

Kerstin Elert

**Portraits of Women in Selected Novels  
by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster**



Kerstin Elert

**Portraits of Women in Selected Novels  
by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Arts  
of the University of Umeå  
to be publicly discussed in the lecture hall E  
on May 23, 1979 at 10 a.m.  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## ABSTRACT

*Author:* Kerstin Elert

*Title:* Portraits of Women in Selected Novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster

*Address:* Department of English, Umeå University,  
S-901 87 Umeå, Sweden

Female characters in novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster are studied in their relationships as wives, mothers, daughters and prospective brides. The novels selected are those where the writers are concerned with families dominated by Victorian ideals. Virginia Woolf: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927). E.M. Forster: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910).

The socioeconomic, religious and ideological origins of the Victorian ideals are traced, esp. as they are related to the writers' family background in the tradition of English intellectual life. The central theme of the four novels by Woolf is the mother-daughter relationship which is analyzed in its components of love and resentment, often revealed in an interior monologue. Forster's novels usually present a widowed mother with a daughter and a son. It is shown how the plot, dialogue and authorial intrusions are used to depict a liberation from the constraints of the Victorian ideals of family life. The mothers in the novels of both writers are shown to be representative of various aspects of the Victorian ideal of womanhood. The attitudes of men towards women vary from those typifying Victorian conceptions of male superiority to more modern ideals of equality and natural companionship.

*Key Words:* Forster, E.M., Woolf, Virginia, Victorianism, Victorian women, female characters, Bloomsbury Group, woman in history, history of woman, woman in literature, mother-daughter relationship

ISBN 91-7174-036-8. Umeå, 1979. 145 pages.  
(Acta Universitatis Umensis. Umeå Studies in the Humanities. 28.)

*Distributed by* Umeå Universitetsbibliotek, Box 718,  
S-901 10 Umeå, Sweden.

# ERRATA

Page	9, line 27	propective	<i>read</i>	prospective
"	16, "	15 contrast	"	contract
"	29, "	9 exemples	"	examples
"	30, "	11 woman	"	Woman
"	30, "	18 feminity	"	femininity
"	31, "	16 woman	"	women
"	33, "	16 <i>Women</i>	"	<i>Woman</i>
"	45, note 78	Feminism and Art	"	<i>Feminism and Art</i>
"	57, line 17	<i>Jacob's room</i>	"	<i>Jacob's Room</i>
"	61, "	31 <i>Add note:</i> Bell, 1:210		
"	97, "	1 nourned	<i>read</i>	mourned
"	100, "	7 accompaines	"	accompanies
"	112, "	4 could possibly	"	could never possibly
"	119, "	14 Abbot	"	Abbott
"	120, "	1 Abbot	"	Abbott
"	143, "	40 <i>Add :7-26 after</i> <i>Victorian Studies</i> , 14 (1970/71)		
"	144, "	20 <i>English Woman</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>The English Woman</i>

Kerstin Elert

**Portraits of Women in Selected Novels  
by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster**

## CONTENTS

PREFACE	5
A NOTE ON TEXTS	6
INTRODUCTION	7
I    BACKGROUNDS	11
Origin and Development of the Victorian Ideal	11
Early Views on Woman (12) - The Puritan Heritage (13) - The Economic Position of Women in a Changing Society (14) - The Enlightened View on Woman (16) - The Romantic View on the Sexes and Love (17) - A Victorian Manifesto (19) - The Forgotten Woman (21) - Voices of Equality (22) - The "Angel in the House" (25) - The Victorian View on Sexuality (26) - Single Women (27) - The Impact of Science (28) - The "Unwomanly Woman", the "Fatal Woman" and the "New Woman" (30)	
Notes on Childhood and Youth of the Authors	35
NOTES TO CHAPTER I	41
II    WIVES, MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS	48
The Husband-Centred Wife	49
Inferior Education of Women (50) - Chivalrous Men and Boring Women (51) - Marriage as a Profession (52) - Women as Homemakers (53) - Parties (54) - Beauty a Prerequisite (56)	
Women as Educators of Womanhood	58
<i>The Voyage Out</i> : The Sisterly Mother (59)	
<i>Night and Day</i> : The Romantic Mother (62) - <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> : Rivalling Mother Figures (66)	
- <i>To the Lighthouse</i> : Mother Observed from	

the Distance (69)	
NOTES TO CHAPTER II	78
III FAMILIES IN THE SUBURBS	79
<i>Where Angels Fear to Tread</i> : Duel over a Baby (80) - <i>The Longest Journey</i> : Adulterous Mother (86) - <i>A Room with a View</i> : The Sensible Mother (89) - <i>Howards End</i> : "A wife can be replaced, a mother never" (94)	
NOTES TO CHAPTER III	104
IV YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN	105
Young Women in Virginia Woolf's Novels	105
Ignorant Young Women (106) - Conceited Young Scholars (107) - The "Encouraging Type" of Young Woman (108) - The Right Young Man (109) - Towards a New Type of Marriage (112) - The Family Tyrant (113)	
Young Women in Forster's Novels	118
"Brotherhood at the Expense of Sisterhood" (118) - "You must marry, or . . ." (125)	
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV	131
SUMMARY	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	140



## PREFACE

I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Docent Ingrid Melander, who has followed the progress of my work with never-failing interest and encouragement. She read my thesis in manuscript and made a number of valuable suggestions.

I also wish to thank Professor Nils Thun and the members of the English Seminar at Umeå University. Thanks are due to Neville Shrimpton and Chris Sjöstedt for revising my English and to Raija Salo for typing the final copy. Last but not least, I should like to thank my family for constant encouragement and support.

Umeå, March, 1979

Kerstin Elert

## A NOTE ON TEXTS

### Editions used for quotations

### Abbreviations

#### E.M. Forster:

<i>Where Angels Fear to Tread</i> Edward Arnold, 1953	( <i>Where Angels</i> )
<i>The Longest Journey</i> Penguin, 1967	( <i>Longest Journey</i> )
<i>A Room with a View</i> Penguin, 1967	( <i>A Room</i> )
<i>Howards End</i> Penguin, 1967	( <i>Howards End</i> )

#### Virginia Woolf:

<i>The Voyage Out</i> Penguin, 1972	( <i>Voyage Out</i> )
<i>Night and Day</i> Penguin, 1971	( <i>Night and Day</i> )
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> Penguin, 1971	( <i>Dalloway</i> )
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> Everyman's Library, 1964	( <i>Lighthouse</i> )

## INTRODUCTION

My interest in the portrayal of women in the novels of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster springs from my curiosity about the disparity between the advanced technique of their narrative art and the old-fashioned personalities of the female characters in their works. When I started to look for the origin of the ideals of womanhood which lie behind their portraits of women, I found that some of them could be traced back to the oldest sources of Western Civilization. Others had developed under the pressure of economic, social, political and technical changes that had taken place.

The nineteenth century had been crucial for the formation of an ideal of womanhood which could meet the demands of an essentially reorganized society without causing the upheaval of a unit which had come to be looked upon as fundamental - the family.

The aim of my study is to show how the Victorian ideals of womanhood are reflected in the novels of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster in the first decades of the twentieth century. In the novels which were selected for my study, the writers are concerned with the relationships within families of the Victorian

type. They wrote from their own experiences of the effects of the Victorian doctrines upon women and their families. The novels were selected because they most clearly illuminate the Victorian ideals and myths as they were mirrored in the minds of the writers of a new generation.

The following novels by Virginia Woolf provide the best illustration of the topic: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Forster published five novels in his lifetime, four of which reflect the conditions in late Victorian families: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908) and *Howards End* (1910). Henceforward, only these works are referred to by the phrase "Virginia Woolf's and E.M. Forster's novels", or the like, unless otherwise stated.

Both writers are concerned with the relationship of a mother-figure and a young protagonist. In the four novels by Virginia Woolf the central relationship is that of a mother and a daughter. At the centre of Forster's novels there is usually a widowed mother with a daughter and a son. The women of the parent-generation are representative of various aspects of the Victorian ideal of womanhood.

My study therefore begins with a chapter which traces the origins of the ideals of womanhood that prevailed in Victorian society. The aim is to show how they appear in the depiction of the female characters in the novels. Of course, not all the ideas that form the background of the Victorian doctrine are represented in the novels, since writers seldom reflect *every* tendency in the cultural life of their time, at least not overtly. But it is my contention that these ideas were important for the development of the eclectic ideal of Victorian womanhood.

The novels are analyzed by means of different methods owing to the differences in narrative technique. Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster followed divergent paths away from external realism. Forster's reliance on plot and his symbolic use of the female characters require more reference to the story as such than do the novels of Virginia Woolf, which are organized around the relationships between the characters.

Chapter I, which explains the development of these ideals of womanhood, also contains a section which provides some information about the childhood and youth of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster and their later interaction in the Bloomsbury Group. Biographical references are made whenever interesting or illuminating for the aim of my study. The purpose is to show how the writers were connected, by family and by their own circles of friends and their social position to their ideological environment.

Chapter II discusses matters of central importance in the lives of the married women in Virginia Woolf's novels, who are seen in their roles as wives in relation to their husbands, and as mothers in relation to their daughters. Chapter III deals with the mothers in Forster's novels and their dependence on the social setting. Chapter IV takes up the problems facing the young women in the novels in their encounters with men, particularly prospective husbands.



## Chapter I

### BACKGROUNDS

#### Origin and Development of the Victorian Ideal

The first decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a new generation of writers who reacted against the past which they considered that the previous generation stood for. Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster belonged to this new generation. They had spent their childhood and early youth in the late Victorian period when the impact of the Victorian family could still be felt to the full. The female characters in their novels, their attitudes to women and to the situation of women in general must be seen against the background of Victorian ideas in order to be understood properly.

Attitudes to women in England in the Victorian era were the result of a long process. To a large extent this process was common to the whole of Western civilization. Many features, however, can be seen as consequences of British history in particular, especially the fact that Britain played a leading role in Europe's cultural and socioeconomic development during the two centuries preceding the Victorian era. There are a

number of studies devoted to the history of women.<sup>1</sup> The development of a new feminist movement has led to an increasing interest in this field during the last few years. The material relating to the situation of women in different ages, however, is widely scattered and not easily accessible. Nor is it easy to lay bare the threads in the dense web of conflicting ideas and opinions concerning women and their various roles. The result of such attempts must, of course, ultimately depend on the selection of facts and documents used to support the theory in favour. Generally, there has been an accentuation of the importance of sex roles and their relation to family structure.<sup>2</sup>

### Early Views on Woman

England is particularly rich in documents, dating back as far as Anglo-Saxon times, that contain information about the economic, legal and social position of women. The historian, Doris Mary Stenton, has investigated a great many of these primary sources in her study *The English Woman in History* <sup>3</sup>, which covers the history of England down to the middle of the nineteenth century. There is evidence in the material that a married woman in Anglo-Saxon England was treated almost as her husband's equal.<sup>4</sup> The Norman Conquest and the emergence of feudalism gradually put an end to this state of things in the higher orders of society. The fate of women was bound up with the distribution of land and property and the feudal rules of inheritance that demanded that a man's estate should pass intact to his eldest son. Women, particularly married women of the propertied classes, became completely dependent economically. In the lower orders women were on a more equal footing with men in that respect.<sup>5</sup>

Religion also influenced the position of women. Aristotle's theory concerning women was incorporated into the medieval Christian ideology through the work of Thomas Aquinas. It fused with Judeo-Christian



thought on women, dominated by the views of St Paul. Aristotle, and after him St Thomas, considered women defective and thus inferior to men. Early Christian theologians had come to view St Paul's texts as proof that women should be subordinated to men. On the other hand, they exalted the Virgin Mary to almost divine status as Queen of Heaven, which presumably had its implications for the emergence of courtly love on the continent in the twelfth century.

An insight into attitudes towards women in medieval England is given by Francis Lee Utley, who has collected a vast material for an analytical index of the history of satire and the defence of the women under the tell-tale title *The Crooked Rib*.<sup>6</sup> In its hatred as well as courtly exaltation of woman English literature is, in this respect, highly dependent on its French and Latin sources. In spite of the fact that the medieval currents survived there is a significant change in the climate at the beginning of the modern era. This becomes evident from the fact that women are now praised much more often. Utley mentions, besides the abandoning of the ascetic idea of clerical celibacy, the following factors: a great stress on individualism, relativism in morals and in the assessment of character, a revolution in the ideals which lie behind the education of women, and confirmation of the monogamous ideal.<sup>7</sup>

### The Puritan Heritage

Nevertheless, the Protestant religions retained the earlier ideas concerning the subordinate position of women. The Reformation, also, overthrew the image of Mary as an ideal. The teachings of St Paul were reinforced. For instance, an English homily on the state of matrimony demanded of the wife that, in addition to obedience, she "should endeavour in all ways to content her husband, do him pleasure and avoid what may offend him".<sup>8</sup> A homily on matrimony also stressed

the idea of woman as a defective creature: a "weaker vessel; of a frail heart, inconstant".<sup>9</sup>

In Elizabethan England girls could be given a preparatory education equal to that of boys, and a contemporary writer like Mulgrave was in favour of the education of women. But since home was seen as a woman's only working place, such subjects as household knowledge were the only subjects taught to girls besides reading and writing. "Sixteenth century education did not leave the ground of common sense in these matters."<sup>10</sup> We are reminded of the fate of the imaginary woman writer in Virginia Woolf's famous description of "Shakespeare's wonderfully gifted sister" in *A Room of One's Own*.<sup>11</sup>

The Puritan view of the relations between the sexes was stated in the tract on *Matrimonial Honour* by Daniel Rogers, a minister.<sup>12</sup> According to Stenton, Roger's treatment of women is in general more lenient than that of the writers of the homilies in the preceding century. But Rogers still emphasizes subjection as being one of the special duties of a wife to a husband, "the first and maine comprehending all the rest", helpfulness and gracefulness.<sup>13</sup> The higher esteem of the role of women is also reflected in literature, for example, in the portrayal of the marriage of Adam and Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667).

### The Economic Position of Women in a Changing Society

Both the middle-class woman and the working-class woman owed their position in nineteenth century society to changes in agriculture and industry that had been going on for a couple of centuries. The full implication of this, however, was not felt until industrialism totally changed the structure of the economy and destroyed the old traditional patterns of life.

When agriculture was the main source of subsistence, men, women and children were mutually dependent on each other for the provision of necessities. In her book, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, Alice Clark calls this the system of Domestic Industry.<sup>14</sup> In another economic system, that of Family Industry, husband and wife were able to increase their production and sell the surplus, but they still worked together as partners for the good of the whole family. This was the case not only with regard to agriculture but also with regard to the early trades and crafts carried out on the family premises. These two systems had existed, according to Clark, from the Middle Ages. Both systems were replaced by Capitalistic Industry, where the husband or other members of the family worked outside the household for individual wages.

Enclosure movements, which to a large extent turned arable land into pasture, led to the concentration of land in the hands of big landowners and farmers and the disappearance of small landholders who were forced to become wage-labourers.<sup>15</sup> They had to go where the jobs were and thus became a mobile group.<sup>16</sup> New means of communication and technical innovations led to a similar concentration of capital in industry. Much of the work in the textile industry that had earlier been done in the cottages by the wives and children of small landholders and agricultural labourers was now transferred to factories, thus depriving women of an important additional source of income. They were obliged to compete with men for jobs on farms and in factories. Thus, the gradual change from an agrarian to an urban industrial society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to a change in the family situation. The agrarian household - what sociologists would call a "domestic group" - was controlled by a paterfamilias and consisted besides him of his wife, children, servants and, often, older and unmarried relatives.<sup>17</sup> This type of family gave way to the

"nuclear family" consisting only of the husband, his wife and their children. The new society required a flexibility that the patriarchal family could not offer. It

stood in the way of individualism, and it is probably for this reason that the conjugal [=nuclear] family system has established itself most strongly in individualist and Protestant societies, and that it is essentially urban and middle class in nature.<sup>18</sup>

### The Enlightened View on Woman

The principal opponent to patriarchalism among the philosophers was John Locke. His theories on the individual and society, according to which the civil state is a contrast between individuals, also influenced the conception of the family. The greater freedom that this led to, did not affect women very much, however. Legally, the husband was still the head of the family and he had his wife's property entirely at his disposal even if he deserted her. Marriage had also, to a considerable extent, tended to become a matter of commercial interest, in spite of the fusion of the ideas of Puritan marriage that had made love a prerequisite of matrimony.<sup>19</sup> The patriarchal domestic group was not replaced by a society of independent individuals but by conjugal families dominated by the husband. As the French writer on the history of the family, Philippe Ariès states: "It is not individualism which has triumphed but the family".<sup>20</sup>

Samuel Johnson maintained, according to Boswell, "contrary to the common notion that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned".<sup>21</sup> Virginia Woolf quotes another saying of Dr. Johnson's implying that men thought that women were an overmatch for them and that this was the reason for their choice of the weakest and most ignorant. She finds it necessary to quote Boswell when he states explicitly that this was

The eighteenth century rationalists who championed the rights of man included woman in their programme. The French Revolution unleashed ideas and emotions that threatened the traditional order of society. Once loose, these ideas and emotions could not fail to influence people all over Europe. They inspired Mary Wollstonecraft to write *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. The Reign of Terror in France (1792-94) and the Napoleonic wars, however, stirred a latent fear of mob riots and revolution in England, a fear that persisted throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft's work aroused little response in the English women of her day. Feminism as a movement for the improvement of woman's political and social status did not get under way until well into the nineteenth century.

#### The Romantic View on the Sexes and Love

Instead the traditional views concerning women were modified under the influence of Rousseau in a different way which was to be decisive for the following period. It is above all in his book on education, *Emile* (1761), that Rousseau expands his ideas about woman. *Emile* was translated and immediately widely read in England.<sup>24</sup> In contrast to Mary Wollstonecraft Rousseau stresses the differences between the sexes. Men and women have qualities that complement each other, and they should not strive to do the same things. The place of women is in the home, that of men in the world. According to Rousseau women are made especially to please men. This is reflected in his views on the education of women:

the entire education of women ought to be in relation to man. To please him, to be of use to him, to love and honour him, to rear his children, to tend him in manhood, counsel, console him, make life pleasant and sweet for him; these are the duties of woman in all ages and what they should learn in their infancy.<sup>25</sup>

The Romanticists believed that the nature of man and woman were different but of equal value since they complemented each other. The unusual individual could even unite masculine and feminine qualities, and this is expressed by Coleridge in his declaration: "The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous".<sup>26</sup> In the Romantic conception of love the relationship of the sexes was a perfect union of sexual impulse and spiritual love between congenial beings. These requirements led to theories about lovers being predestined for each other. The intensification of the love relationship meant that happiness was a prerequisite for marriage. This prerequisite led in turn to attacks on the institution of marriage as such.<sup>27</sup>

The Romantic Movement in literature represented a swing away from eighteenth-century rationalism toward the glorification of emotional experience. What it could mean for the individual is demonstrated by the lives of many of the writers of the Romantic era. A case in point is that of Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Shelley. Whereas the sexual licence in, for instance, pre-revolutionary France reflected an indifference to moral standards, the new demand for emotional freedom was a matter of principle. The questioning of the institution of marriage was effectively counterbalanced by another factor which is also worthy of attention, namely Evangelicalism, a religious revival that had its roots in the eighteenth century. It had influenced the religion of the middle class and was one of the strongest forces in a society where this class was steadily growing in economic and social power. The importance of Evangelicalism for the emergence of the Victorian view on women has been treated by G.M.Young.<sup>28</sup>

According to him, the early Victorians found that "the evangelical canon of duty and renunciation, was a woman's duty".<sup>29</sup> Young describes their feminine ideal as

sensitive and enduring, at once frailer and

finer than the man, - in a word Amelia [of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*] - and this type, perpetuated and articulated in a thousand novels, had blended insensibly with the more positive type evolved, in a humanitarian age, by the persuasive working of a religion of duty.<sup>30</sup>

He also comments on the effect of the evangelical influence on the education of girls. That it "tended to a certain repression of personality in the interest of a favourite sexual type, can hardly be denied".<sup>31</sup>

### A Victorian Manifesto

The ideal type of woman which emerged out of the concurrent influences from Rousseau, the Romanticists and the Evangelical movement is described nowhere more explicitly or more eloquently than in John Ruskin's lecture "*Of Queens' Gardens*". It was delivered in Manchester in 1864, printed the following year, and later reprinted in the numerous editions of the collection called *Sesame and Lilies*.<sup>32</sup> Ruskin repeatedly stresses the equality of the sexes although he maintains that their different and complementary natures direct them to separate spheres.

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

For Ruskin man "is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender". Woman's intellect, on the other hand, is "for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. . . . Her great function is Praise; she enters in no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest."<sup>33</sup>

Ruskin presents his programme for the education of girls with a rhetorical technique. He professes that a girl's education should be nearly, in its course and material of study, the same as a boy's. He admits "that of the two the girl should be earlier led, as her intellect ripens faster, into deep and serious subjects". Her education should also be freer: "you may chisel a boy into shape ... or hammer him into it ... But you cannot hammer a girl into anything." The attention is directed to the real goal for this education, presented as nearly "the same" and freer,<sup>34</sup> only "differently directed" by a metaphor: "She grows as a flower does, - she will wither without sun".<sup>35</sup> Her command of study should be "general and accomplished for daily and helpful use", in her home and for her husband.<sup>36</sup> A concrete glimpse of what this means is given in the lines that follow:

a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly - while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends.

Women are limited to a position in which they have to strike an unsure balance between "elementary knowledge and superficial knowledge - between a firm beginning and an infirm attempt at compassing".<sup>37</sup> Perfection and self-denial are equally demanding requirements for the woman:

She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise - wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband. . . .<sup>38</sup>

At the same time the laws of courtly love regulated the attitudes of men. A man should be obedient, "entirely subject" to the beloved woman, and receive from her "not only the encouragement, the praise and the reward of all toil, but, so far as any choice is open,



or any question difficult of decision, the *direction* of all toil".<sup>39</sup>

### The Forgotten Woman

Ruskin's words to his audience on a December day in 1864 were uttered in the very middle of the cyclone of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that swept over Queen Victoria's England, Manchester. The speed of these processes is mirrored in the population statistics. While only about 14.5 % of the 8.8 million inhabitants of England and Wales lived in urban districts in 1801, the urban and rural populations were about equal in number by the middle of the century. The Census of 1901 showed that 71 % of the population, 32.5 million, lived in urban areas. During the nineteenth century the number of urban dwellers had increased from 1.5 to 25 million while the rural population remained roughly constant.<sup>40</sup>

This new group, whose number grew so immensely, consisted of industrial workers and a new middle-class of, for example, businessmen and industrialists. While the working-class family was faced with poverty, squalor and toil, industrialisation often gave the middle-class an unprecedented affluence. In preindustrial society men, women and children had all helped to provide for the family. In the new middle-class family the husband alone became the provider.<sup>41</sup> Wives did not participate in the management of a business; nor was such a business any longer conducted on the family premises. In her history of the working women in England Alice Clark states that this gradual exclusion of middle-class women was not the consequence of a deliberate policy and it was not regarded as something that should be counteracted:

The momentous influence which some phases of Capitalism were destined to exert upon the economic position of women, were unforeseen

by the men who played a leading part in its development, and passed unnoticed by the speculative thinkers who wrote long treatises on Theories of State Organisation. The revolution did not involve a conscious demarcation of the respective spheres of men and women in industry; its results were accidental, due to the fact that women were forgotten, and so no attempt was made to adjust their training and social status to the necessities of the new economic organisation. The oversight is not surprising, for women's relation to the "Home" was regarded as an immutable law of Nature, inviolable by any upheaval in external social arrangements.<sup>42</sup>

Previously it had been the emergence of the nuclear family that had influenced the situation of women (see above p. 16). Because of developments in the nineteenth century middle-class women became economically dependent on their fathers or husbands. There was no necessity to give them the same educational opportunities and occupational training as men. Marriage provided the one acceptable career for a middle-class woman - domestic life. As Clark points out, the fact that a woman's productive capacity was no longer utilized led to a depreciation of her value.<sup>43</sup>

### Voices for Equality

The views concerning the content and the goal of education that Ruskin set forth should be seen in the light of the development of the affluent middle-class, which was the only group he had in mind. The same can be said about his efforts to exalt women's restricted and dependent role to a level which would be equal to that of man. A lot of energy and many aspirations were bottled up in this leisure class of middle-class women. Nor did the new society offer satisfactory solutions for the single woman. Mary Wollstonecraft's demands for female rights were reiterated in 1825 by the Socialist, William Thompson. He argued for female suffrage in reply to James Mill who had suggested that

women should be treated on a par with children, since their interests were taken care of by their fathers and husbands.<sup>44</sup> As Doris Stenton asserts, this support could be of doubtful value:

The support of the feminist cause by the new socialism imported a dangerous element of fear into the instinctive reaction against new ideas felt by the great mass of ordinary people.<sup>45</sup>

A more powerful support for the idea of feminine equality was rendered much later by John Stuart Mill, son of James Mill, who had wanted to reduce women's rights as a consequence of their dependent situation. In *The Subjection of Women*<sup>46</sup> he pointed out the fallacies of the then current views on the nature of the sexes, such as conceptions of the feminine character. He stressed the effects of a repressive education. He found that "in the case of women, a hot-house and stove cultivation has always been carried on of some of the capabilities of their nature, for the benefit and pleasure of their masters".<sup>47</sup> Mill also dealt with the supposed inferiority of women in the fine arts.

