



**Ahmed Draia University – Adrar**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Department of English Letters and Language**

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**The Self in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves***

**Presented by:**

**Sergma Mabrouka**

**Supervised by:**

**Mr. Abidi Abdel Wahid**

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**Before the jury :**

**Mrs. Kerthiou Omayma..... President..... Ahmed Draia University – Adrar**

**Mr. Abidi Abdel Wahid..... Supervisor ..... Ahmed Draia University – Adrar**

**Mr. Djellouli Ismail..... Examiner ..... Ahmed Draia University – Adrar**

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To the teachers who helped me through my studying career



# *Dedication*

I dedicate this research paper to my beloved  
parents, my beloved brothers and sisters, and nephew and niece,  
as well as, my friends and my dear colleagues

## Abstract

This study aims to figure out how the self was presented in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. It also Explores the relationship between modernism, Virginia Woolf, and how it was the self represented in her novel *The Waves*. This study also explains how Woolf used the modernist aspects to express the modernist self throughout her novel *The Waves*.

## ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة كيف تم تقديم الذات في فرجينيا وولف في الأمواج. كما يستكشف العلاقة بين الحداثة ، فيرجينيا وولف ، وكيف كانت الذات ممثلة في روايتها "الموجات". تشرح هذه الدراسة أيضًا كيف استخدم وولف الجوانب الحداثية للتعبير عن الذات الحداثية في روايتها. *The Waves*.

## Abstrait:

Cette étude vise à comprendre comment le soi a été présenté dans *The Waves* de Virginia Woolf. Il explore également la relation entre le modernisme, Virginia Woolf, et comment c'était le soi représenté dans son roman *The Waves*. Cette étude explique également comment Woolf a utilisé les aspects modernistes pour exprimer le soi moderniste tout au long de son roman *The Waves*.

## General Introduction

" Who are you?"<sup>1</sup> this question was asked by caterpillar to Alice in Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice could not answer the question because she does not know herself. According to the *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, this novel is the first literary work for children which has no moral lessons behind it .<sup>2</sup> Morals, values and religious faith were the main elements of the self during the Victorian era. The majority of the literary works at this time were brought to give a moral lesson, for instance Charles Dickens's novels, he wrote a lot of works which describe the struggle between good and evil, right and wrong. At this period, though there were poor conditions for the working class, changes in the world views because of the technological development and political changes but people knew a part of themselves. At that time there was a solid self that was formed and filled by religious morality and faith and the belief that the self was created by God.

1859 was a turning point in science because the appearance of Charles Darwin's theory of Evolution and Natural Selection. Darwin claimed that the natural world had an evolutionary origin, and it was not created by the divine power of God. Additionally, he stated that human being was created from animal . Because of these ideas people started asking questions like what is our origin? Do animals have morals, faith and religion? People started doubting every aspect of their identity: religion, faith, truth, reality, relationships, culture,...etc. This was the beginning of a new age that was characterised by rejecting everything that had a relation with traditional way of thinking and living.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau said " I am not made like any of those I have seen. I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different."<sup>3</sup>. The change of the self had existed before Darwinism but it was not that clear as in the late of 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of this century the western society had witnessed social, political and religious changes because of industrialization and modernization. Progress and development the order of every aspect in the western society and formed a new foundation of what is called modernism.

Modernism refers to the shift from the traditional ways of living and thinking to the new ones. Though there is not an exact date for the starting of modernism some scholars claimed that it started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and ended at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The term

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<sup>1</sup> Dodgson, Charles Lutwidge . *Alice in Wonderland*. 1856, 152.

<sup>2</sup> Zipes, Jack David. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. University Press, 2000, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Rousseau, Jean-Jacques . *The Confessions*, 10

modernism covers all artistic, literary and philosophical movements that emerged as a result of the political and social changes in western society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the modernist philosophy, art and literature ; traditions, religion, truth and personal experience are the major concepts discussed in their works. It also refers to the revolution against traditions of realism. Modernists view reality in a different way and they established a new relationship between reality and the artistic, or the literary work. When we say that modernism is a revolution against traditions it does not mean that it rejects them completely by it tries to " make it new".<sup>1</sup>

Modernism is characterised by a radical change in the concepts of philosophy, art , and literature. The traditional and the old conventions that characterised the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were neglected , and new philosophical , artistic, and literary approaches began to appear. This period generally is known as modernism because thinkers and artists saw traditional approaches as outdated and must be renewed. The first stage in modernism was known as Avant-Grade. The latter refers to a generation of artists who rejected the traditional way of writing of the Victorian Era. This movement appeared between 1890 and the beginning of the First World War. After Avant-Grade, philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche provided the western society with new interpretations to the concept of the self, change, a new way of seeking truth, new assumptions of the individual, and new conception of history. They are characterised by their rejection of traditions and authority and they favoured reason and natural science.

Modernism brought structural change in all the fields and easier way of living, but it also increased the standards of living and developed new philosophical questions which had a relation with the private life of the individual. Who am I? Where did I come from? And where am I going? These questions are the consequence of the changes that were brought by industrialization, capitalism and materialism. If the individual cannot find an answers to his questions he may be stressed. Fiction and poetry were one of the ways that used to represent the self and the self-experience. The self, self-experience and self-examination were stressed more in modernist literature. According to Dennis Brown, The modernist writers like Virginia Woolf found a difficulty in expressing and representing their self-experience because of: social diffusion and alienation, the emergence of psychoanalysis, the shock of the First World War and the increasing of experimentalism in all aspects of life.

Virginia Woolf is one of the modernist writers who insisted the concept of the self through their fiction and nonfiction. In *A moment of Being*, *The Waves* and other works of her, Woolf

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<sup>1</sup> Pound, Ezra. *Make It New*. Yale University Press, 1935,15.

questioned whether the self is one unity, stable and constant, known or it is fragmented, unstable and unknown. She questioned also whether the self is formed through our interaction with others or not. Woolf through her fiction tried to discuss the major issues that are related to the concept of the self. While she was writing *The Waves*, she told her husband that she "wanted to take six persons, intimate friends, all different, and show their relations to the fundamental things in human existence"<sup>1</sup> she wanted to show that these six persons were severally facets of a single complete person". When *The Waves* was published she remarked that "the six characters were supposed to be one."<sup>2</sup> According to Eric Warner, the problem of the self and the other selves were an issue in the modernist philosophy, so we must not be surprised to find it in most of her works.

Being interested in what is modernism and its relationship with Virginia Woolf and her novel *The Waves* is one of the reasons that helped me in starting this study. My real experience is also one of the most helpful things that made me interested in studying how the self was represented in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. When I lost my father in 2011 myself was lost because they bury him, so I did not see him for the last time, because I was passing my exams. *Waves of life* made me too weak. Till one day, my feet touched the stage in 2014. Being an actress made me able to find myself again. I spend three years to find out myself again. So this research paper aims to investigate how the modernist self is represented and insisted on the modernist fiction, and answer the question How the self was presented in *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf? The first chapter is devoted to discuss the relation between the concept of the self and Woolf as a modernist writer, and how the self is represented in her works and life. The second chapter is about the novel of *The waves* and how it was formed by the writer. The third chapter discusses how the concept of the self is represented in the novel, and how it is reflected by the Woolf.

## **Review of literature**

Many studies were done in order to explain who the self was explored and presented in *The waves* by Virginia Woolf. Louis Prosky (2010) came to conclude that Woolf's notion of the self is elusive. In other words it is unreachable. Whereas Roxanene J. Fand (1999) concluded that Woolf tried to omit the boundaries of the self in order to have a dialogic one. However, Dennis Brown found that Virginia Woolf believes in the discontinuity of the self of her character in *The Waves*. However, none of these studies has concluded that Virginia Woolf has presented in the same time the self an elusive, discontinuous, dialogic and feminine, and this is the task of this study about the representation of the self in *The Waves*.

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<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 195, 13.



# *Chapter One:*

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## **Modernism, the Modernist self and Virginia Woolf**

## 1) Modernism and Modernist Literature

There is no clear cut consensus about the beginning and end of modernism. There is a debate, and a heated discussion about when and how modernism actually began. The word modern (the stem), is a term originated from the Latin word "*modo*" which means "now" i.e. current. There are a lot of concepts that are originated from the word modern; such as modernity and modernism but they do not have the same meaning. Generally, the word modern was used to refer to the generation of Avant-garde. The latter refers to the writers and the artists who were considered as the first step toward modernism. Modernist authors and philosopher were dissatisfied with the traditional values of their communities and considered them to be outdated. Therefore, they felt a need to make a rupture with the past. Similarly, the German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) announced that " For we moderns have nothing whatever of our own; only by replenishing and cramming ourselves with the ages, customs, arts, philosophies, religions, discoveries of others do we become anything worthy of notice...."<sup>1</sup>

The term modernism, in its first appearance, referred to a group of authors who were unrelated, and new artistic movements like Imagism and Vorticism. Then it developed in literature, music, architecture. Some critics had argued that the term modernism refers to the regeneration and the renewing of the Western artistic and literary traditions which were the result of the influence of other cultures like African and Asian cultures. This influence also was clear in literature as well, because of the moving of modernist writers away from Victorian literature.

