PGEG S3 01

20th Century Novels

SEMESTER III

ENGLISH

BLOCK 2

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Subject Experts

1. **Prof. Pona Mahanta**, Former Head, Department of English, Dibrugarh University
2. **Prof. Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami**, Former Srimanta Sankardeva Chair, Tezpur University
3. **Prof. Bibhash Choudhury**, Department of English, Gauhati University

Course Coordinator : Dr. Prasenjit Das, Associate Professor, Discipline of English, KKHSOU

SLM Preparation Team

UNITS	CONTRIBUTORS
6-8	**Dr. Prasenjit Das**
9	**Maitraeye Das** Former Senior Lecturer, Bongaigaon College & **Dr. Prasenjit Das**
10	**Maitraeye Das**

Editorial Team

Content (Unit 6) : In house Editing
(Unit 7-10) : **Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Nath**, Department of English, Gauhati University
Structure, Format and Graphics : **Dr. Prasenjit Das**

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City Office: Resham Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022

SEMESTER 3
MA IN ENGLISH
COURSE 1: 20TH CENTURY NOVELS
BLOCK 2: JOYCE AND WOOLF

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BLOCK 2: INTRODUCTION

This Block contains total five units. The details of the unit are as follows:

Unit 6: This is the first unit of the Block 2. This unit introduces the learners to 'Stream of Consciousness' fiction. It is a phrase used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) to delineate the characteristics of consciousness into fiction and to describe the techniques employed by some novelists to enshrine the vague and fleeting thoughts in their novels. This kind of fiction is marked by long passages of introspection, in which the narrator records in detail what passes through a character's awareness, exemplified by novelists from Samuel Richardson, through William James' brother Henry James, to many novelists of the modern era such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and a few others.

Unit 7: This unit deals with the Irish writer James Joyce who is one of the important representatives of the idea of the 'modern' in the novel. He is considered the most prominent English speaking literary figure of the first half of the 20th century. Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is an extraordinary example of modernist fiction incorporating classicism, elements of 'Kunstlersroman', and a semiautobiographical account of a sensitive boy growing up in Dublin with aesthetic aspirations.

Unit 8: This unit shall help you to discuss the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in terms of its various important aspects. It traces the religious and intellectual awakening of young Stephen Dedalus, a fictional alter ego of Joyce and an allusion to Dedalus—the consummate craftsman of Greek mythology. In writing this novel, Joyce might have been influenced by Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh,* St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Goethe's *Werther and Wilhelm Meister*, and Cardinal Newman's *Aologia Pro Vita Sua.*

Unit 9: This unit shall help you to read about Virginia Woolf in some detail. However, for understanding Woolf's role in using the 'Stream of Consciousness' as a technique in fiction writing, we must first understand the fact that Woolf was an experimental novelist. Her experimental aesthetic, her founding of the Hogarth Press (along with her husband, Leonard Woolf), and her membership in the Bloomsbury Group, place her at the centre of British modernism in the first 40 years of the 20th century.

Unit 10: This unit takes you to the discussion of the novel *To The Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. The novel was written in the experimental narrative technique earlier used in the many-volumed novel *Pilgrimage* by Dorothy Richardson. Apart from the characters, setting and actions, which bear

resemblance to her own family life, this novel is also built on her theory that a writer must attempt to expand the ‘moments of vision’ and fill them out in words.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in “LET US KNOW” along with the text. We have kept “CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The hints for the answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the “FURTHER READING” which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred to in the preparation of the units have been added at the end of the block. As you know the world of literature and criticism is too big, we strongly advise you not to take a unit to be an end in itself. Despite our attempts to make a unit self-contained, we advise that you read the original texts of the authors prescribed as well as other additional materials for a thorough understanding of the contents of a particular unit.

UNIT 6 : INTRODUCING "STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS" NOVELS

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Impact of Psychology

- 6.3.1 William James (1842–1910)
- 6.3.2 Henry Bergson (1859–1941)
- 6.3.3 Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)
- 6.3.4 Alfred Adler (1870-1937)
- 6.3.5 Carl Gustav Jung (1875 –1961)

6.4 Important Novelists of Stream of Consciousness

- 6.4.1 Dorothy Miller Richardson (1873–1957)
- 6.4.2 Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)
- 6.4.3 James Joyce (1882-1941)
- 6.4.4 D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930)

6.5 Use of Interior Monologue

6.6 Let us Sum up

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6.8 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

6.9 Possible Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the technique of Stream of Consciousness in the context of the 20th century fiction
- discuss the impact of Psychology on the development of the Stream of Consciousness as a technique of fiction writing
- identify the 20th century fiction writers who made optimum use of the technique in their novels and appreciate their works
- discuss the significance of Stream of Consciousness novels in the development of modern fiction.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of the Block 2 of the Course on 20th century novels. This unit shall introduce you to Stream of Consciousness fiction. Stream of Consciousness is a phrase used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) to delineate the characteristics of consciousness into fiction and to describe the techniques employed by some novelists to enshrine the vague and fleeting thoughts in their novels. With this concept, James tried to describe the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind; which later came to be adopted broadly to describe a narrative method in modern fiction. This kind of fiction is marked by long passages of introspection, in which the narrator records in detail what passes through a character's awareness, exemplified by novelists from Samuel Richardson, through William James' brother Henry James, to many novelists of the modern era such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and a few others. This technique became synonymous with new experiments in language and techniques to present the inner workings of the mind in to words. However, you will note that these experiments were motivated by diverse forces, revolutionary theories in the field of Psychology, Art and Science. This unit will provide a detailed analysis of the Stream of Consciousness technique used in modernist novels, which shall further help you to discuss the prescribed Stream of Consciousness Novels in this Block.

6.3 IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGY

In this section, we shall try to briefly look at the history of the emergence of the "Stream of Consciousness" as a representational technique in modernist novels. In order to do so we shall try to look at the contribution of those thinkers and philosophers whose discussions and researches over human psychology helped in the emergence of the Stream of Consciousness Technique.

6.3.1 William James (1842–1910)

He was an American philosopher and psychologist, and the first educator to offer a psychology course in the United

States. James was one of the leading thinkers of the late 19th century and is believed by many to be one of the most influential philosophers the United States has ever produced, while others have labelled him the "Father of American psychology."

James published the book *The Principles of Psychology* in 1980, and there he proclaimed that thought belonged to a personal consciousness and it is always changing. Thus, James used Stream of Consciousness as a technique to signify the continuous flow of thought and its variations. Sometimes we feel that we have smelt the same perfume or same pain as experienced before. The physical and the ideal objects in the outside world seem to steer up same thoughts repeatedly, as we look at them second or third times. However, this is an erroneous impression, as one cannot have the same sensation of an object twice. Again, two sensations of the same object can never be alike, because as we grow, our experience changes, our sensibility changes. James believed that thought belonging to a personal consciousness is never stationary; it always moves and is continuous. Even the intervention of time cannot break the continuity of consciousness and self both. James believed that consciousness runs in a stream and flows like a river, therefore he preferred to use the term "Stream of Thought". The outside object of the world may sometimes appear to be broken or discontinuous, it may be isolated and separated in space and time, but according to William James, their thought in the brain is not to be taken as broken and discontinuous. This shifting of thought in the consciousness from one object to the other does not mean any break in thought. When a huge explosion takes place, there is an abrupt transition of thought from one object to another. In fact, there is no break in the flow of consciousness. In James' opinion, Stream of Consciousness has different rates of change, and in the shift of thought, there are various stages. It can sometimes be compared to the life of a bird, which consists of 'alteration of flights and perchings.'

Along with providing his views on thought and consciousness, James also took up the question of self. According to him, the self is constantly changing and varying. The present self is different from the previous self. Thus, by nature, a person is the blend of changing and moving thoughts and other psychological states. The personality is not just in the state of being but always in the state of becoming. Thus, James would like to believe that a person is actually a 'flux of identities'. This view had important bearing on the Stream of Consciousness novels.

6.3.2 Henry Bergson (1859–1941)

Henri-Louis Bergson (1859–1941) was a French philosopher who was influential in the tradition of continental philosophy, especially during the first half of the 20th century until World War II. Bergson is known for his influential arguments that processes of immediate experience and intuition are more significant than abstract rationalism and science for understanding reality. Breaking with the traditional philosophers, Bergson denounced intellect, which does not help a person to grasp the reality. Intellect analyses, classifies, conceptualises and splits the flow of reality as if it were a thing existing in space. The breaking of reality into parts may serve the cause of the language and society, but it will never help us to comprehend the reality. Because, reality is a continuous flow and can be understood through intuition and sympathy. Reality is an 'immediate experience' and is in a constant state of flux.

In his famous work *Time and Free Will*, Bergson reiterates that analysis and description only distorts the feelings, and do not enable us to understand the experience. According to Bergson, reality means the real duration. It is 'time perceived as invisible'. Although there is an element of succession in time, in this succession, it cannot be specified that so much is before and so much is after. Bergson related the idea of succession with that of

the melody. In melody, there is no impression of 'simultaneity', we rather think that one note is following the other, but at the same time, the succession can never be split up. The continuity cannot be broken. Bergson further makes a distinction between psychological time or inner time and mechanical time or the time of the clock. It is elastic and is the prolongation of the past into the present and the future. This concept of time has been beautifully portrayed into the novels of Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Bergson regarded personality as the sum total of mental states i.e. sensation, feelings, desires, memories and ideas. These mental states are dynamic. In personality Bergson perceives 'the continuous melody of inner life—a melody which is going on and will go on indivisible from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence.'

6.3.3 Sigmund Freud (1856—1939)

Freud was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. In the proliferation of the psychoanalytic movement, Freud is among the three most brilliant names along with Adler and Jung. Freud employed the method of 'free association' to cure all his patients. His patients were supposed to relate all their mental experiences pleasant and unpleasant, trivial and significant, without any inhibitions in order to enable the analyst to diagnose his ailment. This way, the patient was under no restriction or control but was free. The dreams related by the patients were also of great use, as they according to Freud concealed the real cause of ailment and neurosis, and by analysing and interpreting the dreams, Freud tried to get at the truth. Sometimes, the patients recounted their childhood sex experiences, and the causes of neurosis could be traced back to infantile sexuality. Thus, Freud attached a great significance to the study of dreams. When we are asleep, most of our experiences appear in

the form of visual images and are also mixed with thoughts and feelings.

However, in Freudian Psychology, the study of the unconscious is also very important. The thoughts and feelings coming from the unconscious into the conscious are not allowed to enter the focus of consciousness, but they are repressed. As found in M. H. Abrams *Glossary*, Freud's model of the mind has three functional aspects: the **id** (which incorporates libidinal and other desires), the superego (the internalization of standards of morality and propriety), and the **ego** (which tries as best it can to negotiate the conflicts between the insatiable demands of the id, the impossibly stringent requirements of the **superego**, and the limited possibilities of gratification offered by the world of "reality"). Freud recommends **free** living for removing repression. In his analytic treatment, the dormant thoughts are brought out from the unconscious into the conscious. In the field of fiction writing in the 20th century, treatment of the unconscious became a common feature in the works of Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Green and so on.

6.3.4 Alfred Adler (1870-1937)

Alfred W. Adler, one of the most cited psychologists was an Austrian medical doctor, psychotherapist, and founder of the school of individual psychology. His emphasis on the importance of feelings of inferiority, the inferiority complex, is recognized as an isolating element, which plays a key role in personality development. Adler was the first to emphasize the importance of the social element in the re-adjustment process of the individual and who carried psychiatry into the community. In collaboration with Freud and a small group of other colleagues, Adler was among the co-founders of the psychoanalytic movement and a core member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. He was the first major figure to break away from psychoanalysis to form an independent school of psychotherapy and personality theory, which he called individual

psychology because he believed a human to be an indivisible whole, an *individuum*. He also imagined a person to be connected or associated with the surrounding world.

His book *The Neurotic Character* defines his key ideas. He argued that human personality could be explained teleologically: parts of the individual's unconscious self ideally work to convert feelings of inferiority to superiority (or rather completeness). The desires of the self-ideal were countered by social and ethical demands. If the corrective factors were disregarded and the individual overcompensated, then an inferiority complex would occur, fostering the danger of the individual becoming egocentric, power-hungry and aggressive or worse.

Adler placed great emphasis upon the interpretation of early memories in working with patients and schoolchildren, writing that, "Among all psychic expressions, some of the most revealing are the individual's memories." Adler viewed memories as expressions of "private logic" and as metaphors for an individual's personal philosophy of life or "lifestyle." He maintained that memories are never incidental or trivial; rather, they are chosen reminders:

"(A person's) memories are the reminders she carries about with her of her limitations and of the meanings of events. There are no 'chance' memories. Out of the incalculable number of impressions that an individual receives, she chooses to remember only those which she considers, however dimly, to have a bearing on her problems."

Adler's idea of inferiority and the psychical compensation have been beautifully depicted in *Ulysses* through the hallucinations and daydreams of Leopold Bloom.

6.3.5 Carl Gustav Jung (1875 –1961)

[Adapted from MH Abram's *Glossary*]

Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. Jung's mature

version of depth psychology is very different from that of his predecessor, and what we call **Jungian criticism** of literature departs radically from psychoanalytic criticism. Jung's emphasis is not on the individual unconscious, but on what he calls the "collective unconscious," shared by all individuals in all cultures, which he regards as the repository of "racial memories" and of primordial images and patterns of experience that he calls *archetypes.*

Like Freud, Jung does not view literature as a disguised form of libidinal wish-fulfilment that largely parallels the fantasies of a neurotic personality. Instead, Jung regards great literature as, like the myths whose patterns recur in diverse cultures, an expression of the archetypes of the collective unconscious. A great author possesses, and provides for readers, access to the archetypal images buried in the racial memory, and so succeeds in revitalizing aspects of the psyche, which are essential both to individual self-integration and to the mental and emotional well-being of the human race. Jung's theory of literature has been a cardinal formative influence on *archetypal criticism* and *myth criticism.* In his view, the creative artists have depicted the collective unconscious and archetypal patterns through their use of the mythological subject matter. It is important to mention that novelists like D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and James Joyce have used mythology, the archetypal patterns, and the collective unconsciousness in their novels.

From your reading of the above-mentioned thinkers, it may be assumed that the "Stream of Consciousness" technique in fiction carries the imprints of normal and abnormal psychology. William James' theory of consciousness, Bergson's theory of psychological time, and the researches into the unconscious undertaken by Freud, Adler and Jung into the Unconscious rendered significant influences towards the development of the Stream of Consciousness technique in the field of fiction. For example, Freud's interpretations of dreams, his ideas of Oedipus complex, incest etc. have greatly affected the works of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence. In similar way, Adler's

ideas of self-assertion and inferiority complex and Carl Jung's notion of collective unconscious, his use of mythology and psychological types–all these have been beautifully presented in the novels of James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Aldous Huxley.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How did William James take the idea of consciousness?

Q 2: What is Henry Bergson's contribution to the researches on psychology? Explain.

Q 3: How is the Freudian model of the mind?

Q 4: State Adler's contributions to the field of psychology. What did he state about memory?

Q 5: How does Jung differ from his predecessors like Freud while formulating his ideas on the unconscious?

6.4 IMPORTANT NOVELISTS OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The rise of the Stream of Consciousness technique marks the beginning of a new phase in English fiction just before the outbreak of World War I. The writings of William James and Henri Bergson, and the researches undertaken by Freud, Adler and Jung, the scientific theses of Einstein, the post impressionistic paintings, cubists and surrealist thoughts—all directly or indirectly influenced the Stream of Consciousness technique. You will note that this technique has been beautifully used by some of the early 20th century writers, as mentioned in the following.

6.4.1 Dorothy Miller Richardson (1873–1957)

Dorothy Richardson was a British author and journalist. Author of *Pilgrimage*, a sequence of 13 semi-autobiographical novels–though Richardson saw them as chapters of one work–she was one of the earliest modernist novelists to use stream of

consciousness as a narrative technique. Richardson also emphasizes in *Pilgrimage* the importance and distinct nature of female experiences. Critics say that *Pilgrimage* alludes not only to the journey of the artist...to self-realization but, more practically, to the discovery of a unique creative form and expression on the part of the artist.

Richardson was one of a select group of writers who changed the rules of prose fiction at the beginning of the 20th century. With James Joyce in Ireland, Marcel Proust in France, William Faulkner in the United States and, Virginia Woolf in England, Richardson invented a new form of writing. With Proust and Joyce, she has been at the forefront of a revolution in literature. The first "chapter" of her long work *Pilgrimage* was begun in 1913 and published in 1915, two years after the publication of the first volume of A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu, a year after the first appearance of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and seven years before Woolf's first experimental novel *Jacob's Room*.

The first 10 "chapters" of Pilgrimage were published by Duckworth at lengthening intervals between 1915 and 1931: Pointed Roofs (1915), Backwater (1916), Honeycomb (1917), The Tunnel (1919), Interim (1919), Deadlock (1921), Revolving Lights (1923), The Trap (1925), Oberland (1927), and Dawn's Left Hand (1931). Extracts from Interim were published in Little Review 1919–20. The eleventh chapter, Clear Horizon, was published by Dent in 1935. In 1979, *Pilgrimage* was recognized as a feminist classic. Although a number of critical terms have been used to describe *Pilgrimage*, Richardson was not happy with May Sinclair's description of her work as "stream of consciousness." In fact, she denied that she was writing a novel at all. Novels, in Richardson's opinion, always suffered from being "conducted tours." *Pilgrimage* in contrast gradually develops its own aesthetic, always deferring either an ending or narrative resolution.



