together.

The governing element of moment is emotional rather than simply sensual. It is the principle underlying her fiction. The complexity of her novels depends upon intricate relationship of emotions, conflicts, and tensions which affect the character. The patterns of these inner tensions make up the form of her novels. The reality that her characters perceive is governed by the physical and mental make-up of the characters. The reality is shaped by an individual's thoughts, memories and sensations. According to Virginia Woolf the self is not one and simple, but complex and many. In Mrs. Dalloway she seems to show self as a bundle of divided parts which the outside world sees as a single person. The most dramatic way of entering the character's consciousness is by the modes of time. Virginia Woolf measured time emotionally and not by the clock. By the clock the span of the moment of being might be merely five minutes or five seconds, but when it is measured mentally or emotionally, a succession of awareness takes place not in five minutes but really speaking it posits past, present and future. The voice of her character is not social but it is a deep, troubling, inner voice. Three voices are heard in Virginia Woolf's novels. The first voice comes from within the character and

resembles the usual voice of the internal monologue. The second voice is mistaken for that of the narrator which hovers above the character but has access to certain obscure areas of his personality. The third voice makes clear certain hidden truths of the individual. Sometimes two, sometimes three voices are blended. In "To The Lighthouse" we see these voices blended.

"How did she manage these things in the depths of the country?" he asked her. (1)
She was a wonderful woman (2) "All his love,
all his reverence, had returned. (3)"⁶

In the first sentence it is the voice of a character William Bankes in Free direct monologue. The second sentence is indirect interior monologue of the same character. It is the voice of his mind which resembles the voice in the first sentence. In the third sentence the narrator's voice is clear, which reveals the character's feelings. Another aspect of voice is style. She sought a vocabulary and rhythm which would express thought and feeling at once personal and universal. In To The Lighthouse seeing Mr. & Mrs. Ramsay together the thought that arose in Lily's mind is expressed in the words which express her thoughts and feelings for Ramsay couple.

"And suddenly the meaning which, for no reason at all, as perhaps they are stepping out of the tube or ringing a doorbell, descends on

people, making them symbolical making them representative, came upon them, and made them in the dusk standing, looking the symbols of marriage, husband and wife".⁷

Virginia Woolf's whole attempt is towards understanding rather than judgement. In her novels we attend to the thought and speech of her characters, but never to her own. Even then her novels contain moral and metaphysical ideas. Again and again her characters create the sense that life is chaotic, fragmentary, disillusioning and often they create the sense of intense joy of living. No solution is offered, no conclusion reached about the value or the horror of life, about the peace or the terror of death, it is merely that both experiences are vividly represented in her books. The central theme is the significance of life and the significance of death. She creates the sense of magnificence and the sense of chaos through characters. Through Mrs. Ramsay she has created shape, order and harmony out of human relationships.

Her novel Jacob's Room laid the foundation of the new technique. The impact of one personality upon another continues in all her books to be an important means of composing the portrait of a human being. Her characters Mrs. Ramsay, Mrs. Dalloway inhabit the mind of the readers. In all her novels, personality is revealed as much by the record of

an inner monologue as by action and conversation. In To The Lighthouse the reader understands Mrs. Ramsay's character through Mr. Ramsay's understanding of his wife, the influence of Mrs. Ramsay on Lily, William Bankes, Charmical, Mr. Tansley and her own children. In some of her earlier novels she depicted characters conventionally by describing their physical and psychological traits. But when she realised that the traditional method of characterization could not interpret her own vision, she searched for other means. In her novels Night and Day and The Voyage out she developed a new method of characterization. She discovered the characters gradually and completely, partly through their own reflection and partly through their effect upon other people. Joan Bennett a critic, observed that she failed to provide memorable characters. But it is due to her different method of characterization.

Her novels are interesting although she has no story to tell, nor a sequence of events leading to climax. The readers are interested in her human beings, their joys and sorrows, hope and despair. Regarding her vision of life Joan Bennet comments,

" There is profound truth in Virginia Woolf's vision of the experience of the deepest of all sorrows, the death of those we loved. What she shows is the continuation of life, the healing tyranny of habit and the small unavoidable

demands made by living. She doesnot minimise the pain, but she shows it as it is, continued, and is yet frequently submerged"

Another interesting thing with Virginia Woolf is her insight into women characters and their typical womanliness. Though her women characters lack sense of facts, they are honest and courageous. Mrs. Ramsay is more honest than her husband. She always comforts him whenever his vanity is wounded. She fosters faith in him. She depicts the essential quality of female experience.