Modernism at the early eighteenth century referred to the characteristics of the modern times, while in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it referred to the sympathy the modern opinion and style of expression. However at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the term modernism referred to the trends in the Catholic Church which were in progress. Though there was a "modern movement in literature before 1900s , and a great influence of Ezra Pound's "*Make it New*", but the term modernism was rarely used in literature. The term "modernist" was used widely only in 1960s and so on because modernism was in highest point in literature and art.

Modernism in its entirety is difficult to define, but it generally refers to the rejection of religious and traditional authority and the embracement of the new conventions that were a result of scientific and political progress. Furthermore, it describes the revolutionary movements of literature, art and philosophy that appeared between the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In

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<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, David, and Kevin J. H. Dettmar. *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2006, 12.

terms of art, modernism refers to movements such as Expressionism, Imagism, Surrealism, Futurism, Dadaism, Vorticism and Formalism.

For many historians, the modern period had begun during the renaissance. The change in that time began with the progress in technology and scientific knowledge. This period also expanded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it was known as the Age of Enlightenment. The latter was characterized by the use of reasoning and rationality. The Scientific Revolution which started from the late of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and expanded to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, changed a lot of conventions, truths and beliefs which were held in the western institutions like the church. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century people became more open-minded. This open-mindedness allowed them to think freely, and it gave them the ability to use reason in order to find the truth. The continuous belief in the progressive line of the development which started in the Renaissance was changed gradually because of new ideas which helped in changing the traditional order of things. These ideas and thought laid the foundation of modernism.

According to Clement Greenberg, modernism emerged in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century particularly in France with Baudelaire in literature and Manet in Painting, and Flaubert in fiction.<sup>1</sup> Modernism was called Avant-Garde in its first appearance. Avant-Garde was a term used in order to describe painters, and writers who identified themselves as modern artists or writers, and overthrew the traditional ways of representing ideas and emotions. Because of the progress and industrialization at that period, the traditional order of dealing with things was changed quickly and the shape of modernism was taking a clear image in the western society. It is true that there was a huge influence by the political, legal, philosophical and technological changes, but there were also revolutionary ideas which helped in the rise of modernism such as the ideas of Charles Darwin( 1809-82), Karl Marx( 1818- 83), Friedrich Nietzsche( 1844-1900) and Sigmund Freud( ). Through their publications they tried to criticize materialism, universal truths, divine authority, and social morality. Furthermore, they stressed doubting reality, and embraced the self, the conscious, the individual, the relativity of truth and reality, the subjectivity, in order to place them in the heart and the mind of each modern person. While Marx criticism influenced artistic movements by finding new role for art in representing social issues, Darwinism was changing the concept of the modern self which was based on religion. In addition, Nietzschean philosophy and Freudian psychoanalysis made a great step in forming modernism.

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<sup>1</sup> Clement Greenberg: Modernism and Postmodernism (<http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/postmodernism.html>), seventh paragraph of the essay. Accessed on 15 June 2006

Friedrich Nietzsche was a thinker and a philosopher who influenced the modernist writers and artists. He had provided the western society with new way of thinking using his philosophy. Nietzsche attacked the old conventions of his society, the tendencies of bourgeois society and Christianity because he considered himself as a modern philosopher, and he has the right to find the truth. He also analysed his self because he believed that the modern person must make self- critical in order to identify himself as a modern. Philosophy was also attacked by Nietzsche because of his belief in transforming life and philosophy. For him philosophy must seek truth through questioning the universal principles of philosophy. The ideas of Nietzsche made the western society able to accept the idea of change and to reject traditions. As a result, people, artists and authors were able to criticise themselves, religion, society, reality, and social morality.

Sigmund Freud was also one of the most influential psychologists in the modernist period because he discussed new concepts like Id, ego, superego, subconscious. Through his theories he discussed the changes that occurred on human psyche using scientific methods. Because of Freud discoveries in the field of psychoanalysis; writers and artists began to move away from the use of reason, towards analysing the self and the psyche in order to find the truth. Because of Freud's theories; modernist elite, authors and artists started embracing subjectivity rather than objectivity. In other words, the absolute reality of the Enlightenment was replaced with subjectivity and relative reality and conventions of realism were moved away. Freud had provided the western society with the means to re-examine the self and society. He also freed humanity from the influence of the past on reality and psyche. He also explained how the break with social values was not inherently evil, but is a part of our instinct, and this what Darwin represented as the "animal" side of man.

The influence of Nietzsche and Freud led to a peaceful transformation towards new conventions in science, arts and literature. In science, scientists like Albert Einstein had moved science further using his theory of 'Relativity.' In the arts there was also a great transformation in music, painting, architecture and even dance was changed by this movement. For example, painters like Pablo Picasso and Henry Matisse brought a new vision to figurative arts. In literature, writers like Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf rejected the traditional ways of representation of the Victorian era.

Modernism as an artistic and cultural movement is characterised by:

- High complexity in structure
- Renewing traditions
- Works that are self reflexive

- fiction that is fragmented
- being located between wars and empires.
- the great deal of experimentation with language and form
- subjectivity and human consciousness
- rejection of realism and the ideas of the works that depict reality

M.H. Abrams , and Daniel Silas Norton wrote in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*(1957):

The specific features signified by ‘modernism’ vary with the user, but most critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art. . . . A prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon of an avant-garde . . . that is, a small ,self-conscious group of artists and authors who undertake, in Ezra Pound’s phrase, to ‘make it new.’ By violating accepted conventions and decorums, they undertake to create ever-new artistic forms and styles and to introduce hitherto neglected, and sometimes forbidden, subject matters.<sup>1</sup>

In short, modernism refers to the revolution against traditions of Realism, Enlightenment, and the Victorian era. It also represents a period, style and genre that is characterised by the rejection of the past and celebrating the new innovations. Furthermore, it includes the different movements in art, architecture, and literature that deliberately break up with the traditional ways of expression. Modernists view reality in a different way and they established a new relationship between reality and the artistic, or the literary work. When it is stated that modernism is a revolution against traditions it does not mean that it rejects them completely but it tries to " make it new".

For some the modernists, all religions are equal, since they all lead to God. They believe that religion represents what makes human feels good and more attached with the Divine, then it is true for him. For them religion does not consist of an objective truth. All truths are relative for modernists. In other words, for them objective truth does not exist because there is no Truth that can judge anything either true or false. What is true for one person is not necessarily true for another, and what is false for one cannot be false for another.<sup>2</sup>

Individual, personal experience and self examination are stressed more in modernism. For the modernist individual must put his personal beliefs and experiences above those of his society and those of the other individuals. He must focus on making himself better rather than trying to make the society better. The individual has to trust himself and to be confident. He also must not be

<sup>1</sup> Abrams, M. H., and Daniel Silas Norton. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Rinehart, 1957. P 226

<sup>2</sup> Childs, Peter. *Modernism*. Routledge, 2008, 50.

a conformist. The self for the modernist was something important because modernist self was lost. The latter was a result of the influence of modernization process. These concepts and ideas and innovation resulted in the creation of the modernist literature and fiction. In modernist literature writers represented a contradictory attitude to progress, Traditions, and politics, and shared the desire to experience new forms and that what made works like : *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, *Hart of Darkness* by Josef Conrad, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf different from the early literary works.<sup>1</sup>

Modernism in art refers to the efforts of artists in order to move away from the traditional ways of representation. In literature, it refers to literary works that rejected the conventions of Victorian literature. In other words, literary modernism represents the conscious "breaking away from established rules, traditions"<sup>2</sup> which reveals "fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style"<sup>3</sup> as J.A. Cuddon stated in his description to this literary movement. Therefore, modernism in literature refers to particular selection of language and ways of experimentation, as Peter Child remarked, in his book *Modernism*, that the push to new forms necessitated a reconsideration of the fundamental of imaginative writing: theme, characters, narration, plot, the representation of time and space, imagery and , above all language.<sup>4</sup>

The world did not change suddenly, but new ideas were "in the air"<sup>5</sup>, especially at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, influencing the way of thinking an artistic production. These new ideas increased and influenced the western culture. As a result, it found its roots in forming new ways of representation in arts and literature, and in every day exchange as Grant Allen proclaimed that "everybody nowadays talks about evolution Like electricity, the cholera, women's rights the great mining boom, and the Eastern question, it is "in the air""Social change, scientific progress, questions that are related to religion, race, faith, truth, reality...etc continued to be in " the air".<sup>6</sup> Because of these forces that accrued at the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Victorian literature was neglected even before the death of Queen Victoria. As a response, the modernists began celebrating change and the rejection of the past as Lucy Tantamount stated in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) by saying "If you like speed, if you want to cover the ground, you can't have luggage. The thing is to know what you want and to be ready to pay for it. I know

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<sup>1</sup> Abrams, M. H., and Daniel Silas Norton. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Rinehart, 1957, 100.

<sup>2</sup>Gillies, Mary Ann., and Aurelea Denise. Mahood. *Modernist Literature: An Introduction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007, 2 .

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Childs, Peter. *Modernism*. Routledge, 2008, 134.

<sup>5</sup> Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity*. Viking Penguin, 1988, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

exactly what I want; so I sacrifice the luggage"<sup>1</sup>. In addition, modernist literature was a response to the forces around the world which occurred between 1850 and 1950 such as the First World War (1914-1918), the Russian Revolution 1917, Mussolini March on Rome 1926, The Wall Street Crash 1929, Hitler rise to power ; The Spanish Civil War 1930, The Second World War (1939-1945).

