

## THE JOURNEY TO MENTAL FREEDOM, CREATIVITY AND ART THROUGH VIRGINIA WOOLF'S "TO THE LIGHTHOUSE"

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### ABSTRACT

In this study *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf is going to be analysed through feminist theory. This book can be assumed as a journey to the mental freedom, art and creativity. As an ardent supporter of the feminist movement, Virginia Woolf rebelled against the patriarchal order that undermines women's identity and creativity. As asserted in her feminist manifesto, she constantly encouraged women for having their own income and their separate rooms to create and survive individually indicating the injustice among the two sexes. Virginia Woolf highlighted the difficulties for women to follow the route of creativity and mental freedom in a patriarchal order. Frustrated by the sudden deaths of her beloveds successively, Woolf tried to grant a meaning to life. In her semi-autobiographical novel, *To the Lighthouse*, art has turned a perfect medium for the convergence of life into a concrete product. The novel offers the reader two prototypes of women: the traditional mother figure Mrs Ramsay and the extraordinary artist Lily Briscoe. In accordance with Woolf's feminist struggle, traditional and all giving mother figure Mrs Ramsay reflected "the angel in the house". As binary oppositions given with the idea of death and life, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe

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become indispensable for each other, as the existence of traditional Mrs Ramsay helps the extraordinary Lily Briscoe to become an artist and gain her creativity and individuality as a woman. Endowed with the feminist discourse, the reader will encounter an allegorical journey to the lighthouse as the source of illumination, creativity and mental freedom. The death of “the angel in the house” will not only pave the way for Lily’s artistic journey, but also for the reader for creativity, individuality, freedom of mind and art, defying the harsh reality of death and mortality.

**Keywords:** *Women, Feminism, Freedom, Creativity, Art*

## **VIRGINIA WOOLF’UN “DENİZ FENERİ” ADLI ESERİ İLE SANATA, YARATICILIĞA VE ZİHİNSEL ÖZGÜRLÜĞE UZANAN BİR YOLCULUK**

### **ÖZ**

Bu çalışmada Virginia Woolf tarafından kaleme alınmış *Deniz Feneri* adlı eseri feminist teori bağlamında incelenecektir. Bu eser zihinsel özgürlüğe, yaratıcılığa ve sanata uzanan bir yolculuk olarak da değerlendirilebilir. Kadınların üretmek yaşayabilmelerinin yalnızca kendilerine ait bir oda ve bir miktar para ile gerçekleşebileceğini savunan Woolf, Kadın Hareketinin de öncülerinden olmuştur. Feminist Hareketin geçmişi ve gelişimi kadınların verilmiş normların dışına çıkarak, meslek edinerek ve yaratarak var olmalarını amaçlamaktadır. Woolf bir yazar olarak sanatı ve yaratıcılığı ölüme karşı bir meydan okuyuş ve var olmanın ana sebeplerinden biri olarak algılar. Yarı biyografi türünde olan *Deniz Feneri*, Virginia Woolf’un sevdiklerinin hayata bir veda etmesiyle yazarın yaşamı anlamlı kılmak için oluşturduğu bir eserdir. Eser, sanata ve yaratıcılığa uzanan hikâyeyi okuyucuya iki farklı kadın portresi çizerek anlatır. Yazarın tüm feminist mücadelesinde vurguladığı “evdeki meleğin” sanat ve üretkenlik için öldürülmesi gerektiği gerçeği, romanda geleneksel anne figürünü temsil eden Bayan Ramsay karakteri ile belirginleşir. Feminist yazının ana hatları çizilerek, geleneksel Bayan Ramsay’ in, sıra dışı ressam Lily Briscoe’nun sanatçı kimliğinin oluşumundaki rolü irdelenen roman, deniz fenerine yapılan bir yolculuk ile okuyucuyu ölümün acı gerçeğine karşı üretmek yaşamaya, birey olarak var olmaya, sanata ve özgürlüğe çağırır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Feminizm, Kadın, Yaratıcılık, Özgürlük, Sanat*

## INTRODUCTION

*To the Lighthouse* by Woolf introduces a journey towards the lighthouse that stands for illumination, art and life. In accordance with Woolf's feminist identity, *To the Lighthouse* displays two totally different women prototypes that lead the reader to the journey of creativity, art and freedom covering the twentieth century's crucial issues as war, childbirth, emancipation of women, as well. The only possibility to grasp the core of the novel is to investigate the situations that triggered the feminist movement and conditions that fostered Virginia Woolf to write this novel.

