CHAPTER V

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

"Drown your eyes, drown your eyes"

In the Lighthouse p. 96.
For most readers of Virginia Woolf, no praise is too high for the delicate perfection and mastery of material in *To the Lighthouse*. That Virginia Woolf has been able to successfully steer clear of the dangers inherent in the treatment of such an obviously biographical material, every one agrees. Also *To the Lighthouse* makes use of a variety of symbols in such a complex fashion that the novel aspires to the condition of poetry. The irresistible Mrs Ramsay has, for, long been considered the controlling consciousness lending depth and profundity to the novel. Most critics regard *To the Lighthouse* as a perfect statement of feminine sensibility (as represented by Mrs Ramsay) which works by intuition, and whose magnetic force unifies people. Mr Ramsay's final journey to the lighthouse is a validation of the force that governs the lives after Mrs Ramsay's death. "What she had achieved in her life continues to fructify in the lives of her children, and in the mind and art of Lily Briscoe".¹ But with the


Vogler who emphasises the superiority of Mrs Ramsay
publication of Glenn Pederson's article,\(^2\) an opposite view has come to be held. According to this view Mrs Ramsey is domineering and selfish, and her power suffocating, forcing individuals into dependence. Lily's vision and Mr Ramsey's reaching the lighthouse are a vindication of the individual self against feminine domination. To then the final line on the canvas suggests Mr Ramsey's success in toppling Mrs Ramsey's matriarchy bringing about the integration of the family, and Lily's escape from the disintegration of her personality. In his article on Lily Briscoe's picture,\(^3\) Sharonwood Proudfoot supports this view by showing Lily over her husband is allured by the Madonna figure she conjures up, and considers her a pure and angelic soul. He even discovers her first name as Helen mistaking the second of the following passages of the text:

"No they haven't, and I've told Ellen to clear away tea", Cam tells Mrs Ramsey, (Mrs. Ramsey thinks): "But why after all should poor Augustus not ask for another plate of soup? He had merely touched Ellen's arm and said, "Ellen, please, another plate of soup, and Mr Ramsey scowled at that". (In the Lighthouse Penguin PB) pp 64, 110.

Evidently Ellen is the kitchen-maid. (Subsequent references to the text are identified by page numbers in parentheses)


\(^3\) Lilly Briscoe's painting: A key to personal relationships in 'To the Lighthouse', Criticism 13, 1 (Winter, 1971), 26-38.
as a post-impressionist painter, who reduces the figure of Mrs Ramsay to an object: "Mrs Ramsay has become like other objects". Apparently, a not altogether happy conclusion, unless it is a consoling thought for Lily. Mark Spilka finds in *To the Lighthouse* "an attempt to justify, to celebrate, to commend the love between this well-matched and ill-matched pair". He asks, "Are we supposed to choose marriages of passion and compassion? Not, surely, if they produce bullies of sexuality like Paul Rayley, on the one hand, bullies of sympathy like Mr Ramsay, on the other".5

The point is that patriarchal marital relations favour only marriages of passion and compassion, and provide no place for warm friendship and naked contact with things. It is the struggle between the obligations wedded status thrusts on Mr and Mrs Ramsay, and the urge for a marriage of true minds that is depicted in *To the Lighthouse*. No doubt Virginia Woolf shows that marriages of passion and compassion produce either bullies of sexuality or bullies of sympathy. But she does not recommend

4 Ibid., p. 38.

such marriages; she is not sentimental about them.

Though critic after critic seems to overlook certain aspects of the novel, still extraordinary insights into the novel, have been provided. Some of these interpretations could be used to arrive at a picture of the novel in terms of Mrs Woolf’s “Outsiders Society”.

In the novel, *To the Lighthouse*, a family and their friends are removed from London to the island of Skye where they can have contact with the real sea and the real sky. They are given solitude and friends so as to be outside themselves for a span of six hours, from 6<sup>o</sup> clock in the evening to 12<sup>o</sup> clock, and be above pecuniary anxieties and be free from prostration before another’s opinion and from unreal loyalties. They come very near to the realisation of their true selves and their inadequacies for a real contact with the other.

6 Nancy Topping Baxin observes, “In the novel as a whole the author abandons unity of time, but she tightens the unity of place”. *Virginia Woolf and the Amphora Vision* (New Brunswick, New Jersey; Rutgers University Press, 1973), p. 127. But the following facts prove she has not abandoned. Light and darkness, and watch note the passage of time:

... “and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as day light faded, and the blue went out of the sea” (Emphases mine) p. 75.

“It was September after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening” (p.24).

“He flicked his watch carelessly open. But it was only just past seven” (p.78)

“Here Mr Michael, who was reading Virgil blew at his candle. It was past midnight” (p.198).
The novel begins with the conflict, if it can be called so, between Mrs and Mr Ramsay. Mrs Ramsay tells James that is apparently a lie that they would go to the lighthouse if the weather next day was fine and Mr Ramsay declares curtly that the weather will not be fine, and they cannot go. Both the husband and wife are angry with each other. Mr Ramsay is angry that his wife is feeding her children with lies and expresses his anger with a 'Damn you' (p.38), while Mrs Ramsay simmers in silence.

To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency, that, without replying, dazed and blinded she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter, unrebuked (p.38).

The sense of outrage she feels in silence is not merely on account of her son's self being violated, as we discover in James's reaction to his father's words, but due to the hurt caused to herself. The seemingly trivial event ushers in a shower of innumerable atoms in the mind of Mrs Ramsay and the situation becomes a dramatisation of self's anxieties about itself and its concern for adequate human relationships. Hence Mrs Woolf asks us to
examine the ordinary mind on an ordinary day, its myriad impressions—the trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. The moment of importance comes not here but there.

Of all the people in the novel Mrs Ramsay mostly sees through the human intimacies, particularly the intimacy between husband and wife. She realises that they are illusory owing to the mutual affronts to self men resort to, and to herself because even as a woman, she is an accomplice to it. She desires to alter the false relationship between her husband and herself, false since she has been softening her husband's male-aggressiveness through her physical charms: "Then she looked in the glass and saw her hair grey, her cheek sunk, at fifty, she thought, possibly she might have managed things better—her husband". On one occasion she even makes a determined effort to express herself.

In section 12 of the first part 'The Window', she sends James to bed and feels "relief" since "she need not think of any body", and "could be herself, by herself". Like a mystic she thinks of her unburdened self, "a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; (p.71)". One may be
carried away by her illusory comforting thoughts if the parenthesis—"(She accomplished here something dexterously with her needles)—is ignored. She still thinks of her husband's affront to her feelings and of the ways to bring him round to a better understanding. In her thought-feeling matrix "children don't forget" figures as a motif. What they will not forget is "a refrigerator, moving machine, a gentleman in evening dress (p.73)". It has a reference to the immediate fact and Mrs Ramsay's mental state. The immediate fact is James's hatred for his father who thwarted the boy's wish to go to the Lighthouse. James remembers his father at the moment in terms of a refrigerator, a moving machine because when his father observed they should not go to the lighthouse James had been looking at the pictures of moving machine and refrigerator of the catalogue book. Mrs Ramsay is still ruffled with her husband's uncivilised behaviour, since the motif—"children don't forget"—resurfaces in her thought. She fears this relationship will continue and the world will end (p.74). The relationship which engenders hatred and jealousy in children too. But she recovers soon when she looks at "her stroke", the long stroke, of the lighthouse. She regrets instantly
that she uttered that they were in the hands of the Lord. "How could any Lord have made this world? She asked" (p.75). It is only people. She thinks like an outsider, not like an insider, blaming God for the conditions that obtain in the world. A hope of changing the nature of her relations with her husband shimmers. At this moment she is exquisitely happy and experiences the beauty of the real sea. Her happiness silvers "the rough waves a little intensely", and she is drawn to "the waves of pure lemon" curve, swell and break on the beach when the blue is going "out of the sea" at the passing of daylight (p.75-76). When the "exquisite happiness" fills her heart, she becomes active. She takes her shawl and, taking the arm of Mr. Ramsay, goes for a "friendly" jaunt in the garden. Incidentally, in Mrs. Woolf's novels, the desired gesture of friendship between man and woman is walking arm in arm, as against the traditional—holding each other in the arms and kissing. In her exquisite moment of communication with William Ranks who shares her motives and concerns in the picture she is working at, Lily has a feeling that she is walking down "not alone any more but arm-in-arm with somebody—the strangest feeling in the world, the
most exhilarating".

