



Research Title: Virginia Woolf and Identity... Dr. Ragaa Hamed Ahmed Omer

Humanities and Educational
Sciences Journal

ISSN: 2617-5908 (print)



مجلة العلوم التربوية
والدراسات الإنسانية

ISSN: 2709-0302 (online)

**Research Title: Virginia Woolf and Identity
as established in “Mrs Dalloway”
and “To the Lighthouse”(*)**

Dr. Ragaa Hamed Ahmed Omer

Assistant Professor of English Language
Faculty of Arts and Humanities Al Baha

تاريخ قبوله للنشر 20/8/2024

<http://hesj.org/ojs/index.php/hesj/index>

(*) تاريخ تسليم البحث 29/6/2024

(*) موقع المجلة:



فيرجينيا وولف والهوية الذاتية كما ورد في رواياتها السيدة دالواى ورواية المنارة

د/ رجاء حمد أحمد عمر

أستاذ مساعد بقسم اللغات الأجنبية

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بجامعة الباحة – السعودية

الملخص

ساهمت الحداثية البارزة فيرجينا وولف بشكل كبير في تطوير الرواية الحديثة بحلول نهاية القرن التاسع عشر وانغماسها في علم النفس. اهتمت وولف كثيرا بربط فننها بالهوية الفردية. وتهدف هذه الورقة البحثية الى دراسة الابعاد المتعددة والمختلفة لتأسيس الهوية الذاتية كما عرضت في روايات الكاتبة فيرجينا وولف (السيدة دالواى 1920) و (المنارة 1923). واستهملت الكاتبة رحلتها نحو اكتشاف الهوية الذاتية من خلال استخدام مختلف الاجهزة والاطر في الروايات مثال استخدام المرايات او رسم اللوحات او حتى اقامة حفلات العشاء. وقد استخدمتها حتى تعترف بما "وصفته الواقع الثابت، المرئي والمنظم في الداخل، في اطار واقع متحرك، غير مرئي، وغير منظم في الخارج".

وقد قامت الكاتبة بتجميع هذه الاطر التي تعمل داخليا وخارجيا، وحركتها المستمرة مكنت الكاتبة من حجب العناصر المتناقضة التي اشتمل عليها تعبيرها عن الهوية الذاتية. وتناقش هذه الورقة البحثية افكار الكاتبة ورحلتها نحو تأسيس الهوية الذاتية في الروايات المذكورة أعلاه. والمنهج الذى اعتمدته الباحثة هو المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي.

وخلصت الدراسة ان وولف نجحت في تأسيس رحلتها نحو اكتشاف الهوية الفردية، بل وفصلت الهوية الى عدة انواع تشمل الهوية الاجتماعية، الهوية الزمنية وايضا الهوية الجنسية مما جعل القراء متشوقون جدا لقراءة فننها المبتكر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحداثية، فيرجينا وولف، الهوية الذاتية، الانعزالية، الهوية الذاتية، الهوية الاجتماعية، الهوية الجنسية، الحرب العالمية الأولى، علم النفس.



**Research Title: Virginia Woolf and Identity
As established in “Mrs Dalloway”
and “To the Lighthouse”**

Dr. Ragaa Hamed Ahmed Omer

Assistant Professor of English Language
Faculty of Arts and Humanities Al Baha University

Abstract

Virginia Woolf, a prominent modernist has contributed significantly in the development of the modern novel by the end of the 19th century and it's indulged of psychology.

Woolf was very much interested to connect her art with identity.

This research paper aims to investigate the multiple dimensions of Identity as presented in Virginia Woolf's novels Mrs Dalloway (1925) and To the Lighthouse (1923).

She has started her journey in establishing identity by employing various framing devices such as the use of mirrors, portraits, dinner parties.

She had manipulated these devises in order to acknowledge what she called it “a solid, visible and structured reality within a frame of shifting, invisible and unstructured reality outside it”.

She synthesized these devises functioning inward and outward and this continuous motion enabled her to overshadow the contradictory elements in her expression of identity.

The paper discusses Virginia Woolf 's establishing journey of identity in Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse.

The approach adopted here is analytical and descriptive approach.

The study concluded that identity as established in Virginia Woolf 's novels presented in multiple types such as social identity, temporal identity and Gender identity that made readers so much interested in reading her innovative art.

Key words: Modernism– - Virginia Woolf– Identity- Self- identity– social identity– Gender identity- First World War- Psychology.



Introduction

Identity is not an easy term to be defined.