LET US KNOW

You will note that London finds a prominent place in the early 20th century fiction be it Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage.* This novel is marked by her experience of working for £1 a week in London at the beginning of the 20th century. Her literary aesthetic was always concerned with the relationship between women's work and art. *Pilgrimage*, which is a semi-autobiographical work, covers the life of its protagonist Miriam Henderson, from early childhood to the moment she becomes a writer. As the novel progresses, London is an "elastic" material space that facilitates Miriam's public life. London's streets, cafes, restaurants, and clubs figure largely in her explorations, which extend her knowledge of both the city and herself. Uncomfortable with, even hostile to, the 19th century conventions of femininity, Miriam seeks a third space between masculinity and femininity, developing a new and evolving form of gendered identity that is enabled by the possibilities the city offers.

She sustains a stream-of-consciousness mode of narrative, focused exclusively on the mind and perceptions of her heroine, throughout the twelve volumes of her novel *Pilgrimage* (1915-38). Her work was the subject of intense critical discussion in the 1920s, given its centrality to the emergence of modernist prose fiction. After a brief dip in the 1930s, there again emerged a renewed critical interest after World War II and her work started to receive due recognition with the critical revisions following second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. In subsequent years, Richardson has been fully restored to the modernist canon.

6.4.2 Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)

Woolf's experimental aesthetic, her founding of the Hogarth Press (along with her husband, Leonard Woolf), and her membership in the Bloomsbury Group, place her at the centre of British modernism in the first 40 years of the 20th century. She was

also a reviewer trying to understand the implicit contract between the writer and reader. Woolf's first two novels *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* are formally conventional, though their plots examine changing relationships between men and women, women's entry into the workforce and their demands for suffrage. However, it was her involvement with the Hogarth Press, which permitted Woolf to become an experimental novelist.

Her novel *Jacob's Room* evinces several preoccupations that would mark, to a certain degree, all of Woolf's subsequent work. The first preoccupation is her sense that both the World Wars altered the human condition and experience in some profound and inescapable way. Therefore, even autobiographical novels such as both *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* would have their timeframes altered to include the War. Scenes from her most popular novel, *The Years* (1937), would be set in basements during air raids. Her final novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), takes into account how we understand and how we create history on the eve of World War II. Her concern with the war's effect is closely related to her careful historicizing of all her characters' lives.

Her second preoccupation is her concern for a more aesthetic and meaningful relationship between her ideas and the forms of her novels, one less preoccupied with plot–which she suggested in her modernist manifesto, "Modern Fiction," doesn't reflect the lives we live: "The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old …life is not a set of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end." This view was to play a significant role in her emerging as a famous Stream of Consciousness novelist.

The form of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Woolf's second experimental novel, makes use of focalization that is handed off like a baton in a relay between characters who hear the same sounds or view the same sights over a single day in London (a strategy she will use again in *To the Lighthouse*). In this way, the novel formally echoes the thematic balance between the intimacy of love and friendship that connects individuals with both the necessity and the ache of isolation. The main narrative arc follows Clarissa Dalloway, who is to give a party in the evening, a party she views as a creative offering to her community of friends; at the same time, however, Clarissa contemplates her isolation from her husband, from her daughter, from her one-time suitor, Peter Walsh. The second narrative arc follows Septimus Warren Smith, a young man suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder after serving in World War I, who is misunderstood and thus isolated by a medical establishment that advises him to get out of his "funk" by taking an interest in cricket. The arcs of the novel are connected when Smith's suicide is revealed at Clarissa's party and Clarissa intuits both his isolation and his attempts to communicate.

Virginia Woolf's novels have depicted the psychological and internal time, involuntary memory, instincts and intuitions while dealing with the Stream of Consciousness technique. In the following units, you will read about Virginia Woolf and her novel *To The Lighthouse* in sufficient detail.

6.4.3 James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce's works reflected his life, his times, and his varied cultures both in their themes and in their aesthetic aims and development. Joyce adopted a mode of writing in clean, dry, hard prose that exemplified the modernists' repudiation of the opulent emotional language they attributed to romanticism. The long chapter 42 of Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady,* for example, is entirely given over to the narrator's description of the process of Isabel's

memories, thoughts, and feelings. As early as 1888 a minor French writer, Edouard Dujardin, wrote a short novel *Les Lauriers sont coupés* ("The Laurels Have Been Cut") which is a rather crude but sustained attempt to represent the scenes and events of the story solely as they impinge upon the consciousness of the central character. James Joyce developed a variety of devices for stream-of-consciousness narrative in *Ulysses* (1922). Here is a passage of interior monologue from the "Lestrygonian" episode, in which Leopold Bloom saunters through Dublin, observing and musing:

Pineapple rock, lemon platt, butter scotch. A sugar-sticky girl shovelling scoopfuls of creams for a Christian brother. Some school treat. Bad for their tummies. Lozenge and comfit manufacturer to His Majesty the King. God. Save. Our. Sitting on his throne, sucking red jujubes white.



LET US KNOW

Joycean:

Characteristic of the style, tone and peculiarities of the writings of James Joyce with particular reference to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Principally, this style of writing refers to a high degree of stylistic and technical inventiveness and originality in the use of the pun, the portmanteau word, symbolism and the stream of consciousness technique. It may also allude to his inclination towards scatology, his habit of joining up numerous words and using little or no punctuation for many pages on end. In addition, his creation of what is virtually a 'private language', especially in *Finnegans Wake* is important to note.

6.4.4 D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930)

D. H. Lawrence is known for his challenging, and controversial fiction of the modernist period. His fiction maintains his position at the heart of twentieth-century British literature with its combination of social and domestic realism and poetic intensity in works that bear witness to a deeply felt belief that the conditions and repercussions of political modernity required a new kind of

writing, a new relation to language. The early novels deconstruct romantic and sexual love. The reception *Sons and Lovers*, was almost wholly positive. It was taken to epitomize a Freudian and confessional mode – a critical response that vexed Lawrence and which he repudiated. While he shared with Freud an interest in the instinctive life (he wrote two books on the unconscious), Lawrence nevertheless rejected what he knew of Freudian psychology, which he viewed as symptomatic of a modernity that pathologized sex. Thematically, the mature novels constitute a sustained critique of cultural and individual violence and advocate, albeit indirectly, an end of the degraded institutions and relations of modernity, and a new, untested notion of selfhood.

Lawrence's principal characters frequently undergo metaphysical journeys in which the birth of the self is the unforeseen and unexamined goal. However, in the later novels the impersonal aesthetic of the mature writing tends to give way to an over conscious messianic version of individualism before resorting to the solutions of a highly personal primitivist vision. An earlier sensitivity to community similarly tends toward a more brutal sense of race and nation in the later novels, although Lawrence returns to the theme of England and what he idiosyncratically calls "passional" awareness in his final novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1993 [1928], 101).

Each of the 10 novels published in Lawrence's lifetime challenges orthodoxies, particularly conventional social and sexual mores. Specific dualities identify the contours of Lawrence's thought as he returns to the challenges they pose: male/female; speech/ silence; primitive/modern; self/other. More than that, the novels at their best examine the future of the novel form, and provide fascinating insights into the ambition and scale of Lawrence's artistic vision. They explore the relation of individual to community, race, nation, and place, and do so in ways that maintain a creative pressure on the capacity of the English language to be modelled into new expressive and poetic forms.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: For which work is Dorothy Richardson most famous?

Q 7: How did Virginia Woolf view the idea of a novel?

Q 8: Comment on the literary style of James Joyce.

Q 9: Identify the basic point of D. H. Lawrence's portrayal of the characters in his novels.

6.5 THE USE OF INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

It refers to a technique of recording the continuum of impressions, thoughts and impulses either prompted by conscious experience or arising from the well of the subconscious. The phrase originates in an essay on James Joyce by Valry Larbaud and is often regarded as synonymous with "stream of consciousness." There is, however, some dispute as to which of the two is the larger term. Some critics argue that stream of consciousness includes limitations of interiority; according to this view, the interior monologue is one method among many. To other critics, interior monologue is the larger category and stands for all methods of self-revelation, including for instance some kinds of dramatic monologue; according to this view, stream of consciousness refers to an uninterrupted flow, in which logic, conventional syntax and even at times punctuation are abandoned. The origins of this kind of fictional representation is to be found in poetry and specifically in the kind of 19th century poetry that is broadly dramatic in method. The English dramatic monologue, as popularised by Browning and Tennyson, purports to be spoken, but it is often the case that speech dissolves into reverie. This seems to have been taken up by the French Symbolist poets and their associates. Projections of interior musings, often deeply ambiguous, are to be found in the poems of Tristan Corbiere, Jules Laforgue, Stephane Mallarme, Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Valery. They in turn influenced the fiction of Edouard Dujardin, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, as well as the verse monologues of T. S. Eliot ("Gerontion").

As mentioned above, some critics use "stream of consciousness" interchangeably with the term **Interior Monologue.** It is useful, however, to follow the usage of critics who use the former as a more inclusive term, denoting all the diverse means employed by authors to communicate the inclusive state and process of consciousness in a character. "Interior monologue" is thus reserved for that species of stream of consciousness, which undertakes to present to the reader the course and rhythm of consciousness precisely as it occurs in a character's mind. In "interior monologue", the author does not intervene, or at any rate intervenes minimally, as somebody who describes, guides, or comments, and does not tidy the vagaries of the mental process into grammatical sentences or into a logical or coherent order. The "interior monologue", in its radical form, is sometimes described as the exact presentation of the process of consciousness; but because sense perceptions, mental images, feelings, and some aspects of thought itself are nonverbal, it is clear that the author can present these elements only by converting them into some kind of verbal equivalent.

In 1901, the German playwright and novelist Arthur Schnitzler published a Novella called *Lieutenant Gastl*, a satire on the official code of military honour. In this the interior monologue technique is highly developed. However, it seems that it was a minor French novelist, Edouard Dujardin, who first used the technique (in a way which was to prove immensely influential) in. *Les Lauriers sont coupes* (1888). James Joyce, who is believed to have known this work, exploited the possibilities and took the technique almost to a point ne plus ultra in *Ulysses* (1922), which Purports to be an account of the experiences (the actions, thoughts, feelings) of two men, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus, during the twenty-four hours of 6th June 1904, in Dublin. The following lines provide some ideas of the method:

Yes. Thought so. Sloping into the Empire. Gone. Plain soda would do him good. Where Pat Kinsella had his Harp theatre before Whitbread ran the Queen's. Broth of a boy. Dion Boucicault business with his harvestmoon face in a poky bonnet. Three Purty Maids from School. How

time flies eh? Showing long red pantaloons under his skirts. Drinkers, drinking, laughed spluttering, their drink against their breath. More power, Pat. Coarse red: fun for drunkards: guffaw and smoke. Take off that white hat. His parboiled eyes. Where is he now? Beggar somewhere. The harp that once did starve us all.

The climax to this extraordinary work is the forty-odd page interior monologue of Molly Bloom, a passage which has only one punctuation mark. The beginning of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) is an early indication of his interest in this technique.

Meantime, Dorothy Richardson had begun to compile her twelve volumes *Pilgrimage* (1915-6) and Marcel Proust was at work on the equally ambitious A la recherche du temps perda (1913-27). Henry James and Dostoyevsky had already indicated, through long passages of introspective writing, that they were aware of something like the stream of consciousness technique. Therefore, it seems that several original minds had been working, independently, towards the development of interior monologue as a new method of fiction writing.



6.6 LET US SUM UP

From this unit, you have learnt that Stream of Consciousness is a technique, which seeks to record the flow of impressions passing through a character's mind. It is the name applied specifically to a mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrator's intervention, the full spectrum and continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings, and random associations. The best-known English exponents of the Stream of Consciousness are Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Later novelists have often employed the technique, though rarely with such thoroughness as its early proponents. For them, it was a fresh weapon in the struggle against intrusive narration. By recording the actual flow of thought with its paradoxes and irrelevancies, they sought to avoid the over-insistent authorial rhetoric of

Edwardian novels. They felt that the traditional techniques could not meet the social pressures of the new age. Hence, they tried to justify his use of new experiments while writing fiction.



6.7 FURTHER READING

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Shaffer, Brian W. (Ed). (2011). *The Encyclopaedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction*. Vol 1. British and Irish Fiction. Blackwell Publishing Company.

Websites and Electronic Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Adler

6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: James believed that consciousness runs in a stream and flows like a river… …the outside object of the world may appear to be broken or discontinuous… …but their thought in the brain is not to be taken as broken and discontinuous… …this shifting of thought in the consciousness from one object to the other does not mean any break in thought… …it can sometimes be compared to the life of a bird, which consists of 'alteration of flights and perchings.'

Ans to Q 2: Bergson is known for his arguments that processes of immediate experience and intuition are more significant than abstract rationalism and science for understanding reality… …broke with the traditional philosophers and denounced that only intellect does not help a person to grasp the reality… …the breaking of reality into parts may serve the cause of the language and society… …but it will never help us to comprehend the reality… …Reality is an 'immediate experience' and is in a constant state of flux.

Ans to Q 3: Freud's model of the mind has three functional aspects: the **id** (which incorporates libidinal and other desires), the superego (the internalization of standards of morality and propriety), and the **ego** (which tries as best it can to negotiate the conflicts between the insatiable demands of the id, the impossibly stringent requirements of the **superego**, and the limited possibilities of gratification offered by the world of "reality").

Ans to Q 4: Adler emphasised the importance of feelings of inferiority… … emphasised the importance of the social element in the re-adjustment process of the individual… …Adler was a co-founder of the psychoanalytic movement and the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society… …he was the first to form an independent school of psychotherapy… …Memories are the reminders she carries about with her of her limitations and of the meanings of events.

Ans to Q 5: Jung departs radically from psychoanalytic criticism… …his emphasis is not on the individual unconscious, but on what he calls the "collective unconscious" shared by all individuals in all cultures… …"racial memories" and of primordial images and patterns of experience are called *archetypes* by him.

Ans to Q 6: She is most famous for *Pilgrimage*, a sequence of 13 semi-autobiographical novels… …here she used stream of consciousness as a narrative technique… …she also emphasized the importance and distinct nature of female experiences in *Pilgrimage*… …the novel alludes to the journey of the artist towards self-realisation as an artist.

Ans to Q 7: She displayed a more aesthetic and meaningful relationship between her ideas and the forms of her novels… …she was less preoccupied with plot… …the myriad impressions coming from all sides shape themselves into the life… …life is not a set of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

Ans to Q 8: It refers to a high degree of stylistic and technical inventiveness and originality in the use of the pun, the portmanteau word, symbolism and the stream of consciousness technique. It may also allude to his inclination towards scatology, his habit of joining up numerous words and using little or no punctuation for many pages on end.

Ans to Q 9: His characters frequently undergo metaphysical journeys in which the birth of the self is the unforeseen and unexamined goal… …in the later novels, the impersonal aesthetic of the mature writing tends to give way to an over conscious messianic version of individualism.



6.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: How did the influence of Psychology help in the emergence of Stream of Consciousness Novels? Provide a detailed discussion.

Q 2: In what way, did Stream of Consciousness evolve as a technique of writing fiction in the early part of the 20th century?

Q 3: Who are the main practitioners of the Stream of Consciousness technique in fiction? Discuss with reference to their works.

Q 4: What is meant by Interior Monologue? Write a note on the use of Interior Monologue in fiction with specific examples.

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UNIT 7 : JAMES JOYCE: *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN* (PART I)

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 James Joyce: Life and Works

7.4 Story of the Novel *A Portrait of the Artist*

7.5 Critical Reception of Joyce

7.6 Let us Sum up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

7.9 Possible Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- discuss the life and works of James Joyce
- form an idea of James Joyce as a major English novelist with reference to his idea of the 'modern' in his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- grasp the story of the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- make an assessment of the critical reception of Joyce as a modernist writer

7.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with the Irish writer James Joyce who is one of the important representatives of the idea of the 'modern' in the novel. He is considered the most prominent English speaking literary figure of the first half of the 20th century. His short-story collection and three novels redefined the idea and form of modern fiction, and have inspired countless writers. Joyce eccentrically claimed that in many respects the tasks of literature had been completed by his time. As stated by Margot Norris in *Blackwell*

Encyclopaedia, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* resorts to another tenet of modernism–classicism–to frame its Kunstlersroman, its semiautobiographical account of a sensitive boy growing up in Dublin with aesthetic aspirations. By naming its protagonist Stephen Dedalus, the novel evokes the myth of Icarus, the son of the artist Dedalus whose winged escape from ancient Crete was aborted by flying too close to the sun, melting the wax that held his wings together. The classical superstructure endows the story of young Dedalus's struggles to free himself from the squalor of poverty, and from the oppressive constraints of the Catholic Church, with universal significance. *A Portrait* also offers moments of enlightenment and self-recognition, termed "epiphany" by Joyce, as antidotes to the paralysis of Dublin life. By the time you finish reading this unit, you will be able to discuss the life and works of James Joyce and appreciate the significance of his extraordinary novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

7.3 JAMES JOYCE: LIFE AND WORKS



Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce, better known as James Joyce, was an Irish novelist and poet. Considered one of the most influential modernist writers, Joyce is best known for *Ulysses* (1922). The eldest of ten children, he was born on 2nd February 1882 to John Stanislaus Joyce and Mary Jane in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar. In 1887, when his father was appointed the collector of local property taxes by Dublin Corporation, the family moved to the fashionable adjacent small town of Bray 19 km away from Dublin. Subsequently, he excelled as a student at the Jesuit schools Clongowes and Belvedere, then at University College Dublin. In his early twenties, he immigrated permanently to continental Europe, living in Trieste, Paris and Zurich. Though most of his adult life was spent abroad, Joyce's fictional universe does not extend far beyond Dublin, and it is populated largely by characters who closely

resemble family members, enemies and friends from his time there. In his own words: "For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal."

