Into the Light

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Contents

Introduction

> [...] 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 [...] I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her. I suppose that I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. (Woolf, *Sketch* 81)

Virginia Woolf was averse to and highly critical of the theory and practice of psychoanalysis (Lee 197). She claimed that up until 1939, the year in which she met Sigmund Freud, she did not read his work--despite the fact that the Hogarth Press (which she and her husband owned) was the first in Britain to publish a complete translation of Freud's work, starting in the early 1920s. However, she did have knowledge of the prevalent theories on psychoanalysis at the time, gathered mainly from 'gossip' with some of her friends and relatives, such as her brother Adrian and his wife Karin, who were both psychoanalysts (Hussey 93-4). Her main objection to psychoanalysis seems to have been that it turns people into 'cases' and ignores their complexity; she did *not* dispute "psychoanalytic interpretations of infantile experience" (Abel 17).

In her diary of 1925, Woolf writes that *To the Lighthouse* "is going to be fairly short; to have father's character done complete in it; & mothers [*sic*]; & St Ives; & childhood; & all the usual things I try to put in--life, death &c. But the centre is father's character" (Woolf, *Diary* 18). However, it is evident from the notes she took later on while planning the novel that "her interest has gravitated from the father to the mother [and that] To sustain Mrs. Ramsay as the novel's 'dominating impression,' Woolf created Lily Briscoe" (Abel 68). Woolf challenges "the paternal genealogies prescribed by nineteenth-century fictional conventions and reinscribed by Freud" (Abel 3), and as such, her ideas coincide with the maternal narratives formulated in the 1920s by psychoanalyst Melanie Klein.

The first page of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* immediately sets the tone: we read James Ramsay's (the youngest of eight siblings) thoughts about his parents, which invokes the idea of the Oedipal triangle, first written of by Sophocles in Ancient Greece, posed in the early twentieth

century as part of a theory on infantile development and sexuality by Freud, and questioned by later psychoanalysts such as Klein:

> Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgement. What he said was true. It was always true. (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259)

In this thesis, my aim is to show that Woolf uses two opposing narratives--that of James and Cam Ramsay as representing Freud's paternal views on family roles and society, and that of Lily Briscoe as representing a feminist, maternal view similar to Klein's--to portray both the changes that have already taken place in the movement of the Victorian era to the post-war period in Britain, and to indicate that more changes are necessary to further women's emancipation. I argue that Woolf's aim is not a replacement of patriarchy by matriarchy, but to achieve a balance between masculine and feminine forces to create a society in which both are equally represented.

In my research, I have focussed specifically on Freud and Klein's theories of psychoanalysis, Woolf's feminism and aesthetics, and their connections to pre-war and post-war society. In particular, I address the relationship between *To the Lighthouse* and Woolf's own childhood experiences of the Victorian era, the impact of the Great War, the similarities to cinema(tography) and Marcel Proust, the relationship between feminism and aesthetics, and finally, the differences between Freud's psychoanalytic theories and those of Klein and how these two are represented in the novel.

I began my research by reading Woolf's work and other people's work on Woolf. The greatest guidance has been Hermione Lee's immense biography, *Virginia Woolf*, which, together with Woolf's diaries, letters and other autobiographical work, helped shape my understanding of Woolf. I drew my main inspiration from Abel's *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*,

Goldman's *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*, and Levenback's *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*.

In the first chapter, I will discuss the changes from pre-war to post-war society in Woolf's own lifetime, as well as in *To the Lighthouse*. The second chapter focusses specifically on the Great War and its impact on Woolf and how this is reflected in the novel. In the third chapter, I compare the novel to (the techniques of) cinema and Proust. The fourth chapter is concerned with Woolf's feminism and how this is illustrated in the novel through her use of aesthetics. In the final chapter, I first explain Freud's relevant ideas and show how they are represented in *To the Lighthouse* by James and Cam's narrative, and then explain how Klein's ideas differ from Freud's and how they are represented in Lily Briscoe's narrative.

Armies and Navies

In her lifetime, Woolf witnessed several important changes and developments in England. Having been born in 1882, her childhood was set during the Victorian era. Thus, she grew up with the strict ideals of female chastity and family roles common at the time. Her mother was "a beautiful middle-class woman" (Lee 85) who was "opposed to female suffrage and thought women should only be educated for domestic careers" (Lee 85). However, family life was split in two for Woolf, with, on the one hand, the younger generation--the children of Leslie and Julia Stephen--and on the other hand, the older generation--the children resulting from their former marriages, "who were still, she thinks, Victorians: 'We were living say in 1910; they were living in 1860'" (Lee 55).