Identity is the essence of an individual, what constitutes him what makes the individual different from others.

It can neither be seen nor defined as fixed entity.

Identity lies deep down in the individual and cannot lie on the surface.

Once identity lies on the surface, it forms a part of self.

Unlike identity, a self takes a lot of time to be known.

We may look at identity as a group identity because group identity provides the context of the interpersonal relationships of the individual.

An individual cannot live alone.

Therefore, identity is heavily influenced by the social and cultural context.

Modernism is a literary movement that typically associated with the period that followed the First World War.

This war was an important turning point that changed every aspect of society.

There came a generation of writers that become increasingly shocked by the consequences of this destructive war, and they have also witnessed facts that they have never come across.

Gertrude Stein has named this generation “lost generation”.

Their pre-war vision of the world is completely shattered, and they could not accommodate a new vision but the absurdity of human destiny.

This changing world demands a new mode of expression, modes of narration and stylistic devises of writing that could match this newness.

There can never be a solid description for reality.

According to Modernists, reality reminds them of the war and its disastrous effects.

Modernists modified the old traditional methods of the earlier generation of writers and substituted them with new modes of narration that is typically known as stream of consciousness and interior monologue to convey the irregularities of the mind.

For the first time existence become hopeless, identity is invalid and so modernists have to dig out and find a new way to represent identity.

Virginia Woolf, original name Adeline Virginia Stephan born January 25, 1882 – London England, died on March 28, 1941 was an English writer whose novels exerted a major influence on literary writing.



Being an influential modernist, she wrote essays on artistic theory, literary criticisms, history, women 's writing and the politics of power.

Woolf is also a pioneer in her description of this modern search for identity.

In her book "The Common Reader" (1925: 65) Woolf commented "In the vast catastrophe of the European war, our emotions had to be broken up for us and put an angle from us, before we could allow ourselves to feel them in poetry or Fiction".

But this is exactly what happened to individuals as the expected result of the war.

They have been left paralyzed mentally and psychically.

Although, Woolf have been a successful literary figure but has identity crisis that was intensely increased by her battle with mental illness.

She suffered from several mental strokes and depression that ended in her committing suicide.

Objectives of the study

The present study aims to:

- 1-Shed light on the major turn of modernists new insight about the individual and the need to express their psychological disturbances in their writings as expected result of world war crisis.
- 2-Investigate the concept of identity according to Virginia Woolf in her novels Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse.
- 3-Unearth the types of identity as presented in Virginia Woolf 's novels, Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse.

Significance of the study

Virginia Woolf is an innovative writer of the 20th century.

Her novels were considered as psychological novels as due to constant search for self and identity.

Methodology

This study I research paper investigating the concept of identity in Virginia Woolf novels Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse deploying an analytical, descriptive approach.

Abbreviations

Mrs Dalloway (MD)

To the Lighthouse (TL)



Literature Review

British Literary scene has changed radically during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the immersion of psychological theories that showed the fascination with the individual and his identity.

In fact, the old traditional methods of writing disappeared to be exchanged with new traditions of “making it new”.

Identity comes from Latin Language “identitas” which mean the same.

The term is also defined, in Oxford advanced Learners’ Dictionary refers to who or what somebody or something is.

Identity includes the person ‘s characteristics, feelings or beliefs that make them different from each other.

Whereas there are two basic meanings for identity offered by an online version of English Collins Dictionary (2000) as:

1- Identification of oneself, e.g. “as moving to London destroyed his Welsh identity”.

2- A synonym to the following concepts: distinctiveness, individuality, oneness particularity, personality, self, selfhood, singularity, uniqueness.

In fact, many scholars have agreed that one’s identity or identities is part of one’s self.

So, identity is closely related to the self.

Identity as defined by Jan Klein (Klein, 1982) is that “Self is everything constituting an integral part of a given individual” But what makes the integral part for a given individual “Is it the individual himself? Or the society around him”.

Therefore, identity is concerned with answering identity as related to the person or to the society.

(As quoted in Zack Waggoner (2009; 22) “My Avatar, My Self: Identity in Video Role playing games”.

One of Modernism ‘s marking characteristic is the heavy emphases it places on individual.

Alberto Melucci (Melucci 1996:61) briefly summarized this view by saying “The most exalting and dramatic legacy of Modernity, is our need and duty to exist as individuals.

Modern individuals think of themselves as subjects capable of purposive and meaningful behaviours.



