

MULTIPLICITY IN FEMINIST THEORY:
AN ANALYSIS OF TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

by

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Feminism of multiplicity is a complex theoretical stance which appreciates the validity, and the relativity, of individual thought in art and criticism, in which "gendered" dichotomous structures are fragmented or exposed. The three French feminists Helene Cixous, Teresa de Lauretis and Julia Kristeva propose different forms of feminism of multiplicity. In To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf exhibits the values of a feminist multiplicity with an enactment of her novelistic intentions, with a plot structure that exposes the limitations of the Oedipal narrative form, and with the transition in the female position in the cultural structure from the traditionally feminine Mrs. Ramsay to the independent artist Lily Briscoe.

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The category of literary studies customarily labelled as "feminist" falls across a broad range of subjects. One of these subjects, multiplicity, describes a theoretical space which breaks apart prior, oversimplified assumptions about the world. In a interpretation that considers multiplicity, the critic views the world from beyond a system of dualities or straightforward rights and wrongs. Feminists considering the system of dualities view that the system is coded in such a way that one side of the duality is considered male and the other is considered female. This means that certain traits and habits available to a person are determined by the sex of that individual. Feminists concerning themselves with multiplicity seek to fragment or expose these "gendered" dichotomous structures. In their estimation, these structures set unfair restrictions on women because they place women outside an active, subject role. A woman existing outside the subject position has no power in a society that acknowledges only the functioning of the subject as important.

Feminism of multiplicity is a complex theoretical stance which appreciates the validity, and the relativity, of individual thought in art and criticism. The feminist artist or critic who considers the multiplicity issue appreciates differences and openness, believing that the most expansive method within this realm may bring a new

sense of fluidity and freedom to the individual and to entire cultures made up of individuals who practice it.

Before presenting an interpretation of To the Lighthouse, a novel Virginia Woolf published in 1927, in which I consider the feminist concern of multiplicity, I would like to discuss the ideas of three feminists who provide a foundation for reading To the Lighthouse. These feminists concern themselves with a constructed system, "culture", and with the culture's discursive system, "language", among other things. Most examinations of the problems women encounter which relate these problems to women's exclusion from the place of subject come from French feminists. As dual authors Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine put it, following Elaine Marks' description, "American feminists emphasize the oppression of woman as sexual identity, while French feminists investigate the repression of woman as difference and alterity in the signifying practices of the West" (Eisenstein and Jardine, 1980 xxvi). Others have said that American feminists are more concerned with instituting social reforms such as equalizing wage differences, providing child care, making available contraception, and the like. Meanwhile, the French feminists seek to change the foundations, be they the symbolic structures or the language, of the culture which has manifested its inadequacy in the problems that women encounter. Thus, French feminists concern themselves with gender roles in symbolic order and the need to change them

in order to break up the dichotomously structured system. In this respect Virginia Woolf may be considered a French feminist, because she shares these goals.

Simone de Beauvoir is widely considered to be the founder of French feminism. She introduces her feminist manifesto, The Second Sex, published in France in 1949, with a discussion of the cross-cultural category of Other. When a man speaks, he never must first present himself as a representative of one of the sexes; but when a woman speaks, if she wishes to define herself, she "must first of all say: 'I am a woman,' on this truth must be based all further discussion" (de Beauvoir 1980, 43). de Beauvoir recognizes that this phenomenon occurs because Woman does not occupy the subject position, and therefore individual women do not. Woman as a cultural ideal, and thus as individual, is the other. Diverse mythologies and societies all foster this concept of the duality between the Self and the Other; Beauvoir claims that it "is as primordial as consciousness itself"(44). She refers to Hegel, who finds "in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed-he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object"(45). de Beauvoir concludes that men, who fit into the category of self and therefore who need no further definition, refuse to consider women as filling the subject/self category. Instead, "they propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to

immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (conscience) which is essential and sovereign"(55). Thus, women are defined on the basis that they fall into this other category, Woman. An individual woman will encounter difficulty because to herself she is a self, a subject, and yet she as a self is continually challenged by "the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential"(56). Thus, she simultaneously occupies two contradictory positions within the social structure. With The Second Sex, de Beauvoir set the tone and the stage for further feminists concerning themselves with language, signifying practices, and describing or transforming the space culturally delineated as Other.

The theorists Helene Cixous, Teresa De Lauretis and Julia Kristeva wish to change social perspectives so that women can share the subject position. Two of these feminists, Cixous and Kristeva, express their ideas in French circles; De Lauretis practices feminist theory, with an emphasis on cinema, in the United States. Each feminist views both the problem and its potential solutions in a distinct manner; all, however, concern themselves with issues related to multiplicity in ways that make it valuable to discuss their ideas before doing a multiplicitous reading of Woolf's To the Lighthouse. Further, the discussion of these three multiplicitous feminists will prove that even the concept of multiplicity is multifaceted and contradictory. A uniform goal among multiplicitous

feminists, however, is to open the problem of sexual difference up for examination.

Helene Cixous describes history as phallogentric. This means that history is based around the phallus, the symbol of the male genitalia, which can only exist in the mind. Because the phallus is not the penis, but some ideal of it, even males can never physically possess this abstract ideal. However, males seek to manifest control of their phallic ideal. Males are, therefore, continually frustrated. As a result of male frustration at the inability to adequately control even the symbol of their own gender identity, they seek to control through language. Male language, then, which is the language that determines history, castrates. Women, lacking even the penis, lack this ideology and cannot within this male-structured system voice their power. Cixous believes that the historical project, which is based on a structured opposition of activity/passivity determined by the masculine order, thus starts with the abasement of women. In the "logocentric project", each word, as it stands as a unit, is nothing but a tool men use to enhance the functioning of the machine, their version of culture. The project's mission has always been to "found (fund) phallogentrism, to insure for masculine order a rationale equal to history itself" (Cixous 1980, 93):

Phallogentrism is. History has never produced, recorded anything but that. Which does not mean that this form is inevitable or natural. Phallogentrism is the enemy. Of everyone. Men stand to lose by it, differently but as seriously

as women. And it is time to transform. To invent the other history(96).

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This other history may be found in experiences and modes of expression specific to women. Cixous determines that women possess a special quality by virtue of the multiplicitous manner by which they experience sexual pleasure. Men are intimidated and afraid of the expression of this "jouissance": intense, and long-lasting sexual pleasure occurring on multiple fronts which only women can experience. Men can never experience this pleasure. Cixous thus accepts women's placement in the categorical system which considers women inessential, and she wishes that women would describe the space which they occupy apart from men in ways only they, as women, can, and delight in their possession of this space. To Cixous, a woman must occupy this space by writing through her body, setting free passionate emotions that have been ignored from the moment she began to speak. An interest in "L'écriture feminine", or "feminine writing", which focuses on this goal, subsequently has emerged in France.

To describe the roots of the absence of feminine writing, Cixous elaborates on the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's mirror stage. According to this theory of childhood development, the small child, anywhere from the age of six months onward, first learns self-definition by seeing an image of the self in a mirror which is entirely separate from, yet seems identical to, the child. Cixous reflects that the working of the mirror stage not only causes the

child to determine an essential separation from the rest of the world, but also instills cultural codes which distinguish sexual identification. For women, the mirror stage is the beginning of a long encounter with a culture which has determined that they are the other. By virtue of the inescapable involvement in the mirror stage, women, "at the same time as they're taught their name,...can be taught that their territory is black...And so we have internalized this horror of the dark"(Cixous 1986, 310).

To achieve and maintain a position of power against this culture, women must be militants, demands Cixous. For "as a militant, [woman] is an integral part of all liberations"(313). Only radical action, Cixous determines, will adequately counter the violence with which males castrate women from the speaking subject role. As a part of this action, women must claim with metaphorical force their place in the literary canon. This assertion will allow woman to glorify herself. Her speaking out will act as a multiplicitous extension of her feminine ability to experience pleasure. This ability differs radically from the male's, which is easily locatable at the site of the penis, and through which he can experience pleasure of finite and measurable duration. The woman can experience orgasm repeatedly, and this may occur by her being stimulated in any of many areas on her body. Thus a woman, by speaking out physically through a text which elaborates

the multiplicitous erotic aspects of female sexuality, glorifies herself as a member of the group of all women.

Cixous, after taking account of the sexual differences between women and men, tries to unite the two sides of the oppositional structure of males and females, subjects and objects, by discussing and modifying a traditional notion of bisexuality. Traditionally, Cixous says, bisexuality is a neutered concept which denies "the possibility or the pertinence of a distinction between feminine and masculine writing"(314). Neutering does not allow the subject to struggle for the dynamic definitions that exist between meanings. So Cixous counters the traditional notion of bisexuality with a definition of her own:

each one's location in self of the presence-- variously manifest and insistent according to each person, male or female--of both sexes, nonexclusion either of the difference or of one sex and from this "self-permission," multiplication of the effects of the inscription of desire(314)

Cixous suggests that we become aware of the individuality of sexual differences. The female body is the seat of the most intense, thorough elaboration of desire. First, each person finds how much of the two sexes lies within the self. Then the person acknowledges the differences between the sexes, and the existence within the self of both sexes. With this acknowledgement the individual should find a new ability to accept the multiplicitous nature of the meanings in texts, and a new awareness of the fallacious practice of defining through opposition. Meaning then does not lie in an all-or-

nothing, yes-or-no definition of verity. It can be found in an awareness of where on the male-female sexuality continuum and, consequently, where on the desire continuum, each person lies at any given moment. Only then is an adequate analysis of the inscriptions of this desire possible.