However, in her twenties she and her siblings Thoby, Vanessa and Adrian saw the end of the Victorian period, and due to the death of their father (nine years after their mother passed away) were able to live a modern, rather unorthodox life. They moved into a house together in London and often discussed art and politics with friends (later on resulting in the formation of the Bloomsbury group) (Lee 262-3).

In *To the Lighthouse*, the father, Mr Ramsay, is a philosopher who thinks the (male) intellect is ordered and analogous to the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. He has worked his way through them, up until Q, at which he is now stuck (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 278). Woolf uses this to mock "rational, linear thought and [...] any attempt to systematize knowledge" (Hussey 1), a tendency, it can be claimed, specific to men (as their dominance in, for instance, the field of logic indicates). The use of the alphabet is both a reference to Bertrand Russell's notation of the syllogism (used in logic) as

> All P are Q
> R is P
> Therefore R is Q (Hussey 1)

as well as to Leslie Stephen's project of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a work of reference which is arranged alphabetically (Hussey 1). Thus, Woolf seems to suggest similarities between Mr

Ramsay and her own father (as well as intellectual men in general) and in doing so, turns him into a caricature Victorian man. Mr Ramsay's efforts in the field of philosophy are portrayed as part of a larger picture, which will be replaced in the future: "His own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two, and would then be merged in some bigger light, and that in a bigger still" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 279). This is similar to the process in science (also male-dominated) where a particular theory is dominant until a new one is developed and replaces it (as Einstein's did with Newton's).

The first part of *To the Lighthouse* can be considered to represent the view of the older generation and pre-war, Victorian values, in which "marriage and children [were] the social norm, careers and intellectual pursuits [...] the public domain of men, and domestic duties [...] the private realm of women" (Goldman 169). The second section then, which is set during the Great War, represents the transition away from those values, partly due to the death of Mrs Ramsay, and the final part shows the next generation's viewpoint and the introduction of modern values by which women do not necessarily have to marry, as Lily Briscoe shows (Goldman 169).

Woolf's family had ties to imperialism: her grandfather, James Stephen was an "influential colonial administrator [whose] life's work [...] was to carry out emancipation in the colonies [...] [He] was an unpopular as well as a powerful figure [and his son] Leslie remembered him dictating to wife and daughter [...] at such a speed that they could hardly keep up" (Lee 60-1). Her mother, Julia Stephen, was born in India (Hussey 267). The Ramsay family's history in *To the Lighthouse* is similarly founded in imperialism (Carr 197). Mrs Ramsay's family is probably stationed in India (for she makes several references to India, e.g. Woolf *Lighthouse* 260), and Mr Ramsay is the dominant ruler (and sometimes tyrant) of his own Empire, his family (Lee 479). At the start of the novel, James (the Stephen family's male name) cuts out a picture of a refrigerator from "the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259). The refrigerator evokes the idea of modernism, but also of frigidity, meaning sexual inactivity, a Victorian value

praised in women. Army and Navy Stores were common in Britain throughout this period and are associated with imperialism. Finally, James' mother fantasizes about him going into law when he is older, the occupation of most of the men in the Stephen family (Lee 60).

However, Mr Ramsay's patriarchal system is challenged (like that of Leslie Stephen was by his children) throughout the novel by "Mrs Ramsay with an alternative language of matriarchy; by Lily with her painting; by William Bankes with his scientific objectivity; by the homosexual Augustus Carmichael with his mystical, impersonal Persian poetry, and by the children" (Lee 479). Interestingly enough, Leslie Stephen considered his father a tyrant at home, while his own children later on felt the same way about him (Hussey 265), which suggests a "profound influence of the past on the present, and the ways in which each generation continues to live out and by the values, defences and world-views of the [preceding] generation" (Marcus, *Feminism* 149). Woolf was well aware of this and incorporated it into *To the Lighthouse*. The fact that Lily appears to overcome this at the end of the novel suggests that there is hope for change, although one can never completely erase the past and its influence.

Besides traditional family roles, the novel also reveals a glimpse of the class system prevalent in Britain at the time. The Ramsay family is a middle-class family with servants and a summer home (like the Stephens). After the Great War, the Ramsay's servant Mrs McNab cleans the family's summer home after their ten year-absence, making it fit for living again. This part of the novel was written during the General Strike of 1926 and "is about the stoic survival of working people" (Lee 531).

Madness of Civilization

Woolf was thirty-two at the start of the Great War, which she experienced as a civilian. She was greatly affected by this, what she called, "preposterous masculine fiction" (Levenback 13), the end of which to her "was a beginning and [...] would serve as a touchstone against which life would be judged" (Levenback 26). She considered "the civilian experience of the war [...] no less real" (Levenback 16) than that of those on the front, and tried to come to terms with this in her fiction.

