



Illusion and truth: A study of Jacob's room by virginia woolf

Ritu Rani¹, Uma Shanker Yadav²

¹ Research Scholar, Singhanian University, Pachari Bari, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India

² Supervisor, Singhanian University, Pachari Bari, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

In each of the novels by Virginia Woolf, the individual's freedom to express his intrinsic personality depends heavily on his ability to conceive for himself and communicate a vision of reality to others. This ability is developed by the individual autonomously, but is critically affected by the pressures of civilization and facts from the outside world. And finally, however slightly, the external world itself is altered by the impact of the individual's expressed personality.

Keywords: illusion, reality, perception, personality etc

Introduction

The varying theories of 'illusion' and 'truth' supported by thinkers, scientists, and religious saints are numerous, but they believe that illusion is something that looks like reality. Poets, dramatists and novelists have dealt with the theme of perception and truth. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Jane Austen's *Emma*, Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Ambassador*, Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*, James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, R.K Narayan's *The Guide*, and Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* are some examples.

According to the theory of poetry by Wordsworth, he expressed that his feelings has a spontaneous flow and he wrote his poem on the basis of it. While T.S Eliot has a different perspective, according to him poetry was not a feeling that can be expressed directly. He explained that rather the emotions can be better explained by logical correlatives. In *The Common Reader* Virginia Woolf announced her philosophy of literature. She believed that the techniques that were used by all the traditional novelists could not help her in explaining her vision of reality. So for this she adopted the technique of stream of consciousness in her novels like, *The Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how the external world's special characteristics, as they are portrayed in each novel, are incorporated into or affect the vision of reality of the hero and, subsequently, the effect that the vision of reality of the hero has on his social environment.

The importance of the relationship between the individual and the external world focuses on their mutual interdependence, and an in-depth analysis of this interdependence must include observations of the related characteristics of the external world, the essence of the intrinsic personality of the individual, the perception of truth that he achieves, and the impact that the individual has on the environment. Nevertheless, the central issue remains the interrelationship between the very real forces created by both the individual and the outside world.

Throughout the novels of Virginia Woolf it is clear that the protagonists who try to find their view of the world whether entirely within the imaginative domain or in the realm of

reality inevitably follow sterile life styles. Each mode of experience requires supporting knowledge of the other realms for its confirmation. Virginia Woolf writes in her diary that one has to be both a vulnerability and a definable externalized human, one has to get out of life; very, very focused at one level, not having to rely on the fragmented parts of one's soul, living in the brain.

In other words, the values of an individual remain entirely in the domain of speculation if one's active life can provide little or no reason for one's existence, and vice versa, one's active life is meaningless if it bears no relation to ideals; it is interdependent on the two modes of experience or the two truths. As Bernard Blackstone points out: there is not one kind of reality for Virginia Woolf, but two. There's the reason truth, and there's the imagination truth.

The reason truth is the masculine sphere pre-eminently, while the imagination truth, or intuition, is the feminine sphere. Such truths together constitute what she calls truth. The feminine sphere, or the subjective world of one, is made up of the vision of reality of the individual based on his ideals as they are shaped by his imagination, desires and attitudes. The world changes and matures as it is exposed to different experiences that include the interplay between personality and the outside world.

On the other side, the historical cataloging of the external world and its general concern for and belief in the future inform the individual that the human race has a history and a future, that each individual is a contributing factor to the onward flow of life. As society represents the moral codes and social actions of the time and more or less determines its place in the giant system of humanity for each individual, it gives the person a sense of the overall meaning of life that is deficient in supplying his inner world.

Nevertheless, the outside world is ignorant and un sympathetic to human sensitivities, inherently concerned with the generalities of society, and this indifference may leave one feeling personally insignificant. Therefore, it is up to the individual to learn how to articulate and understand his inherent nature within the external world's depersonalized reality, to emphasize the positive aspects of both worlds, to delegate the negative and, in the end, to create a practical, all-encompassing vision of reality. This

all-encompassing vision of reality is achieved by the protagonists of the novels by Virginia Woolf. Say that the moment is a combination of the sensation of thought and the voice of the sea. In such moments the person is aware of the meaning of his environment and of his place in the overall picture; he synthesizes the realities of his subjective sphere; he synthesizes the realities of his subjective sphere.

These moments of insight provide the foundations on which the individual builds his life style, enabling him to find meaning in the daily life routine. The first three novels by Virginia Woolf, but more specifically *The Voyage*, *Night and Day*, are primarily concerned with this aspect of discovery—the ability of characters to conceive an all-encompassing vision of reality based on a synthesis of their active and thoughtful experiences.

Jacob's Room is more concerned with the way an individual ideally gathers knowledge in and out of the world, approaching each situation with an open and unprejudiced mind, but we see very little of the cumulative effect this experience has on the consciousness of Jacob. Therefore, this novel is not able to formulate a full vision of reality. The fusion of the inner and outer realities is not complete until the individual, as well orders his own lifestyle, makes some impact on the outer world so that both he and society benefit from his insights.