Modernism in the US was noticed clearly in 1900s as Virginia Woolf introduced in her diary "on or about December 1910 human character changed".<sup>2</sup> In literature, it was discovered for the first time in Joseph Conrad's *Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897), and in Gertrude Stein's *Tree Lives* (1909). Modernist authors are characterised by being conscious, more detached from the world, and open minded because they owned especial kind of observation. Through literary works, modernist writers started introducing ways to question, religion, social morality, reality, traditions, authority, technology, and to stress the self, the individual, relative reality and truth, subjectivity and so on. After WWI, modernism became a flourishing aspect to the western literature, because the authors' ideas were fed by the events which took place in the world. They found the war as a means to move away from the traditional conventions of early literature by creating new experiences using new forms, styles and devices.

Using their literature, modernist stressed Nietzschean philosophy and criticism by questioning the universal absolute truths, criticising and embracing technological progress, incorporating and celebrating the visual language of media, criticising authority and laws, stressing individualism and personal experience. They also adopted the Marxist thoughts in order to create a new role in their society. Freudian psychoanalysis was also presented in the modernist fiction in order to represent the self loss, fragmentation, dissolving, disorder and disintegration. Modernist literature moved away from the old ways of narrating by stressing the new techniques and neglecting the omniscient and the external narration. This modernist innovation was observed for the first time in Virginia Woolf's *Jacobus Room*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* as a response to catastrophe of the war.

The faith in the adequacy of the old literary modes to represent the modern realities after the war was lost. New forms and new styles were experimented and developed in order to express the modern disorder and the loss of integration that is based on religion and myths. For example, in *The Wasteland*, Eliot changed the traditional flow of the poetic language and developed fragmented utterances instead. According to literary critics, the majority of modernist works which follow

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<sup>1</sup>Gillies, Mary Ann., and Aurelea Denise. Mahood. *Modernist Literature: An Introduction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, Dennis. *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: a Study of Self-Fragmentation*. Macmillan, 2000, 15.

Joyce' *Ulysses*( 1922), destroyed the basic norms of earlier prose fiction through moving away from the old ways of representing characters, breaking up the continuity of narration, subverting the traditional coherence and syntax of narrative language by developing new innovative modes of narrating such as stream of consciousness.

Generally, the modernist fiction is characterised by the rejection of the classical fundamentals of realism such as the use of the narrator, the fixed stable self, the progressive linear history. It is also characterised by classical allusions, free indirect speech, juxtaposition of characters, Stream of consciousness, meta-narratives, mixing forms and boundaries, using symbols and allusions, capturing the impression of a moment, multiple narrators or voices, representing the inner experience of time, breaking traditional patterns in order to see things in a fresh and new way, using metaphor and substitution, and open or ambiguous endings.

## 2) The Modernist Self and Modernist Literature

The Online Oxford English Dictionary defined the self as" person's essential being that distinguish them from others."<sup>1</sup> However, the definitions attached to concept of self have undergone some changes throughout history. Through the history of the western society, so changes were brought about by modernists. The latter resulted in changing every aspect of life, even the way individuals saw themselves. Before the advent of modernism, the individual's behaviour was controlled by traditions and rules, the family was the source of knowing how to get through life, the individual's freedom was limited, and guilt arose if he wanted to do something he was not meant for or he contradicted the society's rules. In modern period, the individual got the choice about what to do with his life and traditions lost their importance. The pre-modern individual feels a kind of anxiety if he feels that he had not made the right choices, or he believes that he was not doing as well as he must do. Because of modernisation and industrialisation, the pre-modernist self was shifted to create a new version of the self which is known as the modernist self.<sup>2</sup>

After the First World War, everything was subject to the quick change even the individual's understanding of the self. As a result, people's views of themselves were renewed and modified according to the changes that appeared in his society. In modernist literature also, the concept of the self hood was presented in a different way, and this is the central assumption of my study. The self, in modernist literature, was drawn as an object and characterised by being dissolved,

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<sup>1</sup> Self | Definition of Self in English by Oxford Dictionaries." *Oxford Dictionaries | English*, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/self.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, Dennis. *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: a Study of Self-Fragmentation*. Macmillan, 2000, 5.



fragmented and dislocated. The fact of being fragmented was the result of losing faith in the traditional points of reference which shape the self, like religion, God, reason. The modernist self became more rational, and conscious about the changes which occur within it. It became identified and shaped by its relation with the other selves rather than the traditional points of reference. The continuous and the integral self of pre-modernism has been broken down to fragments and it was suppressed. The Christian self of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, that was identified by being good or evil, had been psychologised and divided to different parts. This division of the self prepared the way for the fragmentation of the self. The unitary self of the Victorian era was disintegrated and the self-consciousness fell apart under the impact of emotional shock of the war.

The Victorian representation of the self became old fashioned for the modernist writers. The modernist discourse in literature was "hunted by the ghost" of the fragmented and the lost self because there was a variety of factors that were involved in this phenomenon such as the rise of psychoanalysis, social alienation, capitalism, the shock of the Great War, industrialisation and the increasing of experimentalism. As a result, modernist authors brought new ways in order to represent properly the modernist self and rejected the traditional ways of expressing it. They tried to express the issue of fragmentation of the old notion of the self. They represented realities on the self experience and its complexity through exploring new ways of representation. Modernists like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce moved toward expressing the character's self, conscious, and psyche, because they were influenced by the other modernist movements in art such as Impressionism. According to Dennis Brown the modernist writers were obsessed with the destroyed concept of the self at the same time they were haunted by it.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a change in the different techniques in literature in order to express the new conception of the self and characterisation of the self. The modernist authors moved toward using internal narrative style, fragmented sentences, plots, and chronologies; first person narration, interior monologues, modern complete, all around character, and stream of consciousness in order to explore the new western self and to represent the self the modernist character. Furthermore, they tried to express the conflict, experience, existence and the fragmentation of the self using new innovations.

Having said that, Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* is one of the modernist works that reflect the complexity of the modernist self. *The Waves* was published in 1931 and it was considered to be Woolf's most difficult and experimental work. This novel explores the mystical and the inner life of

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Dennis. *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: a Study of Self-Fragmentation*. Macmillan, 2000, 6.

six characters as they explore and experience the world and life. It traces six characters' lives from their childhood to the adulthood. Susan, Rhoda, Jinny, Bernard, Louis, and Neville, each one of them uses interior monologues in order to narrate how his/ her life is going. In addition, the stages the characters' lives had been marked by the rise and the full of the sun in a one day and near the sea. In other words, each stage of the sun represents a new stage in the life of each character.

### 3) Virginia Woolf between Modernism and the Modernist Self:

Generally, modernism refers to the break from traditions and it contains the sense of discontinuity. Furthermore, it emphasises the individual, the conscious and the self as Bradbury and McFarlane stated in their book *Modernism 1890-1930* that modernism is:

“an art of a rapidly modernizing world, a world of rapid industry development, advanced technology, urbanization, secularization and mass forms of social life” but also the art of a world which many traditional certainties had departed, and a certain sort of Victorian confidence not only in the onward progress of mankind but in the very solidity and visibility of reality itself has evaporated.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Deborah Parsons it is hard to localize modernism in a strict period in literature "because modernism connotes a cultural sensibility rather than a particular period in time and it is not simply interchangeable with strictly historical references such as “the early twentieth century” or “the 1920s,”<sup>2</sup> even though it overlaps with them the label “high modernism.”

Virginia Woolf was born in a famous and educated family in London 1882. She was the daughter of the critic and the scholar Leslie Stephen and the sister of the painter Vanessa Bell. Woolf did not get a formal education but she was educated at home and her father insisted on that. She moved with her family to Bloomsbury after her father's death in 1904. She became a member and influential part in Bloomsbury Group. Woolf worked as a journalist after receiving her money from inheritance. She published her first novel *The Voyage Out* in 1915 after her marriage with Leonard Woolf in 1912. In 1917, they formed together the Hogarth press. She was also a professional literary critic and she criticised authors like T.S. Eliot and James Joyce. According to Peter Child her modernist style only fully began with *Jacob's Room* in 1922, and she is often regarded as the exemplary British modernist novelist because of her use of interior monologue, recurrent motifs,

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<sup>1</sup> Bradbury and McFarlane. *Modernism 1890-1930*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Parsons, Deborah. *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf*. Routledge Critical Thinkers, London and New York, 2007, 90.

fragmented time and intense lyricism. Because Woolf suffered from psychological depression, she committed suicide in 1941 and died by drawing herself in the River Ouse.

Virginia Woolf lived in a period that is characterised by change and transition from the Victorian era to the 20th century modernism. There is no doubt that this transition influenced her because it appears clearly in her fiction and works like *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Her imagination was influenced by the difficult moments of transition which involved "an easy meeting of old and new, past and present" as she mentioned "Now is life very solid, or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions". According to Eric Warner the majority of her fiction was "pervaded by the opposition between order and freedom, security and promise, value and discovery, stability and movement, and no work is more imbued with this than *The Waves*". In 1900s, she stated that "On or about December 1910 human character changed." She specifically referred to 1910, because period was characterised by accumulation of series of events like the opening of the first exhibition of Post-impressionist art, the death of Edward VII, and the rise of suffragette movement. According to Woolf; 1910 was the end of an era of stability and the beginning of an era of crisis and conflict, it was a period of sudden break between the present and the past because of the sudden loss of beliefs and values.