Similarly, Lester Faigley (Fragments of Rationality: 1992: 16) remarked in his discussion about the notion of the individuals.

The first notion is a coherent consciousness capable of knowing oneself and the world whereas the second notion is one who can change identities at will because identities are acquired by what one consumes.

With this concept, Anthony Giddens “quoted in Zach Waggoner (2014; 23) in his book “Modernity and Self- Identity” (1993) assumed that self – identity is connected with self- awareness by saying: “Existence is a mode of being in the world.

In doing everyday life, all human beings answer the question of being.

They do it by the nature of activities they carry out”.

The identity of the self presumes reflective awareness.

It is what the individual is conscious of in terms of self– consciousness.

Self– identity has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual.

Giddens furthered that self– identity is not a distinctive trait or even a collection of traits possessed by the individuals.

It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography continuing across time and place.

In order to view how Virginia Woolf has started her journey of establishing identity in her novels it is useful to shed light upon her unique method of characterization.

Unlike her contemporary such as James Joyce who favored traditional realism and presentation of the real- world surroundings of his characters, Woolf aimed to draw characters with their social and psychological attachments.

In this way, her characters’ portrait should have a balance between their interior thinking and their surroundings.

Woolf constructs and reconstructs her character ‘s identity in event and after event and by the end we as readers observe the character from multiple perspectives and as the narrative shifts from internal monologue to dialogue and also time shifts from the present to the past.

As for Reality in Woolf ‘s novels, is determined by consciousness as it acts upon the world external to the mind. Consequently, the existence of each



character is determined by the social realm in which “Being for self depends upon the existence as being for others”.

Ultimately, the reader is left with the puzzle of subject– object relationship that contains evident and cryptic life.

The root of identity that resides in the mind of each character, creates a web of contradictions determined by the duality of perspective.

Woolf defined reality as the common life in which the real life and not of the little separate lives which we live as individuals.

Therefore, in this sense characters in Woolf’s novels exists as fragments of separate lives and unities of the common life.

But this common life introduces instability because when the inner life of one character is revealed, she necessarily obscures the interiority from the angle of another character and thus not only she emphasizes the relevance of the angles of perception in understanding character but also problematizing human relationships.

Eventually, Woolf defines the self not by its internal structure but also by the external factors.

As a result, elements that was thought to be hidden in the mind of one character, is expressed in terms of external life that includes other characters.

In this sense identity is the principal factor that relates the external with the internal as it depends upon recognizing the similarities and differences.

This point is further emphasized by Friedman (Friedman; 1996; 15) by saying “Identity is constructed relationally through the differences from the other.

Identification with a group based on gender.

Race or sexuality, for example, it depends mostly on binary systems of “us versus them” where the difference from the other defines the group to which one belong.

Conversely, identity also suggests sameness as in the word identical: identity affirms some form of commonality, some shared I” Identity formation could also be tackled in another way depending upon time sequence.

Wendy Steiner (Steiner, 1987:141) suggested that “ Identity as constructed via subject– object relations depend upon temporal dimension- “ temporal sequence is implicit in subject because what is present on the canvas cannot



be present in a single direct perception of this subject, but only through the superimposition of past views into the present.

The subject is thus presented as a synthesis of a number of temporally distinct perceptions.

Furthermore, the process of identity formation might be assessed through the metaphor of mirror.

The use of mirror image in Woolf's fiction is generally seen as a way to comment on the societal difference in the perception of men and woman.

However, the mirror according to Chapman (1972, 336) can also be viewed as a metaphor for realizing reality.

Likewise, Claudia Olk (2004: 56) pointed out that Woolf uses mirrors to emphasize the impossibility of any kind of direct and unmediated vision which in turn emphasize subjectivity.

Therefore, this underlines that the characters cannot perceive themselves objectively as any normal individuals.

Chloe Taylor (2006; 64) on the other hand, argues that the mirror can be seen as "a re- establisher of identity".

which suggests that identity is used as a mode through which the character's self- perception is revaluated.

Likewise, according to Mansfield (2002; 3) the self is always perceived in relation to other external objects or people.

Identity as a mode that is situated in between the self and the other, the mirror can provide different perspectives on the characters perception of their self.

Moreover, both the actual and metaphorical mirror image stimulate the characters to examine and possibly to adapt themselves.

Identity can also be established through the use of window: The window presents a complex metaphorical form that expands or contracts narrative focus.

Ruth Miller (Miller: 1989, 100-01) stresses the synesthetic function of windows in mediating between Art and Life:" Windows may be seen as affecting certain synthesis".