Women endowed with childbirth naturally symbolize productivity and creativity, even though this reality has always been suppressed by civilizations throughout the history. The injustice and suppression of women, restricted with traditional roles and totally undermined by the patriarchal society led them to lead a conventional life and have limited professions. Feminist movement has emerged as a rebellion of women sex against the patriarchal order.

As Virginia Woolf explains in *Professions For Women* writing and literature has always been familiar for women due to the fact that the cost of paper and a pen never caused a problem to afford. Social and political systems forced women writers to use pseudonyms and conceal their identities, yet these challenges could not be able to prevent women from writing and expressing themselves, even though the style and content of the writings might differ. The nineteenth century had been the era for the female novelists to become popular. George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Jane Austen paved the way to women creativity. Although these novelists tried to be self-conscious, they forgot in a way to express themselves. The Victorian society expected women writers to reflect their femininity. The women writers were bound to the stereotypes that were drawn to them by society.

## THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Women's Liberation Movement in 1960s had been a starting point for female self-awareness through literature in England, the movement spread to America around 1968 (Showalter, 1977). The movement enabled many experts to agree upon that it is apparent to see a recurring repetition of the same issues and problems throughout the centuries, reaching the new generations. Female literary frame and self-awareness have developed in a certain time-span. Eagleton asserts that the heyday of the theory can be regarded as 1970s. Although many topics enriched the field until 1990s, there had been very few new theories that would surpass the canonical pioneers as Kristeva, Showalter, Irigaray, Cixous (Eagleton, 1996).

Showalter asserts that when the female literary movement is considered, it can be followed by three phases. First, there was an imitation of the dominant

conventions and the acceptance of social roles. Then, the second phase was rebellion against these social values looking for an autonomy. Lastly, there was a search for individual identity and self-realization phase. These phases could be identified as Feminine, Feminist and Female (Showalter, 1977). The first period had been the period between 1840-1850. The Feminist era as 1880 to 1920; last phase as 1920 to now, but the self-awareness period started with 1960s. This period is significant with the authenticity of female writers that represent women's experience.

The idea of self-awareness was not common in Victorian novelists as Austen, the Brontës, Mrs Gaskell and several other writers. Victorian novelists again felt themselves in between the social repression on their shoulders and their vocation to become real writers. Feminist writers were deprived of expressing their inner lives and this repression continued until the twentieth century.

Child workers, slaves and prostitutes were represented by feminist protest discourse in 1840s and fiction. This was in a way a rebel against marriage and the suppression of women economically. Jane Austen and George Eliot and other women novelists focused on daily lives of the women and their roles in the society. A Feminist period followed the attacked restrictions of women, the notions of sacrifice, the challenge of the patriarchal order. Women asked for justice and change within the social systems enabling them privilege and they demanded fidelity from men. Virginia Woolf gained her economical freedom by printing her novels owing to the feminists' insistence upon the independence for women in a male-oriented society.

The last successors of Victorian conventions, adopted a Female attitude by expressing themselves. Leaving aside the masculine culture, feminist authors focused on the inner part, psychological issues. The separate room and the attic in *Jane Eyre*, represented female subconscious and sexuality, had been a refuge for the feminist writers to escape from the vicious world of males. Self-sacrifice was transformed into a female aesthetic in modernist fiction.

Virginia Woolf struggled for women's emancipation, gaining their individuality and economical independence. Woolf ardently supported Women's Movement, in *A Room of One's Own* which can be considered as a feminist manifesto, asserting that a woman must have money and a room of her own to be able to write, create a work of art. For Woolf, mental freedom was bound to material things. Women have always been poor. The intellectual freedom of women has been less than Athenian slaves. She even argued that if Shakespeare had had a sister, she would not have had the same opportunities, provided for her (Woolf, 2011). On her revisiting Oxbridge, she realized that the library entrance was banned to women to enter. As she was thinking of this injustice, she realized that our mothers could not save any money. She seemed to feel locked in as womenkind, she complained

about the injustice the woman gender has faced, she compared the inequalities between the sexes in terms of prosperity and security. The injustice between two genders was significant for other feminist writers as Simon De Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous, Judith Butler, Laura Mulvey, Annette Kolodny who were in the canon of feminist discourse and they all highlighted the problems faced by women in their different arguments.