Using her literature, Woolf turned away from direct ways of representation toward self-reflexivity, and became one of the central figures of modernism, one of the representatives of Self-reflexivity, as well as one of the modernist novelists who contributed to developing the narrative technique of "Stream of consciousness". Her exploration of the concept of the self was different even from the other modernist writers. This concept was the heart and the core of her fiction most of the times. Sometimes she represents the self as an elusive-self. In other words, her characters always search to find themselves and when they get access to it something happens and they get lost again, and that is how the self was represented in works like *Night and Day* and *To the Lighthouse*. In works like *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Voyage Out*, Woolf depicted the Self and the Other as another way to represent her conception of the self. When people start talking about you and they give you a voice, this means that they represent you as a self, but when talk about you and they don't give you a voice you become the other as Edward Said explained in his book *Orientalism*. This was the case of the Americans before getting their independence, and the case of the Africans and the Asians in Colonialism and Imperialism. The discontinuous-self was also present in works like *The Waves*. Woolf showed how people renew themselves according to their situations and needs.

## *Chapter Two :*

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# **Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* as a Modernist Literary Work**

## 1. An introduction to *The Waves*

Virginia Woolf's *The waves* was first published in 1931. The writing of novel was started in July 1929 and it was called *The Moths* before its publication. It is regarded as one of the most experimental works of Woolf because it is told using "dramatic soliloquies"<sup>1</sup>. In other words, it is a story of six friends which is told by six characters: Bernard, Louis, Neville, Rhoda, Jenny and Susan. *The Waves* is an exemplary modernist literary work. For some critics and Woolf herself *The waves* is the most complex, difficult and challenging novel of Virginia Woolf.<sup>2</sup> This novel seems more like poetry than like prose, because the writer had moved away from the conventional elements of fiction such as character, plot, and narrative. For some literary critics, *The Waves* can be regarded as an attack on traditional aspects of the novel. As a result, *The Waves* had given rise to a controversy as to whether it is a novel or not. Responding to the novels, Elizabeth Hardwick stated that:

I was immensely moved by *The Waves* when I read it recently and yet I cannot think of anything to say except that it was wonderful. The people are not characters, there is no plot in the usual sense. What can you bring to bear: verisimilitude to what? You can merely say over and over again, very beautiful, and that when you were reading it you were happy.<sup>3</sup>

Virginia Woolf through using her novel, tried to engage the reader in using his imagination and his mind as Stuart Hampshire remarked "The reader of *The Waves* is left helpless, either overwhelmed or repelled, . . . without the independent material on which his imagination can work. The implications are already stated, the novel criticizes itself."<sup>4</sup> The novel challenges the reader and does not offer clearly outlined characters. All along the novel, the six characters speak alternatively, in a way that touches the reader deeply, though they speak normally about their lives, but what makes the difference is self-consciousness and self-awareness of the characters. Woolf's writing in such a way, in fact, reflects a mental or psychological state of the author and his contemporaries in a period that was haunted by wars death and continuous search for self in alternative ways than the traditional one the modernist artist turned their backs on.

<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Hardwick, Elizabeth. *Seduction and Betrayal; Women and Literature*. RANDOM, 1974; 52.

<sup>4</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,3.

## 2. The Modernist Conditions that Contributed in writing the Novel

As already mentioned, Virginia Woolf had lived in a time of transition and a revolutionary movement. This transformation from the Victorian era to the modernist one influenced her greatly. This was clearly shown in her novels like *To the Lighthouse* and *The Year*. This transformation held a meeting between the past and the present, the old and the new<sup>1</sup>. Woolf was affected by these contradictions as she stated "now is life very solid, or very shifting, I am hunted the two contradictions. This duality in Woolf was present more when she was writing *The Waves*. Her fiction, in generally, was characterised by being "pervaded by the opposition between order and freedom, security and promise, value and discovery, stability and movement"<sup>2</sup> but *The Waves* was the only work which contains all these characteristics as Eric Warner remarked, "no work is more imbued with this conflict than *The Waves*."<sup>4</sup> This novel particularly holds a lot of contradictions, because of the complexity of Woolf's life and the context in which *The Waves* was written.

As a result, those complexities in the lives of the modernist writers like Joyce and Woolf and Eliot led to the emergence of modernist literature. In other words, the contradictions in modernist writers' life contributed to creating new modernist values which contradict each other and, at the same time, they represent the revolution against the old order of things. For Warner, Woolf is one of the pioneers of modernism and "one of the architects of the modern novel."<sup>5</sup> Modernism is a broad concept which refers to the different movements in art and literature which rejected traditions and the past. The majority of the modernist writers and artists who contributed to this movement were intellectuals who lived in urban areas. As a result, the city was present in their works, for example *The Wasteland*, *Mr Dalloway* and *Ulysses*. Modernism became wide spread in the world because societies were opened to accept change in all the aspects of life.

Modernists accepted the change and foreign culture in order to move away from traditions and the past. As a result, their works of art and literature were difficult to the reader as Warner stated, "foreign colour helped to make the work of the modernist dense, allusive and opaque to the common reader."<sup>6</sup> In fact, this difficulty expresses the complexity and the difficulty of the modernists time and life. Modernists rejected the process of commercializing art which was a result of the mass audience and the middle class. They started writing for the minority who has a given level of intelligence and who have the ability to understand them though their works were complex

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<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,5.

and hard to figure out their meaning. The modernist art and literature were characterized by moving away from mystical allusions toward new innovations like condensation and compression. The modernists were not obliged to embrace the values of the reader as the Victorian writers and artists had been. Their greatest aim was to make everything different from the past and traditions, and to "make it new" as Ezra Pound remarked. Modernist tried to make everything "complex, multi-faceted, opaque, ordered by an ecstatic logic far removed from common or conventional comprehension."<sup>1</sup>

Some critics assumed that the modernist revolution was an attack on the reader, others claimed that it was a sense of entering a new age which is characterized by the greatness of the pressure of experimentation. The Victorians, as Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, and Leslie Stephen affirmed, represented the proclivity to cling around one central belief, assumption, and form of treating those beliefs. However modernist like Woolf, T.S. Eliot, and James Joyce were attached with new beliefs which are related to modern theories like those of Einstein, Freud and so on. This age was characterized by destructing the old beliefs and standards of the Victorians, and supporting the new arts which are appropriate more to represent the new character.

The sense of change had dominated the beginning of the 20th century because of the change in conditions of living. This sense of change was supported by artists and writers because it was the core of revolution in order to renew techniques, wars, and arts. Therefore, it was significant in art and literature. In other words, change is the core of the modernist movement, and it is the thing which inspired its leaders. This period of change was the time to which Woolf belonged, moreover, it was a time of experiment and new innovations. According to her dairies, Virginia Woolf was aware of the change that happened in visual arts like painting, and in the same time she was also aware of it in literary works. She described and criticized works like those of Henry James, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust. Woolf marked that: In or about December, 1910 human character changed."<sup>2</sup> The first post-impressionist exhibition had presented new forms of painting that differ from the preceding ways of realism. This new form of painting had moved away from the old ways of representation toward the bizarre ways of expression.

This change in arts had found its way also in literature, and media. For example, the literary works of T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Joyce represented clearly the change which occurred in literature. The old beliefs of the Victorian and Edwardian novelists were replaced by the modernist ones. For novelists like George Eliot and Charles Dickens, social values and social life are the core

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<sup>11</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The Waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,6.

<sup>2</sup> Childs, Peter. *Modernism*. Routledge, 2008.87.

of the human life. In addition to that they argued that social stability was formed by traditions, values and norms. However, modernists had questioned all these beliefs and created new ones because of the speed of development and the pressure of experimentation. They use subjectivity and fragmented representation in order to portray their new experiences using literature. Woolf as one them, when she entered her artistic maturity, she became one of the greatest representatives of the modernist outlook. She had published a number of series about the necessity of rejection and moving away from the old ways of representations especially in literature. Through her essays, she made an attack on the Edwardian and the Victorian novelists, and argued that they are "out of step with times."<sup>1</sup> She also stated that "the accent falls differently from old,"<sup>2</sup> and questioned the old ways of representing life: "must novels go on being descriptive, externalized, implying a stable point of view and widely shared assumptions about the nature of reality? Is life like this?"<sup>3</sup> In her essay "Modern Fiction," 1919, she insisted and emphasized "inner reality...perception and response ... what was thought small,"<sup>4</sup> rather than "outer reality... action and event ... what was previously thought large."<sup>5</sup> This new belief of Woolf was presented in her fiction and especially her novels. In other words, she had made a "new form for new kind of novel."<sup>6</sup> Woolf had used "Stream of Consciousness" in order to centre her fiction on the "individual reality" and to reflect it adequately. *The Waves* is one of those novels in which Woolf tried to use all her new innovations and all the modernist aspects in order to express her reality as an individual and herself as a modernist.

