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**Women Characters in To the Lighthouse by
Virginia Woolf**

**Ženské postavy v románu K majáku od Virginie
Woolfové**

Diplomová práce

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Centrálním tématem diplomové práce jsou ženské postavy v románu K majáku od Virginie Woolfové. Cílem práce je hlubší pochopení ženských postav založené na společenském kontextu a měnících se pohledech na ženu ve společnosti. Hrdinky budou zkoumány jako ženy vycházející z dědictví viktoriánské éry, avšak přijímající hodnotový systém moderní ženy. Práce bude zaměřena zejména na postavy paní Ramsay a Lily Briscoe. Jakožto východisko literární analýzy samotného textu budou požity aspekty ze života Virginie Woolfové, jejich názorů na ženskou otázku a jejího nekonvenčního životního stylu, stejně jako hodnotové názory skupiny Bloomsbury.

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Modernisté. Torst, 1995. O'BRIEN, E. Virginia. Evropský literární klub, 2004. WHITWORTH, M. H. Virginia Wolf. Oxford University Press, 2005. WOOLF, V. To the Lighthouse. Oxford University Press, 2006.

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem v seznamu použité literatury uvedla všechny prameny, z kterých jsem vycházela.

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Centrálním tématem diplomové práce jsou ženské postavy v románu *K majáku* od Virginie Woolfové. Cílem práce je hlubší pochopení ženských postav založené na společenském kontextu a měnících se pohledech na ženu ve společnosti. Hrdinky jsou zkoumány jako ženy vycházející z dědictví viktoriánské éry, avšak přijímající hodnotový systém moderní ženy. Práce je zaměřena zejména na postavy paní Ramsay a Lily Briscoe. Jakožto východisko literární analýzy samotného textu jsou použity aspekty ze života Virginie Woolfové, jejich názorů na ženskou otázku a jejího nekonvenčního životního stylu, stejně jako hodnotové názory skupiny Bloomsbury.

Klíčová slova:

Virginia Woolf, feminismus, role žen, modernismus, britská společnost, literární skupina Bloomsbury

Annotation:

The central issue addressed in the thesis are female characters in the novel *To the Lighthouse* written by Virginia Woolf. The aim of this thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of the characters based on social context and changing views of women in the society. I want to examine the characters as women from Victorian era and its heritage of values and coming up with new values of modern women. The analysis mainly focuses on Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. The novel is explored through a literary analysis via the life of Virginia Woolf, her opinion of roles of women and her unconventional lifestyle. The findings in the thesis also departs from literary opinions of the Bloomsbury group.

Key Words:

Virginia Woolf, feminism, the role of women, modernism, British society, the Bloomsbury group

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1. INTRODUCTION

Modernism brought far-reaching changes to lives of ordinary people and it specially affected women's world. Modernism introduced a new concept of a modern woman, independent, self-confident and being able to decide her destiny herself. This new concept was in opposition to the previous Victorian one. Virginia Woolf, who was a direct witness of the clash of these two concepts, transformed her experience into the novel *To the Lighthouse*. She managed it through lives of two heroines, Lily and Mrs Ramsay, who found themselves living on the boundaries of two epochs.

Mrs Ramsay is described as a beautiful, charming, but at the same time meek, submissive and self-sacrificing Victorian model. In contrast with Lily Briscoe, open minded, single and independent painter who does not fit into the Victorian environment of the house.

This thesis proceeds and develops the viewing of this Woolf's masterpiece as a work reflecting transition from a Victorian woman to a modern one. The aim of this thesis is to view the process as a personal transition of individuals, and it is carried out through comparing Mrs Ramsay's and Lily's attitudes on five traditional feminine issues, such as: courting, marriage, relations between wives and husbands, self-realisation, family and children.

The first half of the theoretical part is dedicated to modernism itself, the specific changes it brought to various areas of everyday life, women question, and also literature. This part also contains a chapter which is dedicated to Virginia Woolf's life and work in The Bloomsbury Group with the emphasise on the transition of her lifestyle from a Victorian way to a modern one. The second half of the theoretical part reflects the roots the novel grew out of. It introduces the Victorian background, set of opinions and values concerning the afore mentioned feminine issues that deeply influenced both Virginia and the heroines of the novel. The different attitudes of the heroines to the afore mentioned areas are reflected in the practical part.

2. THEORETICAL PART

2.1. Modernism - the Time of Changes

Modernism, like any other epoch, brought new ideas and new understanding of life. However, there are two aspects of the social and cultural changes that are unique. The first one is universality. Both the modernistic ideas such as feminism or individualism, and the concrete impacts of modernism such as new inventions or changes in the world of labour affected everyone. Modernism was not a matter of closed intellectual circle, the educated ones; thoughts of modernism spread through all classes. The second uniqueness lies in its breadth. Modernism brought changes into culture, literature or philosophy but also into everyday lives of ordinary people.

According to Marianne Dekoven Modernism lasted from the last two decades of the 19th century to the end of World War II. (Dekoven, 1999 p. 174) This movement was leading the Victorian society out from its stillness, and at the same time modernism itself was a dynamic phenomenon with its turning point in the middle of its duration, in the first world war. Modernism of the pre-war and post-war time significantly differs. The first one is full of hope, great expectations, and self-confidence. The second one is marked with loss of values, insecurity and suffering.

Pericles Lewis views modernism as a direct reaction to this catastrophe. (Lewis, 2007 pp. 108-109) Allan Bullock even sees the war as a cataclysmic event “sweeping” the old order, values and traditional social roles and therefore making a space for this new concept. (Bullock, 1991 p. 70) The role of the war was catalyst in nature. The war brought the confidence to say aloud what had been just whispered before. The claims for reorganising society resonated more strongly throughout the post-war and post-Victorian “new” society. Still, the Victorian normality had been in crisis before. Lewis emphasises also the role of the pre-war social changes in the development of modernistic thinking. (Lewis, 2007 pp. 108-109)

The most important ones are summed up in *Modernism A Guide To European Literature 1890-1930* by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. The first is an economic change that is based on development of capitalism and industrial orientation of the economy. (Bradbury, et al., 1991 p. 27) Increasing industrialisation went hand in hand with living in huge metropolises, so the urban populations expanded. (Bullock, 1991 p. 59) The next

far-reaching change was the start of mass production for mass market. One of the greatest symbols of the mass production responding to the new phenomenon of leisure time was the cinema. (Bullock, 1991 p. 60)

Besides these society-wide changes modernism came with interest in feelings, experience and self-fulfilment of individuals. This interest is especially apparent in literature. As it is written in the preceding paragraphs modern thinking was a product of a crisis. This statement could be applied to literature as well. The crisis in literature came from questioning its authenticity leading to refusing contemporary forms of language which were found ineffective and conventional. Bradbury and McFarlane point out that the birth of modernism in literature was determined by “dis-establishing of communal reality” and “discreditation of language”. (Bradbury, et al., 1991 p. 27)

The way out from the crisis seemed to lay in coming back to the essence of literature, to go beyond the already misused forms. Bradbury and McFarlane call it “artistic sense fulfilling itself”. (Bradbury, et al., 1991 p. 25) The concrete aspects of these efforts were subjectively viewed reality and breaking of traditional composition and forms of language. Such an attitude to art was believed to win the literature its credibility back. (Bradbury, et al., 1991 p. 24)

Modernistic interest in self affected most the identity and place of women. Subjectivity and individuality resonated well among the ones whose self-realisation was in the long term one-sidedly limited. Feminists’ claims for independence and for possibility to decide on one’s life could be without any doubt viewed as purely modern ones. Even the concept of “a new woman”, which is far different from the Victorian one, is called a modern woman.

Bradbury and McFarlane describe “a modern woman” by putting her into contrast with a Victorian one. “...no young virgin, silly and ignorant of her destiny;” (Bradbury, et al., 1991 pp. 41-42). Still, a woman-mother was very powerful image even in modernity and still played a significant role in the forming of an identity of modern women. Women’s devotion to their families should be as strong as it was during the Victorian era. However, the activity of women themselves is the most important part of the quotation. As it is mentioned afore, modern women were all but passive in the quest for their new position and role in the society. The best example of a movement determined to even fight

for the rights were suffragettes. Peter Widdowson founds the suffragette movement as the most radical and violent feministic movement. (Widdowson, 2004 p. 157)

In the society, facing this women revolution, it was evident that there is no way back to Victorian homes. Many viewed the protests of women as a freeing event and welcomed it, but some refused it and condemned it as an eccentricity. Dekoven writes about the fear from “women’s new power” that appeared in the society. (Dekoven, 1999 p. 174) Alexandra Warwick shows even more catastrophic contemporary views on modern women:

“The appearance of what become known as the New Woman was still controversial and, at worst, she was regarded as a sign of the imminent collapse of society.” (Warwick, 2008 p. 152)

All modernistic changes, the transformation of society, brought new hope and positive expectations, but also insecurity, less stability and relativism coming from the dissolving of the generally respected Victorian stereotypes, roles and values. To find one’s individual place, role in the society and to form one’s identity became a personal task of every individual.

2.2. Virginia Woolf-life and work

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was a witness of radical social changes coming from dissatisfaction within the society. Not just did Virginia Woolf observe the changes, she even experienced them herself. She went through Victorian upbringing in which she was not allowed to express herself fully, but also independent free life of a modern woman. Virginia Woolf embraced the new modern way of a life and at the same time helped to create new modern concepts enriching the contemporary literary scene.

Virginia Woolf, born as Virginia Stephens, spent her whole childhood and youth in a strict Victorian environment. She was growing up in a purely patriarchal family which was recognising the general sovereignty of men. To illustrate the ideas and opinions she grew up in her uncle’s literary activity could be mentioned. Martin Hilský sums up the ideas of James Stephen’s ironical pamphlet Liberty, Equality, Fraternity as a refusal of equality of sexes and advocacy of natural superiority of men over women. (Hilský, 2017 str. 187)

The situation did not improve even after the passing away of the representants of the old Victorian generation in the house, her parents. Living together with her two brothers was a great hardship. Even though they were both young men they were not willing to accept the young and revolutionary ideas of the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, they were both strict Victorians oppressing their sisters Virginia and Vanessa immensely. Michael Whitworth describes differences between the sisters and the brothers: "...Vanessa and Virginia were by nature "explorers and revolutionists", living ten years ahead of their times, while George and Gerald were Victorians, forty years behind." (Whitworth, 2005 p. 9)

However, everything had changed with the year 1904. Both brothers moved away. (George got married and Gerald left to live in a new flat.) Soon after, Virginia joined her sister Vanessa moving from their old house to a new one. The impacts of the change could be well illustrated though a comparison of the old home and the new one coming from sisters' recollections as they are recorded in *Virginia Woolf*:

"...both figure 46 Gordon Square as a place of light, space, and freedom after the darkness, and claustrophobia of 22 Hyde Park Gate; as a place of rational if slightly chilly beauty after the ugliness of their old home." (Whitworth, 2005 p. 10)

The moving to a new home was a turning point in Virginia's life. She started to live as a modern woman. She and her sister lived rich cultural lives. They were inviting various intellectuals and artists to their new home and organising discussions over literature, culture and social issues. It is the time when The Bloomsbury Group came into existence.