Virginia Woolf wished to achieve in her writing: their medium is protective yet transparent.

The perspective is detached yet comprehensive.



Since rooms often serve as metaphors of the mind in Virginia Woolf 's novels, it is not surprising that windows are connected with the eyes which are usually represent metonymically the various ways in which the mind apprehends the external world.

Although eyes themselves have a figurative function, windows add a further dimension by representing not the direct means of perception but also, the circumstances which both enable and restrict that perception.

In the same way that, as windows allows for both participation in and separation from life, it invokes the notion of an existence of two worlds of realities.

Windows signify both solidity and transparency.

In fact, Martha Nussbaum (1995; 743) made sure that Woolf 's image of the window made people not completely sealed to one another.

"There is an opening, one can see through or see in, even if one cannot enter" also.

In her novel *To the Lighthouse*, by the end of part 1, the novel ends by saying "She had not said it, yet he knew" (2008; p. 100).

A recent study conducted entitled "A quest for Identity", a researcher pointed out in the introduction of study that Virginia Woolf might be considered as a feminist as she pointed out the struggle of a female author in the academic world dominated by males only.

Also, Woolf is extraordinary as she dealt with issues ahead of her time.e.g. gender identity.as presented in *Orlando*.

In *Orlando*, Woolf made identity and self as a significant theme where she describes the notion of existence of not a single self but multiple selves which constantly interplay.

Woolf shows that human identity is not necessarily defined by a single word, situation or experience, identity is perceived as a complex mosaic of selves.

The researcher concluded her theses that Woolf completed her quest of identity in *A Room of one's Own* and *Orlando* according to her personal needs by showing two types of identity; a female writer struggling to find her way successfully in a world dominated by men and a woman wanted to establish a position for herself in a society as equal to men.

As for *Orlando*, Woolf wanted to analyse social attitudes towards gender keeping in mind that Woolf lived during the strict moral codes of the



Victorian age and so astonished by the technological advances of the 20 th century.

Formation of Identity in Mrs Dalloway

Mrs Dalloway, published in 1925, is one of the best novels written by Virginia Woolf.

Among the themes that have been tackled in this novel, is the expression of identity confusion in post- world war England.

The novel is centred on the subjective experiences and memories of characters over a single day in London.

The novel is divided into parts, rather than chapters in order to emphasize the fine thread of interconnected thoughts between the characters.

The main protagonists in the novel, are Clarissa Dalloway, the wife of a politician and Septimus Smith. Septimus Smith is a war veteran who fails to find his purpose in life after the War.

In the character of Mrs.

Dalloway one gets a glimpse of everyday life of an ordinary woman living in London during the early twentieth century and her struggles to find her identity apart from what society assigned to her.

Through the character of Septimus Smith, readers come to explore the thoughts in the mind of a world war veteran who completely loses his idea of the Self and fails to establish it ever again.

The inability to establish identities is what eventually brings these characters together towards alienation and isolation.

Virginia Woolf stretched the various dimensions of identity in her portrait of Clarissa Dalloway as she confines the span of the novel to one day not only to record the minute passage of time in the individual mind and but also to record the individual as a historical being.

Types of Identity

(a) Social Identity

To start with, Woolf has established for Clarissa a permanent identity by addressing her as MRS Dalloway.

Mrs indicate the status of women being married by adopting their husband names rather than family.



Clarissa Dalloway is presented with a minimum amount of physical description.

We only come to know her about what her neighbour Scrope Purvis who thought about her “A charming woman with a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty and grown very white since her illness. “(MD, 4).

This reference to a bird may suggest that Clarissa is an active character.

Contra to this, Clarissa defined herself by saying,” a narrow pea stick figure, a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird’s”. (MD, 12).

In fact, this is rather an unfavourable description that reveals her own negative subjective assessment of herself.

Woolf even further emphasized this point when Clarissa imagined herself as being “invisible, unseen, unknown “. (MD, 13).

Therefore, Clarissa denies any physical existence of herself.

Additionally, Woolf stressed this fact of Clarissa ‘s invisible attendance by saying:

“ Somehow, in the streets of London , on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home: of the house there ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was ; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself.” (MD, 10- 11).

Mist is a metaphor that is employed by Woolf that spreads out lightly over the entire social context.

It is a vital metaphor presented to facilitate the understanding of the diffuse nature of identity.