The walk and conversation of Mr and Mrs Ramsay looks on the surface a matter for comedy. A scratch on the surface reveals the predicament of two souls that are constrained from reaching out to the other, hedged in by the roles the societal obligations impose. By such 'scenes' Virginia Woolf leads us to look at the totality of experience where there is neither comedy, tragedy, nor beauty that Austens and Trollopes gave. Our minds are made to apprehend the damage done to human interaction and communication by social mores which bestow public sanction and private sanctity on concealment and conversion. We have to choose attitudes according to persons, and situations. We arrive at this understanding of the scene only when we bring upon the scene the impressions accumulated from the earlier and the latter parts of the novel.

Let us examine how the two souls languish. Mrs Ramsay walks now holding her husband's arm, but she would like to heave her heart out and speak of the fifty pounds she requires for her green house, and share her suffering with him. Mr Ramsay too would like to share his worries. He cannot do so either with his friend, William Bankes, whom he inspired with his atheism in
youth, or with Charles Tansley whom he inspires to
behave "obsequiously" (p.52). When Mr. Ramsay makes a
soul-searching analysis of his situation like an out-
sider, Lily suspects, "Teaching and preaching is beyond
human power" (p.43). This is his worry. He suffers
from teaching and preaching his professional obligation.
To speak in the words of the Fisherman's story, this
man's heart grows heavy; he would not go on in his
profession as it is not right, but he goes on (p.49).
He cannot say this is what he likes, this is what he is
(p.53). But he is a father of eight children and he has
no choice but to go on (p.52). He cannot break through
his professional role and preserve his true self invic-
table. He envies the botanist7. He looks with envy at
Banks's association with Lily and the ease with which
the two, the naturalist and the painter, can communicate.
He has no such companion. If he perceives, he can find
one in his wife who harbours similar thoughts about his
profession, and takes delight in gardening. As they
walk in the garden, an opportunity arises. She tells

7 We learn through Lily that Mr. Ramsay wanted a
child of his take up Botany: "Why don't some of you take
up Botany",... with all those legs and arms why doesn't
one of you.(p.228).
her husband that their son, Andrew, should not write dissertations. Andrew had better not grow if his lot were to write dissertations and seek scholarships. She cries in extreme disgust—"Oh Scholarships". But the poor Professor insists on Andrew's writing dissertations despite his dislike for them. The wife would like Andrew to become a mathematician for she knows its use since she maintains accounts.⁸ She would like her son to take up even painting, not a professorship. Walking with Charles Tansley earlier she saw a painter, in Panama hat and yellow boots, standing "seriously, softly, absorbedly". She notices an air of profound contentment on the painter's "round, red face" as he is gazing at the sea (p.16). Mr. Ramsay also looks at the sea, but fears it; it brings to his mind the thoughts of his profession and his reputation. He notices the island and the sea, but is unable to separate the thing from the idea. As a philosopher he sticks to the idea of the table, not the table. Andrew jokes, he imagines the table when it is not there (pp 27-28).

⁸"... and a note-book and pencil with which she wrote down in columns carefully ruled for the purpose wages and spendings... (p.12)".
The little island seems to him pathetically small, "half swallowed up in the sea". He leans on a consoling reflection that he has not damned the little universe; he has done a bit of good work—his eight children (p.80). He is obsessed with "my-life-and-my-world" attitude.

All this happens because his emotions are classified. His attitude to his wife is 'classified' as a hero's emotion paying tribute to beauty, and is protective. He is so inconsiderate that he cannot think of any other way to be intimate with his wife. On the other hand Mrs Ramsey desires to have a different relationship. She examines Bankes's "caring" for Lily. She is sure it is not "love". It is one of the "unclassified emotions" of which there are "many". She contemplates their marriage because they have so many things in common. For example (she enumerates one) Lily is "fond of flowers". Their's will be a marriage of true minds (p.120).

In fact Mrs Ramsey is very fond of flowers, but her husband does not share her interest. His understanding often astonishes her for he is "blind, deaf and dumb to the ordinary things... (p.81)". In the garden, as they walk, she even presses his arm to stop him as she would like "to stoop and see if fresh mole hills are
on the bank". When she looks at the Evening primroses, she looks up, and the "first pulse of full throbbing star" above the thin trees, fascinates her. She tries to draw her husband's attention to it for it gives her "keen pleasure". But she is afraid that he might remark, poor "little world", sighing (p.82).

Her attempt failing, she resorts to matchmaking. Her matchmaking is her spirit's attempt to change the unfortunate state of affairs prevailing between man and woman. Though her attempt looks trivial, it is an effort on the part of a woman as an outsider of the man-made conventional society to endeavour in her little way for the betterment of human relations. Significantly when she grows optimistic about her attempt, looking forward to future generations, she turns to the real sky and the real trees. Bernard in The Waves observes, "Some people go to priests; others to poetry; I to my friends, I to my own heart, I to seek among phrases and fragments something unbroken --"9. Mrs Ramsey turns to trees, the sea and children.

After the party she stands alone, and slowly comes out of the illusion that her party, her creative joy.

would make a memorable moment bringing people together:

She felt rather inclined just for a moment to stand still after all the shatter, and pick out... the thing that mattered... clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things, and so hold it before her, and bring it to the tribunal where... set the judge she had set up to decide... used the branches of elm trees outside to help her to stabilize her position... insensibly approving of the dignity of the tree's stillness, and now again of the superb upward rise (like the beak of a ship up a wave) of the elm branches as the wind raised them... and the stars themselves seemed to be shaking and darting light and trying to flash out between the edges of the leaves (emphases mine pp. 129-130).

She then gloats over her achievement—not the party—
but the bringing together of Paul and Minta:

Yes, that was done then, accomplished; and as with all things done, become solemn... and this, she thought, going upstairs, laughing, but affectionately, at the sofa on the landing (her mother's) at the rocking-chair (her father's)... All that would be revived again in the lives of Paul and Minta; 'the Rayleys'— she tried the new name over; and she felt, with her hand on the nursery door, that community of feeling with other people which emotion gives as if
the walls of partition had become so thin that practically (the feeling was one of relief and happiness ... (p.110-111 emphases mine)

To attribute a malicious motive to Mrs Ramsey words that she is scoring a victory over Minta is to misread her laughing. It is true that she felt jealous at dinner at the thought that Minta's glow had revived her husband's spirits, but the laughter here is affectionate. There are other reasons for her sense of fulfilment. Paul is not 'bookish'; he thinks that Vronsky is a good name for a villain, and he cannot remember in which book of Tolstoy he came across the name (p.124). Mrs Ramsey is fond of boobies like Paul. They do not bother her with dissertations (p.64). She feels that these very clever men with their dissertations miss sympathy and get dried up (p.115). She finds fulfilment in marrying Minta who ably managed Mr Ramsey at dinner to the booby, Paul, as if she wished that in future women should not suffer as she does at the hands of her husband and clever men.