The Bloomsbury Group was an innovative and progressive circle. The modern ideas to live and work according to a new redefined modern concept was penetrating throughout the whole group and affected various aspects of its organisation and principles of their work. The character of the group itself was very informal; their gatherings resembled to casual meetings of friends rather than serious meetings of literates and intellectuals. Hilský points out that the members of The Bloomsbury Group did not have the ambition to form a new literary movement. They even did not have a programme manifesting their ideas. He considers the lack of organisation to be a result of a deliberate refusal of the Victorian formalism. (Hilský, 2017 str. 183)

Not just did the group opposed the Victorians concepts of its organisation, it also refused Victorian attitude towards women. They were thought to be equal to men and they were discussing philosophy, literature and social issues together with them. Both women, Vanessa and Virginia were no more kept away from men both physically and intellectually. Finally, both sisters found husbands in that circle. The marriage of Virginia with Leonard Woolf, which took place in 1912, could be viewed as a modern one. Virginia kept her freedom and means of self-realisation-social activism, travelling and writing.

Still, what makes The Bloomsbury Group ground breaking was its literary innovations, the revolutionary forms and techniques. John Fletcher and Malcolm Bradbury show concrete Virginia Woolf's ambitions and reveals the character of her novels. They point out that she uses the method of the flow of consciousness, believing that consciousness itself is aesthetic. She intentionally refuses "fact-giving" and "story telling". Her aim is to "desubstantiate" the material world. Realism is not sufficient for Virginia; she wants to go beyond its limitations. Her intention is to serve a "higher realism" which would make a novel free, poetic and truer. (Fletcher, et al., 1991 p. 408)

The innovative approach of The Bloomsbury Group affected also their choice of subject matters. They shifted their literary interest from the contemporary wide-social topics and grand historical themes to everyday day lives of ordinary people. Hilský points out that The Bloomsbury Group left traditional topics and put the unimportant to the centre of their works. (Hilský, 2017 str. 174)

The Bloomsbury Group also held liberal values. Their new believes differed immensely from the ones they were brought up in and which their parents believed in, the Victorian ones. To refuse the past was a challenge, especially for Virginia Woolf. Hilský comes with two specific examples. On the one hand, The Bloomsbury Group refused the elitist system of the Victorian upper class, however, they realised, that they are its finest examples. Especially Virginia Woolf did not like her being a part of that system, still, she was aware that her comfortable life is determined by belonging to it. (Hilský, 2017 str. 190) The Bloomsbury Group also refused Victorian hypocritical morality; they were tolerating homosexuals, propagating the ideal of free love and liberation of relationships, but at the same time Virginia valued a family life. (Hilský, 2017 str. 188)

Forming of the new ideas, values and literary concepts of The Bloomsbury Group was based on long-term inner processes of its members and it could not do without holding opinions on the previous Victorian ideological concepts. Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* reflects her dealing with the past in the light of the dawn of women's new opportunities.

2.3. Characteristic of Daily Lives of Victorian Women

2.3.1. Courting and choosing the right partner

Courting and the process of choosing the most suitable husband was an extremely important season for a woman. The final decision for a certain match influenced every aspect of her future life. The Victorian society viewed marriage as a life-long matter and was obsessed with virginity of the brides to be, so courting took very seriously. During the social events, young unmarried women had a female company by their side. The one, who a young woman could always fall back on in the society, was called a chaperone. Michael Paterson describes a chaperone more detailly. It was usually a mother, another female relative or a close family friend whose task was to give her protégé advice, introduce her to suitable company and protect her from ruining her reputation. (Paterson, 2008 p. 207)

No matter how important marriage was for a young woman, she was not the one who chooses her life partner. The accepting of a marriage proposal was not an individual choice. As it is apparent from the previous paragraph both getting to know the other sex and the process of decision-making always required an intermediary, and parents had usually the last say in it.

Parents' blessing was determined by social limits, the strong sense of belonging to the proper social class. Robert Woods in *The population of Britain in the nineteenth century* writes: "In wider society the prospects for marriage were affected by the size of the pool of eligibles, its composition and the circumstances in which those eligibles found themselves." (Woods, 1995 p. 27)

Therefore, finding of a suitable husband was not easy. As Woods writes finding a husband was limited into the relevant class, so the desired result of courting was to keep the same social position or even get a better one. This made the process of courting very tough and complicated because there were not enough rich and well-situated candidates.

Therefore, many young women could not escape from an uncertain life of a spinster. Young women were aware that to get married brought certain advantages to their lives. The first one was the financial security, the second one was getting a field for self-realisation-the household, and finally, limited freedom.

Joan Perkin writes that “childlike” and “humiliating” dependence was combined with surprisingly free environment. Especially in the case of upper classes. (Perkin, 2002 p. 3) Even though, their rights and powers of young wives were restricted, they could use their free time the way they pleased organising parties, meeting friends and enjoying cultural events.

However, such a model had been under a criticism from the second half of the century, and a calling for a change was getting louder. Especially the choosing of a husband based on his amount of wealth had been viewed more and more problematically. Lynn Abrams points out that from the middle of the 19th century concept of the “reasonable marriages” started to be sharply criticised, even parodied. She considers the gradual change of attitude towards marriage to be a result of a desire to experience romance and emotional fulfilment in matrimonial relationships. The new ideal was to enter a marriage because of true love only. (Abrams, 2005 p. 74)

However, the reality was not as romantic as it seems because the new ideal did not manage to overcome class consciousness. Still, the situation got better and around 1900 love or at least mutual liking in marriage was viewed as normality. The following decades brought increase in confidence of young women gained by economic independence. Women could afford to be more demanding on their future husbands and more importantly, they could make their own choice.

2.3.2. Marriage

Institution of marriage was traditionally closely connected with Christian religion as well as the Christian religion was related to the Victorian society. Christian churches were giving its blessings, shaping the wedding ceremony and living in a marriage as well.

Besides its mystical and sacred character, being married guaranteed certain privileges, especially for women. Marriage above all meant existential security for them, so they were driven to it. Lynn Abrams claims that marriages guaranteed women economic surviving and moral position. (Abrams, 2005 p. 72) The necessity of marriage

for women was stemming from their economic dependence on men. Even for young women from middle and upper-class families quest for a husband meant a quest for financial security.

There are two other aspects that enhanced importance of marriage in the lives of women as well as men. Marriage was expected to last until the death of one from the couple. Also, sexual activity of people limited to marriage. However, in case of women sex before marriage was unwanted, in contrast with men when previous experience was permissible. Next aspect giving marriage such importance in lives of 19th century people was that a marriage was the only way to beget legitimate children.

However, 19th century marriages, especially in the second half of the century undergone a process of transition when the inseparability of marriage was questioned and the viewing of marriage as a sacred union was getting lost. One of the gradual changes is shifting of powers of Church under the state control, therefore the Church lost its dominant power over matrimonial relationships. In the following sentences two concrete displays of the loosing influence are given. Firstly, an alternative to religious marriage was created. Lauren Everitt refers to Marriage Act (1836) that allowed non-believers to have civil marriage. (Everitt, 2012)

Another change that influenced the viewing of marriages was the possibility to end an unsuccessful marriage by divorce. The process of divorce got under state control as well. In the book Abrams writes that the Church courts had lost disciplinary authority in considering reasons for obtaining divorce and the authority was passed to civil courts. (Abrams, 2005 p. 88)

More detailed information about divorces in the second half of the 19th offers Cambridge Family Law Practise website where the crucial event of the history of divorces of the second half of the 19th century is recorded. It is the Matrimonial Cause Act from 1857. Still, women wanting a divorce after 1857 were greatly disadvantaged. As it is written on the web side, the Act made possible divorce based on husband's petition. To achieve the divorce a husband needed to prove his wife's infidelity. The Act also allowed divorces based on women's request. In addition to her husband adultery, a woman had to also prove an "aggravating factor". (Cambridge Family Law Practice, 2019)

"Women who wanted to divorce their husbands needed also to prove an aggravating factor of the adultery, such as rape or incest."

Even though the possibility to get divorced existed, it was an unusual and traumatic matter. Cambridge Family Law Practise website enhances the traumatic and scandalous atmosphere that accompanied divorces to which the attention of the public was drawn.

“The High Court in London was the only place to get your divorce, and proceedings were held in open court, enabling society to be scandalised by the personal details revealed during the process.” (Cambridge Family Law Practice, 2019)

These unequal conditions and treatment lasted until 1923 when The Matrimonial Causes Act guaranteed equality. Wives could ask for a divorce because of their husbands’ adultery. Still, the requirement to prove the deed existed. (Cambridge Family Law Practice, 2019)

The 19th century brought two important changes in marriages: civil marriage and divorce. These changes transformed general viewing of the marriage in the society. Marriage outside the church lost its mystical and inseparable character. Figuratively said, marriage came from heaven to earth and became one of many legal contracts that is possible to make and under certain conditions cancel.

2.3.3. Relationship between Wives and Husbands

Although world of Victorian wives was separated from their husband’s one, they were definitely determined by it. Lives of women depended on men. At first, they were born to houses of their fathers’, later they were married to houses of their husbands’.

Marital relationship in Victorian era was a product of long-time discourse based on creating particular models of manhood and womanhood that came from creating a gender stereotypes concerning emotions, characteristics, physical aspects and talents. Ongoing stereotypies brought women to disadvantageous position. Perkin sees the resulting dependence of women on men as a logical necessity coming from division on the weak and the strong sexes. (Perkin, 2002 p. 1)

In her book Perkin also explains historical background of creating the weak sex. “Down to the eighteen century and beyond women were subjected to the domain of the unfair sex. The law undoubtedly regarded almost every woman as under tutelage to some man, usually father or husband.” (Perkin, 2002 p. 1)

Relationship of women in Victorian marriages could be characterized as a patronage of men. Abrams in her book comes with commonly used metaphor symbolizing marital relationship of the 19th century. A man is described there as a strong stable, graceful and noble pine and a woman as a grateful thin slender delicate grapevine. (Abrams, 2005 p. 77). In those verses women's task is to cover and smooth his roughness. By contrast, men's task is to protect so the grapevine could survive and grow well. Being married meant for a Victorian woman that she was confronted with such or other similar symbolic images. Upper mentioned idea was not just a theoretical concept, a possibility of distribution of roles in marriages, it was a pattern that was forced to be applied by society. Women had to decide either to protest against it by creating a different lifestyle which was often seen as a rebellious and a vulgar one, or to embrace upper mentioned schematic life pattern.

Patriarchal dominance over women in marriage was also embodied in law leading to many serious practical everyday impacts on women. Perkin describes situation and position of women around 1869. Husband was a breadwinner, his task was to financially secure his wife. He was in charge of all financial matters. A wife's personal property became her husband's absolutely, unless settled in trust for her. A married woman had no legal existence. Her rights of a mother were also restricted. The legal custody of children belonged to the father. (Perkin, 2002 pp. 13-14)

Gratefulness and respect that women were to show to their husbands was a logical impact coming from such organisation of everyday life. Wives needed their husbands to be able to literally survive. Married women of the second half of the 19th century were tied to their husbands with both inside natural bonds that were based on emotions, and outside bonds that were impacts of the social discourse.

Abrams points out that in spite of the afore mentioned image praised through 19th century, marriages were gradually changing. At the beginning of the 20th century marriages that were viewed as a mixture of protective care, ownership and guidance from husbands' side were overcome. (Abrams, 2005 p. 82)

The core of changes in marriages was a reshaping of relationship between wives and husbands. Authoritative dominance of men towards wives was not applicable anymore. Couples preferred to build relatively more equal relationships. The idea changing the marriages at the beginning of the 20th century was to create better working

marriages based on respect of the differences between sexes refusing the concept of the weak and the strong sexes.

