TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

The first notes on *To the Lighthouse* appear in Virginia Woolf's *Diary* on May 14, 1925:

This is going to be fairly short; to have father's character done complete in it; and mother's; and St. Ives; and childhood; and all the usual things I try to put in - life, death, etc. But the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat, reciting *We perished, each alone*, while he crushes a dying mackerel.¹

The novel was written out of Virginia Woolf's desire to exorcise her parents' dominance; and she wrote it with a surprising, spontaneous fluidity. She discloses in "A Sketch of the Past":

> It is perfectly true that (my mother) obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four. Then one day walking round Tavistock Square I made up, as I sometimes make up my books, *To the Lighthouse*; in a great, apparently involuntary, rush. One thing burst into another. Blowing bubbles out of a pipe gives the feeling of the rapid crowd of ideas and scenes which blew out of my mind, so that my lips seemed syllabbling of their own accord as I walked. What blew the bubbles? Why then? I have no notion. But I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother....

> I suppose that I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest.²

After knowing from Virginia Woolf about her parents, it is easy to recognise how much of the actual lives of Sir Leslie and Julia Stephen have gone into the making of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay of *To the Lighthouse*. But it is not an autobiographical novel in the sense *David Copperfield* or *Sons and Lovers* is. The novel is, as Ruby Cohn says, "in part at least ... a work of art about art - as are *Hamlet* and *Don Quixote*; as is much of the creation of
artists so various as Yeats, Braque, Pirandello, Mann."

To the Lighthouse, is a living and eloquent testimony to Virginia Woolf's mastery of a complex yet disciplined form. In this, she finds a correlative for her purely personal emotions; and the form is so perfect that it contains and signifies everything. A wide range and multiplicity of experience is presented within severely circumscribed limits of time by subtle and constant movements in and out of the minds of her various characters. As in Mrs. Dalloway, here too, she selects from the flux and chaos of experiences, from the tangle and clasp of memories, certain thoughts, feelings and impressions, and arranges them, now in sequence and then in simultaneity, with a skilful and sure touch, to produce a beautifully textured and formally composed whole, conforming to her own singular and sensitive vision.

The theme and structure of To the Lighthouse were clear to Virginia Woolf as early as 20th July, 1925: father and mother and child in the garden; the death; the sail to the Lighthouse. I think, though, that when I begin it I shall enrich it in all sorts of ways... It might contain all characters boiled down; and childhood; and then this impersonal thing, which I'm dared to do by my friends, the flight of time and the consequent break of unity in my design. That passage (I conceive the book in 3 parts.1. at the drawing room window; 2. seven years passed; 3. the voyage) interests me very much.4

"Seven years" were changed to ten years in the novel, leaving the theme and the structure untouched. The structure is composed of three sections of unequal lengths. The first and the longest section, "The Window", covering the better
as the central issue whether or not the proposed expedition to the Lighthouse will come of the next morning. The second and the shortest section, "Time Passes", is of the nature of a choral interlude and marks the passage of ten years. It also intimates in parenthesis the death of several members of the Ramsay family, and depicts the decay to which the house has fallen. The third section, "The Lighthouse", covers like the first, a single day and in it the trip to the Lighthouse, planned ten years earlier, finally takes place.

The mixing of the genres in To the Lighthouse too is clear. However, the role of painting, as we shall later see, predominates. E.M. Forster, Ines Verga, and E.K. Brown compare this novel to a musical composition. The three parts or sections are equivalent to three movements and each is constructed differently. Part I, with mother and child framed in the window, is static and revolves round one scene. The presence of Mrs. Ramsay dominates. Part II is constructed employing all the resources of poetry. The sense of the passing of ten years is created impressionistically rather than chronologically. The mystery and gloom of death are intensified. Part III, seemingly cast in a conventional mould, shows a simple journey from one point to another. But the linear movement is deceptive. It is, on the other hand, much a symbol of inner explorations in which along-with physical triumph of James, the intellectual triumph of Mr. Ramsay, the artistic triumph of Lily Briscoe, the spiritual triumph of Mrs. Ramsay, are registered. The
Lighthouse links the three parts and stands for the fulfilment of each one's desire. It is a recapitulation of Part I in that the happenings of Part I are recalled in this part and what is spilled there is gathered here.