Mrs Woolf wants her reader to have a trained literary sensibility. As such the names, 'Ramsey' and 'Rayley' may be examined in their etymological significance. In the passage quoted above, Mrs Ramsey turns over the new name 'Rayleys'. She has suffered at the
hands of Ramsay—the male sheep 'saying', and the female 'doing'. The word, 'Rayley's which she fondly
nominates on, means etymologically, "light in the open
country". It implies her urge for open air occupations,
and to open her heart in a dialogue with the male, instead
of being a dumb, listening companion. Hence Asurbach
rightly remarks in another context: "It is precisely the
random moment which is comparatively independent of the
controversial and unstable orders over which men fight
and despair; it passes unaffected by them, as daily life.
The more it is exploited, the more the elementary things
which our lives have in common come to light".10

Mrs Ramsey's vicarious consolation11 in matchmaking

10 Erich Asurbach, Mimesis, (Princeton, New Jersey;

11 Mark Spilka in his psycho-analytic speculation
on Lily's borrowed grief argues that the matchmaking
mania of Mrs Ramsey originates from the lack of passionate
love between Leslie Stephen and Julia Stephen. Julia had
passionate love with Herbert Duckworth, her first husband,
and unable to have it with Leslie Stephen. Mrs Ramsey is
jealous of Minta for "some quality" she herself has not,
suggests to Mark Spilka, a vicarious involvement in the
marriages as if she sought in these some missing component
in her marriage to the otherwise dried up Mr Ramsey—see
Mark Spilka, "On Lily Briscoe's Borrowed Grief, A psycho-
literary speculation", Criticism, Vol. 21, 1979, pp 5-33.

We do not propose to contradict him, but point
at a more fruitful speculation.
is elegiac. Such consolations have been posited by the women novelists. In *Wuthering Heights* for example, Emily Bronte shows the failure of elder Catherine in bringing together the gentle and the aggressive. But the novel ends with younger Catherine succeeding in the case of young Hareton whom she educates. Jane Austen seeks a similar consolation in the novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, by marrying Elizabeth to Darcy on Elizabeth's terms. The novel ends when Elizabeth waits for the time when she could bully Darcy.

After her secret sense of fulfilment, Mrs Ramsay, opening the nursery door, thinks that she must not speak aloud. As is the case in all the novels of Mrs Woolf, the reflection refers to the immediate action and the character's thoughts. Mrs Ramsay does not want to disturb the children, and equally would not speak aloud of her experiment with Paul and Minta. Women cannot speak out such ideas openly lest men should be provoked. The novel being a genre resembling a friend to friend talk, has provided women with an opportunity to give a freer vent to their feelings. But Mrs Ramsay, having no such outlet, attempts to bring about a change in married relationships to the advantage of women, carrying on what her mother's generation did. In the passage quoted we find that Mrs Ramsay touches her mother's "sofa" and her
father's "rocking chair". The women of her mother's generation had overcome the male aggressiveness by rocking it into sleep as they did with their children. In the earlier part of the novel when Mrs. Ramsay was thinking of her preference of boobies to clever men, she reads a passage from the story of the Fisherman and his wife, thinking of Minta and Paul:

"Next morning the wife awoke first, and it was just day break, and from her bed she saw the beautiful country lying before her. Her husband was still stretching himself..." (p. 65 emphasizes mine).

One could read her disgust at her relationship with her man. She would not like the husband keep to himself, but come out with her to experience the pleasures of the open country, a strong outsider urge for friendship and co-operative imagination.

Since she has such keen urge to be outside herself, she is aware of the perceptive powers of children, she recognises that they are adults in perception. When she looks up at Joseph and Mary (the names she has given to particular rocks that settle on a nearby tree), she rejoices in their "exquisite scimitar shapes". As the wings "beat out", she is very much pleased and asks her daughter, Rose, to look at them for Rose "would see it
clearly more than she could". In the company of children she always has the realisation that one's children
"so often give one's own perceptions a little thrust forwards (p.95)". But Mr Ramsey's constant absence
from home and stay in the dusty lecture rooms of the University has resulted in his alienation from his
children. As such, he has missed the opportunity to extend his perceptions by the little forward thrust
the children can give.

Hence Mrs Ramsey's quarrel with her husband with
which the novel opens. There she tells James that they
would go to lighthouse if it was fine next day. It
roused in James a sense of adventure, such an intense
arousal of his senses that his imagination animates even
the inanimate pictures of machine and mower in the
catalogue book. With keen empathy she finds in her son's
face an expression of will and strength to direct "a
stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public
affairs (p.6)". But his father's remark deflects his
attention from a sense of adventure to that of war. It
is true that feeding the wish of James with a conditional
assurance, may not be right as Mrs Ramsey herself admits.
But Mr Ramsey's reaching after fact is so irritable as
to make James think of taking an axe against his father.
The attitude of Mr Ramsay, in the name of truth, deeply hurts James, and the latter could overcome it only after ten years. Had James risen with the lark and found it raining (Nature thwarting his desire), he would have been certainly disappointed; but then his ire would have been against nature, not against his father. In reality Mr Ramsay's prognostication of the weather is a guess based on the facts collected by the finite intelligence of man. Hence, Agustus Carmichael fears Mrs Ramsay for her "masterfulness, her positiveness, something matter-of-fact...." (p.222).

Mr Ramsay is not inconsiderate altogether. His consideration for Mrs Ramsay's feelings shows him otherwise. He stamps his foot and swears at her for telling lies to James. But when he finds her hurt at his horrible outrage of human decency, he becomes "very" humble and says he would verify with the coastguards (p.38). His emotion goes linear. His anger and humility are very much like the inconsiderate smiting of the beak of brass. When realisation of the hurt he has caused comes to him, he is all sympathy. Such straight striking hurts deeply, though prompts at times profound reverence in the other (p.38). Hence Mrs Ramsay is not against the male inte-
lignance, the virile mind of her husband, but against its base like sharpness. As such she likes (with symbolic import) "putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape without knowing" why she does it (p.125). When Mr Ramsay hurts James or Mrs Ramsay he is like Thrasymachus of Plato's Republic. Mrs Ramsay's questioning attitude is Socratic. She asks by implication the king of the house to combine philosophy with a sense of 'meaner' understanding. James, in the cave of illusions, cannot understand the light of Mr Ramsay unless he experiences the light outside. Thwarting the inexperienced would engender hatred of high magnitude that would tear the philosopher to pieces.

This is the trying situation to which married people are driven if woman is relegated to the position of a housekeeper and a mother, and man, chooses to be the classified bread winner and protector of woman.

II

Despite the urge to reach out, Ramsay family and friends regret that they have been brought together. "Strife, divisions, differences of opinion (p.11)", isolate them. They are tortured by the private life,
"its nullity, its immorality, its servility", and tossed by the public world they helplessly carry with them, "its possessiveness, its jealousy, its puritanity..." 12

Ramsay's children hate Charles Tansley, "the sarcastic brute" who turns everything round to "reflect himself", and would disparage them (p.10). Charles Tansley, in turn, is bitter about the presence of women: "Women made civilisation impossible with all their 'charm', all their silliness" (p.99). A statement made out of envy since he has not the enticing youth of Paul. William Bankes repents for joining the family; it is "a terrible waste of time" for he "would have been free to work" (p.102) in his room had he not come. As Lily looks at Charles Tansley who is on pins and needles since unable to assert himself, she is painfully conscious of the "immoral" obligation of women to men, "to go to the help of the young man so that he may expose and relieve the thick bones, the ribs, of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself (p.105, emphases mine)".

Men and women quarrel with each other. Charles, representing the younger generation, shouts at the old:

12 Three Guineas (Penguin PB.), p. 86.
"You have wasted your lives. You are all of you wrong. Poor old fogies, you're hopelessly behind the times (p.109)". He declares, Scott is outdated, and Mr Ramsay who jealously guards Scott's reputation as if his life and career depended on it, frets and fusses at dinner. Lily, who has entered the world of men, as a painter, simmers with hatred for Charles Tansley and men since Charles Tansley sneers reiterating that women "can't paint" (p.105). Mrs Ramsay who envies the composure of Augustus Carmichael, observes that her husband is fretting and fussing, and thinks that "she cannot understand how she had felt any emotion or affection for him". She finds, nothing seemed to have "merged", and as she looks round, she perceives "no beauty" anywhere (p.96). William Bankes who sits by the side of Mrs Ramsay grieves that Mrs Ramsay's presence is "nothing to him, her beauty, meant nothing to him (p.102)".