Jennifer Phegley calls this new type of cohabitation “companionate marriages”. The author also points at the emotional dimension, the inside bond of marriage that was getting more and more important. “marriage became ideal, and love was seen as a crucial component of marriage.” She sums up such a marriage as “a union based on love and mutual affection”. (Phegley, 2012 p. 2) Marriage become unity of hearts rather than unity of reason. Generally, love was expected and supposed base of the relationship. This idea changed matrimony from the way to get financial security and respect in society to the aim, marriage for marriage itself. Phegley comes with another important aspect of the partnership-based marriage. She characterises it as “a union of companions who were supposed to emotionally enrich each other’s lives. (Phegley, 2012 p. 2) Abrams also mentions that within he marriages the aims were to build spiritual, emotional and intellectual alliance. (Abrams, 2005 p. 84)

Individuality of women started to matter, and their satisfaction brought to marriages mutual contentment. This change did not make lives of married women ideal; the dependence on men was despite upper mentioned changes still distinct. However, the changes definitely made women’s position in marriage fairer. Dawn of the 20th century brought more self-confident women that were able to formulate their own expectations on marriage as well as on husbands viewing them as companions not masters. As a result, marital relationships between second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century had grown from ownership to partnership.

2.3.4. Self-realisation of married women

Throughout the whole Victorian Era women’s tasks were centred in their households and families. Anne Summers believes that such a realisation of women was a result of prosperity coming along with the progressing capitalism. Middle-class women who used to be partners in family business, “the over shop women”, were settled in villas and not needed anymore. (Summers, 1990 p. 124)

Capitalism brought business and sources of wealth outside the houses, so women, who were kept out from the public affairs, spent their lives in shadows of their active husbands. The gaps between the worlds of men and women had deepened at such an

extent that the terms public and private sphere were coined. These two spheres were strictly divided. Just men could realise themselves in the public one, the world of politics, business and entertainment. Realisation of women was restricted within the household and the family. This ideology pervaded the whole society, the cultural life and intellectual circles. (Abrams, 2005 p. 9). In such an environment the ideal of womanhood - “an angel of a house” had been established and married women were confronted with this concept throughout their lives. (Abrams, 2005 p. 50)

The image of women as creatures with angelic character evokes further connotations: sensitiveness, purity, docility, morality, sweetness, care and empathy. Such a vision of women gave them no chance in fighting the rough world outside.

Summers points out that women were said to be “ladies” or “gentle women” gaining leisured status. (Summers, 1990 p. 124) The concept of not working and publicly inactive “gentle women” had been brought to absurdity. Ryder and Silver writes that “...work for women became a misfortune and a disgrace.” (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 127)

Victorian discourse supported women in inactivity trivializing their abilities. Women, lapsed in their homes, were fulfilling just their house duties. In middle-class families where servants were at her disposal, their duties concerned upbringing of children and the management of domestic staff. (Summers, 1990 p. 124)

However, contemporary diaries show that women, who were aware of not using their potential fully, existed. The following citation comes from private records of a young lady from 1894. She protests there against her everyday duties:

“...must arrange the flowers, help with the house-keeping, pay the family calls, entertain the family visitors, always be at hand, well dressed, cheerful, and smiling...” (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 127)

From the upper passage is evident that lack of self-realisation, life in s filled with naïve activities or idleness did not suit her. The diary record shows another role that married women had. A married woman kept the status of the family in public. Whitworth writes that “woman of the 1890s was expected to concern herself with the rules of etiquette, so that she might safeguard and advance her family’s social position, ...” (Whitworth, 2005 p. 61)

This citation shows the only reason why women stepped out from the private sphere. They were to represent their husbands in society. Along with fulfilling their representative and social duties they had to cultivate themselves. Ryder and Silver comes with suitable examples such as playing music, reading poetry or memoirs. (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 127)

However, married women were active in one specific public domain combining both “angelic” character and representation of a family well. Middle-class women were active in various charities. Paterson considers the charitable activities to be a reflection of Christian Victorian ethos teaching women to serve the others- the poor or the nation. (Paterson, 2008 p. 164)

Summers even calls such activities “...“woman mission” whose aim was to offer the society the benefits of the domestic model: to bridge the gulf between the “two nations” of rich and poor...” (Summers, 1990 p. 125)

What partly opened the public sphere to women was a crucial event of the 20th century, the WW I. Abrams points out that as never before this war had a direct impact on women. Having men at war women were leaving quiet places of their homes and replacing the missing men. Mobilizing themselves they proved their abilities and prepared new post-war phase of independence in women history. (Abrams, 2005 pp. 289-290)

2.3.5. Motherhood, family and children

In contrast with nowadays understanding of motherhood as a one of many possibilities of self-realisation of a woman, in Victorian era motherhood was seen as an inseparable part of womanhood. Abrams points out that motherhood in Europe in 19th century was viewed as a peak of woman’s life ensuring an emotional fulfilment to women. Not having children was seen as woman’s failure and a personal tragedy. (Abrams, 2005 p. 102)

The idea of motherhood in Victorian era was also affected by position of children in the society. Matthew Sweet even claims that today’s position of children in society was developed in Victorian era: “It was the Victorians, however, who developed and expanded the new status of children giving them a privileged position under the law and generating an iconographic system through which we still articulate images of the youngest members of our society.” (Sweet, 2002 p. 157) To illustrate the situation in

families and expectations on raising children Sweet gives an example from an contemporary book called *Train up a Child the Way that He Should Go* (first published in 1846, but reprinted into the 1880s) by John Charles Ryle, evangelical bishop of Liverpool: “Children are weak and tender creatures, and, as such, they need patient and considerate treatment. We must handle them delicately, like frail machine, lest by rough fingering we do more harm than good. They are like young plants, and need gentle watering, often, but little at a time.” (Sweet, 2002 p. 159)

The well-being of children was getting more and more strategic issue to the society that had practical impacts on families. Parents’ responsibility for raising and ensuring material well-being of their off-springs making their future lives successful was emphasised in the society. Such efforts started right from the beginning. Abrams mentions that right at the beginning of life of new born babies, women were encouraged to educate themselves in terms of “responsible motherhood” and to be helped by experts such as nurses and doctors to improve health conditions of children e.g. giving more effective hygiene to prevent bacterial infection, ...) (Abrams, 2005 pp. 105-106)

This centring on children has its impact on motherhood bringing new expectations on mothers and reshaping the model of an ideal mother. The ideal of motherhood in middle and upper-middle class strata was according to Abrams based on emotional dedication, attention and ensuring effective, proper and beneficial care. (Abrams, 2005 p. 125)

As mentioned above, mothers were expected to fulfil emotional and physical needs of children. Fathers’ role was to ensure satisfying social securing and a sufficient supplement of money to guarantee better perspectives for children. Woods writes about pressure on middle class parents to give society educated and prosperous “higher-quality” children. (Woods, 1995 p. 37) This demands on parents lead to a demographic change. The form of the last quarter of 19th century middle class families undergone massive changes leading to lesser birth rate.

“At some time in the 1860s and 1870s a decline in family size had begun among upper- and middle-class families.” (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 128) The following statistic showing the decline of birth rate comes also from *Modern English Society*:

“Of every hundred women who married in the years 1870-9, there were sixty-one who bore five or more live children; seventeen bore ten or more; only twenty-one of them

bore none, or two. By contrast, of every hundred women who married in the years 1900-9, only twenty-eight bore five or more; the number bearing none, one or two had risen from twenty-one to forty-five.” (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 123)

Possibility of bringing fewer children to families was determined by stimulating women’s fertility. Woods describes the situation until 1870:” We do know that until the 1870s English, and by implication British, marital fertility was consistent with “natural fertility”, that is it was largely biologically determined with little sign of parity specific control. Children came by God’s will.” (Woods, 1995 p. 32) However, he points out that the second half of the 19th century is marked with secularisation. Christian teaching was seen more problematic with urbanised life style in towns and cities. The decline of church lead to lesser meddling of church to the matters of family. He points out that “moral code” given by church that had been disappearing by the last quarter of the 19th century. (Woods, 1995 p. 39)

With general scientific development, particularly in the fields of medicine, the knowledge of reproductive cycle of women was getting more accurate and techniques preventing pregnancy were more effective. With elimination of the religious viewing pregnancy as a miracle and a demonstration of God’s will there was great willingness from women’s side to actively decide about size of their families. Abrams mentions that at the end of the 19th century women through some means tried to control number of their children, size of family and age gape between births. (Abrams, 2005 p. 111)

Detailed reasons for this change are still discussed and assumed by historians and other experts. Ryder and Silver come with a few factors leading to lower birth rate. They precisely write: “The answer lies in the rising standard of middle-class life and the determination to maintain and secure the higher standards of comfort.” (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 129) Later in the chapter he points out to desire of the middle class to afford luxury goods, new special food, holidays. (Ryder, et al., 1977 p. 129) With more money the middle class started to be more materialistic orientated force in the society.

Whitworth confirms: “...for the middle classes, the relevant economic unit was the “household” rather than the “family” as such.” (Whitworth, 2005 p. 49) He also one more reason for the decline of birth rate: “Among the middle classes, the rising cost of private education may have discouraged larger families.” (Whitworth, 2005 p. 49) Very similarly Woods writes: “...middle class parents were obliged to devote increasing

proportions of their incomes to the education of their children in order to provide them with competitive advantage in the labour market. “ (Woods, 1995 p. 37)

Abrams points out that the middle-class women had approximately 15 years of pregnancy and caring for little babies. To illustrate the opinion numbers are added. Generally, women managed to give all births in the first years of marriage around 1900, so in their 40s the care of children was behind them. (Abrams, 2005 p. 107)

As a consequence, space in the productive part of their lives appeared free from bearing and raising children, so they could explore new things and use their free time in different ways.

3. PRACTICAL PART

3.1. Characteristic of Daily Lives of Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe

3.1.1. Courting an choosing the right partner-Mrs Ramsay

Mrs Ramsay notices and takes care of the two couples that occurred in her house. The first one, Lily Briscoe and William Bankes who are shyly getting to know each other better and the second one, Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley who vainly covers their mutual liking.

Her active role comes from her belief that she, a happily married woman, should help others, especially women, to make them as happy as she is. Mrs Ramsay sees the marriage as the best possible destiny for every woman, so helping them is a duty for her as it would be for other married female friends, relatives or friends of an unmarried woman. Mrs Ramsay is aware that courting and choosing a partner is a crucial phase in a life of a woman, and she tries to pass this belief on the two young unmarried women in the house, Lily and Minta. Minta seems to be willing to embrace it, but Lily's case is more complicated. Observing her behaviour, Mrs Ramsay genuinely tries to actively help her, not realising that Lily's state might be a consequence of her choice rather than lack of attractiveness or potential candidates.

Trying sincerely to understand the feelings and wishes of the two women, she becomes a chaperone for both. Even though she is not a chaperone of the strict Victorian nature; she respects their privacy and let the couples to be alone, still there can be found

specific Victorian aspects in her guarding. Firstly, the assessment of Lily's and Minta's personalities is based on their chances of marriage. She even thinks the same way of her own daughters.