Therefore, ideally James Joyce grew up on the artistic ideas available in literary Dublin. He was concerned with the newest spirit in the arts and responded to the two main international literary movements that had developed since 1890s: **Naturalism** and **Symbolism**. **Naturalism** at once reminds us of Henric Ibsen. The stories of his *Dubliners* share the naturalistic feelings that we live in a determined and conditioned world, which art must treat with meticulousness and radical frankness. This is prevalent in the detailed record of the Dublin life in the *Dubliners*. The same meticulous detailing is also the essential stuff of his most famous *Ulysses*. As Joyce said, the book was written in such a way that even if Dublin were to be destroyed it could be reconstructed from the novel. The other movement that excited Joyce was **French Symbolism** powerfully supported in Britain by none other than W. B. Yeats and Arthur Symons. Joyce conceived art not as a plain report on the world but as an active work of creation and moving consciousness, an essential story of the artist. His version of Symbolism makes its presence felt in various arguments that Stephen advances in both *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist* about the transcendent beauty of art. And above all, there is the famous idea of **'Epiphany'**—the transcendental revelation which Joyce took from religion and applied to art.

'The Revolt Into Art' as described by Joyce in the book took shape in 1902 when Joyce himself departed to Paris to study medicine and become a writer. Then in 1903, he had been called back to Dublin because of his mother's illness. The return brought back again the whole question of artistic duties and responsibilities and prepared him for larger literary accomplishments. In 1904, he produced a collection of verse called *Chamber Music*, finally published in 1907. Then he started his work on some linked short stories about the paralysed city of Dublin that would eventually make up the volume called *Dubliners* in 1914. Meanwhile, he

also began his first draft of autobiographical tale of Stephen Dedalus, an early version of his posthumously published novel *Stephen Hero* (1944). *A Portrait of the Artist* is a revised, distilled and a mature version of this, but he completes the 'sequel' in the form of *Ulysses*.

Joyce suffered from a life-long eye complaint provoked by an attack of rheumatic fever during his twenties and complicated by Glucoma in 1917. Although he was operated on several times, his sight steadily grew worse. Then in 1932, his daughter Lucia was diagnosed as schizophrenic and his general health began to degrade. With the outbreak of the World War II, the family escaped to Switzerland where Joyce died in 1941.



LET US KNOW

James Joyce's works reflect his life, his times, and his varied cultural belongingness. The late Victorian century Ireland placed him in a country whose quasi-colonial status gave it representation in the British parliament but little control over its own affairs. Consequently, Ireland suffered economic stagnation, rural and urban poverty, and a sense of oppression that led to a Home Rule movement ultimately frustrated by the Catholic Church's role in the downfall of Charles Stewart Parnell, the country's best hope for independence through parliamentary negotiation.

Joyce's stories in the collection *Dubliners* reflect the national despondency following this failure as a condition of paralysis that called less for political agitation against England than an unflinching self-examination. In this respect, Joyce departed from the aims of Irish cultural nationalism–the movement known as the Celtic Revival—whose recovery of the Gaelic language and of Irish myth and folklore he regarded as parochial and backward looking. Inspired by the realism of Ibsen's drama, *Dubliners* offers stories of schoolboy yearning, of entrapment by duty and responsibility, oppressive working conditions, the degradation of patriotism, the ravage of families by alcoholism. The last story in the collection, "The Dead," thematizes the ambiguous clash between Irish revival insularity and the protagonist's look toward the Continent for cultural sustenance.



Entwicklungsroman: ("development novel") is a story of general growth rather than self-cultivation. **Erziehungsroman:** ("education novel") focuses on training and formal schooling.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How would you assess the influence of Naturalism and Symbolism in James Joyce's fiction?

Q 2: State the significance of Joyce's *Dubliners* stories.

His Works:

Joyce's first published work was an essay on Ibsen written as an under graduate and published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1900. By that time, he was gradually becoming a part of the group shared by Yeats, Synge, Lady Gregory and George Russell—writers famous for fostering Irish Cultural Renaissance. However, in 1902, he suddenly got dissatisfied with the narrowness of Irish life and spent a year in Paris. During that time, he read voraciously. Dujardin's experimental novel *Les Lauriers Sont Coupes* (1888) influenced him to model his own "Stream of Consciousness Technique" in the later days to come.

You are already told that Joyce returned to Dublin in 1903 following the illness of his mother. In the same year, he began working on a long autobiographical novel *Stephen Hero* that took the form of *A Portrait* in 1916. Joyce also published a number of books of poetry. His first mature published work was the satirical broadside *The Holy Office* 1904, in which he proclaimed himself to be the superior of many prominent members of the Celtic revival. In 1907, a volume of 36 short lyrics entitled *Chamber Music* was published in London. Here, he explained the sound of urine hitting the side of a chamber pot. This publication led to his inclusion in the *Imagist Anthology* edited by Ezra Pound, who was a great supporter of Joyce's works. This was followed by *Dubliners* (1914) which is a collection of technically conventional but strikingly innovative stories based on his experiences of his native city Dublin. However, after a dispute with the Irish publishers over certain references made to the British Royal family, Joyce withdrew the book and subsequently published it in London. *A Portrait of the Artist* appeared in the famous *The Egoist,* of which Ezra Pound was the reviewer then, in 25 instalments from February 1914 to September 1915.

The complete book appeared in 1916. A Künstlerroman, this book is an autobiographical depiction of the childhood and adolescence of a protagonist named Stephen Dedalus and his gradual growth into artistic self-consciousness. Ideas of Stream of Consciousness, Interior Monologue, "Psychic Reality" are some of the terms used while describing this novel.



LET US KNOW

Bildungsroman: The term was coined in 1819 by philologist Karl Morgenstern in his university lectures, and later famously reprised by Wilhelm Dilthey, who legitimized it in 1870 and popularized it in 1905. The genre is further characterized by a number of formal, topical, and thematic features. *Bildungsroman* tells about the growing up or coming of age of a sensitive person who is looking for answers and experience.

During the World War I, Joyce moved to Zurich from Trieste. He received a grant from the Royal Literary Fund and a Civil List Grant in 1916 with the help of Yeats and Pound. Then, he started his *Ulysses*, which was first published in serial form in *The Little Review*, New York, appearing between 1918 and 1920. However, this periodical was prosecuted for publishing obscene matter. Then in 1918, he published a three act play *Exiles*. It is a study of a husband and wife relationship and it looks back to the final story "The Dead" of *Dubliners* and forward to *Ulysses*, which Joyce began around the time of the play's composition. In 1922, *Ulysses* was finally published in Paris where Joyce, his wife Nora, and their two children had finally settled in 1920. At its simplest, *Ulysses* is the story of two men whose lives meet in Dublin on 16th June 1904. According to Stephen Spender *Ulysses* is one extraordinary example of the 'decreative' novel. It is a work that moves our attention from its realistic subject into its language and its form. It makes an epic approach, calls up Homer in its title and its structure, but also functions as anti-epic. This novel shares many things in common with most of the major works of modernism. It is very much the story of its own act of creation. This novel was conceived in Dublin filled with the spirit of Irish Literary Revival active since 1890s.



Künstlerroman: "artist novel") is about the development of an artist and shows a growth of the self. Some famous examples of Bildungsroman are found in the following works: Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

In 1923, Joyce began the composition of *Finnegans Wake* initially published as a *Work in Progress* in 12 parts between 1928 and 1937. It is a work of comic fiction significant for its experimental style. *Finnegans Wake* is also the author's final work. The entire book is written in a largely idiosyncratic language, multilingual puns and portmanteau words, which according to many critics, was conceived as an attempt to recreate the experience of sleep and dreams. Owing to the work's expansive linguistic experiments, stream of consciousness writing style, literary allusions, free dream associations, and its abandonment of the conventions of plot and character construction *Finnegans Wake* still remains a difficult text for the general reading public.



LET US KNOW

Ulysses and *Finnegans Wake* are seen as modern masterpieces by many writers and critics. You should note that Joyce's influence on the development of modernism is undisputed. Arnold Kettle in his essay "The Consistency of James Joyce" writes that there is a remarkable consistency about his life and development as a writer, a coherence and a completeness which has a sort of aesthetic richness. From the writing of his first stories in *Dubliners* (1914) to *Finnegans Wake* (1939), he seemed to have precisely known what he was doing. This is what is so unique about James Joyce as a modern writer.

A Portrait of the Artist, the novel prescribed for your study, is an account of a sensitive boy growing up in Dublin with aesthetic aspirations. By naming its protagonist Stephen Dedalus, the novel evokes the myth of Icarus, the son of the artist Dedalus whose winged escape from ancient Crete was aborted by flying too close to the sun, melting the wax that held his wings together. The classical superstructure endows the story of young Dedalus's struggles to free himself from the squalor of poverty, and from the oppressive constraints of the Catholic Church, with universal significance. A Portrait also offers moments of enlightenment and self-recognition, termed "epiphany" by Joyce, as antidotes to the paralysis of

Dublin life. Stylistically, *A Portrait* exhibits an imitative form of writing that expresses the stages of Stephen Dedalus's artistic development in a changing play of language reflective of his evolving consciousness. Childhood is narrated in simple prose, the romantic longings of early adolescence in lyrical language, the rigorous scholasticism of the university phase in erudite expression. A final series of diary entries ending the novel make it clear that the shifting narrative styles represented aesthetic simulations rather than actual representations of Stephen's consciousness. *A Portrait* ends with Stephen Dedalus, like Icarus, attempting to escape his island home for the Continent.

Joyce's next novel, *Ulysses*, begins with Stephen Dedalus returned to Dublin, living in desolate aimlessness following the death of his mother. In *Ulysses* both the thematic enactment of classical mythology and the experiments with stylistic imitation undergo a dramatic enlargement and expansion. Set in 1904 Dublin, Ulysses is structured in correspondence with Homer's classic epic, the Odyssey, although the precise relation of each chapter to an Odyssean adventure became apparent only thanks to a schema Joyce sent to his

Italian translator, Carlo Linati. The story of Homer's voyager, who must overcome tremendous obstacles with wit and courage, is invested in the unlikely figure of a 38-year-old Jewish advertising canvasser named Leopold Bloom. Joyce's early love of drama recrudesces in the novel's classical unity of time, place, and action.

Set on a single specific day, June 16, 1904 in Dublin, the action consists of the movements and interactions not only of the protagonists–Bloom, his wife Marion (Molly), and Stephen Dedalus–but also of a considerable portion of the city's colourful population. The variations from the Odyssey are as intriguing as the correspondences. Bloom's obstacles and crises are as much psychological as they are social. He must come to terms with grief over the loss of his infant son, the suicide of his father, and the infidelity of his wife who, unlike the faithful Penelope of the classic, initiates an adulterous affair with her impresario on this day. Bloom also encounters prejudice and anti-Semitism, while Stephen Dedalus, still trying to realize a

vocation as an artist, finds himself excluded from the Irish literary and intellectual milieu. The city of Dublin is represented with what has been called "documentary" realism not only for its historically verifiable addresses, buildings, and institutions, but also for the historical personages mixed in with its fictional figures. This creates an effect of tremendous vitality, as its citizens, on the move, visit shops, school, post office, public bath, church, cemetery, newspaper office, library, museum, pubs and eateries, beach, hospital, and house of prostitution.

Ulysses owed its notoriety not only to features of its content but also to the conspicuous experiments in style that produced a dizzying variety of narrative voices. The style of narration, changing virtually chapter by chapter, confronts the reader with considerable difficulty. The early episodes are told by an impersonal voice that nonetheless moves in and out of the minds of protagonists whose thoughts are reported in the process of shaping and expressing. In addition to this "stream of consciousness," Joyce also produces a variant of the imitative style introduced in *A Portrait* by having the narration reflect themes, settings, and Homeric correspondences. The episode reporting Bloom's visit to the newspaper office is divided into sections introduced by captions or "headlines," for example, as well as windy rhetoric befitting Aeolus, the keeper of the winds. The episode corresponding to the lure of the siren song tempting Odysseus and his men highlights the musical qualities of the narrative prose, beginning with an "overture" that gives each character a musical leitmotif. The episode set in the Holles Street Maternity Hospital recapitulates the evolving styles of English literary history in mimicry of the embryonic development of a foetus. The final episode is produced by the irrepressible and lively thoughts of Molly Bloom in bed, as she revisits her day and her past. The novel ends with her memory of the moment of love on Howth Hill when she offered an affirmative "yes I said yes I will Yes" to her husband's proposal and to life itself.

The difficulty of reading *Ulysses* is eclipsed by the challenges posed by *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's last work. Its title, inspired by an Irish ballad of a dead hod carrier who is revived by a splash of whiskey during his wake, points to death and resurrection as overall themes of the work. However,

the phantasmagoric character of the writing–reminiscent of the hallucinatory brothel episode in *Ulysses*—departs dramatically from the realism of Joyce's earlier texts. The book is without stable characters, setting, or actions. Everything is so fluid and multiple that everything is indeterminate. Although there appears to be a family at the heart of the work–possibly named Earwicker and consisting of mother, father, twin sons, and daughter–nothing is certain about them including their names, numbers, or species. The mother – Anna Livia Plurabelle, as she is designated–may be old or young, or a hen, or the river Liffey. Her husband may be a pub-keeper, or a mythic giant, or the landscape of Dublin itself. The children, twin sons who are enemies and a daughter who is also sometimes doubled, variously take form as tree, stone, cloud, or rainbow. There are transgressions and sins at issue, including aggression and possible incest, but trials and inquests fail to clarify them.

Like *Ulysses*, the work has mythic resonances although these too are multiple. Genesis, the Stations of the Cross, the Oedipus myth, Irish mythology, all play structural roles. Joyce talked of the Wake as a "night" work, and the analogue of dream–particularly Freudian dream–offers arguably the best analytical tool for making sense of its seeming nonsense. This nonsense also permeates the language, whose words are multiple, interlaced with other words and meanings reminiscent of the "portmanteau words" in Lewis Carroll's Alice books. The Wake's language layers its English with words from many other languages, creating a universalizing effect.



LET US KNOW

Contemporaries vs Moderns?

Stephen Spender in his book *The Struggle of the Modern* presents a fascinating distinction between two distinctive lines running through twentieth century writings- the line of the **'Contemporaries'** and the line of the **'Moderns'**. The 'Contemporaries' include names of writers like H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, C. P. Snow and many more who seem to have accepted the processes of the modern world and its various forces, and whose work have maintained an attitude of

realism, rationality and positivism. While the idea of the 'Moderns' includes writers like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf who have taken a different view of their age and often seem to have distrusted its historical direction, doubted its progress, felt dislocated from its past and are conscious of the anarchy present in the modern times. Subsequently, the 'Modern' writers seem to have constructed radical orders of their own. Thus, their writings tend to be fragmentary and disjunctive. Joyce is one of those 'Modern' writers according to Spender.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Mention the significance of Dublin in James Joyce's writings.

Q 4: How do you think James Joyce is connected to Naturalism and Symbolism?

Q 5: What, according to you, is the literary significance of Joyce's *Ulysses*?

Q 6: What kind of a novel is *Ulysses*?

Q 7: Why is *Finnegans Wake* considered a difficult novel?

Q 8: What function does the allusion to Icarus play in the novel *A Portrait*?

7.4 STORY OF THE NOVEL *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST*

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is an autobiographical novel by James Joyce. It tells the story of Stephen Dedalus, a boy growing up in Ireland at the end of the 19th century. He is intelligent but frail and struggles towards maturity in Ireland at the turn of the century. This novel thus traces his intellectual, moral, and artistic development from boyhood to the completion of his education at University College, Dublin. As Stephen gradually grows, he decides to escape from all his social, familial, and religious responsibilities and live a life devoted completely to the art of writing.

As a young boy, Stephen's individuality is challenged by different conventions, dictated mainly by his family, Catholic faith and Irish nationalism. He attends a strict religious boarding school called Clongowes Wood College. At first, he is lonely and homesick at the school, but as time passes, he finds his place among the other boys. As a child, he witnesses a political dispute between supporters of Parnell and anti-Parnellites and suffers unjust punishments at the hands of a stupid and brutal priest, Father Dolan.

