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Yüksek lisans tezi olarak sunduğum "Symbolism in Virginia Woolf's Novels The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse" adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin bibliyografyada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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H. İrem Çomoğlu

TUTANAK

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Yrd. Doç. Dr. Sena Tulpar
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ÖZET

Virginia Woolf yirminci yüzyıl İngiliz Edebiyatının en seçkin yazarlarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu tez, yazarın The Voyage Out ve To the Lighthouse isimli eserleri üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, söz konusu romanların sembolik açıdan incelenmesi ve ortak sembolik elementlerin bulunması amaçlanmaktadır.

Önsöz bölümünde Virginia Woolf ' un yaşamına ve meslek hayatına kısaca değinilmektedir. Giriş kısmında tezin bölümleri hakkında genel bir bilgi verilmektedir. Sembolizme Genel Bir Bakış başlıklı bölümde, sembol ve sembolizmin temel özellikleri üzerinde durulmaktadır.

The Voyage Out ' da sembolizmin incelendiği bölümde, romanın Virginia Woolf 'un ilk eseri olduğu dikkate alınarak sembolik açıdan bir değerlendirilmesi yapılmaktadır. Bu bölümde, sembolizm açısından önem taşıyan karakter ve olaylara ağırlık verilmektedir.

To the Lighthouse' un sembolik açıdan incelendiği bölüm, romanın son derece karmaşık olan yapısına ışık tutmayı ve bir takım sembolik elementleri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Her iki romanın sembolizm açısından karşılaştırıldığı bölümde, ortak sembolik elementler ele alınmıştır. Bu karşılaştırma sırasında, aynı yazar tarafından üretilen bu iki eserin doğal olarak bir takım ortak özelliklere sahip olduğu gerçeği kabul edilmiştir.

Sonuç kısmında, The Voyage Out ve To the Lighthouse adlı romanların incelemelerinden elde edilen sonuçlar sunulmuş ve bu iki romanın Virginia Woolf ' un edebi hayatının değişik dönemlerinde yazılmış olmalarına rağmen birbirlerinden tamamıyla farklı olmadıkları sonucuna varılmıştır.

ABSTRACT

Virginia Woolf is generally regarded as one of the most outstanding novelists of the twentieth century English literature. This thesis focuses on two of her works, namely The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse. It is aimed to analyse these two novels in terms of symbolism and to find out various symbolic elements shared by both novels.

In Preface, a brief summary of Virginia Woolf's life and writing career is presented. In Introduction, general information on the parts of the thesis is given. The third part of the thesis entitled A General Look at Symbolism deals with some of the basic features of symbol and symbolism.

In Symbolism in The Voyage Out, the novel in question is analysed with regard to its symbolic elements, considering the fact that it is the first novel written by Virginia Woolf. In this part, the emphasis is laid on characters and events that have symbolic importance.

In Symbolism in To the Lighthouse, the novel consisting of three parts is studied in terms of symbolism. This part aims to enlighten the extremely complicated structure of the novel and attempts to discover some of its symbolic elements.

In A Comparison of the Symbolic Elements in The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse, various symbolic elements shared by both novels are handled, taking into consideration the fact that these novels naturally have some common features since they are created by the same author.

In Conclusion, the insights that are derived in the analyses of The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse are presented. And it is concluded that these two novels by Virginia Woolf are not totally different from each other although they were written at different periods of her literary career.

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H. İrem Çomoğlu

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PART I

PREFACE

Woolf was born in 1882 to a distinguished family that promoted the study and appreciation of literature and the arts. Often ill as a child , she was unable to attend school regularly but benefited from the ongoing intellectual exchange occurring in her rich cultural milieu. Descendant of a distinguished literary family, member of the avant-garde Bloomsbury Group, herself an experienced critic and reviewer, she was taken seriously as an artist.

Nevertheless, her early works were not financially successful; she was forty before she earned a living from her writing. The Voyage Out ,Woolf's first novel, appeared in 1915. This tragic tale, which offered radical new views on women and education, was generally viewed as the work of a promising author. Woolf wrote her second novel, Night and Day (1919), while recuperating from the mental breakdown brought on by the completion of The Voyage Out. Despite the fact that these two novels are generally considered to be conventional, it is impossible to dismiss them since they have lots of features that Woolf will develop in her later novels. Especially The Voyage Out is of great significance with its features anticipating the great symphonic work To the Lighthouse. With Jacob's Room (1922) , she began to experiment with fiction, she was free to try out new techniques because in 1917 she and her husband had established the Hogarth Press.

Over the next two decades, Woolf produced her greatest works. Her important novels are given as follows: Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To the Lighthouse (1927), Orlando: A Biography (1928), The Waves (1931), The Years (1937), Between the Acts (1941).

Of all these novels, To the Lighthouse is regarded as her most moving and complexly affirmative novel. It is even possible to claim that as a writer of fiction she probably never surpasses this achievement. In fact, the plot in To the Lighthouse is very simple: an expedition to a lighthouse is postponed, then completed a decade later. Woolf's mastery, however, of symbolism in this novel makes such a fragile plot line

quite sufficient. Virtually every detail of the world created in To the Lighthouse can be seen to contain some symbolic suggestion and it is really hard for the reader to trace and assess the development of each individual symbol. And with its extremely complex symbolic structure, To the Lighthouse certainly has a special place among Woolf's works.

Virginia Woolf's output was both prodigious and varied; counting her posthumously published works, it fills more than forty volumes. Beyond her novels her fiction encompasses several short-story collections. As a writer of non-fiction, Woolf is similarly prolific. Her works include Roger Fry: A Biography (1940), and two influential feminist statements, A Room of One's Own (1929) and Three Guineas (1938). Throughout her life, Woolf also produces criticism and reviews; the best-known collections are The Common Reader: First Series (1925) and The Common Reader: Second Series (1932). In 1967, the four-volume Collected Essays was published.

Of contemporary writers, Joyce and Proust exerted a profound influence on Virginia Woolf. The theories of William James, Bergson and Freud also helped to shape her work. Anyone unfamiliar with the work of Woolf will certainly be confused by the apparent incoherence of her novels. She provides little background for the narrative situation, major characters are often difficult to distinguish from minor ones, and there is usually no important romantic interest. Instead of a story with a beginning, middle and end consisting of events arranged in chronological order, Woolf presents an exploration of minds. She deals primarily with the spiritual side of humanity, not its activities and adventures.

To understand and appreciate a novel by Virginia Woolf fully, as F. N. Magill states, "one should be willing to read it several times, first determining the overall design, then later connecting details and linking image into patterns that gradually become clearer and acquire deeper meanings. A reader discovers that the world expressed in a novel by Woolf in a way that is similar comprehending a great symphonic work through repeated hearings. One is always attentive to slight variations in the melodies, changes in the harmony and rhythm, contrasts of key and tempo, and

instrumental colouring. Like a great composer, Woolf plots the design of her fictional compositions, orchestrating them with words that form complex patterns and images and creating intricate designs. Her works, accessible to the average reader , nonetheless demand attentiveness and patience. The rewards to be gathered enrich a spirit seeking truth" (1).

PART II

INTRODUCTION

It is certainly true that two novels written by the same author in different stages of his/her literary career differ in many aspects. Naturally, The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf's first and rather immature novel, is unable to reach the complexity and the perfection of her mature novel To the Lighthouse. As David Lodge explains, Virginia Woolf is one of the writers whose literary development can be followed through her novels:

> Virginia Woolf exemplifies very clearly a tendency among modernist writers to develop from a metonymic (realistic) to a metaphoric (symbolist) representation of experience. The essential line of her literary development may be traced through the following novels: The Voyage Out, Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves.(1)

It is crystal clear that one surveying The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse rapidly realises how the features of the traditional novel melt away in To the Lighthouse. Nevertheless, this study attempts to prove that these novels in question, being the products of the same mind, are unavoidably alike.

In this thesis, The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse are examined in terms of symbolism. This study aims to find out some of the symbolic elements shared by these two novels. Other symbolic elements that are not common to both novels are not taken into consideration.

In Preface, a brief summary of Virginia Woolf's life is given in order to make the reader have a general knowledge of Virginia Woolf and her writing career.

The third part of the thesis titled A General Look at Symbolism gives general information about symbolism. It aims to present some of the basic features of

symbolism without going into detail. This part attempts to provide the definitions of symbol and symbolism, giving examples from the works of some outstanding writers and poets such as Dante, Coleridge, T.S. Eliot.

In Symbolism in The Voyage Out, the emphasis is laid on the symbolic features of The Voyage Out as a first novel. Each major character is examined carefully since Virginia Woolf's characters are usually believed to have symbolic dimensions. In the analysis of character symbols, the character brought into focus is Rachel, the heroine of the novel. Rachel is depicted as a naive girl who was brought up by her maiden aunts. Although she is twenty-four, she is unaware of the realities of life. As a young lady, she is not even kissed by a man. However, the voyage she makes to South America changes her life completely. The events she experiences during her voyage are, in fact, first stages of her spiritual development. In Symbolism in The Voyage Out the events and people that influence Rachel's life are given importance. Especially her voyage to South America is of great significance since it has both physical and psychological aspects. In this study, it is accepted that The Voyage Out, including too many characters and unimportant events, is not much of a success as a first novel. However, it is concluded that despite its weak plot The Voyage Out is of great importance since it has many features that Virginia Woolf will develop in her later novels. Therefore, in this thesis, the fact that The Voyage Out is not a satisfying novel is accepted, but on no account is it dismissed as a first immature novel.

In Symbolism in To the Lighthouse, the complicated structure of the novel is handled, taking into consideration its symbolic elements. Because To the Lighthouse is divided into three parts, each part is analysed separately. Mrs. Ramsay, the mother, is the symbolic centre of the first part The Window. She is given as a woman of beauty and intuition ; on the other hand, her husband Mr Ramsay is depicted as a man of logic and intellect. Despite their contrasted characteristics, Mr. and Mrs Ramsay are considered by Lily, the artist, as the universal symbol of the unity of marriage. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, James, the youngest son, is also the centre of interest since he is the one who wants to visit the lighthouse passionately. At the very beginning, James is an inexperienced young boy who loves his mother so much that he even hates his father.

However, in the last part of the novel, his arrival at the lighthouse makes a remarkable change in his life. Throughout the novel, the lighthouse functions as a symbol carrying special importance for each character. Nevertheless, the purpose of this study is not to find out the meaning of the lighthouse as a symbol since it is believed that a single interpretation of the lighthouse is impossible to make. Time Passes is the most abstract part of the novel in which Virginia Woolf deals with the subject of death. By presenting the setting as an important symbol in this part, Virginia Woolf achieves to create a magnificent piece of writing. The sea, for instance, functions as a symbol of man's weakness in the face of natural forces. Similarly, the garden, the symbol of man's ability to tame nature, is quickly changed into the symbol of man's vain struggle against nature. In The Lighthouse, the symbolical voyage finally takes place, leaving the reader with lots of questions dangling in mind. It is certainly not easy to solve this complicated structure of To the Lighthouse, so this study can be seen just as an attempt to help some of its symbolic elements emerge.