Women in the educated classes are almost universally taught more or less of some branch or other of the fine arts, but not that they may gain their living or their social consequence by it. Women artists are all amateurs.<sup>48</sup>

The effects of the traditional education of women for the marital relationship was sharply criticized by John Stuart Mill. Not only do women suffer but men as well. "A man who is married to a woman his inferior in intelligence finds her a perpetual dead weight, or, worse than a dead weight, a drag, upon every aspiration of his to be better than public opinion requires him to be."<sup>49</sup> Mill showed the consequences for both sexes of the limitation of freedom. It "dries up *pro tanto* the principal fountain of human happiness, and

leaves the species less rich, to an inappreciable degree, in all that makes life valuable to the individual human being".<sup>50</sup>

The theory of equality for women without confinement to a separate sphere and ideas concerning the natural propensities of the sexes, however, did not gain momentum until the turn of the century. Then it was through the activities of a militant feminist movement. The influential part of the nation adhered to the Victorian ideal of woman as restricted to the home and family and subjugated to male dominance.

A striking feature in the history of the attitudes to women is the persistence of certain ideas, often conflicting ones, through the ages. This is all the more surprising with regard to the repeated and wellknown attacks that have been launched on them by influential social thinkers. George Boas, an eminent scholar in the field of the history of ideas, has pointed out a difference between ideas which are incorporated in institutions and "those which are the opinions of individual persons and are transmitted from man to man". The latter change more rapidly.<sup>51</sup>

Ideas about the inferiority of women are such as are incorporated in institutions. They were firmly embedded in Christian thought right from the beginning; they were restated in early Puritan society. They persisted in social contexts, although they were, in theory, gradually modified under the influence of new ideas about marital love and of egalitarianism during the Era of Enlightenment. They were revived by Rousseau and the Romanticists and presented in the guise of the doctrines of separate spheres and complementary characters. They finally emerged as the exaltation of women in Victorian society as the "Angel in the House".<sup>52</sup> They remained incorporated in institutions, as they were espoused by Church and Crown.

Queen Victoria was a firm opponent of female emancipation.

### The "Angel in the House"

The Romantic polarization of male and female characteristics supported the belief that moral qualities such as readiness to make sacrifices, duty and endurance, had different implications for men and women. For women endurance and renunciation were stressed rather than the more active qualities which were expected of men. The active-passive scale was also adopted for manners and behaviour. Men should be hard, self-assertive, competitive and selfreliant; women soft, modest, submissive and docile. Women were encouraged to develop a predilection for refinement, whereas men were expected to stress simplicity. The intellectual faculties were also considered from the point of view of the active-passive scale. Men were creative, rational and lucid thinkers. Women relied on intuition and were imitative rather than creative. Extensive knowledge was important for men. For women deep knowledge was considered dangerous.

As Walter E. Houghton has stated in his work, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, the increasing importance of home and family was, to some extent, a result of the Evangelical Revival with its emphasis on duty and responsibility.<sup>53</sup> His views coincide with those of Philippe Ariès, who writes about the child and the family in Western Europe in the centuries before 1789. The family confined itself, in contrast to its former sociability in order to protect its members, especially the children, from the intrusive world outside the home. This "moral ascendancy" was a middle-class phenomenon, and related to the fact that many of those who now lived in urban districts had fathers and mothers who had lived in the country. "Moral distances took the place of physical distances."<sup>54</sup> Quoting J.S.Mill, Thomas Arnold and John Ruskin, Houghton finds that there was a new "conception of

the home as a source of virtues and emotions which were nowhere else to be found, least of all in business and society". The home was a place "in which certain virtues too easily crushed by modern life could be preserved, and certain desires of the heart too much thwarted be fulfilled".<sup>55</sup>

Women were naturally the custodians of these sacred places. They were seen as the priestesses or the angels of the home. This led to an adoration of women which owed much to the courtly love of the Middle Ages, a period greatly admired by the Pre-Raphaelites, and to religion. Christian and agnostic alike joined in this adoration of woman, one woman. Both John Ruskin and John Stuart Mill paid homage to women but in radically different ways. Ruskin was influenced in his thinking by his deep love for one woman, Rose La Touche,<sup>56</sup> and Mill stood in a similar relationship to Harriet Taylor.<sup>57</sup>

Another aspect is also dealt with by Houghton:

the cult of love and the idealization of woman is related, in another way, to the problem of doubt of traditional Christianity, and the resulting will to believe. When the religious emotions of worship were denied a divine object, they could readily turn to a human one, to a hero or a heroine; and romantic love, called on to fill the vacuum, could take on a new fervor and importance.<sup>58</sup>

As an example of this kind of relationship, Houghton (quoting Noel Annan) mentions the historian and biographer, Leslie Stephen and his wife Julia, Virginia Woolf's parents.<sup>59</sup>

### The Victorian View on Sexuality

To attain and maintain this lofty position it was essential that women remained pure and innocent. Almost all aspects of sex were taboo for "good" women, i.e. respectable wives, mothers, daughters or sis-

ters. It was believed that "bad" women, prostitutes and mistresses were the only women that felt any sexual desire and enjoyment. The respectable wife and mother was encouraged to develop a refinement of feeling and behaviour that often manifested itself in prudery. Houghton who deals with the fear of sexuality for which the Victorian age is so notorious, believes that it goes back to the reaction against the moral and sexual laxity of the Regency period.<sup>60</sup> He finds it difficult to pinpoint the actual cause of the strength of this reaction. In Houghton's views the main cause was the feeling that licentiousness was on the increase.<sup>61</sup>

That there was an actual change in sexual practice is suggested by Edward Shorter in an essay called "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution and Social Change in Modern Europe".<sup>62</sup> Shorter bases his suggestion on statistics for illegitimacy which he says increased markedly in all European countries from the years of the French Revolution up to the middle of the nineteenth century. This indicates an increase in pre-marital sexual relations.<sup>63</sup> His contention is that in that period, which coincided with the industrial restructuring of traditional society, large groups of people were uprooted and did not feel the pressure of a stable environment. Stabilisation of the social conditions for the workers later in the nineteenth century led to a decline in illegitimacy.<sup>64</sup>

### Single Women

The cold reality in a society where marriage was the only accepted career for the middle-class woman was the fact that women outnumbered men. The first Census of 1801 shows that there were 4,638,000 women to 4,255,000 men in England and Wales. The discrepancy increased during the century. A large number of women had to remain unmarried in spite of the fact that they had been educated to run a household. By 1871 there were over three million single women aged 15 and over

in England and Wales.<sup>65</sup> J.A. and O.Banks attribute this increase to the lower mortality rate of women. They also mention the fact that more men than women emigrated, particularly from the middle classes. Marriages tended to be late in the middle-class since men were expected to provide their wives with a certain standard of comfort. Unmarried middle-class women had to fall back on their families for support since there were very few opportunities for them to get any kind of work that lived up to their own demands and those of their families for gentility. Jeanne M. Peterson points out the reluctance of middle-class women to accept paid employment. She quotes Mrs Sewell: "they would shrink from it as an insult".<sup>66</sup> One professional group recruited from the class of superfluous and destitute middle-class women was that of the governesses. They play a certain role in the literature of the time. Peterson calls attention, however, to the fact that their number was small compared to the number of women in domestic service - 25,000 as opposed to 750,000 in 1851.<sup>67</sup>

Widows, often in straightened circumstances and socially isolated, are another group of single women. The world of the widows was well-known to E.M.Forster, whose experiences in this respect are reflected in his writings.

### The Impact of Science

Ever since the Renaissance, science had been advancing steadily. Its practical applications had produced the Industrial Revolution, and its intellectual attitude had helped to sow the seeds of political revolution. During the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century students of geology, biology and human anatomy had been accumulating the evolutionary data which were systematized by Darwin in his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859.<sup>68</sup>



In the late nineteenth century those who still held the view that woman was inferior to man also received new support for their ideas; support that was all the more powerful since it had the impact of science behind it. It was provided by no less a person than Darwin whose theories concerning sexual selection published in *The Descent of Man* (1871)<sup>69</sup> seemed to confirm Aristotelian and Pauline theories. Darwin used examples of men's preeminence over women in the arts and in science to prove that, in the course of time, through natural selection man has ultimately become superior to woman.<sup>70</sup> He also echoes the opinion of his Victorian contemporaries:

Woman seems to differ from man in mental disposition, chiefly in her greater tenderness and less selfishness . . . Man is the rival of other men; he delights in competition, and this leads to ambition which passes too easily into selfishness.

Woman is credited with "the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation" to a greater extent than man; "but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization".<sup>71</sup>

Another sector in the expansion of science was the study of human consciousness. Scientific travellers, visiting primitive societies assembled the raw materials of what later became anthropology. A few pioneers, defying religious and popular prejudices, began to explore the relation of mind and body. In Germany Wilhelm Wundt performed laboratory experiments to determine the neurological bases of sensory perception.<sup>72</sup> In France medical aspects of the problem took precedence, focussing on mental aberration, and by the 1860s Charcot, best known for his therapeutic use of hypnotism had founded the first neurological clinic.<sup>73</sup> Among Charcot's disciples in the 1880s was Sigmund Freud. Freud's theories of the unconscious

motivation for human activities were to influence many authors and thinkers in the following decades. Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard Woolf were among the first in England, outside the medical profession, to study Freud's works.<sup>74</sup>

The "Unwomanly Woman", the "Fatal Woman" and the "New Woman"

As a result of the various ideas about the sexes there appeared in the literature of the last decades of the nineteenth century some stereotype categories of women. Three of them, the Unwomanly woman, the Fatal Woman, and the New Woman, are described more closely here. There are traces of these female types in the novels of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, although none of their characters can be said to be incarnations of them.

The "good" woman and the "bad" woman represented different poles of femininity but they were both "womanly" women. Women who engaged in the movements for female emancipation were generally regarded as "unwomanly" and had difficulty in securing support for their activities from both men and women.<sup>75</sup> Even women who had succeeded in spite of the adverse conditions - a Florence Nightingale, a Hannah More - were reluctant to endorse the behaviour of others, as is pointed out by Doris Stenton. Florence Nightingale held the opinion that efficient women could always get on.<sup>76</sup> Houghton shows that some outstanding women were genuinely worried that women would lose their influence as a moral force in society if they were emancipated. He cites as evidence "An Appeal Against Female Suffrage" (1889), signed by such well-known women as Mrs T.H. Huxley, Mrs Matthew Arnold and Beatrice Potter Webb among others. Another of the signatories was the afore-mentioned Julia Duckworth, mother of Virginia Woolf.<sup>77</sup>

Feminism is not a prominent feature of Virginia Woolf's novels. Katharine Hilbery's feminist friend in *Night and Day*, Mary Datchet, is, as many critics have noted, portrayed "as a little comic".<sup>78</sup> It was not until the 1930s in her collections of essays, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938), that Virginia Woolf overtly defended the case of women, especially in literature. E.M. Forster, as well as other contemporaries, had little sympathy for this belated feminism. He believed, like many of his contemporaries, that there was little motivation for this when the Suffragists had won their case.<sup>79</sup> Virginia Woolf was apprehensive of Forster's opinions and expressed the fear that he and other friends might find "a shrill feminine tone" in her writings.<sup>80</sup>

"Womanly" woman were conceived of as being of two kinds: the pure, chaste woman, the ideal wife and mother, who helped to save her husband and sons from their base, carnal nature; and the passionate woman who ensnared and lured men with temptations of the flesh. Both of them have a long history in mythology and literature, whether pagan or Christian. Since Christian mythology ultimately prevailed in the West, the two types of women were symbolized in the Virgin Mary and in Eve, the temptress, responsible for Adam's fall and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Eve's inability to resist the devil in the disguise of a snake proved her inferior moral strength and her need of protection against the evils of the world.

In his work, *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz investigated the fascination that evil in the shape of a beautiful passionate woman or man has always held in literature. According to Praz, this preoccupation with evil beauty is particularly evident in Romanticism.<sup>81</sup> In English literature the tradition of what he calls the Fatal Woman and the Fatal Man goes back to the Elizabethan writers whom an interest in the wickedness of Renaissance life in Italy had provided with themes

of passion, violence and unnatural sexual relationships.<sup>82</sup>

In his investigation of the themes of nineteenth-century literature Praz found that at the beginning of the century it was the Fatal Man that held the stage. No one contributed more to his popularity than Lord Byron who himself embodied all the qualities of a Byronic hero. At the end of the century the Fatal Man had been supplanted by the Fatal Woman who shared the pale, dark beauty, the mysterious but noble birth and the terrible secret with the Byronic hero of earlier fiction. Praz cites Matilda in *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis as a typical prototype.

The Fatal Woman emerged in French literature with Baudelaire. His interest in the Fatal Woman was stimulated by Edgar Allan Poe, whose works he read and translated. Interest in the Fatal Woman also became predominant in Swinburne, who, as Praz mentions, is an English equivalent of Baudelaire.<sup>83</sup> In 1855 Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads: First Series* raised an outcry in England on account of its treatment of sexual themes. John Dixon Hunt mentions that Ruskin had advised against its publication.<sup>84</sup> Houghton also comments on the book and quotes passages from John Morley's outraged review of it, where, among other things, he complained of "pieces which many professional vendors of filthy prints might blush to sell".<sup>85</sup> What stirred up people's minds was the mixture of cruelty and sexual lust. Praz points out that

Swinburne's influence introduced into England the French literary tendencies to which he had paid homage. Through Swinburne, the younger generation was initiated into the Decadent Movement, and continued the discovery on its own account.<sup>86</sup>

Another precursor of the Decadent Movement in England was Walter Pater, whose *Studies in the History of the*

*Renaissance* (1873) contained a famous description of Lionardo's La Gioconda. An important influence was also exerted in England by the Aesthetic Movement that had started with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848. The women in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetry and paintings with their strange mixture of madonna and temptress appealed to aesthetic taste in the last quarter of the century, as is shown by Hunt. Rossetti, Swinburne and Pater mutually influenced each other.<sup>87</sup>

Finally in the 1890's, there were a number of novelists who defied the prevailing opinions on womanhood. One source of inspiration and encouragement was found in contemporary European literature, not least the strong heroines in Ibsen's dramas.<sup>88</sup> One group was named by contemporary critics "the purity school" with Grant Allen's *The Women Who Did*<sup>89</sup> as its most well-known product. The heroines of these novels make attempts to establish a lasting sexual relationship while preserving their personal freedom. What the heroine in Allen's novel tried to do in a world where it had been professed that "man is eminently the doer" (see p. 19), was to rear an illegitimate love child. Other novelists depicted emancipated women who tried to break out of the constraints of traditional female roles in the home and in marriage. They were able, like the heroine in Mona Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus*,<sup>90</sup> to question the most sacred of womanly duties: "Women might harbour dreams and plan insurrections; but their children - little ambassadors of the established and expected - were argument enough to convince the most hardened sceptics". A.R. Cunningham, who wrote a study of these novels, now largely forgotten, describes the authors as forerunners of "a more realistic characterization of women to match their increasing social emancipation".<sup>91</sup>

The only masterpiece in literature that could be labelled "a fiction of sex and the new woman" was Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, published in 1895.

Hardy suffered, however, so much from the critical reaction to his work that he dedicated the remaining part of his life as an author to the less obnoxious art of lyrical poetry.

## Notes on Childhood and Youth of the Authors

Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster belonged to the professional upper-middle class. Both their families had their roots in the Evangelical Clapham Sect, a group of religious-minded people, mostly laymen, who were influential in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Claphamites were known for, among other things, their participation in the work against slavery led by W. Wilberforce.<sup>92</sup>

As the daughter of Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf was born into the most central tradition of Victorian intellectualism. Significantly enough, Stephen is one of the people Walter E. Houghton most often quotes and refers to in his study *The Victorian Frame of Mind*.<sup>93</sup> Born in 1832, the year of the first Reform Act, Stephen epitomized many of the characteristic features of the age: moral earnestness, common sense and integrity. He also had his share of the doubts and anxieties that characterized the age.

Stephen was as well known as an agnostic as he was famous as a literary critic and intellectual historian.<sup>94</sup> At the time of Virginia Woolf's birth in 1882 he was fifty years old and married for the second time, to Julia Duckworth, née Jackson. She was noted for her beauty. At the time of her marriage to Stephen in 1878 she was a widow with three young children.

Leslie Stephen who was fifteen years her senior, had a daughter by his first wife (Thackeray's younger daughter), and four additional children were born within the next five years. The youngest but one of them was Virginia.

Her parents were comparatively old and already well established in society. Their home at 22 Hyde Park Gate in Kensington was visited by many of the outstanding literary men of her father's generation.<sup>95</sup>

Virginia Stephen lost her mother at the age of thirteen. This was a traumatic experience that led to a mental breakdown that culminated in a suicide attempt. The threat of mental illness followed her throughout life. Her breakdowns were often connected with the completion of a novel. After the death of Mrs Stephen it fell to the lot of her daughters, Stella Duckworth, and Vanessa and Virginia Stephen, to console and care for their aging father, a task that became increasingly difficult on account of his illness and bad temper.<sup>96</sup> Many years later she wrote in her diary:

Father's birthday. He would have been 96, 96, yes, today; and could have been 96, like other people one has known: but mercifully was not. His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; - inconceivable.<sup>97</sup>

It is significant that the immediate reaction of the four youngest Stephen children after the death of their father in 1904, was to move from Hyde Park Gate to Bloomsbury. Thus Virginia Woolf escaped her stifling family conditions while she was still a very young woman, only twenty-two. She was from then on able to live a life largely of her own choice, fulfilling her dreams of becoming a writer. It is notable that this escape has left little trace in her early novels.



By the time of Edward Morgan Forster's birth in 1879, the most remarkable and representative member of his father's family was his great-aunt, Miss Marianne Thornton, daughter of Henry Thornton of the Clapham Sect. She had taken an interest in Forster's mother, Lily Whichelo, who was the daughter of the widow of a drawing-master. Miss Thornton had encouraged the marriage of her favourite nephew, Edward Forster, and Lily Whichelo, in spite of the social difference between them. Edward Forster, who was an architect, died before his son was two years old and his wife was thus left a widow at the age of twenty-five. Miss Thornton transferred her interest in the father to the little boy, called the "Important One" by his female relations. Forster and his mother resented the patronizing attitude taken towards them by the rich and influential Thornton family. On the other hand, Forster was very fond of his maternal grandmother whom he describes in *Marianne Thornton*, the biography of his great-aunt.

My grandmother [Mrs Whichelo] was a lovely, lively woman, most amusing and witty, fond of pleasure, generous and improvident, and by no means inclined to see trials as blessings.<sup>98</sup>

Mrs Honeychurch in *A Room with a View* is partly modelled on her.

But it was Thornton money that sent Forster to Cambridge and that served as a buffer when he wanted to launch himself as a writer. He had no memory of his father, about whom he says:

He has always remained remote to me. I have never seen myself in him, and the letters from him and the photographs of him have not helped.<sup>99</sup>

Forster grew up as a lonely boy in a household of doting, overprotective women. He lacked a suitable

father figure to identify with and he also lacked playmates of his own age.

After her husband's death Mrs Forster became over-anxious about her son's health. P.N. Furbank, Forster's biographer, says that there was a very close relationship between Forster and his mother:

Lily was an extremely possessive mother, but not an emotionally smothering one: there was a coolness and briskness - something of the sister as well as of the mother, one might say - in her feelings for Morgan, and this kept a certain balance in their relationship.<sup>100</sup>

He and his mother had been forced to leave their beloved home in the country, "Rooksnest" - the model of Howards End - and move to Tonbridge, where he became a day-boy at Tonbridge School. Forster did not enjoy his school and not until he came up to Cambridge did he find companions of his own sex who shared his interests.

Forster's mother continued to be an important person in his life also after he had gone down from Cambridge. They shared a home, intermittently, until her death at the age of ninety in 1945. Consideration for her probably explains part of Forster's well-known reticence. His homosexuality was thus well concealed from all but a few personal friends.

The Cambridge years became crucial for his decision to become a writer. At Cambridge he became a member of the "Apostles", a discussion group which included such young men as Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes, Thoby Stephen, and Leonard Woolf, all of later Bloomsbury fame. In his autobiography, *Sowing*, Leonard Woolf mentions some of the authors that were admired at Cambridge around the turn of the century: Shaw, Ibsen, Hardy, Swinburne, and Butler. Of par-

ticular interest was Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, which appeared posthumously in 1903.<sup>101</sup> This novel gave a picture of the Victorian parent-child relationship and revealed the extent of cruelty involved in Puritan child rearing. It was the first serious attack on the Victorian family as an institution. In her essay "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" Virginia Woolf mentions that it contains the first signs of a historical change:

All human relations have shifted - those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910.<sup>102</sup>

Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster lived in this era and by their books, their activities and influence they contributed to the ideological change. They were connected by their relations with the group of writers and artists, which came to be known as the "Bloomsbury Group". The core of the group was Virginia Woolf's brothers, Thoby and Adrian Stephen, and their Cambridge contemporaries, among whom were the previously mentioned "Apostles", and also Vanessa Stephen and her husband to be, Clive Bell. Virginia Stephen married Leonard Woolf in 1912.

The new generation of writers and artists to which Virginia Woolf and Forster belonged were alive to the necessity of change and development both in politics and literature. They admired French and Russian literature and rejected the late Victorian and Edwardian novelists, whom they found more interested in external objects than in internal moments of consciousness.<sup>103</sup> They rejected the inhibiting and oppressive social codes that had led to a denial of biological and emotional needs in both men and women. They conceived of themselves as spokesmen for their generation.

Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster were the only members of the original set of the Bloomsbury Group who devoted themselves seriously to the writing of novels. They followed each other's progress with interest. Virginia Woolf, always sensitive to criticism, was anxious to hear Forster's reactions to her novels, as her diary shows.<sup>104</sup> Both wrote about each other's novels with a certain critical bent. Forster found Virginia Woolf inclined to aestheticism and poor in rendering memorable characters. Besides he was disturbed by "spots" of feminism in her works as is already mentioned. She found his plots too contrived and his method old-fashioned.<sup>105</sup> Of course, there is always a certain rivalry between contemporary authors, and Virginia Woolf was strongly affected by adverse criticism.