Stephen's father, Simon, becomes a spendthrift and the family sinks into debt. After spending some time in the company of his Uncle Charles, Stephen learns that the family cannot afford to send him back to Clongowes. Instead, he moves to Dublin and starts attending a prestigious day school called Belvedere, where he grows to excel as a writer and as an actor in the student theatre. His first sexual experience, with a young Dublin prostitute, unleashes a storm of guilt and shame in Stephen. For a while, he ignores all his religiosity throwing himself into a variety of 'sins' like masturbation, gluttony, and more visits to prostitutes, among others. Adolescent sexual experience thus causes in his mind intense moral torment to be pacified by Father Arnall's famous 'hellfire sermon. Afraid and deeply shaken, Stephen decides to resort to a life of Christian piety. He begins attending Mass every day. Rejecting the call of priesthood, Stephen begins to exert his own individual identity. Soon he realizes that the austerity of the priestly life is utterly incompatible with his love for sensual beauty. Anxiously waiting for his acceptance to the university, Stephen goes for a walk on the beach, where he observes a young girl loitering. He is struck by her beauty, and realizes, in a moment of epiphany, that the love and desire of beauty should not be a source of shame. Stephen resolves to live his life to the fullest, and vows not to be constrained by the boundaries of his family, his nation, and his religion.

Stephen moves on to the university, where he develops a number of strong friendships, and is especially close with a young man named Cranly. There he embraces the wider and more rewarding world of literature, philosophy and aesthetics. In a series of conversations with his friends, Stephen formulates his own theories about art. By the end of the novel, he

becomes more and more determined to free himself from the claims of family, church and state. Like his namesake, the mythical Daedalus, Stephen hopes to build himself wings on which he can fly above all obstacles and achieve a life as an artist. Finally, he resolves to leave Ireland for Paris, encounters the 'reality of experience', and learns to forge 'the uncreated conscience' of his race.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: What is the subject matter of the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*?

Q 10: Name some of the works that might have influenced the writing of the novel *A Portrait of the Artist.* What is common in all of them?

7.5 CRITICAL RECEPTION OF JOYCE

There is no doubt about the fact that James Joyce is a major figure of the modernist period in literary history. Richard Ellmann summarizes the author's impact on 20th century letters like this, "We are still learning to be James Joyce's contemporaries, to understand our interpreter." Critics are unanimous in their praise for Joyce's artistry while acknowledging the difficulty of his works. Eloise Knowlton comments about *Dubliners*, "The stories…take a coldly objective, scrupulously true view of their objects, accomplish a vivid and swift capturing of a single, seemingly accidental moment, and lack an explanatory authorial voice (a caption) that might pin down a specific meaning: a lack that perpetually frustrates students who expect a definite, readable meaning to a tale." Similarly, Keith Cushman writes about *Ulysses*, "It is odd that a novel with such a reputation for consummate artistic design should also be universally recognized to be formally problematic. Every serious reader of *Ulysses* must grapple with the apparent divergence of matter and manner, of surface and symbol… Our image of Joyce almost requires that we equip *Ulysses* with a grand design, but any such design is apt to leave out the sheer exuberant messiness of the novel."

Responses to the novel *Ulysses* have been as varied as the different facets of the novel itself, although the antihero figure of Leopold Bloom is so loved that a day named for him (June 16) is celebrated by Joyce enthusiasts around the world (and especially in Dublin, Ireland, where the novel takes place): Bloomsday. Attempting to trace Joyce's effects on the development of a "world modernism," literary critic Ce´sar Augusto Salgado notes several "central Joycean themes—the interplay between the Homeric and the Orphic, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, death and resurrection." Salgado also describes *Ulysses* as "an anarchical avant-garde work" driven by a "realist imperative to represent a plurality of characters with technical conciseness by filtering their representation and characterization through their own language."

David Daiches argues that in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* "Joyce…has given us one of the few examples in English literature of autobiography successfully employed as a mode of fiction. As autobiography, the work has an almost terrifying honesty; as fiction, it has unity, consistency, probability, and all the other aesthetic qualities we look for in a work of art…*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is perhaps the most flawless of all Joyce's work. The welding of form and content, the choice of detail that seems inevitable once it has been made, the brilliant yet unobtrusive style, these and other qualities give the work a wholeness, a unity, and a completeness possessed by hardly a handful of works in our literature."

Joyce's influence on later 20th century literature and culture has been enormous, as has been his appeal to common readers. He has had an impact not only on such Irish writers as Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien, but also on a much wider international field. Vladimir Nabokov and Umberto Eco reflect Joyce's influence in their word play, puns and puzzles, and historical and arcane trivia. The Latin American writers strongly influenced by Joyce include Jorge Luis Borges of Argentina, Pablo Neruda of Chile, and Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz of Mexico. Anthony Burgess, Salman Rushdie, and J. M. Coetzee gloss Joyce significantly in their work. The British playwright Tom Stoppard's 1974 play Travesties features Joyce's conflict with an English consular official during a staging of Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest in Zurich.

Joyce's writing also provided instructive study for such influential late twentieth-century critical theorists as Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan. In 1979, the American composer John Cage produced an avant-garde piece of music titled Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on "Finnegans Wake." Film adaptations of Joyce's work include an early cinematic version of Finnegans Wake by the film animator Mary Ellen Bute, as well as ambitious adaptations of Ulysses by Joseph Strick (1967) and Sean Walsh (2003). The Strick film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in 1967. The famous American director John Huston filmed the Dubliners story "The Dead" in 1987. A film titled Nora, produced by Pat Murphy in 2000, is based on the biography of Joyce's wife by Brenda Maddox. The International James Joyce Foundation, established in 1967, sponsors an international symposium on Joyce's work every two years, generally in a European city.



LET US KNOW

Joyce's influence on later 20th century literature and culture is immense. He influenced the Irish writers as Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien. Vladimir Nabokov and Umberto Eco reflect Joyce's influence in their word play, puns and puzzles, and historical and arcane trivia. The Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges of Argentina, Pablo Neruda of Chile, and Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz of Mexico were strongly influenced by Joyce. Anthony Burgess, Salman Rushdie, and J. M. Coetzee gloss Joyce significantly in their work. The British playwright Tom Stoppard's 1974 play *Travesties* features Joyce's conflict with an English consular official during a staging of Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest in Zurich.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 11: How does David Daiches celebrate the novel *A Portrait*?

Q 12: Who are the important writers influenced by James Joyce?



7.6 LET US SUM UP

From this unit, you have learnt that the Irish writer James Joyce is one of the most important representatives of the idea of the 'modern' in the 20th century novels. Besides, getting to know about the life and various aspects of Joyce's works, you have also learnt that the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a semiautobiographical account of a sensitive boy growing up in Dublin with aesthetic aspirations. By naming its protagonist Stephen Dedalus, the novel evokes the myth of Icarus, the son of the artist Dedalus whose winged escape from ancient Crete was aborted by flying too close to the sun, melting the wax that held his wings together. As you read the text of *A Portrait*, you will learn that Stephen's own task like that of Dedalus, is to migrate into the unknown arts, and the novel ends with his making the narrator's own flight, to Europe and art. This novel is an early example of some of Joyce's modernist techniques that are developed in later novels like *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake. A Portrait* also offers moments of enlightenment and self-recognition, termed "epiphany" by Joyce, as antidotes to the paralysis of modern Dublin life. It is assumed that your reading about the life and works of James Joyce will be of help while reading the *A Portrait.*



7.7 FURTHER READING

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7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: The stories of *Dubliners* share the naturalistic feelings that we live in a determined and conditioned world… …Joyce also conceived art not as a plain report on the world but as an active work of creation and moving consciousness, an essential story of the artist.

Ans to Q 2: Joyce here departed from the aims of Irish cultural nationalism or the Celtic Revival… …Joyce regarded the recovery of the Gaelic language and of Irish myth and folklore regarded as parochial and backward looking… …*Dubliners* offers stories of schoolboy yearning, of entrapment by duty and responsibility, oppressive working conditions, the degradation of patriotism, the ravage of families by alcoholism.

Ans to Q 3: Joyce makes Dublin his fictional universe… …Joyce's Dublin is populated largely by characters who closely resemble family members, enemies and friends from his time… …"For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal."—so claims James Joyce… …Joyce also said even if

Dublin were to be destroyed it could be reconstructed from the novel *Ulysses*.

Ans to Q 4: Naturalism taught Joyce that we live in a determined and conditioned world, which art must treat with meticulousness and radical frankness…. …while Symbolism helped him to conceive art not as a plain report on the world but as an active work of creation and moving consciousness, an essential story of the artist.

Ans to Q 5: *Ulysses* is an example of the 'decreative' novel… …as a literary work it moves our attention from its realistic subject into its language and its form… …it calls up Homer in its title and its structure, but also functions as anti-epic…. …this novel was conceived in Dublin filled with the spirit of Irish Literary Revival active since 1890s.

Ans to Q 6: *Ulysses* is the story of two men who meet in Dublin on 16th June 1904… … *Ulysses* is one extraordinary example of the 'decreative' novel… …it moves our attention from its realistic subject into its language and its form… …also functions as anti-epic.

Ans to Q 7: Because, the novel is written in a largely idiosyncratic language, multilingual puns and portmanteau words… …uses expansive linguistic experiments, stream of consciousness technique, literary allusions, free dream associations… ….abandons the conventions of plot and character construction.

Ans to Q 8: The novel evokes the myth of Icarus, the son of the artist Dedalus whose winged escape from ancient Crete was aborted by flying too close to the sun, melting the wax that held his wings together… …young Dedalus's also struggles to free himself from the squalor of poverty… …*A Portrait* ends with Stephen Dedalus, like Icarus, attempting to escape his island home for the Continent.

Ans to Q 9: *A Portrait of The Artist* deals with various contemporary issues such as the quest for autonomy and the role of the Catholic Church… …allusion to a particular Irish politician Charles Stewart Parnell, bear tremendous significance… …the myth of Daedalus and Icarus features prominently in the novel.

Ans to Q 10: Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* that describes a young artist's revolt against the repressive norms of society… … St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Goethe's *Werther and Wilhelm Meister*… …Cardinal Newman's *Aologia Pro Vita Sua*.… …the common element in all these works is the description of how a sensitive youth is first shaped by his environment but soon becomes conscious of its different pressures and revolts against it.

Ans to Q 11: In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* "Joyce…has given us one of the few examples in English literature of autobiography successfully employed as a mode of fiction. As autobiography, the work has an almost terrifying honesty; as fiction, it has unity, consistency, probability, and all the other aesthetic qualities we look for in a work of art…*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is perhaps the most flawless of all Joyce's work.

Ans to Q 12: Samuel Beckett… …Flann O'Brien… …Vladimir Nabokov… …Umberto Eco… ...Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz… …Anthony Burgess, Salman Rushdie, J. M. Coetzee… …Tom Stoppard.



7.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Joyce wrote about Ireland and the Irish, although he lived abroad for almost all his adult life. Discuss.

Q 2: What stylistic features of James Joyce do you think can be attributed to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man?*

Q 3: Discuss James Joyce's contribution to modernist novels in the 20th century? How did he deviate from the traditional novelists in representing reality in fiction?

Q 4: Write a note on the novels of James Joyce to explain the role of Psychology in his fiction.

Q 5: What makes *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* an important manifesto of modernism in literature? Give your views.

Q 6: Describe how this novel *A Portrait* fits the meaning of the term Bildungsroman. Have you read any other novels that can be classified similarly? If so, compare this novel with a similar novel.

Q 7: What makes James Joyce a 'modern novelist'? Illustrate with examples drawn from his technique of writing.

Q 8: Write a note on Joyce's experiments with the use of the Stream of Consciousness technique and Interior Monologue in his fictional works.

Q 9: Comment on the different influences on James Joyce which finally helped him to emerge as a great modern novelist.

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UNIT 8 : JAMES JOYCE: *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN* (PART II)

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Reading the Novel

- 8.3.1 Major Themes
- 8.3.2 Joyce's Art of Characterisation
- 8.3.3 Joyce's Narrative Style

8.4 Let us Sum up

8.5 Further Reading

8.6 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

8.7 Possible Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- discuss the different important aspects of James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- discuss the various themes in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- explain Joyce's processes of characterisation
- identify the different aspects of Joyce's narrative style
- make an assessment of the reception of the novel over the period of time since its publication

8.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit shall help you to discuss the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in terms of its various important aspects. You are informed in the previous unit that this first novel by the Irish writer James Joyce is a Künstlerroman in a modernist style. It traces the religious and intellectual awakening of young Stephen Dedalus, a fictional alter ego of Joyce and an

allusion to Dedalus—the consummate craftsman of Greek mythology. In writing this novel, Joyce might have been influenced by Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh,* which is based on the growth of a young artist and his revolt against the repressive norms of society to which he belonged. Perhaps, Joyce was also influenced by some autobiographical works like St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Goethe's *Werther and Wilhelm Meister*, and Cardinal Newman's *Aologia Pro Vita Sua* while preparing for *A Portrait*. The subject of these works is how a sensitive youth is first shaped by his environment, but soon becomes conscious of its different pressures and revolts against it. Let us now have a discussion on the various important aspects of the novel.

8.3 READING THE NOVEL

The title of the novels may have been adapted and parodied by many writers including Dylan Thomas in his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, Ogden Nash in his poem *Portrait of the Artist as a Prematurely Old Man*, Joseph Heller in *Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man*, A.M. Klein in his poem *Portrait of the Poet as Landscape*, Andrew Barlow and Kent Roberts' *A Portrait of Yo Mama as a Young Man*, Grayson Perry's biography *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl*. Joyce's centrality in the fictional world of the early 20th century is best perceived among his contemporary writers. His *Ulysses that appeared in 1922* provided much of the stimulus for much of the experimentalism that followed through the rest of the twenties. Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* would not have taken its shape without the pressures and premises of Joyce's novels. The same can be said of John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* and *USA*, and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. By the end of the 1930s, Joyce turned out to be the grand old man of European literature. The following is a discussion on the different aspects of the novel.

8.3.1 Major Themes

Naturalism, Symbolism and Modernism [Adapted from *Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, p, 75-76]

The dialectic between Naturalism and Symbolism is nowhere more apparent than in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), which Eliot regarded as Joyce's farewell to the novel. Stephen Dedalus devises symbolist poems and symbolist theories, which have often been taken out of context as modernist doctrine. Having rejected the Church's sacred ritual, he makes a sacred ritual out of art. According to him, beauty precludes emotions such as desire and loathing, which are kinetic rather than static, and directed towards a physical rather than a spiritual end. Yet his exposition of this theory, which takes the form of a dialogue with his friend Lynch, as they walk through the Dublin streets, is itself both kinetic and physical.

One of his speeches is interrupted by a "harsh roar of jangled and rattling metal," when a dray laden with old iron turns the corner. Stephen's response to interruptions is to evolve a literary style capable of abstract order. He derives less pleasure from the reflection of external reality in language than from "the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose" (181). When, a few minutes later, he dedicates himself to the creation of beauty, he dedicates himself to a style, a theory, rather than to a subject matter, in a periodic prose which mirrors the emotion, and which we can sense him admiring. Joyce just as evidently does not endorse this rampant will-to literature, since he punctuates the reverie with the sound of young men bathing: "O, cripes, I'm drownded" (183). Stephen's devotion is rewarded, towards the end of chapter 4, by the sight of a young woman gazing out to sea: a figure his lucid supple periodic prose immediately converts into a symbol. Chapter 5 opens with Stephen's breakfast. "The yellow dripping had been scooped out like a bog hole and the pool under it brought back to his memory the dark turf-coloured

water of the bath in Clongowes" (188). The sentences, which describe this scene, are notably plain and notably faithful to appearance. Here, in the sad decline of the Dedalus family into squalor is a story Zola might have written. In an early essay, Joyce had praised Henrik Ibsen for portraying "average lives in their uncompromising truth." The Naturalism of *A Portrait,* its attention to the uncompromising truth of the lives, which surround Stephen,'s, establishes a powerful resistance to literature. All five chapters conclude with a moment of self-transcendence; four times, the next chapter opens with a harsh reversion to squalor and to a plain style. The fifth and final chapter peters out in Stephen's inconsequential diary. Although the diary's conclusion invokes the promise of achievement encrypted in his surname, it can hardly be said to resolve the dialectic between Naturalism and Symbolism. *A Portrait* is Modernism in a state of suspended animation.

Individuation and the sense of a Community:

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man explores what it means to be an individual. Stephen's decision at the end of the novel—to leave his family and friends behind and go into exile in order to become an artist—suggests that Joyce sees the artist as a necessarily isolated figure. In his decision, however, Stephen turns his back on his community, refusing to accept the constraints of political involvement, religious devotion, and family commitment that the community places on its members. However, though the artist is an isolated figure, Stephen's ultimate goal is to give a voice to the community that he is leaving. In the last few pages of the last chapter, Stephen expresses his desire to "forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." (P, 275) He recognizes that his community will always be a part of him, as it has created and shaped his identity. He recognizes himself as a part of the community and it is in relation to the collective, the race, that he formulates his individual aspirations. Similarly, it is in relation to his community that Stephen learns the processes of individuation. Even as Stephen

turns his back on the traditional forms of participation and membership in a community, he envisions his writing as a service to the community.

Ireland, Public History and Private History

More than anything else, the novel *A Portrait of the Artist* is among the most important of the Irish novels as we can assume that it is the first to examine the distorted relationship between the Irish community and oppression. It is more than a mere coincidence that the novel appeared in the year of the Easter Rising in Dublin. The political rebellion and even the cultural resurgence led by W. B. Yeats seemed insufficient to James Joyce. In James Joyce, we often witness a reaction to the squalor, paralysis and servility of an Irish life. Joyce perhaps could well understand the fact that the morbidity of his community's condition was not the consequence of a lost wholeness or of a traditional culture. Instead, it was the adherence to the deforming systems of belief and modes of behaviour that kept the Irish people in bondage. However, the fear of freedom, of the complexity of experience was more pronounced because the conventional systems by which the Irish lived their lives were borrowed, from both London and Rome. Therefore, degeneracy that could be identified with the Irish condition was the product of a tradition not the consequences of its loss.