In 1925, Woolf came up with the idea for *To the Lighthouse*, which she began to write a year later and would publish in 1927. The Great War is one of its major themes: the civilian experience of it and the transition of England to the unstable period that followed (Levenback 84). In this novel, Woolf tries to cope with her own memories of "war and death in a world intent on forgetting them both" (Levenback 89), and shows that this is needed to move forward in post-war times.

In *To the Lighthouse*, as in her other work, the beginning of war is marked by darkness: "with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof, a downpouring of immense darkness began" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 337). Throughout this middle section of the novel, the word 'nothing' is repeated numerous times, and together with words such as 'emptiness', 'darkness' and 'chaos' sets the tone for the war years. The reader is told about the deaths of Mrs Ramsay, Andrew and Prue in short sentences placed in between square brackets--causing shock and disbelief (and allowing Woolf to avoid sentimentality). Thus, Woolf is able to convey emotion not only by *telling* the reader what happens, but also by *how* she puts it. The feeling of emptiness which dominates this section is further intensified by the description of the Ramsay's summer house as deserted and falling into a state of disrepair.

Other events put in between square brackets are Prue's marriage and her giving birth (provided as the probable cause for her death), and as such, these short sentences evoke the image of a newspaper, stating only facts. Woolf reproached the newspapers for their coverage during the

Great War, believing that they "eschewed the reality of war and made it appear nonthreatening to those at the home front" (Levenback 13). She alludes to this when she states Andrew's death: "[A shell exploded. Twenty *or* thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.]" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 342, italics added).

Woolf was shocked; she had "never considered the possibility of a great European war. It seemed such an absolutely mad thing for a civilized people to do" (Lee 345). This shock is reflected by the questions that haunt the first few pages of 'The Lighthouse': "this morning everything seemed so extraordinarily queer that a question like Nancy's -- What does one send to the Lighthouse? -- [...] made one keep asking, in a stupefied gape: What does one send? What does one do? Why is one sitting here after all?" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 351).

Freud also experienced the Great War as a civilian and was equally bewildered and disillusioned, due to "the low morality shown externally by states which in their internal relations pose as the guardians of moral standards, and the brutality shown by individuals whom [...] one would not have thought capable of such behaviour" (Freud).

However shocking though, the war "destroyed illusion and put truth in its place" (Woolf, *Room* 572) (evocative of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"). In *To the Lighthouse*, peace comes in the third part and is announced by the lighthouse, suggesting light--this time artificial--after the darkness of the war. It becomes obvious that the post-war differs from the pre-war world: the journey to the lighthouse is finally undertaken, but not exactly as they had originally planned, because a female, Cam, now joins the men in the boat. Meanwhile, Lily finally finishes her painting, but it is a completely new one (Goldman 178). This part of the novel suggests that the possibility of change and "the potential for life and growth in the post-war world involves validation of civilian memory as well" (Levenback 89).

Travesty

> So the days pass, & I ask myself sometimes whether one is not hypnotised, as a child by a silver globe, by life; & whether this is living. Its [*sic*] very quick, bright, exciting. But superficial perhaps. I should like to take the globe in my hands & feel it quietly, round, smooth, heavy. & so hold it, day after day. I will read Proust I think. I will go backwards and forwards. (Woolf, *Diary* 209)

Freud made use of hypnosis in his psychotherapy for a short period of time, but soon replaced it by the method of free association, which bears some resemblance to the stream of consciousness technique used by Proust and Woolf in their novels (Jones 156). Woolf was perhaps as fearful of hypnosis (and psychotherapy in general) as she was of the experience of reading Proust: "I'm shivering on the brink, and waiting to be submerged with a horrid notion that I shall go down and down and perhaps never come up again" (Coyle 260).

Woolf was fascinated with the idea of the passage of time, which she illustrates partly through her use of stream of consciousness. In *To the Lighthouse*, she goes "backwards and forwards" (Woolf, *Diary* 209) between the thoughts of different characters, producing a stream of thoughts. In the first part of the novel, long sections and the abundance in details slow down the feeling of the passage of time; however, in the second part, brief sections, descriptions rather than thoughts, and the use of short sentences conveying major events cause the feeling of time passing quickly.

Woolf's techniques for conveying time are similar to those of Proust, although they are not the same, and indeed, it might be said that her writing is a travesty of Proust (Coyle 259); it imitates his work, but in a distorted way. The same can be claimed about cinema and cinematography, which emerged in Woolf's lifetime and influenced her and other writers. While in the process of writing *To the Lighthouse,* the expressionist silent movie *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* inspired Woolf to write "The Cinema" (Hussey 49). In this essay, she envisions a different task for the new art form, other than simply adapting novels into movies; she believed its future lay in triggering visual emotions through, for example, abstract shapes (*Cinema* 3). Although Woolf criticized how the new art form

was applied, it can be argued that she used some of its techniques in her novels, creating a caricature--a travesty.