Secondly, Mrs Ramsay does not think of courting as a private matter concerning just the man and the woman. She feels to be entitled to help. The young needs to be encouraged; she thinks of the success of courting as her own responsibility, especially in Minta's case because she promised her parents to take care of her. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 48)

The more the announcement of Paul and Minta's marriage is approaching, the more she wishes the same for Mr Bankes and Lily.

"...Ah, but was that not Lily Briscoe strolling along with William Bankes? She focused her short-sighted eyes upon the backs of a retreating couple. Yes, indeed it was. Did that not mean that they would marry? Yes, it must! What an admirable idea! They must marry!" (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 59)

In the case of Minta and Paul Mrs Ramsay's encouragements had finally led to success and the announcement was made at the dinner. Minta's happiness and the gratitude in Paul's eyes are the best reward for her. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 94)

3.1.2. Courting an choosing the right partner-Lily Briscoe's point of view

Even though Lily did not get married, she had experienced a specific way of courting. She was getting to know better with Mr Bankes, and elder widower. Their close relationship would eventually transform into a life friendship. Mrs Ramsay, viewing marriages as the best future for women, looks at all their meetings and private talks with contentment. She is happy for Lily, seeing her besides a man, because she finds her in disadvantaged position in searching for a husband. It is her age (She is in her 30s) and her appearance. Mrs Ramsay finds her not very attractive in comparison with Minta who is to be married to Paul Rayley.

"She faded, under Minta glow; became more inconspicuous than ever, in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes. Everything about her was so small." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 85)

There is another factor of a great importance that makes Lily's quest for a husband more challenging-some aspects of her character. She is independent, trying to find her place in the public sphere. Lily is a woman with her own opinions and life experience. It is Mrs Ramsay who clearly perceives it.

"There was in Lily a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own which Mrs Ramsay liked very much indeed, but no man would, she feared." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 85)

Lily also formulates her demands on her future husband. She meditates over the aspects of character of her potential husband that she would accept and the ones she would not. Having in mind the particular man, Mr Ramsay, she condemns tyranny of men, egoism and selfishness in their behaviour towards others. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 23)

Lily's maturity contrasts with Minta's naivety and simplicity. However, such naivety is seen as desirable and adorable. Minta is a favourite companion in contrast with meditative Lily. For example, Minta successfully amuses Mr Ramsay with her silly and childish talks during diner. (Woolf, et al., 2006 pp. 87-88)

Lily knows about Mrs Ramsay's intentions with her. She is to come up to expectations and get married. The pressure is very unpleasant for her giving her no choice to decide herself and manipulating her to the final decision.

"...she must, Minta must, they all must marry, since in the whole world, whatever laurels might be tossed to her (but Mrs Ramsay cared not a fig for her painting), or triumphs won by her..." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 43)

Lily does not approve the Mrs Ramsay's belief that marriage is a matter of course and that marriage brings respect and sense to the lives of women. She critically views how Minta succumbed to the pressure with such a naivety not realising impacts and changes that marriage would bring into her life.

"For any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven; she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 83)

Lily does not agree with the general viewing of unmarried women whose qualities are derived from their appearance and characters traits that makes them marriable. She is

aware that her idea of being true herself does not correspond with the idea of others, and she proves her being different on daily bases. Still, she is aware that she risks a lot. Staying unmarried, throws her into financial insecurity, but mainly to loneliness leaving no chance for having a mate or a family.

3.1.3. Marriage-Mrs Ramsay

The reality of a life of a married woman differed from idealised picture presented by Victorian society. It is full of sacrifice and self-denial. What helps Mrs Ramsay to overcome such difficulties, bear disappointments and the routine of the marriage was her personal attitude and full identification with her role of an “angel of the house”.

In the second half of the 19th century reasons for entering marriage varied. Besides natural searching for affection, the final decision was influenced by aspects that are not of a great importance today. For some women marriage was necessity, the way to gain respect and position in the society. Some women saw in marriage safety and financial security freeing them from uncertain future. Other women believed in sanctity of the unity of marriage and perceived it as their destiny. Mrs Ramsay belongs to such a group. She is aware of the importance of marriage and its value. She perceives marriage as a life mission and the best way of realisation for a woman. She genuinely believes in marriage being her lifelong occupation; her genuine everyday life in the marriage proves it. She dutifully takes care about what that marriage had brought-her own household, her husband and children. Mrs Ramsay creates calm and harmonic atmosphere in the house. The warm atmosphere attracts many visitors to the house who takes the house as an asylum to escape the hostile world outside. In the following excerpt Mrs Ramsay’s vision of the marriage as a universal value is expressed. After a typical Victorian dinner Mrs Ramsay leaves the company to put the children to bed. Going up the stairs she thinks about Minta and Paul and their engagement.

“...”the Rayleys”-she tried the new name over; and she felt, with her hand on the nursery door, that community of feeling with other people which emotion gives as if the walls of partition had become so thin that practically (the feeling was one of relief and happiness) it was all one stream, and chairs, tables, maps, were theirs, it did not matters whose, and Paul and Minta would carry it on when she was dead...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 92)

Generally, marriage in the 19th century ensured respect and recognition of the society. By marrying women's position in the society improved and they gained prestige. This also happened in the case of Mrs Ramsay. She is aware of the importance she gained in the society knowing that she is praised as a wife and a mother. She draws confidence from recognition that her beneficial and praiseworthy work brings.

“She looked at the window in which the candle flames burnt brighter now that the panes were black, and looking at that outside the voices came to her very strangely, as if they were voices at a service in cathedral, for she did not listen to the words.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 89)

The previous citation expresses her satisfaction when the family and friends are gathered enjoying the dinner she organised. The warm atmosphere at the table seems even mystical to her.

Her self-confidence gained by marriage has an impact on her behaviour towards other people, especially the visitors of the house, the poor and the unhappy ones, staying under her roof. What concerns her behaviour to other women she is aware of her exclusive position due to being married. Having achieved everything that world offers to women, she feels authorised to give advice and help. The way how to help best is to be a “chaperone” and matchmaker to young unmarried women in the house (Minta and Lily).

In case of men, she deliberately uses her experience of a wife; she combines charm and beauty of a woman and tender understanding of a mother in the communication with them. She is able to create intimate atmosphere, so they open their hearts to her. The following excerpt shows her way of communication with them. The morning walk with Charles Tansley could be given as an example. Mrs Ramsay invited him to go on errands to the town with her. During the walk they see a poster inviting inhabitants to circus. Mrs Ramsay wants all company from house to go. Mr Tansley confesses to her that he had never been to circus and then shares his memories about his joyless childhood with her. (Woolf, et al., 2006 pp. 13-14)

Her confidence in talking with Mr Tansley or any other men from the house is coming from her efforts to fulfil the concept of an ideal woman. Her belief is based on identification of the ideal of womanhood with the image of “angel in the house”. She is convinced that men want and need such women, so she enjoys their attention and admiration gained by her role of the “angel in the house”.

The following passage comes from the very end of the dinner. Mrs Ramsay is leaving the room to look at children. The evening was a success for the hostess, so she is leaving the room overwhelmed, being aware of admiration that fills the room up.

“She made herself get up. Augustus Carmichael had risen and, holding his table napkin so that it looked like a long white robe he stood chanting:

To see the Kings so riding by

Over lawn and daisy lea

With their palm leaves and cedar sheaves,

Luriana, Lurilee,

and as she passed him he turned slightly towards her repeating the last words:

Luriana, Lurilee,

and bowed to her as if he did her homage. Without knowing why, she felt that he liked her better than he had ever done before; and with a feeling of relief and gratitude she returned his bow and passed through the door which he held open for her.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 90)

Being convinced of rightness of her behaviour that represents marriage well, Mrs Ramsay does not approve behaviour of married women that does not fulfil their roles and therefore belittle marriage. She criticised especially wives that are not able to support their husbands. It is case of Mrs Tansley who left her husband. Mrs Ramsay condemns her decision although she is aware of other aspects of the failed marriage such as poverty, sharp arguments and bad conditions. During the morning walk she thinks of his lonesome and cheerless situation as the result of his tragic unsuccessful marriage; Mrs Ramsay sees a great idle potential of a philosopher in Mr Tansley, she blames Mrs Tansley for not recognising and not supporting his talent enough.

“He should have been a great philosopher, said Mrs Ramsay, as they went down the road to the fishing village, but he had made an unfortunate marriage.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 12)

The identity of Mrs Ramsay, her character and self-confidence, is coming from the character traits that are generally believed to be gained by marriage rather than from her self-knowledge.

3.1.4. Marriage – Lily Briscoe's point of view

Lily's personal attitude to marriage is not clearly defined and therefore it cannot be easily described. It is based on a mixture of various opinions. What can be said for certain is that she seriously considers marriage, the relationship with Mr Bankes proves it, but her definite wish to spend the rest of her life in marriage is not apparent. The book, especially the part called Window is full of meditations over the marriage and the relationship with Mr Bankes. Both, they are spread through with doubts. In the following paragraphs the process of the complicated decision-making which finally lead to her staying unmarried is described.

The ambiguity and vagueness in Lily's opinions on marriage are most evident while they are compared with the ones of Mrs Ramsay's. Mrs Ramsay is convinced that marriage is a natural and logical phase in the life of a woman. Her firm opinions come from a full identification of her own marriage with the Victorian concept. She embraced the ideas that is why her opinions are consistent and without any serious doubts. Lily's position is completely different. She has doubts about adaptability of the Victorian model of a marriage to her life. As a woman living in Ramsay's Victorian household, she faces a challenge. It is crucial for her future to realise whether a Victorian marriage has its sense and place in her life and whether she is able to live in it.

Her decision-making is a process comprising of many aspects. Besides getting to know herself and clarifying her dreams, means of realisation and expectations, she also mediates over the transformation of love itself in a marriage. In the following excerpt she fears that the transformation does not correspond with women's needs and leads to their dissatisfaction.

“Yet she said to herself, from the dawn of time odes have been sung to love; wreaths heaped and roses; and if you asked nine people out of ten they would say they wanted nothing but this; while the women, judging from her own experience, would all the time be feeling, This is not what we want...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 84)

Lily's confusion concerns both marriage generally and concrete marriages of others especially the Ramsay's. On one hand, she doubts their mutual happiness, on the other hand, she appreciates one of the products of a marriage: a home. Lily fully enjoys its peaceful atmosphere. She goes there to have a rest and to have time to work on her paintings. She perceives the importance of having a home, the safe place with warm and accepting atmosphere and someone there who supports and loves. The importance of belonging to someone is expressed in the following passage. Lily is watching the Ramsay's standing together at the door while she is resting by her easel in the garden. However, observing from distance distorts her viewing of the couple. Being far from their figures means also being far from their character flaws, mistakes and mutual hurting and conflicts. The picture of the couple standing side by side represents an ideal in Lily's eyes and reflects her desire of a harmonious and equal relationship between man and woman.

“Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called “being in love” flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 40)

Her unclarity of opinion on happiness of married women also affects her relationship to Mrs Ramsay. On one hand, Lily does not agree with Mrs Ramsay's role in the marriage and criticise her for her passivity with which she accepted it and her inability to fight for a better position there. On the other hand, Lily admires her generosity, charm and mainly unconditional love that she gives out to others changing the world around for better.

