

A psychoanalytical reading of Mrs. Ramsay in ‘To the Lighthouse’ in relation to Virginia Woolf’s personal life

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Abstract

This paper explores Woolf’s self into her character: Mrs. Ramsay and vice versa. The narrative of ‘To the Lighthouse’ offers a detailed description of her characters’ inner selves and their outlook on life based on their interior designs. Woolf has drawn her characters based on incidents chiselled from her personal life. Her personal life suffered incessantly from jolts of fear, psychosis, neurosis, and attempts of suicide on various occasions. To compensate for the injuries and trauma of the past, Woolf is at her best in drawing the character of Mrs. Ramsay, which is full of love, life, and harmony, contrary to her own life, which was full of trouble and mental sickness. Woolf could not manage her personal and conjugal life smoothly, but Mrs. Ramsay, on the contrary, successfully kept her family connected till her death. Our main argument is Aristotle’s stance on Art that artists, in reaction to the realities of the physical world, create an imaginative world of perfection. According to the novel’s psychological nature, Freud’s theory of personality has been adopted in exploring and correlating the character of Mrs. Ramsay (the brainchild of Woolf) with Woolf’s personal life.

Article History

Received:
April 12, 2022

Revised:
May 24, 2022

Re-revised:
June 20, 2022

Accepted:
June 21, 2022

Published:
July 13, 2022

Keywords: Freud theory of personality, psychoanalysis, psychosis, neurosis, trauma, unconscious, art, perfection, character, self and character, correlating character.

How to Cite:

Salam, S., Khan, S. A., & Ahmad, K. (2022). A psychoanalytical reading of Mrs. Ramsay in ‘To the Lighthouse’ in relation to Virginia Woolf’s personal life. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 6(1), 251-266. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/6.1.16>

Publisher’s Note: IDEA Publishers (IDEA Journals Group) stands neutral with regard to the jurisdictional claims in the published maps and the institutional affiliations.

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1. Introduction

Virginia Woolf, a modern novelist, was born in London on January 25, 1882 and died in Lewes, United Kingdom, on March 28, 1941. Her birth name was Adeline, but she adopted Virginia after her writing career because she wanted to get a new identity hiding her family background. She is famous for using the *stream of consciousness technique* in her narratives. Being a modern writer, her writing style was poetic, dramatic and thematically fragmented. She is a prominent Novelist, Essayist, Publisher and Critic. Her most notable works are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *The Waves* (1931).

Woolf was raised in a Victorian household and her father Sir Leslie Stephen was an author and historian in the golden age of mountaineering. Woolf's mother, Julia Prinsep Stephen, was a painter and nurse. Both of her parents were widowed before marrying each other. She had four half-siblings and three full-siblings. She received her early education at her father's library and later at Kings College London; at the age of nine, she was part of her family newspaper, "Hyde Park Gate News." Later, she fell deep into literature and her father supported her in pursuing her literary career.

Zarevish (2021) argues in his article that Virginia Woolf's life was full of suffering and anxiety. Also, it is clear from her suicide attempts at times of severe traumatic fits. Her life complexity started when her mother passed away in 1895. She was recovering from the depression when her half-sister Stella Duckworth died at age 28. As written in her diary, this event was "impossible to write off" and led her to her first nervous breakdown in 1904. Afterwards, her father's death disturbed her sick mind in a way that she made a suicidal attempt by jumping from the window, but was briefly hospitalized and luckily got saved; after that she started teaching at Morley College from 1906-1907. Then she got engaged to Lytton Strachey's famous biographer and Stephen's family friend but soon their engagement broke up. She had an unusual relationship with Rupert Brooke, a poet; he was mentally sick and found peace for himself through Neopaganism. Virginia had a love affair with Clive Bell, an artist and husband of her sister Vanessa Bell, the painter; this made her relationship complicated with her sister. Later, she married the literary figure Leonard Woolf, in 1917. They founded the Hogarth Press, in which they started publishing their works.