However, one must admit that Virginia Woolf is a novelist of very narrow limits. The range of her characters is small. Her characters belong to a certain class - upper middle class. They are distinguished by their intelligence and acute self consciousness. In spite of these limits, she is highly original and the most accomplished artist.

In his review Orlo Williams comments on the art of Virginia Woolf :

" Mrs. Woolf's art, in other words, is intensely personal in its stamp, especially now that she has abandoned the solidly constructive method of narration for her uniquely reflective impressionism. 'Making of the moment something permanent' is the work of the poet, the painter, the musician, not of

the dramatist nor as I believe with Mr. Wyndham Lewis, essentially of the novelist. For imaginative prose of this kind, their ought to ^{be} another name, since it is a thing different from the novel, verging at its most exalted moments on poetry"⁹

2.2. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF "TO THE LIGHTHOUSE" :-

According to the Critics "To The Lighthouse" is Virginia Woolf's most satisfactory novel. On May 14, 1925, Virginia Woolf wrote in her Diary that she wrote the novel.

"To have father's character done complete in it; and mother's; and St. Ives; and childhood and all the usual things I try to put in - life, death etc." ¹⁰ Eventhough she has drawn the character of Mr. & Mrs. Ramsay on the basis of the actual lines^V of Sir Leslie Stephen and Julia Stephen, To The Lighthouse". is not an autobiographical novel. Ruby Cohn observes that the novel is "a work of art about art - as are Hamlet and Don Quixote : as is much of the creation of artists so various as Yeats, Braque, Pirandellow, Mann."¹¹

The novel expresses personal emotion. She presents multiple experiences by the subtle and constant movements in and out of the minds of her various characters. From the choas of experiences she selects certain memories, thoughts, feelings and impressions. She arranges them skilfully to create harmony and unity and to produce a formally composed

whole.

The outward structure of To The Lighthouse is simple. It is composed of three movements of unequal length. The first and the largest section "The Window" introduces all the principal characters as well as the central issue - the proposed expedition to the Lighthouse. The second section "Time Passes" is like a choral ode which marks the passage of ten years. It is framed between the day recorded in the first movement and Lily Briscoe's awakening ten years later, in the Ramsay's house after Mrs. Ramsay's death. It also describes the decay to which the house has fallen. The third section "The Lighthouse" covers a single day and in it the trip to the Lighthouse planned ten years earlier, finally takes place. These three parts are constructed differently Part I depicts the mother and the child in the window. The presence of Mrs. Ramsay dominates. Part II is constructed using all the resources of poetry. The sense of the passing of ten years is created impressionistically rather than chronologically. In Part II the mystery and gloom of death are intensified, part III shows a simple journey. But it explores the physical triumph of James, the intellectual triumph of Mr. Ramsay and the artistic triumph of Lily Briscoe. The Lighthouse links the three parts and stands for the fulfilment of each one's desire. The Lighthouse is the symbolic point around which the novel revolves. At the beginning young James Ramsay longs to go there on an expedition but is frustrated by his egocentric

father, who is a famous scholar. By the end of the book James, now more compassionate and understanding than his father, finally makes the passages across the choppy water to the Lighthouse, and symbolically achieves maturity through his understanding of his Oedipal relationship with his parents.

In To The Lighthouse ten characters make prominent appearance. Of these only seven, Mr & Mrs. Ramsay, Lily Briscoe, William Bankes, Mr. Tansley, James, Cam, reveal themselves fully in speech & in soliloquy. The Ramsays have come to their summer resort for vacation on the Isle of Hebride, They have some guests. The group includes a bachelor, a maiden, a poet, philosopher, an artist, a scientist, a housewife, children. Some of these characters talk about their planned expedition to the lighthouse. They react in their own way & it is through their reactions that the reader's understanding of the events and the characters develop. The novel achieves a remarkable unity due to limited time, narrow space and fewer characters.