Virginia Woolf considered the Lighthouse, not as a symbol of something particular, but as an integrating principle of many skeins and strands. Roger Fry made some very important points in the criticism of *To the Lighthouse* when he wrote to Virginia Woolf and received from her an equally analytical reply:

"How little, I realized when I tried to imagine how I should describe the problems of a writer a la Lily Briscoe (in which by the by Vanessa and I both think you come through unscathed and triumphant...)....

So you won't get a criticism-only you can't help my thinking it the best thing you've done, actually better than *Mrs. Dalloway*. You're no longer bothered by the simultaneity of things and go backwards and forwards in time with an extraordinary enrichment of each moment of consciousness.

I'm sure that there's lots I haven't understood... for instance that arriving at the Lighthouse has a symbolic meaning which escapes me."8

Virginia Woolf wrote back to Fry regretting that she had not dedicated the book to him but acknowledging his guidance, nevertheless:

"I am immensely glad that you like the *Lighthouse*. Now I wish I had dedicated it to you....(You) have I think kept me on the right path, so far as writing goes, more than anyone....

I meant nothing by The Lighthouse. One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together. I saw that all sorts of feelings would accrue to this, but I refused to think them out, and trusted that people would make it the deposit for their own emotions - which they have done, one thinking it means one thing another another. I can't manage Symbolism except in this vague, generalised way.9

The whole technique of *To the Lighthouse* is radial, with the Lighthouse standing in the centre. When the novel
begins we are already in the middle of a scene: "'Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow', said Mrs. Ramsay, 'But you'll have to be up with the lark', she added" (5). As Davenport observes, "Mrs. Ramsay's opening remark is the answer to an unstated question, which we have to supply by picking up clues from what follows." The Ramsay family are vacationing at their summer resort on the island of Hebrides with some friends. The group includes a bachelor, a maiden, a poet, philosophers, an artist, a scientist, a housewife, children, fishermen and menials. It is a small select society, a microcosm of the usual Virginia Woolf world. They talk and think of executing their planned expedition to the Lighthouse, and the "conversation about going to the Lighthouse", Davenport writes, "acts as a stone thrown into the middle of a pool." The several characters present in the first part react to this situation in their way and it is through their reactions that a reader's understanding of the events and the characters develops. Lily's central position in the novel also results from the adoption of the radial technique. It is left to her to explore the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and to present it in her art.

The novel achieves a remarkable unity due to limited time, narrow space and fewer characters who are just triangles of flesh and blood; and if it is a study of human relationships, it is also a study of the formal arrangements; Mrs. Ramsay standing for the one, Lily Briscoe for the other. What they are attempting at is order out of the chaos and flux of things. The whole novel, really, is a
celebrate on of this attempt, though success and failure are other matters.

Mrs. Ramsay who is a nobler extension of Mrs. Dalloway in that she has a wider vision, a richer imagination and a deeper sympathy — "knowledge and wisdom were stored in Mrs. Ramsay's heart" (60) — endeavours to bring people into harmonious wholes. In the first section of the novel, we see her undertaking voluntarily the uphill task of creating order and beauty in the interrelations among her family and friends, that is, we do not see her in relation to herself merely as we see Mrs. Dalloway, but in relation to others, essentially. All the time she is aware of the inadequacy of human relationships, but is never daunted: "how flawed they are... at their best" (49). There are many demands on her life. Mr. Ramsay's enormous demands for constant attention and sympathy are a drain on her energies, yet she never disappoints him. She extends him all the support he needs in the hour of his intellectual frustration and agony, yet she protects James against his father's unfeeling, rather brutish, frankness. She harbours a hope for the happy marriage of her daughter, Prue, and encourages a match between Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle. She runs numerous errands of mercy in the village and drafts many letters to draw attention to the poor. She entertains frequently quite a large number of house guests and invites the vacationers on the Isle of Syke to her fabulous dinner. In spite of her sacrificing disposition and charitable deeds, she feels that a "sort of transaction went on between (life and her)
in which she was on one side, and life was on another, and she was always trying to get the better of it, as it was of her" (69). She endeavours reconciliations but is forced to admit that life was "terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce on you if you gave it a chance" (70). Yet she never surrenders to despair and never abandons her endeavour to bring people together.