Dublin in Joyce's writings is not a place in the sense London is in Dickens. The streets, shops, pubs, churches and civic buildings of Dublin are names and located in relation to one another as if a generic map of the city of Dublin could be drawn from such particularities. It is therefore important to note that from the very beginning James Joyce's Dublin is not only a place, but also a sight of linguistic self-consciousness that also projects our desire to give our knowledge a shape that is foreign to it. Throughout the book 'walking' in Dublin remains important because the walk itself is one of the most significant rhetorical devices used in this novel. Geography implies history. As far as it is public referring to public

building and monument, the history that accompanies it is the 'official' national history. . In so far as it is private – hoardings, provision shops, diary with a clock, it is 'personal', the history of Stephen, his friendships, his readings and thoughts. The distinction between the two however is not so secure. As Stephen is constantly reading the history of the city's monuments in the light of his own preoccupations. Thus, Ireland has a story and Stephen too has a story—where they meet is history. History in this sense is Stephen's interpretation of certain aspects of Ireland's past and of his own present

Ideas of Epiphany:

An **epiphany** is an experience of sudden and striking realization. Generally, the term is used to describe breakthrough scientific, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. Often they are triggered by a new and key piece of information. Famous epiphanies include Archimedes's discovery of a method to determine the density of an object and Isaac Newton's realization that a falling apple and the orbiting moon are both pulled by the same force. James Joyce gave this word a particular literary connotation in his novel *Stephen Hero*, part of the first draft of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. We are told in Joyce's *Stephen Hero*: "By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phrase of the mind itself. He believed it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments." In *A Portrait* however, the notion is somewhat changed and Stephen endeavours to become 'a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of evolving life.' His role is to create art out of life and while doing so an artist must rival the God of creation Himself. He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany. A little further

on he says: "Imagine my glimpses of that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanized." Joyce elaborates this theme at considerable length in different occasions. The epiphany is a symbol of a spiritual state of the individual. This aspect of aesthetic theory is left out in *A Portrait*, but acknowledging it is essential for an understanding of Joyce the artist of *A Portrait of the Artist*.

Bildungsroman and the Question of an Artist

You are already told in this unit that this novel is an example of a *Bildungsroman* or Coming-of-age story which is also a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood. Therefore, in a Bildungsroman the change of a character is extremely important. The various stages of Stephen's development and change that are vividly portrayed in this novel can be traced like the following:

1. The imaginative and un-athletic young boy suffering under narrow orthodoxies and the brutalities of a Jesuit boarding school
2. His growing realisation of his families drifts into squalor
3. The overwhelming sense of a 'sin' through an occasion of untimely sexual orientation
4. The phase of sudden and anxious religious observance
5. The journey towards understanding the realm of art and his supposed place in it
6. The crisis of his break with the Church and the exalting moment of revelation.

Thus, one of the main themes of the novel is the development of the artist during the period extending from his early childhood to the days of his young manhood. An artist is essentially an individual who can flourish only by becoming free of all collective entanglements and commitments in the external world. A true artist simply lays down the minimum condition for the survival of the will to create art. As we find in the case of Stephen, he is determined to escape from

his nationality, language, religion etc. which he regards as obstructing the flight of the soul of the artist. Thus, the mission in his life turns out to be the expression of himself in some mode of life or art as freely and as wholly as he can using for his defence only such weapons like silence and exile.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State some of the major themes of the novel *A Portrait*.

Q 2: How are the theme of Individuation and the sense of a Community explored in this novel?

Q 3: What do you mean by the term epiphany? How is James Joyce connected to the ideas of epiphany?

Q 4: What are the different stages of Stephen's development in *A Portrait?*

Q 5: What are some of the sources of Joyce's novel *A Portrait?*

8.3.2 Joyce's Art of Characterisation

You should note that in the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce attempts to weave much of his real life into fiction. Most of the characters in the novel are based on people who actually existed during Joyce's lifetime. Joyce portrayed them as fictional representations of religious, social, and cultural elements of Ireland as they influenced Stephen Dedalus, the young sensitive and maturing artist. The following are the major characters whose reference is almost mandatory while discussing the text of the novel.

Stephen Dadalus

Stephen Dadalus is the most important character of the novel. The most striking quality of Stephen's character is his introverted nature. This brings us back to his childhood. As a child, as an adolescent boy and as a young man, Stephen leads a life of isolation. He is seduced time and again by parental, political, religious,

sexual and literary voices but ultimately concedes only to his own voice that he assigns to his own soul. The spiritual voicing, although it is the product of a closely exercised discipline of isolation, is not the voicing of a private and personal condition only. It is also the voicing of hitherto unrealised and unexamined condition of the Irish people. The novel being a Bildungsroman, Stephen undergoes several crucial transformations over the course of the novel. His introverted attitude finally provides the basis of his aesthetic self as we are told: "Was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?" Important to note that his introversion as an adult also becomes the basis of his defensiveness which uses a highly developed form of the same weapon he had used as a child: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether I call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile and cunning". This is the pattern through which Stephen seeks and finally succeeds in finding his own identity by resisting all collective relationship.

Simon Dedalus

Simon is Stephen's ineffectual father, good-natured but undependable. He prefers to live in the self-deluded reveries of his past rather than fulfil the role of a responsible father. An overly sentimental Irish Nationalist he is never a role model for his son. Seemingly, Simon's only bit of advice for Stephen is to choose his friends well and never to "peach" on them. In Chapter V Stephen describes Simon as less a father than "a medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor . . . a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller . . . and . . . a praiser of his own past." Simon Dedalus

spends a great deal of his time reliving past experiences. Simon is a dominant father figure: he has a deep pride in tradition, but is unable to keep his own affairs in proper order. To Stephen, his father Simon represents that part of family, nation, and tradition, which he feels he must rebel against.

Emma Clery

Emma is Stephen's "beloved", the young girl to whom he is intensely attracted over the course of many years. We are told nothing of her appearance and we can never have any clear idea of her as an individual. Stephens's flirtation with her becomes a bitter recollection in Stephen's mind, which is associated with his dislike for the Church. Stephen does not know Emma particularly well, and is generally too embarrassed or afraid to talk to her, but feels a powerful response stirring within him whenever he sees her. Stephen's first poem, "To E— C—," is written to Emma. Stephen only perceives women in terms of certain extremes. For him, women are either pure, distant, and unapproachable, like Emma, or impure, sexual, and common, like the prostitutes he visits during his time at Belvedere. Thus, the character of Emma remains important so far as her shadowy presence affects the development of Stephen's self.

Charles Stewart Parnell

Parnell is not fictional, and does not actually appear as a character in the novel. However, as an Irish political leader, he is a dominating figure whose death influences many characters in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* During the late nineteenth century, Parnell had been the powerful leader of the Irish National Party, and his influence seemed to promise Irish independence from England. When Parnell's affair with a married woman was exposed, however, he was condemned by the Catholic Church and he fell from grace. Many people in Ireland, such as John Casey in the novel, considered Parnell a hero and blamed the church for his death. Many others like Dante thought the church had done the right thing

to condemn Parnell. These disputes over Parnell's character are at the root of the bitter and abusive argument that erupts during the Dedalus family's Christmas dinner when Stephen is still a young boy. In this sense, Parnell represents the burden of Irish nationality that Stephen comes to believe is preventing him from realizing himself as an artist. However, Parnell also denotes parnellism—that is a set of rhetorical procedures for the reading of the Irish past that Joyce and W B Yeats, along with many others, perfected in the period between 1890 and 1940.

Cranly

Stephen's best friend at the university, Cranly also acts as a kind of nonreligious confessor for Stephen. In the late-night talks, Stephen tells Cranly everything, just as he used to tell the priests everything during his days of religious fervor. While Cranly is a good friend to Stephen, he does not really understand Stephen's need for absolute freedom. He firmly believes that leaving behind all the trappings of society would be to become terribly isolated. Cranly fears the sense of loneliness that Stephen seems to accept as an essential part of an artist's life, and he warns Stephen about the dangers of alienation and faithlessness, urging him to reconsider his decision to leave Ireland.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: How is Stephen's introverted nature gets reflected in this novel?

Q 7: Who is Parnell? What role does he play in the context of the novel?

8.3.3 Joyce's Narrative Style

A novel written in Joyce's characteristic free indirect speech style, *A Portrait* is a major example of the Künstlerroman (an artist's Bildungsroman) in English literature. Joyce's novel traces

the intellectual and religio-philosophical awakening of young Stephen Dedalus as he begins to question and rebel against the Catholic and Irish conventions with which he has been raised. He finally goes abroad to pursue his ambitions as an artist. The opening lines exhibit a new fictional skill: "Once upon a time and a very good time it was…baby tuckoo…" In addition, our knowledge about Stephen was to be attained through his own developing consciousness and this is what is so significant as a narrative style.

However, the most famous aspect of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is Joyce's innovative use of the **Stream of Consciousness** technique. With the help of this technique, Joyce directly transcribes the thoughts and sensations in a character's mind, rather than simply describing them with the help of an observer. Joyce's unique use of Stream of Consciousness in this novel makes the novel a story of the development of Stephen's mind. In the first chapter, child Stephen is only capable of describing his world in simple words and phrases. The sensations that he experiences are all jumbled together with a child's lack of attention to cause and effect. Later, when Stephen is a teenager obsessed with religion, he is able to think in a clearer, more adult manner. However, by the end of the novel, Joyce renders a portrait of a mind that has achieved emotional, intellectual, and artistic adulthood.

However, Joyce has used multiple narrative styles in this novel. Stylistically, the novel is written as a third-person narrative with minimal dialogue, though towards the end of the book dialogue-intensive scenes involving Dedalus and some of his friends, in which Dedalus posits his complex, Thomist aesthetic theory, and finally journal entries by Stephen, are introduced. Since the work describes Stephen's life from the time, he was a child to his increasing independence and ultimate abandonment of Ireland as a young man, the style of the work progresses through each of its five chapters, with the complexity of language gradually increasing. This is an important aspect of Joyce's style in this novel. Throughout the whole

novel, prosaic language is used to describe the state of mind of the protagonist. But the inflections of the narrative voice that Joyce made more supple and subtle with his free indirect style, his interior monologue (this technique helps in recording the continuum of impressions, thoughts and impulses either prompted by conscious experience or arising from the well of the subconscious), and his shading of the third person narrative towards a first person account, can actually bring the whole question of reported speech under scrutiny. The story is constantly being ascribed to Stephen, and by Stephen to someone else. This makes the readers ask about the 'actual identity of the narrator. Is the narrator the same as the author? Alternatively, is it the narrator's voice as borrowed? Even the term impressionism has also been used to describe Joyce's technique of concentrating on the inner life of the main character. Abundant examples of this technique are to be found in the work of Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. Joyce may have learnt a great deal from his predecessors, but none of them had brought the question of the 'authority' of the author to focus as he did. For him it was a question fundamental to his culture.

James Joyce avoided all established notions of cultural nationalism. However, there was a connection between his own project and that of Yeats. Both sought to find for Ireland a language and a literary form that would consort with the Irish experience, including the traumatic experience of having lost a language. Although their ways of doing so were different, they both seemed to have agreed that Ireland must find its own language or get doomed to quote itself in a language that belonged to others. One of the ways of triumphing over the inherited language was to quote them, for in quotation, they lose their own context and gets replaced by the context of the writer who quotes. This notion is unique to James Joyce and it often gets reflected in his narrative style. While examining Joyce's narrative technique, one cannot help referring to the irony inherent in the title of the novel itself. It establishes the difference

between what Joycean representation involves and the earlier works, both in painting and in literature having almost no difficulty with the idea of portraiture itself.



LET US KNOW

Early reviewers of the *Portrait* found faults with what they would tend to call 'a brilliant and nasty variety of pseudo-realism'. But, it is almost difficult to categorise this work as being realist, or an impressionist, or a symbolist and so on. Joyce uses a variety of techniques each playing its role in the context of the novel. Most of the major modern and postmodern writings that have followed since his death have flowed in one way or the other from him.

Although, following World War II, the idea of writing a novel took a new turn, Joyce's presence was still felt. Samuel Beckett, once Joyce's translator and friend in Paris, developed his ideas absurdist and minimalist form of post-war fictions directly from his master. Malcolm Lowry, the writer of *Under the Volcano* (1947) seemed to have seen himself as "Joyced with his own petard". Anthony Burgess, however, pronounced that Joyce's *Ulysses* is the greatest single work of English literature of the 20th century. Much modern criticism depends heavily on his view of the task of modern writing and the crisis of the modern word. When he was asked what *Ulysses* was all about, Joyce explained: "I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy from centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of ensuring one's immortality."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: How is the Stream of Consciousness technique used in this novel?



8.4 LET US SUM UP

By this time, you have learnt that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is essentially the story of Joyce's own break with his family and the Catholic Church and the discovery of his true vocation in life. The aesthetic available in a novel like this is worth reading in conjunction with Virginia Woolf's well-known essays on Modern Fiction. The importance of this novel as a great work of art and its wide influence have generally been recognized. Among many critics, it has inspired numerous commentaries yet it has been quite allusive a novel to comprehend. In naming its hero, however, Joyce also refers to the story of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen whose reference occurs when the hero is crossing St. Stephen's Green. But, the Christian story does not play any significant role in the book as the Pagan myth of Dedalus. This novel is written in Joyce's characteristic free indirect speech style and it is a major example of the Künstlerroman (an artist's Bildungsroman) in English literature. The work is an early example of some of Joyce's modernist techniques that would later be represented in a more developed manner by *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake.* The novel, which has had a "huge influence on novelists across the world", was ranked by Modern Library as the third greatest English-language novel of the 20th century.



8.5 FURTHER READING

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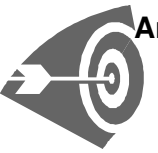
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8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)



Ans to Q 1: Naturalism, Symbolism and Modernism… …Individuation and the sense of a Community… …Ireland, Public History and Private History… …Bildungsroman and the Question of an Artist and so on.

Ans to Q 2: *A Portrait* explores what it means to be an individual… …Stephen's decision to leave his family and friends and go into exile in order to become an artist suggests that the artist is necessarily an isolated figure… …however, Stephen's ultimate goal is to give voice to the very community that he is leaving.

Ans to Q 3: An epiphany is an experience of sudden and striking realization… …one famous example is Archimedes's discovery of a method to determine the density of an object… …James Joyce gave this word a particular literary connotation in his novel *Stephen Hero* in which he states: "By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation…"… …in *A Portrait* however, the notion is somewhat changed.

Ans to Q 4: An imaginative child suffering under narrow orthodoxies and the brutalities of a Jesuit boarding school… …his growing realisation

of his families drifts into squalor… …the overwhelming sense of a 'sin' through an occasion of untimely sexual orientation… …the phase of sudden and anxious religious observance… …the journey towards understanding the realm of art and his supposed place in it… …the crisis of his break with the Church and the exalting moment of revelation.

Ans to Q 5: Allusion to Dedalus—the consummate craftsman of Greek mythology… … Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh,* which is based on the growth of a young artist… … St. Augustine's *Confessions… …*Goethe's *Werther and Wilhelm Meister… …*Cardinal Newman's *Aologia Pro Vita Sua.*

Ans to Q 6: The most striking quality of Stephen's character is his introverted nature… …as a child and an adolescent, Stephen leads a life of isolation… …he is seduced time and again by parental, political, religious, sexual and literary voices… …however, the novel being a Bildungsroman, his introverted attitude finally provides the basis of his aesthetic self.

Ans to Q 7: Parnell was an Irish political leader of the Irish Nationalist Party in the late 19th century… …although he is not present in the novel, the news of his death influences many characters in *A Portrait… …*when Parnell's affair with a married woman was exposed, he was condemned by the Catholic Church and he fell from grace…. …Parnell in the novel represents the burden of Irish nationality that Stephen comes to believe is preventing him from realizing himself as an artist.

Ans to Q 8: With the help of this technique Joyce directly transcribes the thoughts and sensations in a character's mind, rather than simply describing them with the help of an observer…. …this technique makes the novel a story of the development of Stephen's mind.



8.7 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: How is Stephen Dedalus influenced by his Irish nationality? Discuss with reference to his *A Portrait.*

Q 2: Discuss Joyce's use of religious imagery and language. Why are Father Arnall's three sermons so successful in overcoming Stephen's religious doubt?

Q 3: What role does Stephen's burgeoning sexuality play in his development as a character? How does his Catholic morality complicate his experience of sexuality?

Q 4: Compare and contrast Stephen's perception of art with his perception of religion, family, school, or country. What makes art such an appealing escape for Stephen?

Q 5: Why does Stephen turn down the offer to become a Jesuit?

Q 6: How do Stephen's parents affect his development throughout the novel? How does he react to his father's patriotic nostalgia? To his mother's solemn Catholicism? At the end of the novel, why does Stephen feel he needs to escape from his family?