The novel is a study of human relationships and its inadequacy. It tells about Ramsay family and their relations to one another & to a group of their friends. The planned expedition to the lighthouse, which is frustrated by the bad weather in the first section and which actually takes place in the last section, is an instrument to reveal certain ^{aspects} of characters such as Mrs. Ramsay's sympathetic

understanding of other people's feelings particularly that of James' and Mr Ramsay's insensibility and sense of fact , Mr. Tansley's aggressive self assertiveness . Ramsay's children and friends are all revealed in the light their relation to Mrs. Ramsay and to one another , both before and after her death . Mr. William Bankes is devoted to her physical and moral beauty. Mr Tansley feels himself intellectually superior but socially inferior . Lily Briscoe's endeavour to paint a picture of Mrs. Ramsay and her subsequent completion of the picture is the expression of her sense of Mrs. Ramsay's power to create order and harmony out of human relations . In the first section , we see Mrs. Ramsay undertaking the task of creating order and beauty in the relations among the family and friends . All the time she is aware of the inadequacy of human relationship but she is never disappointed . She extends Mr. Ramsay all the support and sympathy in the hour of his intellectual frustration . She hopes for the happy marriage of her daughter Prue . She encourages a match between Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle . She runs numerous errands of mercy in the village and drafts many letters to draw attention to the poor. She entertains quite a large number of guests. She never gives up her attempts to bring people together . Her social skill is displayed at dinner table . It reveals Mrs. Ramsay's artistic endeavour to knit people and arrange things .

Mr. Ramsay is an isolated figure . He is an egoist

intellectual figure who has no interest in any one's aspirations . He wishes for an ideal world. His behaviour is sometimes cautious , and some time selfconsciously rash . His consciousness of loneliness isolates him , makes him separate and compels him to lock his heart . He talks in gestures , hints and whispers , that are clear to him alone . His ambitions are vague . Mr. Ramsay's sense of loneliness is increased in the third section . Death has struck his family in "Time Passes " . Mrs. Ramsay died suddenly one night; Prue died in childbirth; Andrew was killed during war . His reciting 'we perished each alone'¹² describes not only his physical isolation but also spiritual isolation. In the last section he remains the remote unscrutable old man.

Virginia Woolf also deals with the theme , relationship between life and art , through paintings of Lily Briscoe, the creation of order out of confusion . Lily Briscoe recognises Mrs. Ramsay's manipulation of life . Mrs. Ramsay makes the moment permanent . The life of Mrs. Ramsay nourishes the art of Lily Briscoe and the art of Lily Briscoe grants permanence to life of Mrs. Ramsay. Lily discovers order out of chaos of life and depicts it in her picture. The problem of Virginia Woolf and Lily Briscoe is similar. On her canvas she wants to paint Mrs. Ramsay and James representing mother and child on the opposite side of the picture , she has pictured the hedge , view of the sea and a tree. Her problem is how to fill the space in the centre .

The possible solution of this problem occupies Lily throughout the novel. She is concerned with colours , shapes , lines , masses, space, light and shadow arranged in the right relation. She does not want to break unity as a whole she is reminded of the picture when she returns to the summer house after ten years. She tries to paint but she cannot paint with Mr. Ramsay around begging for sympathy. When she recalls Mrs. Ramsay, visions come to her and she finishes the picture. In this way Virginia Woolf unifies the novel linking the window with the lighthouse.

At last all the enigmas have been resolved. Proper relation at all levels have been achieved. Lily has made the moment permanent through her art after a long struggle. Mr. Ramsay's estrangement from his children has ended . James drops his hatred for his father. Cam looks at her father with respect. Mr. Ramsay's ideal of order, discipline, work, philosophy and the conquest of nature have been balanced by the feminine receptivity of Mrs. Ramsay's practise, her recognition of the child's need for love and care and her awareness of the disasterous consequences of a decisive world view.