She was fascinated with the idea that movies allow us to "see life as it is when we have no part in it" (Woolf, *Cinema* 1), evoking a theory in philosophy formulated by Bishop Berkeley, who claimed that objects only exist if they are being perceived. Woolf refers to this idea in *To the Lighthouse* when Lily remembers Andrew Ramsay trying to explain his father's field of study, namely "Subject and object and the nature of reality" (271), by saying: "Think of a table [...] when you're not there" (271).

The theme of perception can be discerned throughout the novel: "looking at people looking and being looked at, and creating a complex interplay of eyelines and sightlines within the text" (Marcus, *Muse* 143). In the first part of *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay wants all the windows open and the doors closed (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 274), presumably to stop the spread of Tuberculosis. However, this image can also be interpreted as people being allowed to *look* at the scenes playing inside, but not to *participate* in them, much as one looks at the screen in a movie-theater and sees everything that goes on but cannot take part in it. In another scene, Mrs Ramsay poses with James behind a window for Lily's painting. Mrs Ramsay lets her thoughts roam free as James cuts out pictures from a catalogue, until "the sight of the girl standing on the edge of the lawn painting [reminds] her; she [is] supposed to be keeping her head as much in the same position as possible" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 267). In 'The Lighthouse', after Mrs Ramsay's death, Lily continues her painting and reflects how "Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 384), an image evoking both cubism and the technique in cinematography of showing multiple perspectives (Marcus, *Muse* 144). This technique is shown through the stream of thoughts which runs through the novel, in which the consciousness passes between different people. As such, it is not a continuous stream in the sense of being only one person's thoughts, but

rather those of multiple people, showing different sides of the story, seemingly at once due to the continuation of thoughts.

The idea of "absence" or "invisible presence [which Woolf used] to describe the continuing influences upon her of 'ghosts', and her dead mother in particular" (Marcus, *Muse* 115) is another theme in *To the Lighthouse*. In the 'Time Passes' section, Woolf uses brackets to enclose "those elements which traditionally form the substance of novels (childbirth, marriage, death) and gives the narrative over to 'unnaratable' events, such as the passing of time and the decay of matter" (Marcus, *Muse* 145). In this part, there is no "identifiable point of view" (Trotter 169). In the final section, the absence of Mrs Ramsay, can be felt throughout: "Here was Lily, at forty-four, wasting her time, unable to do a thing, standing there, playing at painting, playing at the one thing one did not play at, and it was all Mrs Ramsay's fault. She was dead. The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 354).

In 'The Lighthouse', Woolf clearly uses another technique from cinematography when she moves back and forth between the voyage to the lighthouse and Lily's completion of her painting, emphasizing that these events occur simultaneously. On a larger scale, the constant changes from one character's thoughts to another throughout the novel can also remind one of a movie. To a similar effect, in the parts about the trip to the lighthouse the view alternates between the boat, looking back at the shore, and looking forward to the lighthouse (Marcus, *Muse* 145).

A New ---

Woolf was a feminist, but it is difficult to place her in a particular tradition due to the complexity and contradictory nature of "Her responses to the feminist ideas of her time" (Marcus, *Feminism* 144). She was part of the active suffragette movement for a while, but withdrew because she felt that obtaining equal rights to vote was not enough (Marcus, *Feminism* 144). Woolf, on the one hand, emphasized the differences between men and women--although she believed women could achieve just as much as men and are their equal intellectually, if only they receive an education and sufficient financial means--but on the other hand, she thought the "emphasis ... laid consciously upon the sex of a writer" (Marcus, *Feminism* 147) unnecessary and annoying (Marcus, *Feminism* 146). Woolf believed "that women should have liberty of experience; that they should differ from men without fear and express their differences openly" (Marcus, *Feminism* 146).

Although Woolf, in a letter to Roger Fry, claimed that she "meant *nothing* by The Lighthouse" (Nicolson, *Letters* 385), she also writes that she "refused to think [the feelings associated with The Lighthouse] 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" (Nicolson, *Letters* 385). Thus, the objects she chose in the novel are meant to signify something, although they might not have only one static or predetermined meaning, and the reader is invited to read more into them than the author may have intended.

Aesthetics plays a major role in *To the Lighthouse*. The novel's protagonist, Lily Briscoe, is a painter whose view on traditional family roles and feminism is illustrated by her art. On a larger scale, Woolf's use of shapes, colors, light and shadows throughout the novel can be seen to reflect the elegiac tone of the novel and illuminates the transition from the pre-war, Victorian era to the post-war period. Lily in turn may be interpreted to embody Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell, or Woolf herself.