While De Beauvoir suggested that male authority considered women as “the other” and mysterious to understand as a black side of humankind, as the second sex, Hélène Cixous asked women to write for themselves in *The Laugh of Medusa*. She mentioned the mother side in every women, feeding, caring all the time and writing with a white ink. She suggested to forget the psychoanalytic discourse and phallogocentric values and to discover being a woman with all perspectives. Judith Butler asserted that the idea of “compulsory heterosexuality”, argued to be two sexes and the desire ran from one sex to the other. Butler asserted that “natural” was actually socially constructed and therefore contingent. Social and political motives try to form our choices as the source of power. Laura Mulvey brought forth the psychoanalytic contribution to the feminist theory. The male gaze or voyeuristic-scopophilic look was regarded as traditional filmic pleasure. The fetishistic female figure presented to the spectator freezes the look of the spectator and prevented the person following any other thing. Annette Kolodny argued in *Dancing Through The Minefield* that aesthetic valuations of certain canons had to be re-evaluated in terms of norms. Those readings as in the case of *Paradise Lost*- failed to display the gender implications despite its perfect structure- may again be pleasant even though they need a new reader’s perspective.

Gillian Alban discusses another aspect of feminist theory asserting the male gaze exposes women beneath a panoptic eye. The gaze can be traced in all the media, ranging from advertisement or broadcasting, the social male view of the females as sexual beings rather than human beings. Alban claims the fact that even females themselves accept to be the target of these evaluations whether humiliating or admiring, the constant contest among all the females is worth attention. It should be another aim of feminist movement to convince all their sex to cease to be the object of this male gaze and start to consider a woman not only as a desirable object but as a human being (Alban, 2017).

While the feminist theory Virginia Woolf supporting ardently fostered the author to inspire the women sex to create and survive as independent individuals, the sudden losses of her family members also led her to turn life into meaningful. The inevitability of death reminded the shortness of life and the desire to leave a piece of art, a way of converting life to a concrete item. The immortality through the work of art and creativity had been another stimulator as an idea in the emergence of *To The Lighthouse*.

The family life in the summerhouse of Ramsays will affect free artist Lily Briscoe and the journey to the lighthouse is to be completed at the end of the novel, when it was the right time for creating a piece of art.

## **FRAME**

Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* can also be considered as a journey to the freedom of mind, creativity and art. In addition to feminist struggle, Woolf thought that art and creativity can be regarded as the ultimate aim of life. Frustrated by the death of her beloved ones unexpectedly, Virginia Woolf tried to understand the meaning of life in her semi-autobiographical novel *To The Lighthouse*. As an author, Woolf believed that the only solution lies in creativity and art to turn life into meaningful (Woolf, 1979). *To The Lighthouse* searches the meaning of life by drawing two portraits of women who lead the reader to the path of art. The two prototypes of women cannot be separated from each other in the journey to enlightenment. The traditional, all giving mother figure Mrs Ramsay turns out to be a source of inspiration for artistic, extraordinary Lily Briscoe and her existence becomes indispensable for Lily Briscoe to create her intellectual identity. As binary oppositions life and death, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe are connected to each other to gain creativity.

Woolf expressed her excitement about *To The Lighthouse* in her letter to Vita Sack Ville-West, one of her closest friends, emphasizing that she was writing her best novel and she had never written in such excitement (De Salvo & Leaska, 2007). The sudden deaths of her family members affected Virginia Woolf profoundly on which she searches for the meaning of life as an author and intellectual. In addition to be a pioneer in feminist movement, she decided that art was the most crucial concept in life. To take a vision from life, to make it immortal, to enlighten people with one's thoughts could make life meaningful. Thus her literary journey started as a woman author as an indicator of her feminist attitude towards this patriarchal order.