S.P. Mittal comments, "In 'To The Lighthouse' Virginia Woolf attains a high degree of stylisation of obliterating the distinction between form and content which is shown by the convergence of both human and artistic relationships at



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the end..... Virginia Woolf also totally abandons reliance on dramatic events, concerned as she is to explore human consciousness; and there is juxtaposition instead of sequence of the moments of human consciousness making them a reflex of the past and the future. This, according to her, in aesthetic terms, is the creation of a genuine sense reality and truth of life"

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In the second part 'Time Passes' Virginia Woolf has reached the most impressive height of the book. In this part she describes the unused house in the Hebrides. Only the sea air and the light of the lighthouse enter it. It tells the story of the change, the destruction, the solitude and waste of the house. The short span of mortal life is contrasted with the recurring season and enduring world. The emotional and ironical tone of this part surpasses. It also records events such as death of Prue and Andrew, death of Mrs. Ramsay, marriage between Paul and Minta. The change of season is interwoven with the records of human events in such a way as to indicate indifference of nature. These interlude, the passage of time of ten years, is unavoidable. Virginia Woolf wants to adjust the point of view of the reader's to the further seen of action. Louis Kronenberger in his review on To The Lighthouse remarks, "The great beauty of these eighteen pages of prose carries in it an emotional and ironical undertone that is superior to anything else that the firstclass technician the expert stylist, the deft student of

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human life in Mrs. Woolf ever has done. To The Lighthouse is superior in its portrayal of life that is less orderly, more complex and so much doomed to frustration, it strikes a more important note, and it gives us an interlude of vision that must stand at the head of all Virginia Woolf's work." ¹⁴

Thus the second section 'Time Passes' shows Virginia Woolf's profound imagination. Arnold Bennett in his review expresses his different opinion saying, "It is short cut, but short cut that do not get you anywhere" ¹⁵

The novel is difficult to judge. Its aim is high. Firstly, it has an autobiographical element. It throws light on the personalities of Virginia Woolf's father and mother. Secondly it illuminates the process of artistic creation. Lily Briscoe is the mouth piece of Virginia Woolf and thirdly, it describes 'good life' seen from a woman's point of view. Mrs. Ramsay is a great creation of Virginia Woolf. She has a gift of penetrating through the layers into the core of things. It is her life work to create again self confidence in people. She is in some respects stronger than her husband. Her sense of values is highly developed and her self criticism and honesty are admirable. She is all the time aware of inadequacy of human relation. She is a born wife and a mother with a store of warmth and tenderness. The novel is pre-eminently about Mrs. Ramsay she is the center around which everything and everyone revolves. In the first movement of To The Lighthouse the reader gradually discovers the

relation between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. We see them together and apart; reflected in each others mind and in the mind of other people. She soothes his wounded vanity, fosters faith in him. Mr. Ramsay gives her a sense of security and stability. The males in 'To The Lighthouse' are intellectuals, materialistic and philosophical where as the female world is intuitive , sensitive , beautiful and domestic. Thus the novel deals with the relation between male - female and between intellect and intuition.

The experience of love, like experience of death, is shown in Virginia Woolf's book as a part the pattern of human life . Nither is seen as climax or conclusion. Instead she portrays alternation between vivid consciousness and numb insensibility , the rhythm of human response to these major sources of joy and grief. The significance of life the significance of death is again the central thing. It is life as men and women experience it, Virginia Woolf presents in her books ; with its both extremes , the sense of life's magnificence and the sense of life's ugliness and chaos.

Most critics are of the opinion that the lighthouse in the novel is a poetic symbol and it is suggestive. The alternating light and shadow of the lighthouse beam symbolises the rhythm of joy and sorrow in human life and the alternating radiance and darkness of even the most intimate human relationships. The structure of the book itself

reproduces the effect of the lighthouse beam, the long flash represented by the first movement (The Window), the internal of darkness represented by the second movement (Time Passes) and the second and shorter flash by the last movement (The Lighthouse). When this aspect of the book is thought of, the subject is no longer a particular group of human beings; it is life and death, joy and pain - more specifically two things stand out : the isolation of the individual human spirit and the contrast between the disordered and fragmentary experience of living and the ideal truth of beauty to which the human mind aspires.