Mrs. Ramsay's real social skill is displayed successfully around the dinner table where nothing but good feeling pervades the whole group, even Mr. Ramsay and Tansley. Lily admires Mrs. Ramsay's accomplishment: "She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought. Now she had brought this off - Paul and Minta, one might suppose, were engaged. Mr. Bankes was dining here. She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly, and Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit" (116-117). The dinner reveals Mrs. Ramsay's artistic endeavours to knit people and arrange things. The Boeuf en Daube, on which the cook worked three days, is "a perfect triumph" (121). "It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked", Mr. Bankes had said earlier (116). Mrs. Ramsay herself feels that "it partook... of eternity" (121). The other work of art is the centre piece: "What had she done with it, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, for Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears, of the horny pink-lined shell, of the bananas, made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet, of the bunch that hangs with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus
(in some picture), among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold.... Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed... like a world in which one could... climb up hills... and go down into valleys..." (111-112). The dinner, however, is not only a display of social skill, but also an attempt to create a perfect work of art: a balancing of opposite poles.

Most of Virginia Woolf's characters are isolated figures. The lonely but heroic and egotistical Mr. Ramsay, unable to proceed beyond "Q", is one such human being. We get intermittent glimpses of him in "The Window", storming about and appropriately reciting Tennyson's, "Charge of the Light Brigade" and muttering: "Some one had blundered" (30). The bombast, first delivered when Jasper shoots at the birds, does not seem to refer only to his own blundering remark that it will not be fine tomorrow, but also serves as a penchant at "some one" bigger and higher, agnostic as he is. Mr. Ramsay is always thinking about "'subject and object and the nature of reality'" (28). His sense of loneliness wells up in "The Lighthouse". Death has struck his family in "Time Passes". Mrs. Ramsay died suddenly one night, leaving his arms empty; Prue died in childbirth; Andrew was killed instantaneously by a shell during the war. Their loss has become a leaden weight round his neck to send him down into deeper gulfs of sorrow. Having lost faith in God, it is natural that he should not find peace and consolation within easy reach. The quotation from Cowper's "Castaway": 
We perished, each alone
But I beneath a rougher sea
Was whelmed in deeper gulfs than he
(188-189)

describes not only his physical, but also spiritual isolation and suffering.

The life of Mrs. Ramsay nourishes the art of Lily Briscoe, and the art of Lily Briscoe, in return, grants permanence to the life of Mrs. Ramsay. So the theme, relationship between life and art, is treated variously in the novel and Lily Briscoe's painting structures the whole of it. Lily acknowledges Mrs. Ramsay's manipulation of life: "Mrs. Ramsay saying 'Life stand still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent" (183). But Mrs. Ramsay's efforts are doomed from the start. Life and time have no regard for any effort, nor submit to any order. Only in another sphere - the sphere of art - can moments be conferred permanence. Mrs. Ramsay can, of course, order a scene to make it look like a work of art, but Lily Briscoe succeeds in creating an actual work of art. Her paint brush is for her "the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin, chaos" (170). It is she who alone is able to realise the credo of the true artist, "how 'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (204).

Painting is an art which symbolises order and the flux of experience. This also is a feature of To the Lighthouse:

Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron. It was to be a
thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you
could not dislodge with a team of horses (194).