Virginia Woolf presents two prototypes of women to the reader in *To The Lighthouse*. The traditional, emotional, caring mother and wife figure Mrs Ramsay and creative, productive, untraditional artist Lily Briscoe. Unlike their differences as women prototypes they represent, these two women are essential for each other. The moral and spiritual growth of Lily Briscoe as an artist could only be achieved by the support of Mrs Ramsay. Mrs Ramsay performs her duty as a lighthouse when she illuminates Lily spiritually and encourages her "to catch a vision of life". What would happen if Mrs Ramsay were not a part of Lily Briscoe's life? It would be really hard for Lily to reach her mental emancipation and creativity. It would not be easy for her to create a work of art and lead a different, extraordinary path. In this sense, Mrs Ramsay becomes a muse and starting point in Lily Briscoe's artistic journey in a world dominated by patriarchal order.

The journey to the lighthouse signifies a lifelong journey to artistic creativity, to the freedom of mind. The light symbolizes the illumination of the minds, knowledge, surpassing the limits, emancipation of thoughts. Mrs Ramsay is a perfect reflection of the devoted, self-sacrificing mother and wife who fulfills her duties thoroughly. However, she has the capacity to question and search for the unknown as a descendant of Eve, women have always had the capacity to question and search for the unknown. The light is associated with the idea of illumination, knowledge and freedom throughout the centuries. When Prometheus stole the fire for humanity, the search of knowledge started. Virginia Woolf argues in *A Room of One's Own* that women will look beyond the personal and political relationships to the wider questions, which the poet tries to solve- of our destiny and the meaning of life.

In the novel, Lily Briscoe asks herself this question “What is the aim of life?” and Mrs Ramsay tries to answer her by telling her “to catch a vision of life and making it immortal” (Woolf, 1927: p.135). She pioneers her in her route in creating a piece of art. Mrs Ramsay herself performs the duty of a lighthouse being a source of life for everyone. The guests of the summerhouse, her eight children, her husband are all the essential parts of her life and she signifies “the angel in the house” for them. She melts as a candle for them asking for nothing. As Hélène Cixous asserts in “The Laugh of The Medusa”; A woman is never far from “mother”. There is always within her at least a little of that good mother’s milk. She writes in white ink. In women there is always more or less of the mother who makes everything all right, who nourishes, and who stands up against separation.

The patriarchal society forces women to be either a virtuous, married woman or to be the strange and the other. The latter alternative does not have the chance to survive too much. Nevertheless, as an artist, Lily Briscoe understands that she should kill the angel in her soul to achieve to emancipate her thoughts and to create a piece of art. According to Woolf, women should kill “The Angel in the House” to create a work of art (Woolf, 1979). The sacrificing all giving mother cannot have the mental freedom to create a piece of art. Similarly as Woolf asserts, Mrs Ramsay cannot have a “room of her own” and £500 a year (Professions For Women) to live freely and build her intellectual identity. Even if Lily or Mrs Ramsay achieved to own a room, they shouldn’t have succeeded to furnish the house. It turns out to be too difficult to survive as women artists depending solely on themselves in a patriarchal order. The conventional prototype that we encounter with Mrs Ramsay is a very beautiful, attractive woman to whom almost every man she knows falls in love. Woolf criticizes the patriarchal point of view to women as a desirous object.

John Berger presents women as the objectified spectacles of men who dream of them. He asserts that the ‘ideal’ spectator always assumed to be male and

the image of the woman is designed to flatter him (Alban, 2017). Laura Mulvey asserts in her work this male gaze on the cinema. She claims that the gaze operates from the man onto the woman as an indicator of the erotic object of the male gaze (Warhal& Herndl, 1993). However, H el ene Cixous asserts instead that woman may claim the power of Medusa, levelling her look against the intrusive other and petrifying those who all under her gaze. Rising above obstacles placed in her path, she may seize her opportunities from a resistant patriarchal world and can burst into defiant laughter. She claims that woman can express themselves physically, sexually and textually perfectly (Alban, 2017).

Despite being very attractive, our heroine is much deeper than her outlook. She has a hidden desire as a woman to acquire the knowledge, the unknown. The ultimate reality that women have always striven for knowledge is an undebatable fact. Starting from The Garden of Eden, the tree of knowledge had been preferred by the first woman, Eve and as descendants of her, women have always been prone to go beyond the given, question more and gain more knowledge and thus power. Woolf creates a character, Mrs Ramsay who is familiar with Anna Karenina and Kont Vronsky in *To The Lighthouse*, which means she is much more intelligent than Mr Ramsay and other guests thought (Woolf, 1927).

