



VIRGINIA WOOLF'S "TO THE LIGHTHOUSE"

Deepak

Assistant Professor (English, MGCUB)

Former, Jr. Research Assistant, Penn State University, USA

BACKGROUND

- Published in 1927, *To the Lighthouse*, is a landmark novel of high modernism centering around Ramsay family and their visits to the Isle of Skye between 1910s and 1920s.
- Full Text of the Novel is in the link below
- <https://ia800302.us.archive.org/11/items/ToTheLighthouse/ToTheLighthouse.pdf>
- “The Window,” “Time Passes,” and “The Lighthouse” are its three sections which are fragmented into stream of consciousness.



PLOT AND CHARACTERS

- The whole action take place in just two days, which are structurally separated by ten years.
- Mr and Mrs Ramsay had 8 children and there are few guests who visits their home.
- The novel is set in the Ramsays' summer home in the Hebrides, on the Isle of Skye. The section begins with Mrs Ramsay, 'angel of the house', assuring James that they should be able to visit the lighthouse the next day.
- Apart, the Lighthouse can be seen as a symbolic character.



PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL

- Kate Flint writes, “The overt story of *To the Lighthouse*, indeed, is slender. It is set on a Hebridean island, in a holiday house occupied by a large family and their guests” (Kate Flint, <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-to-the-lighthouse>).
- The novel includes little dialogue and almost no action; most of it is written as thoughts and observations.



STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- Following the tradition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the novel of Woolf can be termed stream of consciousness novel, a type where maximum of action takes place in mind.



AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL

- The book contains semi-auto-biographical elements from the life Woolf, especially through the trope of her mother and father.
- The novel recollects the experiences of happy days of Woolf's childhood at Cornwall and Lily can be compared with the character of Woolf ,but not in every sense.



WHY TO READ IT

- Novel is a reply to “women cannot write, women cannot paint.” the end of the novel, Woolf proved that both the statements are incorrect. The women painter paints and Woolf herself writes.
- The novel depicts where were the changes that the Great War brought in the lives of people living in different parts of the world, especially America.
- The novel defines the way family values are declining in a post-war world and how people are struggling to maintain those values.
- It was 5th novel of Woolf, who through this, prepared a road by walking on which many women writers achieved name and fame.