In June 1927, Woolf witnessed a total solar eclipse. Although by this time she had already published *To the Lighthouse*, the novel can be interpreted using the idea of an eclipse, with its movement from the natural light in the first part, to the darkness prevalent in the second part, to the (artificial) illumination of the lighthouse and Lily's vision in the final part (Goldman 1689).

Before starting the novel, Woolf envisioned a new form for it: "[...] I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel'. A new --- by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?" (Woolf, *Diary* 34). In choosing this form for her novel, which is also similar to a "künstlerroman" (Goldman 169)--both of which are traditionally male-dominated--Woolf is innovative by opting for a female protagonist, who moreover paints a portrait of a woman (Goldman 169).

Woolf's use of color throughout the novel can be interpreted to convey just as much as (or perhaps even more than) her use of objects such as the lighthouse or the boar's skull hanging in the children's room. For instance, on the first page of the novel, the scene in which Mrs Ramsay watches her son James "cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259), three colors are explicitly mentioned: red, white and blue--the colors of the Union Jack, which can be associated with The British Empire, imperialism and colonialism (Goldman 171).

Furthermore, the colors purple, white and green--which are generally associated with the suffragette movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Britain--occur repeatedly throughout the novel (Goldman 68). For instance, Lily is painting a "triangular purple shape [meant to stand for] Mrs Ramsay reading to James" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 289-90), her face is thought of as white by Mrs Ramsay (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 273), and Mrs Ramsay has a green shawl which is mentioned several times in different contexts (e.g. Woolf, *Lighthouse* 298, 302, 328). Woolf's use of these particular colors can be interpreted as signaling Lily Briscoe's feminism and rebellion against the patriarchal order in which she finds herself.

In an important scene in the novel, Cam cannot sleep due to the shadows cast by a boar's skull hanging on the wall, while James cannot sleep without a light and thus wants it on. As a solution, Mrs Ramsay wraps her green shawl around the skull (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 328). The light can be seen as masculine and dominant, casting the feminine in shadows. The green shawl which resolves the problem is both suggestive of the suffragette colors, as well as of the bright colors used by Post-Impressionists (Goldman 174).

Woolf's good friend Roger Fry was the first (in 1910) to hold a Post-Impressionist exhibition in England, which shocked the nation due to its use of vivid colors and abstract shapes, meant to "generate in us emotional states" (Nicolson, *Post-Impressionism* 12). Mrs Ramsay's use of the green shawl may point to her potential to overthrow the existing patriarchy (Goldman 174). Lily's use of color and shapes in her painting is also suggestive of Post-Impressionism, pointing to her wish to rebel against the dominant state of affairs in the pre-war, Victorian era outlined in the first part of the novel (Goldman 175). Whereas Mrs Ramsay, representing the older generation, accepts her position in her family and society, Lily tries to change hers. This is anticipated at the start of the novel, when Mrs Ramsay thinks of Lily: "With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; but she was an independent little creature, Mrs Ramsay liked her for it" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 267). However much she wants to, Lily is not yet able to bring about change in the first part of the novel.

Darkness and light play a role in the novel's transition from pre-war to post-war times, reflecting the development from Victorian ideals to the modern period. At the beginning of 'Time Passes', all the lights in the house are turned off one by one (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 337). The darkness prevails throughout this part, situated during the Great War, in which we learn of the deaths of Mrs Ramsay and her children Prue and Andrew. It ends with the coming of peace and Lily waking up to a bright new day, back in the Ramsay's summer house once again (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 348).

The light in the third part of the novel is not the same as in the first; something has changed: "[Mr] Ramsay's enlightenment mind has lost its uxorial shadow" (Goldman 178), namely, his wife. He desperately tries to find another 'shadow', but his children and guests resist him: "Mrs Ramsay's shadow is overcome by Lily's Post-Impressionist colours [and Mr Ramsay's] notion of the ever-expanding solar ball of masculine enlightenment" (Goldman 178) is replaced by a world in which women are more emancipated and offer a challenge to the old-fashioned patriarchy of the Victorians.

Although Lily grieves the loss of Mrs Ramsay, she also derives some pleasure from the fact that she has overcome her. Once again, this is illustrated by her use of color: "'Squeezing her tube of green paint' [...] she imagines the triumphant pleasure in informing Mrs Ramsay of the Rayleys' failed marriage" (Goldman 179).

Through her portrayal of Victorian family roles in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf illustrates the patriarchy prevalent at the time, with which she was familiar due to her upbringing in Victorian England. In particular, she focusses on the father's oppressiveness, which in the novel is at first directed mainly towards the wife, Mrs Ramsay, but later on towards the youngest daughter, Cam, and (unsuccessfully) Lily Briscoe. Thus, Woolf was aware of "the desire of fathers to control and possess their daughters" (Marcus, *Feminism* 149), not only, perhaps, because she had experienced this herself in her childhood, but also because she was aware of the prevalent theories on psychology and psychoanalysis at the time (Marcus, *Feminism* 149).