In A Comparison of the Symbolic Elements in The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse, character symbols are examined by selecting some of the important characters in the novels. In this selection, characters that have common features are taken into consideration.

It is easily seen that both in The Voyage Out and in To the Lighthouse, characters who are eager to live freely are depicted. For instance, Rachel, who is a naive girl, develops her identity through her experiences in life. She bravely fights against her father and aunts, who wish to make her submit to the taboos of her society. Similarly, James and Cam in To the Lighthouse get rid of the effect of their parents and start a new life. At the beginning of the novel, James continually blames his father for disturbing his relationship with his mother. However, at the end of his voyage to the lighthouse, James comes to understand that his father is not to blame. In other words, James recognises the real face of his father's personality, which can be regarded as James's first attempt towards maturity. Similarly, his sister Cam begins to evaluate the father from a different point of view, that is, she starts to admire this man.

In To the Lighthouse, Woolf also depicts another character called Lily, who is an artist and who functions as the symbol of intellectual women of her society. Similarly, Rachel, the heroine of The Voyage Out, refuses to accept the roles the society is trying to impose on her. Unlike the women of their time, these two women, namely Lily and Rachel, are aware of their importance as individuals. Through Lily and Rachel, Virginia Woolf expresses her hatred for what she calls 'the angel in the house'. This 'angel in the house' is the woman who does not have self-respect and who lives for others.

This part also focuses on two more female characters: Helen and Mrs. Ramsay. Helen, Rachel's aunt, has a profound effect on Rachel's life. As a mature woman, Helen attempts to introduce Rachel to different faces of life, but she is not aware that her attempts cause Rachel to develop a pessimistic view of life. Similarly, Mrs. Ramsay, who treats Lily as if she were her own daughter, wants this young artist to obey the rules of the society without questioning. Therefore, in this study it is claimed that Helen and Mrs. Ramsay are alike in that they both aim to mould the lives of these two young women according to their own norms. It is suggested that Helen in The Voyage Out anticipates Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse.

In this study, besides the character symbols, thematic symbols which are thought to have importance are also included. In The Voyage Out, for instance, the picnic, the dance scene and the expedition are emphasised, considering that they are important stages in Rachel's spiritual development. Her 'voyage out' is considered to have spiritual sides since through this voyage Rachel achieves to become a mature adult. Similarly, in To the Lighthouse, the voyage they make to the lighthouse is of special importance in the novel's symbolic structure. Through this voyage, James, Cam, Mr. Ramsay, Lily and even the old poet Carmichael undergo an internal change. Of all the thematic symbols in these novels, the voyages can be regarded as the most important ones since they effect lots of physical and psychological changes in the lives of the voyagers.

In Conclusion, a brief summary of the points discussed in the analyses of The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse is given. And a general comparison of both novels is made in order to indicate similarities in character and thematic symbolisation, considering the fact that these novels by Virginia Woolf naturally have some common points as the products of the same frame of mind.

PART III

A GENERAL LOOK AT SYMBOLISM

When literary critics use the word 'symbolism', what do they mean? In Theory of Literature, Wellek and Warren suggest that in literary criticism the usage of "symbolism be confined to the discussion of an object which refers to another object but which demands attention also on its own right"(1). This description of symbolism indicates the dual nature of the symbol in literature, existing on the level of representational realism as well as pointing towards another object or area or experience.

The word 'symbol' derives from the Greek verb symballein 'to throw together', and its noun symbolon 'mark', 'emblem', 'token' or 'sign'. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else. As Coleridge put it, "a symbol is characterised by translucence of the special in the individual"(2). Scales, for example, symbolise justice; a dove, peace; the rose, beauty; the lion, strength and courage; the stars and stripes, America and its States.

In literature, however, symbols – in the form of words, images, objects, settings, events and characters – are often used deliberately to suggest and reinforce meaning, to provide enrichment by enlarging and clarifying the experience of the work, and to help to organise and unify the whole. A literary symbol can be likened to a metaphor one half of which remains unstated and indefinite. The analogy is a good one. Although symbols exist first as something literal and concrete within the work itself, they also have the capacity to call to mind a range of invisible and abstract associations, both intellectual and emotional, that transcend the literal and concrete and extend their meaning. A literary symbol brings together what is material and concrete within the work with its series of associations; by fusing them, however briefly, in the reader's imagination, new layers and dimensions of meanings, suggestiveness, and significance are added.

In The Wordsworth Companion to Literature, the symbol is defined as follows:

> The symbol . . . draws together different worlds, usually tangible and intangible, into a unity that purports to be more real than either. It tends to be less precise than a sign and more pretentious than a simile . . . The symbol may be thought of as a metaphor that purports to be more than merely metaphorical. In practice, this means that metaphors apparently having a number of referents and an indefinite reverberation of suggestions tend to be distinguished as symbols. Thus Blake's Sick Rose seems to be a rose, a vulva, jealousy and corruption at least, but, rather than inviting translation into any or all of these, it offers itself as a complex unity of which they are all inseparable parts.(3)

Symbolism emphasised the primary importance of suggestion and evocation in the expression of a private mood or reverie. The symbol was held to evoke subtle relations and affinities, especially between sound, sense and colour, and between the material and spiritual worlds. Dante's Divina Commedia is structurally symbolic. In Macbeth, there is a recurrence of blood image symbolising guilt and violence. In Hamlet, weeds and disease symbolise corruption and decay. In King Lear, clothes symbolise appearances and authority. The poetry of Blake and Shelly is heavily marked with symbols. The shooting of the albatross in Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner is symbolic of all sin and stands for a lack of respect for life and a proper humility towards natural order. In his Four Quarters, T.S. Eliot makes frequent use of the symbols of fire and the rose.

In prose works, the great whale of Melville's Moby Dick is a kind of symbolic creature which hunters have been dissecting for years. Much of the fiction of William Golding, especially Lord of the Flies, Pincher Martin and The Spire, depends upon powerful symbolism capable of more interpretations than one. In all these works we find instances of the use of a concrete image to express an emotion or an abstract idea, or as Eliot put it when explaining his term 'objective correlative', "finding a set of

objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that particular emotion"(4).

Besides these writers, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Wallace Stevens were all variously interested in Symbolism. The most significant work was Arthur Symons's The Symbolist Movement in Literature, an introduction to the French literature which Eliot found a revelation. It characterised Symbolism as a reaction against Naturalism and Realism, and as an attempt to spiritualise literature. It was to be reflection, not merely a sign, of spiritual reality: "a kind of religion, with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual"(5).

The identifications and understanding of literary symbols require a great deal from the reader. They demand awareness and intelligence: an ability to detect when the emphasis an author places on certain elements within the work can be legitimately said to carry those elements to larger, symbolic overtones, and when the author implies nothing beyond what is literally stated. They also make demands on the reader's maturity and sophistication, for only when we are sufficiently experienced with the world will the literal and concrete strike an appropriate symbolic chord. If we have not had the occasion to think much about life, it is not likely that we will be able to detect the larger hidden meanings to which symbols point. What he reader gets from a symbol depends not only upon what the author has put into it but upon the reader's sensitivity and his consequent apprehension of what is there.

It is perfectly true, of course, that the meaning of any symbol is indefinite and open-ended, and that a given symbol will evoke a slightly different response in different readers, no matter how discriminating. Yet there is an acceptable range of possible readings for any symbol beyond which we must not stray. We are always limited in our interpretation of symbols by the total context of the work in which they occur and by the way in which the author has established and arranged the other elements; we are not free to superimpose our personal meanings simply because they appeal to us.

Symbols are often classified as being traditional, original, or private, depending on the source of the associations that provide their meanings. Traditional symbols are those whose associations are the common property of a society or a culture and are so widely recognised and accepted that they can be said to be almost universal. The symbolic associations that generally accompany the moon and the sun, night and day, the colours black, white and red are examples of traditional symbols.

Original symbols are those whose associations are neither immediate nor traditional and that derive meaning from the context of the work in which they are used. Melville's white whale is an original symbol, for white whales are often associated in the popular imagination with brute strength and cunning, Moby Dick assumes his larger, metaphysical significance only within the contextual limits of Melville's novel. Outside that novel, Moby Dick is just a whale.

Private symbols restrict the source of their meaning even more than the original symbols. Certain authors employ symbols that are the products of their own peculiar and idiosyncratic systems of philosophy or belief, as is the case with a number of the symbols found in the poetry of William Blake and William Butler Yeats. Private symbols are esoteric and largely unintelligible.

In many cases, the reader's attention is diverted to the setting. The author deliberately calls attention to the setting, suggesting that it is integrally related to his larger purposes. In the case of Hardy and Crane, it is to call attention to the thematic implications of the works; in the case of Poe and Hawthorne, it is to help reveal the personalities of their characters. Setting in fiction that goes beyond mere backdrop is often used in such symbolic ways.

Besides, symbolism is frequently employed as a way of deepening our understanding of character. Some characters are given symbolic names to suggest underlying moral, intellectual, or emotional qualities. The name Robin Molineux, for example, suggests springtime, youth and innocence, while the name Roger Chillingworth suggests cold intellectuality and lack of human warmth.

Symbolism thus enhances fiction by holding the parts of a literary work together in the service of the whole in such a way as to help readers organise and enlarge their experience of the work. Symbolism, when employed as an integral and organic part of the language and structure of a work of fiction, can stimulate and release the imagination – which is, after all, one of the chief goals of any form of art.

PART IV

SYMBOLISM IN THE VOYAGE OUT

The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf's first novel, was published in 1915. It was a hard-won book. It took six years to write and went through at least seven, and perhaps as many as eleven drafts. At about the time she began The Voyage Out, Woolf described herself to Strachey as a "painstaking woman", wishing to express "some of the perplexities of her sex in plain English"(1).

However, in this first novel, Virginia Woolf is hindered by her attempt to work within traditional novelistic conventions. One senses a disjunction between what she wants to do in the novel and the tools she has for doing it. Therefore, the novel is generally dismissed as an immature first novel.

Nevertheless, to some critics, The Voyage Out is not to be dismissed as the first immature novel. Stella Mc Nichol, for instance, claims that " the first novel by a writer of sophisticated 'Modernist' fiction is a traditional novel, and it has been too readily dismissed by critics for not being innovative. Yet it is only on its surface that makes it a novel of realism. The Voyage Out is a novel of surface simplicity , and of submerged complexity"(2).