Forster spent several years abroad in Italy and India. During the war years, 1914-1918, he served with the Red Cross in Alexandria in Egypt. He kept somewhat aloof from the Bloomsbury Group, as he had strong ties of friendship with other Cambridge contemporaries. His reticence as well as his attitude to clever women was noted by Virginia Woolf who wrote about a meeting with him in her diary:

I was beckoned by Forster from the Library as I approached. We shook hands cordially; and yet I always feel him shrinking sensitively from me, as a woman, a clever woman, an up to date woman.<sup>106</sup>

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

- <sup>1</sup> The classic modern study is by Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949. Trans. H.M. Parshley, Penguin, 1972). See also Vera Brittain, *Lady into Woman: A History of Women from Victoria to Elizabeth II.* (London: Dakers, 1953).
- <sup>2</sup> See for instance, Harriet Holter, *Sex and Social Structure* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970).
- <sup>3</sup> (London: Allen & Unwin, 1957.)
- <sup>4</sup> Stenton, p. 28.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 30-31; p. 75; p. 348.
- <sup>6</sup> (Columbus, Ohio: State University, 1944.)
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 83.
- <sup>8</sup> A homily of 1562. See Stenton, pp. 104-106.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 105.
- <sup>10</sup> A.L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (London: Macmillan, 1950 [1962]), p. 502. Cf. Stenton, pp. 57-58. Although there were many learned women in Elizabeth's England besides the Queen herself, learning was restricted for women also in the highest classes. One illustration is offered by the Paston family where, according to Virginia Woolf, the fathers "quarrelled with their sons" and the mothers were "fonder of their boys than of their girls" *Collected Essays*, 4 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1967), 3:5. Stenton mentions about them that the sons were sent to Eton and Oxford while the girls stayed at home (p. 99).
- <sup>11</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth Press, 1929; Penguin, 1945), pp. 48-49.
- <sup>12</sup> London, 1642.
- <sup>13</sup> Stenton, pp. 150-151.

- <sup>14</sup>(London: Routledge & Sons, 1919; Frank Cass & Co., 1968), pp. 6-8.
- <sup>15</sup>G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England*. 3rd ed., reissue (London: Longmans, Green, 1952), p. 285.
- <sup>16</sup>G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (1942; Penguin, 1972), pp. 391-396.
- <sup>17</sup>See definition of "domestic group" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 17 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 5:302.
- <sup>18</sup>Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957; Penguin, 1963), p. 145.
- <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 141-142; 171-174; Stenton, pp. 217-218.
- <sup>20</sup>Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (London: Cape, 1962), p. 406.
- <sup>21</sup>*Boswell's Life of Johnson* (London: Oxford U.P., new ed., 1961), p. 406. (Entry for 30 September 1769.)
- <sup>22</sup>Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, p. 31. - Lady Masham, a friend of Locke's, had published a book, in 1705, where she pleaded for an elementary education for women (Stenton, p. 220).
- <sup>23</sup>Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (1957; reprint ed., New Haven: Yale U.P., 1968), pp. 54-58.
- <sup>24</sup>*Emilius and Sophia: or a New System of Education*, trans. W. Kenrick, 1762-63. *Emilius or An Essay on Education*, trans. Thomas Nugent, 1763.
- <sup>25</sup>Leslie F. Claydon (ed.), *Rousseau. On Education* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969), pp. 139-140.
- <sup>26</sup>In *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London, 1835), 2:96. See Mary Ritchie Key, *Male Female Language* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975), p. vii; p. 166. This phrase is often quoted, e.g., by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, p. 97. As many critics have observed there are many references to androgyny in Virginia Woolf's writings (see, for instance, Herbert Marder, *Feminism and Art* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1972), pp. 105-152. (Cf. Ch. IV, p. 112.))

- <sup>27</sup>H.C. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics* (London: Constable, 1966), p. 155.
- <sup>28</sup>G.M. Young, *Early Victorian England 1830-1865*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford U.P., 1934).
- <sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 415.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 415.
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 492.
- <sup>32</sup>New York, 1865. Quoted from the Complete Edition (London: G. Allen, 1906).
- <sup>33</sup>All quotations, Ruskin, p. 107.
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.
- <sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 121.
- <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117.
- <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118.
- <sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 109.
- <sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.
- <sup>40</sup>All figures are quoted after J. Ryder and H. Silver *Modern English Society. History and Structure 1850-1870*. (London: Methuen, 1970). p. 321.
- <sup>41</sup>Trevelyan, *English Social History*, pp. 500-503.
- <sup>42</sup>Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1919; New Impression, 1968), pp. 299-300; p. 303.
- <sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.
- <sup>44</sup>Stenton, *The English Woman in History*, pp. 320-321.
- <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 323.
- <sup>46</sup>London, 1869.
- <sup>47</sup>J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, p. 39.

- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 136.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 166.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 188.
- <sup>51</sup>George Boas, *The History of Ideas* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), p. 87.
- <sup>52</sup>"The Angel in the House" is the title of a poem by Coventry Patmore, from 1854-1856, glorifying conjugal love. See Mario Praz, *The Hero in Eclipse*, trans. Angus Davidson, (London: Oxford U.P.), 1969, pp. 413-443.
- <sup>53</sup>Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven, N.J.: Yale U.P., 1957), pp. 341-348.
- <sup>54</sup>Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 406.
- <sup>55</sup>Houghton, p. 343.
- <sup>56</sup>Robert H. Murray, *Studies in the English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. Cambridge: Heffer, 1929; reprint Gregg, 1972), 2:131.
- <sup>57</sup>John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (London: Longmans, 1867; 2nd ed., 1873, p. 229. See also Basil Willey *Nineteenth Century Studies, Coleridge to Matthew Arnold* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), p. 194.
- <sup>58</sup>Houghton, p. 389.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 389-390.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 359.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 364-365; a standard work on attitudes to sexuality in the Victorian Era, Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966; Corgi Books, 1969), does not discuss the origin of the attitudes deeply. A study of the history of sexuality in the Western civilization is begun by Michel Foucault *La volonté de savoir* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976), first volume in a more extensive study, *L'histoire de la sexualité*.
- <sup>62</sup>In *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1971), pp. 237-272.
- <sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 238.



- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 246-247.
- <sup>65</sup> J.A. and O. Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England* (Liverpool: Liverpool U.P., 1964), p. 27.
- <sup>66</sup> Jeanne M. Peterson, "The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society", *Victorian Studies* 14 (1970/1971), p. 10.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 8.
- <sup>68</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London, 1859).
- <sup>69</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (London, 1871; reprint ed., London: J. Murray, 1906).
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 860.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 858.
- <sup>72</sup> George A. Miller, *Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 16-19.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 283-284.
- <sup>74</sup> Leonard Woolf, *Downhill All the Way* (London: Hogarth, 1970), pp. 163-169.
- <sup>75</sup> See Sonja Lorichs, *The Unwomanly Woman in Bernard Shaw's Drama and Her Social and Political Background* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1973).
- <sup>76</sup> Stenton, p. 343; pp. 312-313; p. 340.
- <sup>77</sup> Houghton, pp. 352-353.
- <sup>78</sup> See Joan Bennett, *Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1945), p. 76; and Marder, *Feminism and Art*, p. 91-94.
- <sup>79</sup> E.M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Arnold, 1951; Penguin, 1965), p. 261.
- <sup>80</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, (ed. Leonard Woolf, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1953), p. 148. (Entry of 28 October 1929.)
- <sup>81</sup> Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson, (London, Oxford U.P., 1970), p. 28.

- <sup>82</sup>Praz, p. 200.
- <sup>83</sup>Ibid., pp. 201-204 and passim.
- <sup>84</sup>*The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, 1848-1900* (London: Routledge, 1968), p. 231.
- <sup>85</sup>Houghton, p. 368.
- <sup>86</sup>Praz, pp. 354-355.
- <sup>87</sup>Hunt, p. 189; p. 193.
- <sup>88</sup>A.R. Cunningham, "The New Woman Fiction" of the 1890's. *Victorian Studies* 17 (1973): 177-186.
- <sup>89</sup>(London: J. Lane, 1895.)
- <sup>90</sup>(London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894.)
- <sup>91</sup>Cunningham, pp. 183-186.
- <sup>92</sup>See Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf. A Biography*. 2 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1972), 1:3-4.
- <sup>93</sup>Houghton, pp. 389-390.
- <sup>94</sup>See Bell, 1:17-18.
- <sup>95</sup>Ibid., 1:30-32.
- <sup>96</sup>Ibid., 2:40-42; 2:62-64.
- <sup>97</sup>Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary* (London: Hogarth, 1975), p. 138. (Entry of 28 November 1928).
- <sup>98</sup>E.M. Forster, *Marianne Thornton. A Domestic Biography*. (London: Edw. Arnold, 1975), p. 250.
- <sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 289.
- <sup>100</sup>P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*. 2 vols. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977), 1:21-22.
- <sup>101</sup>Leonard Woolf, *Sowing: An Autobiography of the Years 1880-1904* (London: Hogarth, 1974), p. 152; pp. 163-164.

<sup>102</sup>Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, 4 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1966), 1:320-321.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 320; pp. 325-337.

<sup>104</sup>Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, p. 20 (30 October and 6 November 1919; on *Night and Day*); p. 54 (29 October 1922; on *Jacob's Room*); p. 77 (19 May 1925; on *Mrs Dalloway*).

<sup>105</sup>E.M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest* (1936), pp. 119-129; reprinted in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (Penguin), pp. 249-265; and Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, 1:342-351.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12 (12 October 1919).

## Chapter II

### WIVES, MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS

At the turn of the century the Victorian ideals of domesticity were widely accepted in English society, especially in the middle class, from its upper strata to its lower. The novels of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster deal with the problems of families living in accordance with the principles of this nineteenth-century ideology. Both are concerned with the relationship of a mother-figure and a young protagonist. In Virginia Woolf's novels the central relationship is that of a mother and a daughter. The pattern of Forster's novels is more complicated and varied. At the centre is usually a fatherless family: a widowed mother, a daughter and a son. The women of the parent-generation in the novels of both writers are representative of various aspects of the Victorian ideal of womanhood.

The wives, given prominence in Virginia Woolf's novels, answer to the requirements of domesticity. Their thoughts are centred on their husbands, their activities on the household duties and on the raising of children.

## The Husband-Centred Wife

The Victorian wife's attention was centered on her husband. Her first duty was to him. The code of behaviour made her responsible, not only for his physical comfort, but also for his spiritual and moral standard.

The upper-middle-class man could insist that the family not make demands that interfered with his work. He expected preferential treatment because of his profession. Scholarly husbands who make excessive demands on the time and attention of their wives constitute a recurring theme in Virginia Woolf's novels. Mrs Ambrose in *The Voyage Out* is required to leave her small children to accompany her husband on a trip to South America in order to secure peace and quiet for his work. Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* entertains her husband's colleagues.

Mr Ambrose, as well as Mr Ramsay, the scholar most closely modelled on Virginia Woolf's father, emerge from their studios when they are in need of sympathy and reassurance from their wives, but leave them to their own devices as far as unpalatable household problems are concerned. The Victorian polarization of male and female spheres of action is rigidly observed. Virginia Woolf strikes a blow at the self-deception inherent in this kind of attitude to women.

Mrs Ambrose in *The Voyage Out* and Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* are well aware that their husbands cannot stand up to the pressures of reality. Reality could mean such disappointments in life as, for the politician, Mr Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway*, not getting a Cabinet post or for Mr Ramsay, smaller vexations, such as finding an earwig in the milk at breakfast (*Lighthouse*, 231). It is therefore impossible to be honest with them.

But then again, it was the other thing too - not being able to tell them the truth, being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be, fifty pounds perhaps, to mend it (*Lighthouse*, 45-46).

Virginia Woolf confers an impression of a genuine love relationship between husband and wife, but it is marred by the lack of sincere communication that adherence to the Victorian code of behaviour inevitably brings in its train. They are trapped within their respective spheres, which reduces both husband and wife. Men like Mr Ambrose and Mr Ramsay are encouraged to be self-indulgent and emotionally dependent on their wives.

### Inferior Education of Women

The wives, on their part, consent to be intellectually underrated and subjected to humiliation because of their lack of formal education. Mr Ambrose and Mr Ramsay prefer to think that their wives are unable to take part in discussions on intellectual or political matters because as women they have no grasp of fact. The wives who appear as persons in the novels are not depicted in a way as to refute this. Virginia Woolf gives vivid and concrete pieces of evidence to show that their husbands are not altogether in error. Mrs Hilbery knows a lot about her beloved William, i.e. Shakespeare, but the outstanding feature of her intellectual capacity is the lack of organized thinking. Mrs Dalloway, the brilliant hostess of men of world and men of learning, does not even have the modicum of skills recommended in the education of girls (see p. 20):

She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed; (*Dalloway*, 11) . . . could not think, write, even play the piano. She muddled

Armenians and Turks; loved success; hated discomfort; must be liked; talked oceans of nonsense: and to this day, ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know. (*Dalloway*, 135.)

Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day* illustrates a somewhat different variety of the Victorian ideal of a woman's education. She has cast herself in the role of a romantic person, which enables her to escape many of the trying duties of the Victorian wife, duties which she has transferred to her daughter Katharine. Mrs Hilbery dwells a lot on the past, officially to write a biography of her famous father, a task for which she lacks the necessary discipline. In spite of her vagueness and inefficiency "she had a way of seeming the wisest person in the room" (*Night and Day*, 39-40). She shares with the other wives of Virginia Woolf's fiction a capacity to soothe tension. She is the one that brings about the happy ending for the two young couples who, in her absence, were threatened by Mr Hilbery's prohibitions.

### Chivalrous Men and Boring Women

Since the husbands withheld their company, the wives sought compensation from others. The Victorian ideal for the relationship between the sexes prescribed chivalry on the part of men. We find the married women in Virginia Woolf's novels, for instance, Mrs Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* and Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* constantly surrounded by admirers of all ages who pay homage to their beauty and womanly virtues. Young men, often of a scholarly type, who cannot get along with girls of their own age, are particularly susceptible to the sympathy of women like Mrs Ambrose and Mrs Ramsay. Thanks to their experience of scholars they know how to make clever but ugly and difficult young men like St John Hirst in *The Voyage Out* and Charles Tansley in *To the*

*Lighthouse* speak about themselves and even express their feelings of admiration. There is a touch of patronizing condescension in these women's attitudes towards the young men, but at the same time, Virginia Woolf makes it clear that the men, as well as the women, find an escape from too demanding relationships.

The laws of the chaste adoration of woman of young or elderly knights seem, in Virginia Woolf's novels, never to be trespassed. Not even the arm that Peter Walsh, once Mrs Dalloway's wooer, puts around her shoulder when they meet after twenty years, is allowed to stay there long (*Dalloway*, 53).

On the other hand Virginia Woolf's married women do not get on well with other women. Mrs Ambrose of *The Voyage Out* is bored by women of her own age and expects that her young niece Rachel will be even more boring (*Voyage Out*, 16). She is not above ridiculing less fortunate women as when she tries to make Hirst laugh at a fat woman (*Voyage Out*, 158). But Virginia Woolf turns the tables on her when she attempts to entertain the aristocratic Mrs Flushing with a vivid but malicious account of a common friend. Mrs Flushing delightedly exclaims, "She is my first cousin! Go on - go on!" (*Voyage Out*, 201). As is evident from *Recollections of Virginia Woolf*, the author herself was given to malicious teasing.<sup>1</sup>

### Marriage as a Profession

Women like Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* use all their capacity in the narrow circle of the family. Even when they perceive people outside it, their thoughts are directed towards matchmaking, to create - more or less fortunately - new marriages. When Mr and Mrs Ramsay takes a stroll on the beach we can follow their thoughts about marriage in the interior



monologue. He dreams of a house far out on the lonely sandhills but adds with an internal sigh: "He had no right. The father of eight children." But in the next thought: "That was a good bit of work - his eight." Mrs Ramsay ponders on her husband, guesses that he was thinking "he would have written better books if he had not married". She gives him, even his gloominess a tender thought, thankful for his efforts to please her. When, at the end of the walk, they see a couple of their friends she exclaims impulsively: "They must marry!" (*Lighthouse*, 80-83.)

### Women as Homemakers

In Virginia Woolf's novels the married women are often society women, in themselves not intellectual, but the wives of scholars or politicians. They are stately middle-aged women of remarkable beauty and charm, ideally suited to perform the role of the hostess. They are on good terms with their servants and are seen at their best presiding over dining-tables and crowded drawing-rooms. Mrs Dalloway, in the novel with the same name, represents the climax in the social scale of Virginia Woolf's elaborated portraits of married women. Her establishment with its exquisite furniture and polished silver, and her parties, attended by the Prime Minister and other dignitaries, presupposes wealth and social position.

Mrs Dalloway has not direct contact with everyday household duties. The same applies to Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day* who prefers to limit herself to the social side of her tea-parties, leaving the drudgery to others. Virginia Woolf's own education took place in a social environment and in an age where the practical training did not come naturally. Nevertheless, household work was an established part of the education of middle-class girls. Ruskin recommends the girls:

Then, besides this more delicate work [i.e. languages, music, drawing], resolve to do every day some that is useful in the vulgar sense. Learn first thoroughly the economy of the kitchen: the good and bad qualities of every common article of food, and the simplest and best modes of their preparation.<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to a friend Virginia Woolf gives advice, referring to the education of her little daughter, which almost echoes that of Ruskin. She stresses the importance of teaching household work to girls, as well as theoretical subjects. "It is dreadful how we were neglected, and yet it's not hard to be practical, up to a point, and such advantage, I hope."<sup>3</sup> Virginia Woolf also praises D.H. Lawrence who is advocating skill in practical work, also household work.<sup>4</sup>

The good housekeepers are contrasted with women who fail in this respect. There are, for instance, the maiden aunts of the motherless Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, who brought her up with excessive care for her health and moral, but failed in employing good servants and creating an attractive home.

## Parties

Mrs Dalloway is presented to the reader as a woman of unusual vitality and charm. She appears sound in her judgement of other people, she hates pomposity, hypocrisy and arbitrary power. All these qualities she invests in giving parties for exactly the people that, the novel tells us, she hates most, Sir William Bradshaw or Hugh Whitbread, for instance. We may ask, as do her husband and Peter Walsh: What makes her do it? Mrs Dalloway's parties have not even furthered the career of her husband, a mediocre politician, as one of her guests, Lady Bruton remarks: "It might have been better if Richard had married a woman with less charm, who would have helped him in his work.

He had lost his chance of the Cabinet." (*Dalloway*, 198.) Mrs Dalloway knows that she does not give parties because of snobbishness, as Peter Walsh might have thought, nor was it harmful for her heart, as her husband thought.

And both were quite wrong. What she liked was simply life. 'That's what I do it for', she said, speaking aloud, to life. (*Dalloway*, 134.)

As a young girl, Mrs Dalloway had spoken of marriage as catastrophe and had dreamt of reforming the world with her reckless friend Sally Seton. But she had followed the prudence dictated by her background. She had chosen the steadiness of a life with Richard Dalloway instead of the excitement with Peter Walsh. Parties were her life, her gift to life (*Dalloway*, 134.) Later in the novel Mrs Dalloway describes her feelings at a party to which "the Prime Minister had been good to come":

And walking down the room with him, with Sally there, and Peter there and Richard very pleased, with all those people rather inclined, perhaps, to envy, she had felt that intoxication of the moment, that dilatation of the nerves of the heart itself till it seemed to quiver, steeped, upright . . . (*Dalloway*, 193).

As the case of Mrs Dalloway shows, the giving of parties could become a desirable outlet for female activity, even creativity, within a section of the upper-middle class, where there was otherwise little opportunity for women outside the family.

The preoccupation with hostesses, to some extent, reflects an interest in parties of Virginia Woolf herself. As is evident from Quentin Bell's biography of Virginia Woolf, her attending of parties had become something of an argument between Virginia and Leonard Woolf, always worried about her health, early in 1923, when she was sought after as a guest by

fashionable London hostesses. She was at that time working on *Mrs Dalloway*, and an entry in her diary of June 4, 1923, shows her ambivalence on the subject.

I want to bring in the despicableness of people like Ott [Lady Ottoline Morrell]. I want to give the slipperiness of the soul. I have been too tolerant often. The truth is people scarcely care for each other. They have this insane instinct for life.<sup>5</sup>

### Beauty as a Prerequisite

We can assume an experience in Virginia Woolf's own background, where many women were noted for their beauty, when she expresses ambivalent feelings about female beauty and its implications for those who have it. Beauty was of great importance in the Victorian image of women. Ruskin gives it a place prior to everything else in his programme for a girl's education:

The first of our duties to her - no thoughtful persons now doubt this, - is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect her beauty; the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendour of activity and of delicate strength. To perfect her beauty, I say, and increase its power; it cannot be too powerful, nor shed its sacred light too far.<sup>6</sup>

The women in Virginia Woolf's novels are often said to possess that power of beauty. A few examples will suffice. William Rodney, fiancé of Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day*, is very much aware of her beauty. "She outshone all her cousins. He had discovered that she never made an ugly movement." (*Night and Day*, 181.) Mrs Ramsay is alternatively compared to a Greek goddess and a Renaissance painting by an old friend of her husband's (*Lighthouse*, 33-34). Mr Ramsay himself delights in his wife's beauty (*Lighthouse* 52, 76, 142). On the other hand, Lily Briscoe, the perceptive

observer of Mrs Ramsay throughout the novel, makes the following comment on beauty:

But beauty was not everything. Beauty had its penalty - it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life - froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distinction, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty (*Lighthouse*, 205).

A similar attitude to beauty is taken in *Jacob's Room* by a husband regarding his wife's self-admiration in the mirror: ". . . beauty is important; it is an inheritance; one cannot ignore it. But it is a barrier; it is in fact rather a bore." (*Jacob's room*, 134-135.)

The great emphasis laid on beauty in women in Virginia Woolf's novels is an indication of her preoccupation with its significance for the destiny of women.<sup>7</sup>

## Women as Educators of Womanhood

The married women in Virginia Woolf's novels are also mothers and as such they are treated with an ambivalence of feelings. Side by side with admiration, there is resentment, envy, and protest. To their young daughters they are objects of love as well as threats to selfhood. The powerful mother-figures are contrasted with vague and uncertain young women: Mrs Ambrose and Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, Mrs Hilbery and Katharine in *Night and Day*, Mrs Dalloway and Elizabeth in *Mrs Dalloway*, and Mrs Ramsay and her four daughters as well as Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*. They are frequently compared to their mothers and fall short of them. At the sight of the motherless Rachel Vinrace her uncle, Mr Ambrose, exclaims: "Ah! She's not like her mother." (*Voyage Out*, 11.) In the same manner Elizabeth Dalloway is said not to be like her mother Clarissa at the same age (*Dalloway*, 213). Clara Durrant in *Jacob's Room* "lacks her mother's spirit. Clara is a little pale." (*Jacob's Room*, 81.) The comparisons are never favourable to the daughters.

Virginia Woolf herself never had an adult relationship with her mother as she was only thirteen when her mother died. It is tempting to compare this fact with the inflated size of her mother-figures. She was obviously longing for a closer relationship with her mother. The recently published *Moments of Being*

contains hitherto unpublished autobiographical material that throws additional light on the Stephens' household of the early 1890's. It is quite obvious that a woman who was in charge of a household of that size - with eight children and seven servants - and who undertook a lot of responsibility for her children's education, had very little time to become intimate with one particular child.<sup>8</sup>

### The Voyage Out: The Sisterly Mother

In her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, Virginia Woolf resolutely separated her middle-aged mother-figure, Mrs Ambrose, from her own home and children and sent her on a voyage to South America with her substitute daughter, Rachel Vinrace. This gives her a possibility to explore a sisterly relationship between a mother-figure and a daughter. Rachel's substitute parents, Mr and Mrs Ambrose are established as being larger than the rest of humanity already on the first page of Chapter One when they walk arm in arm towards the Thames Embankment. Thus Virginia Woolf introduces one of the main problems of the novel: the overpowering position of the old generation in comparison with the young, also when another relationship is attempted.

Mrs Ambrose undertakes to complete Rachel's instruction and a state of sisterly friendship is gradually established between the two women. She suggests that Rachel should call her Helen instead of Aunt but her attitude towards her young ward remains one of amused superiority. Rachel is often at the mercy of her ridicule in front of others. "Oh, Rachel . . . It's like having a puppy in the house having you with one - a puppy that brings one's underclothes down into the hall", is one example (*Voyage Out*, 143). At another time she teases Rachel because she changes her view of life every other day (*Voyage Out*, 161). Even the young

scholar Hirst, usually not perceptive to the sensitivity of young women, tells Mrs Ambrose: "Why shouldn't you talk to her - explain things to her, I mean, as you talk to me?" (*Voyage Out*, 161.)

