Chapter Three

Vision of the World in the Works of Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf is recalled as one of the major figures of modern literature. She is highly reckoned both for her innovative fiction techniques and for insightful contributions to literary criticism. In most of the novels, she tries to bring a vision of truth, reality and the role of women in society. The novels and her other works are well-known for their subjective explorations and they grab ordinary experience depicting the workings and perceptions of the human mind. Woolf did not want to skip life, which harvested with it its myriad impressions, its main centre containing the human soul or psyche, which she called consciousness. Woolf believes that the existing technique of the novel cannot express life or spirit, truth or reality. She feels that if novelist wants to portray and focus in the inner reality then he or she must hang on to the tradition. According to her, the mission of the novelist is to enshrine that spiritual life in art. Her main concern as an artist was to assimilate the reality as well as the convention. She believes that the novelist must “expose himself to life and yet be detached from it” (Varshney, Common Reader 40). Further she remarks with a vibrant image of Ernest Hemingway “the true writer stands close up to the bull and lets the horns – call them life, truth, reality, whatever you like – pass him close each time” (40).
The third chapter *Vision of the World* deals with Woolf’s unequalled vision for the world. She wants her readers to scrutinize the human life deeply. The American psychologist William James compares human mind to a constantly flowing river. He is of the opinion that thoughts go on passing through our mind and thoughts are not basically a chain of connected ideas as any idea may sprout at any time in one’s mind. A river flows only in one direction but our mind moves randomly both in the past and in the present. These things are pinned with our thoughts and thoughts give rise to vision. Therefore, they bloom and sparkle.

Woolf is the voice for the voiceless. She gets fascinated to reveal to the world the elusive nature of her story telling and the truth of life. She is often compared with James Joyce. Stream of Consciousness is a literary technique, which was pioneered by Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. Woolf is one of the greatest female authors of all time. She fashioned a body of writing which is respected worldwide. It is characterized by a flow of thoughts and images, which may not always emerge to have a coherent structure or cohesion. Woolf always experimented with stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue. Her works remark about her experiments with her psychological thoughts and her perception on time, which she does not forget to mention in every works. She clearly frames her views about the society, world, and gender as well her vision of the world. Like Keats, she loves beauty in all things. Her view of life is above and over the material and physical side of life. It revolves round the psyche, the soul, the consciousness of man. Shahnaz Hashmi claims, “To see life with the eyes of those who live it was the first desire that drove
Virginia Woolf to discard narration and comment altogether and to disappear from her novels” (112). She further reveals:

The disappearance of the writer from the scene and the absence of commentary cut down the element of curiosity and there is no place for a question like ‘what next?’ This allows the reader to live in the minds of the persons in the novel and to share their feelings and moods without the imposed guidance of the author. (112-13)

Hence, it can be said that it is on this foundation Woolf advances with her well-known ‘stream of consciousness’ technique. *To the Lighthouse* is a record of the anxious challenge of its men and women to catch and hold the present moment and make it perfect, eternal, worth living. An assured sum of talent, diligence, force and self-image is required for writing skill. Many writers are found to be complicated and competitive. Woolf was no exception. She was one among the other writers who broke new ground for modernism and feminism. She wanted to defy the traditional novel by experimenting with its formal features such as plot, characterization and technique together with a woman’s vision of life. Her novels dealing with her marvelous truth of life show her attempt to break away not only from the mainstream novelist tradition, but also to establish a new female-oriented literary tradition. She was always trying to get nearer to a vital phrase of life. Suzanne Bellamy’s regarding Woolf’s features claims:

When I first saw the Woolf persona, she stood absorbed at a huge easel-like circuit board, tipped at an angle like an architect’s bench. On both sides of her were hundreds of tiny objects in
containers and trays, exotic materials unknown to me, like jewels and unknown metals, tiny shapes . . . . I asked her whether she could tell me what her current work involved . . . . She was quite seriously courteous but not wanting to encourage silly questions or any gee-whiz responses, so I withdrew on the invitation to return . . . . (qtd. in Matz 598)

Woolf is primarily an innovator, experimenter, conscious of infinite possibilities, and ready to try anything. She has a weakness to discover life especially if the life was linked with women, the whole life that contains truth and reality, the central reality as well as the eternal reality. Woolf once said that “I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity” (Varshney, Mrs. Dalloway 81). Woolf’s vision quivers with the incessant activity of her acute and ironical observation. Her authoritative themes are life and death, time and the absolute, confusion and order, singleness and oneness. Instead of revealing events, she gives her readers subtle inlets into the consciousness of human beings. Woolf is always capable to perceive and to smile. She was fully conscious of the inadequacy of human relationships. She realized that human beings were living in isolation and the communication between them was partial and mostly unsatisfactory. Woolf constructs a new feminine world and makes her readers to have a vision of her characters who struggle to establish relationships with the people around them. The things required for satisfactory human relationship are love, sympathy, understanding, harmony, communication, emotional unity and activity. At times false hopes and dreams too prove to be a source of happiness.
Satisfactory human relationships are necessary for obtaining happiness in life.

Urmila Seshagiri regarding Woolf records:

> Her main aesthetic projects – developing a technique of free indirect discourse, rewriting patriarchal literary forms, pioneering new representations of time and space, and creating psychological realism – share a common goal: to draw (and redraw) human relationships by lifting the veils separating individuals. (59)

Woolf perceived that the union of hearts, emotional understanding and sympathy are strongly required for relationships between parents and children, husbands and wives. Julie Kane narrates that no one can avoid thinking about Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* – a character modeled on Woolf’s own late mother, Julia Stephen. Kane says, “She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband” (341). Alex Zwerdling spotlights the exchange of ideas between public and private voices was carried on in Woolf’s mind and in her works from the earliest stages of her career until the end of her life. The consciousness of “what other people say and think” was frequently exemplified by a monitory voice, like that of her mother. Woolf says that before she wrote *To the Lighthouse* her mother obsessed her. Woolf was able to listen to her voice, see her, and envisage “what she would do or say as I went about my day’s doings” (Real World 6). She realized that only after she wrote the novel she heard her mother’s voice no more. Until the end of her life, she heard such voices. In her last desperate letter to her sister, she wrote that she fears the return of madness “I am always hearing voices” (6).
Woolf bestows a vision of how in a family a mother supports her husband and her children. Father being a dominant character imposes his rules on the family. Such kind of persona is found in every family. Woolf highlights how in *To the Lighthouse* James hatred for the father increases to such a level that he even goes to the extent of thinking about stabbing his father. When his father tells him that the weather will not be fine for the expedition it is Mrs. Ramsay, his mother, warm-hearted and sympathetic, at once assures him that the wind might change and they might still be able to go on the expedition. The vision of a mother consoling her son is appealing to the eyes. Though she is not sure, though it is a lie it soothes her son and Woolf mentions this to show that such lies at times are essential for human happiness. Though her own life was packed with sorrows, she is bent on forming a perfect family in order to spread happiness. Woolf shows her as a good mother, a good wife, and a good hostess. Mrs. Ramsay tries to please everybody and forget her own sufferings. She feels that women should respect men but this is unacceptable according to Lily who is bent on fulfilling her goal as an artist. Annis Pratt opines that a number of critics identify Mrs. Ramsay as a prey of patriarchal oppression. Mary Kelsey claims that “Woman should be a kind of spiritual service station, where man may restock with the commodities of enthusiasm, ambition, and the sense of power . . . . In *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. Woolf describes how the service-station feels about it” (423-24).

After Mrs. Ramsay’s death her desire for completing her picture becomes more life-or-death. She wants to win Mrs. Ramsay. The steps where she used to sit were empty as she was gone forever. She quit the battle but Lily does not want
to leave the battle like a coward. She wants to fight the race of the living and the dead. Michaela Mudure says that

The culmination of the bond between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily is finding the balance and being able to put the right touch exactly there where it should be, namely in the middle of the painting. It is the epiphany created by this very special female bond that makes Lily have her vision: the vision of a balanced future between the two sexes. (65-66)

Mrs. Ramsay’s attachment with Minta is based upon Minta’s fulfilling relationship with Paul. This fruitful relation keeps Mrs. Ramsay in high spirits. It is “a happiness that goes beyond the immediacy of the events, it is the generous happiness that some women could go beyond the traditional patriarchal bonds” (66). Mrs. Ramsay is none other that Woolf’s own mother. As Shannon Forbes has rightly pointed out:

*To the Lighthouse* tend to focus on Woolf’s relationship with her mother and to link Mrs. Ramsay to Woolf’s own mother, Julia Stephen, whom Woolf described as an archetypal Angel in the House . . . . Julia Stephen died when Woolf was thirteen, but the memory of her mother as an Angel disturbed Woolf to the point that she heard Julia Stephen’s voice almost daily for thirty-two years after her death until ‘I wrote the book [*To the Lighthouse*] very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her.’ – Several years after the completion of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf
commented with regard to the role of the Angel in the House, that
‘If I had not killed her, she would have killed me – as a writer’
and critics, therefore, have tended to concentrate on Lily as the
artist and surrogate daughter of Mrs. Ramsay – ‘the adult Virginia
Woolf’ – who is able to realize her artistic capabilities only after
Mrs. Ramsay, the archetypal Angel in the House has died. (464)
Roger D. Lund mentions how Virginia Woolf writes in her diary of 14 May 1925
touching on her plans for To the Lighthouse. She pens:

This is going to be fairly short; to have father’s character
done complete in it; & mother’s; & St. Ives; & childhood . . . . But
the centre is father’s character, sitting in a boat, reciting We
perished, each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel. (75)
As the novel develops, some alterations were done in the original plans. Woolf
predicted that the depiction of the dying mackerel might personify her own fury;
it was an unsuitable symbol for her father, who detested witnessing fish killed.