David Daiches , too , claims that the novel should not be rejected completely. In his analysis of The Voyage Out, Daiches explains:

> While conforming in structure and external pretentions to the traditions of fiction writing which the nineteenth century had bequeathed to the twentieth, the novel already showed the signs of the author's search for a more delicate savouring of experience than the traditional novel allowed. There is a plot, of sorts. Characters are brought into relations with each other and in the process things happen, complications arise and resolved, and in the course of all these personalities are

> described and analysed. But if the reader inquires into the exact nature of the plot, the quality of experiences described, the meaning of the final resolution, he finds that the entire meaning of the novel seems to be on a different level than that of the generality of works of fiction that had proceeded this.(3)

The Voyage Out is the story of twenty-four-year old Rachel Vinrace, a naive and talented amateur pianist who sails from England to a small resort on the South American coast, where she vacations with her relatives, Ridley Ambrose and his wife Helen Ambrose, who plans to help Rachel become a thinking individual.

At the start of the novel, Rachel Vinrace is twenty-four and quite astonishingly ignorant. Her mother having died when she was eleven, she has been brought up by maiden aunts at Richmond with excessive care for health. Her reading was censored, and although friends might have told her a few facts of life, she has had few friends of her own age. Her aunt's house in Richmond and the park where they walk are sheltered spots which seem disconnected from the outside world. The sheltered gardens of Richmond figure in Rachel's mind throughout the book as emblems of the protective, stifling enclosure from which she breaks out by voyaging to South America.

Life on the shipboard is somewhat like life at Hyde Park Gate, although Rachel's father, Willoughby Vinrace, owns the ship, he presides over it remotely; his only contact with her is his unspoken demand that she act as hostess at the table. Willoughby Vinrace intends to go into politics after he returns to London, and he wants to be able to depend on Rachel to entertain his constituents, to be of great help to him, in short, he wants his daughter to be a 'Tory hostess'. However, in such a role Rachel is uncomfortable and inept. She copes with her difficult position by retreating from it and burying herself in her own cabin with her piano. "It was far better to play the piano and forget all the rest"(4). And later, when they arrive at Santa Marina and move into a villa, Helen promises Rachel a room cut from the rest of the house, large, private – a

room in which she could play, read, think, defy the world, a fortress as well as a sanctuary.

As Hermione Lee puts it, " Rachel's ignorance about sex and her lack of proper education . . . stem from the social assumption that she is to be subservient in a masculine world. Her teachers, who ' would as soon have forced her to go through one piece of drudgery thoroughly as they would have told her that her hands were dirty'; her aunts, who disapprove of Rachel's spoiling her arms playing the piano as 'then one won't marry'; her father, who assumes that Rachel can be turned into a 'Torry hostess' – all further the acceptance of an ideal scale of things where the life of one person was absolutely more important than the life of another"(5).

Phyllis Rose compares Rachel with the heroines of other novels and continues:

> Rachel Vinrace, that wispy amalgam of ineptness, shyness, and innocence, represents an odd portrait of the artist. Here are no signs of genius. She is alienated, but this alienation is a sign not of her superior perceptions, but of her insecurity. This is an ordinary girl, notable only for her extraordinary ignorance. Her art (playing the piano) does not redeem her, but is presented as a kind of retreat.(6)

Rose goes on to explain the effects of the society in which Rachel was brought up:

> Rachel is the product of the kind of education given to women in the nineteenth century – indulgent, patronising, demanding no serious work, designed to keep her free from contamination. The result is a profound and even dangerous ignorance, dangerous because a kiss can produce nightmares, dangerous because the thought of sex is associated with

> thoughts of sex, dangerous because sickness comes to seem a sort of integrity.(7)

Like many other young women of her time, Rachel suffers the consequences of this type of upbringing. She is deeply shocked when Richard Dalloway, one of her shipmates on the voyage out, gives her a kiss. Although their encounter is in fact limited to a passionate kiss, the totally inexperienced Rachel is traumatised by this event. That night she is tortured by a nightmare in which she finds herself in an increasingly narrow tunnel which opens into a damp vault from which there is no escape. Once inside the vault, she is confronted by a gibbering, deformed, animal-like little man by whom she is horribly threatened.

To Pamela J. Transue, "the vaginal and uterine images of the tunnel and vault and the threatening dwarf-like figure are fairly common themes in the dream imagery of women writers, and seems to suggest an association of sex with intimidation, torture and entrapment"(8). In this case, however, during the course of the following day, Rachel's terror is transformed into anger:

> So that's why I can't walk alone!
> By this new light she saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled forever – her life was the only chance she had – a thousand words and actions became plain to her.
> "Because men are brutes! I hate men!" she exclaimed.(9)

Dalloway may be a thoroughgoing bounder, but he is not directly blamed for provoking Rachel's horror. The novel insists that his kiss suggests the infinite possibilities that have been heretofore closed to Rachel. Helen Ambrose pins the blame for Rachel's terror on her sheltered upbringing, for which her father is responsible: "Helen could hardly restrain herself from saying out loud what she thought of a man

who brought up his daughter so that at the age of twenty-four she scarcely knew that men desired women and was terrified by a kiss"(10).

Traumatised even by a kiss, Rachel is too timid to encounter the world of experience. As Phyllis Rose says, "she hardly flings herself into it, but, cautiously testing the temperature of the water, immerses herself bit by bit, half wanting to retreat to her room, to play the piano and stay dry"(11). In fact, the world lies all before Rachel, but having crossed the ocean and come to the wild shores at the edge of the jungle, who or what emerges to meet her? Savages, gods, evil, deception? No, she encounters two young men who have just come down from Cambridge.

These new friends are St. John Hirst, a scholar, and his friend Terence Hewet, an aspiring novelist. Hirst, who perceives women as objects, finds unexpected pleasure in talking with Helen, though he finds Rachel annoyingly unthinking and unread. Hirst's acerbic and denigrating remarks cause her to feel defensive and inferior.

To Frank N. Magill, Virginia Woolf has a certain reason for including such a character in her novel:

> In portraying Rachel as essentially nondescript and thus accepting the artistic task of forcing this young woman to go through a profound transformation, Woolf needed another character-as-catalyst to help her accomplish her task: Hirst , the most ego-centred , pretentious , self-righteously outspoken and unlikable character ever portrayed in her fiction. "Ugly in body, repulsive in mind" is how Rachel perceives him. It is partly her respect for his learning and partly because she justifiably believes that her "value as a human being" is "lessened" in Hirst's eyes when her ignorance of a given book becomes apparent, that she implicitly accepts him as her teacher. It is apparent that Woolf needed him to accomplish much of Rachel's

> transformation, for without Hirst, Helen would have needed to be a more intrusive, demanding and potentially unlikable personality. Helen can therefore remain admirable in her methods of instruction . . . (12)

On the other hand, Hewet's relationship with Rachel is based on intuitive and emotional rather than intellectual understanding. He spends much time defending Hirst to her, assuaging the pain and anger she feels as a result of various insulting and condescending comments Hirst makes to her, and helping her look at herself objectively and even laugh at herself.

As Phyllis Rose states, "Hewet is sensitive, perceptive, sociable, down-to-earth, and eminently sane; and as opposed to Hirst, he likes women, though he approaches them with something of the spirit of scientific curiosity with which Darwin approached beetles. He is going to be a novelist and wants to write a novel about silence, about the things people don't say ... There is something of a woman in him, as various Santa Marinites notice"(13).

Besides these two gentlemen, there are lots of people in the novel whose names are too difficult for the reader to remember. The bulk of The Voyage Out consists of conversations and thoughts-as-action, since hardly any noteworthy physical activity takes place in the story.

To some critics, by creating so many characters and including their unimportant conversations in her novel, Virginia Woolf aims to criticise the inane lives of the English upper classes. It is possible to say that in this novel there is much direct criticism of the Victorian upper-middle-class family and social system, and a great many caricatures of dons, distinguished civil servants, politicians, men of letters, and of their wives and ways of living. At the same time against all that is set the struggle of the free and enlightened spirit, Rachel Vinrace, to achieve freedom and a personal form of life.

The three times in the story in which noteworthy physical activity occurs represent important moments of growth and transition for Rachel. The first, a daylong expedition to the top of a mountain for a picnic arranged by Hewet, proves to be important because Rachel and Hewet discover between them binding affinities.

Stella Mc Nichol regards the picnic on Monte Rosa as the first significant event in the novel and continues:

> The picnic on Monte Rosa furthers the plot sequence by being the occasion on which Terence Hewet begins to take a serious interest in Rachel Vinrace. The occasion assumes, at the same time, a symbolic aspect. As Virginia Woolf's art develops, her writing becomes more complex. Here, in her first novel, she is already selecting certain scenes, actions and events and presenting them in a multi-layered way.(14)

When the little group reaches the summit, they are overcome by the magnificence of what they see. But this moment of transcendence resulting from the scenery moves easily into the comedy of manners situation as the little group does battle with an invading army of ants:

> The ants were pouring down a glacier of loose earth heaped between the stones of the ruin – large brown ants with polished bodies ... At Hewet's suggestion it was decided to adopt the methods of modern warfare against an invading army. The table cloth represented the invaded country, and round it they built barricades of baskets, set up the wine bottles in a rampart, made fortifications of bread and dug fosses of salt. When an ant got through it was exposed to a fire of breadcrumbs, until Susan pronounced that that was cruel, and rewarded those brave spirits with spoil in the shape of the tongue. Playing this game they lost their stiffness...(15)

Taking stock of the little group combating the ants, Hewet feels depressed by the mediocrity of most of his companions. Helen and Rachel, however, seem to him to be different from the rest. He is instantly attracted to Rachel, sensing that they have something in common:

> His eyes fell upon Rachel .. Hewet crawled up to her on his knees, with a piece of bread in his hand.
> 'What are you looking at ?' he asked.
> She was a little startled, but answered directly, 'Human beings.'(16)

The dance is the next event to further Rachel's story. In fact, this is a dance in honour of Susan Warrington's engagement and it suggests the celebration of the compatibility of men and women, but it proves, in Rachel's experience, exactly the opposite. Rachel and Hirst get off to a bad start. They try dancing, but "instead of fitting into each other their bones seemed to jut out in angles making smooth turning an impossibility"(17). When they talk, her platitudes alternate with his silences until, Hirst brings up the subject he loves best, books. As Helen was scandalised that Rachel had reached the age of twenty four without being kissed, Hirst is scandalised that she has reached twenty four without reading Gibbon:

> 'Mon Dieu!' he exclaimed, throwing out his hands. 'You must begin tomorrow, I shall send you my copy. What I want to know is' –he looked at her critically. 'You see, the problem is, can one really talk to you? Have you got a mind, or are you like the rest of your sex? You seem to me absurdly young compared with the men of your age.'
>
> Rachel looked at him but said nothing.
>
> 'About Gibbon,' he continued. 'Do you think you'll be able to appreciate him? He's the test, of course. It's awfully difficult to tell about women,' he continued, ' how much, I

> mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity. I don't see myself why you shouldn't understand- only I suppose you've led an absurd life until now-you've just walked in a crocodile, I suppose, with your hair down your back.' (18)

To Phyllis Rose, "this passage reads like a series of slaps in the face"(19). With this speech, Hirst reveals the worst aspects of his personality. He upsets Rachel by being insultingly patronising, and before long he leaves her, and she escapes into the garden where Hewet finds her.