Unless men and women feel beauty, the physical charm, they cannot be themselves and merge. So on one level, Mrs Ramsay's bringing together of Paul and Dinta, the handsome youth, and make them the centre at the dinner, is to pave way for this intimacy. Men feel "Dinta's glow" and women the youth of Paul. She even seats Dinta by
her husband though "for a moment she felt what she had never expected to feel again—jealousy. For he, her husband, felt it too—\textit{inta's glow} (p. 114)." Beauty is the 'glue' for this intimacy. The effort on the part of Mrs. Ramsay until and through the dinner to recover the sense of her beauty and its influence on the other sex which she helplessly finds as a means to bring round men to be friendly with her and with themselves, forms the pathetic and poetic part of the novel. She is a charming woman who once had her age of innocence and had a season of passion and vanity. Such a fine lady cannot give up her carriage. She is obliged occasionally to entertain her old friends at dinner. But something in her, in her most sensitive and thoughtful hours, upbraid her for the hollowness of her old airs and graces. It is really a sorry business, this perpetual presence of being important and charming, and charmed and beautiful. Perhaps it is this which impressed Leonard \textit{Woolf} to call the novel "a psychological poem".\textsuperscript{13}

Mr. Ramsay breaks and bullies her memories to get her sense of beauty renewed and her sovereignty over her husband and others, assured.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{A Writer's Diary}, p. 104.
The first memory voyage in Mrs Ramsay's mind occurs when Charles Tansley repeats after his master that they cannot go to the lighthouse (pp 7-18). She remembers how she sympathised with him by taking him along with her for a walk to town. Her sympathy is always associated with the sense of her beauty. Charles Tansley also remembers the walk and the sympathy shown by her. It is evident since that memory softens his voice in the small third section of 'The Window' (p.18).

Here Mrs Woolf depicts the inventory of the emotion of intimacy felt between the two sexes, which the poetic imagination of man weaves round the evanescent and elusive idea of beauty for which woman is a symbol. As certain rhythms in music arouse a sense of beauty, certain psychic urges of Charles Tansley terminate in ecstasy over Mrs Ramsay's beauty. It has no bearing on the object, Mrs Ramsay, a married woman of fifty with eight children. He is a subject; she is the queen. The queen walks with him, she listens to his voice. She seems to assure him of success and distinction, and he feels rewarded. He does not look at her, but looks at the man at the drain who "regards" (p.18) her, looking at her twice. That is how her queenliness is felt. The walk, the unburdening of
thoughts, the feeling that his professor’s wife has shared
his thoughts influence his senses so intensely that he
feels on his pulse the wind, the cyclamen and the violets.
Her figure, in the act of stepping through the fields of
flowers, rises before his mind’s eye. The whole movement
of the walking-event is filled with interrogatives which
are either sympathetic utterances or part-exclamations.
No imperative occurs since Mrs Ramsay, through her memory,
is escaping from the male world of ‘do this’ or ‘do that’.
The interrogatives are followed by statements. She walks;
she stops at the tennis lawn; she walks further; she stops
and looks at the circus poster. This stop-and-go-rhythms
of their walk move in the mind of Charles the pause-and-
go-movement of the poetic imagination. In the end Charles
Tansley’s mind writes a poem. Only, the prose lines should
be rewritten in the order of a poem:

With stars in her eyes
And violets in her hair,
With cyclamen and violets—
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Stepping through fields of flowers
And taking to her breast
Buds that had broken
And lambs that had fallen;
With the stars in her eyes
And the wind in her hair—
As a hiatus in this poetic gush (noted with dots above) comes the thought, "What nonsense was he thinking? She was fifty at least; she had eight children (pp 17-19)". But his imagination overshoots the fact.

Mrs Ramsey realises with pain that her hold on Charles Ramsay through her beauty proved to be of no avail, for he still harps on not going to the lighthouse. He only softens his voice, and that is all her physical charm has accomplished.

The sense of loss of her beauty and with it her sense of her life as ephemeral as a rainbow, worries her. The choice of the words 'ephemeral' and 'rainbow' (p.21) is intentional. Ephemera is "a genus of insects whose adult life is very short, may-fly". (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary). A woman's adult life is short without any soul-satisfying, meaningful activity. Mrs Ramsey, looking at her sunken cheek and streaks of grey hair in the looking glass, thought earlier that she "might have managed things better—her husband (p.9)." But, remembering her admirers ("People", friends of Mr Ramsay, particularly Bankes who looks at her now in rapture), she works up again in her memory an image of herself as a beauty with profound understanding of existence. This may be considered her second moment of being (pp 31-36).
Keeping in view what we observed earlier we may now explore the memory-excursion of Mrs Ramsay. She now takes up the reddish-brown stocking, to measure against the leg of her youngest child, James. She looks at William Bankes and Lily, assuring James they might go some day to the lighthouse, if not next morning. James fidgets purposely, "in his jealousy, not liking to serve as a measuring block (p. 31)", for the lighthouse boy's stocking. She wonders how her son, her 'cherished' child, is possessed with the 'demon' of it 'fearfully shabby'.

She contemplates the room, which her son, Andrew, calls their 'entrails', a simile that calls up the skeleton behind the outward flash and beauty of the body. Hence the room suggests to her 'fear' of decay. The room becomes a metaphor to her fading, bodily charm which she cannot bear. For consolation she indulges in thoughts of her consideration for children. Let the children spoil the rooms bringing the "beach" into them; Andrew, crabs; Jasper, seaweed; Rose, shells. Her children are gifted. They should have their way. She, then, looks at the books on the shelf, which have on the flyleaves admiring lines of dedication to her beauty: "For her whose wishes must be obeyed...", "The happier Helen of our days...".
She plunges again into the nostalgic sense of her beauty and the fear of its getting faded and grieves that "every door" is left open—the hall door, the drawing room door, the bedroom door even. Window on the landing is also open, but she herself does it. When she thinks of her 'homely homily' that the door should be shut and windows open she remembers then her going to the Swiss maid's room the other day. As she showed to Swiss maid how to make bed, the Swiss girl, standing at her window, remarked that the mountains at home were very beautiful, "Her father was dying there, Mrs. Ramsay knew. He was leaving them fatherless". Her sense of human mortality becomes sharp and acute.

Then the following passage brings to a focus the soul's slipping into conventional patterns of thought and formulations of feeling.

Never did anybody look so sad. Bitter and black, half-way down, in the darkness, in the shaft which ran from the sunlight to the depths, perhaps a tear formed; a tear fell; the waters swayed this way and that, received it, and were at rest. Never did anybody look so sad,

But was it nothing but looks? people said. What was there behind it—her beauty, her splendour?
Had he blown his brains out, they asked, had he
died the week before they were married—some other,
earlier lover, of whom rumours reached one? Or
was there nothing? nothing but an incomparable
beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing
to disturb? For easily though she might have said
at some moment of intimacy when stories of great
passion, of love foiled, of ambition thwarted came
her way how she too had known or felt or been
through it herself, she never spoke. She was silent
always. She knew then—she knew without having
learned. Her simplicity fathomed what clever people
falsified. Her singleness of mind made her drop
plumb like a stone, alight exact as a bird, gave
her, naturally, this swoop and fall of the spirit
upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained—
foolishly perhaps (p. 34).

Auerbach asks a few questions to find out who, should we
suppose, has spoken the passage. He concludes that it is
neither the author nor anybody within or without the race,
but the person speaking here, "whoever it is, acts the
part of one ... who looks at her face and renders the
impression received, but is doubtful of its proper
interpretation". He calls the unknown persons invisible
spirits, "nameless spirits capable of penetrating the

14 END Auerbach, 'The Brown Stocking', MINNESOTA,
(PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1974),
PP. 525-553.
depths of the human soul. But he adds, "No one is certain of anything here; it is all mere supposition, glances cast by one person upon another whose enigma he cannot solve. To call them 'invisible spirits' or to conclude that some person is looking at Mrs Ramsay is straying from the context and delinking this para from the earlier part of the passage in consideration. In this passage the central consciousness is Mrs Ramsay. She is trying to recover her sense of her beauty.