Cixous, however, reinforces the oppositional structure she wishes to revise with her multiplicity-seeking alternative because she classifies the openness to differences as a specifically feminine trait, locatable once again in the female sexual experience. She asserts that there is a way of writing that is feminine, and thus does not effect an adequate transformation of cultural or social structures. Woman "must write woman"(310), because "there is always within her at least a little of that good mother's milk"(312). So Woman writes with white ink, which is inherently (and biologically) superior to a male type of writing which excludes and denigrates women through its dependence on the phallus.

Cixous thinks that we can make the meaning of a text less certain if we write dynamically. The white ink with which women write may be considered as untraceable on the white page. The woman, then, has a measure of artistic freedom. Her white ink allows her the room to play on the page more freely than a male might. This practice of breaking down popular considerations of composition possesses elements common to the habits of those who practice deconstruction. Cixous' ideas about feminine

creativity and the feminine pleasure experience, and thus her ideas about women's writing, possess an element of indefinability because they require an exploration into multiplicitous, not dichotomous or readily defined, structures. Her notion of "a writing said to be feminine," is thus similar to the ideas the French philosopher Jacques Derrida proposes in his analysis of writing as difference (Moi 1988). "Differance", a word Derrida forms by combining the words deferrance and difference, enacts the slipperiness and unlimitability of meaning. Derrida extrapolates on Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the signifier and the signified. According to this concept, in any formation of meaning, an image (that which is signified) is arbitrarily assigned a sound-word (the sign or signifier). The assigning is culturally specific. To Derrida, any meaning develops from the relationship between these two parts. Derrida "deconstructs" language, and writing by focusing on the gap, the space, the ambiguity which exists in the relation between the signifier and the signified:

...The signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences (Derrida 1986, 125).

The term "differance" combines the two qualities of the gap existing in the system of neverending referents: deferrance, and difference. Derrida also calls the

qualities "temporization" and "spacing"(123). We can never, Derrida asserts, close the space, or the temporal distance, between our reality and how we define that reality. However, we may delight in the field of play made possible by the existence of this difference; perhaps we may achieve a sense of liberation by exploring and exposing the limits of the symbolic process. Cixous echoes Derrida when she describes a writing which is "infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another"(Cixous quoted in Moi 1988, 109). Cixous seems to contradict herself as she first asserts the undefinability of any expression then goes on to say that although she believes that every man and woman is inherently bisexual, only the female possesses the power to be truly dynamic, to revel in the indescribable gaps, to transcend the cultural limitations of a phallogcentered history. Thus, she emerges as a complex separatist. However, she does provide a valuable exploration into the options that multiplicity allows.

Teresa de Lauretis wants to fracture the narrative form. de Lauretis wants the dynamic nature of female expression to be more appreciated by Western culture. In historical relation to the Oedipal journey which is elaborated both by Freud and by widespread mythic narrative structures, she studies how the narrative form has worked to engender the subject and to place the individual within a dichotomous structure of oppositions.

In the theoretical base for her ideas de Lauretis combines psychoanalysis and semiosis. Psychoanalysis, she says, takes place in the workings between the unconscious and how it produces a subject-effect; semiosis takes place in the interaction between the inner and outer world, the "continuous engagement of a self or subject in social reality" in which "both the subject and social reality are understood as entities of a semiotic nature, as 'signs,'"; "...semiosis names the process of their reciprocally constitutive effects"(de Lauretis 1984, 184). In semiosis, semantic value is produced through culturally shared codes. de Lauretis believes that if we change our reactions to the semiotic codes set out in the narrative form, we may begin to solve the problems with the engendering process occurring in narrative.

According to de Lauretis, a shift from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society accompanied the development of the Oedipal plot structure which forms the basis of all narrative. Creatures such as the Sphinx, who stands for the "frontier between the desert and the city [metaphorizing] the symbolic boundary between nature and culture, the limit and the test imposed on man"(109) are engendered as female because they are the boundary (the womb) through which the hero must pass, and the hero "must be male". Further, the boundary is a place of desire, because the hero requires something in order to pass through to continue or fulfill the heroic plot. All the subsequent oppositional pairs

which occur within a culture, and the shifts by the subject from one position to another within the pair

are predicated on the single figure of the hero who crosses the boundary and penetrates the other space. In so doing the hero, the mythical subject, is constructed as human being and as male; he is the active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, the creator of differences. Female is what is not susceptible to transformation, to life or death; she (it) is an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter(119).

The subject may explore the space which is object, other, boundary, death, but the space remains stationary, and merely receptive to the subject's exploration and passage through. Cixous would say that women do occupy this space, with their openness to differences. However, Cixous thinks that the story should be told from the viewpoint of the Sphinx because the female character acting as the boundary occupies a special position which should be glorified.

de Lauretis refers to Freud's discussion of the Oedipal journey and its relation to femininity as she discusses how desire relates to the male subject's process. The woman's role as subject is to be the passive receptor to the man, or in other words, the reward. "For the boy," de Lauretis says, "has been promised, by the social contract he has entered into at his Oedipal phase, that he will find woman waiting at the end of his journey....And so her story, like any other story, is a question of his desire"(133). de Lauretis recouples the link between the Freudian idea of the male Oedipal phase and the narrative structure from which

she determines it has come. The male journeys through a series of crises and tests and finds the female waiting at the end of the story as his reward. The female journeys through a series of situations which will only allow her to better fulfill her role as the male's reward.

Like Cixous, then, de Lauretis examines how the unconscious is formed. Cixous, however, focuses her examination on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, in which the female subject learns the contradictions inherent in trying to identify herself. For Cixous, the mirror's image of the self shows the woman that she is separate from the territory of the subject. de Lauretis chooses to focus on the Freudian Oedipal phase and how that has historically structured narrative, placing woman outside the subject position. To Cixous, the woman's cultural position is less passive than that postulated by de Lauretis, but is equally devoid of power. de Lauretis' female, within the Oedipal plot structure, may only function as the male's reward, or the tunnel through which the male must pass in order to attain his reward. The space that Cixous' woman occupies, however, has the potential to be exploited. Women can use the secret power they have by existing in this space for militant, radical types of liberation. Cixous' woman is the subject who lives in the ambiguous darkness, and who embraces this territory and the opportunities it presents. The female subject de Lauretis describes at this point may

only stand passively while the male finds liberation by using the female as an object.

de Lauretis believes that the problem with narrative structure does not rest solely with the Oedipal formulation and its link to narrative. The problem is that current formulations fail to see a link between the two, that "the very work of narrativity is the engagement of the subject in certain positionalities of meaning and desire"(106). Further, these formulations fail to take into account that engagement is something that is actively, "materially inscribed - in a field of textual practices"(106). Consequently, they fail to see that the subject is "materially, historically, and experientially constituted"(106), most basically with regard to gender. This is a politics of the unconscious and experience in which personal identification is a process which transpires in a movement through a complicated unfolding field of constant change. Woman, within this system, is defined as

the other-from-man (nature and Mother, site of sexuality and masculine desire, sign and object of men's social exchange)...the term that designates at once the vanishing point of our culture's fictions of itself and the condition of the discourses in which the fictions are represented(5).

Lauretis seeks to move away from an exclusionary ideal of woman, and toward a meaning which includes women, the active, "historical beings who cannot as yet be defined outside of those discursive formations"(5). It should be possible, she thinks, to work through those established

codes in order to redirect the course of narrative and its entwined identification procedures. Like Cixous, de Lauretis wishes to expose the limiting gender codes. Her codes exist within the narrative form, and she wishes to eliminate the limiting factor within them.

de Lauretis exposes the contradictory nature of the female's position in this story. She utilizes Freud's ideas of female subjectivity to find her solution. First, "Oedipal desire requires in its object-or in its subject when female, as with Freud's little girl-an identification with the feminine position"(134). Neither femininity nor masculinity is ever fully attained or abandoned by an individual. de Lauretis says, according to Freud, "'in the course of some women's lives there is a repeated alternation between periods in which femininity or masculinity gain the upper hand'. The two terms," she continues,

do not refer so much to qualities or states of being inherent in a person, as to positions which she occupies in relation to desire. They are terms of identification. And the alternation between them, Freud seems to suggest, is a specific character of female subjectivity(142).

Since female subjectivity exists in an alternation between the two subject positions, de Lauretis sees that the goal of future narratives is to place the subject in that contradictory position.