### 3. *The waves'* summary

The Wave is a story of six friend: Bernard, Louis, Neville , Rhoda, Jenny and Susan. The story is told by them through eternal monologues. Though they are friends but there is no interaction or direct conversation between them. Percival is the seventh character, though he is a friend of them but he has no monologues like them. He is interdicted by their monologues. *The waves* does not contain chapters, but it has nine sections. Each section begins with a description of the sun position, the sea situation, and the waves fettle ...etc. The description starts from the early morning in the first section when the characters are just children, to the end of the day in which they become adults and move toward their death (one day).

<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves* . Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid,8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,



The first section shows the six characters when they were Children. It shows also a description of the sun rise and the coming of the day. It explores a short interior monologue for each character, and a description for their personalities at that time. Furthermore, this section gives a description to how they spend their time together at school. The second section begins with showing the sun still rising and describing the waves' roughness. After that the six characters appear leaving for different broad schools. The interior monologues continue detailing their reaction toward leaving and being in different schools. When the sun rises, the third section begins, here the characters try to find a way to their identities and their "selves". We find that in this section Bernard and Neville attend the same college, but Neville, studies literature while Bernard tries to develop his skills in order to be a story teller. However, Jinny and Rhoda consorted in London. Louis became a clerk, while Susan comeback to her home in the countryside.

The fourth section begins with the description of how the sun become brighter, and the monologues of Bernard in which he announces his engagement. In this section the six friends meet together in a managed dinner in order to farewell Percival before he moves a way to India. This was the first meeting of the six friends. At the beginning of the fifth, we see the waves break strongly onto the shore, and the sun is at its full light. In this section, the six characters meet again but this time because of the death of Percival (he died at the same time of the birth of his first child). The beginning of the sixth section describes the beginning of sunset. The waves are crashing strongly against the rocks, and flowing into cold caves. This section shows the six friends as mature adults who moved along with their choices. Bernard becomes a father and Susan becomes a mother.

The seventh section begins with describing the sunset and the waves go backward. In this section each character is in the middle age, and their monologues describe and reflect their lives. Bernard describes how much is disappointed with his marriage, while Susan remembers her past when she was living in the countryside. However, Jinny tries to convince herself that she is beautiful and she still attracts young man. The unhappy Rhoda tries to commit suicide by standing on a cliff edge. Neville becomes a writer but he thinks that the middle age has affected his appearance. The eighth section slows the sinking of the sun, and prides of owl are chirping. Here the characters meet again in a diner in Hampton court. It was a comfortable meeting though it was not at the beginning, but this time the six friends go for walk through Hampton Park. The most notable thing in this section is the discussion between Rhoda and Louis about their break up. In the ninth and the final section, the day finished and the sun has gone down. This part contains only Bernard's monologues. He tells the story of his life with a fighting spirit to unknown companion at dinner.

#### 4. The Image of the Waves and its Contribution to the Structure of *The Waves*

As mentioned earlier, *The Waves* was written in a period of transition. The latter had influenced Woolf greatly and affected her imagination. Furthermore, if we study the period in which *The Waves* was written, we find that the majority of cultural fields were also affected by the move from the past to the present. James Mcfarlane described those effects in *The Mind of Modernism* as "Individualistic, relativistic, stockman's outburst marked the start of complex and protracted change in the European mind, in which a growing instability was to be its most conspicuous feature"<sup>1</sup>. Human self became elusive, fragmented and discontinuous. The individual became the centre of the world, and new fragmented forms were conducted in order to create new order for reality.

The Waves in this context symbolizes the changes that occurred on the western culture with the coming of modernism. The outcomes of this movement are the new beliefs, systems, norms, values and thought that rebelled against traditions and buried them in the sea. These kinds of waves were represented in Louis description of London:

'The roar of London,' said Louis, 'is round us. Motor-cars, vans, omnibuses pass and repass continuously. All are merged in one turning wheel of single sound. All separate sounds--wheels, bells, the cries of drunkards, of merry-makers--are churned into one sound, steel blue, circular. Then a siren hoots. At that shores slip away, chimneys flatten themselves, the ship makes for the open sea.'<sup>2</sup>

Through Louis' Monologues, one can see he always has a pessimistic view toward the British society. He always hears the noisy sounds of the revolution on the shore. He argues that the British businessmen are responsible for the spread of colonialism, wars, commerce, explorations. His identity is not secure, because he is an Australian who lives in a society which cannot accept him as an individual. He must work hard in order to foster and reinforce his class position and to be treated as an Englishman. He says, "I am an average Englishman, I am an average clerk."<sup>3</sup> Though he tries harder to skip these waves of modernism but he always feels that he is "not included."<sup>4</sup> He said, "if I come from Canada or Australia, I, who desire above all things to be taken to the arms with love, am alien, external."<sup>5</sup> These waves in Louis' monologues represent the conflicts between the individual and his society that were brought by modernism and its changes in all aspects of life even in the

<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,90.

<sup>2</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931,77.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 54.

literary works. The image of the 'waves', as a title for Virginia Woolf's novel, was a very expressive representation of modernist aspects of life.

### 1. The Fragmented Structure and the Discontinuous Narrative

The revolution against the old ideas and beliefs at the twentieth century was the core of modernism. The latter stressed the fact of breaking rules, norms, values, systems and standards. In literature, this fact is known as fragmentation. At this period human became changeable and indeterminate because of the speed of development. As a result, fragmentation found its way in all aspects of life even in literature. Virginia Woolf is one of the modernists who embraced fragmentation and breaking norms in writing fiction. Furthermore, she rejected the fact of the fixed and the dramatic character of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She believed that the pre-modernist character was deprived from abstracted inklings for that reason we find him acting sometimes just to reach a given aim in the story, and we can anticipate what he will do easily, so he will not affect us as readers.<sup>1</sup>

There are so many aspects that show how Woolf's *The Waves* moved away from the old conventions of the novel. The first thing, and according to my reading to this novel I conclude that the novel has no strict line narration, because we have six diachronical waves and nine synchronical waves. In other words, the diachronical waves represent the whole lives or the whole story of the six characters from childhood to death. While the synchronical waves represent the different stages that each character goes through during their growth process. What makes the difference is that the diachronical waves represent the whole lives of the six characters while the synchronical waves represent just a given period from their lives, and the latter are related with the sun rise and fall:

Sun has not yet risen	childhood
Sun rose higher	school
Sun rose	college
Sun risen	farewell dinner
Sun at its full light	The death of Percival
Sun is no longer in the middle of the sky	life
Sun start sunk lower	Middle age
Sun is sinking	Reunion Dinner

<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves*. Landmarks of World Literature, 1951, 20.

## Sun had sunk

## Summing up

Childhood, adolescence and adulthood these are the important stages in human life in general, but they are represented in this novel as waves which rise and fall, go forward and backward. As a result, they contributed to differentiating the various sections of the novel. In other words, the description of the natural waves in the novel and the movement of the sun gives the reader an idea about the stage Woolf is talking about. For example:

The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was lightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.<sup>1</sup>

As already mentioned at the beginning of this section, the narrative which is used in the main sections of *The Waves* differs from the common one. What makes the difference is that Woolf's novel contains no direct discourse. This style of narration makes the reader highly influenced by the message, perspectives, and the attitudes of author. Modernists like Woolf prefer to affect the reader through their new innovations instead of using their authority on the reader. Most of the time, they use stream of consciousness in order to do so. For example:

" I see a ring,' said Bernard,' hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light."

" I see a slab of pale yellow,' said Susan, 'spreading away until it meets a purple stripe. "

" I hear a sound', said Rhoda,' cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down."

" I see a globe,' said Neville,'hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill." <sup>2</sup>

All these monologues are not audible, and they represent what a character may say as Irma Rantavaara stated, "None of these "utterances" is actually audible, as they only reflect what the character would say, but think for themselves, thus becoming "silent soliloquies."<sup>3</sup> However, Woolf used this narrative technique in order to create a new way to represent her characters.

Only the first pages of the novel contain ordered monologues. i.e. every character speaks once. In the third and the sixth sections, one of the characters is silent. In addition to that; the order of monologues becomes more arbitrary as the number of the lines in each utterance grows. Another

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rantavaara, Irma Irene. *Virginia Woolf's The Waves*. Kennikat Press, 1969,8.

observation is that Bernard is the first character who speaks at the beginning of the novel, but at the ninth section he speaks the last. Virginia Woolf used another way to represent her characters. The order of characters' monologues is controlled by their affections to each other. For example, Susan is in love with Bernard, as a result she often speaks after him; disposed behind them Louis and Jinny, Neville and Rhoda, Jinny had kissed Louis, Rhoda speaks more after Louis though she speaks less than the others, and later she becomes his lover. Another important point is the order of appearance of the characters. Girls mostly speak after boys and surprisingly they speak less. In other words, we see Louis always in the front followed by Bernard and Neville. Then, Rhoda, Susan and Jinny come. This order represents the predominant conception of gender at the writer's time.

The representation of the waves in the novel is very expressive. As already mentioned, each character represents a wave. Therefore, the technique of discontinuous narrative is represented by the discontinuity of the movements of the waves either in life or in nature. In other words, no one can expect what will happen for us after just five seconds. One may die or may make an accident. The waves in our lives are moving without a strict order, they rise and fall, go backward and forward, and that what Woolf tried to convey through using those techniques.