The final part of the book is more perplexing. It is similar to the first part in structure, in style. The first part is magnificiently expressive, whereas the third part is weak and pale. perhaps Virginia Woolf meant to show that with Mrs. Ramsay's death things fell apart got beyond correlation. This part describes how James, the youngest had always hated his father because he had been a disturbing element in the boy's relationship with his mother. At last he makes the trip to the lighthouse with his father, which was planned ten years ago. His dream which was then, shattered by his father, now gets fulfilled and releases the tension . The lighthouse becomes the symbol of unity that had cast its rays on Mrs. Ramsay's life.

It is difficult estimate the novel of Verginia Woolf

especially 'To The Lighthouse'. It has a charm and pleasure in its design , a striking mingling of inward thought with outward action and the remarkable method of characterisation. Her method is not based on observation or personal experience, but it is clearly creative. In 'To The Lighthouse' characters are depicted through their inner processes, through their moments of consciousness and through their subjective impression of reality. The story in the form of recorded dramatic events, disappeared, the flow of thought has taken its place. Mrs. Ramsay, at the seen of dinner party unfolds her thoughts. She looks back over her life with a sense of futility . Presently her mood changes. Pity revitalizes her. and Lily perceives the sequence of her moods. Before the meal is over Mrs. Ramsay's deadness of feeling about her husband has vanished. In this sense the novel is an inner voyage into the minds of its characters. Thus To The Lighthouse is one of Virginia Woolf's the most psychologically and technically complex novels.

2.3. IMAGERY, SYMBOLISM AND THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

F.H. Sanford wrote: "There are many indications that language is a vehicle of personality as well as thought, for when the person speaks, he tells us not only about the world but also, through both form and content, about himself"¹⁶

This is very true in the case of Virginia Woolf's

character. A close study of the novel as regards vocabulary, syntax, imagery and symbols only reveals the psychological realism of each individual in 'To The Lighthouse'. Their linguistic habit projects their personalities. Virginia Woolf wants her readers to read beyond the printed page. Her readers are required to read the verbal symbols, the words and phrases themselves, appropriately so that their emotional suggestiveness may be felt. Mrs. Ramsay's language suggests her maternal infolding of everything about her. Charles Tansley's language reveals his aspiration for intellectual world. Mrs. Macnab differs sharply from other characters as she has nothing to do with linguistic refinement. Mr. Ramsay as a philosopher, naturally uses abstract words in his speech.

As the novelist depicts the emotional responses of the characters, she has made use of the images, symbols metaphors. The use of imagery is a primitive mode but the psychological novelists use it to suggest latent aspect of experience and to show emotional reality.

Harvena Ritcher comments on the images of Virginia Woolf as : "Virginia Woolf's images are not lyric excesses but rather units of subjectivity which she exploits deliberately for their emotional values and whose many modes of operation -abstraction and concretization, expansion and contraction, metamorphosis or transformation and compression

she appears to have recognised"

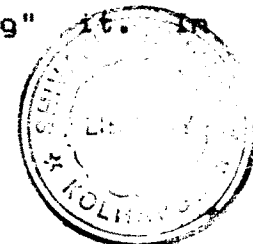
In 'To The Lighthouse' James sitting in a boat stares at his father angrily. He remembers the old image of knife. In his childhood he had wished to strike his father with knife. But now he realises that it is not his father that he wishes to destroy, it is something else which he visualises as "that fierce, sudden, black-winged harpy, with its talons and its beak all old, cold and hard, that struck and struck at you"¹⁸. James expresses hatred for his father translating it into image. As a boy he felt, "crushed" when his father announces bad weather and the postponement of expedition. James' dislike for his father's unreasonable crushing ways, is compressed and concretized in the image of wheel. The readers are made to feel the violent emotion in James Virginia Woolf very successfully describes this complex relationship between Mr. Ramsay and James through images and symbols, with a minimum of space. This illustration shows how Virginia Woolf enriches and expands the image. It can stand not merely for a state of wind at a single moment but for a lifetime of psychic states. She intensifies the emotion of the image through the dynamism of motion or action i.e. 'the wheel moving over the foot and crushing it'¹⁹. This shows her use of the principle of compression. Many of her images present an abstract idea or feeling in a concrete shape. In the third part of To The Lighthouse Lily Briscoe, trying to make conversation with Mr. Ramsay, praises his "beautiful

boots" and finds him at last responsive. "They had reached, she felt, a sunny island where peace dwelt, sanity reigned²⁰ and the sun forever shone, the blessed isle of good boots" . The phrase "blessed isle of good boots" conveys to the readers Lily's desperate feeling and her final emotional relief on finding a sympathetic topic for conversation.