Anger and Rationality

> There wasn't the slightest possible chance that they could go to the Lighthouse tomorrow, Mr Ramsay snapped out irascibly.
>
> How did he know? she asked. The wind often changed.
>
> The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women's minds enraged him. He had ridden through the valley of death, been shattered and shivered; and now she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies. (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 277)

Freud is generally considered the founding father of psychoanalysis. In the early 1900s, he developed his theories on the unconscious and infantile sexuality. He claimed that male infants are faced with a conflict which he named 'the Oedipal complex'. During this stage, a boy desires his mother erotically and hates his father, whom he considers a rival for his mother's affections (Simon et al. 163). When he begins to masturbate, the boy is threatened with punishment and, having seen the girl's genitals (or lack thereof), comes to fear castration by the father. To resolve the Oedipal complex, the boy has to submit to his father's power, realize that he will one day become like him, and repress his incestuous wish (Mitchell 79). This is his first step towards forming a superego and marks the end of the genital stage (Simon et al. 166).

Initially, Freud believed the girl's Oedipal complex to be the same, only reversed, but from 1925 onwards he began to formulate a new theory: the girl also starts by loving her mother, but in the pre-Oedipal period she sees the boy's penis, envies him, and blames the mother for her lack or 'castration'. The girl's affections are redirected towards the father instead, and her wish for a penis is replaced by the wish for a baby (Simon et al. 169). As the girl doesn't *fear* castration, like the boy, but rather *accepts* it, she lacks the boy's motive for forming a superego. Instead, her formation of a superego seems to be initiated by her environment (Mitchell 98). While for boys the castration anxiety marks the end of a state of conflict--the Oedipal complex--for girls it marks the beginning of the complex, which instead "appears as the desirable developmental outcome" (Simon et al. 169).

In *To the Lighthouse*, Freud's paternal theory of the 'family romance' as outlined above is represented through the characters of James and Cam Ramsay. Even though in the first part of the novel, 'The Window', James is only six years old, he thinks that, "Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, [he] would have seized it" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259) after his father pronounces that the weather "won't be fine" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259) and that they will thus not go to the lighthouse as planned and as James had hoped. James' violent feelings towards his father are contrasted by his love for his mother, whom he considers to be "ten thousand times better in every way" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 259). In this part of the novel, seven-year old Cam is portrayed as wild, strong-willed and independent; she is seen to be "dashing past" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 290) on several occasions, and when she is told to "give a flower to the gentleman" she protests: "No! no! no! she would not!" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 270).

In the 'Time Passes' section, ten years elapse; Mrs Ramsay, Prue and Andrew die, and the Great War takes place. Finally, in 'The Lighthouse' the voyage to the lighthouse is undertaken, although it differs from the one planned in 'The Window'. This time, a female, Cam, joins the men and James has lost his excitement for it: "He [their father] had made them come. He had forced them to come. In their anger they hoped that the breeze would never rise, that he might be thwarted in every possible way, since he had forced them to come against their wills" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 362). Cam is shown to have reached the desirable state described by Freud: sitting in the boat, she looks at her father and feels "proud of him without knowing quite why [...] He was so brave, he was so adventurous" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 363). At the same time, though, she remembers the pact she made with her brother to resist their father's 'tyranny'.

As Cam is torn between the love for her father and that for her brother, she in thought compares the latter to Moses: "James the lawgiver, with the tablets of eternal wisdom laid open on his knee [...] said, Resist him. Fight him. [...] Her brother was most godlike, her father most

suppliant." (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 365). However, neither seems to realize that James' 'commandments' are simply an extension of their father's paternal law, to which Cam will be subjected whether she chooses her father or her brother. In the end, Cam remains "loyal to the compact, yet [passes] on to her father, unsuspected by James, a private token of the love she [feels] for him" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 366).

The Freudian tone dominating the sections on James and Cam in this final part of the novel is further emphasized as James thinks: "Suppose then that as a child sitting helpless [...] on someone's knee, he had seen a wagon crush, ignorantly and innocently, someone's foot? [...] over his foot, over Cam's foot, over anybody's foot" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 376). In ancient Greek, 'Oedipus' stands for 'swollen foot'; thus, this section is a clear reference to the Oedipal complex (Abel 51).