“It was love, she thought, pretending to move her canvas, distilled and filtered; love that never attempted to clutch its object; but, like the love which mathematicians bear their symbols, or poets their phrases, was meant to be spread over the world and become part of the human again. So it was indeed. The world by all means should have shared it, ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 41)

Despite Lily's critical views on the role of married women, she is aware that a marriage brings a positive impact, feeling of security. Lily clearly perceives the security that Mrs Ramsay's identification with her role of a wife brought to her life. Being married saved Mrs Ramsay from the mental terror of uncertainty and doubts which Lily has to go through. The security coming from a marriage concerns both financial matters and a

clearly defined place in the society, sense of belonging. In the following passage Mrs Ramsay and Lily experience an intimate moment. They sit closely next to each other and Lily is admiring Mrs Ramsay and enjoying peaceful energy that is radiating from her.

“And yet, she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored in Mrs Ramsay heart.”
(Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 44)

She perceives that the image of a loyal wife gains her honour and appreciation in the society. Lily being surrounded by the Victorian environment is definitely aware of the Victorian expectations on women. She knows what to do and how to behave to gain respect and to be accepted. She also perceived that she is not able to live this way. She knows she is different from Mrs Ramsay and she is not able to sacrifice her life to marriage and give her husband so much as Mrs Ramsay.

Apart from Lily’s critical viewing of marriage, opinions of Mr Bankes, Lily’s potential husband should be introduced as well. As well as differences between viewing of Mrs Ramsay and Lily could be perceived, also some differences could be traced between Mr Bankes and Mr Ramsay’s attitude. The most apparent difference could be found in a distant memory of Mr Bankes. The memory conjured up in Mr Bankes’s mind while he was walking with Mr Ramsay. The memory could be dated back to the youthful years of theirs. This event had changed one of the two young unmarried men radically. Many years ago, they went for a walk discussing philosophy, suddenly they saw a hen protecting her chickens. Mr Ramsay was moved by this image and soon after he got married. (Woolf, 2004 p. 31)

Mr Ramsay found himself and his future in having and protecting his family. By this change of his lifestyle their friendship had changed.

Even if Mr Bankes remarried he would be a different husband from Mr Ramsay. He lacks youthful passion and rashness; he is also affected by his previous marriage, for he is a widower, but most importantly, his reasons to get married are different from Mr Ramsay’s ones. Mr Bankes lacks the desire to own, lead and protect. He expects sharing and partnership. In the following passage Mr Bankes and Lily discuss their travel experience. In their talking an intention to share the same interest, travelling, is implied.

“He had been to Madrid. Unfortunately, it was Good Friday and the Prado was shut. He had been to Rome. Had Miss Briscoe never been to Rome? Oh, she should-It

would be a wonderful experience for her-the Sistine Chapel; ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 60)

From what is written above can be assumed that the Victorian concept is not applicable anymore in Lily’s case, even Lily herself is aware of it. However, rejecting the unfunctional model, she has to come up with a new concept of marriage and Lily is completely alone in this reassessing; Mrs Ramsay and Minta do not seem the need for a change. Logically, creating new concept and reorganisation of values means stress and doubts for Lily. Despite the confusion and vagueness of her expectation, she feels the strong desire for a change. Such a desire comes from her experience that Mrs Ramsay or Minta do not have. In comparison with Minta and Mrs Ramsay she has already tasted freedom, she can leave whenever and wherever she wants, and financial independence. She gets money for her paintings and she can spend the money the way he wants. She lives modestly, but independently. In comparison with Mrs Ramsay who must task for money for her husband. For example, she needs a great amount of money to get the greenhouse repaired and she is afraid to ask.

“There was a ladder against the greenhouse, and little lumps of putty stuck about, for they were beginning to mend the greenhouse roof. Yes, but as she strolled along with her husband, she felt that particular source of worry had been placed. She had it on the tip of her tongue to say, as they strolled, “it’ll cost fifty pounds,” but instead, for her heart failed her about money, she talked about Jasper shooting birds, ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 55)

All this experience of Lily’s gets her know that a marriage does not have to be the only destiny of women. Later, when she comes back to the house again after the death of Mrs Ramsay, still unmarried, Lily projects with some kind of bitter satisfaction what would Mrs Ramsay said to the unsuccessful marriage of Minta and Paul. Lily symbolically says to Mrs Ramsay, right in the decayed centre of her micro world, that her viewing of the lives of men and women was not right.

“For a moment Lily, standing there, with the sun hot on her back, summing up the Rayleys, triumphed over Mrs Ramsay, who would never know how Paul went to coffee-houses and had a mistress; how he sat on the ground and Minta handed him his tools; how she stood here painting, had never married, not even William Bankes.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 144)

In spite of not marrying Mr Bankes their mutual fondness had stayed warm and intensive for all the years. She even confesses that she loved him.

“Indeed, his friendship had been one of the pleasures of her life. She loved William Bankes. They went to Hampton Court and he always left her, like the perfect gentleman he was, plenty of time to wash her hands, while he strolled by the river. That was typical of their relationship. Many things were left unsaid.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 145)

Although Lily stayed unmarried she shows that a spinsterhood is not a condition the others should be sorry for. Lily rebuts the general opinion that spinster’s life is meaningless. The reason why Lily did not marry does not lay in her inability to live with a man. The relationship with Mr Bankes also proves that she did not stay unmarried because she could not find a suitable man. Lily chose spinsterhood because she was not able to live in such a marriage the Victorian era created.

3.1.5. Relationship between woman (wives) and men (husbands)—Mrs Ramsay and Mr Ramsay

Ramsay’s marriage is presented to the reader as a common one; a couple living their marital relationship at the beginning of the 20th century. However, they live their marriage in the post Victorian era (around 1910), their relationship is strongly affected by Victorian discourse and Victorian vision of matrimony. They are loaded with Victorian heritage. They were both raised in Victorian discourse and affected by its patterns when they started to build their marriage determining its atmosphere, marital relationship and distributing roles. Mr and Mrs Ramsay live their marriage quietly on the remote Isle of Skye in the Victorian way being far from the changing and dynamic rest of England.

Despite everyday small conflicts their marriage seems to be happy. Their marriage is quiet, without any turbulences or unexpected situations. The calmness in their relationship is coming from deep knowledge of each other. Their many years relationship is free from naivety and unrealistic expectations, and still it is emotionally alive.

“And he seized her hand and raised it to his lips and kissed it with an intensity that brought the tears to her eyes, and quickly he dropped it.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 58)

From the previous excerpt it might be deduced that they love each other deeply and they respond to each other passionately. Although it does not mean that they live in absolute harmony and equality. Influence of the division into two isolated spheres is apparent. Their interests are not shared. Routine around the house is domain of Mrs Ramsay on the other hand, Mr Ramsay dedicates his life to his work-philosophy. Furthermore, their relationship lacks open and straight communication which is result of no attempts rather than negative previous experience. Having been raised in Victorian environment they are not used to mutual sharing of wishes, needs and dreams. However, chapters of the book reflect their inner worlds and are full of emotions, fears of death, unrealised expectations and secret wishes but they just keep them locked in their minds; keeping their very intimacy within themselves. Communication between them is carried out without words and it is limited to Mrs Ramsay “reading” her husband’s face which is based on knowledge of his character. Excerpt is from dinner. Mrs Ramsay is watching her husband and guesses his feeling during conversation with other guests.

“He was thinking of himself and the impression he was making, as she could tell by the sound of his voice, and his emphasis and his uneasiness. Success would be good for him.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 86)

Following excerpt is also from conversation at the table during dinner. It is reaction on note of one guest dedicated to oblivion of authors she knows that her husband is worried about his after death fame.

“It was as if she had an antenna trembling out from her, which, intercepting certain sentences, forced them upon her attention. A question like that would lead, almost certainly to something being said which reminded him of his own failure.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 87)

Mrs Ramsay’s “reading” her husband’s feelings is not just a desire to know Mr Ramsay better, to make their marriage more satisfying and prevent arguments and conflicts. Her empathy and indulgence towards her husband is a result of her viewing of their marital relationship. She feels responsibility for the emotional part of the marriage. She is the one who should make her husband happy. It is her role; it is her responsibility. Even previous excerpt shows her anxiety and worries about her husband not being comfortable at the dinner. She is worried about his being irritated by his guests.

Worries about her husband's well-being goes so far that it even invades her own private space of thoughts. Following passage describes an impression from experience of a beautiful view during a walk.

“Oh, how beautiful!” For the great plateful of blue water was before her; the hoary Lighthouse, distant, austere, in the midst; and on the right, as far as the eye could see, fading and falling, in soft low pleats, the green sand dunes with wild flowing grasses on them, which always seemed to be running away into some moon country, uninhabited of men. That was the view, she said, stopping, growing greyer-eyed, that her husband loved.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 14)

In this purely private outburst of emotions and joy of the beauty of moment aesthetics and taste of her husband is appearing. She sees surrounding beauty through the eyes of him not hers. The sight she uttered is not her private, her own and independent commentary of what she sees and feels. It is also not an expression of together experience of a couple, one unit. In fact, she completely omits herself in this deeply felt impression.

The weight of responsibility to make her husband satisfied encourages her to give preference to him instead of herself. Her hands are tied making impossible to push her wishes and opinions through. She is not used to confronting her husband even in cases when she is hurt by his actions or words. She does not raise her voice to criticise his behaviour. An example could be found right at the beginning of the book where James is looking forward to going to the Lighthouse and his father destroys his hopes with simple words: “It won't be fine.” pg7 Mrs Ramsay definitely does not agree with his attitude to James. She thinks that it is absolutely useless to take away dreams and expectations from children just because of love for facts and truth. Having this in mind she just utters nervously: “But it may be fine-I expect it will be fine.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 pp. 7-8) But in fact, she is not able to later confront him and tell him her opinion of mother on raising their children. There is another woman in the book that sees the oppression of her husband-Lily Briscoe. Lily considers carefully her future life in marriage and at the same time she is particularly sensitive to woman question and position in marriage. After the death of Mrs Ramsay, she mentions Mrs Ramsay as a one giving her husband immense space at her expense. “Then she was weak with her husband. She let him make those scenes.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 160)

Mr Ramsay feels that his space is unlimited. He is the only one who can question his behaviour to his wife and his children in his house. He knows that he is master here, so he applies his dominance of which he is aware. The following excerpt comes back to the scene in which James craved to go to the Lighthouse, but he is refused and disappointed by his father. The excerpt is a continuation of the lighthouse scene in privacy just between Mr and Mrs Ramsay.

“There wasn’t the slightest possible chance that they could go to the Lighthouse tomorrow, Mr Ramsay snapped out irascibly. How did he know? she asked. The wind often changed. The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women’s minds enraged him. He had ridden through the valley of death, been shattered and shivered; and now she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies. He stamped his foot on the stone step. “Damn you,” he said. But what had she said? Simply that it might be fine tomorrow. So it might.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 29)

The position of Mr Ramsay in the house and family is also well readable from his complicated relationship with already mentioned son James. Mr Ramsay thoughtlessly destroys boy’s wishes (going to lighthouse) and by making ironical comments and ignoring his needs he brings hate to relationship of father and son.