Virginia Woolf highlighted the crucial differences between men and women by depicting the private lives of the Ramsays. Mr Ramsay character is a combination of man ego, pride, rudeness and also psychological weaknesses. His rude and strict personality is apparent when he tells his six year old son, James that the weather will not be fine to visit the lighthouse the following day at the beginning of the novel (Woolf, 1927). Frustrated by his father's decision, James could only be soothed by his mother's patience. Mrs Ramsay represents all feminine values; she is emotional, caring, full of imagination. She soothes her son by telling that their journey to the lighthouse depends on the weather conditions. In other terms, the journey for creativity cannot be possible under these circumstances. Mrs Ramsay's angel life is not available for the path for creativity, freedom of mind and creation of art. The journey will only be possible at the end of the novel when Mrs Ramsay or the conventional "angel in the house" was dead.

The gender differences between the two sexes is given to the reader by the opposite characters as a mutual couple: Mr and Mrs Ramsay. Despite the differences in their gender roles and characters, the Ramsays achieve to gain a unity in their relationship and this unity is appreciated by Lily and the other guests of the Ramsay's summerhouse. Mr Ramsay is obsessed with his intellectual studies and he is both proud and anxious about his academic studies. He thinks the only way of immortality is publishing books and becoming a famous writer as Shakespeare. He is nervous about the success of his book. His male ego is apparent when he confesses that he cannot reach in the alphabet to Z. He is stuck at Q. He thinks



he is not successful enough to be remembered for a long time as Shakespeare. He thinks that he will be forgotten in a short time when he dies. His male ego is humiliated as his book has not turned to a success (Woolf, 1927: p.30).

Mr Ramsay seeks for psychological support, provided to him by Mrs Ramsay. His wife gives him all he needs. Even though she cannot fulfill all his expectations when she cannot tell him that she loves him plainly, she admits about the weather conditions will not allow them for the physical journey to the lighthouse and thus he understands that she loves him. She makes him understand her feelings in her peculiar way. Despite all the male ego, he needs his wife's support to struggle the stresses of daily life, of his work being published or not. On which Woolf suggested in *A Room of One's Own* that women actually enable men to look into their own ego mirrors and see themselves magnified there larger than life:

Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle (*A Room Of One's Own*).

Mr Ramsay seeks for sympathy throughout the novel. He wants Mrs Ramsay tell him that she loves him. Even though he has been stern about the journey to the lighthouse to little James, he has emotional needs. Woolf described this feature as an androgynous mind and she asserted that there were two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, they should be united in order to get complete happiness. In the man's brain, man dominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain woman dominates over the man. They should live in harmony, cooperating. One should think man-womanly or woman-manly. (*A Room Of One's Own*) When Mrs Ramsay is unable to express her feelings towards her husband, she also displays masculine attitudes and she thinks woman-manly. Similar to this, Mr Ramsay acts man-womanly when he needs sympathy throughout the novel. Thus Woolf wants to suggest that each person should be androgynous to a certain amount. The harmony of the Ramsay's relationship depends on their androgynous minds.

Mrs Ramsay turns to a lighthouse not only for Mr Ramsay but also to the people surrounding her, her children, Lily, Mona and all the guests. Mrs Ramsay not only nourishes people surrounding her physically, but also she nourishes them psychologically. Mrs Ramsay is a giving figure for her eight children; furthermore, she tries to matchmaking. She also wants Lily to get married that Lily refuses telling that marriage is not suitable for her character. She encourages Lily when she tells her to take a vision of life and make it immortal! The question that 'What is the meaning of life?' hovers over the head of Lily Briscoe (Woolf, 1927: p.135).

The existence of Mrs Ramsay turns out to be an inspiring muse for the young artist Lily Briscoe to draw her own route as a free artist searching for creativity. When she refuses to marry, she is conscious that one cannot create a work of art by performing as an angel in the house as in the case of Mrs Ramsay. In order to emancipate one's mind, an artist needs a certain amount of loneliness and isolation from society. It would have been impossible for Mrs Ramsay to possess a room for her own but her existence will help Lily to have her own room, to create her intellectual and artistic identity and to create a piece of art. Nancy Milford explains this situation searching for the women, married in an early age and continued their writing career: the groups can be enumerated as the unmarried, the married with no child, few ones married with a child (Gelpi&Gelpi, 1975). Woolf exemplified this fact in *Professions for Women*, when she told that if Aphra Behn, Mrs Gaskell or Jane Austen, George Eliot and many more unknown and forgotten had not smoothed the path and regulated her steps, she would not have succeeded to this extent. She also adds that the only reason women could write in the past was the cheapness of writing paper and thus they could afford it without family problems. They succeeded as writers before they succeeded in other professions (Woolf, 1979).