For de Lauretis, current cultural constructions convey that only women alternate between identifying with the feminine and the masculine position. Unlike Cixous, though,

de Lauretis does not confine this characteristic to women. Not only women may be truly dynamic, as Cixous implies in her redefinition of bisexuality. Not only women possess the ability to be truly open to differences. Although both Cixous and de Lauretis take note that both masculine and feminine traits appear in each individual, only de Lauretis allows males a sense of flexibility and openness equal to that of females. In fact, this allowance is how de Lauretis develops her solution to the problems with the narrative form.

With male and female subjects alternating between the positions the Oedipal narrative structure would classify as specifically masculine or feminine, the strictness of the distinction between the two classifications might dissolve. The heroic subject role will then be seen as non-self-evident. It will become only a fiction. The historic embedding of the Oedipal plot structure and its correspondent desire strategies into the narrative form, which pervades many areas of social interaction, will thus be exposed.

de Lauretis would have any characters such as the Sphinx, currently perceived as other-from-man, alternately classified as male and female. Similarly, she would have the hero-subject character constructed as either male or female. Then, if a cross-section of narratives were taken, the object of the quest would be of both masculine and feminine desire. Consequently the narrative form would no

longer exclusively place women in a powerless role. Since to de Lauretis the structure of narrative is materially inscribed, it must be possible to re-inscribe it in a manner that will not make use of the limiting gender codes.

With such a re-inscription, the contradiction, the duplicity of the female character's situation, may not be seen as self-evident. Erasure of the contradiction, de Lauretis insists, comes when we "enact the contradiction of female desire" and proceed to "resolve the contradiction much in the same way as myths and the mythologists do [with women]: by either the massive destruction or the territorialization"(155) of the situation. Thus, de Lauretis is dissatisfied with the narrative form. She demands a conscious, multiplicitous fracturing of its rigid structure so that women may not be victimized by that constantly reinstated, dichotomous narrative form.

For Julia Kristeva, the problem of the engendered subject is metaphysical. She thinks that we must constitute a fluid and free subjectivity. Kristeva sees that three types of feminists exist. In the first, women demand equality, consisting of equal access to the symbolic order. Kristeva calls this liberal feminism. In the second, women reject the symbolic order because they see it as engendered as masculine. Femininity is praised and highly valued. Kristeva calls this radical feminism. Cixous, with her "white milk" writing, would fall into this second category. In the third, "Women reject the dichotomy between masculine

and feminine as metaphysical"(Moi 1988, 12). de Lauretis is more difficult to classify accurately, because she focuses on the narrative form. Although she does not explicitly claim that the roots of engendering dichotomously are metaphysical, she still might be considered as a feminist of the third type. She renders the construction of the characters of female and male subjectivity relative to the historically rooted Oedipal formulation. Her solution to the dichotomously engendering Oedipal narrative form lies in reformulating the subject and object roles with a new slant on the transitory nature of masculinity and femininity. Kristeva groups herself with this third type of feminist. "What can 'identity,' even 'sexual identity,' mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged?"(Kristeva 1986, 209). In this third position, the current ideal's installation in the present through the imaginary is made obvious. This ideal needs to become more compatible with the surrounding universe. Kristeva says that"...the cosmos, atoms and cells - our true contemporaries - call for the constitution of a fluid and free subjectivity"(208).

The current constitution of the subject is based on the distinction between types of time which are based on sexual difference. Male time, and its linear form of history, are measured in terms of production, and are nationally or culturally limited. Female time, or "Women's time", is measured in terms of reproduction, the woman being the

reproducer. This is another type of history, a diagonal type of history which Kristeva calls "monumental"; in it are members who "echo in a most specific way the universal traits of their structural place in reproduction and its representations"(190). In this cyclic time individuals experience a loss of identity as they become part of the anthropological time dimension. Recently, Kristeva says, European feminists have moved to either be included in the male history of cursive time or have refused it entirely on the grounds that men and women are irreducibly different. But a new generation of feminists is emerging.

This generation of feminists takes note of socialism and Freudianism. Since socialism places the individual with respect to its place in production, it neglects not only the individual's place in reproduction but also its place in the symbolic order. Women, in this production-centered conception, either are considered as inessential or as "non-existent to the totalizing and even totalitarian spirit of this ideology"(196). Thus, feminists in Kristeva's third group wish that sexual equality be added to the economic, political, and professional equality demands of socialists.

Since the root of the sexual equality question relates to questions about sexual difference and specificity, the question becomes symbolic. However, instead of taking the individual away from the social contract, this question of sexual difference "is translated by and translates a difference in the relationship of subjects to the symbolic

contract which is the social contract: a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language and meaning"(196). Issues related to sexuality are thus inseparably entwined with the occurrences and productions of the social world. Kristeva uses semiotic and Freudian strategies to do what she calls "semanalysis;" in this practice she goes beyond "identifying the systematic constraint within each signifying practice" to "specifying just what, within the practice, falls outside the system and characterizes the specificity of the practice as such"(Kristeva 1986, 27). With semanalysis, Kristeva enacts a Hegelian approach as she searches for what falls outside the system; in other words, she searches for the other which exists outside the dichotomous system which delineates existence on the basis of self/other. This method of searching shows that Kristeva is aware of the contradictions inherent within the system and does not hesitate to use them in order that the system may question itself. The entwining of issues of sexual difference and the social world occurs at the most basic levels of establishing language, meaning, and power relations. Thus, as with de Lauretis, the subject is materially, historically and experientially constituted. However, semanalysis differs from de Lauretis' semiosis. While de Lauretis asks us to question the codes that the culture shares in producing values which cause us to view an individual woman by classifying her as Woman, Kristeva asks that we question the semiotic system that produces these

codes. Kristeva takes de Lauretis' questions one step further. Hence to Kristeva it is imperative to discuss the question "of sexual difference and of the difference among subjects who themselves are not reducible one to the other"(Kristeva 1986, 195); this, Kristeva says, is the function of Freudianism.

With semanalysis, Kristeva also relates the speaking subject in a language to the material world within which that subject exists. Kristeva says that the dialectic established by such an approach will provide a concrete base to the negativity which exists within the current dichotomous structure. In this way a pattern of questioning the specific, material status of each subject will be enacted:

...the subject of the semiotic metalanguage must, however briefly, call himself in question, must emerge from the protective shell of a transcendental ego within a logical system, and so restore his connection with that negativity - drive governed, but also social, political and historical - which rends and renews the social code(Kristeva 1986, 33).

Kristeva presents a comprehensive method of attacking the problem of the unfortunate placement of women within the dichotomous system. By questioning both the subject's unconscious wills and desires and the placement of the subject within the material, historical, social world, she hopes that the placement of the male in the subject position will no longer be self-evident. The social code can be renewed more favorably for every member of a culture if each

person enacts this comprehensive questioning method. However, Kristeva realizes that this method may not be easily accepted, especially by those currently occupying the subject position. Kristeva is also concerned that this manner of questioning not be categorized either as religious fanaticism or as an action commonly taken by members of the non-subject set, thereby being defeated. Feminists must also question their own position as subjects::

As long as any libertarian movement, feminism included, does not analyze its own relationship to power and does not renounce belief in its own identity, it remains capable of being coopted both by power and an overtly religious or lay spiritualism(Kristeva 1980, 141).

"The whole problem," then, "is to know whether this ethical penchant in the woman's struggle will remain separated from negativity"(138). After all, the purpose of Kristeva's feminism is to de-centralize power, "render[ing] decision-making institutions more flexible"(Kristeva 1986, 202). Kristeva is the only one of these three feminists who has determined that women must question the foundations of their own movement. de Lauretis claims that both women and men must question the system within which they live, but she does not say that they must question the very roots of that act of questioning. Cixous, meanwhile, with her position that women ought to be outright militants, makes no demand that women question the roots of their militancy. However, she does also object to liberal feminism.

The subject may avoid the trap of categorized negativity by embracing Kristeva's notion of bisexuality. The purpose of this bisexuality is not to remove differences from the sexes, nor is it to provide for a measure of the totality of the sexes within the individual. Kristeva's bisexuality is

the demassification of the problematic of difference, which would imply, in a first phase, an apparent de-dramatization of the 'fight to the death' between rival groups and thus between the sexes. And this is not in the name of some reconciliation...but in order that the struggle, the implacable difference, the violence be conceived in the very place where it operates with the maximum intransigence, in other words, in personal and sexual identity itself, so as to make it disintegrate in its very nucleus (Kristeva 1986, 209).

Kristeva's bisexuality goes beyond mere sexuality. She wishes to recreate the formation of the subject from the nucleus forward. The only way to stop the violence which exists with each constitution of a subject is through demassifying the subject entirely. Each subject is a unique subject, much like the atoms that make up the subject. Shifting the focus in this way will allow the subject to be better oriented in relation to the universe. Within this bisexuality "is precisely the possibility to explore all the sources of signification, that which posits a meaning as well as that which multiplies, pulverizes, and finally revives it" (Kristeva 1980, 165). Kristeva does not stop at Cixous' point of determining how much of each sex lies within the individual. Similarly, she goes beyond de

Lauretis' ideal that all subjects work from the position of Freud's alternating female subjectivity. She breaks down the formation of the sexes, and hence goes beyond justifying a distinction on any sexual basis. By individualizing the problematic of differences, she wishes to show that a complex combination of components make up the subject and that they are entirely unique to that subject.