Thus all images of piscatorial mayhem were transferred to
Macalister’s son . . . . Woolf’s mother moves to the center of the
novel, and critics have generally agreed that if anyone’s character
is ‘done complete’ in To the Lighthouse it is Julia’s and not Leslie
Stephen’s. (75)

Woolf assembles her novel in a rare artistic integrity. In her novels, there
are scenes and images, which are constructed in sense of rare emotional intensity
and vividness, but each scene and image is closely related to other scenes and
images. Woolf presents her thoughts and characters not as a photographer but as
an artist. Her picture of human mind is in close harmony with her aesthetic vision of life. “Her picture of life as a thing of beauty is enlivened all the time by little strokes of humour and observation . . . her unsleeping curiosity about everything great and small that comes within her live of vision” (Varshney, Mrs Dalloway 82). No one can deny the fact that Woolf is a strong feminist, as she knows the extension of life, the therapeutic power of time, custom as well as the demands made by life. Her novels are “composed of sequences, rather than consequences, of selected human experiences emotionally connected with each other, rather than events logically following each other, and leading to a climax and a catastrophe” (Tilak 36). Roberta Rubenstein inscribes:

A few weeks after *To the Light House* was published in May 1927, Woolf was distanced enough from her interval of melancholia to extend the affirmation to herself: ‘I think, often, I have the happiest of lives, in having discovered stability. Now one stable moment vanquishes chaos. But this I said in The Lighthouse’. (49)

Woolf shows Mrs. Ramsay belief in marriage and opines that all, the people on the earth should get married. Even after seeing the flaws in her own marriage, she is happy to live such a life. She never tries to argue with her husband. She is such a wonderful personality who in spite of her caged life tries to support her husband in public. Woolf says that Mrs. Ramsay can create moments of unity that remain intact in the memory, affecting one, as Lily Briscoe realized, “like a work of art”. Woolf is trying to portray the innocent and humble nature of women. Thus, she uses Mrs. Ramsay as a symbol of the reality. Lily
feels triumphant, as she does not equal to Mrs. Ramsay in her old-fashioned values. Though she is unmarried, she is very happy that she need not stick on with the commitment of being a wife to someone. She would not abide by the rules of any man. She can decide life for her own. Finally, when Lily finishes her painting the readers visualize that the painting matches her vision. Lily is deeply affected by Mr. Tansley’s words, this offense is deeply carved in her heart, and it rings in her ears. This urges her to win and prove that women can indeed paint. Lily Briscoe desires that she might produce “the kind of art that would stand in the future as a testimony to the creative powers of her maligned gender” (qtd. in Asher 52). Lily’s painting of Mrs. Ramsay was completed after ten years. She feels that women must struggle to achieve their goal though sometimes it may take years to obtain it but success is sure to come. Lily is guided by the sensitivity and intuition. It is a kind of hallmark of Woolf’s women.

Woolf demonstrates Mrs. Ramsay being a suppressive wife thinks highly of her husband. “She did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband” (To the Lighthouse 34). There is one scene where Mr. Ramsay returns and tells his wife he is a total failure. Mrs. Ramsay strokes his ego and gives him mental support to retain his position forever. Mrs. Ramsay not only cares for her husband but also for everyone around her. She is a very affectionate mother to her children and she always keeps on thinking about their happiness. Mrs. Ramsay feels that it is her sole duty to create loveliness and harmony. During a conversation between Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay tries to be good to her. He wished to tell her that he loves her a lot but his dominant character prevented him from saying pleasing words to his wife. Woolf believes
in perfection and finish and she keeps on tracing things for perfection. Daniel Albright claims, “Who am I? What am I? What is life? These are the incessant questions that form and disperse throughout Virginia Woolf’s work” (qtd. in Bloom 113). Mrs. Ramsay is one of Woolf’s most successful creations. Sally Minogue regarding the novel says:

> There is a human triumph in *To the Lighthouse*, too. In November 1926, in the process of ‘re-doing six pages of Lighthouse daily,’ Woolf writes in her diary about ‘my new vision of death; active, positive, like all the rest, exciting; & of great importance – as an experience’. While this may be another example of not doffing the cap to death . . . . Woolf turns death – her first experience of which was almost a killing blow, and which throughout her adult life dogged her with the possibility of self – extinction – into ‘an experience’ . . . . To Vita, in that same entry, she concedes that it is ‘The one experience I shall never describe’ . . . . (294)

In this novel, there is a vision of gender figures where men give prejudiced remarks and the protective tone towards men that Mrs. Ramsay takes. Mrs. Ramsay is held up as an ideal of womanhood. The conflict between “angel” and “new woman” arises from the fact that the angel role requires one to hand over her independence to men while the new woman role necessitates that one should secure independence. Lily assumes the role of new woman this is observed even by Mrs. Ramsay. “She was an independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it” (*To the Lighthouse* 15).
Mrs. Ramsay’s own daughters who have respect and honour for their mother’s way of life dream for an extraordinary life for them. They do not reveal their tastes openly to their mother. They have locked their dreams of an alternate lifestyle in their heart. Mrs. Ramsay acts ‘an angel’ to her daughters. She too does all the work instructed by the angel and therefore becomes a submissive kind of a woman. Though she lives with an angel the echo coming from her inner monologue shows that inwardly she is questioning male and female roles. Mrs. Ramsay is trapped with the angel’s instructions on one side whereas on the other side she is seen as having greater aspirations for her female daughters.

Her daughters – Prue, Nancy, Rose – could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other; for there was in all their minds a mute questioning of deference and chivalry, of the Bank of England and the Indian Empire, of ringed fingers and lace, though to them all there was something in this of the essence of beauty, which called out the manliness in their girlish hearts. (6)

W.Y. Tindall is of the view that Virginia Woolf was a novelist of distinction and an artist who, whatever her dependence on tradition, had something unique to utter and who surpassed most of her contemporaries in sensitive fidelity of the most evanescent movements of consciousness. Woolf through her novel To the Lighthouse explores brightness, stimulation, vision, truth and order through her two female characters Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Each woman perceives light in their living through different ways and each
woman has a vision. Mrs. Ramsay has a great vision for her children that her children would become a lawyer, a great beauty, a mathematician, a free soul. Lily’s vision restores balance both to her painting and to her life. With the help of her painting she takes every effort to answer the question “what does it mean? How do you explain it all?” (qtd. in Marsh 167). Many of Woolf’s characters pose the similar ultimate question about the meaning of life. Hence, one can take this as an expression of “Woolf’s own motive: writing novels is her means of exploration, searching for an answer to the age-old question: what is the meaning of life?” (167).

Joan Bennett throws her views on Woolf she says, “She perceived the variety of impressions made by one person upon the people around him . . . she invites us to discover it by living in the minds of her characters . . .” (qtd. in Tilak 128). Woolf makes her characters to live in the hearts of the readers even after their death. The readers are unable to give up their thoughts regarding Mrs. Ramsay. The union between Lily and Mrs. Ramsay is “so strong that it extends beyond death . . . at the end of the novel, will give Lily the power to finish her painting and put the final touch” (qtd. in Mudure 65). Woolf picks out her best personalities and spotlights on them. Thus, in this novel, she chooses Lily and through her painting, Woolf shows the vision of an emerging feminism. Her final vision has its full meaning in terms of life. Lily makes the preference to initiate her own artistic voice. Thus in the end, she decides that her vision depends on firmness and creation that is she comprehends how to bring together unequal things in harmony. In this respect, her mission epitomizes Woolf’s writing, which
combine the observations of her many characters to come to a balanced and truthful visual representation of the world.

Woolf compares her works with traditional English literature and she believes that the traditional novel of the 19th century was suitable no more, because of the changes of the society and of the man of her contemporary age. In 1920, Woolf developed her own vision of life and ego, which determined the formal choice of the interior monologue, the fluidification of the rigid realistic structure and the humanization of the characters, whose inner life could be more easily penetrated. Woolf in her novels gives the vision of simultaneous connections between the inner and the outer world, the past and the present, speech and silence. In order to make her readers know how to have a vision for her novels she explains the concept of looking at life. She says:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions-trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life . . . so that, if a writer was a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose . . . 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 consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may
display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?

(Mullik 18)

Woolf takes a lot of effort in polishing her thoughts and vision before screening her vision before the readers. She had been thinking about the character of Clarissa Dalloway for several years. *Mrs Dalloway* was an important point of Woolf’s career. It was the first novel in which she used her entire female experience, without any kind of inferiority complex. The readers are able to have a vision of each and every moment of life lived. The images Woolf uses establish her idea of true reality and reject a whole tradition of literature. In relation to this novel, Woolf by August 30, 1923 writes about her discovery. She claims: “How I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth” (Varshney, Mrs Dalloway 124).

*Mrs Dalloway* was published in 1925 and it depicts the incidents happened in the protagonist’s life in a single day. It also focusses on the other characters, which whirl in the story. The genre ‘novel’ has found its meaning as an art form in the hands of Woolf because this novel which centers around incidents that happened in a day is good in the formulation of plot, characterization, setting and eventually whatever is required for a novel. Woolf has adapted ‘stream of consciousness method’, which is so suitable to the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. The main character Clarissa is fifty years old. Her husband Richard Dalloway is a member of parliament and is soon to become a minister in the cabinet. Peter Walsh is Clarissa’s former suitor. Elizabeth is the daughter of Mrs. Dalloway and Richard Dalloway. Sally Seton was Clarissa’s close friend. Septimus is a soldier who was shellshocked by the incidents happened in the war
and has become mad out of shock. Lucrezia is the wife of Septimus. Sir William Bradshaw is the physician of Septimus. Dr. Holmes was the physician who was the consultant physician of Septimus.

The novel focusses on Mrs Dalloway’s having a life similar to that of Mrs. Ramsay and portrays the pathetic condition of Rezia. The readers experience the same vision when they see Clarissa unhappy with her present life but she manages to keep herself busy by arranging parties and bringing people together. In *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf magnifies her main consideration for Clarissa. She supplies the readers the vision of her heroine, Clarissa as stepping out into a London street to buy flowers for her party. The novel begins with her party and ends with her party with an emerging feminist, who is none other than her daughter Elizabeth. It is a novel with few events. The importance of these events depends upon their effect on the consciousness of the characters of the novel. The two stories of Clarissa and of Septimus run in parallel. Woolf depicts the story of the novel by moving back and forth and ends it up with the news of Septimus’s death. Thus, there is a connection between them based on the identification of experience.

Woolf is always eager to visualize the positive aspects of life. Her novels revolve around the psyche, the soul and the consciousness of human beings. In *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf shows a variety of people like homemaker, soldier, doctor and tutoress. Woolf polishes and creates a character named Bradshaw to show the quality of male in the society. He is a sort of dictatorship and a replica of Mr. Ramsay. People like Mr. Ramsay and Bradshaw still exist in the society. No one can change his or her character. Bradshaw fails to give proper importance to
the feelings and emotions in him as well as in others. Woolf points out William’s cruel nature towards a woman. After hearing, Rezia’s confession that her husband has threatened to kill himself decides that Septimus must go to a delightful mental home in the country and warns her that if she does not permit him to go, the law will take its own decision, for Septimus has already threatened to kill himself. He behaves rudely with a depressed woman.