Lily Briscoe rejects the conventional roles and decides to choose an extraordinary way when she decides to draw Mrs Ramsay's portrait. As Lily questions the meaning of life, Mrs Ramsay also questions when she is alone stating that "How could any Lord have made this world?" With her mind she had always seized the fact that there is no reason, order, justice: but suffering, death, the poor (Woolf, 1927: p.53). She has difficulty in perceiving this world's wars, deaths and sorrows. As a woman, she is also prone to question and search for the unknown. It can be interpreted that Mrs Ramsay reflects Virginia Woolf's inner voice in these lines. As the casualties of war and its disastrous effects reflected in Septimus Warren Smith character and his committing suicide in *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf aimed to explain how meaningless wars were and the psychological breakdowns people experience as the consequences of wars. She felt herself responsible as an author and intellectual to remind society the disastrous results of wars although they were represented to people as wrapped gifts by appealing to their national feelings. Her aim was to express nothing could justify a war, people's killing each other by giving Andrew character in the novel. Andrew's death in the war aims to highlight the cruelties and bare realities of war by Virginia Woolf.

Mrs Ramsay tries to catch the strokes of the lighthouse and she associates her inner self with the light released from there. Nobody could understand her quest because she unconsciously longs for the unknown, knowledge and illumination. Mrs Ramsay encourages Lily by telling her the only way to stop and record the moment is to draw it. She finds the immortality in creation and art. Lily tries to draw her portrait that she cannot finish. In this sense, Lily becomes an alter ego

for Mrs Ramsay that she unconsciously resembles. In her inner self, Mrs Ramsay wants to have the journey to the knowledge, art and to be one with the lighthouse.

The sudden death of Mrs Ramsay changes everything, time passes and Andrew's death in the war and Prue's death while childbearing force Mr Ramsay, Lily and James to face the reality of death. Woolf gave examples from her real life as her step-sister died just like Prue within a year of marriage (Alban, 2017). Frustrated and shocked by sudden deaths, Woolf reflects her feelings in her semi-autobiographical novel. Prue's death also indicates the woman's restrictions by society. Women are only confined with the idea of childbearing and motherhood. Prue's death signifies women's suffering to become a mother confirming to social restrictions. As Simon De Beauvoir suggests "One is not born, rather becomes a woman" (in Alban, 2017). Social roles and conventions restrict women as locked in a room, Woolf expressed this feeling of living within boundaries in *A Room of One's Own* while she found herself out of the library comparing the injustice between the two sexes in terms of prosperity and security. Woolf asserted that throughout the history male gender was provided with privileges of security and prosperity while the female sex was experiencing insecurity and poverty (Woolf, 2011).

Virginia Woolf enabled the reader to understand the gaining of Lily's consciousness as an artist bit by bit from the beginning of the novel to the last scene (Bennet, 1984). Lily Briscoe "standing at the edge of the lawn painting" "in the beginning and reaches the effective scene in the end "yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision" (Woolf, 1927: p.175). Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe stand for the ideas of life and death and the novel starts with "the window" that represents life, Mrs Ramsay, and ends with the conversion of life into a work of art that is represented by Lily, "The Lighthouse" (Cohl, 1962). Mrs Ramsay is the subject of Lily's painting. Part I in which life dominates is much longer than Part III which represents art. Mrs Ramsay has an effort to reflect life in every possible way in her behaviours. She supports her husband and her children spiritually, she helps all the male sex, she is a continuous matchmaker, helper to sick, poor and elderly people. She seeks for harmony in every social event as in her dinner party. Lily appreciates her effort by telling "Life stand still here!" (Woolf, 1927: p.135) but life has to pass and her effort to stop life can only be achieved by Lily's artistic conversion of the moment into a work of art. In her try to change life into a concrete work of art, Lily Briscoe finds her brush the one dependable thing in a chaotic world (Cohn, 1962). In the beginning she lacked confidence to reflect life with her brush but in the end, in Part III, she gains self-confidence and her brush-strokes turns more decisive when she remembers artistic motto of Mr. Charmichael: "How 'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (Woolf, 1927: p.149).