As the memory of Swiss maid's situation brings her to an awareness of decay of her beauty which is tantamount to death, she does not shed a tear, like the maid, but feels a tear in her soul. With her vital urge to overcome it, she tries to look at herself not as a beauty merely but a beauty who has also the beauty of the soul, that fathomed truth. She luxuriates in the strange gratification that is derived in perceiving the mortality of existence, making it an additional feather to cap her beauty. Already in her recollection she has visualised herself standing in the Swiss maid's room—the Swiss maid at the window, with a tear on her cheek. The girl's

15 Ibid., (pp. 331-332).
tear was for her father and the beautiful mountains at home: Mrs Ramsey's, owing to nostalgic sense of her beauty and sense of its transience. At first there is telescoping and transference, and then a transcendence, a physical posture unobtrusively merging with an emotional stasis.

This sort of awareness is an intensely felt inner need for Mrs Ramsey in the present situation. It supports her and gives a sense of security against the terror she faces in section 3 of 'The Window'. This 'impulse of terror' (p.20) is what Aurbach would call, the apprehension of the 'crue meaninglessness of life, which in fact, is the meaninglessness of her life. Hence in the passage, 'Never did anybody look so sad...' she enters into a mental attitude where there is a sense of pride in being 'unawarely aware' of her beauty via others' impressions, both of body and soul. It is not besides truth, as she is posing for a picture, that she wants those who will see her picture hereafter to say, 'Never did anybody look so sad...'

In the succeeding para in the passage under consideration we are still in the mind of Mrs Ramsey. She recollects, in this paragraph 'people' who said of her that she was sad because of frustration in love or she was
merely a beauty which she lived behind and could do nothing to disturb without any profound sense of existence. Through her inner process Mrs. Ramsey prides on her simplicity, her singleness of mind that made her plum the truth like a stone.

Of course, she is aware, that this awareness of her ability to fathom the truth "delighted, eased and sustained"—an outsider who sees through the unreal loyalties. But the outsider is also an insider. Her awareness of her so called simplicity, now sustains her, eases her since she gets over the irritation caused by the consciousness of ephemerality of her beauty and life. She at once softens towards James, and gets back to her attitude for the picture of Lily. In the words, "which delighted, eased, sustained falsely perhaps", one finds the predicament of Mrs. Ramsey's mind experiencing an emotion and being critical about it. She is aware of its illusory nature but since it braves her up, she succumbs to it.17

Hence the point here is that Mrs. Ramsey sustains herself feeling proud of her beauty of the body and soul.

and pushes her awareness of the ephemeral component back in order to impress others.

All this happens because Bankes looks at her in such rapture "at sight of Mrs Ramsay sitting with her son" which has "the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem" (p.156). In fact he recalls the impression she made on him when Mrs Ramsay was nineteen or twenty; the parenthesis that occurs after this passage quoted above indicates.

Now Mr Ramsay walks to the window. He quarrels with her for feeding children with lies and utters the harsh, "Damn you". Sensing her unhappiness at his words, he becomes very considerate. Her heart expands with ido-latrous passion for him. Mr Ramsay also feels great relief and his note changes. But James shows jealousy when Mr Ramsay comes again. Her mind revels in her capacity to manage the child and the father (pp 44-45). It is the next memory excursus. The facts in her imagination are the lap and the arms, and the fountain of spray. They are agents of the act of love and the act of feeding a child. As such she prides on her capacity to 'lubricate' the beak of brass of the male with the lubricant fountain of spray of domestic bliss, and the child, with the fountain of the milk of consideration. Mr Ramsay goes away
like a baby "filled with words". Relaxed in body and
in thought Mr Ramsey goes to witness the children playing.
She has achieved a sense of beauty that belongs to her
body; she is assured of the control she can have on her
husband's emotions. At this particular moment of being
Mrs Ramsey finds, in the experience imaginatively felt,
"the solace which two different notes, one high, one low,
struck together, seem to give each other as they combine"
It has a "resonance", "the rapture of successful creation".
It is a joy entire, "a pure joy of two notes standing
together". But a disagreeable note creeps into her consci-ous-
ness because she realises that she participated in
it with the motive to reduce her husband to the state of
a child by imposing her will through her bodily charm.
Still she is possessed with the "demon", as she terms the
desire to triumph over the male, when she calls out to
Augustus campbell who shuffles past the window—
Augustus who seems to resist her charms and sympathy.
Experience is never one thing. It is a composite of
several strands. But two things stand out here—the
conventional rhythms the soul turns to and the spiritual
harmony it seeks. Between the two the self chooses the
conventional which is irresistible being habitual and
a soul killing necessity in the context of social
relations. Showalter remarks elsewhere: "The free
flowing empathy of woman seeks its own ecstatic extinc-
tion. For Mrs Ramsey's death is a mode of self-assertion.
Refined to its essence abstracted from physicality and
anger denied by action, Mrs Woolf's vision of woman is
as deadly as it is disembodied. The ultimate room of
one's own is the grave.18 We would say it differently.
The subterfuge physicality and anger makes woman deadly
since woman, as it were, is 'despiritualised' in the
role she has to do for the society. For woman who is
trained in body for marriage and motherhood, her body
becomes less her spiritual sustenance, more a grave.

In all the three poems she makes, 'child' figures.
Charles Tansley imagines her as a goddess lifting up a
broken child to her breast. Bankes remembers her taking
a child to her breast in the garden. In the last instance
her husband is on par with her child.

This does not satisfy her. She sends her child
to bed, feels happy she could be alone and be herself.
She feels that her external life is pretentious as it

shows an appartment to others and it is simply chil-
dish (p.73). In the mystical poem she makes here, the
next moment of being, she gets a naked contact with the
sea, its lemon coloured gleam that silvers through her
ecstasy. She would like to seek intimacy with Mr. Ramsay,
that of a bride meeting her lover; to catch the thrill
a bride experiences. That is her unconscious wish.

The next short voyage into her being is when she
makes up her appearance for the party. Paul who is roused
by his adventure on the sea shore with Minta, looks at
her like a courtian awed by the queen.

So she must go down and begin dinner and wait.
And like some queen, who, finding her people
gathered in the hall, looks down upon them, and
descends among them, and acknowledges their
tributes silently, and accepts their devotion
and their prostration before her (Paul did not
move a muscle but looked straight before him
as she passed), she went down, and crossed the
hall and bowed her head very slightly, as if
she accepted what they could not say; their
tribute to her beauty (emphasizes mine p. 95).

Only at the end of the dinner she experiences fully the
bridal ecstasy when Augustus Carmichael recites the lines
of the song; 'Luriana, Lurilee', bowing to her. The
relevant part of the after dinner ritual is done with
a deft hand by the author, catching the subtle thought-
feeling matrix of Mrs Ramsey's ongrowing ecstasy, the
consummation she devoutly wished for.

She looked at the window in which the candle
flames burnt brighter now that the panes were
black, and looking at that outside the voices in
came to her very strangely, as if they were voices
at a service in a cathedral, for she did not
listen to the words. The sudden bursts of laugh-
ter and then one voice (Minta's) speaking alone,
reminded her of men and boys crying out the Latin
words of a service in some Roman Catholic cather-
dral.

... the words seemed to be spoken by her own
voice outside her self, saying quite easily and
naturally what had been in her mind the whole
evening while she said different things.
Augustus Carmichael had risen and, holding his
table napkin so that it looked like a long white
robe he stood chanting... and as she passed
him he turned slightly towards her repeating the
last words:

Luriana, Lurilee,
and bowed to her as if he did her homage. With-
out knowing why, she felt that he liked her
better than he had ever done before; and with a
feeling of relief and gratitude she returned his
bow and passed through the door which he had
open for her (pp 127-128)

Mrs Ramsey's mind recovers the past, her marriage
ceremony and the attendant emotion experienced on the occasion as a bride. As it is night, the window panes are dark; the window panes become the floor for the mind of Mrs Ramsey, as it were. They provide a black backdrop, black as the other memories have faded away completely. The flames in the hall burn brighter reflected on the panes. The voices in the hall come to her strangely; the emotion she felt on the occasion of her marriage is made more strange from a distance of years. She hears Minta's voice, the bride to be. Significantly the word, "Minta's", is enclosed in parenthesis. In her imagination she catches up her voice when she was a bride. The object of the imagination is Minta in the context, but the subject, Mrs Ramsey, is the real object for the emotion she experiences now. The past inheres the present. The boys and men who sing become the choir at the marriage service, a service that occurred long ago at her marriage. Carmichael becomes the priest partly. As he pays his tribute by bowing, a chivalrous tribute of gallant to a beauty; he becomes the one charmed, the lover of the bridegroom. Here is telescoping, transference and transcendence, as it is usual with her imagination. Carmichael has been denying the tribute to her since the first section of part I.
In that section, when she asks him if he requires tobacco, his hands "clasped themselves over his capacious paunch, his eyes blinked, as if he would have liked to reply kindly to these blandishments... (p.13)".