“James will have to write his dissertation one of these days,” he added ironically, flicking his sprig. Hating his father, James brushed away the tickling spray with which in a manner peculiar to him, compound of severity and humour, he teased his youngest son’s bare leg.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 29)

Still marriage and relationship between Mrs and Mr Ramsay cannot be seen as a failure and an example of terror of man applied over women. It cannot be assumed from the book that Mrs Ramsay is unhappy in the marriage. There are attempts made to become closer especially from Mrs, Ramsay’s side throughout the whole book. Following passage is Mrs Ramsay’s contemplation about possible marriage of Paul and Minta and marriage generally in presence of Mr Ramsay.

“Slowly it came into her head, why is it then that one wants people to marry? What was the value, the meaning of things? (Every word they said now would be true.) Do say something, she thought, wishing only to hear his voice. For the shadow, the thing folding them in was beginning, she felt, to close round her again. Say anything, she begged,

looking at him, as if for help. He was silent, swinging the compass on his watch-chain to and fro, and thinking of Scott's novels and Balzac's novels." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 99)

Excerpts are evidence of an intensive, but hidden desire for closer and more intimate marriage. From the upper cited excerpts is also obvious that the attempts are unfinished and unsuccessful. Despite effort and strong desire, they are not able to share their intimacy, their thoughts. Mrs Ramsay is not confident enough to initiate the first step and formulate direct question to her husband who misses sensitiveness to his wife's feelings.

The Ramsay's relationship is determined by Victorian discourse which they embraced. Dominance of man in the marriage is seen as logical and natural. Mrs Ramsay is not able to challenge a Victorian model of marriage where aspects of partnership such as open communication and sharing were not encouraged. She differs from the incoming generation of women (Minta, Lily, her daughters) in embracing the Victorian normality and missing the ability to question it.

3.1.6. Relationship between women (wives) and men (husbands) – Lily Briscoe's point of view

Although Lily is not married she seriously considers it. The only candidate that is mentioned in the book is Mr Bankes.

"This man (Mr Bankes) had shared with her something profoundly intimate. And, thanking Mr Ramsay for it and Mrs Ramsay for it and the hour and the place, crediting the world with a power which she had not suspected, that one could walk away down that long gallery not alone any more but arm in arm with somebody-the strangest feeling in the world, and the most exhilarating..." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 46)

Despite the fact that she makes efforts to become independent, she does not despise marital relationship itself. However, she differs from Mrs Ramsay in her views of a marriage; she has got different expectations and claims both on the marriage and the husband. Her own image of a marital relationship is a product of ongoing comparison of behaviour of men she knows and meets: Mr Tansly, Mr Bankes and Mr Ramsay. In her observations, she mainly focuses on their behaviour towards women. It is apparent, that Mr Bankes is the only man that can be taken into consideration as her future husband because he is the only one with whom she is able to speak openly and share her opinions.

Meeting Mr Bankes often, she gradually formulates her expectations and tries to guess and draw possible features of living with him in marriage. She views it from various perspectives. She imagines what would be her marriage and marital relationship with Mr Bankes like, what feelings she would have, what role she would get and mainly, how much would be her present life changed. In further paragraphs of this chapter, the character of marital relationship which Lily is wants to experience is described. Traits that Mrs Ramsay's marriage misses or the ones that are in her life suppressed are especially enhanced.

Lily Briscoe's image of marital relationship could be summarised as a partnership with its accompanying aspects such as: intimacy, openness, trust (confidence), understanding and uniqueness. Lily Briscoe desires living with a husband together rather than next to each other being divided by each other's tasks and being locked in each other's sphere. She deliberately refuses the Ramsay's model of marriage in which missing understanding is replaced by tolerance and minimal communication by silence.

Lily Briscoe attached big importance to mutual understanding based on communication in marriage. The understanding concerns not just form of life, practical concrete aspects, what is more important for Lily is mutual understanding on the field of hobbies, interests and taste. This expectation from marital relationship is apparent from her discussion with Mr Bankes during their walks. They talk mainly about art and painters. Discussing thing, painters Rembrandt, Michael Angelo, Titian. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 60)

Communication and sharing help to deepen intimacy in their relationship. Lily is aware that her future husband should be the closest person in the world to her in both ways, the physical way as well as the emotional one. Therefore, she opens her soul up filled with dreams about her future to Mr Bankes. She is prepared to share, to listen and to be listened to. The most noticeable demonstration of her desire to share her intimacy is her willingness to show Mr Bankes her painting. She is prepared to hear both praise and criticism from him. On the top of that Mr Bankes is the only person who can look at the painting.

“But now, with all her senses quickened as they were, looking, straining, till the colour of the wall and the jacmanna beyond burnt into her eyes, she was aware of someone coming out of the house, coming towards her; but somehow divined, from the footfall,

William Bankes, so that though her brush quivered, she did not, as she would have done had it been Mr Tanslay, Paul Rayleay, Minta Doyle, or practically anybody else, turn her canvas upon the grass, but let it stand. William Bankes stood beside her.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 18)

The offered intimacy goes hand in hand with confidence, trust and showing the painting surely proves it. However, the decision to show the painting was not made without reluctance. Lily was risking a lot because the rest of men in the house (and probably not just in this house) mocked her and laughed at her efforts to become a respected painter.

Showing the picture reflects another quality of a marital relationship. What she determines her marriage with is a mutual respect and acceptance. Lily is interested in Mr Bankes’ in both positive and negative opinions. She is willing to hear criticism on the quality of the painting. On the other hand, she refuses criticising and mocking of painting as the activity being carried out by a woman. She wants to keep her freedom, the possibility to do what she wants. Being sure of her possible future husband’s acceptance of painting or any other her activities is very important for her self-confidence because her behaviour was at that time (in close proximity of the outbreak of the WWI) judged as a rather eccentric and provoking one. Lily Briscoe definitely was not a mainstream woman, therefore she expected her husband to respect her being different and to defend her against humiliating reactions by his support. She would not accept any other attitude from him, either scorn in his eyes or quiet tolerance of her behaviour and lifestyle.

Besides the upper mentioned acceptance of her outside marriage activities, she also desires freedom in expressing emotions and opinions. She reveals to Mr Bankes her true herself that is not in accord with the Victorian expectations. The best evidence is her own vision of a marriage being free from the concept of the weak and the strong sexes. She perceives herself and Mr Bankes’ personality as a combination of weak and strong parts therefore she leaves free space for her and for his emotional displays and reactions. She does not suppress her strong independent nature and at the same time she is not blind to Mr Bankes’ sensitiveness.

The above-mentioned formulations and expectations should ensure emotional satisfaction of Lily and brought better comfort for her. What is so special about Lily is that she feels confident enough to choose her own way. She wants to have her life in her

hands. Besides her expectations that would be her happy in the marriage, she even interferes in men's sphere. Lily feels entitled to make serious decision concerning both herself and the marriage.

During one of their walks they were discussing art, painters and centres of art they visited. Mr Banks shares his travel experience to Rome, Madrid. Lily Briscoe also talks about her travel experience in Paris and Brussels. After the mutual sharing Lily clearly declares that even in marriage she wants to continue with travelling, but mainly with her own exploring of new places. She clearly shows that she will not sacrifice her own independent dreams to marriage. What she is very strict about is her painting. She wants to continue with it.

“Anyhow, said Lily, tossing off her little insincerity, she would always go on painting, because it interested her.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 60)

Together with growing understanding and liking between Lily and Mr Banks, Lily's aversion towards Mr Ramsay intensifies.

“Looking up, there he was-Mr Ramsay –advancing towards them, swinging, careless, oblivious, remote. A bit of a hypocrite? she repeated. Oh no-the most sincere of men, the truest (here he was), the best; but, looking down, she thought, he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust; and kept looking down, ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 40)

Lily on the one hand, respect his work and his strong individuality. He is charismatic, clever, distinctive and independent. However, she perceives negatively his behaviour in the family, where he builds his position of a master with decisive role using his power without any regards to the feelings of the family members, especially to Mrs Ramsay. The more he gains the less freedom is in the family for others. The next extract expresses other causes of Lily's antipathy towards Mr Ramsay.

“He asked you quite openly to flatter him, to admire him, his little dodges deceived nobody. What she disliked was his narrowness, his blindness, she said, looking after him.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 40)

Lily criticise his and egoism and thinking primarily about himself. He lacks sensitiveness to Mrs Ramsay, but he constantly requires leniency towards his constantly changing feelings and bad moods. What Lily particularly hates is the hypocrisy of others

to Mr Ramsay's public displays of his egoism to which is reacted by flattery leading to paradoxically supporting his egoism. Mrs Ramsay suffers most from such an egoistic behaviour. Mr Ramsay's requirement for attention strengthens his wife's dependence on him. She must be at his disposal when he needs her, and Mrs Ramsay does not protest against it. Such a form of dependence would be unbearable for Lily.

Coming back to the most important aspect that makes Lily so exceptional in the Victorian environment is her determination to shape a matrimonial relationship according to her wishes and expectations rather than social discourse.

3.1.7. Self-realisation of married women-Mrs Ramsay

Status of a married woman predestines her daily occupations and realisation. In Victorian society roles are uncompromisingly distributed giving men and women practically no chance to decide for a different alternative. Such a determined lifestyle based on Victorian values is apparent in every aspects of Mrs Ramsay's daily life. She is fully occupied with responsibility for the house, garden and members of her family. However, she rarely does single duties by herself. It is apparent she has help form outside with work within the household. All Mrs Ramsay does is management and supervising and the only activities Mrs Ramsay does personally are just unimportant errands.

“For they were making the great expedition, she said, laughing. They were going to the town. “Stamps, writing paper, tobacco?” she suggested, stopping by his (Mr Carmichael) side.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 12)

Mrs Ramsay dutifully fulfils the managerial and representative roles without any shows of revolt. The best example could be the chapter seventeen. It is a description of organising a dinner and later its course. Organising a dinner gives her possibility to present herself as a good manager of the household as well as a charming hostess, therefore Mrs Ramsay put significant effort into preparations; she follows Victorian conservatism and formalism through decorations, adequate dress, a festive meal and a servant (Ellen).

“Now eight candles were stood down the table, and after the first stoop the flames stood upright and drew with them into visibility the long table entire, and in the middle a yellow and purple dish of fruit...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 79)

Even during the dinner, besides the warm attention of the hostess, there is an aura of festivity, formalism and ceremony. Conversation is strictly controlled, topics are carefully selected, and conflict issues are ignored. However, such formalism does not need to be viewed primarily negatively. Formalisms hand in hand with rules brings predictability and safety into the environment of the dinner. At least Mrs Ramsay believes so.

“...for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 80)

In fact, Mrs Ramsay created a Victorian microcosmos that evening. She definitely sets high standards proving her abilities as a proper wife, the Victorian one. She feels proud of the atmosphere she created seeing others satisfied.

“...like a flag floated in an element of joy which filled every nerve of her body fully and sweetly, not noisily, solemnly rather, for it arose, she thought, looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; ... seemed now for no special reason to stay there like smoke, like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 85)

Undoubtedly, Mrs Ramsay knows about her triumph herself. However, along with the satisfaction melancholic thoughts are emerging. She feels that organising a dinner in such a way is a “catching of fleeing.” The notion of inevitable disappearing of “the old” is intensified with shabbiness of the salon and oldness of surrounding equipment.

“The room (she looked around it) was very shabby. There was not beauty anywhere.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 69)

Mrs Ramsay is not the only one in the room with the feelings that are not just positive. Others miss authenticity. The strongest feelings of opposition are the ones of Lily’s and Mr Tanslay’s. His following comments negatively assess formalism of both preparations and the dinner itself.