## 2. Symbolism

Modernist works are characterized by the use of mysterious style of language. The common images are defamiliarized by turning objects to metaphors. In the modernist literature, the symbolist revolution appeared first in poetry then it spread to the other genres like the novel. Because of this revolution, change found its way also into language. The meanings of the words had exploded and expanded. According to Melvin. j. Friedman, Woolf is one of the modernist like Henry James, and William Faulkner who were influenced by the French Symbolist poetry,<sup>1</sup> and this was clearly observed in her fiction. Woolf as a modernist writer was concerned more with fragmenting narratives as Friedman stated, "the modernist novel is characterised by fragmented narrative that is connected through images and symbols rather than exterior events."<sup>2</sup> In other words, modernist novel was characterised by depicting experience in short blocks of time that are related to each other using repeated symbols and images. *The Waves* is one of the modernist works that show clearly these new modernist techniques.

The image of the waves was used in Woolf's novel in order to draw and convey some Woolf's ideas and messages of about life, reality, identity, the self, the individual. As any modernist

<sup>1</sup> Friedman, Melvin. j. " the Symbolist Novel: Huysmans to Malraux" *Modernism 1890- 1930*.ed . Malcolm Bradbury - James MacFarlane. Harmondsworth, Middelsex: Penguin Books – 1991, 453.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

novelist; Woolf used the waves as a metaphoric title to her novel though it does not indicate that she is representing six characters' lives. This novel was titled *The Moths*<sup>1</sup> before, but Woolf after editing the original piece felt that she must name it *The Waves*. Using this title, she feels freer from the old conventions of the novel. In other words, most of the modernist novelists use metaphoric titles like *Heart of Darkness*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Waves* in order to move away from the traditional titles that indicate the events of the novel. For example, *Mrs Dalloway* Tells the story of *Mrs Dalloway*. According to Eric Warner, Woolf used the waves instead of the Moths because she was writing to a rhythm and this rhythm was "rhythm of the waves." He stated:

The change of title from *The Moths* was not fortuitous, but rather an 'essential' clarification; the 'rhythm' she wished to sound through the book was the systole - diastole movement of the waves, the repeated pattern of surge and ebb. We have seen, throughout this analysis, some of the ways in which that pattern manifests itself: realism and 'reality', process and meaning, life and art, narrative and plot, personality and impersonality, the individual and the group, speaker and interlude, sensitive and insensitive nature, the mind and the sun, the flowing 'stream' of life and meditative 'islands of light' - all of these dualities meet and contend in the book.<sup>2</sup>

The image of waves in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* can be interpreted in many different ways. For instance, for N. C. Thakur the waves and the sea represent reality and life. He stated that:

just as ripples rise out of the sea, grow into separate waves, rise and bigger, then break and subside into the sea becoming part it again. In the same manner human beings take a different individuals like Bernard, Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda, and passing in through infancy, youth, and old age , ultimately rest in reality, and there achieving fusion with eternal spiritual principles, continue to exist.<sup>3</sup>

The waves may also represent the revolutionary movements of change that rebelled against the old convention especially in literature and precisely in the novel. In other words, the fragmented structure and monologues create new waves that move the old strict plot of the novel away. In addition, they represent the cultural and the social changes at the modernist time .i.e. They represent the conflicts that were brought by modernism between the individual and his society and as illustrated before by the case of the Australian Louis. They also represent Woolf experiences through her life because she also experienced the pain of losing her father as Rhoda did. She experienced psychological difficulties like Rhoda. Woolf also experienced homosexuality as

<sup>1</sup> Warner, Eric. *Virginia Woolf, The waves* . Landmarks of World Literature, 1951,21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>3</sup> Thakur, N. C. *The Symbolist of Virginia Woolf*. London, Oxford University Press, 1965, 20.

Neville, and She killed herself in the same way as Rhoda did. She is the story teller as Bernard when he claimed that the lives of the others are his life. He said, "Take it. This is my life."<sup>1</sup> The waves represent the different stages that her characters passed through i.e. childhood, youth, old age, death. They represent the rise and the fall of consciousness within the characters' minds. For example, Rhoda said, "Let me pull myself out of these waters. But they heap themselves on me; they sweep me between their great shoulders; I am turned; I am tumbled; I am stretched, among these long lights, these long waves, these endless paths, with people pursuing, pursuing."<sup>2</sup> She is conscious of the difficulties that she faces but she cannot "pull" herself because she is so weak. The waves represent the fluxing life of the six characters and human beings generally. They represent the changes that occurred on the 'selves' and the identities of each character. When the sun rises more, they start asking more questions about themselves, who are they? Are they happy? and their waves start moving more and more.

Jinny said " What moves my heart, my legs"	Sun has not yet risen
Rhoda said " This is the life to which I am committed	Sun rose higher
Bernard said " Who am I"	Sun rose
Bernard said " This perhaps is happiness"	Sun risen
Neville said" His horse is tripped"	Sun at its full light
"And time,' said Bernard, 'lets fall its drop".	Sun is no longer in the middle of the sky
Louis said " I, and again I, and again I".	Sun start sunk lower
Bernard said" I went from one to the other holding my sorrow "	Sun is sinking
Bernard said" Take it. This is my life"	Sun had sunk

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 135.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 18.

## *Chapter Three:*

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### **The Modernist Self in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves***



Many critics tried to make different analysis to Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves*. Some had analyzed this novel from a modernist perspective, while others had discussed Woolf's style in this novel. Some scholars tried to trace its philosophical influence on the reader, whereas the others tried to explore themes like androgyny and feminism. Through this section I will depict the self - reflection and self-portrayal in *The Waves*. In other words I will explain how the modernist representation of the self which is the "core or center of human psyche" is present in this novel. I will explore also How the self is presented in different shapes i.e. when it is elusive and other time when it is dialogic or discontinuous.

### 1) The Elusive Self:

*The Waves* is a novel in which Woolf tried to differentiate between the superficial identity that is imposed on the human being by its society and his self.<sup>1</sup> The latter refers to the "core or center of human psyche"<sup>2</sup>, and it also represents "the profound psychic wholeness that mystics seek"<sup>3</sup>. Outside the self there is the ego tries to stress on some new identities that are related to a given society. However in the inside where the ego has no access, human can find their spiritual wholeness easily. In other words the ego tries always his best to create barriers that makes identity and personality moves away from reaching the selfhood through emphasizing on identities that are influenced by the society. Thus what makes the self "sustained", and impossible to reach it. This kind of the elusive self is present in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. Woolf characters always are I search for their selves but there is always something happened which makes their egos create a wall between their selves and their identities.<sup>4</sup>

In the first section, when the sun start to rise, the six characters are children who are exploring the world around them. In this section we see the psychological movement of the six characters. In the first stage we see how they describe what they hear and see. For example, Bernard says "I see a ring ... hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light", while Susan says "I see a slab of pale yellow ... spreading away until it meets a purple stripe." However, Rhoda says "I hear a sound... cheep, chirp; cheep chirp; going up and down." It seems that they explore the world around them for the first time and see it as something strange. Next each of them start react to some the objects around them. For instance, Bernard recognize a spider's web, where as Louis watches shadows, and Susan looks at the leaves. At the next stage we see feelings that are created

<sup>1</sup> Poresky, Louise A. *The Elusive Self: Psyche and Spirit in Virginia Woolf's Novels*. IUniverse, 2010, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

between them and the other objects. For example Jinny says " The back of my hand burns ... but the palm is clammy and damp with dew" while , Neville says " Stones are cold to my feet ... I feel each one, round or pointed, separately." However in the fourth stage each of them describes the house that is near to them from the outside. In the fifth stage they describes how they see it from the inside. They gradually build their awareness and relationships with the external objects around them. They started gradually using their awareness when they become nearer to the house in order to what they can see inside it. This is the same process in which the personality and identity goes through in order to reach the self.

Awareness continues growing till it becomes self consciousness and the human being is no longer reacting with the world around him. However, in this stage human being starts build another kind of awareness , it is called self awareness. Rather than reacting with the world around him, he starts reacting with himself , thus what makes him has " emotional insecurity". For example Louis feels alone, he says "Now they have all gone,... I am alone. They have gone." While Jinny kisses him just because she feels alone, and she has to make contact with humans. However, Susan says:

... I saw her kiss him. I saw them, Jinny and Louis, kissing. Now I will wrap my agony inside my pocket-handkerchief. It shall be screwed tight into a ball. I will go to the beech wood alone, before lessons. I will not sit at a table, doing sums. I will not sit next Jinny and next Louis. I will take my anguish and lay it upon the roots under the beech trees. I will examine it and take it between my fingers. They will not find me. I shall eat nuts and peer for eggs through the brambles and my hair will be matted and I shall sleep under hedges and drink water from ditches and die there.<sup>1</sup>

In the final sections we see the six characters with completed personalities and strong egos. Each of them tries to find his self hood, but the ego as we said block their identities from reaching the self. But they find another way to reach not the self but parts from it, through living their "moments of beings". For example Bernard says:

Heaven be praised for solitude! I am alone now. That almost unknown person has gone, to catch some train, to take some cab, to go to some place or person whom I do not know. The face looking at me has gone. The pressure is removed. Here are empty coffee-cups. Here are chairs turned but nobody sits on them. Here are empty tables and nobody any more coming to dine at them to-night .<sup>2</sup>

Let me now raise my song of glory. Heaven be praised for solitude. Let me be alone. Let me cast and throw away this veil of being, this cloud that changes with the least breath, night and day, and all

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 165.