The novel 'To The Lighthouse' from the beginning to the end is highly symbolic. The characters in the novel and especially the lighthouse represents various things. In the hands of Virginia Woolf symbols are used like similies and long metaphors. Sharon Kachele and Howard German in their article To The Lighthouse ; Symbol and Vision commented as "a careful reading of the three parts of the novel with attention to details of character, action and imagery will reveal how successfully Mrs. Woolf has combined these diverse²¹ themes into a unified whole" . She has created Mr. and Mrs.Ramsay to express her idea about a typical masculine and feminine character. Mrs.Ramsay represents feminine character. Mrs.Ramsay represents femine character. Mrs.Ramsay represents feminine intuition whereas Mr.Ramsay represents masculine intellect. They both represents a man woman relationship. Often Mr.Ramsay is compared to the knife and Mrs.Ramsay to a tree. Mr.Ramsay's lack of feeling and understanding is selfishness and egotism which are always smiting like an²² 'arid scimitar ' whereas Mrs.Ramsay is like 'a rosy-

flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs' .
When she returns to a room where Mr.Ramsay sits reading she
feels 'she grew still like a tree which has been tossing and
quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by
leaf, into quiet'²⁴ . Mrs.Ramsay pities men always but she
never pities women. Mr.Ramsay can not see any beauty in the
flowers because of his intellect but his wife admires the
same flowers for their beauty. The sight of the flowers gives
her keen pleasure. Mrs.Ramsay doesn't like intellectuals who
are only interested in thier 'ugly academic jargon.'
Mr.Ramsay and Mr.Tansley have no mind for the feelings of
others. In this novel Virginia Woolf tries to suggest her
ideas about the reality and intuition through Mr. and
Mrs.Ramsay. In this sense, they are symbolic.

"Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," said
Mrs.Ramsay²⁵ . Mrs.Ramsay is opposed by her husband who
answers her opening remarks "But", said his father, stopping
in front of the drawing room window, "it won't be fine"²⁶ .
Thus the basic situation is infused with symbolic meaning in
the opposing of two forces. The general relationships of the
characters, the struggle after answers to basic problems of
knowledge, the search for keys to memories and impressions
take take on the significance that comes with a mystical
quest : It is, in Virginia Woolf, all a matter of insight,
for the symbolic values cannot be defined and when one finds
them, one knows it only by intuition, by "sensing" it. In



this regard David Daiches has remarked, "Virginia Woolf passes from one consciousness to another, from one group to another exploring the significance of there reactions, following the course of their meditations carefully arranging and patterning the image that rise up in their minds, bringing together with care and economy, a select number of symbolic incidents, until a design has been achieved and experience is seen as something inexpressible yet significant" .

The Lighthouse symbol has been interpreted differently by different critics. It is associated with many ideas, ideas about time, flux, death, egoism. Just as an actual lighthouse marks a fixed spot in moving waters, so the lighthouse in the novel symbolises fixed points in the flux of human life. Mrs.Ramsay in a mood of introspection identifies herself with the lighthouse. 'She looked out to meet that stroke of the lighthouse, the long steady stroke which was her stroke .

She merges into the lighthouse symbol. At that movement she experiences exquisite happiness. For James when he was a child, the lighthouse was 'a silvery misty looking tower with a yellow eye, that opened suddenly, and softly in the evening .

When, after ten years, he actually visits the lighthouse, "James thought the lighthouse, one had seen across the bay all these years, it was a stark tower on a bare rock" . James has two views about lighthouse. In his

first view it is just like a dream for him. The second view suggests this dream is fulfilled at last. The lighthouse sends strokes of light. A stroke of light is followed by darkness and the darkness again follows light. This light and shadow spreading alternatively suggest extreme joy and sorrow.