Mrs Ambrose's size is again emphasized by Hewet, the young man Rachel becomes engaged to: "He liked the look of her immensely, not so much her beauty, but her largeness and simplicity, which made her stand out from the rest like a great stone woman" (*Voyage Out*, 133). At another time Mrs Ambrose is compared to one of the three Fates:

With one foot raised on the rung of a chair, and her elbow out in the attitude of sewing, her own figure possessed the sublimity of a woman's of the early world, spinning the thread of fate - the sublimity possessed by many women of the present day who fall into the attitude required by scrubbing or sewing. (*Voyage Out*, 206.)

The last half of the remark somewhat punctures the classic attitude of Mrs Ambrose.

Rachel does not take Mrs Ambrose into her confidence when she falls in love with Hewet. But Mrs Ambrose soon guesses her secret and cannot refrain from teasing Rachel. Rachel can no longer keep back her resentment:

Thank God, Helen, I'm not like you! I sometimes think you don't think or feel or care or do anything but exist! You're like Mr Hirst. You see that things are bad, and you pride yourself saying so. It's what you call being honest; as a matter of fact it's being lazy, being dull, being nothing. You don't help; you put an end to things. (*Voyage Out*, 265.)

Mrs Ambrose retains her godlike power, though. She swoops down upon Rachel when she and Terence Hewet have just decided to marry and are quite unaware of the world around them.



A hand dropped abrupt as iron on Rachel's shoulder; it might have been a bolt from heaven. She fell beneath it, and the grass whipped across her eyes and filled her mouth and ears. Through the waving stems she saw a figure, large and shapeless against the sky. Helen was upon her. (*Voyage Out*, 287-288.)

Lying on the ground Rachel is once again reduced to nothing and "over her loomed two great heads, the heads of a man and woman, of Terence and Helen" (*Voyage Out*, 288). Her fiancé is here seen on the same level as the mother figure.

Later, when Rachel lies fatally ill with fever, nursed by Mrs Ambrose, she experiences again that her "form stooping to raise her in bed appeared of gigantic size, and came down upon her like the ceiling falling" (*Voyage Out*, 352). She seems to be smothered under the sheer weight and size of the mother-figure.

This continual stress on the difference in size between the mother-figure and the daughter, gives an impression of the impossibility of any contact between them on an equal level. Rachel's unfulfilled yearning for a sisterly mother seems to contribute to her own hasty death.

Maybe there are traces of Virginia Woolf's sister Vanessa, three years her senior, in Mrs Ambrose as is suggested by Clive Bell's letter of February 1909 to Virginia Woolf about an early draft of *The Voyage Out*, then called *Melymbrosia*: "Of Helen I cannot trust myself to speak, but I suppose you will make Vanessa believe in herself".

In a comparison between her mother and Virginia Woolf in Noble's *Recollections of Virginia Woolf* Vanessa Bell's daughter, Angelica Garnett, gives a description of the former that agrees very well with that of Mrs Ambrose.

Vanessa was the more practical, the more solid, the earthlier of the two sisters. Virginia always said so, and the difference must have been marked even when they were young. Vanessa was the elder, a social success, married first and had children. She could mix colours, stretch canvases, cook meals and deal with unpalatable situations. She had a feminine capacity for listening tolerantly to the arguments and ideas of the men they both knew. This made a special place for her in the heart of Bloomsbury. Men from college, used to the freedom of masculine society or the polite and incosequential chatter of their mothers and sisters, found it delightful to be listened to by a madonna with a sense of humour - a little wild perhaps and original, a little *sans façons* - how piquant it was and, in the end, how restful to be surrounded by a feminine atmosphere without the false obligations created by convention.<sup>9</sup>

### Night and Day: The Romantic Mother

Mrs Hilbery, the mother-figure in *Night and Day* is introduced to the reader with the following words:

Mrs Hilbery was so rich in the gifts which make tea-parties of elderly distinguished people successful, that she scarcely needed any help from her daughter, provided that the tiresome business of teacups and bread and butter was discharged for her." (*Night and Day*, 7.)

Here is another case where a beautiful, party-loving mother overshadows her daughter, Katharine, on whom she has transferred all the dull duties of the household (*Night and Day*, 39).

As other women in Virginia Woolf's novels Mrs Hilbery is seen as a work of art, framed in a doorway:

She was a remarkable-looking woman, well advanced in the sixties, but owing to the lightness of her frame and the brightness of her eyes she seemed to have been wafted over the surface of the years without taking much

harm in the passage. Her face was shrunken and aquiline, but any hint of sharpness was dispelled by the large blue eyes, at once sagacious and innocent, which seemed to regard the world with an enormous desire that it should behave itself nobly, and an entire confidence that it could do so, if it would only take the pains. (*Night and Day*, 18.)

Mrs Hilbery's position in her family is strengthened by the fact that she is the daughter of a distinguished author.<sup>10</sup> The burden of her ancestorworship falls heavily on Katharine. In a passage that can be an authorial intrusion as well as a piece of interior monologue Virginia Woolf renders Katharine's situation in words that could describe her own feelings when she was young.

Perhaps it is a little depressing to inherit not lands but an example of intellectual and spiritual virtue; perhaps the conclusiveness of a great ancestor is a little discouraging to those who run the risk of comparison with him. It seems as if, having flowered so splendidly, nothing now remained possible but a steady growth of good, green stalk and leaf. For these reasons, and for others, Katharine had her moments of despondency. The glorious past, in which men and women grew to unexampled size, intruded too much upon the present, and dwarfed it too consistently, to be altogether encouraging to one forced to make her experiment in living when the great age was dead. (*Night and Day*, 35.)

Mrs Hilbery is thus diminishing her daughter Katharine by comparing her generation to the women of her own past. Looking at the family photographs she muses:

What is nobler . . . than to be a woman to whom every one turns, in sorrow or difficulty? How have the young women of your generation improved upon that, Katharine?

She concludes, after her usual roaming in flowery sentences, with the succinct phrase: "They *were* and that's better than doing. (*Night and Day*, 106-107.) The verb 'to be' is often pregnant with meaning in

Virginia Woolf's novels (see, e.g., *Dalloway*, 85 and 215: "There she was").

The pressure of this glorious past, embodied in Mrs Hilbery, becomes the more heavy because her mother has enlisted her aid in the compilation of the biography of her grandfather, the author. Mrs Hilbery's erratic way of doing this puts Katharine in a state of mute rage. Her mother's predilection for flowery phrases makes her seek compensation in the exactness of mathematics. She is more or less forced into the position of a common-sense, levelheaded young woman. "Her mother was the last person she wished to resemble, much though she admired her." (*Night and Day*, 41.) What Katharine detests most about her mother is the way she escapes all the unpleasant facts that turn up in her vicinity, e.g. the easy way she receives the news of a family scandal (*Night and Day*, 113).

Mrs Hilbery's conduct makes Katharine contemplate the easiest escape from her home: marriage. She finds her rescue in the shape of a young man with an inclination for literature. He typifies a group of persons whom Virginia Woolf describes with irony:

Not content to rest in their love of it, they must attempt to practise it themselves, and they are generally endowed with very little facility in composition. They condemn whatever they produce. (*Night and Day*, 51.)

As in similar cases in other novels of Virginia Woolf (see p.109) the choice of a man of such character has to be set right. In her circle of friends another young man turns up with whom she falls in love. When Mrs Hilbery is away for a pilgrimage to Shakespeare's tomb, Katharine feels "less sensible than usual, but as she argued it to herself, there was much less need for sense" with an allusion to her mother's character. Significantly, she is then told by her friends that she is very like her mother (*Night and Day*, 403).

When she later tells her mother about her new love, Mrs Hilbery only casts her eyes, "at once sagacious and innocent", on her daughter, who finds "an extraordinary pleasure in being thus free to talk to someone who is equally wise and equally benignant, the mother of her earliest childhood, whose silence seemed to answer questions that never were asked". (*Night and Day*, 447-448.)

Mrs Hilbery listened without making any remark for a considerable time. She seemed to draw her conclusions rather by looking at her daughter than by listening to her . . . But by means of these furtive glances she had assured herself that Katharine was in a state which gave her, alternately, the most exquisite pleasure and the most profound alarm.

She could not help ejaculating at last: 'It's all done in five minutes at a Registry Office nowadays, if you think the Church service a little florid . . . (*Night and Day*, 448.)

By looking at Katharine Mrs Hilbery came to the understanding that her daughter was in a state - of love, of prospective motherhood? - which made marriage the best advice. Mrs Hilbery's intuitive understanding of her daughter and her capacity for finding solutions for human conflicts clear up the complications caused by Mr Hilbery's resistance.

Mrs Hilbery stands out for Katharine as "some magician" and she feels herself transposed to her childhood when

she was only a foot or two raised above the long grass and the little flowers and entirely dependent upon the figure of indefinite size whose head went up into the sky, whose hands were in hers, for guidance. (*Night and Day*, 450.)

*Night and Day* has an elaborate composition of psychological development - and a humour which reveals Virginia Woolf's teasing mood, so often mentioned by

her contemporaries. These are the author's means of depicting a mother-daughter relationship that spans the cleavage between the Victorian Woman and the New Woman.

### Mrs Dalloway: Rivalling Mother Figures

In the novel *Mrs Dalloway* Virginia Woolf used her recently discovered technique to give the portrait of a society woman. Also the mother-daughter relationship appears, much in the same guise as in earlier books. Mrs Dalloway's daughter Elizabeth, her only child, is another vague young girl who is overshadowed by a beautiful and charming mother. Elizabeth is seventeen and her mother is preoccupied with her daughter's appearance. Her type of beauty does not resemble that of the Dalloways. "She was dark; had Chinese eyes in a pale face; an Oriental mystery; was gentle, considerate, still" (*Dalloway*, 136). Her mother compares her to "a hyacinth sheathed in glossy green, with buds just tinted, a hyacinth which has had no sun" (*Dalloway*, 136). The "sun" can easily be thought of as compliments, the compliments men give women at parties, which later come up in Mrs Dalloway's thoughts (*Dalloway*, 149). Elizabeth, herself, is still clinging to childhood. She would prefer to be left alone to do what she liked "in the country with her father and the dogs" (*Dalloway*, 149).

An alternative to society life is held up before her by Miss Kilman, the history teacher her father has employed, more as an act of charity on account of previous difficulties than for her merits as a teacher. Miss Kilman and Mrs Dalloway are rivalling mother-figures. Mrs Dalloway expresses an attitude of possessiveness towards her daughter, as Mrs Dalloway's friend Peter Walsh notices with annoyance when she introduces her daughter to him as "my Elizabeth" (*Dalloway*, 54-55). The two women are shown in con-

frontation at the Dalloway house when Miss Kilman comes to fetch Elizabeth for shopping. The interior monologue renders the feelings of hatred and disdain they mutually feel. Mrs Dalloway perceives Miss Kilman as "some prehistoric monster armoured for primeval warfare". But she manages to get the better of the monster and feels

how second by second, the idea of her diminished, how hatred (which was for ideas, not people) crumbled, how she lost her malignity, her size, became second by second merely Miss Kilman, in a mackintosh, whom Heaven knows Clarissa [i.e. Mrs Dalloway] would have liked to help. At this dwindling of the monster, Clarissa laughed. (*Dalloway*, 139.)

Miss Kilman brings Elizabeth, who had fled from the scene not being able to see the two combatants, with her out of the house. Elizabeth is matching her mother with Miss Kilman, personally and socially:

what interested Miss Kilman bored her mother, and Miss Kilman and she were terrible together; and Miss Kilman swelled and looked very plain, but Miss Kilman was frightfully clever. . . . Miss Kilman was quite different from anyone she knew; she made one feel so small. (*Dalloway*, 145.)

Elizabeth suddenly becomes aware of the revengeful element in Miss Kilman's feelings for her, already conveyed to the reader by the interior monologue going on in Miss Kilman's mind. Elizabeth is overtaken by repulsion to Miss Kilman, seeing her so plain, fat and complaining, comforting herself with too many cakes with her tea. Miss Kilman thinks: "Mrs Dalloway had triumphed. Elizabeth had gone; youth had gone." (*Dalloway*, 147.)

Having thus abandoned one of her mother-figures Elizabeth obediently appears at Mrs Dalloway's party where she is the object of precisely the kind of

admiration that she has found so embarrassing: to be compared to "poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies" (*Dalloway*, 149; cf. 208).

Miss Kilman had told Elizabeth that every profession was open to the women of her generation. She thinks while she is walking in the busy streets of London: "she would like to have a profession. She would become a doctor, a farmer, possibly go into Parliament if she found it necessary" (*Dalloway*, 151). She is able to take a long view back into a history of feminine leadership in aristocratic England: "Abbesses, principals, head mistresses, dignitaries, in the republic of women" (*Dalloway*, 152). Had someone more suitable, someone less entrapped in her own bitterness, someone with more personal attractiveness than Miss Kilman come to her guidance, Elizabeth might have found an alternative to the society life her mother can foresee. But by her father's indifference to the education of girls and her mother's ignorance, no one else was offered.

It would have been different if she had been a boy. Mr Dalloway would then have said: "Work, work" (*Dalloway*, 126). The preferential treatment given to sons is a recurrent theme in Virginia Woolf's novels. Mothers boast of their sons to impress other women. Mrs Dalloway, who made a short appearance together with her husband already in the earlier novel *The Voyage Out*, feels a pang of envy when she hears that Mrs Ambrose has a son. "We *must* have a son, Dick", she tells her husband (*Voyage Out*, 47). Mrs Thornbury, in the same novel, constantly refers to numerous sons that serve in one capacity or another in the army or the navy. Sometimes Virginia Woolf seems to exaggerate the number of sons to enforce her message. Thus Lady Otway in *Night and Day* is endowed with twelve children, eight of them sons (*Night and Day*, 193).



To the Lighthouse: Mother Observed from the Distance

*Mrs Dalloway* convinced Virginia Woolf that she had found a narrative technique that allowed her to pose her problems in a new way. In *Mrs Dalloway* she had chosen to depict a mother-daughter relationship that was one step removed from her own situation. In her next novel she decided to grapple with the memories from her own childhood more unswervingly. An entry in her diary of May 14, 1925, tells:

I'm now all on the strain with desire to stop journalism and get on to *To the Lighthouse*. This is going to be fairly short; to have father's character done completely in it; and mother's; and St Ives; and childhood; and all the usual things I try to put in - life, death etc. But the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat reciting. We perished each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel.<sup>11</sup>

It is interesting to compare this statement from 1925 with another one, made fourteen years later, in 1939, in "A Sketch of the Past". Virginia Woolf describes how the writing of *To the Lighthouse* freed her from her long obsession with her mother.

I suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest. But what is the meaning of "explain" it? Why, because I described her and my feeling for her in that book, should my vision of her and my feeling for her become so much dimmer and weaker? Perhaps one of these days I shall hit on the reason; and if so, I will give it, but at the moment I will go on, describing what I can remember, for it may be true that what I remember of her now will weaken still further.<sup>12</sup>

In retrospect Virginia Woolf thus seems to be more aware of the character of her mother than that of her father (that she had intended to "do completely"). The unexpected death of her mother had caused a trauma.

As has been shown Virginia Woolf repeatedly displayed ambivalence of feeling towards mother figures in her novels, whether they were based on memories of her own mother, her sister Vanessa or female relatives and acquaintances. Part of her problem seems to have been the feeling of inadequacy that the powerful and yet very feminine - in the nineteenth-century sense of the word - personality of her mother inspired in her, a feeling that is reflected in her young heroines. In *To the Lighthouse* she adopted the technique of the interior monologue that had proved to be so suitable to her particular literary gift. In three separate parts she manages to compress not only a vivid memory of her parents and her childhood, but also the devastating war years and the final solution to her problem.

The tasks that she had set before her in the diary entry, quoted above (see p. 69), she solved with the help of her new technique. The interior monologue also made it possible for her to show the complex nature of human personalities and their relationships one with the other, the secret life that goes on inside every human being, the possible alternatives of ways of life and what limits them.

Virginia Woolf also conceived the structure of the novel in three parts at an early stage.<sup>13</sup> The finished novel retains this under the headings "The Window", "Time Passes" and "The Lighthouse". The first part, which is also the longest, focuses on the character of Mrs Ramsay, the very short middle section gives in a dense, almost poetic form, the devastating forces that human life is up against, the third section shows in a parallel exposition Mr Ramsay's voyage to the lighthouse and the artist Lily Briscoe's completion of the picture of Mrs Ramsay that she had begun in Part I.

In Part I Mrs Ramsay, seated at the open window, is the centre around which the others move and they come into focus as they approach her. The theme of childhood is expanded in the vivid glimpses of the eight Ramsay children and their occupations. *To the Lighthouse* also deals with the power and influence over the children that Mrs Ramsay has. It is almost inevitable that she should draw her daughters into the conventional sphere of woman.

It was only in silence . . . that her daughters - Prue, Nancy, Rose - could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other (*Lighthouse*, 7).

But they had only to look at Mrs Ramsay to succumb to her. The eldest daughter, Prue, promises to become a beauty, and Mrs Ramsay watches her development closely and speculates on her future marital possibilities (*Lighthouse*, 68; 127-128). It is already natural for Prue to take on responsibility for the younger children and to act as a support for her mother in times of domestic crises. Mrs Ramsay's attitude towards her children is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, she thinks that it is a pity that Cam and James, the youngest of the children, shall have to grow up, since childhood is the happiest time of life; on the other hand, she seems to be promising Prue infinite happiness as a future wife and mother (*Lighthouse*, 67-68; 128).

For the exposition in depth of the mother-daughter theme Virginia Woolf hit upon a fictional device that enabled her both to preserve the necessary distance and to draw near to her subject. She introduced Lily Briscoe who, with her thirty-three years, is sufficiently young to be a daughter of Mrs Ramsay, yet more mature and able to size up her character than any of the young Ramsay girls. At the same time she

herself has a daughter's love and longing for her. Thus Virginia Woolf makes the reader see Lily through the eyes of Mrs Ramsay, and vice versa.

Mrs Ramsay and Lily are also viewed by other characters, e.g. the Ramsays' guests, among whom is Mr Bankes, an elderly scientist and long-standing friend of the family, who is an ardent admirer of Mrs Ramsay. Mr Bankes and Lily Briscoe are staying in the village, not in the Ramsay house. "Lodging in the same house with her, he had noticed too, how orderly she was, up before breakfast and off to paint, he believed, alone." With the scientist's eye for detail Mr Bankes has noticed that Lily has sensible shoes. "They allowed the toes their natural expansion." (*Lighthouse*, 20.) He establishes Lily's reliability as an observer by his comments on her character.

Mrs Ramsay's view of Lily emphasizes Lily's smallness and insignificance. "With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry; one could not take her painting seriously; but she was an independent little creature" (*Lighthouse*, 19). Like other young female protagonists in Virginia Woolf's novels, Lily is depicted as being unsure of herself and she does not want anyone to see her picture (*Lighthouse*, 20).<sup>14</sup> At the same time she recognizes that an artist must show her work, that it is even exciting to do so. She allows Mr Bankes to look at the picture she is working on - a representation of Mrs Ramsay and her son - and he asks her to explain. He is wondering:

Simple, obvious, commonplace, as it was,  
Mr Bankes was interested. Mother and child  
then - objects of universal veneration, and  
in this case the mother was famous for her  
beauty - might be reduced, he pondered, to  
a purple shadow without irreverence.

Lily Briscoe explains that the reduction is not an

irreverence. "A light here required a shadow there." (*Lighthouse*, 61.) The word "reduced" seems to indicate that Lily's treatment of a well-known subject in an obviously modern technique is an attempt to depersonalize it, and thus create a distance to the veneration expressed by Mr Bankes. Lily and Mr Bankes are enchanted by the beauty and goodness of Mrs Ramsay, like all the other characters of the novel except Mr Carmichael, an old poet, who refuses to accept her offered sympathy.

Mrs Ramsay is totally committed to marriage and the role of woman as wife and mother. She insists that everybody must marry and refuses to see that there are other alternatives. Thus she thinks that Mr Bankes must marry Lily, though he is old enough to be her father. She cannot conceive of any other relationship between man and woman. Lily tries to defend her own way of life but "it seemed so little, so virginal against the other" (*Lighthouse*, 58). A mother-figure of Mrs Ramsay's dimensions is in herself an argument for the traditional role of woman. Mrs Ramsay is aware of her strong influence on young people and she asks herself why she is always prompting them to marry, "almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children" (*Lighthouse*, 70).

Despite Lily's longing for Mrs Ramsay's love she wishes to assert herself against Mrs Ramsay's attitude, which implied "that her dear Lily, her little Brisk, was a fool". She perceives Mrs Ramsay as child-like, "presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand" (*Lighthouse*, 58).

The climax of Part I is the dinner where Mrs Ramsay serves her *Bœuf en Daube* to family and guests. She sees it as a creation of a memorable moment. Her entrance is magnificent:

like some queen who, finding her people gathered in the hall, looks down upon them, and descends among them, and acknowledges their tributes silently, and accepts their devotion and their prostration before her . . . she went down, and crossed the hall and bowed her head very slightly, as if she accepted what they could not say: their tribute to her beauty (*Lighthouse*, 95).

But the dinner party tests the manners and behaviour of the participants, and Virginia Woolf skilfully brings out the tension within the various characters that threatens to spoil Mrs Ramsay's carefully planned arrangements. The men, in particular - Mr Ramsay, Mr Bankes, Mr Carmichael and Mr Tansley - refuse to contribute on their own. Lily watches Mrs Ramsay's attempts at small talk and does not feel inclined to help her out, but Mrs Ramsay's silent appeal to her makes her do "the usual trick", that is, she hides her irritation and is nice to Mr Tansley (*Lighthouse*, 107-108). With the help of the Bœuf en Daube, candle lights and other paraphernalia the conversation gets going and Mrs Ramsay can relax. She feels sure that the engagement she has planned for two of her guests, Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley, has come off. Lily again notices her childlike quality and at the same time finds her frightening. "She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought . . . She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly" (*Lighthouse*, 118).

The thought of Mrs Ramsay's power makes Lily decide that she need not marry. Her decision is linked with her picture. "She would move the tree rather more to the middle." (*Lighthouse*, 119.) Mrs Ramsay, confident of herself again, compares Lily with Minta Rayley: "She faded, under Minta's glow; became more inconspicuous than ever, in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes. Everything about her was so small." (*Lighthouse*, 121.) Lily seems to dwindle almost into nothingness in Mrs

Ramsay's mind. Though she is aware of Lily's independent nature she starts scheming for the marriage of Lily and Mr Bankes.

The dinner party ends in complete triumph for Mrs Ramsay. Even the indifferent Mr Carmichael pays her homage. But Lily notices that disintegration sets in as soon as Mrs Ramsay has left. It is her presence that maintains order, and Lily is also aware of the great exertion required on the part of Mrs Ramsay to carry out her intentions. By contrasting the striking Mrs Ramsay and the inconspicuous Lily Briscoe, Virginia Woolf all but polarizes the mother and daughter figures. Like other daughter figures in Virginia Woolf's novels, Lily suffers under the pressure of the power, invested in the mother by tradition and enlarged to supernatural size by Mrs Ramsay's own personality. But she manages to preserve her own power of observation and detachment.

Part III of the novel shows that the spell of Mrs Ramsay, now dead, is still at work ten years later, not only on members of her family but also on Lily Briscoe. Mrs Ramsay is recalled to Lily's mind when she visits the island again. The completion of the unfinished picture of her earlier visit runs parallel with the reassessment in her mind of her relationship to Mrs Ramsay. Lily resumes her examination of Mrs Ramsay's vision of the happiness of marriage and discovers that it has imposed limitations on life. She finds evidence for this in Mr Ramsay and his children, Cam and James. Mr Ramsay is still demanding the sympathy he was accustomed to get from his wife at the slightest provocation. Virginia Woolf seems to indicate that this has prevented him from taking up a mature attitude to the conditions of life. James has remained in a childish hatred for his father and Cam is torn between him and Mr Ramsay who are both trying to enlist her on their side.

The conventional happiness in marriage that Mrs Ramsay seemed to have promised Paul and Minta Rayley has not come true either. Theirs is a new kind of marital relationship based on mutual freedom and tolerant friendship between two people who have rather little in common, least of all love in Mrs Ramsay's sense.