Woolf suffered from severe traumatic fits in her life and one of the main reasons was that at the age of six she was sexually abused by her half-brother Clive Bell and it continued till her marriage with Leonard Woolf. This childhood sexual abuse was one of the leading causes of her depression which is reflected in her works in different ways. Due to this, she also became a victim of psychosis and trauma at the end, this illness led her to commit suicide at the age of fifty-eight when she put small rocks in her pockets and drowned herself in the River Ouse, after two weeks her dead body was found.

Throughout imaginative literature, fictional characters are created concerning social, political, and personal issues; some are made out of curiosity and some compensate for one's flaws, shortcomings and imperfections in one's real life. As long as there are imperfect human beings, there will be a perfect creation of art, as Aristotle in his famous critique of Plato said that the physical world is full of imperfections, artists use their creative powers and imagination to come up with a perfect reflection of the physical world and its realities. Writers use their imagination to create fictional characters in such a way that it becomes difficult for the readers to know about the source of their characters. The same is the case with Woolf, she created her works out of her sufferings and pains, the perfect character of Mrs. Ramsay in a way that is controverted to her real-life experiences. Mrs. Ramsay is introduced to us at the start of the novel *To the Light House* not only as a woman but as a perfect figure of her kind, caring, loving, tolerant and protector. She is the symbol of light and universal motherhood, bringing order and harmony to her household and neighbourhood.

Mrs. Ramsay is presented as a perfect picture of a Victorian woman. Her character is like an "angel in the house" and she uses her womanly wiles and housewife skills to bring unity and love to the people around her. Mrs. Ramsay is very kind and generous in contrast to Mr. Ramsay she is very sympathetic towards her guest Carmichael for his unlucky marriage and to Charles Tansley's social awkwardness which makes her lure and friendly towards the guest. Her nature is very unselfish because she has allowed her guests to stay with them in their summer house and she keeps a social relationship with guests, during walks and dinner. These characteristics make her an angel in other people's hearts. The perfection of Mrs. Ramsay's character originates from the imperfect being of Woolf and her miserable life, however, she was a substantial lady but was having limitations in her nature in overcoming her agonizing situation (Spark Notes, n.d.).

To the Lighthouse written in 1927, it is an autobiographical novel. The title of the novel is symbolic and the novel is divided into three parts. In the first part *The Window* we are introduced to the Ramsay family, their guests and their visit to the summer house at "Isle of Sky." James, the youngest son of Mrs. Ramsay, wanted to visit the lighthouse visible through their home window; his father told him that they could not go there tomorrow because the weather would not be fine. Mrs. Ramsay didn't want to make her child feel disappointed so, she told him if the weather was fine they would visit the Light House. In this section, we are also introduced to the guest of the house Lily Briscoe, who is busy drawing a portrait of Mrs. Ramsay but she is unable to complete her painting, which symbolically represents the mingling personality of Virginia Woolf. *The Window* part plays the role of a screen between reality and the unconscious mind of the characters. *The Window* shows us the outer world, so the words and actions of a person act like a window through which we can see the inner thinking and personalities of different characters in the novel.

The second part *Time Passes* is the shortest part of the novel written after ten years of "*The Window*." In this section, we see the ravishing and devastating effect of time on the lives of

certain characters in the novel. It is full of drastic changes in the narrative in which we see the sudden death of Mrs. Ramsay, the death of Ramsay's daughter Prue during complicated childbirth and the death of her son Andrew during World War-I. The third part *The Lighthouse* explains the journey of James, Paul, Mr. Ramsay and Cam to the lighthouse. Lily completed her portrait as they reach the lighthouse, she is remembering everything related to Mrs. Ramsay when she was with them.

While interpreting the characters in the novel, each character is a different perspective of life but Mrs. Ramsay is the reflection of Woolf's most troubled imperfect life, giving an impression of binary opposites. According to Asghar's (2016) Mrs. Ramsay is a perfect fictional character created by Virginia Woolf. She was having sympathy towards the poor people as in the Window section she is busy knitting stockings for the sick son of the lighthouse housekeeper, she was having sympathy with Charles Tansley, despite his egoistic behaviour. She knows about the importance of marriage between man and woman that's why she encourages Lily Briscoe to get married and is worried about Mr. Bankes's marriage to a widow. Her aura is dominant even after her death as James says, Mrs. Ramsay's death is more powerful than Mr. Ramsay living.