With Hewet, the reader abruptly moves from the world of private fantasy to the world of social reality as Rachel reveals her conclusions about the incompatibility of the sexes – 'It's no good; we should live separate; we cannot understand each other; we only bring out what's worst'(20). Hewet brushes this aside because he thinks that such generalisations are generally untrue. And Rachel's fury is channelled into understanding through conversation with the sensitive Hewet who both understands and cares about Hirst, and who is anxious at the same time that this young woman shall not have a tainted view of life because of Hirst's insult. When Hewet has calmed Rachel, they go off together, and feeling much better in his company she enters into the spirit of the occasion.

Rachel blossoms at the dance:

> She was flushed and looked very happy, and Helen was struck by the fact that in this mood she was certainly more attractive than the generality of young women. She had never noticed it so clearly before. (21)

After confessing that "she'd no idea that dances could be so delightful", Rachel concludes; 'I've changed my view of life completely'(22).

The dance is such a success that even when the musicians pack up their instruments, the dancers are reluctant to stop. Rachel improvises at the piano so that they can go on. Now the dance moves into a new phase as the steps are invented to fit the music. The movement on the dance floor is spontaneous, free of convention. The unrestrained extravagance of the improvised dancing concludes with the great circular dance which ends with the disarray of people tumbling all over the place. At this stage in the evening there is a hint of carnival and of night revels. They come to an end with the dawn, too, there is a confrontation with reality. The people who had been completely taken out of themselves as they abandoned themselves to the shifting rhythms of Rachel's playing, suddenly become self-conscious in the dawn-light.

When the crowd disperses Rachel plays Bach to herself, and some of the younger people come back to listen to her. As Rachel modulates to Bach, her weary listeners sit quietly and allow themselves to be soothed by the serene complexity of the music: "they envision themselves and their lives, and the whole of human life advancing nobly under the direction of music"(23). As she plays, Rachel holds them in thrall and they are ennobled; when she stops they want only to sleep.

Stella Mc Nichol interprets the episodes of the picnic and the dance as follows:

> The episodes of the picnic and the dance reveal a quality of writing that transforms the overtly traditional structure of the novel into a more searching kind of narrative. In other words, they afford a glimpse of the substructure that constitutes the modern novel and which lurks below and subverts the surface narrative. What is enacted at the surface is the novel of realism. What runs below it is the poetically resonating texture of its symbolic structure. (24)

After the dance comes the third event which plays an important role in Rachel's 'voyage out'; an expedition of several days up a river into the heart of the jungle. This expedition becomes the occasion of Rachel's formal engagement to Hewet and her

contradiction of the illness that will kill her. To Frank N. Magill, "this is presumably the same fever that killed Mac Kenzie , the famous explorer, Rachel's kindred spirit in that they are both explorers, he of the external world and she of the internal one"(25).

Virginia Woolf's use of the Amazon jungle for such an occasion is very interesting, and to some critics, this choice is deliberate. Phyliss Rose, for instance, thinks that "the jungle setting, the symbolic journey upriver in burning heat through dense vegetation, has to suggest the sexual passion Terence and Rachel feel for each other" (26).

Pamela J. Transue comments on the jungle as follows:

> Ultimately, Hewet proposes and Rachel accepts, although they are both overwhelmed by the sense of unreality which surrounds such a momentous decision. The unfamiliarity of the surrounding, in this case the Amazon jungle, serves to reinforce that feeling. The symbolic connection of the mysterious, exciting, but vaguely ominous Amazon jungle with the feeling of Rachel and Terence as they contemplate marriage is dramatically effective, and is fine example as well how Woolf uses symbols.
>
> The Amazon jungle functions on a variety of levels to suggest the confusion of emotion accompanying a major change in one's personal life. The awesomeness and strangeness of the settings engender a sense of unreality, of a disorientation which is both exciting and terrifying.(27)

As Rachel and Hewet begin to plan their life together, this initial sense of unreality fades and is replaced by a creative vision of how men and women might better relate to one another in marriage. They envision a new kind of marriage which will not stifle them as individuals. Their children, too, will be encouraged to develop independent minds.

All these plans and hopes are shattered by Rachel's untimely illness. As the novel draws to its close, Rachel's movement towards consummation becomes a movement towards death, and "the link between Eros and Thanatos which informs much of Woolf's work is established"(28). The eroticism which Terence has awakened in Rachel is, like the jungle, both enticing and terrifying. On the one hand, it suggests to Rachel the ultimate human experience, but on the other hand, it threatens her with the loss of a selfhood which she is only just beginning to establish.

Transue claims that the reader has been carefully prepared for Rachel's death, and continues:

> In a sense, given the anxiety with which intimacy has been associated throughout the novel, her death seems inevitable. Mitchell Leaska's notion that "Rachel's ability to become detached from a threatening closeness is, in fact, her only means of self-protection, even survival" is probably accurate. And as Leaska goes on to say, "By the end of the novel, we know that no sacrifice was too great to safeguard that tragically helpless independence . . ."(29)

Although Hewet and Rachel's feelings for Hewet are positive influences in her quest for greater self-knowledge, and although he is himself liberal minded and, in theory at least, exceptional when compared to his British society because he believes that women should have rights equal to men's, he is ultimately a traditionalist. Like Rachel's father, Hewet expects her to subordinate her individual tastes and desires to his.

Furthermore, Rachel is portrayed as a more self-contained individual than Hewet. She intends to marry him although she knows that their marriage will be a ceaseless struggle for mastery. It is clear that the struggle will be an essential part of their marriage because of what Hewet himself is unable to accept:

> She seemed to be able to cut herself adrift from him, and to pass away to unknown places where she has had no need of him.(30)

Hewet is portrayed as filled with dissatisfaction because Rachel is able to "cut herself adrift from him" in mind and spirit, accusing her of not loving him because there exists "something I can't get hold of in you"(31). It is clear that, as Frank N. Magill states, "Woolf seems to have decided to preserve that 'something' in Rachel. In death, Rachel's independence remains intact; in marriage, Woolf intimates, Hewet's jealousy would cripple it"(32).

As Mitchell Leaska perceives, " . . . hers is a death consciously unresisted, unconsciously sought – it is a self-willed death"(33). There is something horrifying in this notion that one must choose between loss of integrity or death, however, it is a recurring theme in Woolf's work. In Jacob's Room, for example, "the hero's early death allows him to escape the world's slow stain"(34). Virginia Woolf offers some justification for this paradox in her essay On Being Ill :

> Human beings do not go hand in hand the whole stretch of the way. There is a virgin forest in each; a snowfield where even the print of bird's feet is unknown. Here we go alone, and like it better so. Always to have sympathy, always to be accompanied, always to be understood would be intolerable. But in health the genial pretence must be kept up and the effort renewed – to communicate, to civilise, to share, to cultivate the desert, educate the native, to work together by day and by night to sport. In illness this make-believe ceases.(35)

Rachel's illness inevitably seems connected with her engagement to Terence. As Phyllis Rose points out, "she withdraws into herself as she always does when

threatened, but now in a final and ghastly fashion; her purity and integrity are preserved through death. She dreams again, in a slightly different form, the horrifying dream which followed Richard Dalloway's kiss, and in this context again, the dream suggests a fear of violation to which her delirious illness ... represents a response and a solution: it is the ultimate room of her own, a reality into which no one else can enter ... The extraordinary power of the sick room scene must be taken into account when considering the issues of identity this novel arises. It endorses marriage, intimacy, but its emotional message, its hidden message, is the primacy of the self"(36).

It is possible to say that Rachel's 'voyage out', in other words, her symbolic journey into maturity, ends in death. Rachel's death is generally accepted as her only escape since she cannot solve the puzzle of how to combine marriage with independence.

As Bernard Blackstone claims, "The Voyage Out is the first of Woolf's many attempts to explore different worlds ... The novel is no longer to be just entertainment or propaganda: it is to be a voyage of discovery"(37).

With its complex symbolic structure, The Voyage Out can hardly be dismissed as the first immature novel. Hermione Lee's following interpretation of the novel proves that the novel is a success:

> Virginia Woolf's first novel is not revolutionary, but is unsparingly satirical of the restrictions on freedom and truth that she and Strachey both associated with Victorianism. And, within its deceptively traditional form, it undertakes a theme sufficiently abstract and methods sufficiently impressionistic to make it, as she herself allowed, 'a gallant and inspiring spectacle'(38).

In conclusion, even if Virginia Woolf does not manage "to get her genius expressed whole and entire" (39) in this novel, it is possible to say that Virginia Woolf's voyage out as a writer is full of promise.

PART V

SYMBOLISM IN TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

Even before she had set a single word of To the Lighthouse on paper, Virginia Woolf had a clear idea of the structure, content, theme and even the title of the novel, commenting in her diary:

> The word 'sentimental' sticks in my gizzard . . .
>
> But this theme may be sentimental; father and mother and child in the garden; the death; the sail to the lighthouse, I think. Though, that when I begin it I shall enrich it in all sorts of ways; thicken it; give it branches-roots which I do not perceive now. It might contain all characters boiled down; and childhood; and then this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to do by my friends, the flight of time and the consequent break of unity in my design. That passage (I conceive the book in 3 parts. 1. At the drawing room window; 2. Seven years passed; 3. The voyage) interests me very much.(1)

Indeed, Virginia Woolf divided the final version of the novel as she had planned: Part I, The Window; Part II, Time Passes; Part III, The Lighthouse.

In The Window, we are introduced to the Ramsay family and friends, holidaying for the summer on a remote and unparticularised Hebridean island. This section presents the central narrative issue of the novel: whether or not an expedition to the local lighthouse will take place on the following day.

Mrs. Ramsay sits with her young son James and knits a stocking for the son of the lighthouse keeper in anticipation of a visit to the lighthouse which the family has planned for the following day. Mr. Ramsay intrudes upon this scene, pointing out that the weather is about to change and the forthcoming trip must be postponed. Mr Ramsay

continues to insist that they will be unable to visit the lighthouse, and he is joined by the unpleasant Mr. Tansley, a guest and disciple of Mr. Ramsay, who, to Mrs. Ramsay's annoyance, takes his host's part in the argument.

In this opening section, Mrs. Ramsay is established as a major narrative and symbolic centre in the novel. She is seated at the window, the link between the house and the outdoors. It is to her that Mr. Ramsay and Charles Tansley come. Her point of view is the dominant one, and we see the present and the past largely through her eyes.