In fact, Mist represents how Clarissa ‘s character identity is dispersed over the city but also it may be a way of describing that dispersion collectively.

By spreading her character between the people, she knew best, the real character of Clarissa’s identity is hidden from other eyes of other individuals.

Another idea to be thought about, is that during Modernism, it is normal that urban places being inhabited by variety of people that may be assembled into public places.



In such a crowd, individuals may have different identities or they may be totally ignorant of each other as Wilson has pointed out that The modern city resulted in the promiscuous mingling of classes in close proximity on the street (Wilson,1991: 29).

That blurred the boundaries between the individuals in terms of their social status.

This mingling of classes appears in Mrs Dalloway where the society ranges from the Majesties as well as ordinary people.

Therefore, the identity of Clarissa Dalloway may get lost among the various crowd that assembled in the street.

Any individual may be established or disestablished according to the social environment.

The event of making a party.

Woolf devised this stabling of events in order to unite different characters through collective experiences.

A large group of people happens to be present in the street of London while Clarissa was passing, they hear many voices e.g.

Big Ben or passing of cars, passing of Royalty.

Their response might be the same.

Therefore, Virginia Woolf through this collective experience conveys the interconnectivity of all people.

Additionally, Woolf designed this social event of making of party in this novel just to force characters from different status to assemble: “Every time, she gave a party, she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that everyone was unreal in one way; much more real in another.

It was, she thought, partly their clothes, partly being taken out of their ordinary ways, partly the background; it was possible to say things you couldn’t say, possible to go deeper” (MD, 201- 2).

The making of something ordinary into extra ordinary.

Woolf used the party as way of getting deeper into the insides of characters because she knows quite well that characters best interact socially when they come together.

Woolf commented “She had the oddest thing to being herself invisible; unseen; unknown” (MD, 13).

The normality of Clarissa ‘s life casts her as a totally infused with the society.



(b) Time identity

Woolf 's journey towards identity might be further analysed in this novel by discussing the temporal dimension of the novel and it's reflected upon characters' identities.

According to Paul Ricoeur (1984- 88: 104) "By giving a temporal depth to the narrative, the entanglement of the narrated present with the remembered past confers a psychological depth on the characters without however, giving them a stable identity, so discordant are the glimpses the characters have of one another and of themselves".

Based on this comment, Identity is not a fixed quantity in Woolf's novels but rather a continual process of Becoming.

Characters are constantly are adjusting to their sense of personality.

They go on oscillating between the past and present, therefore, they lack any sense of a permanent identity.

(c) Identity through mirrors

In fact, the devise of Mirror is another way that could achieve identity.

When Clarissa looked in the mirror "collecting the whole of her at one point, seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party, of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself" (MD, 44- 5).

For her, seeing herself in the mirror reflects a moment of self- realization in which she is able to put together the bits and pieces that make up her identity.

Furthermore, Clarissa thinks: "How many million times she had seen her face and always with the same imperceptible contraction" (MD, 45).

Although, the mirror image may be assessed as the reflection of the character 's image of inner life, it can also be a reminder that her reflection might not actually gives her true self.

This phenomenon was already described by Jacques Lacan, the French philosopher who described mirror stage as "misidentification" because the reflection in the mirror is a composition of the subject desired self instead of the real one.

Clarissa "pursed her lips when she looked in the glass.

It was to give her face point.



That was herself when some effort, some call on her to be herself, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre,

One diamond one woman had tried to be the same always, never showing a sign of all the other sides of her, faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicious” (MD, 45).

This is definitely a justification that when Clarissa is looking in the mirror, she does not see her reflection but rather perceive her public self.

She wanted others to view her as a diamond, as a woman and that means to forget other aspects of her character in order to appear as perfect public ideal self as the image reflected in the mirror.

Therefore, she is aware of her fragmented self, but she makes an effort to appear as a united self, nonetheless.

Her desired self is constantly reinforced by the other characters’ perception of her.

This fragmentary nature appears when Clarissa more often speaks of herself being dissembled into fragments.

Moreover, Clarissa felt that “half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that.

Oh, if she could have had her life over again! She thought, stepping on the pavement, could have even looked differently “(MD, 12).

(d) Fragmented identity

The French philosopher Deluze (Deluze, 2009, 48) claims that fragmented identity comes with sole relationship in sheer different fragments that are related to one another only in that each of them is different without having to recourse to any sort of original totality or to subsequent totality that may not have come about.

This is most suitable to Clarissa ‘s contradictory nature.