Lily also remembers Mrs Ramsay's all too easily discernible schemes to marry her off (*Lighthouse*, 203-204). But she also remembers her own intense love and longing for Mrs Ramsay. Lily Briscoe seems to fail in her attempts to fathom Mrs Ramsay's being. "Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get around that one woman with, she thought. Among them must be one that was stone blind to her beauty." (*Lighthouse*, 229.) Nor does she think she can strike a balance between Mrs Ramsay and her husband, whom she sees at the very moment sitting in a boat "where three or four mackerel beat their tails up and down" (*Lighthouse*, 216). Two of his children are with him:

They both wanted to say, Ask us anything, and we will give it to you. He sat and looked at the island and he might be thinking, We perished, each alone, or he might be thinking, I have reached it. I have found it, but he said nothing. (*Lighthouse*, 241.)

She arrives at the conclusion through her art. "There it was - her picture." (*Lighthouse*, 242.) With the unexpected swiftness of a revelation it is clear to her how she can solve her artistic problem. She draws a line in the centre. We do not know whether she destroys it by striking it out, or indicates a partition, or doubleness. Art has transcended the limitations imposed on her own life. She has succeeded in seeing the double aspect of the mother image: a source of life and inspiration, and a threat to selfhood.



Mr and Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* are depicted in a way that reflects the Victorian polarization of male and female that came natural to their social position and age. More than any other mother in Virginia Woolf's fiction, Mrs Ramsay illustrates the seductive power embedded in the Victorian ideal of womanhood, expressed, for instance, by Ruskin in his *Sesame and Lilies*.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

- <sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Elizabeth Bowen's contribution in *Recollections of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Joan Russell Noble (London: Owen, 1972; Penguin 1975), p. 62.
- <sup>2</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, p. xix.
- <sup>3</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Question of Things Happening. The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 2, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth, 1976), pp. 55-56. (15 December 1914.)
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 476. (25 June 1921.)
- <sup>5</sup> Bell, *Virginia Woolf. A Biography*, 2:99.
- <sup>6</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, p. 110.
- <sup>7</sup> See *Recollections of Virginia Woolf*, p. 59; pp. 77-78; p. 247.
- <sup>8</sup> *Moments of Being*, p. 34; pp. 38-39; cf. *Lighthouse*, p. 231.
- <sup>9</sup> *Recollections*, pp. 102-103.
- <sup>10</sup> Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day* is "a pretty straight portrait" of Lady Ritchie, a sister of Leslie Stephen's first wife and daughter of William Thackeray. See Bell, 1:11.
- <sup>11</sup> *A Writer's Diary*, ed. Leonard Woolf, pp. 76-77.
- <sup>12</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*, p. 81.
- <sup>13</sup> *A Writer's Diary*, p. 81.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day*, who carefully conceals her interest in mathematics (*Night and Day*, 40-41), or Isa Oliver in Virginia Woolf's posthumous novel *Between the Acts*, who hides her attempt at poetry in the "book bound like an account book" (*Between the Acts*, 15).

## Chapter III

### FAMILIES IN THE SUBURBS

There are important differences between Virginia Woolf and Forster in the handling of family relations. In Virginia Woolf's novels the women are placed in the upper-middle classes that she knew so well as the daughter of Leslie Stephen. Their social position is never threatened. The same family grouping recurs: father, mother, and a daughter. The woman's double role of wife and mother is accentuated.

The women in Forster's novels belong to the suburban middle class that had provided the formative principle of his youth. At the centre is usually a fatherless family, consisting of a widowed mother, a daughter and a son. The woman's role as mother takes priority over her role as wife. Her social and economic position is vulnerable, and the responsibility for keeping the family in its proper place on the social scale also rests with her. The social setting - the suburb or a village on its way to suburbia - determines the characters of the protagonists as well as the relationships between them.

To move from Virginia Woolf's fictional world to Forster's is to exchange the intellectual high society

of London for the pettiness of the suburbs. The rapid urbanization in the nineteenth century had led to the growth of ugly, sprawling suburbs with a corresponding deterioration of rural areas (see p. 21). L.T. Hobhouse characterized the suburbs in *Democracy and Reaction* (1909) in the following manner:

All round every great centre is a ring of towns to which men resort only to dine and sleep, while the women have no visible function in life except to marry and discuss marriages. While the private life of the suburb is no doubt comfortable and blameless it is a greater burden to the nation than the slum. It has, to begin with, no healthy corporate life. Its menfolk are engaged elsewhere and are too much exhausted by their own business to enter into public life, or they are retired officers and civilians, residents whose only function is to reside. We have a class of moderately well-to-do people almost wholly divorced from definite public duties - a class relatively new in this country. They are removed from contact with poverty or from any special obligation to any class of dependents. All they know of social and domestic reform is that it means expense, and their politics are summed up in the simple and comprehensive formula - keep down the rates. Imperialism is the only conception remotely related to an ideal which they comprehend, and if this is too expensive we have seen that it offers them as a class ample compensation.

This is a contemporary account of the social and political situation in the fictional suburb of Sawston in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey*, a world of narrow suburban values, upheld by widowed mothers and spinsters.

Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duel over a Baby

Mrs Herriton of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is a typical representative of this section of the middle class. She is a moderately well-to-do widow with two grown-up children whose interests are exclusively

centred on her home and position in society. Domestic duties take priority over intellectual interests. Mrs Herriton has qualities that make her an excellent housewife by Victorian standards: she has absolute control of her servants and her children. Her household is well-run, her rooms comfortable and attractive. She has "the gift of making work a treat" (*Where Angels*, 18). In short, she embodies all the Victorian virtues: domesticity, family pride, respectability, refinement. Everything must comply with and be subordinated to these values. She has made her children instruments of her will by giving them a certain latitude. Her daughter Harriet is allowed to be Low Church, and Philip, the son, to cultivate aestheticism and radicalism in word but not in deed. Her daughter-in-law, Lilia, a young widow, is also kept in subjection.

Mrs Herriton rules her little world by means of diplomacy and tact. Most often she takes Philip, who is the clever member of the family, into her confidence, discretely sending Harriet off on some errand. As for Philip, "his mother knew how to manage him" (*Where Angels*, 83). The mother-daughter relationship is more complicated. Thanks to Mrs Herriton's skilful manoeuvring they get on very well. "Harriet's education had been almost too successful . . . Though pious and patriotic, and a great moral asset for the house, she lacked that pliancy and tact which her mother so much valued, and had expected her to pick up for herself." (*Where Angels*, 18.) Mrs Herriton prides herself on her self-control, but her daughter is liable to fly off into emotional fits. The mother treats her daughter with considerably more asperity than her son, to whom, at least outwardly, she pays respectful attention. Philip does not conceal his contempt for his sister and her religious fervour:

"Oh, Harriet is a bad lot!" said Philip as soon as she had left the room. His mother

laughed, and told him not to be naughty  
. . . ." (*Where Angels*, 17).

Mrs Herriton thus condones his attitude towards Harriet, but she does not tolerate any squabbling between them in her presence. Emotional outbursts are anathema to her, and Harriet often tries her patience by losing control of herself. "Don't cry, dear; please me by not crying - don't talk at all. It's more than I could bear." (*Where Angels*, 19-20.) Mrs Herriton is a woman of action but she does not bother to explain to her daughter, who has to rush off to do her errands: "But why - what - " "Go, dear, at once; do not talk." (*Where Angels*, 21.) Harriet is also accident-prone and reacts with physical violence. When her little niece Irma happens to tread on her corn she gives Irma a violent push, so that the child starts crying. "Mrs. Herriton was annoyed with Harriet for betraying irritation." (*Where Angels*, 22.) Her lack of self-control makes her a very unreliable person in moments of crisis, and unwittingly she often betrays secrets which have been carefully guarded by Mrs Herriton. Harriet's undue religious conscience is another source of annoyance to her mother. In Forster's ironic words: "Mrs. Herriton soon made it easy for her daughter to go for six weeks to the Tirol." (*Where Angels*, 92.)

The educational principles of a suburban mother, as applied to a small child, are revealed when Irma, Lilia's daughter, comes to stay with the Herritons in her mother's absence. Irma is, in Mrs Herriton's eyes, a vulgar child and she tries hard to improve her before her mother's return. In Forster's description Mrs Herriton does this by constantly watching over style and appearance and by avoiding anything that can undermine parental authority. She wants Irma to call her 'Grandmother', not 'Granny', which she hates. She is careful to follow up her corrections with a kiss, and she always says 'dear', both to Irma

and her own children. Irma is kept out of an unpleasant family situation by polite questions about her day at school. "Well, Irma dear, and whose team are you in this afternoon - Miss Edith's or Miss May's?" (*Where Angels*, 21.) Mrs Herriton never criticizes Lilia, Irma's mother, in front of Irma.

"All a child's life depends on the ideal it has of its parents. Destroy that and everything goes - morals, behaviour, everything. Absolute trust in someone else is the essence of education. That is why I have been so careful about talking of poor Lilia before her." (*Where Angels*, 80.)

Her principles of education have turned her own children into willing tools under her authority. Philip eventually loses the "absolute trust" in his mother, but it is too late for him to avert the tragic course of events.

Mrs Herriton's most prominent characteristic is family pride. When her children threaten it, she acts. She has, however, not been able to prevent her son Charles, now deceased, from marrying a pretty girl, Lilia, far below the Herriton standards. Her counter-move is to supervise her daughter-in-law, even after Charles' death. "Lilia must be pushed through life without bringing discredit on the family into which she had married." (*Where Angels*, 13.) The Herritons unite to keep her straight. When Lilia had a baby, "that curious duel which is fought over every baby was fought and decided early". (*Where Angels*, 13.) P.N. Furbank, E.M. Forster's biographer, selects this phrase to illustrate Forster's own situation as a child, torn as he was between his father's wealthy relatives, the Thorntons, and his mother's family, the "socially obscure and penniless Whichelos".<sup>2</sup> Contrary to Mrs Herriton, Lilia is "a bad housekeeper, always in the throes of some domestic crisis, which Mrs. Herriton, who kept her servants for years, had to step across and adjust." (*Where Angels*, 14.)

Mrs Herriton's worries increase after Charles Herriton's death. She must see to it that Lilia does not disgrace the Herriton name by marrying someone who is "neither well-bred, nor well-connected, nor handsome, nor clever, nor rich" (*Where Angels*, 11). On Philip's advice Lilia is encouraged to go to Italy, which, in effect, takes her out of the clutches of the Herritons. The Herritons have to face the news of her engagement and marriage to an Italian and can do nothing but cut off relations with her.

When thwarted in this way by Lilia, Mrs Herriton, so eager to induce self-control with others, loses her temper. "How dare she not tell me direct! . . . Have I no claim at all? Bear witness, dear" - she choked with passion - "bear witness that for this I'll never forgive her!" (*Where Angels*, 20.) In her rage she, the flawless housekeeper, offends her servants and they give notice. Moreover, she remembers that she did not cover the peas she had sown. "It upset her more than anything, and again and again she struck the banisters with vexation." (*Where Angels*, 20-25.)

Mrs Herriton is destined to lose her self-control over Lilia's affairs again. Lilia dies in childbirth. This leads to a course of events and a tragic ending in which human characters and social ideals are revealed. The child is left with Lilia's husband in Italy. Mrs Herriton and her children decide to keep the existence of Lilia's baby secret. But because of Harriet's rashness Irma gets to know of her little brother and the secret is out. Mrs Herriton makes a half-hearted offer to Lilia's husband to take care of the baby. At the same time, a friend of Lilia's makes a serious attempt to get the child to England to bring it up there. This releases Mrs Herriton's rage. She realizes the danger of appearing to be negligent of her duties. From now on she is determined to get hold of the child at any cost. She cannot conceal her emotions before her son:



Her face was red, she panted for breath, there were dark circles round her eyes.

"The impudence!" she shouted. "The cursed impudence! Oh, I'm swearing. I don't care."  
. . .

This outburst of violence from his elegant ladylike mother pained him dreadfully. He had not known that it was in her. (*Where Angels*, 103.)

Up till now Mrs Herriton has skilfully played off Philip against Harriet, relying more on his cleverness than on her religious moralism. She had not trusted Harriet to go with Lilia to Italy. She had sent Philip there alone to try to persuade Lilia to give up her engagement. But when Philip questions her motives more and more, she resorts to Harriet as an ally. With a quick decision she sends both Philip and Harriet to Italy in order to bring the baby to England.

In Italy Philip acts reluctantly, causing delay. Harriet, on the contrary, is a loyal emissary. She rebukes her brother:

We've come here to get the baby back, and for nothing else. I'll not have this levity and slackness, and talk about pictures and churches. Think of mother; did she send you out for *them*? (*Where Angels*, 114.)

Harriet shuns no measure, not even kidnapping. As a consequence of her action the baby dies in an accident. Mrs Herriton considers the affair settled with the death of the baby. Her social position is not threatened any longer.

Mrs Herriton is E.M. Forster's indictment of suburban values. In her narrow-minded concern for appearances she fails to take into account such values as love, kindness and sympathy. All her actions are motivated by her fear of "what people say" (*Where Angels*, 104).

She treats her children with coldness and condescension and is tolerant only as long as nothing upsets her scale of values. Her daughter has found refuge in self-righteous religion, her son in flippant aestheticism. Neither of them is a credit to her principles of education. She is a parody of the Victorian ideal of motherhood as well as of the idea of woman as a repository of feeling. Her only unpremeditated reaction is a fit of rage.

The calculated coldness of Mrs Herriton's Sawston is contrasted with the spontaneous warmth of Italy. Mrs Herriton, who never leaves Sawston, is completely unaffected, and Harriet is too deeply imbued with Sawstonian prejudices for salvation. After the death of the child she speaks of 'this unlucky accident' and 'the mysterious frustration of one's attempts to make things better!' (*Where Angels*, 198.) But for Philip the renewed contact with Italy means the awakening of feeling and ultimately the liberation from his indifferent serfdom to his mother.

Mrs Herriton can be seen as a representative of an exposed group in Victorian society, the middle-class widows. Their social positions had been attained by their husbands. After his death the widow was often faced with social isolation, and it was more than natural that she made every effort to maintain her status and that of her children, or at least the appearance thereof. Economic grievances and an impaired relationship with her children were the fate of many a widowed woman.

### *The Longest Journey: Adulterous Mother*

The destructive power of the suburb and its values is also demonstrated in *The Longest Journey*. The mother of Rickie Elliot, the young protagonist of the novel, is another Lilia, crushed by the exacting narrowness

of her suburban husband. Like Lilia she had married into a hostile family who considered her inferior. She cannot manage her household to suit her husband's aesthetic taste, which is narrow and fastidious. The marriage is very unhappy and Rickie, lame like his father, grows up a lonely but perceptive boy.

He worshipped his mother, and she was fond of him. But she was dignified and reticent, and pathos, like tattle, was disgusting to her. She was afraid of intimacy in case it led to confidences and tears, and so all her life she held her son at a little distance. (*Longest Journey*, 29-30.)

The destructive influence of Sawston had been at work already and affected her natural feelings as a mother.<sup>3</sup>

When Rickie's father falls ill he becomes a tyrant who makes unreasonable demands on his wife, even resorting to physical violence. After his death Mrs Elliot alters and Rickie notices:

She was much happier, she looked younger, and her mourning was as unobtrusive as convention permitted. All this he had expected. But she seemed to be watching him, and to be extremely anxious for his opinion on any subject - more especially on his father. Why? At last he saw that she was trying to establish confidence between them. (*Longest Journey*, 31-32.)

Though Mrs Elliot shares some suburban characteristics with Mrs Herriton - reticence, fear of intimacies and outbursts of feeling - she is, as Rickie puts it, "lovable". She shows genuine consideration and concern for her son. Forster indicates this almost incidentally, for instance, in a conversation between mother and son about humour. Mrs Elliot is evasive as usual and wants to send Rickie away on an errand to fetch a reel of thread, but changes her mind. "For she had remembered that the dark passage frightened him." (*Longest Journey*, 29.)

Because of the distance between mother and son Rickie never learns what exactly it is she wants to confide to him, but he eagerly agrees to leave everything to her. "I shall be as wax in your hands, mamma," he says (*Longest Journey*, 32). Mrs Elliot's plans include a removal from the suburb into the country, something that Rickie greets with satisfaction since it also means that he need not go back to his hated school. But the plans are never realized. There is a slight altercation between Rickie and his mother as to the necessity of putting on an overcoat on a chilly day. Rickie who finds his mother overprotective answers her somewhat rudely, "I do wish you wouldn't keep on bothering". When he returns from his walk he finds his mother dead. Her unexpected death - one of many in this and other novels by Forster - has a function in the plot in that it precludes the disclosure of her secret to Rickie. (*Where Angels*, 33.)

What Rickie was not told was that his mother had met genuine love in the shape of a young farmer, named Robert. He was socially her inferior and very different from her husband and his set of friends who had embarrassed her with their clever talk. Robert gave her facts, told her about the earth and his life as a farmer and made her see things. She had tried to resist him but when her husband adopted a frivolous attitude towards her predicament, she escaped with Robert. Forster makes a strong point of the genuineness of Robert as compared to the affected mediocrity of her husband, about whom she reflects:

He did not like her, he practically lived apart, he was not even faithful or polite. These were grave faults, but they were human ones: she could even imagine them in a man she loved. What she could never love was a dilettante. (*Longest Journey*, 235.)

After the death of her husband she looked forward to a life in the country with her two boys. Her sudden

death left the boys to grow up with different relatives in ignorance of each other. Her husband's family was careful not to reveal her infidelity.

Mrs Elliot is thus established as a good mother who does not destroy her son. The intended removal into the country signals the establishment of a new and better relationship between mother and son. Her tragic death leaves Rickie an orphan and her loss is deeply felt. He grows into a young man who hates the memory of his father but who "believes in women because he has loved his mother" (*Longest Journey*, 66). Rickie, like his mother before him, marries into Sawston. The confrontation of his Cambridge idealism with Sawstonian inanity will be treated in the following (see pp. 122-125).

#### A Room with a View: The Sensible Mother

Forster's belief in the salutary values of the English countryside was indicated in *The Longest Journey*. In the novel *A Room with a View* the persons live in a small village, Summer Street. The protagonist of the novel is Lucy Honeychurch, a young woman who has had the advantage of a country upbringing. She is also exposed to the dangers of suburban small-mindedness in the person of a spinster cousin, Miss Bartlett, whose misguided principles come close to upsetting her naturally sound but somewhat narrow judgement. The test of Lucy's character is treated more in detail in a following chapter (see pp. 125-130).

When Lucy's mother, Mrs Honeychurch, is introduced into the novel, she is in the middle of a conversation with her son Freddy, a young medical student. This gives Forster an opportunity to demonstrate both her good qualities and her limitations. The conversation is about Lucy's engagement to Cecil Vyse, a young man who satisfies the standard qualifications for a suit-

able match. Mrs Honeychurch enumerates them: "he's good, he's clever, he's rich, he's well connected." Moreover, she knows his mother. (*A Room*, 91.) Mrs Honeychurch asks her son's advice about a letter she is writing to Cecil's mother. She is critical of Mrs Vyse who

goes in for lectures and improving her mind, and all the time a thick layer of flue under the beds, and the maids' dirty thumb-marks where you turn on the electric light. She keeps that flat abominably - . . . (*A Room*, 92).

Domesticity takes priority over intellectual interests with her as it did with Mrs Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

The essential simplicity and sincerity of Mrs Honeychurch makes her sensitive to conventional outbursts such as the one she is on the point of making when congratulating Cecil on the engagement: "We mothers -." She wishes that she could be as straightforward as her son: "Why could she not be as Freddy, who stood stiff in the middle of the room looking very cross and almost handsome?" (*A Room*, 94.)

Mrs Honeychurch's attitudes are also revealed in a discussion of possible neighbours. When her neighbour, Sir Harry Otway, is looking for tenants for his small villa he is anxious to get the right people and asks Mrs Honeychurch and Lucy for advice. Lucy suggests two unmarried ladies as tenants.

'My advice', put in Mrs Honeychurch, 'is to have nothing to do with Lucy and her decayed gentlewomen at all. I know the type. Preserve me from people who have seen better days, and bring heirlooms with them that make the house smell stuffy. It's a sad thing, but I'd far rather let to someone who is going up in the world than to someone who has come down.'

Mrs Honeychurch is not in favour of letting to women at all. 'Only let to a man', she says and she gives her reason.

'Men don't gossip over tea-cups. If they get drunk, there's an end of them - they lie down comfortably, and sleep it off. If they're vulgar, they somehow keep it to themselves. It doesn't spread so. Give me a man - of course, provided he's clean.'  
(*A Room*, 111.)

Her preference for robust masculinity shows that she is not one to endorse the ideal of excessive refinement. Mrs Honeychurch delights in the simple pleasures of country life. "Nature had intended her to be poor and to live in such a house," the reader is told  
(*A Room*, 112).

The values of Summer Street are those of the well-to-do, "a circle of rich, pleasant people, with identical interests and identical foes. In this circle one thought, married, and died." (*A Room*, 117-118.) Lucy and her brother Freddy find them too narrow but Mrs Honeychurch defends them.

'I see you looking down your nose and thinking your mother's a snob. But there *is* a right sort and a wrong sort, and it's affectation to pretend there isn't.' (*A Room*, 121.)

Mrs Honeychurch soon finds that she has reason to complain about Cecil, the seemingly ideal fiancé. Her complaints throw additional light on her own code of behaviour. Cecil has been rude to old family friends who had looked forward to seeing Lucy's fiancé. She has also noticed that he winces when she speaks and makes remarks about the furniture in the house.

'No doubt I am neither artistic nor literary nor intellectual nor musical, but I cannot help the drawing-room furniture: your father bought it and we must put up with it . . .'

Lucy defends Cecil by saying he is annoyed at things, not at people. But Mrs Honeychurch persists: 'Is it a thing or a person when Freddy sings?' (*A Room*, 144.)

Then Mrs Honeychurch notices that Lucy is worried and irritated, and she comforts her, 'Come here, old lady - thank you for putting away my bonnet - kiss me.' Life in the country house is never completely stalled, because "one member or other of the family poured in a drop of oil." (*A Room*, 146.)

Mrs Honeychurch accepts the traditional female role without hesitation.

She would abandon every topic to inveigh against those women who (instead of minding their houses and their children) seek notoriety by print. Her attitude was: 'If books must be written, let them be written by men' . . . (*A Room*, 147).

It is a matter of course for Mrs Honeychurch that Lucy should remain at home after her engagement with Cecil is broken off. She is hurt when Lucy expresses a wish to accompany two elderly ladies to Greece, and she gets positively furious when Lucy talks of sharing a flat with some girl in London.

'And mess with typewriters and latch-keys,' exploded Mrs Honeychurch. 'And agitate and scream, and be carried off kicking by the police. And call it a Mission - when no one wants you! And call it Duty - when it means that you can't stand your own home! And call it Work - when thousands of men are starving with the competition as it is! . . .'  
(*A Room*, 206.)

Mrs Honeychurch is airing the usual arguments against female emancipation. Forster's comment on independence indicates that he finds the word too often misused, ". . . independence is a useful cry: we can always say that we have not got it" (*A Room*, 206). On the other hand, Lucy's welfare is Mrs Honeychurch's main



concern. It is evident, for instance, from her reaction to the breaking off of the engagement with Cecil, who, she had understood, was not the right man for her daughter: 'I'm thankful - simply thankful.'  
(*A Room*, 200.)

Mrs Honeychurch is thus portrayed as a good, sensible and no-nonsense sort of mother whose views are limited but who reacts accurately. Her children, when left on their own, have sound judgement. It is only when exposed to Miss Bartlett's influence that Lucy gets muddled. It is indicative that Miss Bartlett compares Lucy with her mother at the beginning of the novel when she still retains her spontaneity and outspokenness. Lucy has just given her views on Mr Beebe and ends by saying: 'And you know how clergymen generally laugh; Mr Beebe laughs just like an ordinary man.' Miss Bartlett then exclaims: 'Funny girl! How you do remind me of your mother.' (*A Room*, 14.) Conversely, Mrs Honeychurch finds reason to tell Lucy: 'How you do remind me of Charlotte Bartlett!' at the end of the novel, when Lucy seems to be on the way to spinsterhood and has already begun to use the same petulant way of speaking as Miss Bartlett (*A Room*, 206-207).

