



HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AS THE THEME OF VIRGINIA WOOLF'S 'TO THE LIGHTHOUSE'

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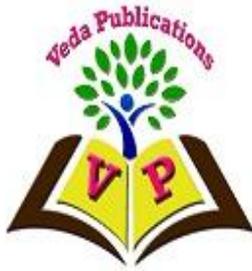
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ABSTRACT



One of the most popular literary figures of the twentieth century, Woolf is widely known for her technical innovations in the novel, especially, her development of stream-of-consciousness narrative. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) is a striking mix of autobiographical elements, philosophical questions, and social concerns, *To the Lighthouse* is generally considered to be Woolf's greatest fictional achievement. It is a study of human relationships between husband and wife, mother and children, lover and beloved, man and universe. Virginia Woolf was fully conscious of the inadequacy of human relationships. Human beings seemed to her isolated and communication between them was partial, often unsatisfactory. Characters in this novel are seen establishing relationships with the people around them. For satisfactory human relationships are needed love, sympathy, understanding, harmony, communication, emotional unity, purposiveness and activity. Sometimes false hopes and dreams too prove to be a source of happiness.

Keywords: *Human Relationships, Inadequacy, Harmony, Communication.*

**CAUSES OF THE INADEQUACY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

Virginia Woolf was fully conscious of the inadequacy of human relationships. It is observed that human beings are isolated from one another and communication between them is partial, often unsatisfactory, and sometimes quite mistaken. In *To the lighthouse*, it is the effort of the novelist to try to establish relationships with the people around them with different degrees of success. Words are the main source of correspondence and communication between one character and another is essential. But words are often found inadequate to set up satisfactory human relationships, to catch the total complexity of thoughts and feelings, and what they express, it is seen, is only a portion of what a character thinks and feels, and they prove to be misleading eventually. Mrs. Woolf is aware of both these aspects of verbal inadequacy. As Lily stands near Charmichael on the lawn trying to explain to Mrs. Ramsay, Lily's mind is full of innumerable thoughts (she would say not one thing but many things). "About life, about death: about Mrs. Ramsay - no she thought, one could say nothing to nobody..... words fluttered sideways and struck the objective too low. For how could one communicate in words these emotions of the body?" (pp.132-3)

ROLE OF SILENCE IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

Sweet are the heard melodies, but those unheard sweeter. Sometimes silence proves to be golden. It has an important role to play in human relationships. Many a time in practical life unhappiness and quarrels and disharmony are avoided by keeping silent. More often silence is more expressive than words. Lily realizes this fully, and she feels in greater communication with Carmichael than if they had spoken. They sit on the lawn perfectly silent, but still they seem to understand each other, and are in perfect sympathy with each other, without exchanging even a single word.

ROLE OF EMOTIONAL SYMPATHY

Satisfactory human relationships are necessary for happiness in life. Such relationships can be established not through logic, reason and intellect, but through emotions. Union of hearts, emotional understanding and sympathy are needed

for satisfactory relationships between mother and children and husband and wife. Mr. Ramsay tells James that it won't be fine tomorrow and so he won't be able to go to lighthouse. This is perfectly true, but the hopes of the poor boy are thus shattered and he feels like stabbing by his father. Mrs. Ramsay, who is more warmhearted and sympathetic, at once assures him that the wind might change and they might still be able to go on the expedition. Now this is a lie, but such lies are essential for human happiness.

Mrs. RAMSAY'S ROLE IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Mrs. Woolf tries to establish communication to build good human relationships between various characters in novel. Mrs. Ramsay's attempt to get Paul and Minta, and Lily and Bankers, married, her arrangement for a dinner party to provide the guests an opportunity to communicate to one another, her constant efforts to remove the state of isolation, her adventure towards the lighthouse are all examples of establishing harmony and human relationships. Mrs. Ramsay is one of those characters who can create harmony between people and break down their isolation. She is a woman who by exercise of love for people in general, endeavours to make life happy and comfortable for them; for the poor people by philanthropy, for her children by fostering their talents, for her husband by sympathy and reassurance : by encouraging people to marry or to get on well together she creates communication between them. Since her own view of life tends to pessimism, she is moved to make every endeavor to create what order she can, from the chaos of life. She can establish satisfactory human relationships and this fact makes her a good mother, a good wife, and a good hostess.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between each individual has been discussed by the writer in detail. There is a strong relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Although they both are different in their thinking yet they are much closed to each other in many ways. The relationship of Lily Briscoe and Mr. Bankes is also amazing to be discussed. Even otherwise, the relation of Tansley and Mr. Ramsay, the relation of



Lily Briscoe and Mr. Bankes, the relation of children with their father, the relation of nature and life are examples, which forces us to believe that it is the prominent theme of the novel. In this backdrop, it is crystal clear that the theme of relationship is also a theme of this novel. The novel shows the ways and means by which happy and satisfactory human relationships can be firmly established in life.

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