To Kristeva, aesthetic practices play a very pervasive and influential part in constituting the subject. She finds it crucial that aesthetic practices begin to question the position of the speaking subject. In this way they may "demystify the identity of the symbolic bond itself, to demystify, therefore, the community of language as a universal and unifying tool, one which totalizes and equalizes"(Kristeva 1986, 210). Women, in particular, are finding it effective to aspire to literary creation, and the strength of the imaginary within that creative space. Kristeva says that this occurs because women have begun to recognize the power they have within literary creation to

lift the weight of what is sacrificial in the social contract from their shoulders, to nourish our societies with a more flexible and free discourse, one able to name what has thus far never been an object of circulation in the community: the enigmas of the body, the dreams, secret joys, shames, hatreds of the second sex(207).

Through writing, women have begun to find power. In the literary creation, women may "emphasize the multiplicity of female expressions and preoccupations"(193). However,

this literary practice is not specific to women alone. It is the object of anyone who undertakes aesthetic practices. Each artist must

bring out - along with the singularity of each person and, even more, along with the multiplicity [underlining mine] of every person's possible identifications... - the relativity of his/her symbolic as well as biological existence, according to the variations in his/her specific symbolic capacities(210).

This is not only the object of the artist. This is the responsibility of each person existing within the delineating culture.

Helene Cixous, Teresa de Lauretis and Julia Kristeva, then, present three distinct yet comparable images of multiplicitous feminism. The preceding discussion of the work of these three feminists, whose link here is their concern for issues related to multiplicity, provides the foundation for the following analysis of To the Lighthouse. Before embarking on this analysis, however, it is also imperative to explain briefly how Virginia Woolf's feminist ideals relate to these current notions of multiplicity. Woolf, like all three feminists with a concern for multiplicity, takes note of the need to transcend the limiting barriers between the sexes. Implicit in her work is an understanding of the difficulties women experience which are brought about by a gender code placing them in the object position. In her 1927 novel To the Lighthouse, Woolf emphasizes concerns about the definition of the self within a social system. She discusses these concerns in Orlando:

A Biography, written in 1928, and in the essay A Room of One's Own, written in 1929, as well. Virginia Woolf especially exhibits feminist ideas with an emphasis on multiplicity, through her discussion and elaboration of the concept of androgyny.

In A Room of One's Own, for example, Woolf describes the best mind as an androgynous mind. The establishment of engendered sexual difference is rooted firmly within the mind, which is incessantly involved with the workings of culture. Woolf agrees with de Lauretis that, within the mind, neither femininity nor masculinity is ever fully attained or abandoned by an individual. However, Woolf's androgynous mind goes a step further. It transcends the poles of masculinity and femininity. It is not "a mind that has any special sympathy with women"(Woolf 1929, 102). It is "resonant and porous;...it transmits emotion without impediment;...it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided....it does not think specially or separately of sex"(102-103). The androgynous mind does not merely join the male and the female, or simply become aware of the distinctions between the two. Within the androgynous mind the male and female aspects of the mind are combined in a way that produces something going far beyond the sum of these two specifically and reductively sexed components. The androgynous mind produces the best creative results:

Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the act of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of

opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace. (A Room of One's Own, p. 108)

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Thus, Woolf describes a creative space which is not based on opposites, but on a "marriage of opposites" and the expansive freedom and fullness of expression that ensues. Cixous differs from Woolf in her determination of what must occur in the mind to liberate the individual. Unlike Woolf, Cixous, with her redefinition of bisexuality, seeks a place where differences are stirred up, revered and glorified, instead of marrying the sexes in a unifying process which allows the artist to transcend the delineation of differences to create a work expressing the "perfect fullness" of the completely expanded and open mind.

In Orlando: A Biography, Woolf embodies her ideas on androgyny in pseudobiographical form. As a child, Orlando is a boy, but upon late adolescence, Orlando suddenly becomes a woman. Literary aspirations which the young male has the liberty to pursue are replaced by the feminine quest for the stability that lies in marriage. Orlando comes late to the game of sex roles and must learn quickly the specifics of the woman's part. Rachel Blau Du Plessis points out that "since they have to be learned all at once, their social, not biological, character is clear" (Du Plessis 1985, 61). This occurrence is in line with the multiplicitous feminists, who have determined the social nature of the formation of the character. Luckily, the

newly female/male Orlando finds a mate in a man who is also a woman, named Shel. Du Plessis calls them an "ambisexual couple" (62). The androgynous individual need not go through life alone, living without human companionship and intimacy. By creating this new type of coupling, Woolf explodes traditional ideas of sexuality in favor of a new androgynous ideal, embodied in both Orlando and his/her mate Shel, and thus transcends the dichotomous, limiting nature of the old gender code. Du Plessis describes the theoretical implications behind Woolf's creation of characters who transgress social norms:

By proposing androgynous selves, Woolf wants to depict characters who have stepped beyond the sex-gender system as a whole, with its claims to natural, universal status, its manners and morals, its sexual polarization, its gender asymmetry, its devaluation of the female and the homosexual. As if offhandedly, she also undercuts the prime underpinnings of its epistemology. Androgyny is a critical break with ideas about sex and gender...(63).

By writing Orlando, Woolf points out the contradictions of the Oedipal formulation of sex roles that de Lauretis describes. She explores alternative ways to relate which wreak havoc on the Oedipal formation of the subject position. Since neither Orlando nor Shel is exclusively male or female, neither gender is described as dominant. Thus neither a masculine character nor a feminine character occupies either the subject role or the object role. In their daily activities, Orlando and Shel alternate between male and female positions of desire.

Woolf's feminism of multiplicity, though, is most similar to Kristeva's. Since Orlando and Shel embody androgyny, their identities, as traditionally they would be defined by the current cultural formulation scheme, are challenged. Thus, both Kristeva and Woolf question the metaphysical groundings of sexual identity. This questioning on metaphysical terms transcends the standards for change mandated by either Cixous or de Lauretis, although it includes aspects of both theorists' arguments. Kristeva and Woolf demand more than the radicalism of Cixous or the narrative fracturing of de Lauretis. Kristeva wishes to set up a new space in which "the very notion of identity is challenged"(Kristeva quoted in Moi 1988, 13). And, as Toril Moi says, Kristeva "echoes the position taken up by Virginia Woolf some sixty years earlier"(13). Moi calls for a new reading of Woolf's To the Lighthouse, one that takes into consideration Kristeva's multiplicitous feminist ideals. Woolf, in her depiction of androgyny, acknowledges that elements that have been engendered as both masculine and feminine exist within each individual. She claims that individual freedom and the highest in artistic expression only occurs when these two parts of the self are accepted and are allowed to mingle freely until they balance and may then be transcended. At this point the individual functions from a place beyond the limitations of sexual differentiations. In the following chapter I consider the ideals of all three feminists who have considered

multiplicity, from Cixous' valorizing of the feminine, to de Lauretis' examination of the fictions that make up the narrative form, to Kristeva's constitution of a fluid and free subjectivity, as I explore Woolf's novel, To the Lighthouse.

CHAPTER II

In To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf shows herself to be a feminist with intentions similar to the three feminists discussed in the preceding chapter. Both the structure and the content of the novel undercut the dualisms inherent in the Oedipal narrative form. Woolf sets up an example of the old cultural system. She shows that she appreciates what this system does. Then she combines techniques of plot and character development to show that this system is restrictive. Simultaneously, she sets up a new way of existing and relating which transcends the roles mandated by this oppositional, dualistically engendered system. Woolf combines events and characters to develop a new way of living in To the Lighthouse. The novel is set on an island in the Hebrides, also known as the Isles of Skye, just northwest of Scotland. Mrs. Ramsay organizes a gathering of family and friends at the Ramsay summer cottage, and the events begun then are not completed until the characters return, ten years later. The vacation occurs away from the cultural structure of the mainland and, presumably, away from the rigidity of the confines of that structure. However, the workings of that culture still exist within the characters who have left the city to spend the summer on the island; the holiday atmosphere allows Woolf the flexibility she requires to analyze the cultural system, embodied in Mrs. Ramsay and her relationships, and eventually to set up

the alternative forms of existence she describes in Lily Briscoe.

Woolf expresses how the individual develops in her fashioning of novelistic structure. In one of her many essays, she describes her view of life, and the consequent duty of the novelist:

Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from beginning to end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?(Woolf 1967, 106)

In her fiction Woolf finds that her most important task is to describe life in all its complexity. Life is not, symbolically, a set of beacons. Life is not a set of actions rigidly spaced and timed that occur in a plot which only leads to a singular, ultimate, brightest gig lamp goal. Instead, life, were it made of light, would be more dispersed and encompassing, a "luminous halo," which surrounds everyone all the time. To Woolf, the novelist must describe this illumination, and describe it fully and well.