Woolf not only focuses on feminism but also takes pain to unveil the cruel people like Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw. They lack the warmth of human relationship in life and to them man is just like a machine. Woolf portrays Rezia’s psychological torment because she is living a horrible life with her husband. Her words “I am alone; I am alone!” pierces the hearts of all women in the society. The way Septimus is told that nothing is wrong with him alludes to circumstances in Woolf’s life. Woolf suffered nervous breakdown like Septimus. The sounds which maddened Woolf in real life according to Alison Light is “the swish of a mop; tapping; knocking; a loudness when the front door opened; a voice repeating a message in the basement; the chink of silver on a tray” (qtd. in Hill 10). With her fragile mental state, she encountered many psychologists, most of whom did not know how to treat mental ill patients like Septimus’s doctors – William Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes. Often, they did more harm than good. Ban Wang mentions:

Crisis of identity not only is manifest in the characters of Mrs. Dalloway but also is part of Virginia Woolf’s personal experience. Numerous studies, biographical as well as theoretical, have traced the parallels between the schizophrenic symptoms of
Septimus Smith and the ‘bouts of madness’ that Virginia Woolf suffered, especially during the period of 1912-1913. Like Septimus Smith, Woolf also experienced an inability . . . was treated as a psychotic patient by neurologists and psychologists in psychiatric institutions . . . . It is also a critical consensus that Woolf, in creating Septimus Smith, gives a compelling artistic expression to her problems. (188)

Rezia is considered as one of the most moving, pathetic characters in modern fiction according to Bernard Blackstone. Lucrezia Warren Smith also known as Rezia is the daughter of a hat-maker of Milan in Italy. Rezia has a passion to enjoy life, to tour and visit England. Her life was changed after her marriage and is filled with a tragedy of frustrated love, desires and ambitions. In this novel, one is able to see Rezia’s dependence on Septimus. He literally makes her life miserable. Rezia is unable to come out of the commitment, which is tied with her through marriage. Rezia has become very weak. “Her wedding ring slipped – she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered – but she had nobody to tell” (Mrs Dalloway 27). She feels very lonely, as she has no one with her except Septimus. Woolf is trying to unveil the vision of a suffering wife who wanted a good life. Septimus had become as a stranger for her. “His wife was crying, and he felt nothing . . .” (100). Day by day, his strangeness increases. Woolf mentions some vision, which Septimus experienced, and later she too experienced it. Septimus tells that, “People were talking behind the bedroom walls . . . . He saw things too – he had seen an old woman’s head in the middle of a fern . . .” (74).
The vision of death for Clarissa was a state of unity, a triumph for visionary imagination over the destructive time. It frees her from the implications of her previous self-images. Mark Spilka does not find an effective fusion of the fright of death in Mrs. Woolf’s works. He takes that moment in Woolf’s childhood when she “laughed at the nurse who was crying at Mrs. Stephen’s deathbed and when, on a second visit to that deathbed, Virginia Woolf ‘saw’ a man sitting on the bed . . .” (Doner, Quarrel with Grieving 688). Woolf’s vision for death forced her to choose death as salvation. The image of Septimus was so deeply carved in her mind that she threw her life away in order to preserve which was most sacred to her—life and integrity of soul. Julia Kristeva asserts that “[o]nce the moorings of the word, the ego, the superego, begin to slip, life itself can’t hang on: death quietly moves in. Suicide without a cause . . . I think of Virginia Woolf” (Viola, Fluidity 289). Jacqueline E. M Latham says:

One aspect of the tantalizingly brief notes about Mrs. Dalloway in the Berg Collection notebooks concerns the relationship between the characters in the novel and their originals in life. In the note dated 9 November 1922 Virginia Woolf writes: ‘Septimus (?) must be seen by someone. His wife? She to be [bounded in S?] founded on L?’ . . . The use of the abbreviation suggests someone whom Virginia Woolf knew closely, and she uses ‘L’ for her husband in A Writer’s Diary. (The Manuscript 475-76)

Clarissa is shown less as a wife as she is in her own world of parties. Richard is busy with his political life. He eats lunch with Hugh Whitbread and
Mrs. Bruton, members of the high society. After lunch he returns with a bunch of flowers but when he comes home he is not able to say ‘I love you’ to his wife Clarissa because it is long since he has told such words to his wife. Clarissa has always felt this kind of void between herself and her husband. Clarissa is the representative of each woman who undergoes silent psychological trauma in every minute of her life. There is always a void or emptiness between a husband and wife. Soon after marriage even a hearty laughter is denied to a woman. Richard Dalloway who has time and mind to praise and to help Mrs. Bruton has not prepared his mind to say even ‘I love you’ to his wife Clarissa. The society expects a woman to be a good hostess to everyone. A woman is getting value only when she demands anything to herself. Even though all people around the woman traps her leg morally and places her in a critical situation ‘the woman should maintain her individuality’, Woolf stresses this. Simone de Beauvoir has meticulously scrutinized the allotment of historical and mythological labour. She says,

The man is typically the hero, the subject, the representative of humanity, the winner and conqueror, while the woman is mother, background, landscape, temptress, or goal. She is so much an outsider that she is not human. She is ‘other’; she is ‘natural’ or childlike or holy or evil, while the man is ‘man’ (humanity). (qtd. in Little 10)

Woolf looks upon time as a healer. Changes are sure to come. Time flows with the stream, having neither beginning nor end. Marina Mackay shows that even after so much of struggle in portraying women’s conditions and trying
to do something good for them the novelist, short-story writer, dramatist, and critic Angus Wilson is disgusted by Woolf. Wilson feels that Woolf fails “to extend her sympathies outside a narrow class range . . . ” (MacKay 103). Woolf believes in the eternal process and hence she demands a revolution in literary techniques and subject matter. She is sure that her novels will surely bring a change in the society. Woolf explores feminist issues as the necessity, or even desirability, of marriage for women and the difficulties for women in pursuing a career in the arts.

*Mrs Dalloway* is a complex and compelling modernist novel. The novel enters into the consciousness of the people and takes it as subjects, creating a powerful and psychologically authentic effect. Woolf’s feminism revisions the urban and human experience. Clarissa stares into her neighbour’s window and sees an old woman going to sleep. She felt it fascinating to watch people carrying on with their laughter and conversation in the drawing room whereas the old woman was going to bed alone. This made her to think about loneliness, which becomes a part of one’s life. The old woman had put out her light and the whole house became dark. Caroline Webb describes:

The old woman’s life remains her own, yet her separation reflects, and thereby in a sense creates, Clarissa’s own identity: the perception of individual difference becomes the ground for a more positive vision than was possible when Clarissa, rejecting the unmarried mother at Bourton, chose a life based on convention and stereotype . . . . Paradoxically, she affirms the party by refusing any longer to generate it with her own life . . . . They
must seek the individual Clarissa as she has chosen a life beyond her role. (285)

Woolf gives a vision of Clarissa a unique creation that is true to life. Clarissa is at times better than Mrs. Ramsay is because unlike Mrs. Ramsay Clarissa has the freedom to lead life according to her own notions even after marriage. She loves freedom more than love. Kenneth Ames says, “Clarissa defends herself from the cruel incoherence of life by an insistence upon order . . . the protective and ironic distance which she erects between herself and life . . .” (373-374). W. Y. Tindall comments:

Virginia Woolf was a novelist of distinction and an artist who, whatever her dependence upon tradition, had something original to say and who surpassed most of her contemporaries in sensitive fidelity to the most evanescent movements of consciousness. (Varshney, Mrs Dalloway 4)

Woolf always wanted to explore about life regarding how life is lived and how it can be rendered as it is actually lived without distortion. Therefore, she concentrates on inner reality and brings out the consciousness of her character. She wanted to depict the inner life of human beings. Richard Hughes in his Saturday Review of Literature, “A Day in London Life” reveals that “To the poet the visible world exists: it shines with an intense brilliance, not only to the eye but to the touch, ear, smell, inward vision . . . . In Mrs. Woolf’s new novel, Mrs Dalloway, the visible world exists with brilliance, a luminous clarity” (qtd. in. Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin 158). Woolf has always remained truthful to her vision and thus represents the feminization of the English novel. Every
thought, phrase and vision of Woolf’s writing has a distinct and analyzable purpose.

Woolf’s next portrayal of Sally Seton astonishes the readers with her merry, mischievous, bold and rash nature. “. . . the last person in the world one would have expected to marry a rich man and live in a large house near Manchester, the wild, the daring, the romantic Sally!” (Mrs Dalloway 80-81). She is a sort of feminist woman who used to work for the Suffrage Movement and is even described as a ‘radical’ by Peter Walsh. Through Peter Woolf unveils her personality. He says,

Sally Seton, like a child who has been in mischief, leaning forward, rather flushed, wanting to talk . . . an attractive creature, handsome, dark, with the reputation in those days of great daring, and he used to give her cigars, which she smoked in her bedroom, and she had either been engaged to somebody or quarrelled with her family . . . . (66-67)

Sally was devil-may-care type of robust, unconventional girl who was all the time living life to the fullest. She frequently quarreled with her parents and once she even went to the extent of running away her from home and stayed with Clarissa at Bourton. She sold her brooch in order to pay for the journey. She had unconventional views of many things and her values were those of a materialist. She had a daring spirit to think differently of her choice that it mattered little to her whether a woman becomes a mother after marriage or before her marriage. She gets married to a rich man, a millionaire and is a mother of five boys at Eton. Woolf has created her not only as impulsive and rash but equally an idealist. She
has zeal to reform. She would discuss with Clarissa for hours together as to how the world should be reformed. She wanted to form a society.

Woolf at this juncture conveys the vision of a liberal woman. When women get freedom, they too enjoy their life as men do. Nevertheless, this kind of life is not blessed for all. She realizes that without money and social status life is a bed of thorns. Peter Walsh finds her changed when he comes for Clarissa’s party. He thinks, “Lord, lord what a change had come over her! the softness of motherhood; its egotism too” (205). Woolf’s vision of life is that of an aesthete. She observes both the beauty and the ugliness of life. She depicts the real world with real people and real happenings around them. Time stands as Woolf’s greatest marker of life and living. Susan M. Squier narrates Woolf’s diary written in June 1923, which reveals:

I suppose, a very different element in us: my social side . . . is very genuine in me. Nor do I think it reprehensible. It is a piece of jewellery I inherit from my mother – a joy in laughter, something that is stimulated, not selfishly wholly or vainly . . . . (91)

Woolf was very much concerned with feminity and the differences between the women of the past and the women in the present. Woolf envisions an allegorical struggle between good and evil- between Clarissa Dalloway’s comic celebration of life and the tragic, death-dealing forces that drive Septimus Smith to suicide. Woolf feels that after marriage a woman must have some privacy some independence some freedom to accomplish her ideologies. In the novel, Woolf juxtaposed the sane and the insane through the characters Clarissa and
Septimus. Septimus leaped through the window and committed suicide to save his soul and Clarissa cannot do this. In this world, either one should die or become mad to achieve something has become the day today affair and this should be changed, according to Woolf. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman’s reveals a web of complicated symbiotic relationships connecting Woolf’s feminism, modernism, and self. She is a judicious critic of Woolf’s writings. In Woolf’s feminist essays, she finds that Woolf “creates the female tradition by writing about it and is created by it as she redefines herself in its image” (Ferebee, Invisible Presence 355).