“He had been reading in his room, and now he came down and it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy. Why did they dress? He had come down in his ordinary clothes.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 70)

“They never got anything worth having from one ear’s end to another. They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 70)

Besides the representation of a good hostess Mrs Ramsay is aware of her representative role in general. Even in common situations she tries to make a good impression on the people around. She knows that her character is identified with the character of the whole family. Her efforts to represent husband and the family well goes hand in hand with her charitable activities. In case of charity two aspects should be pointed out.

The first one is Mrs Ramsay’s emphatic nature, one of the angelic character traits that Victorian women were supposed to have. Mrs Ramsay’s empathy is apparent in her willingness to take care for her guest despite the lack of money in the household and worries with providing them with comfort. An example could be Mr Carmichael who is a lonely penniless and old man.

“But what more could she have done? There was a sunny room given up to him. The children were good to him. Never did she show a sign of not wanting him. She went out of her way indeed to be friendly.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 36)

Mrs Ramsay patience and tolerance are beyond limits, even in case of Mr Tansly who is an arrogant moody man with prejudices against women. The submissiveness of Mrs Ramsay is in contrast with Lily’s attitude. Not understanding Mrs Ramsay’s inactivity, she is not afraid to ironize him. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 69)

The second one is Mrs Ramsay’s charitable activity. As it was common in the Victorian Era women were interested in their poor neighbours providing them with help. Mrs Ramsay feels responsible for changing social conditions for better. She views social disadvantaged and suffering people as her personal problem and feels responsible to ease their pain.

“...but more profoundly she ruminated the other problem, of rich and poor, and the things she saw with her own eyes, weekly, daily, here or in London, when she visited this widow, or that struggling wife in person...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 11)

All here occupation and realisation are concentrated on others. It based just on giving. There is no place and time for self-realisation. In one of Lily’s meditations over

Mrs Ramsay life, she comes to surprising conclusion that she even cannot imagine Mrs Ramsay doing something for herself.

“And (to go back to Mr Carmichael and his dislike) one could not imagine Mrs Ramsay standing, painting, lying reading, a whole morning on the lawn. It was unthinkable.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 160)

Even Mrs Ramsay misses the time for herself. She confesses love for books but at the same time pity that she is too busy to read. (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 25)

Not only is Mrs Ramsay interested in intellectual activities, she is also talented. She follows her husband’s philosophical reflections and understands his expert discussions with other men, philosophers. Unfortunately, she keeps all her findings and opinions for herself. The more she admires her husband (and other intelligent men), the more she underestimates herself.

“...she let it uphold her and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world, so that she could trust herself to it utterly, even shut her eyes, or flicker them for a moment...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 86)

Mrs Ramsay’s lack of self-confidence leads to wasting her potential. Her intellectual life is shrunk into purely private meditations. However, there is no mention of regrets about not having opportunity to present her opinions to others and be an equal partner for discussions. Such inactivity will not be acceptable for her daughters, the generation of women to come and Mrs Ramsay feels the change in the air.

“...her daughters-Prue, Nancy, Rose-could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other;” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 9)

The following generation of women will be more self-confident, active, and mainly more concentrated on themselves searching for their own way of realisation.

3.1.8. Self-realisation of married women-Lily Briscoe’s point of view

The issue of self-realisation is not an easily decided matter even for Lily, a woman being able to live a more independent life than her contemporaries. To use her abilities and talents requires to find her own place within the limits of the Victorian society.

However, Victorian conception concerning fields of interests of women comes primarily from marriage: management of house, raising children and organising social events. Spinsterhood (no matter whether Lily preferred it or not) moves her away from this group of women and enables her to do what she wishes; it opens space for alternatives. As it has been already mentioned in this paper, main Lily's interest is painting.

This activity is not a substitute for the ideal she has not reached yet, a life in family. Painting is an equal and adequate way of realisation in Lily's eyes and her high aspirations proves it. In contrast with other women loving art, she does not think about herself as a passionate amateur painting to amuse herself. Lily takes it seriously and wants to become a professional painter, though she is aware of hardships ahead. Not only does she need to prove her talent, she also needs to find a place in the environment that is not typical for women. At the same time Lily takes up roles that are in many aspects typical for men such as earning her living.

Searching for the ways to support herself looks like a logical consequence for a woman without family or rich relatives, but it is different in Lily's case. Lily despite having a choice to not live at her own expenses seems to prefer painting to marriage to Mr Bankes who is interested in her.

No matter how much Lily differs in Mrs Ramsay's idea of realisation and aspirations in life, they have one aspect of the attitude to the public sphere in common. It is low self-confidence. As it is mentioned in previous chapter, Mrs Ramsay does not think about her meditations to be worth sharing; Lily is afraid that her paintings are not good enough.

“She could have wept. It was bad, it was bad, it was infinitely bad! She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealized; ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 42)

Such anxiety is a result of lack of self-confidence which makes her over sensitive to comments filled with inadequate prejudices instead of constructive criticism. The upper passage from the books continues with such a comment (made by Mr Tansley) which spreads through Lily's thoughts and arouses notion of incompetence.

“And it would never be seen; never be hung even, and there was Mr Tanslay whispering in her ear, Women can’t paint, women can’t write...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 42)

It is apparent how deep this insensitive comment hurt Lily. It needs to be pointed out that the comment was not personal. Taking Mr Tanslay’s negative experience with women into account, it even might not have been meant seriously. However, Lily views it as questioning of her abilities which she is trying to prove in the public sphere, a domain of men, so similar words weaken her belief in succeeding there.

Choosing different field of realisation in contrast with all women surrounding her, Mrs Ramsay or Minta, she is heading to unknown and comments of inability of women makes her even more uncertain.

The conflict and antipathy culminated during dinner leading to mocking from Lily’s side.

“...and if she wanted a little revenge take it by laughing at him? “Oh, Mr Tanslay, “she said, “do take me to the Lighthouse with you. I should so love it.” She was telling lies he could see. She was saying what she did not mean to annoy him, for some reason. She was laughing at him.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 71)

Noteworthy is the reaction of Mrs Ramsay’s who does not perceive Lily’s irony as means of self-defence, but as an improper eccentricity. Lily notices her disapproval. She knows exactly what is expected from her. Not just hiding her antipathy towards Mr Tanslay, but even helping him with conversation, so he could feel comfortable at the table.

“There is a code of behaviour she knew, whose seventh article (it may be) says that on occasions of this sort it behoves to the woman, whatever her own occupation may be, to go to the help of the young man opposite so that he may expose and relieve the thigh bones, the ribs, of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 75)

Finally, she behaves generously to him, as if she wanted to apologise, but still, she does not approve submissiveness which seems to be a natural thing for Mrs Ramsay. Furthermore, observing Mrs Ramsay and seeing triumph in her eyes for a feeding well

her guests, decorating room nicely and take care of smooth conversation seems to be childish and naïve for her.

“How childlike, how absurd she was, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 82)

It needs to be pointed out that Lily is not mocking the work of Mrs Ramsay. She even admires her passion and genuineness in her behaviour. However, to win a praise for organising a perfect dinner would not be an adequate reason for Lily to feel proud on herself. She expects praise and recognition for her artwork.

It is apparent that centres of interest and sources of self-realisation of these two women are different. While Mrs Ramsay is satisfied with she was destined to: family, management of household and the charitable “women mission”, Lily finds it not fulfilling enough. In fact, the inside of outside orientation makes their approaches so different.

Mrs Ramsay finds meaningful activities that make other people happy. She feels useful giving her time and energy to others. This contrasts with Lily’s orientation. Self-realisation means development of talent and abilities for her. It is based on self-knowledge. She concentrates her energy primarily on herself.

“...she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself; she was not made for that (marriage)...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 43)

The citation comes from an impressive scene. Lily is standing in front of her painting and feeling to be truly herself. She does not need admiring of others to feel useful because she finds it in herself. It can be viewed as a more selfish attitude in comparison with Mrs Ramsay’s one. However, Lily’s attitude enhances the importance of development of an individuality. She shows that a woman values is not in serving and that there is no point in adoring self-realisation that leads to self-sacrificing of a woman. Ways of self-realisation are variable and cannot be determined by expectations.

3.1.9. Motherhood, family and children—Mrs Ramsay

Mrs Ramsay’s vision of motherhood is in accord with the Victorian one. She lives and behaves according to the set of opinions she was brought up in. Her life of a mother is a concrete example of an application of the Victorian idea of motherhood, one example of the Victorian social construct in a real life.

Mrs Ramsay applies the Victorian concept in her life without serious doubts. She does not feel to be forced or manipulated to a particular way of lifestyle. Her certainty with Victorian beliefs is reflected in the novel by unity of her life and her opinions. She lives what she believes. In contrast with Lily, who is driven with terror of uncertainty of the heading of her future life.

Mrs Ramsay's overall attitude to motherhood is influenced with a natural pride of a mother and the Victorian concept of ideal motherhood. She is fascinated by her children that she bore to the world, by their diversity, characters and abilities. She also believes that marriage and subsequent motherhood is the most suitable mission for women. Having children is the sense of a life ensuring women satisfaction and happiness. The evidence of sincerity with which she stands by these opinions is her wish that her daughters would have the same future. Following citation comes from dinner when the engagement of Minta and Paul was announced. Mrs Ramsay's daughter Prue observes the couple curiously. Mrs Ramsay assumes Prue to be imagining what is expecting Minta, and at the same time dreaming about herself being engaged one day.

"The faintest light was on her face, as if the glow of Minta opposite, some excitement, some anticipation of happiness was reflected in her, as if the sun of the love of men and women rose over the rim of the table-cloth, and without knowing what it was she bent towards it and greeted it. She (Prue) kept looking at Minta, shyly, yet curiously, so that Mrs Ramsay looked from one to the other and said, speaking to Prue in her own mind. You will be as happy as she is one of these days." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 89)

Mrs Ramsay even defines an identity of a woman with motherhood. She actually believes that womanhood is realised through motherhood. This belief is most apparent while she is expressing her sympathy with unmarried women that will not experience motherhood. The following citation is also taken from dinner right after the announcement of engagement of Minta. Mrs Ramsay feels sorry for Lily that will probably end up as a spinster.

"...and here she saddened, darkened, and came back to her chair, there could be no disputing this: an unmarried woman (she lightly took her hand for a moment), an unmarried woman has missed the best of life. The house seemed full of children sleeping and Mrs Ramsay listening; of shaded lights and regular breathing." (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 43)

Seeing happiness of Minta and Paul Mrs Ramsay comes with the conclusion there is not any other better way to live lives than to get married and have children.

“...she knew, almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 51)

To describe the model of ideal motherhood most effectively to focus on period opinions on children as they are reflected in the novel is very helpful. As well as in the Victorian society also in the novel the specific period characteristic of viewing childhood could be traced. It can be said that the children friendly environment of the house reflects the atmosphere in society. Children needs are recognised and respected. They are allowed to spend their time playing, being outside and having free time. Jasper hunts the birds, James cuts out objects from magazines. His mother also reads fairy tales to him. Based on children’s interests and displays of their behaviour typical character traits that the Victorians presumed children to have are given to them as well. They are thought to be innocent, playful, naïve, joyful and fragile.