The problems of Virginia Woolf and Lily Briscoe are similar. "To the Lighthouse, whose central theme is the creation of order out of confusion", says Keith M. May, "is itself a work of such creation. Lily's painting is likewise the discovery of order... Lily strives for and finally achieves 'significant form', the very goal which Virginia Woolf sought in this novel, for the latter adapted the tenets of Clive Bell to the purposes and capacities of fiction."12

The post-impressionistic quality of Virginia Woolf's novel and Lily Briscoe's painting is evident. Both are struggling to create "significant form". Lily is concerned with the colours, line, space, light and shade, and the relation between the masses: "She would not have considered it honest to temper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr. Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semi-transparent. Then beneath the colour there was the shape" (23). Roger Fry's discussion of "significant form" in his essay "Retrospect" also describes the nature of Lily's struggle:

We feel that a work which possesses it is the outcome of an endeavour to express an idea rather than to create a pleasing object. Personally... I always feel that it implies the effort on the part of the artist to bend to our emotional understanding by means of his passionate conviction some intractable material which is alien to our spirit.13

On one side of Lily's canvas stands the wall with the representation of mother and child. On the opposite side of the picture is the hedge, at some point in which
a gap, with red-hot pokers on either side of it, gives a view of the sea. Somewhere between these two masses is a tree. Lily's problem is to fill the space in the centre of the picture so that the two masses will move around this central object. As she wrestles with her "intractable material", she reduces her problem to one of "how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left" (62). It means that she has to shuffle the material of art for an aesthetic effect.

The possible solution of this problem occupies Lily throughout the novel, but the occasion on which most of her thoughts about it are revealed is the dinner. The dinner concentrates on the problems of relationships faced both by Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Lily disapproves of Mrs. Ramsay's implied pity of William Bankes. She decides: "he is not in the least pitiable. He has his work" (97). This thought carries her to her painting and she thinks about how to improve its form: "I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space.... She took up the salt cellar and put it down again on a flower in pattern in the table-cloth, so as to remind herself to move the tree" (98). The tree, like the Lighthouse, is central to the scheme of things.

Lily reverts to her painting when she remembers Tansley's saying: women "'can't paint, can't write'" (105). But after sometime, "her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr. Tansley was saying" (107). Finally, as she watches Minta being charming to Mr. Tansley, and as she catches
sight of the salt cellar, she thinks simultaneously of her painting: "She would move the tree rather more to the middle" (118).

Roger Fry is essentially trying to describe the procedure by which a Post-Impressionist painting is created when he writes:

Almost any turn of the kaleidoscope of nature may set up in the artist (a) detached and impassioned vision, and, as he contemplates the particular field of vision, the (aesthetically) chaotic and accidental conjunction of forms and colours begins to crystallise into a harmony; and as this harmony becomes clear to the artist, his actual vision becomes distorted by the emphasis of the rhythm which has been set up within him. Certain relations of directions of line become for him full of meaning; he apprehends them no longer casually or merely curiously, but passionately, and these lines begin to be so stressed and stand out so clearly from the rest that he sees them far more distinctly than he did at first.... In such a creative vision the objects as such tend to disappear, to lose their separate unities, and to take their places as so many bits in the whole mosaic of vision.14

Virginia Woolf in structuring her book and Lily Briscoe in painting her picture have followed the above procedure. They have expressed their ideas transferring the design they saw to their work, by creating the formal relations and harmonies, by putting on the page and the canvas the significant forms they had discovered. So long as Mrs. Ramsay was alive, neither Mr. Ramsay was able to complete his voyage to the lighthouse nor Lily was able to finish her picture. Before Mr. Ramsay can triumphantly say "'Well done!'" (234), or Lily Briscoe can exultantly exclaim, "It was done; it was finished" (237), both of them have to deprive Mrs. Ramsay of all her specific characters because she poses an obstacle to the completion of their work. For the picture
to be completed along Post-Impressionist lines, Mrs. Ramsay must become merely a part of the system of formal relations; and in order to accomplish this, Lily must overcome Mrs. Ramsay's ability to dominate her emotionally. By having Lily paint a Post-Impressionist picture, one in which she sacrifices nothing of those formal relations to the arousing of emotions connected with the outer world, Virginia Woolf offers a means for understanding the significance which Mrs. Ramsay enjoys in the novel.