The structure of the book itself reproduces the effect of the lighthouse beam, the long flash represented by the first movement (The Window), the interval of darkness represented by the second movement (Time Passes) and the second and shorter flash by the last movement (The Lighthouse). Virginia Woolf makes use of motifs as unifying devices. One such example is the recurring symbol of Lighthouse in To The Lighthouse. Her symbols are very emphatic in this novel as the whole novel is based on symbolic values. An examination of To The Lighthouse will reveal the manner in which this symbolic structure functions to give the needed coherency of pattern in stream of consciousness fiction .

Part II is designed to reveal the force of time and flux upon man and his works and to emphasize the indifference of nature to man's fate. Virginia Woolf suggests the passage of time by describing the interior and the exterior state of affairs of Ramsay house. Inside the house the rusty hinges, the swollen sea-moistered wood work, the fading roses on the

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wall paper, the moth eaten clothes, the fallen plaster suggest the passage of time. Outside the long grass, the growth of poppies among dahalias suggest the years of neglect. The tree affected by autumn looking like a tattered flag, symbolises Mr.Ramsay widowed, torn after the death of his wife. The choked rain-pipe symbolises his choked emotions. Similarly the spring "bare and bright like a Virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity"³² is a symbol of Prue Ramsay. And in the heat of summer 'silence broken by the shrieking alone of giant voice', 'the thud of something falling',³³ symbolizes the death of Andrew Ramsay in the prime youth.

Similarly Virginia Woolf suggests the moods and emotional reactions of her characters symbolically. Mr.Ramsay walks up and down on the terrace. It occurs to him that he is not able to reach 'Z' the last letter, which glimmers red in the distance. This suggests his awareness of his limitations and failures. In the same way his saying "we perished each alone"³⁴ symbolises his loneliness.

Lily Briscoe symbolises Virginia Woolf and her aesthetic problem creating harmony out of chaos. Therefore, we see Lily balancing between lights and shadows in her picture. She avoids the awkward space, in her painting by moving the tree to the middle and brings the wall, the hedge and the tree into harmony. She draws a line a the middle

fills the empty space. Thus she creates a perfect picture of her vision of life. Mrs.Ramsay's awareness of the fact that her relationship with her husband could never give her the pure joy of two harmonious notes sounding together of being inextricably the same like waters poured into one jar, is suggestive of Virginia Woolf's idea of inadequacy of human relationship.

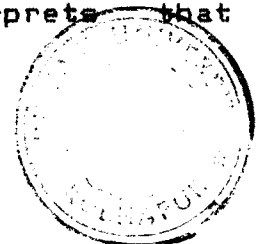
Sharon Kachele and Howard German have interpreted the journey to the lighthouse as "The voyage to the Lighthouse illustrates the difficulty of judging others and the way in which each new set of sensations has the power to alter a judgement ³⁵. Before they leave for the lighthouse, Cam and James hate Mr.Ramsay and recall his past tyranny. They are forced to go on this journey. But in a boat, gradually they reconcile to him. Their opinion about their father is changed.

The symbolic quality of Virginia Woolf helps her to achieve an extra-ordinary fineness of soul. Her style is delicate and supple. Her descriptions are marked by very minute and accurate observations. She tries to describe the impressions of mind and the most delicate feelings, which is a difficult task. To make her style expressive she employs images. In the first part of the novel, the imagery that is used identifies Mrs.Ramsay with the tree. She also makes use

of the images of sea waves, birds and different hues in nature to make the experience vivid and charming. Lily meditates her art and realises its limitations. This is expressed through the imagery. She wants a picture "feathery, evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colour of a butterfly's wing ; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron" ³⁶ .

Critics have observed that her each novel is an attempt to understand her multi-leveled relationship with reality. She felt and perceived simultaneously. In this novels, objects are seen in three ways through the eye of a child, through the eye of a painter and through the feminine creative eye of Mrs.Ramsay. We can see Virginia Woolf's ability to communicate differences between perceptive processes of various characters. Jame's perception of lighthouse is different from that of Mrs.Ramsay's and for Lily Briscoe the lighthouse is a source of enlightenment. Woolf has the power of moulding the language.