He has paid now his tribute to her beauty. All other incapacities disappear. Mrs Ramsey, the bride, now goes to her husband in his bedroom; Mr Ramsey, the bridegroom of her imagination. She sits near him; no more stitching of the stocking. She has on her mind the line, 'The China rose is all abloom and bussing with the honey bee'. Opening a book she reads here and there at random:

Mrs Ramsey raised her head and like a person in a light sleep seemed to say that if he wanted her to wake she would, she really would, but otherwise, might she go on sleeping, just a little longer, just a little longer? She was climbing up those branches, this way and that, laying hands on one flower and then another. Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose, she read, and so reading she was ascending, she felt, on to the top, on to the summit. How satisfying! How restful! All the odds and ends of the day stuck to this magnet; her mind felt swept, felt clean. And then there it was, suddenly entire shaped in her hands, beautiful and reasonable, clear and complete, the essence sucked out of life and held rounded here—the sonnet (p.139).
As Mr Ramsey is in bed reading Scott: "slowly it came into her head why it is then that one wants people to marry"? is it not to recover the ecstatic intimacy that prevails in the heart of the bride and bridegroom at one level?

Oddly Mr Ramsey is able to think that his wife is beautiful, and exhibits his fascination; he is 'watching' her. She is becoming conscious of him, but Mrs Ramsey is unable to say, that "she loved him", "he could say things - she never could. So naturally it was always he that said the things". He calls her, a heartless woman for she never tells that she loved him. Mrs Ramsey would like to protest that it is not so; "it is only that she never could say what she felt". She could not say because she sees through the emotion he felt for her. It is roused by "Minta and his book and its being the end of the day and their having quarrelled about going to the lighthouse (p.142)". This absence of intense feeling since she is critical about it, reveals her "jealousy of affection", not brooking unfaithfulness to her image. Mr Ramsey does not bother about the source of the arousal. He lives in its intensity so as to speak out and demonstrate it without any sense of guilt or shame. Hence he has an edge over his wife so far as feeling is concerned.
The analysis reveals what Mrs. Woolf attempts to show, the Madonna role women has to play to inspire, console and civilise men around her. Under this agonising burden woman cannot feel what she feels. Mrs. Ramsey holds the 'stocking' against the natural flow of feeling as it were, at the moment when she is beginning to feel intensely. She smiles, the Madonna smile, and turns away from it. She looks out of the window, "thinking to herself. Nothing on earth can equal this happiness." In fact her unequalled happiness is due to her feeling 'herself very beautiful' (emphasis mine), and her desire to remain a mystery to her husband who is left to 'guess' that she loves him. Her smile is pathetic for it exhibits the discomfort of a feeling that is checked. Elsewhere Mrs. Woolf says that it is "worse to be afraid of feeling than to feel too much." Mrs. Ramsey is afraid since she is habituated to be the angel of the house, and conscious of what men feel, not what she feels for him. Through out the analysis we have found that Mrs. Ramsey has been worried about her attractions. We may compare here Mrs. Bloom's

inner processes when she remembers her first love encounter with Mr Bloom:

... and then he asked me would I yes, to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going mad and yes I said I will yes.20

It seems women is so conditioned that she is made to rejoice more when man’s heart goes mad for her. So, perhaps, the novel is called an elegy.

Incidentally the following fact may be observed. Mr Bankes regrets, at the beginning, that friendliness was lost between him and Mr Ramsey:

like the body of a young man laid up in peat for a century withered fresh on his lips, was his friendship (p.25).

At the end of dinner Mr Ramsey’s friendliness is renewed:

... they were telling stories about someone they had both known at College (pp 126-127)

But they look back, not forward. It is only Augustus

and Mr Ramsey that feel intimacy. But at what cost?

While the elders so occupy themselves, the home they make dwindles into a miniature warfield of psychological skirmishes reflecting the larger world of public quarrels and combats. Like Mrs Ramsey woman looks for secret consolations and man indulges in morbid soliloquising. They indulge in sudden sentimental rapprochements which, for the time being bury the turbulent disposition within. For the children such 'home' becomes not a palace of pleasure, but a theatre where dramas of emotional blackmail and alienation are staged. Hence when Virginia Woolf envisages the theme of *To the Lighthouse*, she mentions "childhood." 21

III

Every new generation is up against the old. Greek myths celebrate the wars of the sons against fathers. The fight between the parents and children is owing to the complacency of the elders who continue to genuflect before their old gods even though they feel the need to overthrow them. Peter Welsh watches

21 *A Writer's Diary*, p. 80.
the boys in uniform marching up White Hall carrying
guns. He is thrilled by the "strict in step" march
and enamoured by their young faces. But he realises
a little sorrowfully that there is an expression on
their faces like the letters of a legend written round
the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity,
love of England. He would respect "the marble stars",
but cannot help laughing at it. When her daughter
chooses jewels for her solemnly, Mrs Ramsey lets her
do so, remembering her feeling for her own mother on
similar occasions. Yet she is painfully conscious that
what Rose feels is quite out of proportion to anything
she herself has. She knows that Rose will grow up and
suffer from deepest feelings (p. 94).

Secondly, the elders passively search for a
meaning of life. Lily Brescoe, who was working at the
picture of Mrs Ramsey in "The Window" part, takes it
up in the third part searching for the meaning of
existence with added vigour. The following statement
of hers is dramatically ironic: "What is the meaning
of life? ... That was all a simple question; that
tended to close in on one with years." (p. 183 emphases

22 Mrs Dalloway, p. 57
mine). Obviously, it tends to close in on one only with years when there is power failure. Mr Ramsay realised, after soul-searching analysis, in 'The Window', that his atheism which spared "no phantom", and luxuriated in "no vision", and stuck to facts was a disguise (p.52). But he thrust it on Janes. It became a point of clash between wife and husband. The clash alienated James from his father.

Ten years later, we find in the third part - 'The Lighthouse' he still clings to his atheism, but with a difference. He teaches James, not Cam, "we all perished each alone", and preaches to the two a sermon on patriarchal divisions:

\[ ... he liked men to work like that, and women to keep house, and sit beside sleeping children indoors, while men were drowned out there in a storm. So James could tell, so Cam could tell (they looked at each other), from his toss and his vigilance and the ring in his voice, the little things of Scottish accent... (p.187). \]

As a consequence James identifies himself with his father, leaving Cam with whom he had a compact to fight their father's tyranny. Believing "that loneliness which was for both of them (Mr Ramsay and himself) the truth about things", James absorbs his father's attitude.
The stark and naked lighthouse rouses in James "some obscure feeling about his own character"; obviously his father's character—his view—that he has absorbed. He feels that he has shared the knowledge with his father: "we are driving before a gale—we must sink (pp. 230-231)". Cam, on the other hand, falls a prey to the man-made identity of women. When Mr. Ramsey gives her bread, looks like a "great Spanish gentleman, handing a flower to a lady at a window (p. 233)". She has just then recollected the scenes in her father's study where men spoke of Napoleon and Christ (p. 235).

She too becomes short-sighted like her mother. She is unable to see the island that looks like a single leaf standing on end, whereas her father is able to (p. 238).