*Night and Day* published in 1919 revolves around the women of various designations. The novel is stuffed with women’s feelings and thoughts. Woolf’s novel carries the tag of Victorian Era. Woolf highlights the courage of two women – Katharine Hilbery and Mary Datchet. Mary Datchet is focussed more than Katharine is as she comes out from the clutch of love and men. The protagonist occupies the central position. She appears as an knowledgeable, responsive and intelligent woman. Mary’s independent mind and her feminism are essential to her character. She is a valiant warrior in the struggle for women’s rights. She is given a key to a room of her own. The main vision of the story is to highlight women’s rights and their voyage of self-discovery. Woolf portrays that there are many facets for women to achieve in life rather than just getting married. To achieve in a patriarchal society is not a cup of tea for every woman. They have to increase their confidence level.

Katherine is a beautiful, free spirited girl in her late twenties living with her well to do knowledgeable parents on the infamous Cheyne Walk in Chelsea.
Woolf in order to make the lifestyle of Katherine more graspable introduces her mother, Mrs. Hilbery. She is the only child of England’s most cherished poet, and is much renowned by the great and worthy of the society. She spent her days writing a never-ending biography of her father with the aid of her daughter. “She was a remarkable-looking woman, well advanced in the sixties” (Night and Day 13). Her family ground is highly notable because “The Alardyces, the Hilberys, the Millingtons, and the Otways seem to prove that intellect is a possession which can be tossed from one member of a certain group to another . . .” (26). Katherine spent her childhood as well as her young stage in a home, which was filled with literature, ideas, intelligence, romance and reverence. The Alardyces had married and intermarried, and their offspring had a way of meeting regularly in each other’s houses for meals and family celebrations. Woolf says:

In times gone by, Mrs. Hilbery had known all the poets, all the novelists, all the beautiful women and distinguished men of her time . . . . She made her house a meeting-place for her own relations, to whom she would lament the passing of the great days of the nineteenth century. (27)

Katherine’s mother enthusiastically announced that, “With Katherine to help her, the biography would soon be published” (29). Katherine for sometime worked with a sense of great pride and achievement. Since childhood, she was put in charge of household affairs. Woolf in order to make the story a lively one introduces Mary Datchet, who used to dedicate offices off the strand. She used to lend rooms to the people who wished either to meet, for purposes of enjoyment, or to discuss art, or to reform the State. She imposed only one condition for
lending rooms that is she will take the responsibility for making all the arrangements. She was twenty-five years old. She looked older because “She earned, or intended to earn, her own living, and had already lost the look of the irresponsible spectator . . . . Her gestures seemed to have a certain purpose . . .” (36). Mary was a descent from respectable hard – working ancestors, who had been men of faith and integrity. As Mary was knitting, she was thinking of the various stages in her own life, which are responsible for her present position. “The culmination of successive miracles . . . and of her own determination to obtain education, and of her college life . . .” (37).

Ralph Denham is another character in the novel who is responsible for forcing Mary Datchet to change herself completely. The novel opens in the drawing room of the Hilberys. Ralph Denham arrives for a tea party arranged by the Hilberys. He is shown the artifacts and introduced to the famous poet Alardyce. He is an idealistic young lawyer writing articles for Katharine’s father’s periodical and falls in love with Katharine at the first sight. Nevertheless, Mary is also in love with him. It is a triangle love-story where the readers may be biting their nails as to know what will happen in the end, who wins whom. The story in progression highlights to an immense degree Mary Datchet’s daring spirit than that of Katharine. She is bold enough to face the reality. She gets upset in the beginning to see Ralph attached towards Katharine. During a country interlude at Christmas, Ralph realizes that Mary is admiring him. Mary invites Ralph to the village of Disham but was not sure whether Ralph Denham would accept and stay with them. Unexpectedly, two or three days before Christmas she receives a telegram from Ralph, asking her to take a room for him in the village.
Ralph finds her more independent of him than in London. Mary felt herself on the point of saying to Ralph: “I love you; I shall never love anybody else. Marry me or leave me; think what you like of me – I don’t care a straw” (184).

The novel takes the readers for examining the fate of Mary. She is on the verge of taking decision about her life with Ralph. Ralph proposes Mary to marry him. But Mary tells him openly that she could not do it. He asks “You couldn’t do it? . . . I don’t believe you, Mary. You’re not telling me the truth” (209). She is too tired to argue with Ralph. She tells him openly that “I ask you to believe what I say. I can’t marry you; I don’t want to marry you” (209). Ralph realizes how he had been unkind because he had been thinking of Katharine while he was with Mary. Mary being a bold lady accepts the truth. But she is hurt by Ralph’s behaviour because being attached with Katharine he had asked her to marry him and moreover he had no feeling for her in his heart. Woolf in the present context explains:

She could not blame him for loving Katharine, but that, when he loved another, he should ask her to marry him – that seemed to her the cruellest treachery. Their old friendship and its firm base upon indestructible qualities of character crumbled, and her whole part seemed foolish, herself weak and credulous . . . (210)

Mary was very much disturbed by this but she didn’t let it out. She manages it and somehow makes up her mind. One wrong step can mess up the entire rhythm. Woolf wants to reveal to the society that in spite of the interruptions in life women can manage every situation. After a bit of argument with him she sees herself in the suffrage office, delivering judgement, analyzing
right and wrong, and she finds some justice in charge, although it did not affect her main position. Happily and boldly, Mary Datchet resumes her life. Her suffering as an individual was left behind. She arrays a new plan in her mind. She was thinking of finding a solution to the question, which was going on in her mind. She reassessed his judgments with complete self-surrender and “with a sudden cleavage of spirit, she turned upon him and denounced him for his cruelty” (219). Mary takes an easy pleasure in the relief of abandonment. She realizes that such satisfaction comes only through findings, “having renounced everything that made life happy, easy, splendid, individual, there remained a hard reality, unimpaired by one’s personal adventures, remote as the stars . . .” (219-20). When Mrs. Seal inquires where she is going to get married Mary replies back asking “‘Why are you asking such absurd questions this afternoon?’ ‘Must we all get married?’ . . . ‘We have our work’” (220).

Mary happens to attain full independence in life after facing a humiliation in her love affair. She finally chooses singleness and self-dedication to a political cause. A great change has come into her life. The last part of the novel indicates the energetic skill of Mary. In the end of the novel when Ralph and Katharine walk through the streets they happen to pass through the street in which Mary lived. “That is the light in Mary’s room” (430). It shows that there is a triumph in her life which indicates freedom. A freedom, which will give her the authority to utilize her life, as she wants. Her life becomes a powerful one. Ralph who has now realized the power in Mary exclaims that as she with a spirit of woman within her she must be working out her plans far into the night “her plans for the good of a world that none of them were ever to know” (431). Here Woolf draws
the attention of women to show how Mary discovered her inner self and strength through self-realization and self-discovery. Steve Ellis comments, “This insistent figuration of light and lighting throughout the novel also applies to Mary Datchet, as in her moment of revelation about a future in socialist politics” (27).

Mary thus finds fulfillment in her work. Mary finds solace for women like her and those who are facing problems. Her active pleasure in “‘winding up the world’ is contrasted with the boredom and monotony that both William Rodney and Ralph Denham experience at work” (*Night and Day* xxv). Mary starts loving her work even after facing many hurdles in her life. Mary moves further taking her work as a privilege. Some of Woolf’s women characters are sometimes denied sincere love and affection but they liberate themselves from their traumatized psyche and appear as individual beings. They accomplish their identities through the aid of education and employment.

Woolf also highlights the theme of marriage in this novel. Mrs. Hilbery’s declares, “Marriage is a school. And you don’t get the prizes unless you go to school” (177). Aunt Charlotte believes that “it’s no good being married unless you submit to your husband” (177). Lady of Otway states, “I really don’t advise a woman who wants to have things her own way to get married” (177). Katherine merely wishes to induce her mother and her aunt to go on talking about marriage, for she was in search to know the truth about marriage and help her to come to a conclusion for her own marriage. Mrs. Hilbery exclaims that “we’ve all had perfect husbands”(178). According to Katherine’s mother, great men have had bad tempers. When Katherine listens to these conversations, she has some doubts that whether in the ordinary marriage, “Is it necessary to give way to one’s
husband?” (178). After few explanations, Lady of Otway says that most women make out by intuition whether they can submit themselves wholly to their husband or not. She further adds that if one is not ready for marriage they should not marry. For this, Mrs. Hilbery explains that “Oh, but marriage is the happiest life for a woman... ‘It’s the most interesting life’, she corrected herself” (179). Woolf gives us a vision of how due to the passage of time the views for marriage also changes. The new generations are not willing to follow the traditional roles of their parents.

Katherine is being engaged to William Rodney, a very eligible, achingly conventional would be poet in his late thirties. He believes that Katherine has all qualities of an ideal woman. She is a perfect example of womanhood and as an awesome ideal wife. He starts liking her. He starts imagining being desperately in love with her. Not only William, Ralph Denham too admires Katherine. There is a scene where Rodney and Katherine walk together on the Embankment at night. She gets disgusted by William’s behavior. He enquires her that whether her mother would object to his being seen with her. He inquires again with some concern “No one could possibly recognize us, could they?” (53). Katherine laughs at him and looks upon him as an odd person. Once she tells him that “I don’t know. Because you’re such a queer mixture, I think. You’re half poet and half old maid” (53). William gets irritated seeing Katherine’s attitude. He reflects,

Of all the unreasonable, inconsiderate creatures I’ve ever known, she’s the worst! he exclaimed to himself, striding back along the Embankment. ‘Heaven forbid that I should ever make a
fool of myself with her again. Why, I’d sooner marry the daughter of my landlady than Katherine Hilbery! She’d leave me not a moment’s peace – and she’d never understand me – never, never, never! (54)

William meets Ralph on the way and shares his views about Katherine and though he hates her attitude, he has a soft corner for her. He explains to Ralph that he does not have any bitterness against her, as he is sure that her attitude is not an inborn one. He says:

She lives, you know, one of those odious, self-centred lives – at least, I think them odious for a woman . . . . She has taste. She has sense. She can understand you when you talk to her. But she’s a woman, and there’s an end of it. (56)

As the story, moves on the readers are able to figure out Katherine altering her mind-set. It became sure that she was going against marriage. She diverts her thoughts from a typical Victorian life and tells Rodney her feelings openly. She discloses that, “I was wrong to get engaged to you. I shall never make you happy. I never loved you” (203). Katherine overcomes restraining forces and develops her individuality, enabling her to marry a man outside the conventions established by her family’s position. William Rodney is very much hurt when Katherine speaks about breaking her engagement with him. Here Woolf brings the vision of modern women who can be compared to Lily. William Rodney responds that “‘But you’re not a child – you’re not a woman of moods’. ‘You couldn’t have accepted me if you hadn’t loved me!’ ” (203).
William Rodney is unable to digest the fact that he is going to lose Katherine forever. He takes her arm and holds her hand firmly in his. Katherine realizes his superior strength and she does not have the force to oppose. She would submit, as her mother and her aunt and most women, perhaps, had submitted; and yet she knew that every moment of such submission to his strength was a second treachery to him. Katherine thus explains to him clearly with an open statement that she accepts that she was wrong when she said she would marry him. She again reveals to him that “‘for I don’t love you, William; you’ve noticed it; every one’s noticed it, why should we go on pretending? When I told you I loved you, I was wrong. I said what I knew to be untrue’” (204). The vision clearly focuses on the new generations Woolf clearly shows how at times women become bold and alert in order to save their future.