One incident, she exclaims that “At the age of fifty, she felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged” (MD, 10).

On another incident, Clarissa acclaims that she is happy with her present life.

She sometimes back in her twenties, in the country side of Burton experiencing youth and love in the company of Peter Walsh and Sally Seton.

The third incident is that Clarissa is back to London, happy with her life, yet feeling depressed and dissatisfied with her present life.



Clarissa felt that her true self exists with her old friend and lover but her inability to reconcile with the past, thereby blocked her from developing her social identity she is seeking after.

And because she continuously swaying between her past and present life and between her memory and perception as well as integrating the different sensations thereby creating a web of consciousness.

She wanders off in her mind observing reality without actually participating in the events around her. She asks herself” walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely.

Identity in Mrs Dalloway could be inspected not only through her relationship with her former lover Peter Walsh, but also Septimus Smith.

He is a veteran suffering mentally as a result of his time that he spent in the War.

In fact, his illness dispossesses him from his living normally as a wedded man.

He also suffered severely because of the death of his dear friend Evans.

Compared to Clarissa Dalloway, Septimus does not attempt to create his social identity as he thinks that the consequences of the war left humanity meaningless.

He isolates himself, believing that “Now, he was quite alone , there was a luxury in it , an isolation full of sublimity; a freedom which the attached can never know” (MD, 111).

But this is impossible for Septimus to search for freedom in order to do as he wishes at the same time, he wants to be alone.

In fact, Septimus has struggled to establish his identity.

He cannot be treated by doctors as a normal patient, his wife has mistreated him.

He believes that his body “has flowered; flowered from vanity, ambition, idealism, passion, loneliness, courage, laziness, the usual seeds, which all muddled up, made him shy, and stammering, made him anxious to improve himself (MD,101).

At the end, he concluded that “London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith”.

And that even if he exists, it wouldn't be significant.



This is where his alienation from the world is transformed to the level of self- alienation.

Formation of Identity In to the Lighthouse

In to the Lighthouse is the most moving and complex novel in which Virginia Woolf drew memories of her girlhood summer at ST Ives, Cornwall to focus on different themes such as time and death.

It is largely based upon the death of her mother.

She devises her work into three un- equal parts.

The first half of the novel entitled “The window “and its span is only one day.

The second part is rather short “Time Passes pictures the family house during ten years absence.

The final section “To the Lighthouse” covers one day but it is centred almost completely in the main character, a painter named Lily Briscoe and her mediation while completing her portrait.

Types of Identity

(a) Individual identity

The two major characters in this novel are Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Almost the entire novel, Lily is seeking to know Mrs Ramsay ‘s identity.

This quest is introduced by the comment “One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with, she reflected.

Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that woman with, she thought “(TL, 161).

She continues to identify Mrs Ramsey imaging her mind as “Treasures in the tombs of the kings, tables bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out, would teach one everything, but they would never be offered openly, never made public” (TL,44).

But still, Woolf in her assertion of Ramsay identity said “She is to be sure, an enigma and such she basically remains, but she is as it were encircled by the content of all the various consciousness directed upon her.

We come to know about the identity of Mrs Ramsay through Lily ‘s inner perspective.

There are several incidents in the novel whereby Lily imagines that there is more than one way of knowing people.



One of which was “to know the outline, not the detail, to sit in one ‘s garden and look at the slopes of a hill running down into the distant heather”. (TL, 159).

Furthermore, Lily even struggles with Mrs Ramsay ‘s identity not only to understand her, but to her, to forge such an intense union through love.

She mediated “What art was there, known to love or cunning by which one pressed through into the secret chambers? What devise for becoming like waters poured into one jar? Could loving as people called it, make her and Mrs Ramsay one? (TL, 44).

(b)Identity through Motherhood

Typical to Woolf ‘s manifestation of identity, To the Lighthouse presents the multiple representation of identity in character ‘s construction.

Mrs Ramsay identity of a dutiful wife and a mother of eight children, who embodies traditional Victorian values about women as submissive, dependent, and domestic.

Besides, she feels like a mother to all visitors who happened to be staying at the simmer house “They came to her naturally since she was a woman, all day long with this and that.

She often feels that she was nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions. Mrs.

Ramsay directs her attention with exceptional devotion to her children.

When Charles Tansley tease James, her youngest son about the impossibility of visiting the lighthouse the next day, Mrs.

Ramsay felt her responsibility to soothe the Injured feelings of her youngest child: "Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing," says Mrs.