Besides, Mr. Ramsey is not alone. His children, Macalister, the fishermen's boy are there in the boat. James is not alone steering the boat as he is made to feel; Macalister's boy is there. The boat does not sink and Macalister's boy has a good share in steering the boat. The two young men have been alienated with Mr. Ramsey's philosophy of life's insurmountable loneliness, when it is with the cooperative action of the youth the boat moves forward to a safe destination. The
people of higher order do not live in the present, preoccupied with making meanings out of existence. Mr Ramsay and children, resist the leavening influence of the sea. While analysing Virginia Woolf's stylistic web, Hartman says that the theme of the novel is resistance. He quotes the following passage and analyses to validate his findings on the style of Mrs Woolf.  

The sails flapped over their heads. The water chuckled and slapped the sides of the boat, which drowsed motionless in the sun. Now and then the sails rippled with a little breeze in them, but the ripple ran over them and ceased (p. 186).

We may consider the passage from the thematic angle. Being conscious of their father's tyranny Cam and James are putting up resistance. Unfortunately they are resisting equally the chuckle of the water and enlivening slap of the waves. Since they are insiders, burning with hatred for their father they are resisting the 'real sea' and wind. They are drowned in the 'false sea'. The lighthouse, a symbol of man's achievement, is indeed a poor substitute for the expansive

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vision of the universe. It is only a housed-light or 'gig lamp' that cannot hold out in the sunny light of the day. This seems to be the import of it all when we recall the reaction of the matter-of-fact Mrs Ramsay to the lighthouse earlier. "For the great plateful of blue water was before her; the **hoary Lighthouse**, distant, austere, in the midst; (p.16 emphases mine)". 'Hoary Lighthouse' reminds us of Jacob's 'old shoes'.

In 'the Window' part of the novel Mrs Ramsay grieves over the questioning and ridiculing attitude of her children towards elders. She regrets that the "Strife, divisions, difference of opinion" twist the very "fibre" of their being (p.11). She wishes that "they" might find a "way out" of it all so that there might be" a simpler way, some less laborious way (p.8)" obviously, linking the past and the present, the old and the new.

iv

Lily, at the end of the part named, "The Lighthouse", declares that she has had her vision. In fact what she has had, is only wish fulfilment. The old maid falls back on the adoration of "the beak
of brass” and “the arid scimitar”. She becomes an insider leaning on the conventional attitude in man and woman relationship. Further, in giving sympathy to Mr Ramsay, is she not submitting to male inconsiderateness for which Mr Ramsay, stands?

Her moments of being are set off with hatred for the male when Mr Ramsay approaches demanding sympathy. Mr Ramsay looks at her. He remembers that his wife wanted Lily to marry Bankes. It is a sympathy that is urged owing to disobedience of his children that leads to a sense of insecurity in Mr Ramsay. When he approaches Lily, for sympathy, the spinster finds it (Mrs Woolf describes) pouring round her skirt and she feels like folding her skirt so as not to be drenched by it(p.173). She feels a thrust to sympathise, but, being a spinster, she fears. She heaves her heart out only to observe the nicety of the professor’s boots, conscious of her insincerity at the same. That remark relieves, Mr Ramsay and he becomes “Ramsay”. He expatiates on his boots which he got made specially. His lecture ends in unleding and lacing her boots three times. The seventy one year old man gets what he wants—the feminine touch—and vocal outlet. Like a child ‘filled’, he goes with his
children for a venture on the boat. But as he goes out the old maid is left with a longing to give.

Quickened physically by the touch, taking the brush in her hand, she recalls her moments of being in the past. She daubs the canvas with the strokes of blue and brown; brown stands for domestic bliss if we recall the brown stocking episode and blue, for detachment. Her mind is torn between the two. The memories of the past stream out. First, the memory of Charles Tansley and herself playing ducks and drakes, on the sea shore under the surveillance of Mrs Ramsay. It is a moment of friendship with a man. She feels grateful to Mrs Ramsay. But Charles Tansley is a male with a back of brass and so she grows self-conscious, jealous of her independence, of her detachment. As if to score over Mrs Ramsay, she recollects the consequences of the marriage of Paul and Minta which Mrs Ramsay initiated ten years before. Lily saw Paul and Minta twice. When she met them for the first time, she found them bitterly quarrelling. Paul stood with a poker in his hand, swearing at Minta for letting the moles spoil the garden. He complained that Minta had come home at three the previous day morning. Minta put her hand on
the booby lest he should speak of their quarrels to Lily. Next time when Lily met, she saw Minta handing tools to Paul as their car broke down. They were friendly. Minta confided to Lily that Paul had 'taken up' with another woman with hair in a plait and a case in hand. Minta described the woman "gratefully, most admiringly". That serious woman had Paul's views, Minta added. She told Lily that far from breaking their marriage, the attachment "righted it". They were "excellent friends" now. Lily glosses that the marriage is a failure and laughs at Mrs Ramsay's initiative, recalling the efforts of Mrs Ramsay in the long past to bring Paul and Minta together (pp. 197-198). But, in fact, it has turned out to be a successful marriage as desired by Mrs Ramsay if we remember how Mrs Ramsay controlled Mr Ramsay's temper at dinner by seating Minta by his side. Minta managed to be friendly with Paul. Ironically, Lily remembers here Paul and how she wished to help him in finding Minta's brooch. At that memory—"a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind (p.199)". Mrs Woolf narrates that memory in parenthesis. Red is the symbol of passionate love, Lily feels the urge for the idolatrous romantic
But Lily feels at the conscious level, relief at the thought that she escaped from being the victim of Mrs Ramsey. She, then, reflects on her friendship with Bankes. Again she is drawn to the male but one who does not over-bear like Charles Tansley or Paul who commands submission with his irresistible fascination. It is a struggle to keep her self inviolable. She has been meeting William, "Summer after summer". They have been strolling through courtyards together. He tells her about "things"—flowers, proportions, perspective and architecture. She sums up her relationship. "Indeed, his friendship had been one of the pleasures of her life. She loved William Bankes (p.200)". Precisely this is what Mrs Ramsey hoped for, contemplating the marriage of William and Lily, putting it under "the unclassified" love. Perhaps, Lily would have got over the sufferings of a spinster if she had married William, as Mrs Ramsey desired. Lily cries for Mrs Ramsey with

love.24

... love that never attempted to clutch its object... Such a rapture, this silent stare, for which she felt intense gratitude, for nothing so soothed her, eased her, the perplexity of life... (p.56)"
tears in her eyes; and a parenthesis occurs (p.204). The parenthesis is given one complete section though it has just one sentence. In it is described how Macalister's boy takes a fish for bait and throws the mutilated body into the water again. While Mrs Ramsey had physical union but not the intellectual communion, Lily has the latter but not the former. So both are mutilated.25

Lily recapitulates the scene of Mr Ramsey (before their marriage) helping Mrs Ramsey out of the boat (p.226). Lily imagines that Mrs Ramsey should have given her consent to Mr Ramsey's proposal for marriage of that moment. That process of remembering is highly revealing since it surfaces Lily's regret that such an opportunity has not been given to her because of her Chinese eyes and puckered face. Despite the remembered scene where Mr Ramsey rudely threw a plate, Lily concludes that Mr and Mrs Ramsey's relationship was "admirable". Irene G. Dash puts a question to her daughters, "Do you think that there is a basic conflict, as this novel suggests, between

25 Irene G. Dash says, "She (Lily) wants to be in contact with other human beings if she can be assured that she will be in a situation where she is not vulnerable"—"How Light a Lighthouse for Today's Women?", The Lost Tradition: Mothers and Daughters in Literature ed. Cathy H. Davidson and E.K. Brewer Frederick (New York: Ungar Publishing Company, 1980), p. 182."
being an artist and mothering? It is perhaps more than that. It is a conflict between the dated ideal of womanhood—a beauty to whom male pays tribute taking initiative and protects—and the artistic longings. So when she thinks of Mr Ramsey on the boat and draws a line, it seems to stand for the male who bears down, thrusts himself on women.