Summer Street, the country village, where Mrs Honeychurch's house, Windy Corner, is situated, is governed, on the whole, by the same rules as Sawston. But Forster seems to indicate that it has still a sense of freedom about it since it is close to the open wooded country. The name of Windy Corner is in itself suggestive of fresh air. Outdoor activities are also stressed: tennis games and bathing in the pool. Lucy also used to bathe there until she was found out by Miss Bartlett, the guardian of suburban propriety.

Forster implies that in this kind of setting human character has a better chance of developing in the right direction. Mrs Elliot in *The Longest Journey*

had planned a new life for herself and her two sons in similar surroundings. Mrs Honeychurch is endowed with the good qualities of a sensible and practical country woman. Forster does not gloss over her limited outlook on life, but she is presented as a desirable type of mother, attached to her children and her home.

Howards End: "A wife can be replaced, a mother never"

Forster's preoccupation with the setting is an organizing principle in all his novels. In *Howards End* the symbolic use of a country house as well as of the female characters enabled Forster to present a panorama of pre-war England. Several critics have also interpreted it as a novel about England.<sup>4</sup> In my context Forster's way of dealing with the female characters is given priority.

Many characteristics of *Howards End* are found already in the earlier novels: the belief in the good influence of the country house as compared to the suburban villa; the use of an outsider whose role it is to disrupt the existing order. The character of Mrs Honeychurch in *A Room with a View* anticipates Forster's wise old mother Mrs Wilcox in *Howards End*. He was to return to a similar mother-figure in *A Passage to India*, Mrs Moore. Like Mrs Honeychurch the wise old mothers are quite ordinary, even dull, domestic women but they are also endowed with the intuitive, not to say magic, gift of smoothing over differences between people.

The novel deals with the interaction between two families, the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, and the conflicting values that separate them. The Schlegel sisters, Margaret and Helen, and their brother Tibby care about art, literature, music, and enjoy discussions with their intellectual friends. The Wilcoxes

are involved in business and distrust imagination and emotion. Howards End is the name of the country house near London of the Wilcox family. It is Mrs Wilcox's ancestral home and belongs to her.

Helen Schlegel is invited to Howards End as a result of the acquaintance struck up between Mr and Mrs Wilcox and the Schlegel sisters during a stay in Germany, the country of origin of their father, who had moved to England and married an English girl. The previous sympathy between the families comes to an end when Helen falls in love with the younger Wilcox son, Paul. Their love-affair lasts but one day, but the premature interference of Margaret, who has had the care of Helen and Tibby since their parents' early death, stirs up irritation in the Wilcox family. Mrs Wilcox then shows her ability to separate the combatants. She comes

trailing noiselessly over the lawn, and there was actually a wisp of hay in her hands. She seemed to belong not to the young people and their motor but to the house, and to the tree that overshadowed it. One knew that she worshipped the past and that the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow had descended upon her . . . (*Howards End*, 22).

Mrs Wilcox's strong ties with her house and the past are thus emphasized from the beginning and are also perceived by Helen Schlegel. Mrs Wilcox has affinities with Virginia Woolf's wise mother in *Night and Day*, Mrs Hilbery, who also worshipped the past and had an ability to put things straight. But temperamentally they are very different. Mrs Hilbery's ancestor-worship is concentrated on people and literature, Mrs Wilcox's on the house that had been the home of her ancestors.

The Wilcox and Schlegel paths cross again when the Wilcoxes move into a flat opposite the Schlegels' house in London. This leads to a renewal of the contact

between Mrs Wilcox and the elder sister, Margaret Schlegel. They become friends in spite of the difference in age and interests. Mrs Wilcox, however, does not mix well with Margaret's friends.

She was not intellectual, nor even alert, and it was odd that, all the same, she should give the idea of greatness. Margaret, zig zagging with her friends over Thought and Art, was conscious of a personality that transcended their own and dwarfed their activities. (*Howards End*, 73.)

This larger-than-life-size quality of Mrs Wilcox also relates her to Virginia Woolf's mother-figures. Contrary to them, though, Mrs Wilcox lacks vitality and seems grey and tired. She is apt to brood but in a more gloomy way than any of the mothers in Virginia Woolf's novels.

Margaret is impressed by her elderly friend's love for *Howards End* but turns down an invitation to go there on the spur of the moment. When they part Margaret stands watching the tall figure of Mrs Wilcox going up in the lift.

As the glass doors closed on it she had the sense of imprisonment. The beautiful head disappeared first, still buried in the muff; the long trailing skirt followed. A woman of undefinable rarity was going up heavenward, like a specimen in a bottle. And into what a heaven - a vault as of hell, sooty black, from which soots descended! (*Howards End*, 81.)

The sight makes Margaret realize that her refusal meant the betrayal of an unusual confidence. In order to correct her mistake, she hurries to join Mrs Wilcox at the station. The attempt to go to *Howards End* fails, however, because Mrs Wilcox is claimed by her husband and daughter who suddenly appear.

Mrs Wilcox dies shortly after this incident and is

duly mourned by her family. Her husband remembers her

even goodness during thirty years. Not anything in detail - not courtship or early raptures - but just the unvarying virtue, that seemed to him a woman's noblest quality. So many women are capricious, breaking into odd flaws of passion or frivolity. Not so his wife. Year after year, summer and winter, as bride and mother, she had been the same, he had always trusted her. Her tenderness! Her innocence! The wonderful innocence that was hers by the gift of God. Ruth [= Mrs Wilcox] knew no more of wordly wickedness and wisdom than did the flowers in her garden, or the grass in her field. Her idea of business - 'Henry [= Mr Wilcox], why do people who have enough money try to get more money?' Her idea of politics - 'I am sure that if the mothers of various nations could meet, there would be no more wars.' Her idea of religion - ah, this had been a cloud, but a cloud that passed. She came of Quaker stock, and he and his family, formerly Dissenters, were now members of the Church of England. The rector's sermons had at first repelled her, and she had expressed a desire for 'a more inward light', adding, 'not so much for myself as for baby' (Charles). Inward light must have been granted for he heard no complaints in later years. They brought up their three children without dispute. They had never disputed. (*Howards End*, 85-86.)

According to Mr Wilcox his wife had been a perfect wife. The impression of harmony is confirmed by an outside observer like Helen Schlegel who had been impressed by their happy family life during her stay at Howards End. She had noticed Mrs Wilcox's 'steady unselfishness', but she had also had a glimpse of the brutality concealed beneath the polished surface of the Wilcox men - and become completely disenchanted.

For all her sweetness as wife and mother Mrs Wilcox had not been able to influence her husband and children for the better and to impart to them the wisdom she had gained from the past. They are men hardened in the world of business and impossible to reach. Charles, the elder son, displays a complete

lack of sensitivity in all his dealings with people. He has always been eager to persuade his mother to modernize and change Howards End. Charles is the lawful heir to Howards End. Forster indicates his values in life by making him move into a house in a suburb after his marriage (*Howards End*, 88-89).

Mr Wilcox's reflections on the nature of his wife after her death give us a portrait of a Victorian woman who connived in and thus supported the hardness of a man's world. In her powerlessness and ignorance she was unable to act as the guiding force, which was the role assigned to women in Victorian society. Her own daughter, Evie, takes after her father rather than her mother.

Mrs Wilcox had never upset her family in her lifetime, but like Mrs Elliot in *The Longest Journey* she manages to do so from the other side of the grave. She had written on a slip of paper her wish to leave Howards End to Margaret Schlegel. When her family is acquainted with this they change their opinions about her immediately. "Mrs Wilcox had been treacherous to the family, to the laws of property, to her own written word." (*Howards End*, 94.) They are disappointed in their mother and put part of the blame on Margaret whom Charles, in particular, suspects of exerting undue influence over a dying woman. The problem is solved in a businesslike way, the note is destroyed. Forster is anxious to point out that from a legal point of view they are right. But morally they are guilty. "For one hard fact remains. They did neglect a personal appeal." (*Howards End*, 94.) It is the same stress on the sanctity of personal relationships that made Forster wish that if forced to choose he would have the guts to betray his country rather than his friend. Mrs Wilcox's influence on her family is further diminished by their refusal to accept her last wish and the ensuing feeling of her betrayal of them.

Margaret, who is to continue Mrs Wilcox's mission, is depicted by Forster as a representative of the New Woman. She is "not a female of the encouraging type" (*Howards End*, 35). She is unlike the married women in Virginia Woolf's novels who always support men with their encouragement, in accordance with Ruskin's prescription for a woman: "Her great function is Praise . . ." <sup>5</sup> Nor can she lay claim to beauty. "Her figure was meagre, her face seemed all teeth and eyes . . ." (*Howards End*, 39). Here she is seen through the eyes of a lower-middle class man, Leonard Bast, whose reading of Ruskin and endorsement of his ideals is an indication of their diffusion amongst the middle class.

Margaret is aware that "independent thoughts are in nine cases out of ten the result of independent means" (*Howards End*, 120). The Schlegels all have comfortable private incomes. However, she believes that work in itself is good and hopes "that for women, too, "not to work" will soon become as shocking as "not to be married" was a hundred years ago." (*Howards End*, 104.) When she advises her younger brother she points to the Wilcoxes as paragons of work.

There is a renewal of contact between Mr Wilcox and Margaret that eventually leads to her consenting to become his wife. Despite the differences between them, they get on fairly well, even if Mr Wilcox finds Margaret a disconcerting young woman at times and she finds him too impersonal. There is a substantial difference in age between them. It is difficult for her to adhere to her motto, "Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height." (*Howards End*, 174.) When she blames him for his lack of perception he gives her his motto which is "Concentrate". He adds, "I've no intention of frittering away my strength on that sort of thing". (*Howards End*, 175.)

At the wedding of Mr Wilcox's daughter Evie, Margaret has reason to admire Mr Wilcox's organizational talents. Everything is run on so large a scale that she feels overwhelmed.

She must remain herself, for his sake as well as her own, since a shadowy wife degrades the husband whom she accompanes; and she must assimilate for reasons of common honesty, since she had no right to marry a man and make him uncomfortable. (*Howards End*, 207.)

Margaret is aware of the necessity to compromise. Mr Wilcox gives in to her only as a kind of "reward of her tact and devotion" (*Howards End*, 214).

Helen's interference on behalf of Leonard Bast, a poor insurance clerk who had lost his job because of incorrect information from Mr Wilcox, leads to disclosures that force Margaret to choose sides. She had tried to intervene but was ashamed of her female diplomacy. "In dealing with a Wilcox, how tempting it was to lapse from comradeship, and to give him the kind of woman that he desired!" (*Howards End*, 214.) Like the wives in Virginia Woolf's novels she feels that it is degrading to be insincere. Margaret decides to help her husband by loving him. She sides with Mr Wilcox against her sister.

When Mr Wilcox's sordid past is disclosed - Mrs Bast is a former mistress of his - she adheres to her decision, pointing out to Helen that tolerance is necessary in sexual matters.

I don't say there is no standard, for that would destroy morality; only that there can be no standard until our impulses are classified and better understood. (*Howards End*, 241.)

On this issue she is clearly a mouthpiece for Forster. Forster always connects Margaret with his perceptive observations, never Mr Wilcox, who persists in his old



attitudes. When Margaret wants to discuss their future home for instance, he dismisses her with:

'What a practical little woman it is! What's it been reading? Theo - theo - how much?'  
'Theosophy.' (*Howards End*, 244.)

Margaret is treated like a little child, or worse, like a thing, as the pronoun indicates. Forster's incisive irony comes over without the use of excessive detail. Margaret makes no headway with her husband.

Howards End becomes the catalyst in the contest between the Wilcox and the Schlegel ideals. Mr Wilcox had already taken Margaret to see Howards End where an old farm woman, Miss Avery took her for the first Mrs Wilcox. She was for the first time identified with her predecessor. The house is once more brought into focus when, by mistake, Miss Avery unpacks the Schlegel furniture which had been stored there, and, thus, makes Howards End appear to be a Schlegel home. In the complicated plot, Forster reveals that Mr Wilcox attempts to cheat both his wife and Helen. His wife, for a while close to being his accomplice, sides with her sister. Mr Wilcox thereby becomes instrumental in his own downfall and that of his son. Against his orders Margaret lets Helen into Howards End: "A new feeling came over her; she was fighting for women against men". (*Howards End*, 270.)

She refuses to let her husband enter his own house, and she and Helen, who is found to be pregnant, spend the night at Howards End. The house, furnished with their own furniture, restores the old affection and confidence between them. Helen tells Margaret that Leonard Bast is the father of her child. She continues:

'He is not to blame. He would have gone on worshipping me. I want never to see him again, though it sounds appalling. I wanted to give him money and feel finished. Oh, Meg, the little that is known about these

things.' (*Howards End*, 291.)

Helen has thus gained the same insight as Margaret (see p.100). She has also made the same mistake as Mr Wilcox. She has tried to settle a personal relationship with money. Her refusal to see Leonard Bast brings him to Howards End in search of news about Helen. He is accidentally killed by Charles Wilcox, the heir-at-law to Howards End, who has arrived to look after his rights. Charles is sent to prison for manslaughter. Mr Wilcox who has refused to see the connexion with his misconduct and that of Helen and to forgive as he had been forgiven by Margaret is thus severely punished. Both he and Helen are crushed and in need of help and Margaret makes Howards End the permanent home for all of them.

Mr Wilcox's breakdown has been effected at the cost of his former vitality. Grey and tired he is forced to stay indoors at Howards End on account of his hayfever. "The room was a little dark, and airless; they were obliged to keep it like this until the carting of the hay." (*Howards End*, 317.) Forster has made the Wilcox men suffer from hayfever to emphasize their separation from the past.

With his children's consent Mr Wilcox leaves Howards End to his wife. Through Charles' wife, Margaret also learns about Mrs Wilcox's attempt to bequeath Howards End to her. Margaret has thus triumphed. "She, who had never expected to conquer anyone, had charged straight through these Wilcoxes and broken up their lives." (*Howards End*, 318.)

The transference of Howards End from the late Mrs Wilcox to Margaret is symbolic of the fact that Margaret has succeeded where Mrs Wilcox failed in overcoming the Wilcox spirit. A mission begun by a woman of one generation, old Mrs Wilcox, is completed by one of the new generation, young Mrs Wilcox. Her

victory is not attained by adherence to the Victorian ideals of the good woman's influence but by her ability to resist her husband on issues of vital importance. She shows tolerance about matters where our knowledge is still imperfect, such as sexual behaviour. She also refuses to betray the sanctity of a personal relationship when she decides to support her sister. Forster even indicates the possibility of bridging the gap between the upper and the lower strata of the middle class by making Leonard Bast's son the heir presumptive to Howards End.

### NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>L.T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (London: 1909), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster. A Life*, 1:1.

<sup>3</sup>According to P.N. Furbank, Forster had a similar relationship to his mother; see Furbank, pp. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup>Lionel Trilling, *E.M. Forster* (New York: Laughlin, 1943), p. 118; John Colmer, *E.M. Forster, the Personal Voice* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 105-107; and Peter Widdowson, *E.M. Forster's Howards End* (London: Sussex U.P., 1977), pp. 21-36.

<sup>5</sup>Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, p. 107.

## Chapter IV

### YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN

#### Young Women in Virginia Woolf's Novels

One important theme in the novels of Virginia Woolf - the relationship between mother and daughter - was dealt with in a previous chapter. The mothers were seen from the point of view of the daughters in their traditional roles as wives.

Another important theme in the novels is the future of the young women. Relationships outside the family become decisive, particularly those with young men who are seen as prospective husbands. The young women are confronted with learned and intellectual men, whose attitudes to them are a source of vexation. Marriage is not seen as an obvious career, but the young women invariably find that few alternatives are open to them.

In her essay, "Two Women", Virginia Woolf commented on the scarcity of distinguished women recruited from the middle class, as compared to the great number of distinguished men drawn from that "great reservoir". She pointed to the conditions of women's lives that contributed to their persistent obscurity: marriage, child-bearing, lack of income, privacy and education. She put the blame on those stifling conditions and,

above all, on what she called "the negative education" that determined "not what you may do but what you may not do". Women had to find solace where they could get it, in religion or daydreaming, if they did not choose to let themselves be absorbed in domestic details.<sup>1</sup> Virginia Woolf's novels show how such traditions are carried from one generation of women to the next, through the attitudes of mothers to their daughters. They also show how men, young and old, influence the future of young women.

### Ignorant Young Women

In *The Voyage Out*, Rachel Vinrace, Virginia Woolf's first young heroine, had led an uneventful life under the supervision of two maiden aunts. Her father's only ambition for her was to bring her up in the way he imagined "her mother would have wished", that is to be an old-fashioned quiet girl (*Voyage Out*, 83). Consequently, her aunt, Mrs Ambrose, finds her strangely ignorant and innocent at the age of twenty-four. "There was nothing to take hold of in girls - nothing hard, permanent, satisfactory." (*Voyage Out*, 16.) It is inferred that Mrs Ambrose prefers young men who are supposed to have these qualities. Rachel's education had been very rudimentary, her only great interest being music.

The voyage to South America and the stay at a villa there provide Rachel with opportunities to observe people, young and middle-aged, and to get her life into perspective. At first she has very little to say for herself. When her uncle, Mr Ambrose, and his learned friend Mr Pepper talk together, they do not expect women to take part in the conversation with comments of their own. Mr Pepper is particularly dour in his attitude to women, even downright rude. "He had not married himself for the sufficient reason that he had never met a woman who commanded his

respect." (*Voyage Out*, 21.) It is not above him to quote in Greek simply in order to embarrass a woman whom he knows will not understand. Mr Ambrose, on his part, seems to be unaware of the cruelty of his remark to Rachel: "what's the use of reading if you don't read Greek?" (*Voyage Out*, 170.) Virginia Woolf, who herself struggled to overcome the handicap of not having had a formal education in Greek, was sensitive to this kind of remark.<sup>2</sup>

Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day*, Virginia Woolf's next novel, is the only daughter of parents who are securely ensconced in the literary establishment of London. Her romantic mother does not believe in college education for girls, and she has to pursue her studies in mathematics and astronomy secretly at night. Neither of her parents look upon her as anything but a paragon of practical virtues and common sense, and they do not understand her wish to get away from the chaos of feeling at home to the world of order created by facts and figures.

### Conceited Young Scholars

Both Rachel and Katharine are confronted with young versions of the scholar. In *The Voyage Out* there is St John Hirst, a guest at the hotel not far from the villa where Rachel is staying. Hirst finds women stupid. Whenever he is to meet a woman he has misgivings. His friend, Terence Hewet, also a guest at the hotel, wants him to learn to get along with women, but it is all too easy for him to adopt an attitude that enrages them. He asks Rachel, "Have you got a mind, or are you like the rest of your sex? You seem to me absurdly young compared with men of your age." (*Voyage Out*, 152.) Mrs Ambrose who is accustomed to young scholars is the only woman he likes to talk to. He tells her: "There never will be more than five people in the world worth talking to." (*Voyage Out*,

159.) Hewet informs Rachel that Hirst's family has great ambitions for him. They do everything to help him along, whereas his sister is required to wait on him. "No one takes her seriously, poor dear. She feeds the rabbits." (*Voyage Out*, 211.) This partiality to sons at the expense of daughters was another cause of annoyance to Virginia Woolf. (Cf. Ch. II p. 68) Hirst thinks very highly of himself, which infuriates Rachel enough to tell Hewet that men and women are no good to each other. "We should live separate; we cannot understand each other; we only bring out what's worst." (*Voyage Out*, 154.)

Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day*, who wants to get away from her home, sees marriage to William Rodney, a promising young scholar and writer, as a way out of her dilemma. Rodney has the same high opinion of himself as Hirst in *The Voyage Out*. "I dare say there are only five men in England whose opinion of my work matters a straw to me." (*Night and Day*, 130.) He expects Katharine to admire his achievements but has no more interest in her wish to acquire knowledge than her parents. "What do you women want with learning, when you have so much else - everything, I should say - everything. Leave us something eh, Katharine?" (*Night and Day*, 162-163.) Katharine cannot bring herself to give him the sympathy he is looking for, and William mistakes her attempts at sincerity for lack of consideration for his feelings. They begin to feel a mutual disenchantment with each other.

### The "Encouraging Type" of Young Woman

Katharine has tried to persuade herself that she loves Rodney and that he loves her. After a while she notices that he has begun to compare her with her cousin, Cassandra Otway, whom he finds more congenial. Cassandra makes the appropriate comments on Rodney's play; she listens to him with enthusiasm and vivacity.



She also knows how to promote conversation and smoothe over differences. Katharine realizes that William Rodney and Cassandra are better suited for each other. She finds the opportunity to break off her engagement and encourages them to fall in love, as Cassandra discovers: "You wanted us to fall in love." (*Night and Day*, 374.) Katharine herself is surprised at her own audacity in influencing "the life of another, as she had influenced Cassandra's life." (*Night and Day*, 400.)

Cassandra soon becomes engrossed in her love for William Rodney and interprets everything he says in a favourable light. Contrary to Katharine she knows how to put him at ease by controlling herself and assuming the feminine attitudes she knows that he likes.

### The Right Young Man

Virginia Woolf does not leave her young heroines with only one choice. Both Rachel and Katharine meet the right young man, who seems able to offer them alternatives to the sort of Victorian marriages their mothers had. Terence Hewet, in *The Voyage Out*, who in many respects is Virginia Woolf's spokesman, helps Rachel to open up and unfold her personality. He is depicted as an almost ideal young man with an independent income that makes professional ambition and competition superfluous. His attitudes to women are contrasted with Hirst's and with the help of his insight Rachel is able to put the relationship between herself and her father in perspective. Previously she had always taken his authority for granted.

"But did she really believe that? Hewet's words made her think. She always submitted to her father, just as they did, but it was her aunts who influenced her really; her aunts who built up the fine, closely woven

substance of their life at home. They were less splendid but more natural than her father was." (*Voyage Out*, 216.)

Though he loves Rachel, Hewet has apprehensions about marriage. He dislikes its twosomeness and the insincerity it brings. Even Mrs Ambrose, whom he admires, shows this lack of honesty where her husband is concerned. Hewet expresses the attitudes of Virginia Woolf and her generation to marriage as well as to essential qualities in people which they found lacking in the older generation. We will see the same views reiterated in Forster's novels.

What Hewet values in Rachel is her intelligence, her sincerity and her lack of servility. But above all he appreciates that she "understood what was said to her" (*Voyage Out*, 246). He intends to keep her free if they marry. "We'd be free together. We'd share everything together," he exclaims (*Voyage Out*, 247). There is something incompatible in his amalgamation of freedom and sharing.

The promising development of their relationship comes to an end with Rachel's death. Herbert Marder comments on the ending: "The reader suspects that Rachel was too jealous of her independence to marry anyone, and that the novelist has evaded the implications of this fact."<sup>3</sup> Another explanation might be that, in making Hewet her mouthpiece, Virginia Woolf gave him such an advantage over Rachel that it seemed to her impossible that she would be able to hold her ground with him. Rachel has become too much of a pupil in the relationship. On the very day of their engagement she saw him standing supernaturally enlarged, while she was lying on the ground. "Over her loomed two great heads, the heads of a man and a woman, of Terence and Helen." (*Voyage Out*, 288.) He is thus connected with the powerful mother-figure, her aunt Helen Ambrose, whose formidable presence diminished

her throughout the novel. (Cf. Ch.II p. 61) In her next novel, she gave the heroine, Katharine Hilbery, more strength of character to fall back on in her dealings with her male counterpart.

Katharine had the nerve to break off her engagement with Rodney when she realized it was a mistake. Afterwards she feels lonely but she is "determined to forget private misfortunes, to forget herself, to forget individual lives." (*Night and Day*, 327.) After some hesitation she resumes her friendship with Ralph Denham, a young lawyer, who is to play a role in Katharine's life which is similar to that of Terence Hewet in *Rachel's*. She finds that she can discuss her interests more openly with him than she ever could with William Rodney. Ralph admires her but she dislikes his tendency to worship her. She wants him to see her as she is without romantic delusions.