Elizabeth Grove – White evaluates the beginning of the novel as follows:

> The two opening statements of the section establish two worlds of value in this novel: we see how Mrs. Ramsay's desire to please her children blinds her to the threat of bad weather; and we see also her husband's rigorous, unswerving, but unsympathetic devotion to factual truth.(2)

Mr. Ramsay's way of perceiving the world and others is that of philosophers who believe in facts and who seek truth through reasoning. If thought is like an alphabet, he tells himself in one of the amusing scenes in the book, then he has reached Q. But after Q? What comes next? he asks as he tries to imagine Z glimmering in the distance. On the other hand, Mrs. Ramsay is beautiful, queenly, short-sighted, philantrophic and inventive:

> Her intimacy with her children nourishes her natural tendency towards fantasy and exaggeration. She is associated with poetry, Mr. Ramsay with prose. Mr. Ramsay does not see what is close to him-the flowers, or his own children's beauty. Instead, with an eye like an eagle's, he seeks for truth. He is awkward and ungainly in company. He is a stickler for facts, and cannot bear exaggeration or imprecision.(3)

Their conflict over the weather is a paradigm of the sexual battle: Mrs. Ramsay becomes a fountain of fecundity and Mr. Ramsay a beak of grass. The woman's emotional act of giving sympathy paradoxically fertilises the man, but more in the manner of a mother feeding her child than a lover:

> He wanted ... to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his senses restored to him, his barrenness made fertile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life – the drawing room; behind the drawing room the kitchen; above the kitchen the bedrooms; and beyond them nurseries; they must be furnished; they must be filled with life.(4)

Young James, witnessing this polarity between his parents, hates his father so much that he thinks he may even kill him:

> Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one . . .(5)

As Mina Urgan states, James blames his father for disturbing the simplicity and good sense of his relations with his mother and compares him to a scimitar because Mr Ramsay continually asks for his wife's sympathy(6): "There he stood demanding sympathy . . . He was a failure, he said"(7). Under the influence of this Oedipal structure dominating his childhood, young James is determined to fight against his father's tyranny:

> That he would fight, that he would track down and stamp out – tyranny, despotism he called it – making people do what they did not want to do, cutting off their right to speak. (8)

In fact, Mr. Ramsay is a philosopher who had made a definite contribution to philosophy in one little book when he was only twenty five, but who is now unable to produce something new. Knowing that he will never be able to reach R in the alphabet, Mr Ramsay suffers inferiority complex and pities himself. "Like a desolate sea-bird, alone"(9), he wanders on the shore. On the other hand, he tries to hide his suffering and pretends to be a strong man:

> Yet he would not die lying down; he would find some crag of rock, and there, his eyes fixed on the storm, trying to the end to pierce the darkness, he would die standing.(10)

Mr. Ramsay has a habit of reciting poetry aloud to himself, which reflects his inner conflicts. He continuously repeats the following two lines: "We perished each alone" from William Cowper's poem 'The Castaway' and "Someone had blundered" from Lord Alfred Tennyson's poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. The first poem, as Mina Urgan explains, deals with the death of a castaway in the black waters of an ocean.; and the second one with the death of six hundred horsemen who continue fighting, knowing that the command given is wrong.(11) Mrs. Ramsay knows that her husband's habit of reciting poetry is ridiculous and alarming and she is also aware of his complexes, selfishness and weaknesses; but she never stops comforting this man who is in need of her help.

However, the relationship between the two is not so simple. Mrs. Ramsay is dependent on Mr. Ramsay for comfort and protection. It is she who is the more pessimistic and who relies on him to turn her thoughts away from doubt and gloom. And, in spite of their contrasted characteristics, they are engaged on the same field of the battle, in which they evince similar characteristics of courage and endurance. Mr. Ramsay struggles to overcome his sense of failure and transience, Mrs. Ramsay

brandishes her sword against the little strip of time which threatens her. She attempts to build something that will endure, from social and domestic materials.

Hermione Leee expresses their relationship as follows:

> In fact, both are trying to come to terms with the fact of death; but there is a difference in the way their attempts were treated.(12)

Once, Lily, the artist, notices that the Ramsays are watching their children playing cricket and for a moment they become for Lily a universal symbol of the unity of marriage:

> So that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball . . . And suddenly the meaning which, for no reason at all . . . 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. Then, after an instant, the symbolical outline which transcended the real figures sank down again, and they became . . . Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay watching the children throwing catches.(13)

In this arrested view of them they assume symbolic proportions. They become archetypal man and woman, their particularity transcended to make them symbolically representative of man and woman united. The scene in which Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay watch the children throwing catches suggests that the novel reaches beyond its realistic materials. The people are also shapes, and the shapes convey larger meanings that can be contained in the lives of the individuals.

Mrs. Ramsay is defined above all as a mother. She has eight children and enjoys playing a maternal role for all those around her (including those of her guests who do

not like her, and whom she obstinately tries to mother whether they like it or not), to the extent that another mother accuses her of wanting to steal her daughter's affection. Lily Briscoe, who lives alone with her father, is especially the object of this solicitude. On a symbolic level, it is very clear that Mrs. Ramsay embodies the mythical universal mother, the fertile feeding element.

Hermione Lee argues that " Mrs. Ramsay telling a fairy story to James, sitting at the window like a picture of a Madonna and Child, presides over a mythical world. Her powers seem to be those of a pagan goddess. To the Lighthouse continually hovers on the edge of becoming a fairy tale, or, more ambitiously, a mythical or even Christian allegory, whose subject is the conquest of death"(14).

Not only does Mrs. Ramsay love people but she also manages something more difficult: to make people love each other by forming strong bonds of love between them. For example, Lily Briscoe dislikes Charsley Tansley, who continually underestimates women and says "women can't write, women can't paint". However, Mrs. Ramsay finds something loveable in this man and, to Lily's surprise, starts a friendship between Lily and Tansley. In the final part of the novel, Lily remembers Mrs. Ramsay as follows:

> That woman sitting there . . . resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness . . . something . . . which survived, after all these years, complete, . . . and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art.(15)

Mina Urgan claims that "Mrs. Ramsay's physical appearance is as beautiful as her inner world"(16). Extremely affected by her beauty, Charles Tansley expresses his admiration for her in these words:

> She was the most beautiful person he had ever seen with stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamens and wild violets ... What nonsense he was thinking. She was fifty at least; she had eight children – stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen, with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair.(17)

While her imaginings transform the real world into a story for children, she is seen by others as a superhuman figure with goddess-like creative powers. Dry, precise Charles Tansley finds himself singing a lyric paean to her beauty. To Lily, she is an 'august shape' in whose heart 'were stood, like the treasures in the tombs of kings, tablets bearing sacred inscriptions'(18).

The dinner party organised by Mrs. Ramsay is generally accepted as one of the most important symbols of the book . Hermione Lee interprets this dinner party as follows:

> Few others can resist her power, particularly at the dinner party where she appears as a pagan deity. As Mrs. Ramsay puts 'a spell on them all' the bowl of fruit becomes for her 'a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea', and the dish of 'boeuf en daube' the celebration of a festival, creating a sense of eternity. The mythical associations allow a superhuman aspect to Mrs. Ramsay's power of creating harmony and radiance, like a stroke of light laid over a chaotic waste of waters. Mrs. Ramsay is herself a creator.(19)

Magill regards this scene as one of Woolf's finest scenes and continues:

> ...As she mechanically seats her guests at the huge table, Mrs. Ramsay glimpses her husband at the other end, "all in a heap,

> frowning": "She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion of affection for him." Gloomily, she perceives that not just the two of them but everyone is separate and out of sorts. They all sense that something is lacking. They are divided from one another, sunk in their treacherous thoughts.(20)

At that point, Mrs Ramsay instructs two of her children to light the candles and set them around a beautiful fruit centrepiece. This is her first stroke of artistry. Then the maid brings in a great steaming dish of 'boeuf en daube', which is very difficult to prepare and which is regarded as the victory of French kitchen. As the guests relish the succulent food and their camaraderie grows, Mrs. Ramsay experiences a moment of perfect insight. Even the inscrutable poet Augustus Carmichael, who usually resists her magic, actually bows in homage. She affirms to herself that "there is a coherence in things, a stability: something, she meant, that is immune from change, and shines out ... in the face of the flowing, the fleeting"(21). As the dinner ends and she passes out of the room triumphantly and then she looks back on the scene and sees that "it had become, she knew, ... already the past" (22).

John Batchelor states that "the dinner party, one of the major symbols of the novel, is a celebration of Mrs. Ramsay's creativity"(23). The group round the table has to be brought into unity and the whole effort of merging and flowing and creating falls on her and her female assistants, her daughter Rose and Lily Briscoe. The men have no place in this act of creation; Mrs Ramsay felt as a fact, without hostility, the sterility of men. Charles Tansley, riddled with vanity, is rough, isolated and lonely, William Bankes is bored and would rather be working in his lodgings in the town, Ramsay becomes tense and hostile because Augustus Carmichael asks for a second helping of soup and Paul Rayley, who has just persuaded Minta to marry him, is inconsiderably late. The self-pity, self-absorption, aggression, vanity, gluttony and lust of these men threaten Mrs. Ramsay's creation. But she defeats them; the Boeuf en Daube breaks down the resistance of William Bankes and of Augustus, and crowns the occasion of Paul and Minta's engagement. The sixteen people around the table are reduced to

relative silence and momentary unity by this meal, and Mrs. Ramsay enjoys a brief victory which partook of eternity.

This section represents the summit of Mrs. Ramsay's achievements as creator, mother and hostess. The setting of the dinner party, guests and family gathered around a lighted table with Mrs. Ramsay at its head, with the noise of the sea and the threat of the darkness outside, has obvious symbolic as well as narrative significance. Through direct and indirect interventions of Mrs. Ramsay, the individuals around the table are brought together in a moment of unity, of friendship, of communion; which, although it will pass in time, will survive in the memories of those present and constitute a reality as complete and triumphant as a work of art.

Mrs. Ramsay, a woman struggling to triumph over death and chaos, is regarded by many critics as an extremely appealing character. To some other critics; however, she is the most seductive of all those created by Virginia Woolf. For a long time after the appearance of To the Lighthouse, all those who studied the novel sang praises of Mrs. Ramsay. The most recent criticism, on the other hand, takes pleasure in emphasising her faults. For the novel clearly expresses a certain number of reproaches(for example; wishing to dominate, wishing to interfere, making people do what she wished etc.) Her very seductiveness has something sinister about it: "There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way at the end, Lily thought"(24).

The first part of the novel explores the complexity of Mrs. Ramsay's maternal attitudes and suggests that, as well as having a positive aspect, her desire to help other and to be loved has a sinister side.

Mina Urgan argues that "Virginia Woolf gives Mrs. Ramsay some weaknesses in order not to present her as a perfect and superhuman being. One of Mrs. Ramsay's failings is her fondness for marriage, for example . She plans to marry Lily to William Bankes but her plan fails. On the other hand, she causes Minta and Paul to get married, not considering the possibility that this marriage will be a failure"(25).