Virginia Woolf in her essay "modern fiction" argues that modern writers should cut off their ties with traditional fiction writing because life is not a series of events unfolding in a systematically organized way rather things are happening to us in so many different ways most of them unknown to us and the traditional approach to literature is incapable of reflecting life with its immense complexity. Similarly, she takes her point further and argues as follows:

"Life is not a series of gig lamps, symmetrically arranged. Life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of the consciousness to the end" (Woolf, 1925).

Virginia has explained her life in her writing and presented us with the perfect figure in the form of the character she tries to escape from herself in the form of character. The modern writer follows the psychoanalytical approach in their literary work to discuss the hidden feelings, emotion and thought which reside inside the unconscious mind and make us familiar with the inside happening of the character or person's mind.

Virginia Woolf a writer of *stream of consciousness*, says "it is a tack of the writer to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit of life." The term stream of consciousness is the multitudinous thoughts in the narrator's mind. Alexander Bain coined the term in 1855 in his work *senses and intellect* and the term stream of consciousness was used by William James in his work *the principle of psychology* in 1890 was introduced by Maycinclair in literature when he was analyzing *Dorothy Richardson's* works. The first novel which was written in the stream-of-consciousness technique is "*Pointed Roofs*" by *Dorothy Richardson* 1915.

The research questions of the study are: a) What are those traits of imperfection in Woolf's life which led to the creation of the perfect character of Mrs. Ramsay in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*? and b) How does the psychoanalytical interpretation of Mrs. Ramsay's character in "*To the Lighthouse*" correlate with the personal life of Virginia Woolf? Besides, the objectives of the study are: a) To highlight those traits of imperfection in Woolf's personal life which led to the creation of the perfect character of Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*. b) To explore the character of Mrs. Ramsay through the Freudian lens of psychoanalysis focusing on the correlation between Virginia Woolf and her character, Mrs. Ramsay.

This study highlights the traits of imperfection in the life of Virginia Woolf and to make a psychoanalytical interpretation of Mrs. Ramsay's character in comparison with Virginia Woolf's personal life events and problems. This analysis involves an in-depth study of Woolf's personal life, especially the traumatic events which made her life quite troublesome and unbearable for her. The character of Mrs. Ramsay has been viewed through the perspective of Freud's psychoanalysis, exploring the text of *To the Lighthouse* to come up with a critical analysis of the writer and her fictional character as the novel has an ample amount of autobiographical instances.

2. Literature review

The novel *To the Lighthouse*, written by Virginia Woolf in 1927 is a modern novel. The novel is divided into three sections the first part *Window* section tells us the story of the novel Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and her eight children along with guests are holidaying on the island of Skye, in the Hebrides by the west coast of Scotland. At the start of the novel, James the youngest son of the Ramsay family wishes to visit the lighthouse which can be seen, from their home window but due to the unsuitable weather conditions his father Ramsay told him that the weather cannot be fine tomorrow, and it would not be possible to visit the Lighthouse.

But, said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window "it won't be fine" (Woolf, 1927, p. 37).

His mother Mrs. Ramsay did not want to dishearten her child so she promises that if the weather is fine the next day he would be taken to visit the lighthouse.

Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow, said Mrs. Ramsay (Woolf, 1927, p. 37).

According to Mull (2014), Woolf has transformed her living experience into a fictionalized discourse involving introspective works gearing towards self-reflection and self-analysis while depicting the picture of her life experiences, her surroundings, and her reflection on her relationship with her parents. *Lighthouse* is not only limited to the life experiences of the Wolf but also about self-reformation, artistic production, order and disorder, male and female, and reunion.

Being a patient of bipolar disorder, mental illness, and trauma, Woolf's personal life was nothing less than a constant agony. Every day she suffers from inner mind conflict due to early childhood psychological and sexual abuse. Her mother's death, then her sister, to whom she was close, and then her father death greatly affected her. Woolf's father did not allow them to speak about the death, due to it she remained silenced and did not express any kind of emotion from early childhood. Her first psychotic break occurs after her father's death. At the age of seven, she was sexually abused by her half-brother who was twenty years older than her. This sexual abuse was quite traumatic and lasted until she turned twenty-four and married to Leonardo Woolf. She started to write openly about her sexual abuse in her works at the age of ten, and this provided her with a way to express her hidden emotions and tragic experiences of her life.