Consequently, to Woolf a plot structure which is based on the Oedipal quest would have only limited validity. The story line it describes makes up only one part of the stories which exist within the luminous halo. A story based on the Oedipal structure speaks only part of the truth; it does not adequately describe the complexities of real life.

In addition, limiting a character's personal development to a role which neglects the more internal, self-questioning aspects of the character prevents that character from fully exploring the character's own spirit. Woolf, in her allusion to gig lamps, notices that the Oedipal form, and its accompanying set of oppositions, wrongly describes the enveloping halo, life's envelope, as a series of distinct points of light. She proclaims that the gig lamp Oedipal form denies any life which occurs outside of its own too rigidly symmetric structure. Thus, like de Lauretis, she considers this form invalid, if it is accepted as the universal structure of narrative.

In terms of gender, this gig lamp structure of narrative is a masculine form, like the Oedipal quest structure. Its points of light are only a portion of the light sources found in life. If one were to consider only these points of light as the essential parts of life, one would neglect all other types of equally valid existence. These other types of existence include forms that have been engendered as feminine. In her description of the distinction between gig lamps and a luminous halo, Woolf captures the essence of the distinction between the forms of writing considered as masculine, and those considered as feminine. Since part of the gig lamp definition relies on the exclusion of other forms from what it considers as legitimate narrative, its limited validity must be recognized. Further, the novelist must describe the

luminous halo, a form which disperses the light of the many gig lamps and all the other light sources. The luminous halo would not exclude the feminine from the subject position in narrative because it does not rely on the strict structure of oppositions in which one player is active and the other passive.

Woolf also emphasizes this non-linear working of the characters' minds in To the Lighthouse. This realigns our focus on her characters, away from the external developments typical of the dramatic, adventure plot and towards the multi-faceted, complicated developments of the human mind. The mind of a character may pick up an event, like an unfinished painting or an elaborate dinner or a proposed trip to a lighthouse. The mind then often weaves together a complex set of images, combining the imaginary past, present and future. Mrs. Ramsay, for example, begins reading, "and as she did so she felt that she was climbing backwards, upwards, shoving her way up under petals that curved over her, so that she only knew this is white, or this is red. she did not know at first what the words meant at all"(Woolf 1927, 178-179). In Woolf's writing, her characters' interpretations of the world around them, in all their complexity and irreducibility, combine to best convey the spirit of life to the reader.

Because she "uncircumscribes" the spirit of life and because she believes that the artist must remain true to this in novelistic expression, Woolf may be considered a

feminist of multiplicity. With her "luminous halo," she values qualities in writing which expand the limits of what may be considered as valid construction. In To the Lighthouse she emphasizes the non-linear workings of the minds of her characters. Further, while making artistic strides, she is also adequately concerned with gender issues to place a woman, Lily Briscoe, in the subject role of artist. Lily, occupying the subject position, will therefore have an opportunity to speak. Further, as an artist, Lily is allowed to transcend the confining elements of her culture in order to explore her art. Thus, in writing To the Lighthouse, Woolf sidesteps the typical linear mythic structure in favor of a new form which may allow her characters a more realistic type of development. Woolf's novel does not become trivial with its lack of an elaborate external plot; she discards this narrative form in a calculated attempt to transcend its limits and to manifest a more honest depiction of life's complexities. By doing this, she opens the door to exploring the nature of the self in a manner that will not limit the self to the specifics of a cultural construction. This allows Woolf's characters to question life with the potential freedom to explore individual differences without relating these differences specifically to sex.

The second section of To the Lighthouse, "Time Passes," fractures the Oedipal narrative form in a special way. Woolf examines the effects of time and the physical world on

the functionings of humans, where little occurs in the absence of humans that could:

disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence(195).

Time itself, and the wind and the sun, are the main characters in the passage. The fluidity of narrative in "Time Passes" mirrors the passing of time itself. Woolf asks, "Did nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence," she continues, "she saw his misery, his meanness, and his torture"(201-202). The only thing that keeps nature from taking over the house and restoring the land to briars and flowers is "a force working; something not highly conscious; something that leered, something that lurched; something not inspired to go about its work with dignified ritual or solemn chanting(209).

We may consider this section as Woolf successfully presenting a narrative form which revels in the exclusively feminine aspects of life. If we do, Jane Marcus is one feminist critic who presents a good example of an interpretation of this section which is based on the assumption that Woolf explores female qualities. Marcus, who collects and edits anthologies of feminist essays on Woolf's life and work, says that "Time Passes" is two things: a lament for dead Mrs. Ramsay, and an elaboration

of jouissance, that Cixousian form of pleasure which is distinctly female. The feminine qualities, according to Marcus, determine the form of the section, and thus determine the form of the novel: a whole split by this section. "Woolf drew To the Lighthouse as two blocks connected by a tunnel. In the tunnel," Marcus says,

Time is fluid and personality is stable, while in the flanking blocks, personality is fluid and time is stable. Time is experienced according to the mother's presence or absence (Marcus 1987, 6).

Marcus notes that the "Time Passes" section differs significantly from the other two sections of To the Lighthouse. According to Marcus, this difference has a specific root within the feminine. The mother's absence causes Woolf to alter her depictions both of time and of personality development. Time and personality in To the Lighthouse, then, are to Marcus the two distinct qualities attached to the feminine. Marcus determines changes in the text according to fluctuations she sees in these two qualities.

The novel, however, may not be considered as two blocks connected by a tunnel, as Marcus asserts. In the third section of the novel Mrs. Ramsay has not come back to life. Because time, which is experienced according to the mother's presence or absence, is the determining factor, then the way time is experienced can not change from the second section to the third, because Mrs. Ramsay does not return. Since according to Marcus the ebb and flow of personality is

intertwined with that of time, the third section would have to follow a structure similar to that of the second. With her block and tunnel description, though, Marcus herself says that this is not true. Marcus claims that "the figure of the empty house, the questioning of the meaning of life, the horror and chaos of the universe, devastation and meaninglessness, is a portrait of the dead mother's body"(6). With the mother dead, there is no personality development, and the universe becomes ridden with chaos. Meaninglessness runs amok.

Marcus indicates that with Mrs. Ramsay's death comes chaos and devastation, yet accompanying this comes Woolf's expression/exploration of jouissance. Into this anti-space, where all is disorder, Marcus places Mrs. McNab as the expression of the ultra-feminine. Mrs. McNab's continued lurching presence throughout this tunnel of fluid time shows that she is the carrier of jouissance. She calls Mrs. McNab's lurching presence "the voice of the semiotic," whose "lurching and rolling rhythms of working are the origins of language....Mrs. McNab's jouissance is a politics and poetics of life over death"(7). Helene Cixous has determined that this pleasure is experienceable only to women, and she believes that women who write ought to use their art as a forum to discuss this phenomenon. Marcus is like Cixous, in that she perceives that Woolf uses the "Time Passes" section in order to describe the newly available opportunity for female pleasure, embodied in the ageing form

of the housekeeper. Consequently, the purely feminine form of pleasure is the root of all language, and the root of all life. Mrs. McNab represents the triumph, available only to women, of life over death.

Marcus' argument, though, like Cixous' argument based on "that good mother's milk," is based on an invalid set of oppositions. Her interpretation of "Time Passes" falls into an essentialist trap highly reminiscent of Cixous; both classify an openness to difference as purely a biologically female trait. Woolf does consider the perplexities of time, human persistence and nature in the second section of To the Lighthouse. However, the summer house, lying on the border between being returned to the briars and hemlocks and remaining comfortably habitable to humans who might someday return does not describe a bilateral opposition between life and death. Woolf delights in the loveliness which reigns in the house in the absence of humans. Mrs. McNab changes this loveliness, but she does not save the cottage from a persistent evil. Nature is indifferent:

With equal complacence she saw his misery, his meanness, and his torture. That dream, of sharing, completing, of finding in solitude on the beach an answer, was then but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence when the nobler powers sleep beneath"(Woolf 1927, 202).

Nature does not provide humans with clues which lead to a long-sought answer about the meaning of human life; however, nature need not be equated with death, unless life itself is the pursuit of some refinable, definable form of knowledge.

Humans are the ones who choose to interpret nature, in whatever manner they see fit. If "to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken,"(202), then this judgment has lain in human hands. Nature enacts only a "dignified ritual," a "solemn chanting," which Mrs. McNab disrupts. The unknown, which seems replete with bodings of immanent devastation, is something which humans choose to fear, but which they need not. Life holds more than mere personality development or the development of ideas. Life is what goes on inside a character in whatever form, life is what transpires without, and life is the infinite degrees of luminosity between these two.

The "Time Passes" section, then, is an elaboration of the ideals of multiplicity. It might best be thought of as a somewhat Kristevan exploration into metaphysics, a point of transition towards humans feeling more comfortable with the universe and their placement among its elements. Woolf breaks apart the established narrative form with "Time Passes," drawing the traditional structure into question. She presents a form with a new kind of universal subject, one which as it is limitless as time itself, is fluid and free.