Mrs. Ramsay is satirised for the littleness of her society feelings. Some critics regard the compulsion to be loved as a weakness. She is uninformed, leaving the factual knowledge and differences of opinion to the men. She believes frequently and defensively in the essential value for women of marriage and child-bearing. She is deeply inhibited in her emotional life, and at the same time, interfering and even malicious in her dealings with the lives of others. Lily is amazed at Mrs. Ramsay's misjudgements of people and at her universal recommendation of marriage.

According to Susan Dick, "Lily functions as an important critic of the role Mrs. Ramsay plays for the other characters, that of the beautiful, self-sacrificing wife and mother, the celebrated angel in the house. Lily's painting gives her an alternative to Mrs. Ramsay's mania for marriage" (26).

This tension between Lily and Mrs. Ramsay also draws our attention to their functions as character types. Mrs. Ramsay, the mother and wife who as an angel in the house, perfectly embodies what in Mrs. Dalloway Peter Walsh calls ' that woman's gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be', is a familiar figure in nineteenth-century life and art. The other characters are all affected by what she does for them, by the application as wife, mother, and centre of the home, of her beauty and goodness. Lily Briscoe, unmarried woman and female artist, can simultaneously appreciate and resist the power of Mrs. Ramsay's type.(27)

Makiko Minow's comment on this relationship is as follows:

> Mrs. Ramsay is Lily's vicarious mother, determined to drive this difficult daughter into her feminine role. She is the angel in the house, whom Lily must kill so that she can establish her own identity as a new woman professional, unmarried, independent, painting in the lawn, Lily rejects Ramsay's demand for sympathy, refusing the conventional feminine role.(28)

With her negative and positive sides, Mrs. Ramsay is presented as a major figure of The Window. However, in the second part, Time Passes, the focus of the novel changes. This section is a poetic interlude about the passage of time and empty house. Before completing this part, Virginia Woolf comments:

> The most difficult abstract piece of writing- I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless and featureless with nothing to cling to . . .(29)

And ,certainly, Virginia Woolf succeeds in creating that wonderful abstract piece of writing:

> So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin . . . (30)

As the lamps are extinguished, darkness invades the house, and with this passage, the reader is introduced to the main theme of this section: the destruction of human achievements by time and uncontrolled nature. This particular night passes, but is succeeded by others as winter comes and the family departs. In "Time Passes", the natural setting becomes a dynamic force when the elements of climate, vegetative growth and the seasons show their hostility towards human order. These elements are brought together in the novel to suggest symbolically those forces of death, change and natural disaster against which the human spirit constantly struggles. It is possible to say that in To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf uses the setting as a significant symbol.

The sea, for example, is a powerful element in the setting. It continues to advance and recede, an uncomfortable reminder of man's powerlessness against the

forces of time and death that oppose his efforts to find order. The sound of the waves is a constant background to the sounds of the house and garden. This sound raises ambivalent feelings in Mrs. Ramsay. The sea represents both the reassuring permanence of natural forces and their potential to destroy:

> . . . the monotonous fall of the waves on the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again as she sat with the children the words of some old cradle song, murmured by nature, 'I am guarding you – I am your support', but at other times suddenly and unexpectedly, especially when her mind raised itself slightly from the task actually in hand, had no such kindly meaning, but like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat the measure of life, made one think of the destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea . . .(31)

In contrast with the sea, the land, the house and the garden represent a precarious human stronghold. The house is a haven of tranquillity for family and guests, but its invulnerability is an illusion The garden also, the symbol of man's ability to tame nature, is quickly overpowered by the elements in man's relatively brief absence. They are recovered from these forces through human effort, but neither can ever be completely restored to its earlier state.

In this extremely symbolic section, Mrs. Ramsay dies. Prue Ramsay, the most beautiful of Ramsay children, dies in an illness of pregnancy. Andrew Ramsay is killed in the battle in France, and a marriage, which in a sense Mrs. Ramsay arranged, turns out rather badly. The record of these events is too bare to a significant action. It does amount to a recognition that pain, inadequacy and death are permanent and unalterable facts.

A. D. Moody thinks that this passage enforces and explores the facts of transience and death, and continues:

> The point is that since the desired human order has no sanction or support in the external world, the responsibility for creating and sustaining it is thrown back upon man himself, and his nobler powers are summoned to action.(32)

The decay of the house progresses rapidly. The garden invades it, rats destroy the interiors, butterflies and swallows make their home there. The house seems on the verge of becoming an abandoned ruin when unexpectedly another force begins to work. The Ramsays plan to return and Mrs. McNab, the charwoman, re-establishes order in the house. At last Lily and Mr. Carmichael return.

Time Passes, especially sections 3 to 9, is the most abstract in the novel, but is framed by clearly delineated characters. The sinister force of nature, time, darkness and cosmic chaos which threaten the human order symbolised by house and garden are firmly rooted in recognisable events taking place on the narrative level of the novel. The semi-comic figure of Mrs. McNab had not appeared earlier in the novel, and this omission is vital for Virginia Woolf's literary strategy because this character can be drawn in outline rather than in the precise realistic detail that might otherwise interfere with the symbolic movement of these lyrical sections. This movement is not entirely unexpected since a strong undercurrent of symbolism has already made its presence beneath the more realistic opening sections of the novel.(33)

Under this symbolic structure, Woolf indicates that there is the possibility of restoration, though things can never be exactly as they had been. Stella Mc Nichol agrees with this point of view and continues as follows:

> Virginia Woolf suggests that despite the anguish of death and the destruction of war, man can yet find some way of making

> sense of life, or in Mrs. Ramsay's terms, of bringing the scattered fragment of life into coherence.(34)

And this harmony is achieved in the third part of the novel, The Lighthouse, through the voyage to the lighthouse and Lily's painting.

In the third part of the novel, the long-deferred voyage at last takes place. James, now aged sixteen, steers the sailing boat while his elder sister, Cam, sits in the bows trailing her hand in the water and Mr. Ramsay either talks to the fisherman, or reads some 18th century essays or distributes the picnic they have brought with them. This voyage to the lighthouse is one of the important parts of the novel which has both narrative and symbolical dimensions. However, in an important letter to Roger Fries, Virginia Woolf comments as follows:

> I meant nothing by the lighthouse. One has to have a central line down in the middle of the book to hold the design together. I saw that all sorts of feelings would accrue to this, but I refused to think of them out, and trusted that people would make it the deposit for their own emotions . . . I can't manage Symbolism in this vague, generalised way. (35).

Here, in this letter, Virginia Woolf warns us against forcing the lighthouse to mean only one thing.

To A. D. Moody, "it is hardly possible for the lighthouse to be a symbol of something which partakes of the reality which it represents. For a premise of Virginia Woolf's idea of the world is that there is no apprehensible ultimate reality which it could partake of and represent. In itself it is simply a lighthouse. Whatever further meanings it has come from what the characters make of it, by projecting onto it their different views of reality. In this way, it gives to the novel a unifying focus for those views, but not a symbolic meaning"(36).

However, many other critics have different interpretations of the lighthouse in the novel:

Elizabeth Drew, for example, interprets the lighthouse as follows:

> The lighthouse standing in the middle of the sea of life and time serves as the symbol of man's struggle to lighten the darkness. Joan Bennett sees the beam of the lighthouse as the symbol of successive suffering and happiness in human relations.(37)

To Mina Urgan, "it can even be regarded as the symbol of love standing in the face of storms. Besides, the lighthouse is generally accepted to represent Mrs. Ramsay and her tolerance and love to other people. As the following quotation indicates Mrs. Ramsay is identified with the lighthouse because she , like the beam of the lighthouse, enters people's minds and reads their moods" (38):

> Her eyes were so clear that they seemed to go round the table unveiling each of these people and their thoughts, and their feelings, without effort like a light.(39)

Stella Mc Nichol agrees with Mina Urgan on the interpretation of the lighthouse and continues:

> It rests on the belief that one can make the fragments cohere into a whole. The interlude on time embodies the dark moments of life. 'The Window' a moment of light , and 'The Lighthouse' a remembrance of that and a return to it symbolically. The tripartite structure of the novel with its symbolic pattern of alternating light and dark, reflects the shining of the lighthouse beam through the darkness. That beam is symbolically representative of Mrs. Ramsay.(40)

It is also possible to say that the lighthouse has a different meaning for each character in the novel. For James, for instance, the lighthouse modulates from the object of a child's romantic quest to the endorsement of a grown man's rationalism. During the voyage James recalls when he was small the lighthouse had the romantic allure of distance and mystery whereas now he perceives it as a bare tower, but he recognises that his earlier, romantic perception of the lighthouse had its own truth:

> The lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye that opened suddenly and softly in the evening. Now-
>
> James looked at the lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. the other was the Lighthouse too. (41)

This is accompanied by his recognition that he alone among the Ramsay children resembles his father, both their minds are lonely. The starkness and bareness of the lighthouse satisfy James by confirming some obscure feeling of his about his own character. And he has a growing sense of identity with his father: his father's rationalism expresses that loneliness which was for both of them the truth about things.

James hates the father who says 'Damn you!' and loves the father who says 'Well done!'; the story of his moral growth spans the space between these two utterances and is a major continuity from The Window to The Lighthouse. The child's aggression is now redirected and turned against all tyrannical institutions instead of against just one old man. James is becoming a mature adult.

Elizabeth Abel evaluates the effect of the voyage on James as follows:

> The Oedipal structure that dominates James's childhood in The Window is completed during his voyage to the Lighthouse; in the motionless middle of the bay - which mirrors the empty middle of the text, in which Mrs. Ramsay vanishes – James submits to his father's will and ceases to think about his mother. Having ceased to think about his mother, James can proceed to his destination and complete his identification with his father.(42)

As for Cam, she also changes her attitude towards her father. She is initially tempted to yield to the father's speech by accepting his naming of the dog for her:

> . . . a private token of love she felt for him . . . no one attracted her more, his hands were beautiful to her and his feet, and his voice, and his words, and his haste, and his temper, and his oddity, and his passion, and his saying straight out before every one, we perish, each alone, and his remoteness . . .(43)

Cam puts herself in the place of the mother and is caught in the speech of the father : "she murmured, dreamily, half asleep, how we perished each alone"(44).

The arrival to the lighthouse is of special importance to Mr. Ramsay, too. The voyage ends with an image of Mr. Ramsay mysteriously transformed from a tyrant and intruder into a conductor of symphony, a man attuned to the music of the spheres. Mr. Ramsay's spiritual renewal is signalled by the last glimpse we have of him:

> He rose and stood in the bow of the boat, very straight and tall, for all the world . . . they both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock.(45)

The arrival to the lighthouse is so important that even the old poet Carmichael shares their happiness:

> He stood there spreading his hands all over weaknesses and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately their final destiny. Now he has crowned the occasion . . . when his hand slowly fell, as if she had seen him let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth. (46)

The voyage of Mr. Ramsay and his children to the lighthouse is clearly symbolic. On the narrative level, Ramsay and his two children finally make the journey to the lighthouse, and on the symbolic level these three characters accomplish an internal journey. To reach the final achievement of the arrival at the lighthouse in the physical and moral sense, all these characters undergo spiritual change and growth, parallel to the external progress of their journeys.