Q 7: Compare and contrast Stephen with some of the other boys and young men with whom he associates. How is he different from them? How does he feel about being different?

Q 8: How does the setting of the novel affect the characters and the plot?

Q 9: Discuss Stephen's changing views of the clergy as he matures. Give supporting examples and cite specific scenes in the novel.

Q 10: Trace the origin and development of Stephen's own *non serviam* credo. Using specific incidents in the novel, discuss the evolution of Stephen's non-conformist attitudes.

Q 11: In Chapter IV, Stephen experiences an epiphany. What does he learn about his feelings toward women and about art? Do you think he really understands, or is he still as confused as ever? Give your views.

Q 12: Examine Stephen's personal relationships with the women, both real and imagined, in his life. Show what effect they have upon his emotional development.

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UNIT 9: VIRGINIA WOOLF: *TOTHE LIGHT HOUSE (PART I)*

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Virginia Woolf: Life and Works

9.4 Story of the Novel *To the Lighthouse*

9.5 Critical Reception of Woolf

9.6 Let us Sum up

9.7 Further Reading

9.8 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

9.9 Possible Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- discuss the life and works of Virginia Woolf
- explain the story line of the novel *To The Lighthouse* and find its difference from traditional stories
- discuss Virginia Woolf as one of the greatest modernist writers
- provide an analysis of the critical reception of Woolf as a leading writer of the Stream of Consciousness technique

9.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to Virginia Woolf, who is yet another important exponent of the Stream of Consciousness technique in novel in the early part of the 20th century. One of the most prominent literary figures of the 20th century, Virginia Woolf is chiefly renowned as an innovative novelist. She also wrote book reviews, biographical and autobiographical sketches, social and literary criticism, personal essays, and commemorative articles treating a wide range of topics. Concerned primarily with depicting the life of the mind, Woolf revolted against traditional narrative structures and developed her own highly individualized style of writing. The

stream-of-consciousness technique is found in much of Woolf's fiction. As you are already aware, this technique reflects the way in which a character's thoughts flow freely, often without formal sentence structure or punctuation. Writing for "the Common Reader" Woolf also wrote book reviews, biographical and autobiographical sketches, social and literary criticism, personal essays, and commemorative articles treating a wide range of topics. Her essays are commended for their perceptive observations on nearly the entire range of English literature, as well as many social and political concerns of the early twentieth century. She maintained that the purpose of writing an essay was to give pleasure to the reader, and she endeavoured to do this with witty, supple prose, apt literary and cultural references, and a wide range of subjects. Aiming to identify closely with her audience, she adopted a persona she termed "the common reader"—an intelligent, educated person with the will and inclination to be challenged by what he or she reads. As you finish reading this unit, you will be able to discuss the life and works of Woolf with particular reference to her novel *To The Lighthouse.*

9.3 VIRGINIA WOOLF: LIFE AND WORKS

The following subsections will help you to consider the life and works of Virginia Woolf one of the greatest writers of the 20th century.

Her Life:

Virginia Stephen was born in London in 1882. Her father, Leslie Stephen, who had been a well-known mountaineer in his youth later, became an eminent man of letters. He was an essayist, biographer, editor and a historian of ideas. He edited the sixty-five volume *Dictionary of National Biography* for many years. Her mother, Julia, besides being a competent housewife, was also a dedicated social worker. Her first husband, whom she had loved deeply, died young leaving her with three children. Her marriage with Leslie Stephen was a happy one but she



Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org

never recovered from her early tragedy and bore its stamp throughout her life. The Stephens family was a large one consisting of Virginia and her three siblings as well as the children from Leslie and Julia's previous marriages. Finances were a constant source of worry for the man, while his wife wore herself out running the household, taking care of eight children and carrying out her charitable work. It is possible that her sudden death in 1895 was the outcome of exhaustion. He was emotionally indulgent and bullying especially towards Venessa who took over the management of the house. Virginia came to see him as an unhappy man who wanted to be thought of as a genius but was actually tormented by the knowledge that he was a failure. This realisation about her father came when she became an adult because, as children, she and her brothers had an uneasy relationship with him. Virginia's mother died when she was only thirteen years old, yet in her own words "Until I was in the forties…the presence of my mother obsessed me…" *To The Lighthouse* attempts to give a sense of their presence and celebrate them in the light of a daughter's changing perception about her parents.

Virginia was born when her father was fifty years old and he died in 1904. After his death, she and Venessa moved out of their home in Kensington, an area where they found the atmosphere too patronising and prudish. They took a house in the **Bloomsbury locality** where they made friends with a group of cultured young men with similar outlook and interests. All of them were intellectuals of the highest order with a socially and sexually liberated attitude to life. They included Lytton Strachey, the celebrated biographer, Roger Fry, an art critic, John Maynard Keynes, the famous economist and John Strachey who translated the works of Sigmund Freud. Their association flourished and together they came to be known as the Bloomsbury Group. E. M. Forster and T. S. Eliot were also loosely associated with this group. Venessa became a well-known painter and married Clive Bell, a famous writer.

In 1913, Virginia married Leonard Woolf who was her brother's friend and a Cambridge University alumnus. He went on to become a renowned writer and editor as well as a Labour Party activist. He was involved with

the campaigns for the formation of the League of Nations and later for Indian independence. Leonard and Virginia founded a successful publishing house, the **Hogarth Press**. Perhaps inspired by her father, Virginia decided early on that she wanted to be a writer. In this respect, she identified with him and he encouraged her to read and write. Yet in the Victorian milieu, she, as a girl, had to stay at home while her brothers were sent to expensive public schools. She resented the discrimination and the seeds of her feminist outlook were thus sown at a young age.

Virginia Woolf was definitely a product of the Bloomsbury Group. These modern creative writers and thinkers had left the Victorian taboos behind and adopted certain relaxed and unorthodox social norms. Their intellectual and cultural leanings were reflected in her thinking and reading. Proust was a major influence and so were James Joyce and Dorothy Richardson. Her early novels written in the traditional style were moderately successful but *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* established her as a leading modern novelist. *To The Lighthouse,* published in 1927, gained her a wider readership and catapulted her to fame. This was the happiest period of her life when she became a glamorous social figure and was featured in the *Vogue* magazine. In addition to her novels and short stories, Virginia Woolf also wrote a series of autobiographical papers, memoirs and a Diary. These give us a detailed and intimate account of her life and we get an inkling of how she conceived of and came to write *To The Lighthouse*.

After her mother's demise, Virginia's stepsister Stella also died in 1897. Her father succumbed to a long illness in 1904 and her elder brother Toby died of a fever in 1906. Virginia was shattered by the series of calamities and never really recovered from the trauma. In spite of a successful career as a writer, Virginia Woolf was prone to severe depression. Her mental instability was compounded by several traumatic events and ultimately led to her committing suicide in 1941.



LET US KNOW

Woolf grew up in an environment rich in Victorian literary influences. Although she lacked the formal education afforded to men of her day, Woolf acquired extensive knowledge of the classics and English literature in the family's enormous home library. In addition, many influential literary figures visited her childhood house, including George Eliot, Henry James, George Lewes, Julia Cameron, and James Lowell, who was named Woolf's godfather. Proximity to influential writers of her day continued into her adulthood with the formation of the Bloomsbury group and creation of the Hogarth Press. With the freedom to create and publish her own work, Woolf largely avoided traditional narrative structures or plots. Her novels are noted for their subjective exploration of character and theme and their poetic prose. Woolf is mostly known as an innovative novelist and in particular for her contribution to the development of the stream-of-consciousness narrative technique.

Her Works:

Virginia Woolf was far removed from Victorian sensibilities and inhibitions. Her fiction and autobiographical writing give ample evidence of her liberated outlook on life and the arts. Her technique as a novelist also breaks away from the prevalent tradition and establishes the modernistic style. Yet, she resembled her famous predecessors like Dickens, Hardy and George Eliot in so far as she too has left behind a large output of writing.

The Bloomsbury Group, which took upon itself the role of a progressive cultural entity, introduced changes in social and artistic norms. Being a member of the group, Virginia's role as a woman and a writer was shaped by these novel attitudes. Her feminism and modern technique of writing are, to a great extent, the outcome of this association. In addition, she was deeply influenced by Proust and stimulated by James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1919). We also see in her fiction the impact of the "Stream of Consciousness" method used by Dorothy Richardson in her novel

Pilgrimage. Her first two novels *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919) were written in the traditional style. However, in *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), she began to experiment with the new narrative technique and develop her style of lyrical fiction, which established her as the diva of modernist prose. The idea of writing *To The Lighthouse* came to her when she had not yet finished *Mrs. Dalloway*. As she wrote in her Diary in May 1925, she longed to put aside the more laborious work and start giving shape to the new inspiration. The novel was published in 1927 and gained her a wider readership as also greater fame. *Orlando*, written in 1928 was a light-hearted and popular work. Then came *The Wave*s (1931) considered the most unusual and 'difficult' of her novels. After several years of struggle and uncertainty, she fell back on the more traditional style to write *The Years*, which was published in 1937. Her last novel *Between the Acts* was published after her death in 1941.

Like many of her celebrated Victorian predecessors, Virginia Woolf was also a prolific writer. In addition to her novels and the large number of short stories, she has to her credit several books of essays on literature, a biography of art critic Roger Fry and two books on women's position in society. The first of these, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) outlines the key factors leading to woman's autonomy like economic independence and education. She also explores here the reasons why women face difficulty in becoming writers. She lists some of the reasons as the lack of education, the demands made on them by marriage and the raising of a family and the mindset that women must live for others. The arguments are extremely relevant to the themes of *To The Lighthouse* and very close to Virginia Woolf's heart. Her second book on women *Three Guineas* is explicitly feminist stating that professional women should remain outside the mainstream (male) culture, which she sees as dominating and militaristic.

Virginia Woolf has also left behind a series of autobiographical papers and memoirs, which have been published posthumously as *Moments of Being*. An essay in this collection named 'A Sketch of the Past' is pertinent to the novel under discussion. In addition, we have her Diary published in five volumes and six volumes of her letters, which give us, detailed and

intimate information of her life. We get a fair idea of why and how she came to write *To The Lighthouse* from her memoirs and her Diary. In these works, she has revealed the complex emotional connection that defined her relationship with her parents and went on to admit that the novel was an exploration of that relationship. She was compelled to delve into and resolve her ambivalent feelings for her father and the strange influence of her mother. *To The Lighthouse* was the outcome of that compulsion. It is not really a story about her parents but is more of a tribute to them. Hence, it made the author wonder whether she should call it a novel or an elegy. The book builds on an important creative theory of Virginia Woolf. She believed that a writer must bring into focus and expand the rare moments of vision when we experience a deep sense of reality that our mechanical everyday existence has made us immune to. Such a moment was a powerful memory of a holiday she had spent in Cornwall as a child. This becomes the island of Hebrides where the Ramsays go to spend their holidays. *To The Lighthouse* builds on this theory of intense *moments of being* and is autobiographical in this sense.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: In what ways can the novel *To The Lighthouse* be seen as autobiographical?

Q 2: Write briefly about the famous “Bloomsbury Group”.

Q 3: What is the theory that is brought to light in the novel *To The Lighthouse*?

Q 4: What are the different kinds of works produced by Virginia Woolf?

Q 5: How does Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* state certain important aspects of womanhood?

9.4 STORY OF THE NOVEL *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

When Virginia Woolf wrote the novel, she challenged the concept of time traditionally adopted in fiction. *To The Lighthouse* rejects the notion of beginnings and endings and a linear sequence. It contains three parts

but the development of the storyline is not dependent on the passage of time. It does not progress on the 'what- happens-next' basis but moves forward on the arrangement of scenes. Events unfold as they occur in the characters' consciousness and have no temporal dimension. Instead of a string of dramatic events, the form of the novel is a series of impressions inside the minds of human beings. So, let us have a quick look at the three parts of the novel.

Part I "The Window"

It is September, sometime before the First World War. The Ramsays with their guests are having gone to the Isle of Skye for a holiday. There is a lighthouse across the bay from their house to which Mrs Ramsay has promised her son James a trip the next day if the weather is conducive. However, Mr. Ramsay the ever-practical man asserts that the weather will not be fine and this angers his son. The conversation is interspersed with the narration of the thoughts and feelings, memories and perceptions of the characters. Thereby the reader gets to form an idea about the *dramatis personae* and the relationships they share. A significant aspect of this part is that the action takes place in the span of one day. Mr Ramsay talks to his young colleague Charles Tansley and worries about being a failure. There is Lily Briscoe who paints a picture and walks and talks with a guest William Bankes. Another guest Augustus Carmichael dozes on the lawn. Two more guests Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle will have their engagement on the beach and a group of Ramsay children with their friends go down there. In the evening Mrs Ramsay hosts a dinner party. This part focuses on the relationship between her and her husband and ends with their sitting together and reading.

PART II "Time Passes"

Ten years have gone by and the Ramsays have not visited the island in that time. Their house has fallen into disrepair and it becomes a symbol of the remorseless cycle of nature, which continues unmindful of the fate of human beings. The focus in this part is on the passage of time and the indifferent forces of nature. The tragic happenings in the Ramsays' life are reported in parentheses as if these are of little importance. Mrs Ramsay

died suddenly one night and her daughter Prue died at childbirth. Andrew Ramsay is killed in the war. The family is to visit their holiday home and Mrs McNab the cleaner gets a message to this effect. The witless and toothless woman arrives along with Mrs Bast and her son to clean and restore the place. This part ends with the guests descending on the house.

Part III "The Lighthouse"

This Part encompasses a day ten years after Part I. Cam and James Ramsay are now teenagers and their father has decided that he will take them to the lighthouse on a boat. The children have not yet got over their mother's death and their antipathy towards their father. Lily spends the day painting on the beach while Carmichael again dozes on the lawn. She dwells on her memories of Mrs Ramsay as she paints her picture and is overwhelmed with grief. During the day, several things happen. The three Ramsays make the trip to the lighthouse and James rows the boat well. His father praises him and James is happy. He begins to see the redeeming qualities of his father and Cam feels safe with him. They reach the lighthouse and Mr Ramsay bids a private farewell to his wife. On the island, Lily finishes her painting to her satisfaction. She and the children find that they have finally come to terms with Mrs Ramsay's death. They have also resolved to an extent the troubled relationship they had with one another.



LET US KNOW

According to Leonard Woolf *To the Lighthouse* was Virginia's best work. Certainly, it established Virginia Woolf as an important modern writer and earned her wider readership. The sale of her books also went up after its publication. Over the next ten years, she came to be regarded as a serious writer and her novels were translated into other languages. However, by 1941, she was considered outdated, associated with the aesthetic experimentation of the Bloomsbury Group, but not in sync with the times, the late thirties. Her novels did not deal with the major issues like—the rise of Fascism, the Spanish Civil War, the Depression and its effects. When

she died, the Second World War was raging and the decadent culture of the twenties seemed to be of another age. Virginia Woolf, with her focus on subjectivity and the inner world was no longer placed on the top rungs of the literary ladder.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What is so striking about the storyline of the novel *To The Lighthouse*?

Q 7: In what way, is the novel *To The Lighthouse* an important novel by Virginia Woolf?

9.5 CRITICAL RECEPTION OF WOOLF

When *Mrs. Dalloway* was first published in 1925, Woolf received the immediate critical attention unlike in case of her earlier fiction. In a review for the New York Times, John W. Crawford wrote that, despite the inventiveness of other contemporary authors, "Virginia Woolf is almost alone…in the intricate yet clear art of her composition." Edwin Muir, in *Transition: Essays on Contemporary Literature*, compares the novel favourably to her earlier *Night and Day*, stating, "[I]t is infinitely more subtle in its means, and it has on all its pages, as Night and Day had not, the glow of an indisputable artistic triumph."

E. M. Forster in his essay 'English Prose between 1918 and 1939' welcomed Virginia Woolf's works as part of a rich collection of new fiction, which was inspired by 'the new psychological movement'. She belonged to the elite group of writers comprising Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence and Elizabeth Bowen. Other contemporary critics like Q.D. Leavis in essays like 'Fiction and the Reading Public' (1932) also maintained the same line of thinking. She wrote that the elite group had opened up a chasm between the vast majority of readers and a small group with cultivated taste in reading. This gap did not exist in the Dickens era or earlier in the 18th century. Hence, we find that during her lifetime, Virginia Woolf was deemed by many as not a pleasure to read because of her experiment with

the traditional novel form, her complicated narrative techniques and the unfamiliar idiom. In fact, some were of the opinion that her skills were not meant for the novel and would be better suited for some other genre.

By 1965, when 'Fiction and the Reading Public' was republished, the sale of *To the Lighthouse* had gone up dramatically both in the UK and in USA. The renewed interest in Virginia Woolf started after the War because of several reasons. There was a dramatic change in sensibilities leading to a marked transformation in European culture in the fields of music and the arts to science and literature. In this scenario, Virginia Woolf came to be regarded as one of the leading figures of the modernist novel. Her work was widely discussed and debated upon in academic forums and *To The Lighthouse* was generally accepted as a great work of literature. Jean Guiguet's 'Virginia Woolf and her Works' containing a review of academic criticism up to 1962 was a standard book for many years. Guiguet points out that many critics had assessed Virginia Woolf's novels according to the guidelines set by an earlier tradition of novel writing and were unfamiliar with the modernist perceptions. They were thus unable to appreciate the innovations she made in the format of the novel, which had existed since its inception. Erich Auerbach in his 'The Brown Stocking' was the first to make an in-depth analysis of Virginia Woolf's narrative technique and the way her fiction differed from 19th century novels. He brought out the significance of her narrator who marked a departure from the distinct and omniscient 'Voice' of the Traditional Novel. The importance of multiple-viewpoint device and the 'tunnelling' into the past of the characters were highlighted. Auerbach's observation that *To the Lighthouse* was a representative of the modern period was, perhaps, the finest critical appreciation of the novel.