They discuss sincerity which Katharine's experiences make her think incompatible with family life and its obligations. She has always lived in a chaos of other people's wishes and feelings. Only when she was alone for three weeks could she do what she liked. Ralph outlines to her his conception of perfect friendship in which two people would be completely at liberty to break or change the relationship. In spite of their growing love they have difficulties in coming to terms with one another. Katharine has no faith in marriage, and they consider living together without ties. Through the interference of Mrs Hilbery they somewhat reluctantly agree to make their union more conventional.

In *William Rodney* Virginia Woolf created a portrait of a rather unattractive young scholar. Not only is he utterly conventional in his attitudes to women as well as to everything else, but he is also vain and cowardly (*Night and Day*, 188; 301). Cassandra is depicted as the kind of woman who appeals to men like

William. She is accomplished but cannot take up anything seriously. In this she is similar to the mother-figures in the novels (Cf. Ch. II p. 50-51). "The more serious prediction that she could possibly earn her living was also verified." (*Night and Day*, 317.)

Virginia Woolf stresses the opposite characters of Cassandra and Katharine. "In short, they represented very well the manly and the womanly sides of the feminine nature, and, for foundation, there was the profound unity of common blood between them." (*Night and Day*, 317.) Here she is perhaps toying with the idea of androgyny, which she was to develop later in *Orlando* (1928). Katharine and Cassandra seem to be doubles, thus stressing the ambivalence that runs through the novel and its characters, where resentment and affection seem to struggle for supremacy. The theme of the double, utilized in Rachel and Hewet in *The Voyage Out*, is reiterated in Katharine and Denham. The young couple, William Rodney and Cassandra, can be seen as doubles of Mr and Mrs Hilbery as well as of the Ambroses in *The Voyage Out*. Virginia Woolf was in these two novels mainly concerned with the plight of young women faced with the prospect of marriage. She indicated possible alternatives for her young protagonists by contrasting couples of two generations.<sup>4</sup>

### Towards a New Type of Marriage

The alternative to the Victorian type of marriage as typified by the Ambroses, the Hilberies and the Ramsays, which Virginia Woolf arrives at, is one where husband and wife are more independent, not a married couple but two individuals in a marriage. Rachel in *The Voyage Out* dies, perhaps fleeing from too dependent, too overshadowing a marriage to the winsome Terence Hewet. Mrs Dalloway, who appears briefly in *The Voyage Out*, has time to tell Rachel

about marriage: "What one wants in the person one lives with is that they should keep one at one's best."

(*Voyage Out*, 58.) When she reappears as the protagonist in *Mrs Dalloway* seven years later, she stresses independence more: "For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; . . ." She had abandoned Peter Walsh, the great love of her youth, because "with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into." (*Dalloway*, 10.)

Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day* has for a while a vision of a union based completely on love. But her mother persuades her against such a free relationship in a lengthy lyrical passage and by using maritime imagery which anticipates that of *To the Lighthouse* (*Night and Day*, 448-450).

A clearer picture of young Virginia Stephen's vision of marriage can be seen in the expectations she expressed in a letter to Leonard Woolf in 1912 shortly before their wedding:

I say to myself, Anyhow, you'll be quite happy with him, and he will give you companionship, children and a busy life - then I say By God, I will not look upon marriage as a profession . . . I sometimes feel that no one ever has or ever can share something - It's the thing that makes you call me like a hill, or a rock. Again, I want everything - love, children, adventure, intimacy, work.<sup>5</sup>

### The Family Tyrant

In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf returns to the scholar. Mr Ramsay, based on her father, Leslie Stephen, is seen in the midst of his family and friends. He displays the attitudes to women that she objected to in her earlier novels, *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. Here she is mainly concerned with the relationship between Mr and Mrs Ramsay but the impact

of that relationship on the children also becomes evident. Mr Ramsay's stern admonition to his eight children to accept facts, his obvious satisfaction in disappointing their expectations, his high views of his own discernment and his conviction that he himself never tampers with the truth, set them against him. He never tries to control his irritation which casts him in the role of a tyrant in the children's eyes. They also know that his exactingness does not really include himself. Mrs Ramsay has to conceal unpleasant facts from him and sustain him with her praise. His excessive demand for sympathy from his wife puts a heavy burden on her and the children. This becomes evident in the famous dinner scene where Mrs Ramsay despairs for a moment on account of Mr Ramsay's irritation. Minta Doyle who is sitting beside Mr Ramsay helps to save the situation by a display of feminine intuition. She "made herself out even more ignorant than she was, because he liked telling her she was a fool. And so to-night, directly he laughed at her, she was not frightened." (*Lighthouse*, 115.)

Among Mr Ramsay's friends at the summer house on Skye are Mr Bankes, the elderly botanist, and Charles Tansley, the young scholar, whose wish to assert himself at all times makes the Ramsay children hostile to him. Mr Bankes cherishes the Victorian ideal of what a woman should be like. He is a childless widower and a great admirer of Mrs Ramsay, who for him is the incarnation of all feminine virtues. He does not approve of the new generation of women. A hole in young Minta Doyle's stocking suggest- to him "the annihilation of womanhood, and dirt and disorder, and servants leaving and beds not made at midday - all the things he most abhorred". (*Lighthouse*, 199.)

Charles Tansley is another version of St John Hirst and William Rodney. He imitates Mr Ramsay in his emphasizing of fact and has a flair for saying disagreeable things. He tells Lily Briscoe who paints: "Women

can't write, women can't paint . . ." She asks herself: ". . . what did that matter coming from him, since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it?" (*Lighthouse*, 100.) Lily Briscoe reflects Virginia Woolf's own irritation at the parrotlike repetition of old prejudices, intended to humiliate women at large. The code of behaviour, insisted on by Mrs Ramsay, forces Lily to be nice to Tansley but she knows she has been insincere. Like Rachel in *The Voyage Out* after the encounter with Hirst, she feels that men and women always bring out the worst in one another (*Voyage Out*, 154; *Lighthouse*, 108).

Even a young boy like Andrew Ramsay adopts his father's attitude towards women. He is young enough to appreciate that Minta Doyle is a good walker and rather fearless. But he feels that she goes too far in "clapping him on the back, and calling him 'old fellow'". (*Lighthouse*, 87.) When Minta cries over her lost brooch, he is quick to generalize his annoyance. "She had no control over her emotions . . . Women hadn't." (*Lighthouse*, 89.) This constant denigration of women in general is characteristic of the academic men in Virginia Woolf's novels.

The structure of the novel, divided as it is into three parts with ten years between the first and the last part, enables Virginia Woolf to show how time brings distance and detachment even as regards painful memories. In the third part, Cam and James, now motherless, are united in a state of rebellion against Mr Ramsay's tyranny. Cam is torn between her father's silent appeal for sympathy and James's entreaty to resist. Mr Ramsay has adopted the same teasing attitude to Cam as he had practised upon Mrs Ramsay, but he finally asks himself if he did not "rather like this vagueness in women? It was part of their extraordinary charm." (*Lighthouse*, 193.) The expedition to the lighthouse, ten years delayed, is given sym-

bolic meaning as an act of release. It makes it possible for Cam and James to rid themselves of unpleasant childhood memories and to see their father in a new light. The form and content of the novel mirror Virginia Woolf's own success in coming to terms with the memory of her parents that had haunted her, throughout her literary career.

Virginia Woolf had what Forster, in his Rede Lecture, termed "spots" of feminism all over her work.<sup>6</sup> Her young women, in particular, echo the indignation of the writer herself at the attitudes of people who did not recognize them as individuals. The generalizations about women are put into the mouths of scholars and illustrate the way in which the academic mind worked, according to Virginia Woolf. Her alter egos are to be found among young men and women outside the academic establishment. In a letter to her sister, Vanessa Bell, dated 11 November, 1917, she expresses herself concerning the education of men: "My feeling is that excessive masculinity has to be guarded against; I mean young men do seem to me so selfish and assertive; which tends to my thinking to be frightfully boring . . ." <sup>7</sup>

In "A Sketch of the Past" Virginia Woolf calls attention to the fact that there was a substantial difference in age between her father Leslie Stephen and the four children by his second marriage. She says:

"Two different ages confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate: the Victorian age; and the Edwardian age. We were not his children, but his grandchildren. . . . The cruel thing was that while we could see the future, we were completely in the power of the past. That bred a violent struggle. By nature, both Vanessa and I were explorers, revolutionists, reformers. But our surroundings were at least fifty years behind the times. Father himself was a typical Victorian: George and Gerald [Virginia Woolf's halfbrothers] were unspeakably conventional. So that while we fought against



them as individuals we also fought against them in their public capacity. We were living say in 1910: they were living in 1860." <sup>8</sup>

As will be remembered, Virginia Woolf had declared already in 1924 that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed." <sup>9</sup>

## Young Women in Forster's Novels

Forster's early novels contain portraits of women, seen in their roles in the family. The power of the mother over her children was central to Forster as well as to Virginia Woolf. But his interest in the fate of young women differs radically from that of Virginia Woolf. Only in one of his novels, *A Room with a View*, did he use a young girl, Lucy Honeychurch, as a protagonist. Like Rachel Vinrace and Katharine Hilbery, Lucy is faced with the problem of choosing the right young man for her husband. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey* young men are the protagonists. Their relationships to young women are varied and complicated. The fate of the young woman is often unhappy.

### "Brotherhood at the Expense of Sisterhood"

As has been shown in a previous chapter, Mrs Herriton's power over the young women of her family is all but absolute. The widowed daughter-in-law, Lilia, is prevented from remarrying by various stratagems. Only when she escapes to Italy can she follow her heart's desire and marry an Italian, Gino, ten years her junior.

The marriage between Lilia and Gino turns out badly, as Mrs Herriton had foreseen. Lilia feels superior to him and thinks that she can change him to fit into her conceptions of what constitutes a good life. But she is up against a foreign culture that she does not

understand. She finds that in Italy men and women live in separate spheres even more than in England. There is a perfect brotherhood of men. "But it is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women." (*Where Angels*, 55.) The discovery of Gino's unfaithfulness increases her unhappiness and in her despair she writes a letter where she tries to analyse Gino to her daughter, Irma, but it is intercepted by Mrs Herriton. Lilia is told not to contact Irma again, and shortly afterwards she dies, having given birth to a son.

When Gino sends postcards to Irma from Monteriano, he is at once suspected of economic blackmail. Caroline Abbot, Lilia's friend, wants to know what the Herritons intend to do for the baby. Philip, who has recently found that he and Caroline have a mutual hatred of Sawston and its insincerity, thinks her guilty of impertinence. He goes as far as to suggest that she "ought to be well smacked, and sent back to Sunday-school." (*Where Angels*, 96.) He shares his mother's family pride. He is even more irritated when he finds Caroline Abbott already at Monteriano on his arrival there. "To be run by his mother and hectored by his sister was as much as he could stand. The intervention of a third female drove him suddenly beyond politeness." (*Where Angels*, 115.) Like Forster's other male protagonists, Philip is surrounded by too many women, mirroring experiences of a similar situation on the part of young Forster himself.

Philip is delighted when he is treated like a beloved brother by Gino and taken into the brotherhood of men. He was "enchanted by . . . the light caress of the arm across his back." (*Where Angels*, 137.)<sup>10</sup> Forster thus establishes a relationship between the young protagonist, Philip, and the outsider, Gino. The baby is forgotten.

Caroline Abbot is also susceptible to the atmosphere of Italy. She has to remind herself that she is there "to champion morality and purity, and the holy life of an English home." (*Where Angels*, 139.) Harriet and Caroline alike, judge Gino for his unfaithfulness to Lilia. To Harriet unfaithfulness is equal to murder and she tells Philip: "It's the supreme test. The man who is unchivalrous to a woman -" (*Where Angels*, 111). Her purity restrains her vocabulary but not her indignation. Caroline answers Philip in the same vein: "Do you suppose that I would have entered that man's house, knowing about him all that I do? I think you have very odd ideas of what is possible for a lady." (*Where Angels*, 122.) Sexual misconduct is the supreme sin for a "good woman".

While Gino and Philip enjoy life together, Harriet and Caroline are intent on doing their duty, that is, to save the baby from its sinful father. When Caroline finally sees Gino with his baby son, she understands that, whatever he is lacking in morality, his love for his child is genuine. They have no right to interfere. When Philip arrives he finds her with the naked baby on her knee and Gino kneeling before her. The wide view behind them reminds Philip of a Renaissance painting of "the Virgin and Child, with Donor." (*Where Angels*, 157.)

The aesthete translates the human situation - one of the most tender in the whole of Forster's fiction - into a well-known motive in art. Mr Banks looked at Mrs Ramsay and her son in the same way in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (*Lighthouse*, 61).

Caroline wants Philip to take Harriet away immediately, but he claims he is "born not to do things." (*Where Angels*, 168.) He spends his time with Gino. When they finally leave, Philip finds that Harriet has the baby. He believes that Gino, his new-found friend, has sold the baby to her out of greed and weakness. He accuses

Harriet of despising him and Gino. "But you do us no good by it. We fools want some one to set us on our feet. Suppose a really decent woman had set up Gino - I believe Caroline Abbott might have done it - mightn't he have been another man?" (*Where Angels*, 181.) Philip shows himself as a believer in the Victorian attitude of transferring the moral responsibility to a "good" woman. Caroline herself had expressed the opinion that she might have been able to influence Gino for the better (*Where Angels*, 86).

The baby is killed in an accident and Philip has to bring the news to Gino. He encounters a man with a passion so strong that he does not even shun violence and cruelty. Only Caroline's arrival saves Philip's life. In his eyes she has now assumed the proportions of a goddess. "There came to him an earnest desire to be good through the example of this good woman. He would try henceforward to be worthy of the things she had revealed. . . . He was saved." (*Where Angels*, 192.) Caroline is thus taken out of her human context and elevated to the heights where Victorian men liked to see their women.

The fight and the ritual of reconciliation, brought about by Caroline, have created a tie of friendship between Philip and Gino of "almost alarming intimacy." (*Where Angels*, 194.) By now Philip is also very much in love with Caroline, but she tells him that for her "all the wonderful things are over." (*Where Angels*, 199.) Her secret is that she loves Gino with genuine passion in spite of everything she knows about him. If he had asked her she would have given him everything. "But all through he took me for a superior being - a goddess. I who was worshipping every inch of him, and every word he spoke. And that saved me." (*Where Angels*, 204.) Forster's use of the word "saved" for both Philip and Caroline is fraught with ambiguity. Admittedly, Philip is "saved" from his former inanity, from Sawston and from his mother.

But Caroline is only "saved" for the life of a spinster in Sawston. Philip and Caroline both love Gino for his genuineness. Forster has rewarded Philip with Gino's friendship but deprived Caroline of human love. She has to be content with the kind of life that Philip has once outlined for her. "There is . . . nothing that can stop you retreating into splendour and beauty - into the thoughts and beliefs that make the real life - the real you." (*Where Angels*, 89.)

Gino, the Italian outsider of low birth, had broken into the placid lives of three English women. The encounter with him led to disaster for all of them.

Forster's young women are more seldom beset with the criticism of scholars. *The Longest Journey*, the most personal of his early novels, provides an exception. Its main character is Rickie Elliot, a young Cambridge student. One of his fellow-students, Stewart Ansell, shares the same attitude of contempt towards women in general that Virginia Woolf exhibits in her scholars. Agnes Pembroke, a young lady-friend of Rickie's, comes to visit him at Cambridge and Ansell refuses to take her outstretched hand when introduced to her. He denies that he has seen her, referring to a philosophical discussion they have just had. Ansell who is very attached to Rickie has no reason to be jealous of Agnes who is engaged to a young athlete, Gerald Dawes. It is an almost instinctive repulsion he expresses. A similar reaction to Agnes is later voiced by Mr Jackson, a classical scholar, who compares her to "Medusa in Arcady" (*Longest Journey*, 182). Rickie himself has difficulties in finding a classical parallel for her. "She slipped between examples. A kindly Medea, a Cleopatra with a sense of duty - these suggested her a little." (*Longest Journey*, 53.) These comparisons hint at something

sinister in the beautiful, well-mannered young Agnes from Sawston - a touch of the Fatal Woman in the suburb. They also indicate Rickie's education and way of thinking.

Agnes's fiancé dies suddenly and though Rickie knows that she has lost her great love, he is attracted to her. They become engaged and Ansell's opposition hardens. His criticism takes the form of a general disparagement of women. "Stupid women, why shouldn't they wait? Why should they interfere with their betters?" (*Longest Journey*, 71.) Another Cambridge friend who finds Rickie effeminate believes that Agnes will make a man of him.

Rickie's engagement to Agnes leads to a break in the friendship with Ansell. Each supports his arguments with reference to literary sources. In Forster's depiction the two men are very young and have little personal experience of women. Ansell states Agnes's faults with scholarly bluntness:

"(1) She is not serious.

(2) She is not truthful." (*Longest Journey*, 87.)

Mr Pembroke, Agnes's brother, offers Rickie a position as assistant master at Sawston School, which makes it possible for him to marry Agnes. It turns out that Agnes is a very efficient housekeeper, but she is also established as the narrow-minded, conventional type of woman that Forster most abhorred. Rickie loves her but cannot blind himself to her faults in the long run. "She did not like discussing anything or reading solid books, and she was a little angry with such women as did." (*Longest Journey*, 147.) Rickie is very unsuited for his work, and Agnes soon ceases to respect him. She does not believe in his writing.

The real testing of Agnes comes with the disclosure that Rickie has an illegitimate half-brother, Stephen

Wonham. The only thing that matters to her is keeping the scandal quiet and she persuades Rickie to see things her way, thus stifling his spontaneous reaction to do what he feels is right, to acknowledge Stephen as his brother. Through the interference of Ansell, Rickie becomes aware of the extent of Agnes's intrigues against Stephen, who turns out to be the son of his beloved mother and not of his hated father, as he had believed. Forster does not spare Agnes in the last stages of her marriage to Rickie. He points out that she too had her tragedy, the loss of her true love. But at the same time he stresses her fear of scandal and feelings of fury and revenge after the break.

Stephen Wonham, who is clearly meant to be the touchstone by which other people are judged, tells Rickie: "Don't hang on me clothes that don't belong - as you did on your wife, giving her saint's robes, whereas she was simply a woman of her own sort, who needed careful watching." (*Longest Journey*, 266.) Forster has given Stephen the role of the outsider, whose appearance at Sawston disrupts Rickie's marriage. His great advantage is that he has managed to escape convention and protection as well as higher education. Mrs Failing, Rickie's aunt, who took care of Stephen to save the family from scandal, had made "no attempt to mould him; and he, for his part, was very content to harden untouched into a man." (*Longest Journey*, 242.) Once again Forster has established a relationship between a weak young man and a rough and genuine male.

Rickie is not able to see Stephen as a human being in his own right. He tries to mould him according to his notions instead of simply loving him. His failure is atoned when he saves Stephen's life at the expense of his own.



In Agnes Forster portrayed a beautiful young woman who proves to be destructive to her husband. She is the character closest to being a Fatal Woman in his fiction. Forster implies that Rickie was not strong enough for her. Gerald Dawes, formerly prefect and bully at Rickie's public school, would have been her match had he lived. So would Stephen, who immediately recognizes her for what she is. She on her part is reminded of Gerald when she sees Stephen.

In *The Longest Journey* only the strong survive. The indomitable Agnes remarries and has a son. Stephen has taken up farming like his father, is married and has a daughter, named after his and Rickie's mother. Rickie, on the other hand, is granted eternal life through his short stories, which are finally published and well received.

"You must marry, or . . ."

The Sawston, that was partly to blame for the failure of Rickie and Agnes, had appeared also in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. In Forster's third novel, *A Room with a View*, Summer Street, a country village, is substituted for Sawston. The scene is also laid in Italy, where a young Summer Street girl, Lucy Honeychurch, is confronted with both Italian freedom and suburban convention, the latter in the form of her chaperon, Miss Bartlett. Lucy is spontaneous and rather talkative, naturally interested in all her fellow-beings in the hope that they will be nice. Miss Bartlett sees it as her task to make Lucy acquainted with the perils surrounding a young girl. The worst of these perils are, of course, associated with men and Miss Bartlett impresses on Lucy that a young girl cannot be careful enough.

Miss Bartlett is the stronghold of the conventional forces rallying around Lucy. She is supported by two

clergymen, Mr Beebe and Mr Eager, two elderly ladies, the Miss Alans, and a woman novelist, Miss Lavish. On the opposite side, the side of freedom, are Mr Emerson and his son George, who are found not to be quite acceptable socially by their English fellow-pensioners in Italy. The Emersons are the natural people and like Gino in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and Stephen Wonham in *The Longest Journey*, they serve as the touchstone by which the other characters are tested. Miss Bartlett fails the test at once and so does Mr Eager, an old adversary of Mr Emerson's. The Miss Alans are, in spite of the fact that they are old spinsters and dedicated to Victorian delicacy, more ready to suspend their judgement for charitable reasons. Mr Beebe is rather gossipy and furnishes the ladies with information about the Emersons.<sup>11</sup> Miss Lavish who boasts of her democracy ridicules the Emersons.

The room with the view that has given the novel its title, is offered Lucy and Miss Bartlett by the Emersons. "Women like looking at a view; men don't," says Mr Emerson (*A Room*, 9). His generalizations are not reiterations of commonplace conceptions but his observations of men and women. Only Lucy is interested in the view, whereas Miss Bartlett fastens her window-shutters. This outward-inward movement is stressed throughout the novel.

When alone with Lucy in Santa Croce, Mr Emerson talks to her about his son George. She is ill at ease because Miss Bartlett has made her perceive that there is an accepted type of behaviour within her social class that she does not master. Miss Bartlett has taught her that practically everything that excites her is out of the question.

It was unladylike. Why? Why were most big things unladylike? Charlotte had once explained to her why. It was not that ladies

were inferior to men; it was that they were different. Their mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves. Indirectly, by means of tact and a spotless name, a lady could accomplish much. But if she rushed into the fray herself she would be first censured, then despised, and finally ignored. Poems had been written to illustrate this point. (*A Room*, 45.)

It is difficult to find a more explicit statement of that which constituted the very core of the Victorian doctrine of womanhood as it was expounded by Ruskin.<sup>12</sup>

The lessons which Miss Bartlett teaches take her further and further away from excitement, whereas every encounter with the Emersons opens new vistas. George and Lucy become conscious of each other when he catches her as she faints after having witnessed a stabbing in the Piazza. Lionel Trilling sees this episode with its sudden introduction of evil as "symbolic not only of the novel's point but also of its method."<sup>13</sup>

Thinking about George, Lucy decides that he is "trustworthy, intelligent, and even kind; he might even have a high opinion of her. But he lacked chivalry." (*A Room*, 51.) She has been taught by Miss Bartlett to look for chivalry in men and set aside or disregard real virtues, though she recognizes them. Lucy instinctively reacts in the right way, and in the course of the novel she develops and learns to judge people. She quickly discovers the true natures of Mr Eager and Miss Lavish. "They were tried by some new test, and they were found wanting." (*A Room*, 59.)

The crucial event in the first part of the novel is the excursion into the hills above Florence. Lucy has tried to avoid George Emerson but here they are thrown together by accident. She falls down a flower-decked hillside and again ends up in George's arms. He finds it natural to kiss her, but Miss Bartlett

comes upon them and "stood brown against the view." (*A Room*, 75.) Miss Bartlett is blocking Lucy's view both literally and figuratively. Lucy relies on her ability to explain what has happened. But Miss Bartlett's only concern is to make George keep quiet. She is convinced that he is the worst kind of cad. Lucy must promise not to tell her mother or anyone else. This is a deviation from the Victorian code of behaviour which prescribed that young women should have no secrets from their mothers. Miss Bartlett decides that they shall leave for Rome early the next morning. Lucy sees George through the window, but Miss Bartlett intercepts him before she is able to have a word with him.

In Part Two of the novel, Lucy is back in England and engaged to another young man, Cecil Vyse, who meets all the requirements a mother can have on her daughter's suitor. But Freddy, Lucy's younger brother, does not like Cecil, though he finds it difficult to define what is wrong with him, except that he is "the kind of fellow who would never wear another fellow's cap." (*A Room*, 91-92.) Cecil discovers that Italy has brought out features in Lucy that remind him of a Leonardo da Vinci portrait. He sees her as a work of art that he will rescue from surroundings that he finds increasingly vulgar. He veils his criticism in clever remarks to Lucy, who is similar to Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, not only in her piano-playing but also in her ability to understand what is said to her. Cecil makes the mistake of asking for permission to kiss Lucy and in so doing invites comparison with George.