This novel is a very aspiring novel about men and women in search of freedom. Katherine neglects marriage because she wants to attain success in her life by giving importance to her own choice. She does not want to be bound to anyone else. Katherine is at the present moment afraid of two things –one is her sacrifices after marriage and secondly if she does not marry then she has to remain under the clutch of her parents which means no personal freedom. As a woman, she has to think in many ways. When compared to Mary she is somewhat an independent woman. Like Mary, she need not be afraid of such things because she takes her own decisions in life whether it is her relationship or about her career. Though she is in love with Ralph, she gradually starts realizing that her work is more important because it is only through her work she gets
satisfaction and happiness. She is such a brave woman that she is able to overcome her passion thinking her work is sufficient for her to survive in her life.

Woolf is expert in bringing out such bold decisions taken by a woman. However, it is an age of strict discipline for women. Woolf through novels alerts women to think of their position in life. She wishes women to choose a career because if a woman has talents she need not depend on any one as is shown through the character of Mary Datchet. Woolf has to be appreciated because she has taken risk to shape the lives of women during the Victorian age. It clearly exposes the fact that both men and women fear the society. Men fear of losing their status. They do not want to be inferior to women. Therefore, they keep on dominating them. Women are after guarding the name of their family. They do not want to bring a bad name to their family thus, they hide their talents. Both men and women are forced to behave in a way that is contrary to one’s desires and thereby try to satisfy the expectation of peers. The Night and Day is an apt title chosen by Woolf because everyone’s desires and talents lay buried deeply in their heart. Woolf wants women to bring their talents into the daylight. After the night comes the day, a crack of dawn which will brighten the women’s pathetic life. Mary no longer builds her castle in the air. She comes back from her dreams and imagination. She stands for the rights of women and exhibits her inner strength that destroys the pride of men in the gender-biased society. Thus, she asserts her independent self in a male dominated society. In every novel, the readers can find Woolf strongly believing in education. She considers education as a powerful weapon to defeat all the hurdles in life. She feels that education is an essential element for women to prove their “independent woman self” in a
male dominated society. In every novel, the women characters are found to be educated and self-reliant.

Woolf’s strongest example for an androgynous mind in her work is seen in *Orlando*. She tries to bring the vision of male traits and female traits in a human being explaining the problems one has to face in society because of the sex. Woolf defends the androgyny of human beings – the male and female aspects that coexist in every person. Woolf gives a vision of the problems and the experience of Orlando after becoming a woman. Being now a woman and having had the experience of being a man she realizes “with a start the penalties and privileges of her position”. It is natural that if born a woman then she had to sign up the contract of fulfilling the duties of a daughter, wife and mother until their deaths. Woolf shows men thinking of women as inferior to them and therefore they do not bother about the pain they undergo. Only after having the experience of the other sex they realize the sufferings of women. The readers get a vision of Orlando as a woman who suffers a lot but at the end, she realizes the slavery type of life and thus gears up her strong ambition of fulfilling her dream, which is none other than to completing her poem “The Oak tree”. Finally, she fulfills her dream. Woolf also succeeds in fulfilling her own dream of bringing out her character Orlando.

Orlando therefore concludes that being a woman is very complicated which means hard work. Orlando’s journey throughout the novel oscillates between a desire to die and a desire to live. Orlando experiences many highs and lows throughout the novel. He confronts the difficulties of reconciling past and present, the constraints of gender, and the demands of society. In *Orlando* Woolf
exposes the shallowness of social life and its restrictions. The novel gives a vision about marriage, children, and appropriate occupations for women. She learns the art of writing through nature and experience of her sex. The problem of being a woman arouses in Orlando and her thoughts are seen in the following words:

‘Lord’, she thought, when she had recovered from her start, stretching herself out at length under her awning, this is a pleasant, lazy way of life, to be sure. But, she thought, giving her legs a kick, these skirts are plaguey things to have about one’s heels . . . . Could I, however, leap overboard and swim in clothes like these? No! Therefore, I should have to trust to the protection of a bluejacket . . . . (Orlando 75-76)

Orlando thus realizes that being a woman is not a blessed life compared to the other sex. He remembers how being a male; he had enjoyed the pleasures with women and had never tried to understand the real nature of their lives. Now, he has realized and experienced it. Orlando seems to divert her attention to complete her poetry without thinking about her sex. “The distraction of sex, which hers was, and what it meant, subsided; she thought . . . the great lines of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton began booming and reverberating . . . .” (80). Orlando as a woman has many restrictions to follow. Woolf in the present context says:

Love, the poet has said, is woman’s whole existence. And if we look for a moment at Orlando writing at her table, we must admit that never was there a woman more fitted for that calling.
Surely, since she is a woman, and a beautiful woman, and a woman in the prime of life, she will soon give over this pretence of writing and thinking and being at least to think of a gamekeeper (and as long as she thinks of a man, nobody objects to a woman thinking). (132-33)

Woolf clearly brings into focus the image of a man and woman. Riviere argues: “gender is not a natural bodily attribute but, for women at least, a struggle and a performance produced to allay men’s fears that women will usurp their intellectual and sexual dominance . . .” (qtd in Hovey 396). Riviere conveys that women must combat to attain a proper heterosexual object, but she adds an emphasis on the societal and constructed facet of femininity, which consists in producing “the woman men want – that is a creature who could never be mistaken for masculine or lesbian” (396). Woolf points out Orlando’s nature as a man flirting with other girls. He enjoys his life with many young girls during the Elizabethan Era. He is not bothered about the discrimination also when it comes to adventures in love because he is a man. Since he is a man, he can bravely face anything under the sun. As a man he can violate the rules and chase his heart savor. Even after being in the position of Treasurer, Steward, and part of the order of the Gaiter he is not bothered about the class. He was young, he was rich, and he was handsome. No one could have been received with greater acclamation than he was. “It is certain indeed that many ladies were ready to show him their favours. The names of three at least were freely coupled with his in marriage – Clorinda, Favilla, Euphrosyne . . .” (Orlando 14).
Woolf is expert in creating female characters. Each woman character is designed differently and Woolf shows Orlando’s true character as a man. Clorinda was a sweet-mannered gentle woman. She could not bear the sight of blood and fainted at the sight of a roasted hare. She was trying to prevent Orlando from sinning and this created hatred in his heart. He drew back from the marriage. Favilla, daughter of a poor Somersetshire gentleman, is more enough to land her a place at the court. Her address in horsemanship, fine instep, and grace in dancing won the admiration of all. Orlando, who was a passionate lover of animals, finds her ordering a spaniel to be whipped and he thinks she is surely a sign of a perverse and cruel disposition in woman and that very night the engagement is broken forever. Euphrosyne who belonged to an old Irish family was a lover of animals. “She was never without a whippet or spaniel at her knee; fed them with white bread from her own plate; sang sweetly to the virginals . . .” (15). Lawyers on both sides planned for marriage and were busy drawing up all sorts of contracts when the Great Frost begins. As the story moves on Woolf introduces Sasha. She is the one who betrays Orlando. Orlando is incredibly attracted towards Sasha, and ignores his actual fiancé. He tells Sasha that he had never known love until he met her. When Sasha is first introduced, her extraordinary seductive figure, “whether boy’s or woman’s, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity” (17). Orlando calls Sasha an olive tree, an emerald and a fox, metaphors conveying elusiveness and carrying no signs of one gender or the other.
When the boy, for alas, a boy it must be – no woman could skate with such speed and vigour – swept almost on tiptoe past him, Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question . . . . She was not a handsbreadth off. She was a woman.

(17)

Orlando starts his plan by sketching how to escape from the clutch of the proposed marriage and marry Sasha. Later Orlando gets very compressed when Sasha goes away with a sailor. Woolf creates an unexpected twist as the novel moves on by the changing of the sex of Orlando. Later Orlando’s connection with the poets makes her witty. They changed her style and she too started writing, in fact, she wrote some very pleasant, witty verses and characters in prose. Orlando noticed their secrecy regarding women i.e., men’s mentality towards women. He finds Lord Chesterfield murmuring it to his son with a stern command to mystery. He says,

Women are but children of a larger growth . . . . A woman knows very well that, though a wit sends her his poems, praises her judgment, solicits her criticism, and drinks her tea, this by no means signifies that he respects her opinions, admires her understanding, or will refuse, though the rapier is denied him, to run her through the body with his pen. (105)

Woolf transports the vision to the readers saying that though men pretend as goody-goody before women they never desire anything good for the women. Orlando recollects how these witty men have extremely snobbish attitude towards
women. After strolling outside her garden, she meditates under a willow tree for a long time and when night approaches she goes into her house and leaves in the disguise of man. She takes a turn or two in front of the mirror to make sure that “her petticoats had not lost her the freedom of her legs, and then let herself secretly out of doors” (106). Orlando is engaged in cross-dressing all over the place in different costumes to have various adventures in London. She realizes that being a woman she can never enjoy the pleasures of life. Thus, she realizes that the only way to keep her life going and enjoy the freedom of a man. Orlando visualizes that leading a woman’s life is miserable. Nancy Cervetti says that the “Gender trouble is contagious in Orlando, a playful trouble that questions the possibility, the need, or the advantage of any stable notion of identity” (169).