As they proceed to sail across the water, James thinks about his mother, "But all the time he thought of her, he was conscious of his father following his thought, shadowing it, making it shiver and falter" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 377). James realizes that, at the moment, there is no point resisting him; his father is too powerful:

> [...] at that moment the sail swung slowly round, filled slowly out, the boat seemed to shake herself, and then to move off half conscious in her sleep, and then she woke and shot through the waves. The relief was extraordinary. They all seemed to fall away from each other again and to be at their ease, and the fishing-lines slanted taut across the side of the boat. But his father did not rouse himself. He only raised his right hand mysteriously high in the air, and let it fall upon his knee again as if he were conducting some secret symphony. (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 377)

James internalizes his father's censorship; his Oedipal complex is resolved.

While conducting research for his novel, *Totem and Taboo* Freud wrote in a letter to a fellow psychoanalyst: "I am reading thick books without being really interested in them since I already know the results; my instincts tell me that" (Abel 21). This suggests that Freud allowed his presuppositions to influence him while interpreting texts. Indeed, he ignored anthropological

evidence on human origins which shows that the mother--rather than the father--was primarily involved “in the transformation of nature into culture” (Abel 21). Furthermore, even though “There is not a single myth of origins in which a husband or a father plays any part, or even makes his appearance” (Abel 26), in Freud’s work, “The maternal [...] is almost entirely absent, along with adequate recognition or treatment of infantile attachment to the mother” (Chodorow 225).

Freud was not entirely ignorant of his bias. He admitted that, despite his abundant experience in researching the feminine mind, he was never able to answer the question: “What does a woman want?” (Abel 8). Furthermore, he criticized society for its repression of women and their sexuality, particularly in the upper classes, where girls are brought up with the “ideals of feminine purity and abstinence” (Chodorow 235), which may cause neurosis in later life. However, Freud also claimed that infants of both sexes develop disdain towards women due to their lack of a penis. Thus, it seems, women are considered inherently the lesser sex (Chodorow 228).

According to Juliet Mitchell, Freud believed that “The power of women (‘the matriarchy’) is pre-civilization, pre-Oedipal [and thus that] *civilization* as such is patriarchal” (366). This seems to be supported by the fact that “there are no patriarchal families among the animal species” (Abel 26). Irrespective of the nature of the society, human behavior is primarily distinguished from that of other primates by “the systematic exchange of women” (Mitchell 372). Whether Freud was simply an analyst working in a patriarchal tradition and society, or whether he deliberately maintained the superiority of men over women remains open to interpretation. However, it can be stated that he focussed excessively on the role of the father and sexuality, while ignoring the role of the mother, both in his research of myths on human origins and in his theories on infantile development, due to his bias as a male analyst in a patriarchal society.

Emerging from the Shadows

> [...] she pitied men always as if they lacked something -- women never, as if they had something. (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 310)

In the 1920s, while Woolf was writing some of her major novels, Klein challenged Freud's emphasis on infantile sexuality and the paternal in childhood development. In 1925, she gave a lecture in the home of Adrian Stephen (Woolf's brother) and in 1932, some of her lectures were published by the Hogarth Press (Abel 13, 10). It seems that Woolf's objections to psychoanalysis were directed mainly at Freud's theories, rather than those of Klein. Indeed, *To the Lighthouse* shares Klein's views on aesthetics and gender, and poses a challenge "to the Oedipal story of James Ramsay (who is modeled on Adrian Stephen)" (Abel 20).

According to Klein, infantile development starts with a stage, called the "paranoid position" (Abel 10), in which the newborn "knows the mother only as a breast" (Abel 10). The pleasure experienced when drinking causes the child to idealize the mother, but this idealization is frustrated by reality because "the unlimited desire [is] never fulfilled--and the resulting rage generates a complementary phantasy of a 'bad,' withholding breast" (Abel 10). The newborn comes to fear his mother's reprisal and his aggression is transformed into a desire to possess the contents of the mother's body (Abel 10). Thus, where Freud's theory centers around "sexuality and repression" (Abel 11), Klein focusses on "hunger and oral pleasure and anger" (Abel 11).

The second stage for Klein is called the "'depressive' position" (Abel 11). The infant realizes that his object of rage (the withholding breast) and his object of adoration (the breast that gives milk) is one and the same person, his mother. As a result, he experiences "fear for the mother's survival" (Abel 11) and mourns the loss of "the breast and the milk" (Abel 11), and the security and love associated with it, due to "his own greedy and destructive phantasies and impulses against his mother's breasts" (Abel 11). At this point, the superego emerges to make peace with the mother (Abel 11).

Next, the Oedipal complex emerges, which coincides with the depressive position (and the period of weaning). The boy's sexual instinct evolves and in his phantasies he uses this new, genital desire to repair the damage which oral aggression has caused (Abel 12). His castration anxiety is induced by "early fears of maternal retaliation" (Abel 12) and replaced by "guilt over aggression toward the father, fear that the damage wished on him will cause the mother pain, and a desire to make reparation to him by renouncing the contested object of desire" (Abel 12), resolving the Oedipal complex.