Not only Mr Ramsay represents male ego but Mr Tansley consists of ego as well when he tells that “women cannot write, women cannot paint” during the meal. Mr Tansley considers women as H el ene Cixous stated ‘The Second Sex’, inferior to men and not capable of anything except childbearing and raising them up. She asserted that women were considered as *mysterious* and kept on the fringe of the world. She complained that women were oppressed and turned to slaves, servants to males in the patriarchal order. Mr Tansley represents the voice of conventional patriarchal order that humiliates the women sex, considering it “*the other*” and as an object to be scared and unknown.

Mr Ramsay goes through a spiritual growth in the course of the novel and is able to perform the allegoric journey to the lighthouse or to enlightenment when he is capable of reaching Mrs Ramsay’s understanding and soothing way towards his son James. He appreciates James telling him “well-done” for steering the boat well at the end of the novel (Cohl, 1962). Mr Ramsay pleads for sympathy from Lily Briscoe as well. As a male, he is always in need of being understood by women and soothed by them. It is apparent that males are in need for women’s spiritual support despite their egos. Mr Ramsay has also changed and spiritually grown in his relationship with his son. When he arrives at the lighthouse with his son James in the end, he appreciates him for his talent in steering the boat properly. He also gains his late wife’s caring and understanding finally. As a representative of male sex, Mr Ramsay needs time to improve the relationship with his son when compared to his soothing wife.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a representative of feminist movement, Virginia Woolf advocated the female creativity and individuality stating the importance of possessing “A Room of One’s Own”. Oppressed and restricted throughout the history, women were bound to live in accordance with the certain roles given to them by society. It had been hard for a number of women writers to surpass the limits and boundaries that were strictly drawn for them by patriarchal authority. There have always been courageous authors to question and force the limits as George Eliot, Aphra Behn, Mrs Gaskell and many others that smoothed the way for the new generations, as Woolf stated.

Feminist Movement enriched with a number of theorists in the course of time and a female tradition flourished to embrace all the women writers throughout the history of literature. While stating the historical progress of the feminist movement, it remains inevitable to state the leading role of Virginia Woolf and her discourse. As a reflection of her thoughts about women and fiction, *To the Lighthouse* offers a brief and clear summary of her struggle. Woolf presents Lily Briscoe character as an artist, who will eventually achieve her goal and complete her picture at the end of the novel. For Woolf as an author, the work of art remained as an achievement, life would be converted to life as a sign of immortality.

The traditional mother figure Mrs Ramsay helps the artist Lily Briscoe towards her journey to the art, creativity, and freedom of mind. Lily Briscoe tries to understand the mystic relationship between life and art even when she has the final stroke to end the novel. She is interested in the mother and child (Mrs Ramsay and James), she is in love with Ramseys' life. Lily tries to reflect the tree first in Part I (that Mrs Ramsay associated herself with). In Part III, Mrs Ramsay is not directly reflected in the portrait but her tragic death conveyed to the piece of art. When Lily finds herself utter Mrs Ramsay's name loudly with the poet of death, Augustus Carmichael, they try to probe the meaning of life and convert life into a piece of art since they are unable to understand why life is so short and inexplicable. It is as if "they shouted loud enough Mrs Ramsay would return". Together with Mr Carmichael, the poet and the artist defy death in their peculiar way by converting life into a work of art. The ultimate aim of art and creativity was, thus, highlighted once more to leave a sign of immortality, a sign of life against death.

Lily represents life as an artist and Mr Carmichael stands for death since he is known with his poetry about death. Lily and Mr Carmichael together become conscious of the fact that the ultimate aim of life is to achieve to the lighthouse, the symbol of illumination, creation and art. The ultimate aim in life is to create a piece of art and thus catch the glimpse of immortality. Art can only replace death and can turn life meaningful. Inspired from Mrs Ramsay and the domestic life of the Ramsays, Lily Briscoe completes her artistic journey to the freedom of mind and creativity. Supported spritually and encouraged by Mrs Ramsay, Lily gains self-confidence to achieve the conversion of life into a piece of art with her strokes in the end. Mrs Ramsay's impact upon Lily becomes a mean for life to lead to art. Art replaces death and adds a kind of meaning and immortality to life.

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