In the examination of Woolf's characters I will focus on Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. These two female characters best represent the metaphysical transition Woolf would like to see occur. First, with the character Mrs.

Ramsay, Woolf pays heed to the traditional mother-wife, and this woman's way of life. Then Woolf introduces a character possessing both the traits of openness, and a will to transcend the old system: Lily Briscoe. Lily manages to do more than survive; she flourishes alongside those who persist in reproducing the outdated dichotomously delineated roles.

I discuss these two characters because of the distinct, yet comparable roles they play within their society. Both are women. By definition, then, within their patriarchal society they occupy the non-subject position. Each attempts to find a sense of harmony with the surrounding world. However, these two women choose different paths to find this harmony. Mrs. Ramsay's path, which reproduces an attitude of drawing distinctions between the sexes, leads her to death without ever having attained the subject position. Lily, on the other hand, concerns herself with the complex issues entwined in interpersonal and intersexual relations. She survives without reproducing the structures of confinement within which Mrs. Ramsay has tried to survive. Lily is successful at becoming her own artistic, creative person. Thus, cultural change may occur at the individual level. With Lily, Woolf presents an ideal which transcends the sexes. Lily is not a woman who has become a free woman by virtue of her womanhood; she is an individual who, through contemplation and awareness, has found a way to be free within a restrictive system of relating. Toril Moi

says that Lily deconstructs the oppositional nature of the style of relation set up by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Lily is a subject, yet she refuses to be categorized with regard to her sexual identity:

To the Lighthouse illustrates the destructive nature of a metaphysical belief in strong, immutably fixed gender identities - as represented by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay - whereas Lily Briscoe (an artist) represents the subject who deconstructs this opposition, perceives its pernicious influence and tries as far as is possible in a still rigidly patriarchal order to live as her own woman, without regard for the crippling definitions of sexual identity to which society would have her conform (Moi 1988, 13).

According to Toril Moi, then, Mrs. Ramsay works within a social structure based upon a strict set of oppositions. Her strictly gender-defined position restricts her from growing beyond the confines of the patriarchal order. Lily Briscoe, on the other hand, lives her own life tolerantly beyond the binary structure that these two propose. Woolf "has understood that the goal of the feminist struggle must precisely be to deconstruct the death-dealing binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity" (13).

Woolf is a feminist writer emphasizing multiplicity in her depiction of Mrs. Ramsay. She admires Mrs. Ramsay's goodwill. She shows genuine appreciation for Mrs. Ramsay's lasting influence. However, she also shows the limitations of Mrs. Ramsay's kind of greatness. She also shows the oppositional nature of Mrs. Ramsay's methods, which keep Mrs. Ramsay from developing to the full potential of an individual.

Woolf appreciates Mrs. Ramsay's genuine goodwill. Mrs. Ramsay is helpful, kind, caring, and loving. Simply, she is a very nice woman. She does what she can to make life better for those around her. Consequently, those around her admire Mrs. Ramsay. Charles Tansley, the young atheist philosopher who would not be satisfied in a conversation "until he had turned the whole thing round and made it somehow reflect himself and disparage them" (Woolf 1927, 16), feels out of sorts and rejected. Mrs. Ramsay asks him whether he would like to go to town with her, although she herself vacillates between liking him warmly and thinking him "an awful prig--oh yes, an insufferable bore" (22). Her persistent compassion leads him to think, as she stands against a picture of Queen Victoria, that "she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen....with stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen and wild violets" (25). Briefly, the young, brash Tansley fantasizes that he might be able to possess her beauty, to run away to live with her in some field of dreams. Her beauty causes Tansley to feel proud, simply because "he was walking with a beautiful woman" (25) and was allowed, finally, to carry her purse.

Tansley, though, is not the only one who admires Mrs. Ramsay. William Bankes, the aging friend of Mr. Ramsay, also finds Mrs. Ramsay insufferably beautiful. The painter Lily Briscoe catches Bankes looking at Mrs. Ramsay and notices his lasting affection:

it was love....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 gain....as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued(74).

Men, young and old, find solace from the unfriendly, chaotic universe when they are in the presence of Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay fills the feminine role of other that they require in order to reinforce their own position of powerful subjects who may go about life subduing chaos.

Lily Briscoe, the artist who spends most of the novel trying to paint a tribute to Mrs. Ramsay and her young son, also loves Mrs. Ramsay. Lily seeks the knowledge one might find from intimacy with Mrs. Ramsay. Laying her head on Mrs. Ramsay's lap, Lily wishes she could become one with Mrs. Ramsay, thinking, "What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored?....Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one?"(79) In her own way, Lily is as smitten with Mrs. Ramsay as the men in To the Lighthouse.

Woolf also depicts Mrs. Ramsay positively with respect to the way the woman treats her children. Mrs. Ramsay cares deeply for them. When Mr. Ramsay tells James that there will be no going to the Lighthouse on the following day, Mrs. Ramsay comforts her young son. She tells him an adventuresome story about a fisherman and his wife. She tries to assure him that the weather may indeed be fine, until he can play happily again. "'Perhaps you will wake up

and find the sun shining and the birds singing'....'Perhaps it will be fine tomorrow,' she said, smoothing his hair"(26). In another instance, after dinner she goes into the room the young children share, expecting to see them sleeping. However, they are not. Cam is afraid of the shadows the boar's head which is nailed on the wall and James will neither let it be touched or the light turned out. All the children stop talking and running around in their nightclothes and bare feet to watch Mrs. Ramsay take the shawl from her own shoulders and wind it around the boar's head,

and then she came back to Cam and laid her head almost flat on the pillow beside Cam's and said how lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; it was like a beautiful mountain such as she had seen abroad, with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes and...(172).

Mrs. Ramsay gently soothes the children until they can sleep peacefully. She protects them from the evil things in the world, and replaces their worried thoughts with those of fairies and singing birds. By doing these good deeds, she fulfills the traditional mother's role. She is the caretaker, and she sacrifices herself by relinquishing her scarf in order that others may live more comfortably. She devotes herself to helping others along their way to happiness, finding her own satisfaction only vicariously as they progress. Thus, Mrs. Ramsay lives embedded in the

dualistic system in which she stands somewhat passively by while others take the subject position.

Mrs. Ramsay does not even confine her good deeds to her family. She also tries to help the community. When she and Tansley go to town, she pays a visit to someone who is sick. While she is posing for Lily's painting, and while she and Mr. Ramsay sit after dinner, she works patiently at knitting a reddish-brown stocking for the Lighthouse keeper's son.

Mrs. Ramsay tries to help others find the unity she has found within the dualistic system. She plays matchmaker quite extensively, with and without success. She insists that Lily "must, Minta must, they all must marry, since in the whole world whatever laurels might be tossed to her,...there could be no disputing this:...an unmarried woman has missed the best of life"(77). She finally seats Lily and William Bankes near each other at dinner, having wondered all day with whom it would be best to unite Lily. When Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle come in late to dinner with the children and Minta says that she has lost her brooch, Mrs. Ramsay's first thought is, "It must have happened then,...they are engaged"(149). Mrs. Ramsay knows "that people must marry; people must have children"(93). Because in a marriage, these other people would finally have at least one quality: "one--she need not name it--that was essential; the thing she had with her husband"(93).

In addition to being a successful matchmaker, a loving mother, and an all around fine, charitable and beautiful

woman, Mrs. Ramsay is also wonderful hostess. Woolf has depicted the perfect traditional female. Although Mrs. Ramsay has once again asked too many people to stay with them at their summer cottage, she arranges places for them to stay in town, a short walk away. On the way towards town, she asks Augustus Carmichael, the aged poet who the children suspect of taking opium, whether he would like her to get him some stamps or anything else, although Carmichael seems to be in a drug-induced state of enrapturement as he sits in a chaise lounge on the lawn. Finally, as the culmination of her caretaking abilities, she orchestrates a feast centered around the Boef en Daube.

Besides admiring her good deeds, Woolf shows genuine appreciation for Mrs. Ramsay's lasting influence in To the Lighthouse. As such, she shows an openness to differences in line with multiplicity. The character relations Mrs. Ramsay establishes by gathering these people together last through the entire book. Lily and Carmichael are among those who return to the summer house ten years later, in the third section of the novel. Paul and Minta are still married. Lily and William Bankes have become lifelong friends, and likely would have been married if either had expressed an interest in marriage. Lily thinks, "One could talk of painting then seriously to a man. Indeed, his friendship had been one of the pleasures of her life. She loved William Bankes"(263).