As Mr. Ramsay and the children reach the lighthouse and complete their quest so Lily Briscoe completes the painting that she had begun and then abandoned ten years earlier. The completion of the painting and the end of the journey to the lighthouse happen simultaneously, which gives To the Lighthouse narrative and symbolic levels.

Lily's picture is not an ordinary one, in fact, it is a picture which bears solutions to the main problems of the novel. In her painting Lily is working at the problem of relating two opposed masses, and relating them into a unified image. But while her mind works at that it also works at the problem of comprehending the Ramsays. Her abstract problem becomes an analogy for her main concern, and the novel's, which is to bring Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, and the world they represent into a harmonious relation.

Her progress with the painting marks the stages of a progression towards that achievement. What she is looking for is a harmony which will last forever.

The completion of the painting is also perceived as the completion of an act of love. Love has a thousand shapes and the painting expresses the fact that she is in love with the place as well as her love for Mrs. Ramsay. In an agony of frustration with the artistic block preventing her from finishing her painting, Lily calls Mrs. Ramsay's name aloud:

> "Mrs. Ramsay!... Mrs. Ramsay!... cast her shadow on the step"(47).

The apparition of Mrs. Ramsay to Lily is either in Lily's mind's eye or in some trick of the shadows. The vision enables her to finish the picture: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre"(48).

The line represents both the shadow cast on the step by the apparition and the lighthouse's symbolic centrality in the novel: "It was done; it was finished . . . I have had my vision"(49).

The "It was finished" recalls Christ's dedication of himself (50) and the "I have had my vision" suggests that although the painting, as an object, will survive, the artist's moment of triumph is already past. It parallels the moment at the end of the dinner party in which Mrs. Ramsay recognises that her own creation is already the past.

Hermione Lee emphasises the similarity between the painting and the dinner party :

> What Lily arrives at is the proper balance of shapes, this is not an easy achievement and it is undertaken several times in the book. Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party is shaped out of disparate entities – hostilities, reservations, her own reluctance – into a coherent whole, whose ingredients are of

> the most trivial but whose effect is nevertheless grand and transcendental, because it has come about by a creative effort.(51)

Like Lily, Mrs. Ramsay looks back on her dinner party as something that takes on a new perspective as soon as it is completed. Lily and Mrs. Ramsay are both lovers of trying to create shapes of wholeness.

> There might be lovers whose gift it was to choose out the elements of things and place them together and so, giving them a wholeness not theirs in life, make of some sense, or meeting of people one of those globed compacted things over which thought lingers, and love plays.(52)

It is certain that Virginia Woolf has placed in her novel an artist who acts as a kind of surrogate author since she is doing in painting what she herself is doing through language. It is this that enables her to draw the line in the centre of the canvas that brings everything into harmony, thus bringing the picture to completion.

Lily completing the picture, Mrs. Ramsay appearing and Mr. Ramsay arriving at the lighthouse are all victorious over the impersonal powers of chaos and death through their concentration on the task in hand and through the intensity of emotion which they posses.

Hermione Lee indicates that "the conclusion of the book is a moral one. To the Lighthouse deals with the possibility of coming to terms with death. Completed forms, whether made from a social and family group, an abstract painting or the journey to the lighthouse, create only lasting victory over death and chaos"(53).

David Daiches has noted that "death for this writer was always the illuminator of and commentator on life, so that an adequate insight into any character is only given if he is shown not only living but also in some connection with death. Death provides the

motivation for her characters to search for absolutes that could challenge death's silencing power; that all of their searches fail in some way only emphasises her awareness of the irreducibility of human experience and the tentative quality of human knowledge"(54).

It is certain that Woolf recognised the centrality of death while writing this novel. She probably considered renaming the genre in which she wrote as a way of recognising her continuing effort to find a consolation for death. Awareness of death acts as the major force that drives the characters to search for reliable methods to achieve immortality: becoming a renowned philosopher, a talented painter, or an unforgettable mother.

In conclusion, it is possible to claim that To the Lighthouse, consisting of three different sections, each of which has a great part in the symbolical structure of the novel, is an outstanding work in the twentieth century English literature.

PART VI

A COMPARISON OF THE SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS IN THE VOYAGE OUT AND TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

Considering the analyses of The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse, it is possible to claim that The Voyage Out is not so complex and innovative as To the Lighthouse. However, to many critics, it is a novel which is quite different from its predecessors. Lytton Stratchey, for example, wrote to Virginia Woolf in 1916 that The Voyage Out was "very, very unvictorian! The handling of the detail always seemed to me divine . . ."(1). It is true that in spite of some of its weaknesses, The Voyage Out is certainly a novel of considerable importance and a first step in Woolf's writing career.

Therefore, it is possible to claim that these two novels in question cannot be considered as two separate entities. First of all, in both novels, there are character symbols playing an important role in the symbolic structures of The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse. Both novels deal with people who develop their own identities, getting rid of the effects of their parents. In her diary Woolf explains:

> Father's birthday. He would have been . . . 96, yes, today: and could have been 96, like other people one has known; but mercifully was not. His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; - inconceivable. I used to think of him and mother daily; but writing The Lighthouse, laid them in my mind. And now he comes back sometimes, differently. I believe this to be true that I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; and writing of them was a necessary act.(2)

To Virginia Woolf, her parents were ghosts which can be seen as 'laid' when she came to write To the Lighthouse, but, as John Batchelor explains, "the long gestation of The Voyage Out initiates the process of exorcising those ghosts, and the rapid composition of Orlando celebrates her sense of freedom from her parents . . .The

titles of the first novel and of the great novel of her maturity make one long title; The Voyage Out to the Lighthouse"(3).

As Woolf explained in her diary, if her father had survived into his nineties she would never have been able to become a writer. This fact throws emphasis on the freedom that is won at the end of To the Lighthouse: self-possession and perception of moral relativity for James.

At the end James is completely different from the boy at the very beginning. Getting rid of his Oedipal complex, he reaches maturity and proves his own identity. As Elizabeth Grove-White claims, "James uncovers the source of his hatred for his father and recognises that it is not his father he hates, but his father's tyranny. His altered perception of the lighthouse from this new vantage point symbolises James's growing maturity and his ability to recognise the complexity of experience"(4).

James and Cam come to understand their father as well as their dead mother. In other words, they no more detest their father because they become aware of the real nature of his personality. Likewise, they no more adore their mother, who they can now understand and evaluate better. That is, the siblings face the contradictions of life for the first time, which can be regarded as a first step in their development.

It is also possible to claim that Rachel, the heroine of The Voyage Out, also goes through the same process. At the beginning, she is a naive girl who is unaware of the realities of life. However, the journey she makes to South America causes her to have a life of her own. Like James, Rachel, too, becomes a thinking individual with the freedom of making decisions for her own life. The development of Rachel Vinrace is central to all levels of The Voyage Out's structure. The reader traces the development of her mind, and above all, charts the fluctuations of her awakening consciousness.

During her journey, Rachel is kissed by a man for the first time in her life. Besides she falls in love and starts to question life. Each step in her life helps her develop her own identity. In other words, she refuses to be a 'Tory hostess'. And her

voyage out, that is, her spiritual journey to maturity ends in death, which is seen as the only way of protecting this newly-gained identity.

Another point is that in both novels there are women who struggle to protect their own identities. In To the Lighthouse, Lily, the artist, is quite different from the rest of her sex. She functions as a character type who is against the taboos of the society. While women around her are dealing with trivialities, she insistently works on her painting. Unlike the women of her time, she doesn't see marriage as an essential element in life. Similarly, in The Voyage Out, there is Rachel Vinrace, who refuses to accept the roles the society is trying to impose on her. Knowing that her aunts want her to stop playing the piano since it may harm her arms, she goes on playing it. Both Lily and Rachel are important in that they go beyond their own personalities and symbolise the women who are aware of their importance as individuals. Music and painting are the only outlets for their desires. To many people of their time , these two women are rebels who do not want to conform to the rules of the society they live in.

By depicting two characters like Lily and Rachel, Virginia Woolf aims to criticise what she calls 'the angel in the house'. In Professions for Women, Woolf describes this creature, and how she had to battle with her and kill her before she could write:

> She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish . . . She sacrificed herself daily . . . She was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathise always with the minds and wishes of others.(5)

In short, 'this angel in the house' is a perfectly selfless being, whose only purpose is to please, flatter, and smooth the way for others, particularly men. And, Rachel and Lily are presented as two characters struggling to protect their identities among those 'angels in the house' through their art. So it is Woolf 's aim to find an answer to the following question:

Can one be both a woman and an artist at the same time?

By raising such a question, Woolf aims to present the perplexities of being a woman and an artist at the same time.

Besides Rachel and Lily there are two more important female characters in The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse: Helen and Mrs. Ramsay, who play an important role in the lives of Rachel and Lily. As Hermione Lee claims, "Helen appears as the designer of Rachel's fate, anticipating Mrs. Ramsay's mythic, even sinister qualities in To the Lighthouse"(6).

On the one hand, there is Helen, who begins her education of Rachel by choosing an object which Virginia Woolf was fond of using as an image of male dominated society: a volume of Who's Who. Rachel, trying to express her interest in people who inhabit a larger world than her own, becomes absorbed in its list of public figures. Helen, who is encouraging her to be discriminating, enables her to set the volume aside:

> 'I can't be myself', she stammered, 'in spite of you, in spite of the Dalloways, and Mr. Pepper, and Father, and my Aunts, in spite of these?' She swept her hands across a whole page of statesmen and soldiers.
> 'In spite of them all', said Helen gravely.(7)

Helen makes Rachel more definite, but her influence is only a groundwork for the diversity of new experience which Rachel encounters at Santa Marina. And, though Helen's influence is liberating and beneficial, at the book's underlying level, she has an almost sinister role to play. Hermione Lee puts it in the following way:

> In encouraging her to think of life cynically, even pessimistically, she does make it harder for Rachel to find union with another person.(8)

On the other hand, there is Mrs. Ramsay, who acts as if she is Lily's vicarious mother determined to drive this difficult daughter into her feminine role. To Makiko Minow, " she is the angel in the house whom Lily must kill so that she can establish her own identity as a new woman, professional, unmarried, independent"(9).