Before drawing the line she thinks that Augustus Carmichael agrees with her. In fact poor Augustus says only, "they will have landed (p. 237)" not as she thinks he has landed (p. 236). She then conjures up before her the figure of Augustus standing like an old pagan god, "and let fall from his great height a wreath of violet and asphodels" with protecting hands. In truth, Augustus is reading a French novel, not any Greek book (p. 236). 'Asphodels' and 'violets' symbolise the romantic fascination of Bankes and Charles Tansley, respectively, for Mrs Ramsey. 27

26 Ibid., p. 182.

27 "The Graces assembling seemed to have joined hands in meadows of asphodel to compose that face" (p. 35).

"... with stars in her eyes and veils in her hair with Cyclamen and wild violets... (p. 17)."
Lily becomes an insider with the urge for 'asphodels and violets'; which means ultimately the fascination for the aggressiveness and indifference of the male.  

The middle portion of the book, 'Time passes', is intended to effect a smooth transition of the ten year passage of time from the first portion of the book to the third. Mrs Woolf feared that her manner of filling the time-gap would invite the stock criticism of "sentimental" and "victorian" against it. However, on re-reading it, she finds that it is 'a hard, muscular book', 'not run out and gone flabby'.  

Mark Spilks in his analysis of the lyrical portions of 'Time Passes' finds the personifications of 'the little airs' which visit the summer house as an allegorical device, 'precious and pretentious'. The airs are 'agents of dis-

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29 To the Lighthouse was published in 1927. Quentin Bell draws attention to the following utterance of Mrs Woolf: "I began to envisage an age to come of pure, of self-assertive virility... and the rulers of Italy have already brought into being", — See BLOOMSBURY (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 98.

29 A Writer's Diary, pp. 101, 104.
integrative inquiry'. Their inquiry is 'abstruse' and does not yield 'much heart felt meaning'. But it is precisely here that Mrs Woolf's concerns seem to find a vivid expression.

The so called invisible narrator speaks at length of "uneasy mirror" of the mystic, the mirror broken and the trees, eyeless and terrible beholding nothing. The mirror is a known symbol for the patterning mind which seeks order in the face of chaos. If mind could look without imposing a pattern, truth might be revealed. This attitude is implied in the voluntary 'absence' of the author in the novel. The invisible narrator tells us that in "those mirrors, the minds of men", "clouds for ever turn and shadows form". The minds are "pools of uneasy water". Despite their unease, they cannot resist the intimations of the organic and inorganic world, including the "white earth" of summer, which declares that "Happiness prevails". The intimations impel the mind to reach a "crystal intensity", seeking an order "alien to the

processes of domestic life" and "remote to the known pleasure (p.130)". Perhaps this description refers to the minds of down-to-earth inductive reasoners—the scientists, psychologists—and artists of higher ministrations. Mrs Woolf echoes André Gide who says, "An all-pervading joy suffuses the earth and the earth exudes it at the sun's call... The sunbeam has signed to me; my desire is the surest of guides and this morning I am in love with the whole world".31

But there is the "mystic, the visionary", who walks the beach and asks what he is and what this is, "stirring the puddle". He feels an answer "vouchsafed" to him; feels "comfort in the desert and warmth in the frost". This mystic dreamer persists asking questions, after the war, whether nature condoned man's meanness and whether nature advanced man's progress or retarded. This mystic's eye is "a mere surface glasses". As we know Mrs Woolf views on war as a man-made phenomenon the mystic evidently has not been able to examine the real causes of the war. This mirror is "broken". Here

Mrs Woolf puts in parenthesis the success of Mr Carmichael's poems and people's revived interest in poetry (p.153). We learn through Lily that the poems of Carmichael contain images of desert and camel, a mystic vision. At the end of the novel we find him reading a French novel. May be he has grown weary of poetry's inadequacy to get at the truth of things and is shifting to the novel.

A.D. Moody calls attention to Virginia Woolf's diary note where she says, "effort, effort dominates; not the waves; and the personality and defiance". Mrs Woolf's mention of the stroke of the lighthouse in the lyric portions, seems to point at the efforts of man to be androgynous, allowing women into public life:

When darkness fell, the stroke of the lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moon light gliding gently as if it laid caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again (p.151 emphases mine).

We may recall here the impression made by the lighthouse on Mrs. Ramsay in the beginning of the novel. As she looks at the lighthouse, stark and naked, she looks away at the "green sand dunes" whose grasses seem "to be running away to some moon country, uninhabited of men (p. 16). From the passage above (of p. 151) should we suppose then that the stark naked intelligence of man is merging with the soft light of woman's mind? The passage occurs just before we hear of war in which Andrew and twenty or thirty young men died of shell (p. 152). The action belonged to the year 1919 when, according to Mrs. Woolf, women were liberated.

Hence "Time passes" may not be sentimental, but critical, critical of the wasted lives that figure in the two parts on either side of it. While describing the trees and flowers which stand before the chaos, she says they are "eyeless" and "terrible", "beholding nothing" (p. 154). Can we take the statement for a paradox? Eyeless might mean that men should be open-eyed, unenclosed by a perspective. "Terrible" might mean one should have a terrible sensitivity, 'beholding nothing' that is, seeing everything which is the quest of modern men for apprehending the totality of expe-
rience, not trying to be tethered to any ideation.

In the long parenthesis that occurs in 'the window' section, the children sing with Minta the song (only one line of it is given), 'Damn your eyes', as they walk down the cliff (p.86). Since children are said to give a little forward thrust to the perceptions of the elders, should we not suppose that the line, 'Damn your eyes', is a dig about the elders who, nagged by their ontological concerns, close their eyes to the children, to the sky, and the sea, and to themselves? In short, a dig about the elders for failing to be outsiders even when given a chance.

So the eyeless and selfless narrator looks on nature and finds "little airs" going through various rooms questioning the things whether they are allies or enemies and how long would they endure. As we see Mrs Woolf's love for the sun and the wind in "On being Ill" and "The Waves", the sun and the wind are allies of mankind. As they move about, the little airs see the shut-eyes of the sleepers and bedroom which can neither be touched nor destroyed. They go away "wearily", as if they were unable to befriend humanity...
when the storms torment them (pp 144-145). In her reference to the bed, it is quite likely that Mrs Woolf is echoing the existential anguish of "dull privations", and "lean emptiness" of domestic life expressed in Gottfried Keller's poem (translated by Joyce):

Now have I fed and eaten up the rose  
Which then she laid within my stiff cold hand  
That I should ever feed upon a rose  
I never had believed in livemen's land.

Only I wonder was it white or red  
The flower that in the dark my roof has been.  
Give us, and if Thou give, thy daily bread,  
Deliver us from evil, Lord, Amen.33

The sea airs also ask a pair of shoes, shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in the ward robes if they fade or perish. The skirts and coats are not disturbed by such questions. They "scarcely" have to answer that they "remain". Is Mrs Woolf pointing out here that the consciousness—that made the shoes, buttons, skirts, while making them—never worried about death, life etc. at that moment of effort. Only effort.

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dominated effort that "made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted (p. 147)".

Hence her sympathetic portrayal of Mrs MacNab and Mrs Best who go about cleaning and dusting the summer house, when they feel dispirited they indulge in humour and a cup of tea, and go about the work. They are quite and unruffled, unlike Lily who takes two cups of tea and sets about asking, what the meaning of it all is. The son of Mrs MacNab works in the garden and Mrs MacNab, in the house, without impinging on each other, and their cooperative action renovates the house for the visit of the vacationers from the city.

The novel as such is a plea for an awareness that absolute truth is unrealisable or many a millennium of human effort should go into for its realisation. Adult sensibility should help the awareness of the progeny instead of hindering it by their ontological trepidations and teleological enquiries. The novel appreciates the spirits' obligation to know and define itself. But it warns that owing to the self's historical growth through ages of conventional life that has been made for the convenience of social integration at the cost of individual self, the self unknowingly
bcomes an accomplice to the conventions that have taken deep root in the mind. It emphasizes the imperative need for an integrated self that issues from harmonising the public and private experiences so as to enable humanity to put up a united front to come to terms with the powers outside and comprehend them. Since psyche is an integer of the body and mind, the spirit is disturbed between its loyalty to one and loyalty to the other. Hence a call to give unto the body what is body's and to the mind, what is mind's.