Sigmund Freud father of the psychoanalytical theory, psychoanalysis is a form of therapy that cure mental disorder by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind. He says that a person's personality is shaped during childhood through a series of five psychosexual stages known as Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latent and Genital. Freud's basic theory is based on sexuality. This notion of sexuality develops in infancy known as the "Oedipus Complex." These psychological stages should be developed with great care otherwise they affect the personality development of a person (Barry, 1995). According to Sigmund Freud, bad events that happen in one's childhood bring very negative impacts in adulthood. That event can be anxiety, depression, abuse, mental illness, etc. All of these past experiences are stored in the unconscious mind and can cause a problem in adulthood (Freud, 1923). If we take the case of Virginia Woolf at age of six years she was sexually abused by her two half-brothers George and Gerald and this abuse affected her throughout her life. We came to know about this from Virginia Woolf's letters, sketches, diaries, and literary works.

DeSalvo (1989) explores that Virginia Woolf was sexually abused by her trustworthy family member and her parents did not save her from the "mental trauma" for whatever reason and later on when Virginia Woolf reached her adulthood, she tried to cope with it and understand her traumatic memories but often she reacted to it. He further argues that she carried the agony of her childhood sexual abuse until her tragic suicidal death because the scars were indelible. In fact, her madness was a typical reaction to her painful and unbearable experiences of childhood.

Dahl (1983) relates the painful experience of Virginia Woolf from which she suffered throughout her life and her vulnerability being a child is evident, when she was unable to resist or secure herself under such circumstances. She went through mental suppression as this exploitation was through the hands of her half-brothers. Later on, as per the psychoanalytic theory of Freud that the repressed thoughts always come back, Woolf's suppressed thoughts when came back; left her mad and a serious victim of trauma. In her own words, she reflected on her past as follows:

As I sat there, he began to explore my body. I can remember the feel of his hand going under my clothes: going firmly and steadily lower and lower, I remember how I hoped that he would stop; how I stiffened and wriggled as his hand approached my private parts. But it does not stop. His hand explored my private part too.

Williams (2014) in his article argues that Woolf suffered from depression, sleep disturbance, eating disturbance, body shame, and suicidal thoughts in adulthood. Medical psychologists believe that a victim of multiple sexual cases of abuse or a person having many sexual relations often undergoes suicidal thoughts and makes attempts to commit suicide. Virginia Woolf made several attempts to commit suicide but luckily, she was saved but, again in 1941, on 28 March she, at last, ended her story by drowning herself and was found dead at River Ouse.

Virginia also had a sexual relationship with her brother-in-law Clive Bell which further created complications in her relationship with her sister, she had many love affairs with literary persons of the time, but she never kept them secret. She disclosed her connections to her colleagues, sister, brother-in-law, friends of Bloomsbury, and relatives and she had also written about them in her autobiography.

Virginia Woolf writes about her first sexual abuse in her short stories. However, she continues writing about it for the rest of her life because this sexual abuse lasted till she reaches 23 and married Leonard. This long, undercover exploitation destroyed her conjugal life and that is why she has confessed that she could not develop an actual sexual relationship with her husband, Leonard Woolf. Though, apparently, she had a good relationship with her husband as both of them were literary figures of the Bloomsbury where different writers used to publish their works. At last, when she got fed up with her ailment and with the burden of her miserable life, she committed suicide and left the following letter for her husband titled “*a painful and poignant farewell*”;

I become to hear voices and I can't concentrate. So, I am doing what seems the best thing to me. You have given me the greatest possible happiness... What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you. You have saved me it would have been you. Everything has gone from me but the certainty of your goodness. I cannot go spoiling your life any longer. I do not think two people could have been happier than we have been (Woolf, 1941).