As all these examples prove, Virginia Woolf's characters symbolise truths larger than themselves. Elizabeth Grove-White, too, claims that "the characters in Woolf's novel, especially in To the Lighthouse, possess symbolic significance"(10) and continues:

> Lily's perception of the Ramsays as symbols of marriage is an overt signal to the reader that the characters have symbolical significance, but there are also many hidden signs of the symbolic meaning of characters, such as Lily's role as an artist, Carmichael's as a poet, and so on . . . Her novel never completely departs from the novel's traditional description of external people and events while exploiting a larger symbolical meaning usually associated with poetry.(11)

E. M. Forster agrees with Elizabeth Grove-White on Virginia Woolf's use of symbols and goes on:

> Holding on with one hand to poetry, she stretches and stretches to grasp things which are best gained by letting go of poetry.(12)

In this symbolic structure, it is hardly possible to claim that the plot itself provides the main focus for the reader's main interest. As David lodge argues, "Virginia Woolf's mature novels – Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves – are all about sensitive people living from one privileged moment to the next, passing through intervening periods of dissatisfaction, depression and doubt. For this reason, they are essentially plotless . . ."(13)

In spite of the fact that the symbolic structure in The Voyage Out is not so strong as in To the Lighthouse, it is undeniable that there are such certain scenes as the picnic, the dance and the expedition which serve the symbolic structure of the novel. All these scenes can be interpreted as thematic symbols representing a different stage in Rachel's spiritual development. As the title of the novel suggests, her voyage 'out' has both physical and psychological aspects. It refers both to a voyage across the Atlantic and to the spiritual voyage from immaturity to maturity.

In To the Lighthouse, the external structure depends on the resolution of whether or not the Ramsays will visit the lighthouse, and on the development of various characters to the point where a visit to the lighthouse is possible. In selecting the story of a journey as a mainspring of action in this novel, Virginia Woolf was drawing upon a richly suggestive tradition in Western literature whose roots extend to the pilgrimage stories of the Middle Ages; so the reader with any experience of this tradition will readily see the plot of the novel in a symbolic light.

It is interesting to find out that both novels are based on voyages which have physical and psychological aspects. Most of the characters in both novels are extremely affected by these voyages, that is, they develop their identities and prove themselves through the experiences they have during these voyages. Likewise, the voyage of Mr. Ramsay and his children to the lighthouse is clearly symbolic. Elizabeth Grove-White evaluates the symbolic structure of the novel as follows:

> To reach the final achievement of the arrival at the lighthouse in the physical and moral sense, all these characters undergo

> internal change and growth, parallel to the external progress of their respective journeys. The novel's structure, in the sense of story and character development, is clearly symbolical.(14)

In addition to the similarities in character and thematic symbolisation, John Batchelor also draws attention to the tripartite structure in The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse:

> The wave-like pattern can be seen as a characteristic of her career as a novelist. The Voyage Out is a consciously experimental work which cost her great labour and psychological suffering. It is an interesting and in many ways important first novel though it suffers from conflicting directions – it is not clear whether the novelist is creating a Bildungsroman or an elegy. I suppose one has to say that she is creating both: Rachel Vinrace becomes fully established as a human being and is then (prematurely) wiped off the face of the earth. The novel bears the same kind of relationship To the Lighthouse . . . it is an ambitious but incoherent treatment of later themes, organised into three sections. The clearly defined tripartite structure of To the Lighthouse (The Window, Time Passes, The Lighthouse) is anticipated by this first novel's loose organisation into three parts: a voyage across the Atlantic in the course of which Rachel Vinrace is kissed by Richard Dalloway; an account of Rachel's stay in a villa in a South American country and her relationship with English visitors to a nearby hotel, as a result of which she falls in love with the aspiring novelist, Terence Hewet; and an expedition upriver which is followed by Rachel's death from fever.(15)

And he continues:

> Some critics find the novel interesting and important in itself, but for me its interest is in the ways in which it anticipates the mature novels . . .(16)

In conclusion, both The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse symbolise a different stage in Virginia Woolf's literary career. The Voyage Out, which was written at the very early stage, certainly shares some of the important characteristics of To the Lighthouse, which was created at the summit of her literary career.

PART VII

CONCLUSION

As a writer of great talent and ingenuity, Virginia Woolf is generally regarded as one of the major novelists of the twentieth century. Her work as a novelist falls into different periods. There is the early conventional period , represented by her first novels The Voyage Out and Night and Day. During this period, Virginia Woolf can not help working within traditional novelistic conventions. Much as she desires to shape her novels according to her own norms in fiction, she can not achieve this goal and produces rather immature and conventional novels such as The Voyage Out. Next comes her period of experiment during which she realises her dreams in fiction.

Woolf expresses her need to write something different as follows:

> I have, to some extent, forced myself to break away mould and find a fresh form of being, that is of expression, for everything I feel and think . . . This needs constant effort.(1)

Indeed, she challenges realists and the tradition of realism reigning over English Literature for about two hundred years. And in one of her essays entitled Modern Fiction, she continues:

> If a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feelings and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest.(2)

And Virginia Woolf finally achieves what she wants after she has written her first two novels The Voyage Out and Night and Day. After 1922, she enters into a new phase of her literary career and starts to perform miracles in fiction. The works of this period such as Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse are generally considered to be significantly beautiful and ingenious.

Nevertheless, this study attempts to examine two of Virginia Woolf's novels, namely The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse, not ignoring the fact that the novels in question represent a different period in Woolf's writing career. It aims to analyse The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse in terms of symbolism and to discover various symbolic elements shared by these novels.

The Voyage Out, Virginia Woolf's first novel, is the story of twenty-four-year-old Rachel Vinrace, a naive and talented amateur pianist who sails from England to a small resort on the South American coast. The novel's exotic local, large cast of minor characters, elaborate scenes of social comedy, and excessive length are all atypical of Virginia Woolf's mature work. Already, however, many of her later concerns are largely emerging. The resonance of the title itself anticipates Woolf's poetic symbolism. The 'voyage out' can be the literal trip across the Atlantic or up the South American river, but it also suggests the progression from innocence to experience, from life to death, which Virginia Woolf later depicts using similar water imagery.

Reading The Voyage Out in the context of Woolf's all works led many critics to comment on the ways in which the novel is a precursor to Woolf's later fiction. Richter, for example, writes that "there is not a single mode of subjectivity used in her later novels which is not present in The Voyage Out"(3). Similarly, Leaska notes that all Woolf's principal themes, "as well as the many technical singularities and stylistic habits that she later developed and refined are present in The Voyage Out"(4). Therefore, in this study, The Voyage Out is accepted as an important novel containing many of Woolf's characteristics which she later develops.

Compared to The Voyage Out, To the Lighthouse, the second novel studied in this thesis, is of extreme complexity and perfection. In this moving and extremely affirmative novel, Woolf uses a very simple plot: an expedition to a lighthouse is postponed, then completed a decade later. Woolf's mastery, however, of symbolism in this novel makes such a fragile plot quite sufficient. Anyone who reads the novel carefully recognises that Woolf goes far beyond the plot in To the Lighthouse. As E. M. Forster states, "she is a poet, who wants to write something as near to a novel as

possible" (5). Thus, in this study the fact that Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse is not a novel to be studied in traditional norms is accepted.

Woolf devises an experimental structure for To the Lighthouse, this time of three unequal parts. Approximately the first half of the novel, entitled The Window, occurs during a single day at the seaside home occupied by an eminent philosopher, Mr. Ramsay, his wife, and their children, guests, including Lily Briscoe, an amateur single painter. Mrs. Ramsay is the dominant character in this section. A short, exquisitely beautiful centre section, Time Passes, pictures the house succumbing to time during the family's ten-year absence. The final third, The Lighthouse, also covers one day; the diminished family and several former guests having returned, the lighthouse expedition can now be completed.

Stella Mc Nichol's general interpretation of the novel is as follows:

> Within the three-part structure of To the Lighthouse the core of the work lies in its opening section . . . Part I of the novel is rich and alive ultimately because there Mrs. Ramsay is alive and richly generous in her gift of herself to others. Part II creates a vision of a world in which she is both literally and metaphorically absent, a world in which there is no coherence, one in which there is, instead, death and suffering, war and anguish . . . The ritual that Mr. Ramsay, the children, and Lily Briscoe go through in the final part of the novel is one of a journey to the past through memory whereby they reach a position of peace and stability in the present . . .(6)

Virginia Woolf denies intending any specific symbolism for the lighthouse they reach at the end of their journey and warns the reader against forcing the lighthouse to mean only one thing. The lighthouse can be a symbol of safety and stability amid darkness and watery flux or it can also serve as a metaphor for human beings themselves. It is also possible to claim that the lighthouse has a different meaning for

each character in the novel. For James, the youngest son who wishes to visit the lighthouse passionately, it modulates from the object of a child's romantic quest to the endorsement of a grown man's rationalism. Similarly, the lighthouse is of special importance to Mr. Ramsay, the father, since it stands for his spiritual renewal. On arriving at the lighthouse, he is transformed from a strict man into a man of harmony and affection. For Lily, the artist, it is also a journey of spiritual and aesthetic discovery.

In the light of the analyses of The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse, it is possible to conclude that The Voyage Out does not compare with To the Lighthouse. However, it is undeniable that The Voyage Out shares some of the basic features of this beautifully written novel since they are created by the same frame of mind.

First, there are character symbols shared by both novels. Rachel in The Voyage Out and James and Cam in To the Lighthouse are similar in that they all desire to get rid of the effects of others on their lives. Rachel's aunts and father want her to be a girl who lives for others, ignoring her own wishes. However, Rachel does not submit and struggles to protect her own personality. Similarly, in To the Lighthouse James and Cam, who have been influenced by their mother, develop their own identities and begin to see the realities of life as two grown-up people.

Besides, in both novels there are two female characters, namely Rachel and Lily, who fight against the taboos of society. They are artists who struggle to survive in the society both as a woman and as an artist. These two young women function as character symbols indicating Woolf's criticism of the social values of her time.

In addition to these character symbols, there exist two more female characters that can be considered to have similar features: Helen in The Voyage Out and Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse. Helen, Rachel's aunt, aims to make Rachel more definite, but she is not aware that she leads Rachel to become pessimistic. Similarly, Mrs. Ramsay, the mother, has a great desire to make Lily accept her feminine role. However, neither Helen nor Mrs. Ramsay is aware that they are giving harm to the personalities of these two young ladies.

Besides character symbols, Virginia Woolf also employs some thematic symbols in The Voyage Out and To the Lighthouse. In both novels, Virginia Woolf makes use of water imagery skilfully. Therefore, of all the thematic symbols in these novels, voyages can be accepted as the most important ones. In The Voyage Out, for instance, it is Rachel's voyage to South America which makes her a mature adult. At the end of the journey, Rachel is no more an inexperienced girl who is not even kissed by a man. Likewise, characters in To the Lighthouse undergo a spiritual change through the voyage to the lighthouse. In To the Lighthouse, it is evident that narrative and symbolic meaning are completely intertwined, therefore, all the action and dialogue in the book can be read as referring to both the interior and exterior journeys.

In conclusion, The Voyage Out, Woolf's first and rather immature novel, is not a novel to be ignored completely since it has many features which Woolf will handle much more professionally in To the Lighthouse. Consequently, the novels studied in this thesis can be regarded as two works of fiction written at different times but having various similar characteristics.

NOTES

PART I

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PART II

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PART III

A General Look at Symbolism

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3 David Daiches, Virginia Woolf 16.

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PART VI

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