night and all day. While I sat here I have been changing. I have watched the sky change. I have seen clouds cover the stars, then free the stars, then cover the stars again. Now I look at their changing no more. Now no one sees me and I change no more. Heaven be praised for solitude that has removed the pressure of the eye, the solicitation of the body, and all need of lies and phrases.<sup>1</sup>

Bernard repeats this words " Heaven be praised for solitude" in order to strengthen his identity against his ego. He feels good when he reaches those beautiful moments in his life which make him nearer to his self though he does not reach it. These words make him prepared to fight again and again against his ego. He says" And in me too the wave rises. It swells; it arches its back. I am aware once more of a new desire, something rising beneath me like the proud horse whose rider first spurs and then pulls him back. What enemy do we now perceive advancing against us"<sup>2</sup> This struggle between Bernard's personality and ego never ends. But at one moment he was defeated , because of the death of his best friend Percival. He was identifying himself using his friend but when he dies Bernard ego became powerful. Bernard adds:

" you whom I ride now, as we stand pawing this stretch of pavement? It is death. Death is the enemy. It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man's, like Percival's, when he galloped in India. I strike spurs into my horse. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death! "<sup>3</sup>

" The waves broke on the shore" , this is the last sentence in the novel .Through it Woolf tried explain to the reader how the waves moves their backs, and broke and dissolve again and again but they rise again. The same thing as identity though it does not reach the self but there is always hope to find it. Woolf believes that the self is something impossible to reach and thus what made the search for the self is " the heart of Virginia Woolf's work"<sup>4</sup>

## 2) Dialogic self :

We have said in the previous section that each of the characters at the beginning of the novel describes the world around him using short monologues, as well as each of them reflects on his personality through monologues. As a result we can see them as separated individuals as well as we can see them as one individual , because Woolf had succeed in drawing and omitting the boundaries between her characters as Roxanne Fand has marked in her book *The Dialogic Self*:

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 166.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid ,167.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Poresky, Louise A. *The Elusive Self: Psyche and Spirit in Virginia Woolf's Novels*. IUiverse, 2010, 15.

*Reconstructing Subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood* "The boundaries between characters and between characters and the nonhuman world appear and disappear in negotiated meanings" .<sup>1</sup>

Percival, the seventh character, is one of the unifying characters at the novel, though he is absent and present at the same time because he has no monologues and introduced by the others monologues. Percival as a character he has the ability to bring all the feelings and the thoughts of the characters around him and creates one completed individual, self and identity. However, he also can make the other characters look like his "shadow" because they identify themselves by him. At the first meeting we see them comfortable they fill sad because he will leave to India, but at the second meeting we see them totally lost, as if they lost themselves.

" Here on my brow is the blow I got when Percival fell " <sup>2</sup>

" Look now, how everybody follows Percival. He is heavy. He walks clumsily down the field, through the long grass, to where the great elm trees stand " <sup>3</sup>

However, Bernard is also another unifying character who makes the six characters look as one individual, because he was the chief spokesperson of the six characters relationship. Most of the sections in *The Waves* begins with his monologues directly after the interlude. He is the story teller who summarize his friends' lives and claims them as his own life story. Bernard says:

"...when I meet an unknown person, and try to break off, here at this table, what I call "my life", it is not one life that I look back upon; I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am--Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs." <sup>4</sup>

He tries to find the right words in order to summarize his friend's lives. For me And according to the analysis of her dairies, the six characters represent Woolf's self. In other words each of them represent a part of Woolf's life. For example, Bernard represent Woolf the novelist, While Rhoda represents Woolf when she went through mental crisis.

If we consider the six characters as one individual who has one unified self, then we are making equality and balance between the characters. As a result, Woolf ideal self is unifying between male and female identities and selves i.e. " dialogic".<sup>5</sup> As Roxanne Fand claimed in her

<sup>1</sup>Fand, Roxanne J. *The Dialogic Self: Reconstructing Subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood*. Susquehanna University Press, 1999, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 162.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 28.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>5</sup>Fand, Roxanne J. *The Dialogic Self: Reconstructing Subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood*. Susquehanna University Press, 1999, 41.

Book ....that Woolf notion of self is " dialogic". Through her book she explained the dialogism of Woolf by using words and phrases like "boundaries that appear and disappear", "game", "shifting centers" ...etc . Fand has a belief in Woolf ability in playing with the boundaries between her characters. In other words, if you omit "Jinny said" or "Bernard said" you will never have the ability to distinguish between the characters' gender. Fand stated that:

Virginia Woolf's concept of self is dialogic in that it opens up the finite rules of self-narrative to an infinity game in which the selves of the fictional characters become shifting centres of interaction with everything from subtle immediate influences to those far out in time and space. The boundaries between characters and between characters and the nonhuman world appear and disappear in negotiated meanings that are both serious and ironically playful, disrupting conventional monologic self-narratives.<sup>1</sup>

Woolf ideal characters are characterised by holding and unifying the feminine and the masculine as one of the characters stated that he or she does not" know if " or she is " man or woman, Bernard or Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny, or Rhoda—so strange is the contact of one with another.". Fand Explained this fact as seeking for "androgyny implicitly " by Woolf. She believes that Woolf tries to deconstruct terms like fixed identities, characters, and gender. Furthermore she sees that Woolf tries to combine between male and female characters freely through bringing them together though they are separated. For instance, Woolf moves from the "I" to the "We" , from the individual to the community. Bernard says" I cannot remember my past....We insist, it seems, on living."<sup>2</sup>

### 3) The Feminine Self

Before start discussing this kind of self , we must start having some information about Virginia Woolf's life. First we must bear in mind that Woolf was weaned in 10 weeks because her mother was pregnant.<sup>3</sup> The second thing is that she was under the responsibility of her father after the death of her mother, and he insisted on educating her at home. The third thing is that Woolf was abused sexually by her half-brother George Duckwar.<sup>4</sup> The forth thing is that she wished to be a mother after her marriage with Leonard Woolf, but she could not because of the physical damaged of the sexual abuse. The fifth thing , her husband believed that even if she succeeded in healing and she

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<sup>1</sup> Fand, Roxanne J. *The Dialogic Self: Reconstructing Subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood*. Susquehanna University Press, 1999, 42.

<sup>2</sup>Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 64.

<sup>3</sup>Panken, Shirley. "Virginia Woolf: The Feminine Self." *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1990, pp. 45–55., doi:10.1007/bf01253455.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

became a mother she will collapse mentally.<sup>1</sup> The last thing is when she was temporarily apart with her husband she confesses to one of her friends that she is sexually cold.<sup>2</sup>

For this reason Virginia Woolf believed that the female life cannot be portrayed using the old conventions, and the old was of representations especially in the novel. Woolf believed that classical realism has not the ability to represent women's life as it must be represented<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, she claimed through her essays and fiction that the masculine representation cannot speak and represent the female experience adequately.<sup>4</sup> As audience of her, we must know that at Woolf's time was regarded as a second class-citizen, and she was under the responsibility of the males in her family. In addition to that, women writers as Woolf were facing difficulties in accepting their art and literature. Through her fiction Woolf tried to represent the feminine self and life adequately using many modernist innovations and techniques.<sup>5</sup> In this section we will see how Woolf used her new ways of representations in order to reflect the feminine self in *The Waves*.

Virginia Woolf used *The Waves* as a title to her novel in order to express her wish to experience the waters that are related to childbirth and to be a mother. Her characters were borne as the waves in the sea. She believed that life is the mother of every individual, and she represented this idea in her novel using the image of the waves. There for she created new ways to express this feminine self and feeling and view of life. Through her novel she indicated that novelists specially females has to express their selves and lives using their subjectivity, and they have to escape representing their lives objectively. Her idea was stated by her character Rhoda when she said:

Like" and "like" and "like"--but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing? Now that lightning has gashed the tree and the flowering branch has fallen and Percival, by his death, has made me this gift, let me see the thing. There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place. Very little is left outside. The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Panken, Shirley. "Virginia Woolf: The Feminine Self." *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1990, pp. 45–55., doi:10.1007/bf01253455, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 46

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 46

<sup>4</sup> Goldman, Jane, and Virginia Woolf. *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>6</sup>Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 92.

This means that Woolf use Rhoda to encourage female to express their selves and their experience of life using their words, their style and their genre. Woolf in her novel used the fragmented structure, the strange genre and the image of the waves in order to reflect her ideal self, her feminine self. She uses the waves in order to draw a clear image of the oceanic mind of every female i.e. she wanted to represent how the female self and mind process.

The waves are related to water, and water is associated with women's fertility (metaphorically)<sup>1</sup>. In each interlude in the nine sections we see new description for the waves as if the characters die in the previous section and they are born again in the coming section. E.g. "The sun rose... Light almost pierced the thin swift waves as they raced fan-shaped over the beach." , "Now, too, the rising sun came in at the window, touching the red edged curtain, and began to bring out circles and lines... The wind rose. The waves drummed on the shore,"

The sun, risen, no longer couched on a green mattress darting a fitful glance through watery jewels, bared its face and looked straight over the waves. They fell with a regular thud. They fell with the concussion of horses' hooves on the turf. Their spray rose like the tossing of lances and assegais over the riders' heads. They swept the beach with steel blue and diamond-tipped water. They drew in and out with the energy, the muscularity, of an engine which sweeps its force out and in again.<sup>2</sup>

This includes that life is the mother of every one, though we collapse in its ocean again and again but we will be born again as waves in order to continue our struggle. Woolf tries to convey this idea by creating characters that are born out of waves of life. This is the first technique in which Woolf represent the feminine self in her novel *The Waves*.