In the second half of the 20th century, a large number of books were written about Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. From the mid-seventies, her papers, essays and autobiographical writings were edited and published. In 1972, a biography written by her nephew Quentin Bell was published. All this generated a great deal of interest on Virginia Woolf's work, and her memoirs in particular greatly affected academic discussions

on *To The Lighthouse.* The critical success Woolf achieved with *Mrs. Dalloway* raised expectations for the 1927 release of her next novel, *To the Lighthouse*. Critical opinion of the book was mixed, with many noting the author's obvious skill at turning a phrase and offering credit for the stylistic and structural difficulties she tackled with the work. Edwin Muir, in a review for Nation and Atheneum, states that the book is "difficult to judge" because of this, and he credits Woolf as "a writer of profound imagination." Muir concedes, "Yet as a whole, though showing an advance on many sides, it produces a less congruous and powerful effect than Mrs. Dalloway." In his review for the New York Times, Louis Kronenberger agrees: "It is inferior to Mrs. Dalloway in the degree to which its aims are achieved; it is superior in the magnitude of the aims themselves." Orlo Williams, in a review for the *Monthly Criterion*, offers praise wrapped in criticism: "Her mastery increases with each book, but, I fear, it will always fall short of her vision." Despite these reviews, modern scholars have devoted much attention to the novel as one of Woolf's most complex and masterful works.

The feminist movement in recent times has given a new impetus to Virginia Woolf studies. Her novels dealt with issues central to the female psyche like the question of identity and woman as a social construct. Hence, at a time when women's issues are coming to the fore, Virginia Woolf's fiction and other women-oriented works strike a chord with the majority of the reading public. An interesting development in recent times has been the shift in focus from the poetic depiction of subjectivity and the experiment in narrative technique in Virginia Woolf's novels. Readers and critics now emphasise more on the social significance of her theme, namely the problems of power. They see, for example, in *To the Lighthouse*, the struggle for power of men over women, of parents over children. Thus, the novel is regarded as being not so much about Virginia Woolf's parents or about Victorian marriage but about more general and complex issues. Today we see in the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay questions, which are valid for us—about emotionally crippled men and their aggressions, about repressions and frustrations of women and the pattern of behaviour produced through such relationships. The creativity of women embodied in Lily Briscoe

and the obstacles she faces as discussed in 'A Room of One's Own' are of immense interest too. Perhaps, for these reasons, *To the Lighthouse* is more popular today than it ever was before.

Because of her importance as an innovator in the modern novel form, and as a commentator on nearly the entire range of English literature and European literature, Woolf's life and works have been the focus of extensive research. In addition to occupying the attention of scholars, Woolf has inspired experimental works in a variety of artistic genres including author Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *The Hours* (1998), in which Woolf appears as a character, and playwright Edward Albee's work *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962) among others.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: Would you like to say that Virginia Woolf's novels were liked by all?

Q 9: What is the significance of Erich Auerbach in the study of Virginia Woolf?

Q 10: In what way, the feminist movement has given a new impetus to the studies on Virginia Woolf?



9.6 LET US SUM UP

From your reading of this unit, you must have realised that Virginia Woolf exemplifies a tendency among the modernist writers to develop from a metonymic (realistic) to a metaphoric (symbolist) representation of reality. She reinvented the novel form in its totality experimenting with the traditional characteristics of plot, theme, setting and character. The old complicity of assumption between author and reader was rejected as was the role of the clearly discernible omniscient narrator. The process of challenging the traditional ways of negotiating proportion, light, time and character in fiction which Virginia Woolf began in *Jacob's Room* (1922) and continued through *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To The Lighthouse* (1927), culminated in *The*

Waves (1931). In these experimental novels, she developed her individual style of lyrical, poetic fiction. Her innovations with narrative technique, idiom and imagery, enabled her to focus on different kinds of subjective experience and explore several layers of the characters' minds. *To the Lighthouse* represents, perhaps, the best execution of these innovations and critics like Erich Auerbach establishes Virginia Woolf as one of the major writers of the modernist novel. This novel is a fruitful experience for readers and students learning about literary forms. They can trace the evolution from the Victorian to the modernist sensibility in the storyline, characterisation and the experimental multiple point of view technique. It is Virginia Woolf's remarkable contribution to the development of the novel, and hence earns for itself an unassailable and enduring place in literature.



9.7 FURTHER READING

Beja, M. (1970). *Virginia Woolf To the Lighthouse: A Selection of Critical Essays*. Casebook Series, Macmillan Education Ltd.

Daugherty, B.R. & M. B. Pringle.(2001). *Approaches to Teaching Woolf's To the Lighthouse*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

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Reid, S. (Ed). (1993). *Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Sellers, S. (Ed). (2010). *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (2nd Edn). Cambridge University Press.

Shaffer, Brian W. (Ed). (2011). *The Encyclopaedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction*. Vol. 1. British and Irish Fiction. Blackwell Publishing Company.

9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: *To The Lighthouse* provides her own changing perception about her parents… …Virginia'a father was a man who failed in life and had unhappy relationship with his children… …the presence of Virginia's mother who died when she was only thirteen years old often obsessed her… …thus there can be seen many autobiographical elements in this novel.

Ans to Q 2: The "Bloomsbury Group" was constituted by friends having a cultured mind set… …all the members had a socially and sexually liberated attitude to life… …the group comprised Lytton Strachey, the eminent biographer, Roger Fry, the art critic, John Maynard Keynes, the famous economist, and John Strachey who translated the works of Sigmund Freud… …E. M. Forster and T. S. Eliot too were also loosely associated with this group.

Ans to Q 3: The book is built on the theory that a writer must bring into focus and expand the rare moments of vision when we experience a deep sense of reality that our mechanical everyday existence has made us immune to.

Ans to Q 4: Novels like *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *Orlando* (1928), *The Wave*s (1931) etc. … …a large number of short stories… …several books of essays on literature… …a biography of art critic Roger Fry… …two books on women's position in society namely *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas… …*a series of autobiographical papers and memoirs which have been published posthumously as *Moments of Being*.

Ans to Q 5: *A Room of One's Own* outlines the key factors leading to woman's autonomy like economic independence and education… …why women face difficulty in becoming writers… …causes are lack of education, the demands by the institution of marriage.

Ans to Q 6: *To The Lighthouse* rejects the notion of beginnings and endings and a linear sequence… …It contains three parts but the development of the storyline is not dependent on the passage of time… …events unfold as they occur in the characters' consciousness and have no temporal dimension.

Ans to Q 7: *To The Lighthouse* rejects the notion of beginnings and endings and a linear sequence… …development of the storyline is not dependent on the passage of time… …not based on 'what- happens-next' but moves forward on the arrangement of scenes… …events unfold as they occur in the characters' consciousness… …the form of the novel is a series of impressions inside the minds of human beings.

Ans to Q 8: No… …she was deemed by many as not a pleasure to read because of her experiment with the traditional novel form, her complicated narrative techniques and the unfamiliar idiom… …some even opined that her skills were not meant for the genre of the novel.

Ans to Q 9: In his essay 'The Brown Stocking' Erich Auerbach made an in-depth analysis of Virginia Woolf's narrative technique for the first time… …he brought out the significance of her narrator who marked a departure from the distinct and omniscient 'Voice' of the Traditional Novel… …the importance of multiple-viewpoint device and the 'tunnelling' into the past of the characters made the novel a representative of the modern period.

Ans to Q 10: Her novels dealt with issues central to the female psyche like identity and woman as a social construct… …hence, at a time when women's issues are coming to the fore, Virginia Woolf's fiction and other women-oriented works strike a chord with the majority of the reading public.



9.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Virginia Woolf said that she was interested in writing about the dark places of psychology. Discuss with reference to her experimental novels.

Q 2: Because Woolf and her husband operated a press, she was free to write without worrying about rejection by a publisher. Do you think that because of this advantage, she could carry on with her experiments?

Q 3: Woolf famously argued in her long essay "A Room of One's Own" that in order for women to succeed as writers of fiction, they needed to have a reliable means of income and a private space in which to work. Do you think that having "a room of one's own" would be important for women writers of the early twentieth century?

Q 4: Woolf employed the Stream-of-consciousness narrative style to explore the inner lives of her characters. Discuss with reference to her novel *To The Lighthouse.*

Q 5: Write a note on the critical reception of Virginia Woolf and her works.

Q 6: *To The Lighthouse* attempts to give a sense of their presence and celebrate them in the light of a daughter's changing perception about her parents. Discuss.

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UNIT 10: VIRGINIA WOOLF: *TO THE LIGHT HOUSE (PART II)*

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Reading the Novel

10.3.1 Major Themes

10.3.2 Woolf's Art of Characterisation

10.3.3 Woolf's Narrative Style

10.4 Let us Sum up

10.5 Further Reading

10.6 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

10.7 Possible Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- discuss the novel *To The Lighthouse* from different perspectives
- analyse the important themes implicit in the novel
- explain the motive of the characters and trace their development
- appreciate the novelty and significance of Virginia Woolf's narrative style
- gain a fresh insight into the concept of psychological realism in literature

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit takes you to the discussion of the novel *To The Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). The novel was written in the experimental narrative technique earlier used in the many-volumed novel *Pilgrimage* by Dorothy Richardson. Virginia also wrote two books on the role of women in society, a subject very closely related to the themes of several of her novels, especially *To The Lighthouse.* In addition to her novels, short stories and several books of essays, we have a series of autobiographical papers and

memoirs, a long diary and six volumes of letters from her repertoire. These give us a full and intimate account of her life. This unit will help you to discuss that *To The Lighthouse* is autobiographical in more than one sense. Apart from the characters, setting and actions, which bear resemblance to her own family life, it also builds on her theory that a writer must attempt to expand the 'moments of vision' and fill them out in words.

10.3 READING THE NOVEL

You must note that the novel *To The Lighthouse* is one of the most significant novels of the 20th century. In the following subsections, we shall discuss the various important aspects of the novel. When we set out to analyse *To The Lighthouse* thematically, we find that the novel operates on a different level altogether. The major political and social issues of the time do not touch the characters in any significant manner and thereby do not impact the story directly. For example, Part II of the novel covers the time when the World War I is going on. Andrew, the Ramsay's son, is killed in the War. Yet the event is not narrated at length or made to give any dramatic turn to the action. The social and political issues, which are central to the fiction of Dickens and George Eliot, do not occupy any space in *To the Lighthouse*.

Virginia Woolf seems to have deliberately kept the focus on the elements, which were regarded as trivial and uninteresting by her male contemporaries. These were the intricate workings of the mind during the characters' everyday interactions with one another. The novel builds on those emotions and complexes, which are normally not visible in public. The novel progresses with the narration of these hidden undercurrents, which are nevertheless very powerful in defining the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children and among guests present in the house. These subtle and usually unarticulated thoughts and feelings have great significance in developing identities as well as relationships. Yet they happen rapidly and often at a subconscious level and become difficult for us to pinpoint. Virginia Woolf's modernist fiction is a successful attempt at finding ways of articulating these complex nuances of human emotions.

Her success as a modernist also means that in these novels she has done away with the artificial distinction between form and content. In *To the Lighthouse*, for example, even those who have resolved their crises of identity to an extent remain open to doubts and insecurities till the very end.

Any examination of the themes of this novel will mean delving into certain psychological issues rather than finding socially relevant subjects. The novel operates on the level of poetry where language heightened by various poetic devices like simile and metaphor becomes a major instrument of conveying the work's intensity and authority. We find images gradually acquiring symbolic dimension and are often able to trace the novel's narrative progress in terms of the symbol's extension and expansion. The most suggestive symbol is the lighthouse and it can mean different things to different readers. In its most general terms, it is a structure representing the concept of a goal: a fulfilment of some sort, a quest involving an elaborate pattern of relations. On the novel's poetic plane, it is a source of light, which does not become a source of illumination until after Mrs Ramsay's death.

10.3.1 Major Themes

The following discussion can be made on the possible themes of the novel *To The Lighthouse*

Identity

A major theme in *To the Lighthouse* is the issue of identity. Development of the sense of self is a crucial process in the storyline. Self-doubt, instability and indecision are seen to plague some characters who thereby face a crisis of identity. As the novel progresses, some of them like James Ramsay and Lily Briscoe resolve this crisis to some extent. James, as a child, is deeply attached to his mother but is resentful towards his father. In Part III he has reached a stage when he is ready to take on the mantle of adulthood but is prevented by the adverse opinion he has of his father. He does not want to inherit the violent rages, the insensitivity and the self-indulgent emotionality of the elder Ramsay. As he sits

on the boat with the tiller in his hands, he is flooded with memories of childhood. He remembers an occasion when he felt helpless as his father raged at his mother. At last, his perceptions clear and he sees his father, as he is now, a sad old man. He also sees the positive qualities of the man — an ability to face reality, even the harshness of it like loneliness and death. He has already internalised his father's heroic self-image, he has begun to identify with his redeeming traits.

The crisis of identity is especially applicable to the women because of the social construct. In the Victorian ethos, they were endowed with certain attributes, which determined their position in and out of home. Mrs Ramsay could not achieve her goal of fighting for sanitation and medical facilities for the poor because her family duties came first. The compulsion to thwart her reformatory zeal had a negative effect on her personality. She was plagued by self-doubt and hence became vulnerable to a crisis of identity. Lily Briscoe too is haunted by doubts and indecision. She is open to comparison with Mrs. Ramsay, who is the epitome of Victorian womanhood. Lily cannot conform to this ideal yet she idolises Mrs. Ramsay. She is torn by indecision and doubts about her femininity. In Part III she too moves towards a strong sense of self as some of her doubts are resolved and, like James, she too begins to see Mrs. Ramsay as a woman rather than a figure on a pedestal. The theme of identity leads to another important issue, a profound concern with gender and a problematic exploration of the differences between man and woman.

Issue of Gender

The contrast between the genders exemplified most notably though Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay largely revolves around two themes: male egotism and inconsiderateness is pitted against feminine sensitivity and attentiveness towards the needs of others. Secondly, there is a series of narrations on the theme of masculine intelligence versus feminine imagination. On the surface, the distinction between

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay based on their thought process polarises gender in their traditional way. However, Virginia Woolf manages, through the action, to reverse the conventional values society ascribes to the sexes. This is set out most powerfully in Section 7 of Part I in which Mr. Ramsay demands sympathy from his wife. Mr. Ramsay's assault on Mrs. Ramsay's sympathies is mental and verbal but is presented through symbolism, which interprets it as a version of rape. In Part III, Lily is faced with the same assault and is assailed by doubts regarding her femininity when she cannot respond to Mr. Ramsay's demands. The male egotism with which conventional female behaviour is contrasted is most explicit in the character of Charles Tansley. As he walks to town with Mrs. Ramsay, he talks endlessly of himself, while she had asked him to accompany her solely out of the kindness of her heart. At dinner that evening, Lily is repelled by his egotism and Mrs. Ramsay sees through his desire to impress.

Bereavement

Another important theme in the novel is bereavement. Death here is presented as a collision of the framework of human-time with some alien non-human framework. There is no consoling or uplifting significance of death. It is an intrusion of an unintelligible destructive force into the relatively ordered and apprehensible world of the living. Thus, death is the harbinger of grief without there being any scope for spiritual solace. Virginia Woolf does not portray the shattering intensity of grief but paints a more complicated and subtle picture with the use of images like the rope, which immobilises James, the mutilated mackerel and so on. She shows the characters one day many years after Mrs. Ramsay's death as if she wants to depict the long-term effect rather than the immediate shock of Mrs. Ramsay's death. On this day, each one of them performs a private ceremony of farewell to her. Mr. Ramsay looks back at the island staring "at the frail blue shape which seemed like the vapour of something that had burned itself away". The metaphor here is that

of distance. One needs to get the proper perspective of the beloved to be able to bid farewell to them, and distance rather than nearness can achieve this. For both James and Lily, Mrs. Ramsay was a mother figure with magical qualities. They have to see her as a mere woman with her share of limitations and contradictions in order to accept her death as a fact. The passage of time puts a distance between the living and the dead and makes both of them realise that their parent or idealised figure had no protective power for them. They are released from the thrall Mrs. Ramsay had held them in while alive. With this release, grief, which in Lily's case was like a dammed up volcano, loosens its grip over her.