Woolf shows that society fixes the rule about how to act with men and women. Orlando changes himself to fit himself in the society. Later Orlando is fed up by yielding himself to the rules of the society. Thus, she reaches her maturity, which makes her bold to resist conformity. Hence, in the twentieth century Orlando grows to be an independent woman. Orlando does not want to give up his feminine role. She decides to fight for her rights as she is fed up by changing her role in order to survive in such a society, which favours men. Here, Woolf suggests that society is too unchangeable with regard to the roles it forces men and women to play. Woolf requests the society to allow the genders more freedom in their actions and not to command rules to women thinking as inferior ones. Woolf makes women to think about the issues created for them by men. She shows how Orlando even after being grinded with various problems in
society spends his time in shaping his personality, as to attain a position in the society. Adam Parkes states:

Marriage and childbirth, traditionally climaxes of feminine experience in the English novel, become relatively unremarkable features on the landscape of Orlando’s journey through history, minor events offered cursorily for the reader’s delectation as mere curiosities of nineteenth-century society. Though finding Orlando ‘an absolutely enchanting book,’ Sackville-West, writing to her husband, faulted Woolf for ‘making Orlando 1) marry, 2) have a child’: ‘Marriage & motherhood would either modify or destroy Orlando, as a character: they do neither’. This emphasis on the importance of motherhood is not surprising, given Sackville-West’s maternal role in relation to Woolf – a role which both women acknowledged in writing about each other. (450)

The scene in chapter six shows Orlando’s gradual attempt trying to bring out his work. His inkpot, pen, and manuscript are seen on the table. It focusses that she has diverted her perception towards writing. She gets married to Shelmerdine and has doubts regarding marriage. She tries to find out answers to her doubts:

If one’s husband was always sailing around Cape Horn, was it marriage? If one liked him, was it marriage? If one liked other people, was it marriage? And finally, if one still wished, more than anything in the whole world, to write poetry, was it marriage? (Orlando 130)
Orlando is confused a lot regarding life. “She looked at the ring. She looked at the inkpot. Did she dare? No, she did not. But she must. No, she could not. What should she do then? Faint, if possible. But she had never felt better in her life” (130). Orlando recognizes the truth that she need not fight her age, nor surrender to it; she was of it, yet remained herself. Now, therefore, she could write, and write she did. “She wrote. She wrote. She wrote” (131). Writing is her passion and no one can stop her from fulfilling her goals. At the end of the novel, Woolf boosts up the courage in her female character. She gives the reader an image of Orlando completing her poem “The Oak Tree”. The poem becomes his foundation stone, which connects all his selves together. Poetry is an outlet for his feelings. He matures and becomes a woman who creates an identity for her. Orlando protects her poem as she protects her heart and mind. She was utterly afraid of criticism and rejection. The poem is an evidence of Orlando’s internal life. Like every writer, she also starts thinking about fame. She thinks as if her work has been printed in seven different editions and she has won many prizes. She keeps on thinking about her fame every time and it can be said as a natural thing in every human beings. Like Woolf, Orlando also faces many problems but she overcomes everything and completes her poem. She plans of burying the book but realizes that the dogs will dig it up. She says, “I bury this as a tribute”. She wants to give her poetry as a token of reverence to her land that has given her everything- a name, fame and position in the society. Victoria Smith opines:

*Orlando* was of such a personal nature that Woolf felt compelled to ask Sackville-West for permission to write about her.

Woolf writes to Sackville-West, /But listen; suppose Orlando turns
out to be Vita; and its [sic] all about you and the lusts of your flesh
and the lure of your mind. [. . .] Shall you mind? Say yes, or No’.

(59)

Smith furthermore exposes the fact:

Orlando is also a document that produces and overcome loss
. . . . Vita loses Violet, Virginia loses Vita, Vita loses Knole (her
ancestral home); a textual level – Orlando loses Sasha, Orlando
loses the male place of privilege; a cultural level – both Vita and
Virginia suffer through losses forced in part by the confines of
gender, heterosexuality, and marriage. Each of these losses,
however, is at least partially recovered through the writing of
Orlando. (63)

Judy Little’s comments that of all Woolf’s works her best analysis is Orlando,
with its androgynous central character. Orlando as an adult secured deterministic
primary socialization, while the rules of minor socialization have been
unavoidably shifted during each new historical era. Hence s/he is perpetually
“just outside of any congealed and solemn definition of what human society is, of
what sexes are, or of what a self is ; the possibility of evolution into a higher state
is left open” (qtd. in Garrigan 376).

Woolf presents Jacob’s Room in a simple way where the readers have a
vision of a young man – an ordinary man who dies in the world war. She presents
him gradually using an elegiac narration written in a murmuring elliptical style.

Jacob’s Room was the first book in which Woolf felt she had, “found out how to
begin to say something in my own voice” (Jacob’s Room iii). The surrounded
people, and the fleeting impressions he has made in minds of others visualize Jacob. It also describes about the places with which Jacob’s life is connected especially the places he had visited like Paris, Italy, Greece as well as England. Woolf presents the story of Jacob Flanders rather than a story about Jacob Flanders. Like other characters, Jacob too has a loving and caring relationship with his mother, Betty Flanders. Woolf begins the novel by introducing Betty as a widow. When a man who is presented as the head of the family disappears, the burden of looking after the children falls on the shoulders of a woman and thus life becomes a burden for the woman. The world knows the fact about how a widow has to struggle to make the two ends meet. Betty Flanders is the beginner of the novel. She penetrates into the heart of the readers as a mother who cares a lot for her children. Like Mrs. Ramsay she also becomes very close to the readers. The vision of a caring mother is clearly portrayed.

Mrs. Ramsay and Betty Flanders have the same role. However, Mrs. Ramsay has to fulfill the role of a wife too. They both seem to be a caring mother. There is a scene where Woolf brings the reader to visualize how a tender caring mother understands and supports her children. When Archer is unable to sleep Mrs. Flanders tells him to, “‘Think of the fairies.’ ‘Think of the lovely, lovely birds settling down on their nests. Now shut your eyes and see the old mother bird with a worm in her beak. Now turn and shut your eyes’” (5). The same vision is seen in *To the Lighthouse* when Cam is unable to sleep, as she is scared of the horns. Mrs. Ramsay lays her head almost flat on the pillow beside her and narrates a few things to her in order to put her to sleep. She says,

How lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it
was like a bird’s nest; it was like a beautiful mountain . . . her eyes were opening and shutting . . . still more monotonously, and more rhythmically . . . how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots . . . (To the Lighthouse 100)

In Jacob’s Room the oneness between the mother and the children and the uneasy balance between a woman and the society is focussed. If a husband is alive he tortures his wife if he is dead then the society takes up his role of dominating her.

True, there’s no harm in crying for one's husband, and the tomb-stone, though plain, was a solid piece of work, and on summer's days when the widow brought her boys to stand there one felt kindly towards her. Hats were raised higher than usual; wives tugged their husbands’ arms. Seabrook lay six foot beneath, dead these many years; enclosed in three shells; the crevices sealed with lead, so that, had earth and wood been glass, doubtless his very face lay visible beneath . . . (Jacob’s Room 8)

Woolf here highlights a strong feminist who fulfills her duty as a wife and remains loyal to her husband even after his death. When Betty hears the bell for service or funeral, she hears Seabrook's voice – the voice of the dead. The moment the bell sound is heard her son; Archer makes some comments and his sound at the same moment as the bell reflected, “Mixed life and death” inextricably and exhilaratingly. Betty Flanders portrays her husband to her son in order to form a good image of their father. She has inscribed “Merchant of this
city” on her husband tombstone. Her husband’s character and qualities were not up to the mark for the others and they still remembered some negative aspects of his who simply used to sit behind an office window for three months. Death and women have a link with each other as death brings silence in one's life-body the same way the position of women is to remain silence in the her body. However, this death is changed into life as Woolf gives life to death through her writings.

The novel also highlights moments, incidents, scraps of unfinished conversation, moods and landscapes from Jacob's childhood in Cornwall, his student days at Cambridge and then his truncated adult days in London. In every novel, Woolf describes London. Woolf gives the visualization of London with an authority because London was her living room where she always undertook serious conversations with friends as well as while they were outdoors. Woolf and many of her crafted characters walked and talked, sat and talked in the parks and squares that abound in London. She gossiped with John Maynard Keynes in Gordon Square Garden, with Clive Bell in the Green Park and with Aldous Huxley in Kew Gardens. Woolf takes the readers to meet her character Jacob Flanders discussing architecture and jurisprudence under a plane tree in Hyde Park. Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked war veteran, hallucinates as he sits on a bench in Regent's Park. Woolf is expert in creating characters having a link with London where all her incidents take place. In Jacob’s Room she explains London as follows:

The lamps of London uphold the dark as upon the points of burning bayonets. The yellow canopy sinks and swells over the great four-poster. Passengers in the mail-coaches running into
London in the eighteenth century looked through leafless branches and saw it flaring beneath them . . . . (74)

Woolf explains one more quality to show how women hide their own feelings. She says women get a sort of relaxation by writing in diaries and Woolf too used to do the same. Clara Durrant writes “‘I like Jacob Flanders.’ ‘He is so unworldly. He gives himself no airs, and one can say what one likes to him, though he’s frightening . . .’” (53). Woolf says that this is “a young woman’s language”. She wished the moment to continue forever. She hides her feeling for Jacob. Every woman has a different opinion for Jacob. Julia Eliot calls him “the silent young man”. Mrs. Durrant calls Jacob Flanders as “distinguished-looking” “Extremely awkward” “but so distinguished-looking”. Through this, a vision of how a person is viewed by other people is focussed. A man is described using good terms whereas this is not in the case of a woman. Any man as well as writers never appreciates her. Woolf has the talent of putting word into the mouth of her creation. She creates an image for her characters, which is analyzed by the readers. Captain Barfoot says:

Men and women are equally at fault. It seems that a profound, impartial, and absolutely just opinion of our fellow-creatures is utterly unknown. Either we are men, or we are women. Either we are cold, or we are sentimental. Either we are young or growing old. In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows . . . . (54)

Woolf portrays Florinda as a woman who is admired for her role at the
same time it is very pathetic to see her left alone with no one to care about. Her name had been bestowed upon her by a painter. He wanted to signify that the flower of her “maidenhood was still unplucked”. She was without a surname and her life is very pathetic because she did not get a chance to be a part in a family. She never enjoyed happiness in her life as a daughter to her parents because she had only the photograph of a tombstone, which indicates that her father lay buried. Sometime she would dwell upon the size of it, and there was a rumour that had her father died from the growth of his bones that nothing could stop. Her mother enjoyed the confidence of a Royal master. Florinda herself was a Princess, but chiefly when drunk. There is no one to direct her and explain the meaning of life, as her parents were dead. Woolf shows how a life becomes tragic for woman when she is a destitute. Woolf mentions that due to the lack of proper guidance and care, she possessed a different behaviour and this is seen when she spends the day wandering the streets. She stands at Chelsea watching the river swim past “opened her bag and powdered her cheeks in omnibuses; read love letters, propping them against the milk pot in the A.B.C. shop; detected glass in the sugar bowl . . . declared that young men stared at her . . .” (59).