The feminine self of Woolf is also represented through her female characters. For example, Susan's feminine self is expressed in her rejection of order, discipline, and restrictions and in her relationship with nature. She says:

... I think I am the field, I am the barn, I am the trees; mine are the flocks of birds, and this young hare who leaps, at the last moment when I step almost on him. Mine is the heron that stretches its vast wings lazily; and the cow that creaks as it pushes one foot before another munching; and the wild, swooping swallow; and the faint red in the sky, and the green when the red fades; the silence and the bell; the call of the man fetching carthorses from the fields--all are mine.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Panken, Shirley. "Virginia Woolf: The Feminine Self." *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1990, pp. 45–55., doi:10.1007/bf01253455.

<sup>2</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 56.



This monologue by Susan indicates her love of the mother nature, the field, the barn, the trees, the birds,...etc. However, Jinny tries to express her feminine self through her body. She says:

... I do not temper my beauty with meanness lest it should scorch me. I gulp it down entire. It is made of flesh; it is made of stuff. My imagination is the body's. Its visions are not fine-spun and white with purity like Louis' ... the infinite variety of women's dresses (I note all clothes always) delight me. I eddy with them, in and out, in and out, into rooms, into halls, here, there, everywhere, wherever they go... The torments, the divisions of your lives have been solved for me night after night, sometimes only by the touch of a finger under the table-cloth as we sat dining--so fluid has my body become, forming even at the touch of a finger into one full drop, which fills itself, which quivers, which flashes, which falls in ecstasy.<sup>1</sup>

Jinny is in love with her body and beauty, this is the way she represents herself she tries always to be beautiful in the eyes of her lovers.

In *The Waves* even the male character Percival was used to represent the feminine self of Woolf. We know that Percival does not have monologues like the other characters, and he is a unifying character to the others characters. He plays the role of the mother for the six characters. The evident on that is when he is around they feel that they are solid, and without him they feel that there is no solidity. Rhoda says:

he is like a stone fallen into a pond round which minnows swarm. Like minnows, we who had been shooting this way, that way, all shot round him when he came. Like minnows, conscious of the presence of a great stone, we undulate and eddy contentedly. Comfort steals over us Gold runs in our blood. One, two; one, two; the heart beats in serenity, in confidence, in some trance of well-being, in some rapture of benignity; and look--the outermost parts of the earth--pale shadows on the utmost horizon, India for instance, rise into our purview<sup>2</sup>

The six characters the children of Percival though he is a male, but they team around him in order to feel safety. When he died, the six friends felt that everything looks insubstantial as Neville said "He is dead...He fell. His horse tripped. He was thrown. The sails of the world have swung round and caught me on the head. All is over. The lights of the world have gone out. There stands the tree which I cannot pass".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 85.



#### 4) The Discontinuous Self:

For Dennis Brown *The Waves* is considered as the most challenging work of Woolf which explores the self in time<sup>1</sup>. In other words, self is changeable, because it is always in process. We have said before that the fragmented structure of the work was used to represent the life of the six characters from childhood to death. We had also tackled how they use interior monologues to express their struggle to reach selfhood. We also said that Bernard at the end of the novel summarises all the stories of his friends. In other words he "reviews all the whole process of 'selfing' "<sup>2</sup> that his friends gone through. Woolf in this novel had discussed the self process of six characters, and which kind of selves they have either they have "multi-selves" or "unborn-self" or "death self".

Louis, Bernard, Rhoda, and Neville, are characters who accept the fact of being changed i.e. "discontinuity of the self" through time, and every one of them tries to create his way in order to cope with that.<sup>3</sup> However Jinny and Susan had rejected this process of change using their ways. For example, Susan though she is disappointed for her love story but she continues her life normally and she marries. Percival, the unifying character, he represents "the myth of the integral self" and "continuous self",<sup>4</sup> though he dies in the middle of the novel. We see that all characters try to imitate him and they are convinced by everything he does or say. Through this character Woolf tries to represent the "lost ideal of selfhood".

Rhoda self is fragmented more than the others characters. She feels that she is "threatened by others \_ friends as well as strangers\_ and also by the objects in the physical world." She says "Alone. I often fall down in to nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall of the edge of the world into nothingness. I had to begin my had against some hard door to call myself back to the body." Most of the time she feels that most of her experiences in life are strange and fearless. She also says "I cannot make one moment merge into the next. Torne them all violent, all separate ... I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole indivisible mass that you call life". We notice that though she has an affair with Louis and she travel to visit Spain but she cannot establish her selfhood i.e. "her experience does not 'mature' her" She think that death is the only solution to her case.

<sup>1</sup> Brown, Dennis. *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: a Study of Self-Fragmentation*. Macmillan, 2000, 161.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

However, Susan present how much Woolf explored her selfhood during her life. In the first sections we see that she had already defined herself. She says " I love and hate. I desire one thing only"<sup>1</sup> She always tries to establish herself based on what she possess. Though she was disappointed with love but she was not heart broken or she herself was broken because of that. She ignored herself and married. She cannot accept the fact of being broke. She says " I cannot be divided, or kept a part" though she has a husband, children, and land but she did not succeed in maintaining an authentic self .At the end we see that she realized that " something ...has escaped" her, though she seems stronger than the other characters.

Bernard in the only character who " under goes a lot transformation and new awareness of self experience".<sup>2</sup> He says " I have to cover the entrances and exits of several deferent man how alternately act their part as Bernard"<sup>3</sup> This means that though his self in process , but he is still convinced that he will be Bernard the story teller. He always describes the changes that occur on his self and when he was at the college, and the roles and the masks that he performed. Bernard says:

I changed and changed; was Hamlet, was Shelley, was the hero, whose name I now forget, of a novel by Dostoevsky; was for a whole term, incredibly, Napoleon; but was Byron chiefly. For many weeks at a time it was my part to stride into rooms and fling gloves and coat on the back of chairs, scowling slightly. I was always going to the bookcase for another sip of the divine specific.<sup>4</sup>

Then he says again" 'I rose and walked away--I, I, I; not Byron, Shelley, Dostoevsky, but I, Bernard. I even repeated my own name once or twice."<sup>5</sup> In the last section, it seems that Bernard is broken and fragmented . He says " i am more selves than Neville thinks". He claimed that his self disappear when the sun goes down and it come back when " light" return. Sometimes he feels that he is all the six characters , and other times he feels that he is "nobody" . At the end of novel we see him forced to accept the social notion of the self and he says "I, I, I, tired as I am, spent as I am, and almost worn out with all this rubbing of my nose along the surfaces of things, even I, an elderly man who is getting rather heavy and dislikes exertion, must take myself off and catch some last train." Though Bernard is old in this section but his self is still in process . He represents adequately the discontinuity of the self.

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, Dennis. *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: a Study of Self-Fragmentation*. Macmillan, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *The Waves*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931, 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid , 143.

## ***General Conclusion:***

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## General Conclusion:

To conclude, the radical change in the western society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not affect only certain fields , but has its influence also in literature. The emergence of Modernism was the result of this change. This revolutionary movement emerged in literature in order to renew the old ways of representation in literature. The modernists like Woolf, and James Joyce used their works in order to embrace the new ways of thinking and living. They used different literary devices like fragmentation, in order to convey their messages in a new way. The use of fragmented structure and symbolism was not purposeless, but it makes the reader more attached to the text . This is one of the reasons which encouraged Virginia Woolf to use those modernist aspects in her novel *The Waves* .

The image of the waves was used by Woolf to make her text more fragmented, and to provide a discontinuous narration. It also made her able to create new way of representing her characters and ideas. It made the self of the six characters looks elusive and unreachable. Each section starts differently, and each time we see the selves of characters looks different from the previous time. As a result; this fragmentation was used though it makes the work strange for the reader. Each time and in each section we see the six characters investigate using new ways to reach their selves but they do not succeed. Each time the ego of each character block identity from reaching the self hood. This is the way in which Woolf tries to convince her readers that the self is something unreachable and coping with that by living our moments of being

Symbolism, also found its way in representing the modernist notion of the self of Woolf. The image of the waves made the feminine self represented in a new way . The waves in this novel symbolized fertility and the fluidity of women. They also represents the feminine view of life and how the female goes through its difficulties. Woolf had used the character of Percival also to represent the feminine self though he is a male character. The six characters feel safety when he is around as if he is their mother. He is also a unifying character of the other. Their feelings and thoughts , and selves all gathered in order to build one completed individual. This conclude that Percival's character wholes all genders in one self i.e. his self is dialogic. This new notion of the self by Woolf represents her will to unify between the male and the female in one self. Though she did that implicitly in *The Waves* but succeeded in that.

Woolf used a great number of images and modernists aspects in order to present her notion of the self. For Woolf, the self is elusive, discontinuous, and dialogic. The feminine self can be

explored through many modernist innovations in order to present the feminine view of life. Insisting the self in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* made this literary work survive for more than 80 years after its first publication. It is a rare work in which the self is presented differently and it has different shapes.



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