Mrs. Ramsay's influence is maintained throughout the third section, and her character is never forgotten. Lily decides to finally finish the painting, and spends a great deal of time thinking about Mrs. Ramsay and reflecting on the particularities of her personality while she paints. Cam and James finally do accompany their father on a boating expedition to the lighthouse. Mrs. Ramsay's influence remains strong as the characters in "The Window" follow tasks begun around her persona in the first section of the book. Woolf allows Mr. Ramsay the most explicit lamentation of Mrs. Ramsay's passage. One of his refrains in "The Window" refers to his continuing awareness of Mrs. Ramsay's sudden absence and his own painful attempts to survive: "'You find us much changed.' Last night he had got up and stopped before [Lily], and said that. Dumb and staring though they had all sat"(221)

However, Woolf's exploration of Mrs. Ramsay also shows the limitations of Mrs. Ramsay's kind of greatness. Mrs. Ramsay is the epitome of the stereotypically feminine character. Her happiness relies on making others happy, not on solo accomplishment. Indeed, Mrs. Ramsay questions the validity of her own movements through life, vacillating between self-doubt and ecstasy. At the very moment that she should feel elated, she questions herself. The family and the guests sit down to the elaborate dinner Mrs. Ramsay has arranged.

But what have I done with my life? thought Mrs. Ramsay, taking her place at the head of the table, and looking at all the plates making white circles on it....she [had] only this--an infinitely long table and plates and knives(125).

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The questioning of her self dissipates, though, as the dinner party continues. She goes from feeling hopeless and looking wan, grey, tired and removed from the scene to being the prima donna of the evening. Mr. Ramsay and Augustus Carmichael begin to recite a piece of poetry, "Luriana Lurilee." Mrs. Ramsay rises ceremoniously from the table, takes Minta's arm, and leaves the room as if closing a door, providing the ending to a dramatic scene. As she departs, Carmichael repeated "the last words: Luriana, Lurilee, and bowed to her as if he did her homage"(167). She has had her triumph, but it is a fleeting and transitory triumph, based on the acceptance and admiration of others.

Mrs. Ramsay is also incapable of achieving a fully effective line of communication between herself and Mr. Ramsay, except through silence. Mrs. Ramsay will not tell Mr. Ramsay she loves him at the end of "The Window," although she knows that it is a simple thing and that he wants and needs her to say it but cannot ask her to tell him. With this motion of self-maintenance at her husband's expense, she fortifies a structure of opposition, in which either she or her husband must be the outward winner. She looks at him and tells him that of course it won't be fine enough to go to the Lighthouse, and so makes him know that she loves him although she cannot speak the words. Using a

method of concession in which she must tell him that she thinks he is right, and consequently that she is wrong, in order to tell him that she loves him enhances this opposition. She takes a position prone at his feet, and only can maintain herself through the silence that maintenance of the patriarchal structure has caused women to inhabit since the structure was begun.

Further, Mrs. Ramsay's triumphs do not stay the test of the seeming chaos of the outer world and its time, which is always moving forward. First, during the dinner party, she thinks of the blackness of the night beyond the diningroom windows, and perceives that her guests and family feel safely removed from the outside world. The candles lighted the windows, and

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; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily(147)

Mrs. Ramsay wrongfully thinks that indoors is order and outside a watery mirage. Instead, it is the outdoors, the raw elements of the night, and the movement of the earth, which are the constants. The dinner scene is the fleeting mirage that Mrs. Ramsay wishes was eternal. Her sense of security is the false security of the mirage of unity. Second, time passes, and war comes, taking one of her sons. One of her daughters, Prue, dies in childbirth. Mrs. Ramsay

herself gently slips into the past. Woolf announces her death rather backhandedly, in a parenthetical sentence:

[Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty](194).

It is as if Mrs. Ramsay's death and all she stands for are placed gently in the past. Woolf reiterates that Mrs. Ramsay's most important position has been to rest in Mr. Ramsay's arms and to comfort him. Her leavetaking is made more gentle through its placement in the sentence. As a result, Woolf has made it appear that Mrs. Ramsay's life and death have been part of a broader continuum, and that perhaps we need not be so afraid of time and its course as Mrs. Ramsay might have had us be. Mrs. Ramsay's greatness is limited by the role she plays with relation to the universe.

Although she seems to respect and even admire Mrs. Ramsay's efforts, Woolf shows that Mrs. Ramsay's method of existence never escapes functioning from within a dichotomous, oppositional existence. Since the oppositional structure is traditionally set up between males and females, it is best to examine how Mrs. Ramsay exists in relation to this system. First, Mrs. Ramsay does not truly occupy the subject position when she relates with her husband. She exists primarily to raise his children and foster his ego so that he can write more books of philosophy and hopefully go down in history. Mr. Ramsay does think she is beautiful,

but he prefers to limit her value to beauty and disregards any knowledge she might possess. In fact, after dinner, as they sit reading and Mr. Ramsay ponders his wife's ever increasing beauty, he ponders her basic ignorance with the same relish:

And he wondered what she was reading, and exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful(182)

Although Mr. Ramsay may be commended for appreciating his wife, his enjoyment of her abilities falls flat because he chooses to exaggerate her ignorance in order merely to enhance his perception of her beauty. Unfortunately, within the rigid structures of his mind, he cannot accept that she might be both clever and beautiful.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Ramsay reinforces her own placement in the object position of the dichotomous structure. She "knows" that Mr. Ramsay is always right, even as she tells her son James that indeed it might be nice enough to go to the Lighthouse on the following day when Mr. Ramsay has said it will rain. She respects and is in awe of his book-learning. He writes books, and knows things, and so she feels inadequate:

Then he said, Damn you. He said, It must rain. He said, It won't rain; and instantly a Heaven of security opened before her. There was nobody she revered more. She was not good enough to tie his shoe strings, she felt(51).

Woolf shows the irony of Mrs. Ramsay's dependence on Mr. Ramsay's decrees. Mr. Ramsay flippantly, and somewhat insincerely, tells her what she wants to hear. Mrs. Ramsay is pathetically serious in her instant response to Mr. Ramsay's change of mind, instead of interpreting his statement as a less than universal opinions made by an individual. In fact, "she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband; and further, could not bear not being entirely sure, when she spoke to him, of the truth of what she said"(61). With relation to the universe, Mr. Ramsay occupies a position of knowledge and ignorance very similar to Mrs. Ramsay's, and yet Mrs. Ramsay knows in her heart that if they disagree she will be the one who is proven wrong. This occurs because the world she lives in is not structured like the world as she knows it. She knows no other way to live, and is restricted by this system for the duration of her life. Mrs. Ramsay idolizes Mr. Ramsay, and his kind of knowledge, at her own expense. Certainly Mrs. Ramsay must be good enough to tie her husband's shoestrings.

In following with this restrictive overvaluation of her husband's worth, Mrs. Ramsay has little faith in the validity of her own manner of thought:

It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one leant to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one; felt an irrational tenderness thus (she looked at that long steady light) as for oneself(97-98).

Her thoughts are irrational, even to herself, as she thinks them. They are irrational merely because she lives within a structure in which her kind of knowing is not knowing because it is not the same kind of knowing as her husband's, and those others who order the world, who, strangely enough, were "under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance"(13). She has thoughts of tenderness and affinity for inanimate things, but they have no individual power within her own system of relating.

Second, Mrs. Ramsay views unity and marriage, which bonds her to a role which excludes her from the subject position of knowing, as a quest for security against the forces of death and chaos. She reinforces the Oedipal quest structure because she facilitates the placement of others within this structure of formulaic desire fulfillment. The false sense of security is enhanced as Mrs. Ramsay tries to place others, like Lily and William Bankes, in positions similar to her own, although her marriage is less than perfect.

Oh, but nonsense, she thought; William must marry Lily. They have so many things in common. Lily is so fond of flowers. They are both cold and aloof and rather self-sufficient. She must arrange for them to take a long walk together(157).

Mrs. Ramsay insists on trying to unite two people who have no interest in marrying, and who appear to be content in

their self-sufficiency. She can not comprehend a world in which two distinct individuals could be happy.

Mrs. Ramsay, then, is confined within the limits of the patriarchal, oppositional structure. She reinforces this structure by the way she relates to her husband, and by trying to place others within the confines of the same structure. Woolf does show genuine appreciation for this woman who successfully fulfils her role. However, Mrs. Ramsay is limited because her only form of accomplishment relies on the acceptance and admiration of others. She cannot see a way of life beyond this structure. Woolf, the feminist writer with a concern for multiplicity, knows that there is a manner of existence which is distinct from this dichotomous structure and in which individual growth and accomplishment are fostered. She shows the growth of this form of existence in the character of the artist, Lily Briscoe.

Woolf effectively introduces Lily Briscoe so that Lily clearly will be considered as different from Mrs. Ramsay. Woolf introduces this ideal character from within the structure of the old cultural system. Aptly, the reader first sees Lily through Mrs. Ramsay's eyes, the very character Woolf designs Lily to replace. Mrs. Ramsay expresses a somewhat objective affection for Lily, although their ideas about living are not the

With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face, she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; she was an

independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it(29).