The result of such a vision of children has also influence on child-care and the relationship between mothers and children. The following excerpts are practical realisations of the Victorian expectation on mothers as they are carried out in the everyday life of Mrs Ramsay.

The first passage shows the exclusivity, closeness and intimacy that the relationship between a mother and her children was expected. Sensitiveness of a child perfectly matches with sensitiveness of a woman, so presence and loving care of mothers is seen as necessity. Citation comes from intimate moment when Mrs Ramsay reads a fairy tale to her son James. She intensively feels the unique bond between her and James.

“...for she and James shared the same tastes and were comfortable together.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 48)

Next situation reflects the understanding a mother should have for her child. In the citation, Mrs Ramsay is soothing James’s disappointment about not going to the lighthouse. She gives him hope that they might go there tomorrow.

“Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing, “she said compassionately, smoothing the little boy’s hair, for her husband, with his caustic

saying that it would not be fine, had dashed his spirits she could see. This going to Lighthouse was a passion of his, she saw, ...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 16)

The expectation to have their children in centre of their lives, to be always at disposal and to understand their needs and emotions have specific impacts on Mrs Ramsay’s life and her personality.

Not having a responsibility but the management of the household and raising children, Mrs Ramsay enjoys the power she has over her children. She knows that she is needed, praised and loved. They listen to her and take her seriously. It matters what she says to them. They do not let her know about the simplicity of her character and naivety of opinions as her husband does. As an example of her power and authority she has with the children goodnight routine is chosen. After the diner, she comes to their room, solves their problems, prevents an argument telling them what to do. The apparent self confidence in her behaviour comes from the knowledge that she is in charge. (Woolf, et al., 2006 pp. 92-93)

However, there is a negative outcome attached because Mrs Ramsay tries to keep her children for herself as long as possible. It is most apparent in her behaviour towards her youngest child, son James. She even misuses the power she has over him. James is the last one and his solitary character suits her. They spend most of the time together. She does not encourage him to play with others, in contrary, she keeps him for herself enjoying his emotional dependence on her.

Mrs Ramsay’s children centred life has another negative aspect. Being convinced that she knows them better than anybody else, leads to projecting her children’s future heading and careers. Success of her children is her own success, her own pride. Wishes for Prue and James are chosen as an example.

Mrs Ramsay sees glimpse of young herself in her adolescent daughter Prue, so she identifies her dreams of her youth with Prue’s ones. Prue is tender and charming and destined to become a beautiful woman therefore Mrs Ramsay wishes the same goals as she once achieved for her. She wants her to become an “angel of the house” as well. The situation with James is different, she wants him to become a highly influential and powerful person.

“...so that his mother, watching him guide his scissors neatly round the refrigerator imagined him all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 7)

The last impact, that has a direct influence on Mrs Ramsay’s life comes from the excessive fixation on her children. The following passage expresses possessive characteristics of the attitude she has towards them.

“Why, she asked, pressing her chin on James’s head, should they grow up so fast? Why should they go to school? She would have liked always to have had a baby. She was happiest carrying one in her arms. Then people might say she was tyrannical, domineering, masterful, if they chose; she did not mind.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 50)

Her meditations continue with realisation of the importance of their presence in her life. Children mean happiness, bring positive energy, emotions, sweetness and world full of imagination to her life. In one of her associations she sees them in their beds “netted in their cots like birds among cherries and raspberries...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 50)

However, seeing the children growing up, she realises that they will finally leave and that makes her worried about the future fulfilment of her life.

“There it was before the life. Life: she thought but she did not finish her thought. She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 50)

She knows that she raises her children so that they would find their own place in the world and they would become independent. Still, she cannot imagine her future without them. Sharing this fear with her husband, she meets with incomprehension from his side. She somehow accepts his inability to understand. She exactly says: “He has always his work to fall back on.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 50)

Identification of womanhood with motherhood leaves no space for development of Mrs Ramsay’s personality. Absolute dedication to her family has taken her autonomy from her and brings worries about the future form of life when the children leaves her one day. Such thoughts create great amount of tension in her life.

3.1.10. *Motherhood, family and children– Lily Briscoe's point of view*

Lily's opinions on motherhood are connected with the ones on marriage. The connection is primarily based on the fact that her potential motherhood is determined by previous marriage. As well as in the chapter dedicated to marriage, also in this part Mr Bankes is viewed as Lily's potential husband, therefore his opinions on fatherhood will be presented as well.

Lily's view on motherhood is very special. On the one hand, not being married and not having children makes her meditation purely theoretical, on the other hand, the opinions of a single independent woman on motherhood offers a unique insight. Lily 's opinions come from observations of other women that are married and have children. In the house, the only mother is just Mrs Ramsay. Apart from the ideal of motherhood presented by society, Lily is through Mrs Ramsay's example confronted with the reality of being a mother. Lily also views what is Mrs Ramsay not aware of. Lily views how much the motherhood and marriage alter a woman. She is sacrificed to others, the members of her family. A mother zooms her concentration on children and her interests, needs and aspirations are reduced to minimum.

The following citation reflects Mrs Ramsay's daily struggling with children and worries.

“If they could be taught to wipe their feet and not bring the beach in with them—that would be something. Crabs, she had to allow, if Andrew really wished to dissect them, or if Jasper believed that one could make soup from seaweed, one could not prevent it; or Rose's objects—shells, reeds, stones; for they were gifted, her children, but all in quite different ways. And the result of it was, she sighed, taking in the whole room from floor to ceiling, as she held the stocking against James's leg, that things got shabbier and got shabbier summer after summer.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 25)

The next aspect showing her attitude to motherhood is the way she perceives the children around her. The Ramsay's have got eight children, so there are always children around playing, quibbling and shouting in the house. The house is filled with children dynamics. The question is how Lily feels with them, the way she responds to children's behaviour and what emotions they arouse in her. Generally, it could be said that she is

not a woman of maternal instincts. There are not any displays in her behaviour that would show her inclination to the children. There is no interest in spending time with them. In contrary with Minta and Paul who let Nancy and Andrew to go to sea with them. Lily also does not respond to them emotionally. Not once, she expresses fondness to them, she not even moved by their spontaneity and sweetness. She does not occupy her thought neither with these children of the Ramsay's nor children generally. Lily's attitude is rather different from Mr Bankes's one. He cares for children's attention; he wants to gain their fondness. Children's love and devotion seem to be precious to him. He is sorry that the children do not respond to him as positively as he wishes. The following situation describes how Mr Bankes wants Cam's attention who is giving her father a flower. However, she refuses to give him a one in spite of being told to do so by her nursemaid.

“She (Cam) was wild and fierce. She wouldn't “give a flower to the gentleman” as the nursemaid told her. No! No! No! she would not! She clenched her fist.” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 22)

The excerpt shows that seeing the love Cam has for his father, Mr Bankes' wishes to experience a similar father-to-daughter attachment. He wishes to have a child.

There are other aspects that have an influence on both Lily's and Mr Bankes' attitudes to having children. In case of Lily it is her age. She is over thirty. Even if she got married soon the probability of having children is low. Mr Bankes is aware of responsibility of a man for financial security of his family. Having children means an obligation for him to ensure comfortable living and perspective future for them. That is what he misses at the Ramsay's. He cannot imagine himself having such a big family. In the following citation he expresses even surprise that the Ramsay's have so many children knowing that they are not rich and the whole family is financially dependent on Mr Ramsay' philosophical books and lectures only.

“The Ramsays were not rich, and it was a wonder how they managed to contrive it all. Eight children!” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 21)

Despite not having mother instincts and seeing the sacrifice of the mother she undergoes for her children, Lily appreciates the family atmosphere of the house. Undoubtedly, children contribute to the warm atmosphere there. She loves the sense of safety that radiates from the environment which is based on Mrs' Ramsay motherly care of the house, her family and the residents.

“...had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted do far) at Mrs Ramsay’s knee and say to her-but what could one say to her? “I’m in love with you?” No, that was not true. “I’m in love with this all”, waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children?” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 19)

No matter how much she appreciates the family atmosphere, she knows that she is not able to live as Mrs Ramsay does. She is not able to give everything away for the family, her interests, dreams and aspirations and sacrifice herself or them completely. Her different point of view could be best demonstrated while she is producing the art. Lily is painting outside, Mr Bankes is standing next to her and he is observing her. Suddenly, Mrs Ramsay and James appear at the window. Lily decides to incorporate them to her painting as a shadow. Mr Bankes is surprised (not in a negative way), that she wants to express such a powerful image, a mother with a child, by a shadow. He exactly says about the two at the window:

“mother and child then -objects of universal veneration...” (Woolf, et al., 2006 p. 45)

In the picture Lily symbolically manifests the receding of the role of motherhood in her life to the background. The centre of a picture as well as the Lily’s interests lays somewhere else. Her life is completely different from the life of Mrs Ramsay. The most substantial difference between the approaches of Lily and Mrs Ramsay is that Lily needs fundamentally to realise her potential outside the family as well. She also perceives motherhood as one way of life out of many. A life of a woman can be meaningful for Lily even without having children.

4. CONCLUSION

The novel *To the Lighthouse* deals with the effects of modern changes on women. The uniqueness of the novel lays in Virginia Woolf interests in commonness and individuality making the novel touching and authentic masterpiece. Consequently, the transformation of a Victorian model of woman to a modern one is reflected by two concrete women Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe themselves whose lives were immediately influenced by it. Woolf managed to transmit the collapse of the Victorian values together with its impacts into a family setting. Especially in the first part of the novel *Window* she managed to catch the Victorian world on its very edge of downfall.

The process of transformation based on leaving tradition, social rules, and values was complicated and painful. Especially Lily's experience proves that it was connected even with contrary feelings such as hope, expectations, but also fear and doubts. Under the surface of the quiet family Victorian household, the two heroines struggle in the fight for identity.

Mrs Ramsay and Lily have an important quality in common. They are both women of talents-Lily with painting and Mrs Ramsay with her philosophical ideas. However, they differ immensely in their attitudes towards the modern concepts of individuality and a right to decide on one's destiny.

Mrs Ramsay, an angel of the house, holds her trembling Victorian microworld in her hands thanks to organising formal dinners, emphasising propriety and using feminine charm. She is not able step out from her Victorian identity and embrace the new concepts of individualism, self-realisation and independence.

She understands marriage as the best destiny for a woman. A marriage is the only guarantee of happiness for women. Her relationship towards her husband is based on love, but also dependence and her subordination. Mrs Ramsay is a devoted mother. Children make her life meaningful, so she identifies womanhood with motherhood. Her self-realisation contains of the care for the house and children and support of her husband. She is aware of the moral duty to care about the poor and help others and well represent her husband. She presents herself as a beautiful and charming woman.

Lily Briscoe is driven with uncertainty; she has low self-esteem and lacks confidence. The only thing is she confident about is her inability to live the same life as

the previous generations of women (also Mrs Ramsay) lived. She refuses the role of the angel of the house as well as husbands' dominance. She is able to imagine a fulfilled life without a husband and children. She is an individualist whose attention is pointed at the ways of self-realisation. And more importantly, she views the decision to get marry as a choice of individuals.

Symbolically, in the second half of the novel, the Victorian world, together with Mrs Ramsay death, fell apart. On the other hand, Lily came back as a self-confident and strong woman as never had she been before, bringing the glimpse of the new modern world with her.

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