Roger Fry comments " This 'whole shape' is precisely what Virginia Woolf wanted her readers to see when they read her novels and it is when they read her novels and it is the pattern of repetitions and the insight into repetition and rhythm throughout her work which helps her to achieve this effect" ³⁷ . Further he interprets that



Mr.Ramsay's eyes are set upon distant things such as abstract ideas and fame. He is far-sighted. Therefore he doesn't see the hedge as a beautiful mass of colour and shape as Mrs.Ramsay sees it. Mrs.Ramsay, on the contrary is short-sighted and sees the things in a flash of intuition. She sees importance in immediate things and therefore gets inside the repetition and transforms it into rhythm, "and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the lighthouse the long steady stroke, the last of the three which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw ; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. Often she found herself sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at that light for example " ³⁸ . She seems the 'first two quick strokes' of the lighthouse, but it is the long third stroke which modifies this repetition and transforms it into rhythm Mr.Ramsay is long-sighted and cannot become part of rhythm.

Rodger Fry further observes that repetition is one of the themes of this novel. It is used to express Tansley's anger at his sense of the emptiness of the lives of Mrs.Ramsay and Lily, who 'did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat" ³⁹ . Repetition is significantly used to express Paul's thoughts after he had proposed to Minta Doyle. He is dazzled by the lights of the house and by his emotions and he seeks re-assuarance in child like repetition. "

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Lights, lights, lights, and repeated in dazed way, lights, lights, lights, as they came into house, staring about him with his face quite stiff"⁴⁰. The use of phrases or refrain is more interesting. Tansely's 'Women can't paint, women can't write' echoes in Lily's mind, 'we perished each alone' is echoed throughout the final part of the novel.

As the novel is concerned with painting, the use of colour is quite distinctive. 'Blue, yellow, green, red, brown, black, purple these colour adjectives are used frequently by Virginia Woolf. David Daiches has pointed out that there is colour symbolism running right through the book. He says that, "Red and brown appear to be the colours of individuality and egotism, while blue and green are the colours of impersonality. Mr.Ramsay until the very end of the book, is represented as an egoist, and his colour is red or brown ; Lily is the impersonal artist, and her colour is blue ; Mrs.Ramsay stands somewhere between, and her colour is purple"⁴¹.

Roger Fry has noted that many of the sentences in To The Lighthouse begin with 'Never was' and 'Never did'.⁴² This gives an exaggerated, emphatic effect. Virginia Woolf attempts to stimulate certain special aspects of visual art. In To The Lighthouse she uses parenthesis as something more than a mere device in the novel, for the whole form can be seen as a parenthesis. The first and the last section being

parallel form brackets around the central section, 'Time Passes'. Throughout the novel smaller parenthesis mirror this overall pattern within the emptiness of central section, there are various parenthesis which give a sense of the mere contingency of human life. The death of Andrew and Mrs. Ramsay is reported in square brackets. The effect is partly one of irony, which is intensified by the fact that the parenthesis equates these deaths with a candle blown out.

Thus it is the significance of events and memories and associations that is pointed up by Virginia Woolf. She is aware that she cannot express the meaning of the event so she impresses the reader with their significance.

Harvena Ritcher expresses her opinion about the use of vocabulary of Virginia Woolf as : " The vocabulary in Virginia Woolf's novels, constantly guides the readers to an awareness of emotional or sensory reality"⁴³ . She uses the verbs of perception such as felt, thought, looked seemed, appeared, wondered, imagined etc. In her novels we find the use of exclamations, half phrases, repetitions and onomatopoeic words. Harvena Ritcher has observed that Virginia Woolf manipulates the sentence curve according to the need of the novel or the characters particular emotion. She bends and curves her language to achieve the exact subjective tone she wants. Her sentence with its swoops and dartings, its quick

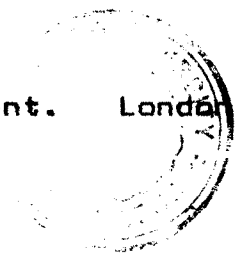
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contradictions, its occasional chattering tone, seems to have been reproduced unconsciously catching the spontaneity and constantly changing quality of feminine thought. It seems as if the sentences were "thought out ⁴³ loud" . This curious quality which exists most strongly in the long curving sentences of Mrs.Ramsay.

Giving due consideration to these evaluations, I have tried a stylistic analysis of the novel 'To The Lighthouse' in the following chapter. However considering the length and scope of the dissertation, the analysis had to be delimited.

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