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By making this choice as a writer, Woolf assures that Lily's character will be explored not only from the standpoint of her own ideas, which fall outside the oppositional system, but also from the perspective of those functioning from within the system. Woolf's decision to have Mrs. Ramsay introduce Lily is very apt for a feminist concerned with multiplicity: what better way to bring in new ideas than by the one who best represents the old? Another key decision Woolf makes which shows her concern with changing the nature of the gendered structure is Lily's introduction hand in hand with her work of art, because it is Lily's independent work which forms the foundation for her existence, not some dependence on the satisfaction or growth of those around her. Lily does not rely on the acceptance of others in order to prosper; this in part may exist because she is not widely determined as a great beauty by those existing within the system. Her beauty is not traditional. Lily's main occupation is not to please people or to see that they are comfortable. Lily is an artist, and as an artist, she finds fruition for her labors in painting, an independent pursuit which fosters her growth as an individual in the universe.

A precarious border stands between Lily's art and the judgment of those who would not understand this functioning: "she kept a feeler on her surroundings lest some one should creep up, and suddenly she should find her picture looked at"(30); this border is a metaphorical parallel to Lily's

very existence and that of those in the world around her, which does not follow the same plan or have the same goals for its women as she has for herself. In fact, Lily must find a way to cope with the unfriendly thoughts of those who wish to maintain the patriarchal structure. Charles Tansley expresses the consequences a woman existing within the dualistic structure must bear as he remarks offhandedly, "Women can't paint, women can't write..."(75), and this thought resonates through Lily's mind, infuriating her as she paints. She continues to struggle with this idea throughout the duration of the book as she persists in functioning by doing something of which no woman object could be capable, until she finally puts the last brush stroke to her painting.

Further, Lily must find a way to exist, knowing that she does not believe in the same oppositional structures that the Ramsays present, without reinforcing these same structures by opposing herself to them. In the third section of the novel, when Mr. Ramsay chats with Lily as he waits for his children to get ready to go to the lighthouse, Lily knows that he needs her to compliment him, and yet he cannot ask her for this because it would require him to step down from the authoritarian, patriarchal platform, the subject placement in the oppositional system. In this section of the text, Woolf shows Lily's struggle and how she survives Mr. Ramsay's test. First, Lily recognizes "this demand that she should surrender herself up to him

entirely"(226). Then she notes her traditional placement in the oppositional structure: "A woman, she had provoked this horror; a woman, she should have known how to deal with it. It was immensely to her discredit, sexually, to stand there dumb"(228). And yet, Lily does not succumb to his demand:

His immense self-pity, his demand for sympathy poured and spread itself in pools at her feet, and all she did, miserable sinner that she was, was to draw her skirts a little closer round her ankles, lest she should get wet. In complete silence she stood there, grasping her paint brush(228).

Finally, Lily manages to transcend Mr. Ramsay's demand for reinforcement by finding what is purely good, beyond his demand for notice. She finds his boots remarkable:

"sculptured; colossal....She could see them walking to his room of their own accord, expressive in his absence of pathos, surliness, ill-temper, charm"(229), and so she exclaims,"What beautiful boots!"(229). Lily cinches Woolf's awareness of the Oedipal narrative form of multiplicity as she notes that that "There was no helping Mr. Ramsay on the journey he was going"(229). She has complimented his boots, but the compliment has come from her, instead of being induced from him. Strangely, it is enough, and the two coexist contently throughout the remainder of the passage. Thus, Woolf shows that Lily need not facilitate Mr. Ramsay's growth, and she need not sacrifice herself in order that he may feel strong again. Lily sidesteps the role that she knows lies waiting for the traditional female in favor of one that suits her individuality.

In Lily's art, she finds herself compelled to follow what she feels, although it may not be fashionable:

She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. she saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral(75).

With Lily Briscoe, Woolf draws a map on which there is an alternative path for women. If they follow this path, they need not exist solely to be beautiful or to help others to find their goals. Yet the path does not take them far away from the culture to a field of isolation. Lily manages to function quite happily within the culture that runs so strictly on its oppositionally based ideologies, and she prospers from her expansion beyond this system. In fact, she has to control herself from throwing herself "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"(32). With Lily, Woolf shows that a character may live happily alongside a set of characters who hold very different cultural values, accepting these characters and their values, but not finding it necessary to adapt the self in order to find acceptance.

Lily also questions and explores life without blocking life's answers in order to maintain the self in order to become a freer individual. The answers to the questions do not seem to be of utmost importance; rather, Woolf

highlights Lily's opportunity and ability to question. For example, she asks herself,

How then did it work out, all this? How did one judge people, think of them? How did one add up this and that and conclude that it was liking one felt, or disliking? And to those words, what meaning attached, after all?....the voice was her own voice saying without prompting undeniable, everlasting, contradictory things(40).

Lily shows the prime characteristics of the most expansive type of multiplicity. She questions the very foundations of thought and language, and does not assume that her own beliefs are beyond questioning. Her questions show an awareness of the shortcomings of the patriarchal structure. She acts with the assumption that there is no inherent rightness or wrongness to anything; determination of liking or disliking is merely up to the individual observer, who likely is bombarded with contradictory thoughts.

As an artist, Lily must transcend the barriers of the dualistic structure which determines the order of things. She is not a member of one side of two opposing forces. When she paints, she paints by:

subduing all her impressions as a woman to something much more general; becoming once more under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children--her picture.(82)

Lily does not exist as a woman, then, but as an artist. In this way she may come to some clearer understanding of the complexities, and the simplicities, of the universe.

Woolf also shows that Lily does not fit into the oppositionally gendered way of thinking, because Lily understands Mr. Ramsay's structured, p-to-q method of thought no better or worse than she understands Mrs. Ramsay's more than Mrs. Ramsay's way of thinking. Andrew Ramsay has told her that Mr. Ramsay's books are about "Subject and object and the nature of reality"(38). To understand Mr. Ramsay's quest, Andrew tells her to picture a kitchen table when she's not there. This table reappears each time she ponders the way Mr. Ramsay thinks, and at the most inopportune times.

So now she always saw, when she thought of Mr. Ramsay's work, a scrubbed kitchen table. It lodged now in the fork of a pear tree, for they had reached the orchard. And with a painful effort of concentration, she focused her mind, not upon the silver-bossed bark of the tree, or upon its fish-shaped leaves, but upon a phantom kitchen table, one of those scrubbed board tables, grained and knotted, whose virtue seems to have been laid bare by years of muscular integrity, which stuck there, its four legs in air(38).

Lily's response to these things she does not understand, though, is tolerance. In fact, she laughs and laughs with her head in Mrs. Ramsay's lap "at the thought of Mrs. Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand"(78). Lily wonders what kind of intuitive wisdom Mrs. Ramsay possesses. Gradually, Lily comes to think that Mrs. Ramsay may indeed understand:

Was it knowledge? Was it, once more, the deceptiveness of beauty, so that all one's perceptions, half way to truth, were tangled in a golden mesh? or did she lock up within her some secret which certainly Lily Briscoe believed

people must have for the world to go on at all? Every one could not be as helter skelter, hand to mouth as she was. But if they knew, could they tell one what they knew?(78)

Mrs. Ramsay's manner of understanding seems as completely unattainable to Lily as does Mr. Ramsay's. She wonders, "what art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers?"(79) Knowledge and wisdom are what Lily seeks, and she wishes to use some art to transcend the limits of knowledge and wisdom, the limits between individuals and the seemingly impenetrable differences of thought. Lily thus questions the foundations, which are the distinct patterns of thought and experience, by which the individual is defined.

Another way Lily differs from Mrs. Ramsay in terms of the oppositional structure pertains to marriage. Lily will not reinforce the structure of oppression which Mrs. Ramsay finds essential to her own existence. Lily will not marry. Woolf entwines Lily's discarding the necessity of marriage with the tenuous progression of her art:

She had only escaped by the skin of her teeth though, she thought. She had been looking at the table-cloth, and it had flashed upon her that she would move the tree to the middle, and need never marry anybody, and she had felt an enormous exultation(262).

Thus, Lily's progression as an individual parallels the growth of her independence from the confines of the cultural system that those around her, like Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, reinforce.

Lily's focus on her art and the realms of thought that accompany it, then, allow her to continue on a path determined by individual concerns instead of the concerns of fitting in with the group, which require following their mandate. Beyond any concerns that are oriented with her culture, Lily finds reinforcement from the instabilities of being unable to determine a lasting judgment about what is right and wrong, independent of the conclusions drawn by others, by focusing on her painting:

She remembered, all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she had her work. In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me(128).

Woolf cinches her argument that Lily's way of life is better than Mrs. Ramsay's by showing Lily successfully completing the painting she began at the start of To the Lighthouse.

Through Lily's trials and concerns with what form of knowledge is best, what ways of loving and living will give her the keys to transcendence, she manages to persevere as an individual and create a work of art, with no concern as to its destiny in the annals of history:

It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again....With a suddn intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision(310).

Lily, then, manages to fully appreciate a type of living which she personally has no interest in joining. She

exists alongside the oppositional structure, without reinforcing it or falling prey to its coercion to join it. She creates a work of art which exists independent of the concerns of others. Finally, through all this, she seeks the knowledge of the universe which will allow her to become a fuller, freer individual among the many other elements in the world. Thus, Lily exhibits the qualities of multiplicity that show that Virginia Woolf wrote To the Lighthouse with a keen eye to the complexities that are inherent in a feminism of multiplicity.

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