Ramsay "compassionately," while "smoothing the little boy's hair"(TL,16).

Mrs. Ramsay's mothering duties extend to her husband and her husband completely relay on her: “He wanted sympathy.

He was a failure “or “It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all and then to be taken within the circle of life warmed and soothed “(TL, 33).

Mrs. Ramsay provides her husband with the sympathy he desires until, "Filled with her words, like a child who drops off satisfied, he said, at last,



looking at her with humble gratitude, restored, renewed, that he would take a turn” (TL, 34).

The simile of a child nursing at the mother's breast emphasizes the element of mothering in the Ramsey 'relationship.

(c) Identity through devises

A useful devise that Woolf employs once again in this novel is reflection of the self in the mirror.

In the issue, Oster (1998: 59) writes “There is some discrepancy between the actual surface external mirror image that any looker could see and some sort of interior mental self whether wished for, or felt or despised which prompts or results from the questions: who and what am I? Which is the real me?”.

This what happened with Mrs Ramsay while she was conversing with her daughters “She looks at the mirror and sees herself “with her grey hair, her cheek sunk , at fifty , she thought , possibly she might have managed things better– her husband ; money , his books “ (TL, 9).

Then she realizes her mental image that probably juxtaposes with her reflection in the mirror all with her image that is reflected to the others, she realizes that “her daughters could sport with infidel ideas of a life different from hers, in Paris, perhaps a wilder life, not always taking care of some man or other “(TL, 9).

Nevertheless, Mrs Ramsay maintains her own mental image thinking that for her own part she would never for a single second regret her decision, evade difficulties or slur over duties.

In the course of her identity, Mrs Ramsay feel that there is a gap between herself, and her daughters and this feeling forced her to avoid looking at herself in the mirror.

In order to assert further this fact, Woolf added “she has a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything and she could be in it or one could be out of it and she was out of it.

It all come to an end, she thought “(TL, 68).

In another situation, when Ramsay felt the squeeze of her old age, she remarked that she was not jealous of her daughters but only resentful that she had grown up.



(d) Group Identity

Woolf style that configures identity in its relationship with the other characters, its attachment and as something that does not exist in itself.

Being invisible to others and even externally invisible to herself and relaying only on her mental self- image.

Mrs Ramsay identifies herself when she is alone in the evening “All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal.

Evaporated and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity to being oneself as invisible wedged shape core of darkness, something invisible to others” (TL, 52).

Likewise, Mrs Ramsay identity has a surface and inner vision of self-identity.

She affirms her preference for depths over surfaces when she thinks that “our apparitions, the things you know by, are simply childish.

Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and what you see us by” (TL, 53).

But this leverage to the surface makes the character of Mrs Ramsay more complicated.

Mrs Ramsay thought herself rising to the surface as she turns her attention towards the Lighthouse: “It was odd, she thought how if one alone, one leant to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers felt they expressed one; felt they become one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one” (TL, 53).

(e) Gender Identity – Female

Lily Briscoe serves as the other major character in this novel to establish her identity.

Lily ‘s identity is brought to the surface through Mrs Ramsay ‘s remark when she described her as having little Chinese eyes a puckered up face but an independent little creature Mrs.

Ramsay’s physical description of Lily as having “Chinese eyes” and a “puckered- up face” is condescending but at the same time highlights another qualification of Lily’s inferior social status.

Here, Mrs.

Ramsay is under the assumption that Lily is still unmarried because she does not possess the standard of beauty that most respectable men would find attractive.



In contrast, Mrs. Ramsay is often praised for her beauty.

(f) Gender identity- Male

Mr Ramsay is the head of his house and its social hierarchy; He serves as the traditional patriarch within the novel *In to Lighthouse*.

Ramsay is a demanding father of eight children and husband of Mrs Ramsay.

He controls his house with an iron fist and no family member can do any move without his permission.

He never softens his words for “the pleasure or convenience” of anyone of his family.

Ramsay chooses to maintain the identity of traditional masculinity instead of worrying about the emotions of others.

Furthermore, Mr Ramsay masculine identity is emphasized by the power he exerts on those around him especially the two females, his wife Mrs Ramsay and the artist Lily Briscoe.

Mrs Ramsay reverend him more than anyone else and offered him the emotional support he needs.

Their marriage represents the traditional Victorian model of submissive wife and patriarchal husband. Mrs.

Ramsay is a submissive wife and tender mother who is pure, immensely charming, intensely sympathetic, and utterly unselfish, just like “Angle in the house”. (Woolf, 100-101).