Creativity

Many of the characters in the novel are creative people. They are philosophers, a painter, a scientist and a poet with worries whether their objects of creation will survive the onslaught of time. Yet, central to the novel are not these high forms of creative function but other efforts at work. These creative efforts run counter to the destruction by the passage of time. The nurturing of children, traditionally a woman's function, cannot withstand the ravages of time, as Mrs. Ramsay realises. Rose creates a beautiful arrangement with fruits, which someone destroys. Mrs. Ramsay immediately looks at Prue whose fragile beauty it reminds her of. (Prue is to die young in the novel.) Mildred, the cook spends three days making her *boeuf en daube* for dinner. The dish, which makes the reader think of a work of art, is, of course, to be consumed soon. *To the Lighthouse* has many examples of women creating vital and beautiful things, which do not last long. Mrs. McNab with her friend and her son clean and restore the house after it had remained vacant for years. It begins to get dirty again when the cleaning and repairing stops. Mrs. Ramsay creates a dinner party to bring together elements, which have a tendency to stay apart and even harbour hostile feelings. This creation resembles a work of art because Mrs. Ramsay wants to make diverse, resisting people

foster positive relations with one another and smoothly function together. The easy sociable mood created with much effort begins to dissipate as soon as the guests get up to leave. Mrs. Ramsay's struggle against the forces of resistance and apathy while creating the dinner is narrated in terms very similar to those involved in the narration of the story of Lily's struggles with her painting. As she goes upstairs when the dinner is over, Mrs. Ramsay thinks that she has created something that will survive in people's memory and "They would, she thought…however long they lived, come back to this night…" What Mrs. Ramsay succeeded in creating was what Virginia Woolf called a "moment of being" or "moment of vision". Lily's art too draws its inspiration from her memory of special moments. Mrs. Ramsay tried to create moments that would make life stand still that would make something permanent, 'as in another sphere, Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent'. The creative process involved in Lily's painting is beautifully described in *To The Lighthouse*. It is a process whereby materials are derived from the unconscious and inspired by memories of special moments but primarily it is a matter of creating form. Significant experiences articulated or not are verbalised to create a tightly organised unit and it provides great satisfaction like the Shakespeare sonnet does to Mrs. Ramsay.

The Sea

The sea is an important theme. According to critics, the sea objectifies the modernist expansion of individual consciousness. The sea's significance expands to the entire island- setting which affirms freedom from tradition and social restriction. The seascape constitutes a shifting, ambivalent setting. Thematically, in Woolf's novels, individual consciousness is always countered by conventions of society. This reminds us of how the modernist freedom of the individual was always countered by the Victorian attachment to external social conventions. *To the Lighthouse* emphasises that thematic opposition. The island world alters sharply

between day and night. During the day, the Ramsays and their guests walk in the garden alone with their thoughts and look at the freedom and openness of the sea. That is individual consciousness takes precedence. However, at night the sea invokes fear of death and oblivion. The characters gather inside the house, doors and windows closed and candles lit. Their fulfilment comes not from escape into their own inner selves but from the social unity of Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: In what ways, can the novel be read as a 'modern' novel?

Q 2: How does the theme of identity or the crisis of identity get reflected in the novel?

Q 3: Do you consider creativity to be an important aspect of this novel?

Q 4: What does the sea signify?

Q 5: How is the theme of gender dealt with in the novel *To The Lighthouse*?

10.3.2 Woolf's Art of Characterisation

In an essay, Virginia Woolf writes in an essay that characters in fiction are not simply realistic portrayal of people but are fictional constructs. According to her, certain conventions, the historical period and the literary genre determine their creation. As mentioned earlier, Virginia Woolf's fiction represented the subtle workings of the subjective life of her characters, the hidden side of their innermost experiences. She discarded the conventions according to which characters were constructed in most of the 19th century novels. As she believed in the utmost importance of certain moments in people's lives, a writer, she said, must fill out in words these 'moments of vision'. Hence, she gave less importance to complicated plots,

external action, and social context and to the moral life of her characters. Instead she emphasised the verbalisation of their unarticulated worlds and 'tunnelling' to garner knowledge about their past. She used images and anecdotes rather than judgemental descriptions to portray the characters and employed the multiple point of view technique. These innovative ways of rendering characters were later taken up by other writers.

In *To The Lighthouse*, she adopts a tone of affectionate mockery towards almost all the major characters and shows no partiality to either gender. At the same time, the transition from Victorian to modern sensibilities is reflected in the major characters of the novel. The many-sided Mr. Ramsay exemplifying the patriarchal ethos of the Victorian era brings to light the power struggle between man and woman, between parents and children, which in itself is a glimpse of modern sensibility. Mrs. Ramsay embodies tradition as much as rebellion. She is no amorphous shadow but a complex, flawed and human creation. Her culminating moment is her dinner party, a transforming moment of social community. Lily questions the role of social tradition like marriage because she fears the loss of individuality and honesty that social roles demand. Yet, at times, she longs to be in love. She recapitulates her vacillation between two worlds in her art: she must paint the tension between two kinds of reality "the colour burning on a framework of steel".

Mr. Ramsay:

Mr. Ramsay a philosopher in his sixties is respected for his work. He is driven by facts but is unsure of his worth and is prone to fantasising about his legendary heroes with whom he identifies. He feels that he is a failure in his work but keeps his frustration to himself and his wife. Though he craves recognition, in public he feigns indifference to praise and fame. He thinks of himself as a sage-like Thomas Carlyle and thus believes he has power over people. He exercises this power mainly over his wife and children by throwing fits of temper and also by being rude to guests. He also makes

himself comical by dramatising himself. In his worst, he is an egotist and a hypocrite. Yet, Virginia Woolf displays her affectionate tone by endowing him with certain redeeming features. People have to admire and respect Mr. Ramsay in spite of all his negative traits. Lily admires his honesty and intellectual rectitude. His wife, Bankes, and Tansley respect him for the persistence and courage with which he confronts the human condition and the questions of life and death, He is a devoted husband and in his own way loves his children. Cam feels safe with him and James longs for his approval. He can be a tyrant with his family but has a friendly manner towards the local fishermen. In keeping with Virginia Woolf's concept, Mr. Ramsay is a multi-dimensional figure who is eminently unlikeable but compels respect from people. To James he is a black-winged bird of prey with a brass beak. To Bankes, he is like a mother hen surrounded by her chicks. To his own mind, he is like a hawk, fierce and unafraid.

Mrs. Ramsay:

To all intents and purpose, Mrs. Ramsay is a model of Victorian womanhood. She is a devoted wife and mother, constantly thinking of others and denying herself. She firmly holds on to the stereotype that a man worships a woman and she 'reverences' him. Hence, she believes that marriage is the ultimate fulfilment for a woman and tries to persuade others like Lily to enter into wedlock. Though she does not like male egotism, she has an inflated sense of men's superiority. As a result, she submits to her husband's tyranny without a murmur. She is given to flights of imagination and fantasy and is an avid storyteller. Yet she has no illusions about life and is often morbid, dwelling on suffering and death. There is a sad streak in her the cause of which could be found in her past. Virginia Woolf's delineation of Mrs. Ramsey makes the reader wonder if there is no more to her than the Victorian role model. Some, including her children consider her views outdated. She is the competent and uncomplaining homemaker, yet she is weighed down with annoyance

and weariness at times. In spite of her reverence for her husband, she is angered by his insensitivity. She can be high-handed in her efforts to arrange other people's affairs and hates to be disliked. To this end, she makes special efforts to win the admiration of Tansley and Carmichael. Mrs. Ramsey too comes across as a complex multi-dimensional believable character. There is also a side to her, which gives a lie to the concept of Victorian womanhood. Her work for charity is not merely the dispensation of angelic mercy but a step towards an organised campaign for better facilities. True to Virginia Woolf's emphasis on the innermost precincts of the mind, Mrs. Ramsay has a private inner world into which nobody—least of all her husband—has access. She enters into the deep recess of this world when the ties that bind her to others are detached for the time being. When she sinks into its depths, intense feelings overwhelm her, feelings, which take her away from her everyday mundane life.

James and Cam:

Though the Ramsays have eight children, these are the two who have significance in the storyline. Both, especially James, are delineated in connection with their parents. Their attachment or otherwise with the father and the mother and their subsequent change of feelings determine the way their identities are formed. When the novel opens, James is six and Cam is seven. Although both are passionately attached to their mother and are somewhat afraid and even antagonised by their father, their natures propel them to different behaviour patterns. James is quietly persistent where Cam is wilder and is prone to distractions. He is described as 'severe' like his parents while she is moved by visions and fantasies. She cannot bear to see the boar's skull, which her mother has to cover with a shawl, but James, like his father, is not afraid to face facts and wants to be left as it is.

In Part III we notice some changes as ten years have passed and the children are older. James still hates his father but a part of

him wants to break free of this animosity, which makes him unhappy and immobile. Cam, we find is more flexible in her attitude towards her father. Though she agrees with James not to give in to his tyrannical ways, she does not share her brother's complete resistance. Cam is susceptible to his affection and interest and feels protected by him while James cannot free himself from the grip of hatred. Only when he is able to pinpoint the source of his detestation in a childhood incident does he reach a turning point. He comes to recognise his father's redeeming qualities with which he can begin to identify. On the boat to the lighthouse, he earns his father's approval and also starts the process of discovery and maturity.

Lily Briscoe:

When we encounter her in the beginning of the novel, Lily Briscoe is thirty and unmarried. Encouraged by Mrs. Ramsay, she toys with the idea of marriage and at times yearns to be in love. Yet she recognises the destructive aspect of love and, hence, fears it. Although she presents to the world a sensible and uncomplicated demeanour, she is actually torn by doubts on many issues. Her identity is at stake because she is unsure about her femininity. She almost thinks that marriage would fulfil her as a woman but she also fears intimacy. She would love to have a family like the Ramsays but is not sure if marriage would be congenial for her art. She idolises Mrs. Ramsay but, sometimes, finds her overbearing. Hence, we find in Lily a confused personality who is vulnerable to a crisis of identity. In Part III her crisis is resolved to an extent. She has seen married couples fall apart and no longer regrets her own unmarried status. Yet she is prone to undermining herself as a dried up 'spinster' especially when she cannot meet Mr. Ramsay's demands for sympathy. She also underestimates her talent as an artist, not expecting any recognition for her work. We find that she does not like to project herself in any way and is ashamed to express her feelings. Lily Briscoe seems to echo Virginia Woolf's own sense of inadequacy as a woman.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: How is Virginia Woolf's art of characterisation connected with her idea of fiction? Explain.

Q 7: How is the character of Mrs Ramsay presented by Virginia Woolf in this novel?

10.3.3 Woolf's Narrative Style

In Virginia Woolf's fiction, the breaking down of the traditional literary structure in the light of the twentieth century querying of perception, reality and linguistic meaning results in a total re-working of the novel-form. The experimental fiction which began in the short story, 'Kew Gardens' (1917) develops through *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and culminates in *The Waves* (1931). Abolishing chapter and verse, Virginia Woolf creates a rhythmic, wave-like form, continuous in flow like a piece of music. The narration is a seamless discourse rather than a series of stops and starts. Relinquishing the privilege of addressing the reader directly, she chose to present her story through various angles of perspective. Thus, she re-invented the novel by effectively using the subjective, multiple-point-of-view technique.

The "Stream of Consciousness" and "Interior Monologue" techniques are interspersed with *Free Indirect Speech*. Most of the narration follows the character's consciousness through time capturing the thoughts, perceptions, feelings and memories in the order they occur. The "Stream of Consciousness" is sometimes interrupted to follow other occurrences in earlier events a technique Virginia Woolf called 'Tunnelling'. This is done not in the interest of realism but to familiarise the readers with some hidden experience of the character thereby enabling them to divine the significance of present experience or thought. There are some passages in *To the Lighthouse* where the characters express their feelings in their own

words, as if speaking to themselves. This Interior Monologue is, however, not continued for long and is interrupted by different kinds of narration like the direct speech of the character. Then there might be the unuttered feelings of a character expressed through the words of a narrator, sometimes in the former's own idiom. This technique called *Free Indirect Speech* is extensively used in the novel allowing for a seamless discourse, which can move smoothly and subtly from thoughts to actions and other external events. It produces a fluent, continuous and grammatically elegant effect, which is unlike the fragmented half-articulated thoughts represented by the *Stream of Consciousness* method.

A very important narrative technique in *To the Lighthouse* is designed to create an ambiguity between the characters' and narrator's voices. The effect is such that the reader is not sure whose voice is expressing the thoughts of the characters. The technique also leads to equivocation between outer and inner events. The reader is insecure as to whether an external conversation has actually taken place or simply a passage of thought. In traditional novels, no such ambiguity exists but here the wandering prose makes it difficult to determine what is happening and whose mind one is exploring. The significance of this ambiguity is that it allows the narration to perform a variety of functions simultaneously. There is a smooth and subtle movement as the narration shifts between different kinds of subjective experience and between different layers of the mind. Her narrative technique is designed to dramatise the pressure on our experience from the large but often unarticulated world, which remains hidden from the human consciousness. It also makes possible the gradual accumulation of poetic meaning as the images are repeated and varied and woven into a complex texture, which contains each of the characters within one fabric of prose.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: In what way is *To The Lighthouse* an experimental novel?

Q 9: Discuss the narrative techniques used by Woolf in the novel *To The Lighthouse.*



10.4 LET US SUM UP

As a representative of the Stream of Consciousness novels, Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* is an example of the modernist fiction in English. The narrative technique used in the novel is in keeping with the subject matter, which in *To The Lighthouse* is the inner life of the characters. The very personal and subjective experiences delineated by the novelist deals with intricate shifts and turns of thoughts. Virginia Woolf's narrative technique took into account these subtle nuances as she adopted several methods of narration in the novel. Stream of Consciousness, Interior Monologue, Free Indirect Speech are some of the techniques used by Woolf in this novel. The narration follows the character's consciousness through time capturing the thoughts, perceptions, feelings and memories in the order they occur.



10.5 FURTHER READING

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10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: In this novel the distinction between form and content is dismantled… … Woolf deliberately keeps the focus on the elements regarded as trivial and uninteresting by her male contemporaries… …the novel builds on those emotions and complexes which are normally not visible in public… …it is a successful attempt at finding ways of articulating these complex nuances of human emotions… …the execution of the themes happens at a psychological level.

Ans to Q 2: Self-doubt, instability and indecision are seen to plague some characters like James Ramsay and Lily Briscoe who thereby face a crisis of identity… …but as the novel progresses some of them resolve this crisis to some extent… …the crisis of identity is especially applicable to the women because of the social construct because the Victorian ethos endowed them with certain attributes which determined their position in and out of home… …the theme of identity leads to another important issue, a profound concern with gender and a problematic exploration of the differences between man and woman.

Ans to Q 3: yes… …the characters in the novel are creative people… …the creative efforts of these people run counter to the destruction by the passage of time… …the nurturing of children, traditionally a woman's function, cannot withstand the ravages of time, … …*To the Lighthouse* has many examples of women creating vital and beautiful

things which do not last long…. …Mrs. Ramsay tried to create moments that would make life stand still… …the creative process involved in Lily's painting is a process whereby materials are derived from the unconscious and inspired by memories of special moments.

Ans to Q 4: The sea objectifies the modernist expansion of individual consciousness and affirms freedom from tradition and social restriction… …The island world alters sharply between day and night… … During the day, the Ramsays and their guests walk in the garden with the freedom and openness of the sea…. …But at night the sea invokes fear of death and oblivion.

Ans to Q 5: Male egotism and inconsiderateness vs feminine sensitivity and attentiveness… …series of narrations on the theme of masculine intelligence versus feminine imagination… …Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay distinguished based on their thought process… … in the novel Woolf manages to reverse the conventional values society ascribes to the sexes.

Ans to Q 6: According to Virginia Woolf characters are not simply realistic portrayal of people but are fictional constructs... ...certain conventions, the historical period and the literary genre determine their creation…. …as part of her fiction she discarded the conventions according to which characters were constructed in most of the 19th century novels… …as a writer she believed in the utmost importance of certain moments in people's lives so that their unarticulated worlds could be made explicit.

Ans to Q 7: Mrs. Ramsay is presented as a model of Victorian womanhood… … She is a devoted wife and mother and believes that marriage is the ultimate fulfilment for a woman … … she has an inflated sense of men's superiority and submits to her husband's tyranny without a voice… …She is given to flights of imagination and fantasy and is an avid story-teller… …she has a private inner world into which nobody has access.

Ans to Q 8: In this novel Woolf breaks down of the traditional literary structure by infusing into it an interrogation of perception, reality and linguistic

meaning… …by abolishing chapters and verse, she creates a rhythmic, wave-like form… …in one sense she re-invented the novel form by effectively using the subjective, multiple-point-of-view technique.

Ans to Q 9: Stream of Consciousness and Interior Monologue techniques are interspersed with *Free Indirect Speech*… …narration follows the character's consciousness through time capturing the thoughts, perceptions, feelings and memories… …the 'Tunnelling' process… …familiarises the readers with some hidden experience of the character thereby enabling them to divine the significance of present experience or thought.



10.7 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: What does it mean to say that in *To The Lighthouse* characters are constructed from multiple points of view? Discuss.

Q 2: Discuss Woolf's the portrayal of the relationships between parents and children in *To The Lighthouse.*

Q 3: Do we learn anything in general about marriage from *To The Lighthouse* or only about the Ramsays' particular relationship?

Q 4: In what way, does memory enter into the lives of the characters in *To The Lighthouse*?

Q 5: What do you find particularly interesting about the portrayal of artistic creation in *To The Lighthouse*?

Q 6: Elaborate on the important themes of the novel *To The Lighthouse.*

Q 7: Critically comment on Woolf's narrative technique in the novel *To The Lighthouse*.



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Websites and Electronic Resources:

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