Freud (1896) argues in his theory of seduction that obsessional neurosis and hysteria are the consequences of unconscious memories of sexual abuse in childhood. Virginia was interested in Freud's works and studied his theories and even she once met him on January 29, 1939. The study of Freud's analytical psychology rendered psychological depth to her writing and most astonishingly Freud was right in her own case of neurosis and of the comeback of unconscious memories in adult life. Sigmund Freud puts it as follows:

At the bottom of every case of hysteria, there is one more occurrence of premature sexual experiences (Freud, 1896).

Khair and Neimneh (2016) argue that there are three different perspectives of Lily's pursuit i.e., the psychological level, the ontological level, and the philosophical level. The image of the lighthouse on a psychological level shows the changes in Lily Briscoe's inner self that is, in the process of making or developing. On the ontological level, the image of the lighthouse shows Lily's existential angst. Coming to the philosophical level, the representation of the lighthouse in Lily's painting stands as a symbol of hope, safety, and strength. The incompleteness of Lily's painting shows her, *self* in the making and the change in her perception of life (Khair & Neimneh, 2016).

Imran (2021) explores that the character Mrs. Ramsay represents Virginia Woolf as she is mostly seen in the first part of the novel, spending much of her time bringing people together to promote human happiness. For Mrs. Ramsay, the world is not to be ended but to be fashioned into something better and she always involves herself in social improvement by helping poor and needy people. At the start of the novel we see her knitting something for the Lighthouse keeper's little boy. She believes that women's happiness lies in marrying and she tries to convince Minta and Paul, Lily and Charles Tansley to marry each other respectively. Mrs. Ramsay appreciates Lily's potential as an artist and encourages her to carry out her paintings, on the other side, other guest members in Mrs. Ramsay's house mock Lily and her painting. Mrs. Ramsay represents something extraordinarily powerful and creative something that set her completely with her family. This aspect of Mrs. Ramsay's personality was not present in the life of Virginia Woolf because of her complexities and traumatic life. Interestingly, she bestowed Mrs. Ramsay with all these charismatic qualities and one can easily guess that Woolf wanted such a role for herself in her real life which she could not adopt due to so many issues and complications, in her past, that haunted her, till the end of her life and became a patient of bipolar disorder (Imran, 2021).

Therefore, the main argument of the researchers in the work at hand is how Virginia Woolf envisioned such a powerful character, full of sacrifices, caring, benevolent and, harmonizing in her masterpiece *To the Lighthouse*. Nevertheless, it is the reflection of Woolf's traumatic and miserable life which means that Mrs. Ramsay is Virginia Woolf herself in her fictional world.

3. Theoretical framework

The paper aims to reread Mrs. Ramsay's character in relation to Virginia Woolf's personal life based on Freud's psychoanalytical theory of personality. Usually, there are two reasons that stimulate the production of literature, firstly, one's own interest and keen observation of the world of reality, and secondly, seeking imaginative escape from the harsh and unchangeable realities of life in general of personal. In this sense, the researcher has explored the character

of the protagonist through the spectrum of Freudian Psychoanalysis keeping in view the real-life events and issues that occurred to the writer throughout her life, from childhood to the tragic end of Woolf's life. Psychoanalytic theory has logical explanations and interpretations of how an artist cannot escape his/her unconscious mind and the things stored in it in the form of repression and suppression while producing his/her artistic works.

4. Research methodology

This research is qualitative in its nature; draws on the descriptive methods of analysis. The qualitative method of research deals with collecting non-numerical data such as videos, audio, and text, analysing them to answer the research questions and to find evidence in support of the researcher's argument. The textual analysis techniques of Catherine Belsey have been used to investigate the hidden meaning of the text. Belsey argues that all creative and imaginative works of art, are for readers and viewers to deduce their point of view from the text. The readers', and viewers' impressions might differ vastly from the authors. According to her, researchers should continuously look for new and distinct facts when evaluating the text. Belsey advises researchers to be self-reliant and not to be swayed by the opinions of others. She also emphasizes the need for the researcher to concentrate on the sources of data when conducting textual analysis before reviewing additional data for analysis; the researcher should get feedback on how well the material is understood. A greater emphasis on secondary facts may stifle the information and opinions (Belsey, 2013). The textual analysis brings forward hidden messages, structure and function of the text. This research paper aims to find new truths and facts by exploring the character of Mrs. Ramsay and correlating it with the personal life of *Virginia Woolf* through the perspective of Freudian psychoanalysis.