Unwittingly, Cecil assists in bringing the Emersons into the neighbourhood. Freddy, who instantly likes the Emersons, takes George and Mr Beebe to bathe in the pond on the Honeychurch estate, which has an almost magic effect on them. They play and run around naked, until they are surprised by Mrs Honeychurch,

Lucy and Cecil, who tries to steer the ladies away. Lucy is upset at the sight of George, radiant with life "against the shadowy woods" (*A Room*, 141). George is again connected with exciting and unconventional happenings out-of-doors.

Despite Lucy's protests, Miss Bartlett is invited to Windy Corner, the Honeychurches' house. Action now resumes speed as the forces for freedom and convention meet again. After a tennis-game, George finds an opportunity to kiss Lucy and tell her what he thinks about Cecil. In his opinion Cecil does not allow Lucy to think or decide for herself. He must admit, though, that he too wants her to listen to him. "This desire to govern a woman - it lies very deep, and men and women must fight it together before they shall enter the garden." (*A Room*, 178.) He voices the idea of a new comradeship between men and women that his father had advanced earlier. But the presence of Miss Bartlett compels Lucy to send George away.

Later in the evening, she makes a scene with Cecil, enumerating rather angrily all the things that have irritated her about him. Cecil behaves better than she had expected. He only demands the right to know why she does not love him any longer. To her annoyance, she finds herself quoting George. The scene ends with the breaking off of their engagement.

Lucy has thus rejected both Cecil, the conventional man and George, the natural man and as Forster puts it in an often quoted phrase, "joined the vast armies of the benighted". Like Miss Bartlett, she has "sinned against passion and truth" (*A Room*, 186). Her main concern from now on is to keep her broken engagement secret to George and her involvement with George secret to her family. To avoid further complications, she prepares to join the Miss Alans on a voyage to Greece.

Lucy is saved by a series of coincidences. An analysis of the plot structure shows that Forster made the contending forces work together for a happy ending. Everything that the forces of convention have done to separate Lucy and George serves to bring them together in the long run. The main defender of the Victorian ideals, Miss Bartlett, keeps the image of George alive in Lucy's mind. Her most powerful ally, Mr Beebe, the staunch but clandestine advocate of celibacy, incidentally gives Mr Emerson an opportunity to speak to Lucy about George's feelings for her. Mr Beebe is also selected to bring the news of Lucy's broken engagement to Mr Emerson's notice.

Lucy and George have been let off easily in comparison with the other young couples in Forster's novels. The happy ending contributes to make *A Room with a View* a light comedy, where the dark powers of convention are held at bay. Forster had planned and partly executed the novel already in 1903, five years before it was published, which perhaps accounts for the youthful optimism of it.

In the novel the ideals of the Victorian age clash with the ideals of a new age, ideals which are not yet clearly formulated and certainly not widely accepted. The story may seem somewhat absurd in its depiction of the anxiety of elderly ladies over the propriety of manners and behaviour. But the impact of the underlying ideals felt very real to those who were exposed to them. This is testified by Leonard Woolf who states in his autobiography: "People who were born too late to experience in boyhood and adolescence the intellectual and moral pressure of Victorianism have no idea of the feeling of fog and fetters which weighed one down."<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

- <sup>1</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, 4:61-63.
- <sup>2</sup> Bell, *Virginia Woolf. A Biography*, 1:27; 1:68.
- <sup>3</sup> Marder, *Feminism and Art*, p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup> For a discussion of Virginia Woolf's opposing principles, see Marder, pp. 125-127.
- <sup>5</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Flight of the Mind. The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. 3 vols. Ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth, 1975), 1:496.
- <sup>6</sup> E.M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy*, p. 261.
- <sup>7</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Question of Things Happening. The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. 3 vols. Ed. Nigel Nicolson, (London: Hogarth, 1976), 2:195.
- <sup>8</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*, pp. 126-127.
- <sup>9</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, 1:320.
- <sup>10</sup> Perhaps one of the few overt indications of Forster's homosexual inclinations. Cf. *Maurice*. Penguin 1971, p. 217 (Terminal note), where Forster describes a visit to Edward Carpenter. "George Merrill also touched my backside - gently and just above the buttocks . . . The sensation was unusual and I still remember it, as I remember the position of a long vanished tooth."
- <sup>11</sup> Lionel Trilling, *E.M. Forster* (New York: 1964), pp. 108-112.
- <sup>12</sup> E.M. Forster, *Two Cheers*, p. 306 for Forster's ownership of Ruskin's works.
- <sup>13</sup> Trilling, p. 99.
- <sup>14</sup> Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again* (London: Hogarth, 1964), p. 34.

## SUMMARY

The novels examined here were selected because of their concern with women and the position of women in families dominated by Victorian ideals. These ideals still prevailed during the childhood and youth of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster and the female characters in their books were studied from the point of view of their relationships as wives, mothers, daughters and prospective brides.

The ideals of Victorian womanhood were outlined in Chapter I, which also traced the origins of these ideals. The importance of Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens" was emphasized, since it was a particularly influential document among the section of the middle class to which Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster belonged. A short section containing biographical information about the writers' family backgrounds and later interaction in the Bloomsbury Group was also included in Chapter I.

Chapter II dealt with the wives and mothers in Virginia Woolf's novels. It was shown that a husband-wife relationship, as Ruskin had conceived it, tended to make the husband emotionally dependent on his wife to such



an extent that he was prevented from having a detached view of himself and his situation. This powerful emotional influence was counteracted by his assertion of his intellectual and educational superiority. The wife had to submit to being regarded as incapable of understanding issues related to scholarship and politics. In consequence the relationship was debased by insincerity on the part of the wife and self-deception on the part of the husband. It easily became too trying emotionally for the wife who had to neglect her children in favour of her husband.

The effects of this kind of relationship were illustrated in the marriages of Mr and Mrs Ambrose in *The Voyage Out* and Mr and Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*. The relationship between Mr and Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day* and Mr and Mrs Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway*, while shown to be based on the same ideology, had turned out somewhat differently because of the dispositions of the wives. Mrs Hilbery's romanticism and Mrs Dalloway's preoccupation with parties provided them with spheres of activity that to some extent transcended those of the common Victorian housewife. They were both seen against the richer background of London life, whereas Virginia Woolf had removed the Ambroses and the Ramsays from their ordinary surroundings.

The mother-daughter relationship was found to be preponderant in the four novels by Virginia Woolf. It was characterized by a feeling of inferiority on the part of the daughters, who inclined to regard their mothers as being larger than life. The daughters were torn between feelings of love and resentment. They admired their mothers but were afraid of being given only one alternative for their future lives, that of being a wife and mother. The mothers were all seen from the viewpoint of the daughters. There is a variety of mothers and the maternal influence on the daughters differs from novel to novel.

Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* grew up as a lonely girl in a household dominated by two maiden aunts. She sought sisterly companionship from her mother-figure, Mrs Ambrose. But Mrs Ambrose remained too much of an authority in the relationship by adopting an attitude of protection rather than one of equality.

Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day* opposed the romanticism of her mother by cultivating the sensible and rational sides of her personality and suppressing her emotional demands. Her mother had therefore found it convenient to saddle her with the prosaic household chores. The mother-daughter relationship was restored to its original state when Katharine accepted the emotional side of her personality.

Elizabeth Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* was torn between her elegant and fashionable hostess of a mother and her teacher, Miss Kilman, who had not been selected with the care that, for instance, Ruskin prescribed for a girl's teacher. Elizabeth was thus not presented with a viable alternative to the society life of her mother, though she had become aware of the possibilities open to young women of her generation.

Lily Briscoe was established as a reliable observer of the mother-figure, Mrs Ramsay, in *To the Lighthouse*. Virginia Woolf placed her outside the family context but in the emotional relationship of a daughter to her mother. Lily was the only one of the daughter-figures who achieved independence from the powerful mother-figure and found a satisfactory option to married life in the life of the artist.

Virginia Woolf's portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship conveys a strong impression of the importance of the mother for the future of the daughters. The Victorian ideal of womanhood had invested the mothers with next to invincible power, which is effectively illustrated by Virginia Woolf's inflation

of them into characters of supernatural size.

In Forster's novels, which were treated in Chapter III, the most characteristic feature was a fatherless family. He portrayed mothers who dealt with this situation in different ways. The social setting was very important for the manner in which they responded to their tasks as mothers. Forster thus shows that the social pressure on the suburban mother forced her into a circumscribed interpretation of the prevailing code of behaviour and an exaggerated anxiety to keep her children within narrow bounds. Mrs Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was like this. Though not at all of the goddess-like proportions of the mothers in Virginia Woolf's novels, she had a degree of refinement, elegance and tact that her daughter Harriet could not attain. Mrs Herriton's attitude also precluded any display of emotions, which further impaired her relationships with her children. Her daughter took refuge in religion, her son in aestheticism. Forster also demonstrated that under Mrs Herriton's smooth surface there were powerful feelings of rage and pride that could suddenly explode.

In *The Longest Journey* Forster depicted the plight of a young mother who was on the point of being stifled in the same suburban surroundings that had produced Mrs Herriton. She met genuine love, typically enough in the guise of a young outsider who was her social inferior. Premature death cut short her plans for a better life out of the suburb. Forster conveys an impression of the powerful social pressure that forbade adulterous relations within the middle class.

A removal to another social setting - the country village - in *A Room with a View* indicates Forster's belief in a more natural life style than the rigidly conventional one that prevailed in the suburb. Mrs Honeychurch was shaped by her surroundings into a no-nonsense, unsentimental but not unfeeling mother,

whose relationships with her son and daughter were on the whole very satisfactory. She had the limitations that the predominating Victorian code of behaviour imposed on women but she never exaggerated. She endorsed masculine men rather than over-refined women.

The mother-daughter relationship reached its highest level of complication in *Howards End*, because of its fusion with the husband-wife relationship. The inefficacy of the good Victorian wife and mother, Mrs Wilcox, made it necessary to transfer the responsibility for the salvation of the good life - which Forster here identifies with a life that takes the wisdom of the past into consideration - to someone outside her own unregenerate family. Margaret Schlegel, the representative of a new type of woman and young enough to be Mrs Wilcox's daughter, established herself as the real heir to Howards End, Mrs Wilcox's ancestral home. But, as Forster states: "A wife may be replaced; a mother never". (*Howards End*, 88.) Margaret was able to accomplish the conversion of Mr Wilcox but his children remained unconverted.

The mother-figures in Forster's and Virginia Woolf's novels were found to have many characteristics in common. They had a dominant position with regard to their children. There was also a certain distance between mother and children. As a male observer of womanhood Forster stressed the effects of a predominantly female household on a young man deprived of a father-figure. His novels contain a number of young men, rather similar to the young women in Virginia Woolf's novels, in their uncertainty and reluctance to get involved with life. They were looking for a male companion rather than a female.

Chapter IV considered male attitudes to young women and the problems connected with the choice of a prospective husband in the novels of both writers. In Virginia Woolf's novels there were a number of

scholarly men, young and old, who displayed the same attitude of condescension to women. They aired age-old, more or less stereotyped views about women, which antagonized the young women. The wives and mothers knew how to appease these men by means of diplomacy and sympathy, adopting the very methods recommended by Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies*. Their sympathy was mixed with pity for the men, though, "as if they lacked something" (*Lighthouse*, 99). Among the young scholars were St John Hirst in *The Voyage Out*, William Rodney in *Night and Day* and Charles Tansley in *To the Lighthouse*.

There were also alternative young men, e.g. Terence Hewet in *The Voyage Out* and Ralph Denham in *Night and Day*, who were not part of the academic establishment. There was an understanding between them and the young female protagonists, which echoes the views of the writer. Rachel Vinrace became engaged to Hewet, but her premature death probably indicates hesitation on the part of Virginia Woolf as to the validity of their union. In *Night and Day* the protagonist, Katharine Hilbery faced the choice between the scholarly young man, William Rodney, and the eligible young man, Ralph Denham. Virginia Woolf made her reject Rodney and the kind of life a marriage with him would lead to. By introducing another young woman, Cassandra, who was willing to love Rodney on his terms, Virginia Woolf demonstrates how die-hard the Victorian ideals and attitudes were.

In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf also portrayed the scholar as father. Mr Ramsay, modelled on her father, Leslie Stephen, incurred the hostility of his children because of his tyrannical demands. Lily Briscoe, the perceptive observer of the Ramsays, finally adopted a conciliatory attitude towards him, indicating that Virginia Woolf, as is evident from her retrospective "A Sketch of the Past", had come to realize that the sheer difference in age between Stephen and his

children explained much of the irritation on both sides.

The young women in Forster's novels were found to follow a somewhat different pattern. They were either crushed by maternal authority in combination with suburban narrowness and religious bigotry, like Harriet Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; or swallowed up by suburban conventions, like Agnes Pembroke, Rickie Elliot's wife, in *The Longest Journey*. Agnes was also exposed to scholarly contempt of the same kind as that which disturbed the young protagonists in Virginia Woolf's novels. Since she was deprived of her true love but chose to marry Rickie whom she neither loved nor suited, she became a destructive influence in his life. Forster was generally hard on the young female characters in his novels. Caroline Abbott in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, who fell passionately in love with the Italian Gino, had to retire to a life as a spinster in Sawston. Her only consolation would be the opportunity to get occasional news about the man she loved from the young protagonist, Philip Herriton, who looked forward to future meetings with his new-found friend Gino.

The only Forster heroine who was let off easily was Lucy Honeychurch in *A Room with a View*. She was in danger of making a wrong choice, again as a result of suburban influence, but she was finally united with the right young man, George Emerson. As has been indicated, Forster's protagonists were young men, deprived of a father. Forster, in his concern with plot, made frequent use of the stranger or outsider, whose role it was to disturb the peace and disrupt the quiet self-complacency of the community. A relationship was established with him and the young male protagonist. Gino, the young Italian in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, befriended Philip Herriton; Stephen Wonham in *The Longest Journey* turned out to be the half-brother of Rickie Elliot. The outsiders were often socially

unacceptable in middle-class circles like the Emersons  
in *A Room with a View* or the Basts in *Howards End*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Works by E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf

- Forster, E.M. *Abinger Harvest*. London: Arnold, 1936; Penguin, 1967.
- *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Arnold, 1927. Penguin, 1970.
- *Howards End*. London: Arnold, 1910. Penguin, 1961.
- *The Longest Journey*. London: Arnold, 1907. Penguin, 1960.
- *Marianne Thornton. A Domestic Biography*. London: Arnold, 1975.
- *A Room with a View*. London: Arnold 1908. Penguin, 1955.
- *Two Cheers for Democracy*. London: Arnold, 1951. Penguin, 1972.
- *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. London: Arnold, 1905.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Between the Acts*. London: Hogarth, 1941. Penguin, 1972.
- *Collected Essays*. 4 vols. London: Hogarth, 1967.
- *The Flight of the Mind. The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. 3 vols. Ed. Nigel Nicolson. London: Hogarth, 1975.



- *Jacob's Room*. Richmond:Hogarth, 1922. Penguin, 1965.
- *Moments of Being*. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. New York & London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976.
- *Mrs Dalloway*. London: Hogarth, 1925. Penguin, 1964.
- *Night and Day*. London: Duckworth, 1919. Penguin, 1969.
- *Orlando*. London: Hogarth, 1928.
- *The Question of Things Happening. The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. 3 vols. Ed. Nigel Nicolson London: Hogarth, 1976.
- *A Room of One's Own*. London: Hogarth, 1929, Penguin, 1970.
- *Three Guineas*. London: Hogarth, 1938. Penguin, 1977.
- *To the Lighthouse*. London: Hogarth, 1927. Everyman's Library, 1964.
- *The Voyage Out*. London: Duckworth, 1915, Penguin, 1970.
- *A Writer's Diary*. ed. Leonard Woolf. London: Hogarth, 1953.

### Works Quoted or Referred to

- Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood*. Translated by Robert Baldrick. London: Cape, 1962.
- Banks, J.A. and Banks, O. *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England*. Liverpool: Liverpool U.P., 1964.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H.M. Parshley. 1953; Penguin, 1972.
- Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf. A Biography*. 2 vols. London: Hogarth, 1972.
- Bennett, Joan. *Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1945.
- Boas, George. *The History of Ideas*. New York: Scribner's, 1969.
- Boswell's Life of Johnson*. London: Oxford U.P., new ed., 1961.
- Brittain, Vera. *Lady into Woman: A History of Women from Victoria to Elizabeth II*. London: Andrew Dakers, 1953.
- Clark, Alice. *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Routledge, 1919; reprint ed. Frank Cass & Co., 1968.
- Claydon, Leslie. ed. *Rousseau, On Education*. London: 1969.
- Colmer, John. *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice*. London: Routledge, 1975.

- Cunningham, A.R. "The New Woman Fiction" of the 1890's.  
*Victorian Studies* 17 (1973): 177-186.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species*. London,  
1859.
- *The Descent of Man*. London, 1871; reprint ed.,  
London: J. Murray, 1906.
- Foucault, Michel. *Historie de la sexualité*. 4 vols.  
1: *La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.
- Furbank, P.N. *E.M. Forster: A Life*. 2 vols. London:  
Secker & Warburg, 1977.
- Hobhouse, L.T. *Democracy and Reaction*. London: Unwin,  
1904.
- Holter, Harriet. *Sex Roles and Social Structure*.  
Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970.
- Houghton, Walter E. *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-  
1870*. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1957.
- Hunt, John Dixon. *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination 1848-  
1900*. London: Routledge, 1968.
- International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.  
17 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1968.
- Key, Mary Ritchie. *Male/Female Language*. Metuchen,  
N.J.: Scarecrow, 1975.
- Lorichs, Sonja. *The Unwomanly Woman in Bernard Shaw's  
Drama and Her Social and Political Background*.  
Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1973.
- Marcus, Steven. *The Other Victorians*. London: Weiden-  
feld & Nicolson, 1966; Corgi Books, 1969.
- Marder, Herbert. *Feminism and Art*. Chicago: U. of  
Chicago P., 1972.
- Mill, John Stuart. *Autobiography*. London: Longmans,  
1867; 2nd ed., 1873.
- *The Subjection of Women*. London, 1869.
- Miller, George A. *Psychology*. New York: Harper & Row,  
1962.
- Murray, Robert H. *Studies in the English Social and  
Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century*.  
2 vols. Cambridge: Heffer, 1929; reprint, 1972.
- Peterson, Jeanne M. "The Victorian Governess: Status  
Incongruence in Family and Society, *Victorian  
Studies* 14 (1970/71).

- Praz, Mario. *The Hero in Eclipse*. Translated by Angus Davidson. London: Oxford U.P., 1956; Oxford U.P. Paperback, 1969.
- *The Romantic Agony*. Translated by Angus Davidson. London: Oxford U.P., 1933; reprint ed. 1970.
- Recollections of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. J.R. Noble. London: Owen, 1972; Penguin, 1975.
- Rowse, A.L. *The England of Elizabeth*. London: Macmillan, 1950; reprint ed., 1962.
- Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies*. 1865; complete ed., London: G. Allen. 1906.
- Ryder J. and Silver, H. *Modern English Society*. History and Structure 1850-1870. London: Methuen, 1970.
- Schenk, H.G. *The Mind of the European Romantics*. London: Constable, 1966.
- Shorter, Edward. "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution and Social Change in Modern Europe". *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1971): 237-272.
- Stenton, Doris Mary. *English Woman in History*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1957.
- Trevelyan, George Macauley. *History of England*. 3rd ed. London: Longmans, Green. 1945.
- *English Social History*. London: Longmans, Green. 1942; Penguin, 1964.
- Trilling, Lionel. *E.M. Forster*. New York: James Laughlin. 1943; New Directions Books, 1963.
- Utley, Francis Lee. *The Crooked Rib*. Columbus, Ohio: State University, 1944.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1957; Penguin, 1963; reprint ed., 1968.
- Widdowson, Peter. *E.M. Forster's Howards End*. London: Sussex U.P., 1977.
- Willey, Basil. *Nineteenth Century Studies*. Coleridge to Matthew Arnold. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. 1792.
- Woolf, Leonard, *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939*. London: Hogarth, 1967.
- *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918*. London: Hogarth, 1964.

-- *Sowing: An Autobiography of the Years 1880-1904.*  
London: Hogarth, 1960.

Young, G.M. *Early Victorian England.* London: Oxford  
U.P., 1934.



- 1 *Bertil Malmbergs skolpojksbrev*. Utgivna av Sven Wallmark. 1975.
- 2 *Saga-Marianne Norlén & Teut Wallner*. Skriftatlas för datering av Birger Sjöbergs manuskript. 1974.
- 3 *Karin Eriksson*. Studier i Umeå stads byggnadshistoria. Från 1621 till omkring 1895. Diss. 1975.
- 4 *Sylvia Danielson*. Läroboksspråk. En undersökning av språket i vissa läroböcker för högstadium och gymnasium. Diss. 1975.
- 5 *Sigurd Fries*. Svenska växtnamn i riksspråk och dialekt. 1975.
- 6 *Folke Nordström*. Mediaeval baptismal fonts. An iconographical study. Ut kommer 1979.
- 7 *Sven-Bertil Jansson*. Folket, de bildade och landsmålsliteraturen. Svensk dialektdikt 1875–1900. 1975.
- 8 *Jan Nilsson*. Plurala ortnamn på Island. Morfologiska iakttagelser. Diss. 1975.
- 9 *Sylvia Danielson*. Samuel Columbus' språkprogram i En Svensk Ordeskötsel. 1976.
- 10 *Birger Liljestrand*. Strindbergs Mäster Olof-dramer. En studie i 1800-talets dramaspråk. I. Diss. 1976.
- 11 *Gudrun Utterström*. Tillnamn i den karolinska tidens Stockholm. 1976.
- 12 *Dialectology and Sociolinguistics*. Essays in honor of Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt 19 April 1977. Edited by C.-C. Elert, S. Eliasson, S. Fries and S. Ureland. 1977.
- 13 *Ann-Maria Ullsten*. Umeå-pressen 1917–1922. En studie i lokalpress. Diss. 1977.
- 14 *Gustaf Utterström*. Fattig och föräldralös i Stockholm på 1600- och 1700-talen. 1978.
- 15 *Gunnar Eriksson*. Kartläggarna. Naturvetenskapens tillväxt och tillämpningar i det industriella genombrottets Sverige. 1870–1914. 1978.
- 16 *Irène Johansson*. Funktionella aspekter på satsintonationen i svenska. Diss. 1978.
- 17 *Inger Nilsson*. Grönlandsfrågan 1929–1933. En studie i småstatsimperialism. Diss. 1978.
- 18 *Tom Ericsson*. I fosterlandets tjänst. En studie i den svenska arméunderbefälskårens fackliga strävanden 1901–1922. Diss. 1978.
- 19 *Brit Uppman*. Samhället och samerna 1870–1925. Diss. 1978.
- 20 *Teater i Göteborg 1910–1975*, I–III. 1978.
- 21 *Dag Nordmark*. Samhället på scenen. En studie i Rudolf Värnlunds drama *Den heliga familjen* dess litterära och sociala förutsättningar. Diss. 1978.
- 22 *Björn Jernudd*. The Language Survey of Sudan. The First Phase: A Questionnaire Survey in Schools. Diss. 1979.
- 23 *Ulf Bäcklund*. Restricted Adjective-Noun Collocations in English. Ut kommer 1979.
- 24 *Nord-Skandinaviens historia i tvärvetenskaplig belysning*. Utg. av Evert Baudou och Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt. Ut kommer 1979.
- 25 *Rolf Hedquist*. Emotivt språk: en studie i dagstidningars ledare. 1978.
- 26 *Monica Loeb*. Vonnegut's Duty-Dance with Death – Theme and Structure in Slaughterhouse-Five. Diss. 1979.
- 27 *Algot Hellbom*. Ordbok över Njurundamålet. 1979.
- 28 *Kerstin Elert*. Portraits of Women in Selected Novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster. Diss. 1979.

Summaries in English or German