Woolf strains herself to introduce her women characters because they are the most targeted ones. Woolf produces a vision of Betty writing a letter to her son. She narrates every thing as if she is sitting before him and talking to him. She writes everything in detail. She advises him not to go with bad women, to wear only thick shirts & finally tells him to come back home safe and sound. She shares every single matter with him. She finds solace by writing to her son. The condition of a woman after the death of her husband depends on her son for her
happiness. Woolf shows how women get solace through writing because they get a chance to pour out their feelings and are able to share everything. She focusses on how a mother’s love is carried to her son through a letter. Woolf presents a vision of how the letter reaches the hands of Florinda instead of her son and she lays it upon the hall table. She puts it on the table after kissing Jacob and Jacob seeing the hand, leaves it under the lamp, between the biscuit-tin and the tobacco-box. They shut the bedroom door behind them. Behind the door was the obscene thing. Woolf explains the fear of a mother if she happens to see such a character of her son. Woolf narrates:

My son, my son-such would be her cry, uttered to hide her vision of him stretched with Florinda, inexcusable, irrational, in a woman with three children living at Scarborough. And the fault lay with Florinda. Indeed, when the door opened and the couple came out, Mrs. Flanders would have flounced upon her . . . . (71)

Woolf presents a vision of how a mother’s feeling is left unnoticed. She has sent her feelings through the letter but it lies like an orphan. Susan Sellers comments that “The cry of the letter echoes her little son Archer’s cry on the beach at the opening. The empty apostrophe expresses simultaneously a general, and a specifically feminine, predicament” (44). Later he comes out of his room in his dressing gown, amiable, authoritative, and beautifully healthy and reads his mother’s letter. It is very pathetic to sense a mother's emotional state and a son's behaviour. A mother’s feeling is overlooked and Woolf says, “As for the beauty of women, it is like the light on the sea, never constant to a single wave. They all have it; they all lose it. Now she is dull and thick as bacon; now transparent as a
hanging glass” (*Jacob’s Room* 90). Woolf likes to give a variety of information regarding women. In *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf portrays the vision of a variety of women’s character in which some are pathetic, some are admirable and some are adorable.

Jacob has a view regarding women’s nature and he had some hidden facts. He strongly feels that “People wouldn’t understand a woman talking as she talks” (114). He says that there is something absolute in everyone, which despises qualification. This is generally teased and twisted by people in society. He personally feels that when people come together in a room they wear a mask and express their fake feelings saying, “So delighted to meet you” and that is a lie. For women are “always, always, always talking about what one feels, and if they say as one gets older, they mean you to reply with something quite off the point” (112).

Society never cares for the viewpoint of a woman or the problems she may be facing. In the patriarchal society she is just a plaything for men. Woolf conveys the chaotic complexity of human nature in the novel and life according to Woolf is evasive. An attempt to grasp life in its totality is impossible. In *Jacob’s Room* the readers come across the life of women in society. Woolf remains a landmark in the history of English literature with regard to her innovative style of writing. Woolf’s concern is to explore human personality with a target to attain a vision of life’s meaning. Woolf completes her first research with a new aspect and a new kind of conclusion. The news of Jacob’s death becomes unbearable in the end. Jacob at the beginning is visualized through his mother and brother. Woolf had tried a different method of narration in this novel.
All of the key external characters are women. The female characters represent the woman's larger role in society after the war. Woolf through one of her women characters in the novel brings a vision of their identity in the society. Women have the power to bear all pains by adjusting it as well as compromising with their life. Mrs. Duggan had lost everything in the world, her husband and child, but her faith remained. This kind of faith keeps them alive and their life keeps going. In the same way, Betty Flanders in the end picks up the courage to face her deceased son's room. She is considered a new woman in the readers mind.

Woolf roundly criticizes her society and even Jacob’s behaviour and treatment with women, especially the planned exclusion of women from a first-rate education. Woolf reveals about women attending service in Cambridge’s opulent King’s College Chapel. Jacob humiliates the women in King’s college comparing them with stray dogs would be because. He wonders why the chapel allows women to be involved in it. He perceives them “as ugly as sin”. He sees, “the way he wanders down an aisle, looking, lifting a paw, and approaching a pillar with a purpose that makes the blood run cold with horror . . . destroys the service completely” (22). Thomas C. Bettie points out that the holograph and typewritten versions of a chapter on a young woman attending austere Newnham while Jacob appearing at King’s indicate that “Woolf seriously considered sharpening the contrast between male and female university educations and male and female sensibilities” (527). Woolf as an artistic woman brings out the unique vision of the world through her narration. She tries to pierce through her knowledge for providing a solution to the women facing the problems in the marginalized world.
Woolf through the moth gives a moral that struggle should be the main aim in life. It is a sort of inspiration for all women. Struggle can make a woman independent and a changed being. She means to say that life’s cycle undergoes both happiness and sadness. Life is a vision of good days and bad days. Woolf tries her best by constructing a castle of hope, success and a world of dreams for women. Her words and works are the bricks that she systematically places for the construction of life. Woolf grinds both the inner world and the outer world. The inner world consists of passions, thoughts, feelings, intuitions, sensations, interests, sufferings, etc. The outer world consists of nature, society, devilish acts of people and a pinch of humanity. She takes the paste of the inner and outer world and garnishes it in the plate of spiritual world. Woolf has a great gift of visualizing life. She presents the truth. Her perception of life is different when compared to the other writers. She explains the brief life of a moth corresponding with the true nature of life and death. She wants to make her vision clear to her readers. Thus, she uses this tiny insect in such a role that represents life.

Woolf puts the life of a woman in the moth. The passage indicates the moth flying vigorously to “one corner of his compartment, and after waiting there a second, flew across to the other. What remained for him but to fly to a third corner and then to a fourth? That was all he could do . . .” (Death of the Moth 4). The vision Woolf gives regarding the enormous effort taken by the moth is none other than a woman trying her best to come out of the dreary life. She believes that only a strong determination in one's life can change the entire life. Woolf also mentions the feelings of some women who must have thought that they must have been born of the other sex who enjoys freedom to the fullest. Only female
are given the rules that has to be followed from the moment they step into the world. Woolf says about the life of the moth that “life might have been had he been born in any other shape” (5). Woolf keeps on focusing on the vision of the tremendous effort taken by the moth. “He was trying to resume his dancing, but seemed either so stiff or so awkward that he could only flutter to the bottom of the window-pane . . .” (5).

Women are chained by patriarchal rules and through slim opportunities in order to prove their intellectual capacities; women try to fly to liberate themselves. The vision created by Woolf are presented in such a way that it appeals to the eyes. The vision makes the reader realize that the essence of true life is energy i.e., strong determination. When Woolf says, “I could fancy that a thread of vital light became visible” (4). It shows that the insect though small contained sufficient amount of energy. The same energy is found in women too and thus through moth the stamina of women is exposed. The vision of the moth at first glance may appear as nothing more than a small thing. Nevertheless, when one tries to visualize it deeply one may see many possible deeper meanings. Woolf discovers life and shows not only the way to discover it but also the manner to discover it. Woolf presents two types of women one is a woman living in her own shell and is reluctant to come out. The other type of a woman is trying to break the shell and come out of it and struggling to create an image for them in the society. Women do possess intelligence, some are very sensitive whereas some wear a mask and bear all the sufferings without raising a word. Woolf feels that blessed are those who gather all their courage to make a difference in their life.
Woolf can be considered as a cultural icon as she has a gift of multiple personae. Woolf has the quality to motivate her readers. Her most distinguished work of art is *A Room of One’s Own*. It addresses the obstacles and prejudices encountered by women writers. It is a colossal suggestion for women’s independence in creative endeavors. *A Room of One’s Own* is a long essay, which has become a great classic of its kind and is often called the “Feminist Bible” that defends the position of women. The arguments that Woolf puts across in this essay are now increasingly relevant with the rise of feminism and therefore can be used in a critical analysis of any modern novel where women play a central role in both domestic and public affairs. From a purely examination point of view the feminist perspective is very important now. Woolf can be considered a champion of women’s rights. She wrote in such a way that promoted the need of women to have more freedom and more changes to earn their own income.

Woolf was a keen critic in her days, although her understanding of literature was likely unacknowledged by many a man in the first half of the twentieth century. This essay gives the readers a chance to identify the truth about women. Woolf presents the essay in a different way as if she is the guide and is explaining and providing information to tourists. It can also be assumed as if the reader is alongside her in her research, pondering her musings and wondering at her declarations. In this essay she gives a vision of woman’s place in literary history. She brings the condition of women by laying bare before us how women are treated in the society. For this, Woolf invents the character of Mary and explains to the readers to name her creation, which pleases them because her creation can be anyone in the society. The problems faced by her
character may or must have taken place in the society. Woolf has made her an average woman who was to represent the whole of all women. Woolf makes her character to encounter various situations through which she discovers her own divergence as a woman as well as alerts women in the society. The narrator Mary Beton is portrayed as a young woman living in the city named Oxbridge, which is close to a University.

The narrator is first seen sent off the lawn by a Beadle as he found her strolling around the grounds. The reason for his behaviour is that she is a woman and therefore she is not supposed to go there. Next, when she enters the library she again faces the problem because of her sex. She is not admitted and is asked to be accompanied by a Fellow of the college or need to have a letter of introduction. Woolf succeeds in creating her imaginable character. She wants her readers to get inspiration from Mary Beton. Woolf has created her character as young and unmarried. Woolf feels her that she is lucky enough to have a “room” and “money” of her own, namely the legacy of her aunt of five hundred pounds a year. She relied on an inheritance from her aunt because of only one reason that she shared her name. She assures women saying that a unique world can be created where they can speak highly of being born as a woman. A room and money will make her independent and will give her all possible freedom throughout her life. Lucio P. Ruotolo asserts, “‘Woolf’s evolving aesthetics encompass both existentialist and anarchist presumptions’ . . . is to be open to life . . . open to an aesthetic of disjunction situated at the heart of human interplay” (DeKoven, Interrupted Moment 275). Dorothy J. Hale gives an explanation of why women will be able to write better novels with a room of their
own and five hundred pounds a year. In a statement given by Woolf’s in *A Room of One’s Own*. She says,

> Women will have social power and material independence, their lives will have public significance and consequence. . . . their lives will be written down—in public registers, in biographies, in histories, in newspapers, and in literature. Material changes will also provide women with the privacy and leisure time needed for writing, relieving them from the women’s work that is never done, and unmooring the traditional patriarchic conceptions of the social roles available to women: wife, mother, daughter, spinster, prostitute, angel in the house. (567)

Josette Feral declares that being a woman is not enough. According to him it takes more than that to inscribe in the feminine form and to write in a diverse mode - an exposed fact which is daily corroborated by the abundance of effort taken by women to write on women’s issues, or dealing with women, letters, short stories and novels. Even when it is expressed in new forms of thought, new ways of verbal or printed word the writing often remains unchanged. Feral feels that women still lack the fresh trends of writing in their own forms therefore, they have to break traditional conversation. The present state of feminist criticism can decide which paths should be followed. Feral feels that the quest for this difference implies “the rejection of all normativity and an exploration of the possible orientations for a new kind of writing specific to women” (549). Luce Irigaray, a French feminist writer and critic, is paving the way for work in this direction.
Feral says that in the Women’s Experimental Theater trilogy women embark on the expedition of investigation in vagueness, as women without names, trying to seek out their identities in the enveloping shadows of their husbands and children. Only men have a name, while women remain in the shade of his name, in a pre-name/first-name limbo. First names of women, daughters, mothers, which fade away into the silence where “women have lost or rejected all social identity and are no longer anything more than a voice” (557). Many men in the present and most, if not all, in the past have considered themselves of obvious high caliber and as the undisputed dominant ruler over women. Yet in the midst of the 21st century, there came a radical change, which occurred merely within the last two centuries because from a homemaker they became a much stronger and independent sex. Through historical struggle women in the past faced persecution and insolence, thus they started fighting for small rights. This led to a social revolution thereby resulting in a drastic change in their life. Lack of freedom of speech, fight for the old customs and laws is holding many nations back socially and economically. Woolf challenges the patriarchal system that gives a man full freedom to select any livelihood as he desires, but often requires a woman to live her life in full support of his inventiveness instead of opting her own path.