5. Discussion and analysis

Ahmad (n.d.) gives a brief explanation of Plato's book "*Republic*" in which he explains the concept of mimesis that all imaginative literature like poetry, fiction, and painting is the imitation of an imitation and hence twice removed from truth or reality. Therefore, Artists, in his view are not fit to reside in his ideal republic as their works appeal to the emotional faculties of people rather than sharpening and awakening their rational faculties. Aristotle in his book *Poetics* counters the stance of Plato regarding artists and their works by redefining the concept of mimesis. He argues that art is not a simple copying or imitative work on the part of the artist because the act of copying is not mechanical in nature rather artists get inspired by things in their lives and in the physical world and later on, they use their creative and intuitive faculties to come up with something new and original in the world of imaginative art and literature.

The physical world; and life is not perfect in any way as all of our desires and dreams do not get fulfilled and in reaction to the harsh realities, artists use their creative and imaginative faculties to draw a perfect picture of the physical world and life, not in the way as things actually are in the real world rather they portray them as they should be, according to human

nature. Similarly, we can say that every perfection is the reflection of imperfection because the physical world is full of imperfections. Poets and artists create a perfect world out of the imperfect using their imagination and creativity, thus contributing more to Plato's world of ideas which are original and perfect.

The novel *To the Lighthouse* presents the perfect character of Mrs. Ramsay, she is the central character of the novel and all events of the story revolve around her because of her unique characteristics as a unifying anchor of the people, a matchmaker of her family. She wants all men and women should marry, her nature is very kind and sympathetic towards the poor and she has a magnetic personality even after her death people miss her, especially Lilly Briscoe imagines her as if she is with them and they are sitting around the same table. At the beginning of chapter first, of the novel, Mrs. Ramsay's little son James insists on going to the Lighthouse tomorrow but his father cuts him short with a blunt reply that we cannot go to the Lighthouse as the weather tomorrow will not be suitable but his mother consoles him in a very polite manner and he goes to sleep. She tells him:

Yes of course, if it's fine tomorrow, said Mrs. Ramsay. But you'll have to be up with the lark he added (Woolf, 1927, p. 34).

Being a Mathematician Mr. Ramsay is very straightforward and tells his son James that the weather will not be fine tomorrow as per the weather forecast and therefore, they cannot visit the lighthouse. On the contrary, Mrs. Ramsay gives her son emotional support by giving him hope that they will definitely take him to the Lighthouse tomorrow if the weather is fine tomorrow. With this James becomes happy and goes to bed. Actually, Mrs. Ramsay gives James an emotional dose rather than dragging him to the harsh realities of the world when he is only a child. Mrs. Ramsay did not want to break her child's heart because he was only six years old. As Virginia Woolf herself had not received her mother's love due to her early death, so she was deprived of her mother's love, care, and attention. Thus in "*To the Lighthouse*" Mrs. Ramsay being a very kind lady symbolizes the universal motherhood and it also reflects the vacuum left in Virginia Woolf's childhood due to the absence of her mother. In another place in the same novel, she is worried about the relationship between two of her guests, William and Lily.

William and Lily should marry she took the heather-mixture stocking, with its crisscross of steel needles at the mouth of it, and measured it against James's leg (Woolf, 1927, p. 69).

Mrs. Ramsay was a kind lady so she, was worried for Lilly (who was a guest at the Ramsay family summer house) and was unmarried, Mrs. Ramsay was aware of the importance of marriage for a woman that it protects women against the precarious and unreliable existence that is why she wanted Lilly and William to get married with which their life would become more bearable and charming. Mrs. Ramsay thinks that women can get happiness only through

the bond of marriage because of it she was convincing Lily to get married to William and was trying to find the perfect match for her. Marriage serves as a sign of unity for Mrs. Ramsay because it unites people in love and faithfulness in a lifelong relationship and Mrs. Ramsay tries to unite all confused lovers.