When Mrs Ramsay died, the situation changed, he directed his attention towards the modern artist Lily Briscoe.

An interesting analogy between the two novels is that Virginia Woolf has tried many ways to establish identity.

In Mrs Dalloway, identity is shown through the main character Mrs Dalloway as Socialite and wife of a politician concerned only with making parities and meeting upper class socials whereas In to The Lighthouse, the identity centers on the painter Lily Briscoe and her struggle to establish herself as a woman painter in a big world dominated by men Gender identity could be spotted into to the Lighthouse where Mr Ramsay is the man who wanted to show his identity by commanding all around him.

In contrast to him, there is Lily Briscoe, the pretty female who wants to become a famous painter.



Conclusion

The period that followed the first World War, is considered as opportunity to advance all that pertains to life including scientific discoveries and theories.

Modernist were very much fascinated by Psychological theories that held forward by Sigmund Freud and Carl Yung that determined to present novels through the subjective experience of characters.

Added to this fact, Modernists were anxious to break free from the traditional/ objective presentation inherent in previous novels and wanted very much to come up with something new.

Stylistic devices such as stream of consciousness and interior monologues marked the move away from traditional styles.

Modernists as post war generation of writers presented their concern about identity and how their characters struggle to establish their identities.

This is also true in a world where every department of life, every belief is riddled with doubts.

Virginia Woolf and her journey to establish identity.

There is a question here that arises “Why Virginia Woolf was anxious to establish her identity?”.

Although, Woolf suffered from mental illness during that era nevertheless she continued to explore her identity as a pioneer novelist through her novels.

Her novel *To the Lighthouse* and the quest of Lily Briscoe to achieve artistic hit is an example.

Added to this, Mrs. Dalloway is a high- class social elite who throughout the whole novel is seeking a social identity but again a question here; how can identity be established when a character is totally detached from his surrounding? Both, Lily Briscoe and Mrs.

Dalloway are unaware of their surroundings, are living inside themselves and are not ready to interact with the outside world.

I think that Woolf ‘s journey towards identity is a long tiring journey bearing the fact that identity is what constitute human self but in a complicated changing world where everything is difficult to explain add to her suffering from mental illness all this, is manifested in her art.

References:

Primary Resources

Woolf, Virginia. (1996). “Mrs Dalloway”. Penguin Books, London.



Woolf, Virginia (2008). "To the Lighthouse", Oxford World 's Classics.

Secondary Resources

Chapman, R.T. (1972). "The Lady in the Looking Glass: Modes of Perception in a short story by Virginia Woolf. Modern Fiction Studies. Vol. 18, No 3, pp.331-337.

Chloe, Taylor. (2006). "Kristevan Themes in Virginia Woolf 's The Waves: Journal of Modern Literature, Vol.29, No 3, pp.57-77.

Collins (2000). English Dictionary & Thesaurus.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. (2005). A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Published by the University of Minnesota Press, pp. 3-74.

Faigely, Lester. (1992). "Fragments of rationality" Post – Modernity and the subject of Composition. University of Pittsburgh Press, pp.16-20.

Klein, Jan (1973).as quoted in Waggoner "My Avatar, Myself: Identity in Video Role playing game, pp.22.

Mansfield, Nick (2000). "Introduction to Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway. New York University Press, pp.1-12.

Nussbaum, Martha C. (1995). The Window: Knowledge of other minds in Virginia Woolf 's To the Lighthouse. New Literary History. Vol.26, No 4. JSTOR, pp.731-753.

Olk, Claudia. (2004). "Modalities of the Gaze: windows, Mirrors and the Veil. Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision. De Gryter, pp.54-108.

Oster, Judith (1998). "See(k)ing the Self: Mirrors and Mirroring in Bicultural Texts". MELUS. Vol.23.No 4. Theory, Culture and Criticism. Oxford University Press, pp.59-83.

Steiner, Wendy (1987). Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein. Yale University Press, New Haven, pp.141.

Ukolova, Maria (2016/17). "The Quest for Identity in selected works of Virginia Woolf (A Room of One's own and Orlando. A Biography) (MA theses) Univerzita Karlova V Praze , Pedagogicka'Fakulta .

Waggoner, Zack (2004). "My Avatar, Myself: Identity in Video Role Playing Games. McFarland.

Woolf, Virginia (1925). "The Common Reader" First series. Hogarth Press. New York, pp.65-75.