Fry writes:

the greatest object of art becomes of no more significance than any casual piece of matter; a man's head is no more and no less important than pumpkin, or, rather, these things may be so or not according to the rhythm that obsesses the artist and crystallizes his vision. Since it is the habitual practice of the artist to be on the look-out for these peculiar arrangements of objects that arouse the creative vision, and become material for creative contemplation, he is liable to look at all objects from this point of view... It is irrelevant to ask him, while he is looking with this generalized and all-embracing vision, about the nature of the objects which compose it. 15

Lily explains her picture to Mr. Bankes to show him that the purple triangle represents Mrs. Ramsay and James, and that "if there, in that corner, it was bright, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness" (61). She elaborates upon her idea that what is important is "relations of masses, of lights and shadows" (62). As she talks to him, she attempts to rediscover her vision, "subduing all her impressions as a woman to something much more general; becoming once more under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children - her picture" (62). Then she remembers that the problem is that of
connecting the "mass on the right hand with that on the left", perhaps by "bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object" (62). But she does not want to break the unity as a whole. Lily's demonstration, her explanation, her concern with colour, shapes, lines, masses, space, light and shadow arranged in the right relation, mark her as a Post-Impressionist.

When Lily returns to the Ramsays ten years later, she is reminded of her picture as she sits once more in the same dining room, but without Mrs. Ramsay: "When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation. There had been a problem about a foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years" (167). She sets up her easel, recalls the problem of relation of masses, feels she knows what she wanted to do. As she stands on the lawn worrying about Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her, she remembers her arrival, recalls her feeling that "it was a house full of unrelated passions" (168). This is the day when those passions are to be related, as are the relations in her picture. But she cannot paint with Mr. Ramsay around, begging for sympathy she cannot dole out. She had to take her work seriously. When finally she has praised Mr. Ramsay's boots, when he has been appeased, and
the Ramsays are ready to depart, she observes: "There was no helping Mr. Ramsay on the journey he was going" (175), and she confronts herself with her white canvas. She rethinks the problems of the "relations of those lines cutting across, slicing down, and in the mass of the hedge with its green cave of blues and browns, which had stayed in her mind" (178). These problems, indeed, have "tied a knot in her mind so that at odds and ends of time, involuntarily, as she walked along the Brompton Road, as she brushed her hair, she found herself painting that picture, passing her eye over it, and untying the knot in imagination" (178). This is also how Virginia Woolf unifies the novel, linking "The Window" with "The Lighthouse".

Lily worries over her first mark, knowing that "one line placed on the canvas committed her to innumerable risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions" (179). She makes her first mark, it runs; she makes another, and she finds herself in the grasp of Fry's aesthetic emotion:

Here she was again, she thought, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers - this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention (180).

She begins dipping her brush, moving it, as the rhythm of creative vision and the sense of impersonality take over:

Then, as if some juice necessary for the lubrication of her faculties were spontaneously squirted, she began... but it was now heavier and went slower, as if it had fallen in with some rhythm which was dictated to her (she kept looking at the hedge, at the canvas) by what she saw, so that while her hand quivered with life, this rhythm was strong enough to bear her along with it on its current. Certainly she was losing consciousness of outer
things. And as she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, and whether Mr. Carmichael was there or not, her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues (181).

Lily pauses, muses about Mrs. Ramsay, thinks of the "great revelation" that never comes and of Mrs. Ramsay's ability to make "of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)" (183). A revelation, however, comes to her: "In the midst of chaos there was shape: this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability" (183). At this moment, Lily is identified with Mrs. Ramsay fulfilling her desire pending for the last ten years. It has become possible because Mrs. Ramsay, now, is no longer the dominant figure in the relationship. They share a gift; and the results are different: her work becomes easier. She understands that design must be added to vision.