Woolf was among the rare writers who have put their talents and ideologies into writings, particularly as a patron of equality to women. Considered as one of the founders of feminism, there were quite a number of literary works that showed Woolf’s passion for promoting feminism. She focusses much on how the society put little importance to the female gender. She
feels that through her works women can play a role both socially and politically. Her works have influenced feminism. Her novels, essays and articles had furthered the feminist movement. Her influence to feminism can be seen from her literary works. *A Room of One’s Own* and *Professions for Women* highlight the needs of women in the society and Woolf’s craftiness in molding the female gender in order to throw away the masquerade, which was forced by men. It also instructs them to take a strong role confidently. Christy L. Burns records that in *A Room of One’s Own* Woolf urges women to write, to give themselves a voice. She says:

> Woolf is still caught up in consideration of how one can constitute an identity (of one’s “own”) in a world determined by economic constraints and often degrading representations of women . . . women who have been excluded from the male literary tradition might both participate in and resist that tradition and the expectations of their unworthiness. (346)

Woolf has the talent for writing which gives rise to vision and makes it easier for readers and the society to understand. She has planted her great thoughts through her writings, which were one way of instantly disseminating information if one wants himself or herself to be taken notice of, and Woolf did it through the novels, articles and essays. Her works made her believable and admirable to people. Therefore, her talent in the art of writing became a means for her views to be heard including feminism, which has influenced many people. One cannot live by the past. One cannot foretell the future, all one can do is live today. So one might live life to the fullest with no regrets who knows there might actually be no
tomorrow. Sometimes funny sometimes-sad Woolf takes the reader on a roller coaster ride of human lives. She creates a vision by trying to answer many questions arousing in her mind. Woolf shares a passionate relationship with her words, themes and language. Woolf thinks that such things inspire her with thoughts and visions since life which shape our thoughts teaches one to struggle in order to attain something whether it’s a name, fame or position in the society as well as a family. She boosts the courage of women. Woolf brings out the issues and themes throughout her works. The age in which Woolf lived made her to take such themes and found expressions in her writings. The reader’s thoughts travel on thinking about the struggle to be free spiritually and physically within the restraints of society. This is true with the theme which Woolf has chosen to focus on the true life of women. It shows how one has to start that is, to take on one’s own personal identity. Anne Ferald reveals that in A Room of One’s Own

The world said with a guffaw, Write? What’s the good of your writing?, and in To the Lighthouse, Lily Briscoe continues to hear Charles Tansley’s ‘Women can’t paint, can’t write’. . . . Thus, in ‘Professions for Women’ Woolf does not kill the patriarchal father, but the Angel in the House, patriarchy’s image of what woman should be. One has to cease believing in sexist and racist axioms before rising to fight against them. (184)

Women should come forward to break the old tradition which our parents had followed in a patriarchal society. Woolf says that women must try to bring out their notions in their works and they must do work with excellence. Her main theme deals with women’s rights. In almost every direction she realized women
were not allowed to be independent. She sharply and desperately wanted the right for women to write of her own and if a woman wants to write she needs a room and before all this she needs education. The anguish she must have felt at not having that right must have tormented her. A woman must have enough independence to provide for herself and realize her dreams. Woolf was a very brave and strong woman and therefore she deserves respect and independence. She lends her literary skills to open the doors for all the voiceless women. Literature requires someone to listen and understand. Her work was more of an outcry to the unfairness, not just her own, but for all women. Women should have something of their own.

Woolf as a feminist not only talks of women but also talks about life in general. Life is equal to all humans, which one cannot differentiate. Woolf motivates women through her writings. She is expert in creating a vision in all her works. However, in some works, she brings the vision of death but in death, also she gives a vision of new life, a life that is free from all sufferings. She makes women realize that life should have a pinch of pain or else they will not struggle in their life in order to win the battle of life. If they achieve something after some struggle, it is a great joy. Life will be enjoyable. It is true that women have to follow their father’s instructions when they are young and later to their husband rules after given in marriage. They do not get a chance to have a vision of their own as is seen in the life of Shakespeare’s sister, Judith. Woolf never experienced such things in her life. She got everything she wanted. However, it was painful for her to see her fellow beings suffering. She too had mental traumas caused due to the death of her family members. She was like her characters
Septimus and Rachel had fearful visions. In order to keep her husband happy she even went to the extent of sacrificing her life. Vijay Kapur mentions that Woolf was in fact not the pragmatic portrayer of societal etiquette in a concrete world. She was, rather, “someone attempting to fuse the inner and the outer realities in a tight tension that would result in a work of art formed out of that tension, complete and whole in itself” (Doner, Vision of Life 686).

Like the moth, she too struggled a lot to overcome all the burdens of life. She struggled a lot to make her well-beings (women) know that they must come out and shine. She knows that life has chained them with lot of restrictions. They must break all the chains through their writings and make men know that they are also made of the same fiber as they are made. They are also humans they too have feelings and desire for their life. They also want to become a writer, a doctor, an architect. They must raise a question regarding why they are made to do the household work? Why they are not let free to decide their future? After all death is the end for all humans then why they are tortured to live a life like death before death. Why it is that men can write freely and they cannot? Why is that they are asked to remain voiceless. Like Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay there are many, other characters who sacrifice their own life for their soul mates. Hermione Lee related with Woolf’s life story says, “Well, admittedly, as a ‘life-story’ it is superb, magnificent, and therefore deserving of its place in every public and private library for all lovers of literature” (qtd. in Schenk 797).

Woolf wants the female not only to feel the vision of freedom in their life but also to experience it. However, for that women have to come out from their covered up self and stride out. They must march towards their goal as a whole.
Let their effort be a useful paradigm for other women too. Let the coming generation realize that they are on par with other sex. They will no more be tortured to remain as a slave to anyone. Like Lily, Katherine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, Eleanor and Elizabeth women should learn to think differently instead of following the traditional women who were used only for childbearing and working for men as non-paid servants. Woolf shows how a vision plays a part in one’s life. It can take the person to the past, present and future. Though man can put restrictions on women’s life, they cannot stop their vision. Thus, Lily's vision made her strong and bold to achieve her goal. Through vision, she alters her painting and finishes it. Randhir Pratap Singh feels that the societarian woman has, at last come to recognize that “the loss of feeling and communication has made the society hollow and hazardous” (28).

Woolf requests for independence and privacy for women through her novels. She wants the society to let them have liberty over marriage, reproduction and education. She argues for androgyny and a sameness of experience without discrimination of resources, etc. She has done justice by showing way for women. She is drawing the readers into the conversation, forcing them especially women to perceive what she perceives personally, recognize what she recognizes and make decisions. Woolf was among those novelists who broke away with their Naturalist forbears Bennet, Wells and Galsworthy. Woolf gives a justification of her own theory of novel in her essay ‘The Modern Novel’ in The Common Reader. She feels that the distinctive quality of the novelist is permanent interest in ‘character in itself’. She feels that Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy characters are not real. She gives a vision of real and ordinary people in order to make the
readers mingle with the characters. “Nevertheless, we go on perseveringly conscientiously constructing our two and thirty chapters after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds . . .” (Mullik 17).

Woolf has treasured in her mind the quotation of William James’s *Principles of Psychology*, which reveals, “Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the volume of the image, is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it” (18). Woolf’s assessment about life, death as well her struggle for women shows that she has a distinctive way of thinking and looking at life. In her vision of life as an eternal process, the concept of time and liberty invented by men has no meaning because the truth of life exists outside of them. Woolf views reality as the whole expanse of space and time, and every living form brings its historic and prehistoric past into the ever – flowing stream of life. The only thing that mattered was the inner life of her characters. Woolf pays close attention to petty details of daily life, and in this struggle, she tries to hunt for the truth. She looks for meaning in miniature things, which was overlooked by the novelists until the twentieth century. Woolf works reveals her interest in feminist issues as elaborated in this chapter. She gives the vision of the social position of women, the experience of the woman writer and the distribution of material possessions between the sexes. Phyllis Rose states that the chapters on *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* provide “greater understanding of the roles of Miss Kilman, Lily Briscoe, and Septimus Smith as surrogates for the author or foils in an unconscious psychological drama” (Magalaner, Woman of Letters 279).
Woolf’s brings the vision of the feminist concerns. She feels that the environment is traditionally hostile to women. Thus in her works she struggles to achieve an authentic voice and vision within a masculine cultural domain. She gives a vision of feminist themes in her works. Woolf gives a vision of how in the public work only limited chance was given to women. They were forced to linger to the marginal role of passive spectators. They were not let to be an active participator in its cultural pursuits. Woolf’s emotional breakdowns arose at least in part out of the conditions of women in her family and society and out of her own traumatic experiences of incest. Diana. L. Swanson claims that her symptoms can be re-counted as efforts to commune the story of her mistreatment as well as her resentment at the ill-treatment and the limited social roles offered to her. Swanson feels that Woolf’s writing constitutes her “determination to tell her own story and become a subject” (286).

Never was a book more feminine, more recklessly feminine than that of *Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. Woolf has used visions as imaginative concepts, and she perfected an original technique to express the order, which she apprehended within these impressions. Woolf has proved herself as an efficient artist. She shows that men dominate females and so women have started stepping out of the ambush individually. Thus in every novels Woolf shows the vision of an improved female personality. In every novel, there comes into sight a new feminist. Woolf’s novels, which mark her progress as an artist, are *To the Lighthouse, Mrs Dalloway* and *Jacob’s Room*. Her novels deal more and more essentially with the finest, the most elusive and profound kind of experience, trying to catch it in the flying moment, its perpetual
vanishing place. Woolf is expert in creating vision and the uniqueness of her thoughts shows that in some cases separation is self-evident; the union of all things, past and present can be seized only by a race act of the imagination. Harrison highlights “an engaging analysis of the ways in which, as Woolf said, ‘books continue each other’” (qtd. in Pingatore 418).

All her works have some connection with life, herself or her family members. Thus, she clearly gives us a vision of reality connected with them and she attacks other characters in order to bring out an aim inside women. She creates feminist not only feminist but a strong feminist. Woolf feels that only women can protect their status. Her originality lay in illuminating the introspective probing of her characters especially those who are struggling to discover order and meaning in their disordered worlds. Woolf in all her works has expressed the feelings of a woman who is suffering with a personal experience in a very personal way. Woolf explains every single moment through her personal perspective. Thus, her feminist vision of the society of that time was a groundbreaking work and in spite of being criticized, Woolf established her role as a strong feminist among the greatest of 20th century writers.