On the other hand, the girl, frustrated by weaning, turns from the mother's breast to the father's penis, which she thinks of as "a source of [...] oral gratification" (Abel 12). She wants to possess a penis to satisfy her oral desires, rather than "as an attribute of masculinity" (Abel 12), and thus, contrary to Freud's theory, no feeling of inferiority is involved. The emergence of vaginal sensations and "the girl's unconscious knowledge of the penis as 'the giver of children' transform oral into genital desire" (Abel 12). However, according to Klein, infants imagine "the father's penis [to reside], as a consequence of intercourse, with the babies, milk, and feces that inhabit the mother's body" (Abel 12). Thus, the daughter is enraged with her mother because she has so much, rather than that she lacks anything, and due to her anger, fears that her mother will "rob her of her own childbearing capacity (the counterpart, in Klein's account, to the boy's castration anxiety)" (Abel 13).

In *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe's parts can be seen to constitute the Kleinian narrative, as opposed to James and Cam, who embody Freud's ideas. In 'The Window', the reader is introduced to Lily as Mr Ramsay almost knocks over her easel in the garden while she is painting a picture of Mrs Ramsay and James. She does not mind however, as long as "he would not stand still and look at her picture" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 268). Lily has heard Charles Tansley, one of the other guests in the Ramsay house, say: "Women can't write, women can't paint" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 311), and negative forces like this haunt her when she tries to express her vision on the canvas. Indeed, "Such

she often felt herself -- struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: 'But this is what I see; this is what I see,' and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 269). Not surprisingly, Lily does not finish her picture. Thus, in this first part of the novel, the paternal dominates and places Lily in the shadow cast by men.

Mrs Ramsay embodies the Victorian ideal of a woman: beautiful, passive and aware of her position at home, in the private sphere: "she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 281). At the same time, Mr Ramsay constantly seeks her sympathy, wishing her to tell him that he is not a failure and that she loves him. However, she cannot say it, but "[looking] at him she began to smile, for though she had not said a word, he knew, of course he knew, that she loved him [...] She had not said it, but he knew it. And she looked at him smiling. For she had triumphed again" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 334). Thus, Mrs Ramsay is obedient to the patriarchal order of the family, but at the same time Woolf seems to suggest that she also has the potential to overthrow it.

In part three of the novel, after the Great War and the deaths of Mrs Ramsay, Prue and Andrew, the rest of the family and the former guests return to the summer house. At first, Lily shares James' negative feelings toward Mr Ramsay, although hers derive from a feminine perspective. She feels that Mr Ramsay will "be down on [her] in a moment, demanding -- something she felt she could not give him [...] That man, she thought, her anger rising in her, never gave; that man took. She, on the other hand, would be forced to give. Mrs Ramsay had given. Giving, giving, giving, she had died" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 353). Besides demanding sympathy, Mr Ramsay can also be interpreted as demanding sexual favors. Lily's character seems to be based (perhaps most out of all her characters) on Woolf's own (childhood) experiences.

Notably, in the parts on James and Cam in 'The Lighthouse', James constantly dominates over Cam, revealing the power of the paternal over the maternal: "James [...] scowled at the lamp,

and Cam screwed her handkerchief round her finger", "Doggedly James said yes. Cam stumbled more wretchedly", "James was sixteen, Cam seventeen" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 353). In contrast, in the sections on Lily they are ordered the other way around, suggesting that the maternal dominates here (or at least that Lily is putting up a fight against the paternal dominance): "here they were -- Cam and James" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 356), "Mr Ramsay was sitting with Cam and James" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 361).

Although Lily is disillusioned by Mrs Ramsay's death and grieves her loss, she also becomes more independent from her in 'The Lighthouse'. She returns to her painting (which, in the end, turns out to be different from that in part one, just like the voyage to the lighthouse), and while applying the green paint she even gloats at the fact that the Rayleys' marriage--which Mrs Ramsay had set up, as she believed every woman should get married--"had not been a success" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 369). Mrs Ramsay's death allows Lily to stand up to her, "override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 369), and she thinks to herself that she "need never marry anybody" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 370).

Her perspective has changed and she faces only one more problem with her painting: how to achieve a "balance between two opposite forces; Mr Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 381). Thus, Woolf seems to suggest that Mrs Ramsay's death was necessary for Lily to be able to overcome the male dominance and replace it, not by a female dominance, but by a balance between the two (Goldman 184). Indeed, she thinks that her picture "would be hung in the attics [...] it would be destroyed. But what did that matter?" (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 391). She is finally able to have her vision, and finish her painting.

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