As Lily paints, she recalls the last September with the Ramsays, Mr. Bankes, the Rayleys, the failure of the Rayley marriage so carefully pushed by Mrs. Ramsay. Engulfed by emotions from the outer world, she encounters some obstacle in the design, and as she pauses, remembers Mrs. Ramsay always urging her to marry, the Rayleys to marry; and "standing there, with the sun hot on her back, summing up the Rayleys, triumphed over Mrs. Ramsay" (198-199). She has now not only identified herself with Mrs. Ramsay but also has triumphed over her. She recalls how, by gazing at the table-cloth, she had barely escaped Mrs. Ramsay's
insistence that she marry William Bankes, and many other things. Then she finds herself "half out of the picture, looking, a little dazedly, as if at unreal things, at Mr. Carmichael" (202). She looks at her picture and asks, "'What does it mean? How do you explain it all?'' and answers, "Something would emerge" (203). After a pause, she says confidently that something which "remained for ever" will come out (204). Subsequently, Lily's pain, her desire for Mrs. Ramsay, begin to subside; and she recalls the visions of Mrs. Ramsay which kept recurring for days after Mrs. Ramsay's death. Then "moved as she was by some instinctive need of distance and blue" (206), she looks out and sees the boat. She looks again, and then again, and she thinks about how "so much depends... upon distance; whether people are near us or far from us" (217).

After a surmise that the Ramsays will arrive at the Lighthouse at lunch time, she looks again at her picture: "There was something perhaps wrong with the design? Was it, she wondered, that the line of the wall wanted breaking, was it that the mass of the trees was too heavy?" (219). Trying to understand what is wrong, she realises that it "evaded her when she thought of Mrs. Ramsay... Visions came. Beautiful pictures. Beautiful phrases. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything" (219). Lily's desire to convey the "jar on the nerves" compares with Virginia Woolf's effort to convert literature into sensation.
Lily sits down, rests, looks at Mr. Carmichael, realises that the essential must be separated from the non-essential and concludes that one way to know people is "to know the outline, not the detail, to sit in one's garden and look at the slopes of a hill running purple down into the distant heather" (221). Then she remembers Mrs. Ramsay, that Mr. Carmichael never liked her, how "half one's notions of other people were, after all, grotesque. They served private purposes of one's own" (224). Again, she thinks of Mrs. Ramsay, of the repetition of the lives of the Ramsays, how they would quarrel and then come back together, how Mrs. Ramsay would smooth things over. But while she thinks she continues to gaze at the window: "One must hold the scene - so - in a vice and let nothing come in and spoil it. One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy" (229).

Lily's problem is not to be viewed merely as the problem of human relationships, for Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are not only human pawns needing to be brought into their appropriate places, but also the artist's mass waiting to be related properly. For Lily, it was certainly a question of balancing things artistically from which naturally neither could be omitted. In the midst of exasperating human relationships, it is art that has come to Lily's rescue.
So we see Lily standing on the lawn and trying to cry off the ghost of Mrs. Ramsay. Something white waves at the window, while Lily looks: "'Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' she cried, feeling the old horror come back — to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table" (229-230). Lily looks over the water for the boat, for Mr. Ramsay, and surmises that he has reached the destination. Mr. Carmichael, who never liked Mrs. Ramsay also joins her in looking out over the water and she realises that he had shared her thoughts the whole morning. She remembers her picture, its lines, its colours, and she looks again at the steps which are now empty: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision" (237).

Proper relations at all levels have been achieved. Lily has overcome her emotions and finished her picture after an exhausting struggle and has succeeded in making the moment permanent through her art. Mr. Ramsay, by arriving at the lighthouse, has proved that he is the master of his family. Assertive, and in overall control of the situation, he will now be able to get beyond "Q". James drops his hatred for him. Cam looks at him with respect. Father's reason has been balanced by mother's sympathy.
In To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf attained a high degree of stylisation by obliterating the distinction between form and content which is shown by the convergence of both human and artistic relationships at the end. Lily Briscoe's success in providing a balance between the masses represents her creator's achievement in adjusting variegated emotions and impressions within a rigid design. Virginia Woolf also totally abandoned reliance on dramatic events, concerned as she was to explore human consciousness; and there is a juxtaposition instead of sequence of the moments of human consciousness making them a reflex of the past and the future. This, according to her, in aesthetic terms, is the creation of the genuine sense of reality and truth of life.

REFERENCES

1. Diary, pp.76-77.


4. Diary, p.80.


10. W.A. Davenport. To the Lighthouse, p.16.
15. Ibid, p.52.