Virginia Woolf, before marriage, was seduced sexually by her half-brothers, and this practice continued till she got married to Leonard Woolf, after which she felt secure, but her past memories could not let her enjoy her married life with Leonard. But she came to know the importance of marriage and her characters like Lily and William reflect her own difficult life before her marriage. As she says:

But he kept overlooking back over his shoulders as Mildred carried him out, and she was certain that he was thinking, we are not going to the Lighthouse tomorrow; and she thought, he will remember that all his life (Woolf, 1927, p. 122).

James the eldest child of the Ramsay family wanted to visit the lighthouse but due to poor weather conditions, his father Mr. Ramsay told him they could not visit Lighthouse tomorrow. Mrs. Ramsay is worried about her little child because she was aware that they could not visit the Lighthouse due to poor weather conditions. Still, she was giving him hope that if the weather is fine, they will visit there because her approach toward life was emotional as compared to her husband, Mr. Ramsay, now Mrs. Ramsay is thinking about her son that if they did not visit the Lighthouse James will remember it throughout his life because childhood experiences cannot be removed from the person's mind. It gives a picture of Mrs. Ramsay's affectionate and loving personality, who cares about the little demands of her children, and is well aware of life. Virginia Woolf remembers her childhood experiences throughout her life due to which she attempted twice to end her life because in childhood she was sexually abused for a long time by her half-brothers. This agony is reflected in her work as her parents too could not save her from this abuse which is why she created Mrs. Ramsay as a caring mother who is worried about her children and their future. She wanted to protect them from all the bad memories which later on would trouble them. According to her own words:

For the first time in his life, Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; ... Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; felt by walking with a beautiful woman (Woolf, 1927, p. 52).

Charles Tinsley a guest at Ramsay family summer house, was an arrogant person and people did not like him because of his being a bit unsocial but Mrs. Ramsay was sympathetic towards him, she decided to give him company during evening walks. On the way back while they were talking about different things, he noticed that even at the age of fifty, she looked young and beautiful. However, she is the mother of eight children, and Charles Tansley feels proud of himself that he is going with a beautiful lady, and for the first time in his life, he feels pride in

himself. Virginia is trying to show us that Mrs. Ramsay was a beautiful lady and people loved her because of her beauty but she was also blessed with a very charming personality and an understandable mind resolving the problems of the people around her as in the text:

Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reason, she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike (Woolf, 1927, p. 40).

Mrs. Ramsay knew about the other sex (man) very well and being a Victorian lady, she acknowledged the dominance of men in the different walks of life and their contribution to the society in general. Some feminist women will not agree with Mrs. Ramsay's point of view on different grounds but definitely she wanted to bring peace and harmony in the circumstance she was facing in her family and neighbourhood keeping in view the demands of her time. In another place Lily describes the beautiful nature of Mrs. Ramsay as follows when she is long been dead:

One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with, [Lily] reflected. Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get around that one woman with, she thought. Among them, must be one that was stone blind to [Mrs. Ramsay's] beauty (Woolf, 1927, p. 317).

Lily was thinking about Mrs. Ramsay after her death, her personality has greatly influenced Lily because of her ideal characteristics. It was only Mrs. Ramsay who encouraged Lily in her work of painting. She thinks one cannot understand Mrs. Ramsay easily, for one needs deep insight and a penetrating mind to know about the aspects of Mrs. Ramsay's beautiful and kind nature. Lily was a firm friend of Mrs. Ramsay, and she knew very well about her. For this reason, Lily was making a portrait of Mrs. Ramsay and she was confused as to how to encompass the whole of her person in her painting. That is why Lily was trying to portray a perfect picture of Mrs. Ramsay and reflect in it everything she had felt about Mrs. Ramsay. Her beauty was everlasting even though having eight children. This reflects the multidimensional being of Mrs. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arm out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty (Woolf, 1927, p. 219).

In the *Time Passes* section of the novel, Mrs. Ramsay dies without any known cause of death, but Virginia Woolf hasn't killed her because of any anxiety or depression, through which she herself was passing for a long time. She gives Mrs. Ramsay an easy end because she does not want her to suffer the way she herself had suffered. She remained a dominant figure throughout

the novel even after her death, every character of the novel remembers her in a very positive way, and in the end, she becomes a sweet memory in the mind of everyone. Her absence is as stronger as her presence. The text portrays her presence as:

There was this expedition they were going to the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay, Cam, and James (Woolf, 1927, p. 240).

After ten years, Mr. Ramsay decided to visit the Lighthouse to fulfil the dream of his wife and his son James, who was now a grown-up child, even though he had forgotten about his childhood wish of visiting the Lighthouse. Mr. Ramsay is now a changed person totally different than he was when Mrs. Ramsay was alive. Now he has realized that human beings are emotional beings, and the role of emotions and passion is far greater than philosophical, mathematical, and scientific truths and facts. Indeed, it was because of the miraculous company of Mrs. Ramsay which changed, the outlook of Mr. Ramsay about life and the realities of life that little things, wishes, and small joys have got a lot of importance in our lives; while fulfilling the needs and wishes of others one gets to a high level of happiness and satisfaction. It was a lesson taught by Mrs. Ramsay whose life was based on the principles of sharing and caring as in the text:

Human relations were all like that, she thought, and the worst (if it had not been for Mr. Banks) were between men and women. Inevitably these were between men and women. Inevitably these were extremely insincere she thought (Woolf, 1927, p. 166).

Mrs. Ramsay is an exemplary character in her outer life. Still, her relationship with her husband was a little complicated in terms of understanding each other because their approaches to life were different. Mr. Ramsay is a man of philosophy, who spent his entire life reading books, on the other hand, Mrs. Ramsay is a person who believes in human emotions, feelings, etc. Their chemistry didn't match on several grounds, and it cannot be because human relationships are like this that one has to live with thousands of compromises, but Mrs. Ramsay's character is highly extraordinary; as she is a practical person had good interactions with people and she was living her life not only for herself but for all those who were in her community. While exploring the benevolent character of Mrs. Ramsay we came to know about the inner person of Virginia Woolf, in other words, Mrs. Ramsay is the fictional self of Woolf because Mrs. Ramsay is her brainchild but a perfect one concerning her challenges and circumstance. She is quite brave in this regard. Mrs. Ramsay at her best tries not to escape from her situations rather she is resolving them contrary to Woolf's actual life and affairs, where she, in the end, accepts her defeat by drowning herself in a river. She left us in a very tragic way because of the unbearable situations and ailments she had, but on the other hand, she left behind her, an evergreen fictional character of Mrs. Ramsay who will inspire people forever towards living life with the principles of sharing and caring.

6. Conclusion

The psychoanalysis of Mrs. Ramsay's character reveals the troubled mental condition and painful life of Virginia Woolf, as we see that Mrs. Ramsay too, had so many problems and challenges in her world. Still, her inner peace and calm personality enabled her to overcome her situation. She becomes the nucleus of her household and neighbourhood because she was always busy putting together all the broken pieces of life mean connecting and bringing people together to one another. Creating such a benevolent and prophetic character, we can make a view of Woolf's unconscious mind that she might have aspired to such tranquillity in her real life which she could not find and was so unavailable to her. The depiction of Mrs. Ramsay's character is a picture of universal motherhood and womanhood, revealing the inner mind of Virginia Woolf about what womanhood meant for her.

The contrast in the personalities of Woolf and her fictional character Mrs. Ramsay is so evident that at first, it appears to be a case of two different ladies but later on, one comes to know that Mrs. Ramsay is a piece of Woolf's mind, her dream lady and of course she might have fallen in love with this perfect creation of her minds which is nothing less than a true reflection of her own troubled and agonizing life.

The delineation of Mrs. Ramsay's character is true of Woolf's philosophy of fiction writing that life is not what we apparently see, instead, it is too much complicated and perplexing when we look into people's minds. Similarly, for her life is not what we do in our routine rather, it becomes heavy when we are lonely or when we talk to ourselves in our mind, and so many conflicting thoughts and bad experiences of the past can make it more miserable and in such, situations we always need someone like Mrs. Ramsay who despite all her challenging situations can create harmony and peace in the lives of those who surround her.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest(s) with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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