Although the characters in the novels that have a broader vision of reality are not always artists in the sense of form, writers, musicians or painters, they are artists in a very general sense in that they are consciously expressing their views of reality in forms that are recognizable to others. Herbert E. Francis, Jr. says that "personality is a creator now and after death" to Virginia Woolf and that the great characters in her novels, such as Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsey, dominate forces; other characters, he continues to say, "are not free of them. Through memory, they live. Through it, characters are moved, changed,

In the main novels of Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, the characters, and more precisely Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsey, can be understood to reflect the creative personality because they have a balance between the male and female modes of thought, the androgenic mind that Virginia Woolf described as a precondition of aesthetic sensitivity. Therefore, their efforts to express their all-encompassing vision of reality can be seen as attempts to influence or "civilize" the outside world, and this is the final step in the convergence of the inner world of ideas and the outer world of truth.

Nevertheless, in the last two novels by Virginia Woolf, the willingness of the protagonist to synthesize the two modes of interpretation is severely impaired as the existing world's facts manifest themselves and hold the deciding role in the novels' action. In addition, the place of art becomes relatively insignificant in society. In *The Waves*, characters are unable to realize a fulfilling lifestyle, and art is simply defining the historical age, rather than giving relief from the boring routine of everyday living. Virginia Woolf discusses in *Between The Acts* what may be the most practical contrast between the individual's external environment and life.

The novel suggests that it is difficult for a person to maintain an all-encompassing vision of reality due to the relentless forces of the outside world. The "moments of being" are still possible, but they remain isolated moments, and the underlying dilemma of existence, the need for

internal satisfaction against the demands of society, remains unclear. In this book, as in the previous one, instead of trying to influence the pattern of society, the artist interprets the period.

One's universe of considerations is one of a kind. When one gets discernments from one's detects, various contemplations are invigorated in one's brain as per one's frame of mind and substance of the intuitive personality. Those considerations can't be effectively decoded by others. Quentin Bell in his *Virginia Woolf* writes: "To know the mind of Virginia Woolf ... one would need to be either God or Virginia, ideally God" (109). His powerlessness to comprehend the brain of Virginia isn't his own concern however the widespread one that hampers human relationship.

Virginia Woolf says, what Individuals state or do has less of reality than its underside. Barbara Bagenal, one of the associates of the Woolfs, writes of Virginia's attitude as follows:

After reading the writings of Virginia, I saw that one of her attributes was to pose incalculable inquiries. She was strongly inspired by what individuals were thinking and why. It was only a curious intrigue; she truly needed to comprehend everybody's psyche and considerations. (Memories of Virginia Woolf by Her Contemporaries 146)

Virginia Woolf in her push to express her vision of reality in *Jacob's Room* gives the pursuers a progression of disengaged however enthusiastic minutes throughout Jacob's life. As a kid, Jacob is keen on the universe of nature. He doesn't play with his senior sibling Archer. He is keen on the superb universe of the seashore and starts to investigate it. At the point when Jacob is in Cambridge he thinks about the universe of older men, supper and casual get-togethers and the regular society as incredible. He feels awkward in the gathering given by Mr. Plumer, the science don.

When he goes out, he shouts "Goodness God, gracious God, goodness God! ..." "Bleeding savage!" (JR 33) he tells his companion Timmy Durrant summing up his distress at the illusion of the world. Having seen the books by Wells and Shaw and the six penny weeklies on the racks of the don, he feels: "What were they in the wake of, scouring and destroying, these old individuals? Had they never perused Homer, Shakespeare, the Elizabethans?"

He appreciates the pontoon ride telling his companion, Durrant, the tale of his uncle. When he sees Lady Miller's cookout party on the island, he needs to proceed onward. "Will we proceed onward... this savage crowd..." (JR 36). Jacob, one who discovers reality in the realm of nature, is drawn gradually into the stunning universe of people, the general public.

At the point when Jacob enters the railroad carriage, Mrs. Norman dissents by saying that it's anything but a smoking carriage. He appears not to hear her. Mrs. Norman is fifty years old and has a child in a school. However she is anxious to sit alone inverse to an intensely constructed young fellow. She considers offering him her paper. In the meantime she questions whether young fellows would peruse *Morning Post*. At that point she pays heed to his free socks, pitiful tie, eyes, mouth and lips. She imagines that he is firm yet energetic, apathetic and oblivious. For, he has not

understood her essence. Anyway to her, Jacob is somehow "decent, attractive, fascinating, recognized, all around manufactured, similar to her own kid?". At this point, Virginia Woolf, through the expressions of the storyteller, remarks accordingly: "No one considers anybody to be he is, not to mention an old woman sitting inverse a bizarre young fellow in a railroad carriage".

Dick Bonamy, the dear companion of Jacob feels that Jacob is "unequivocally the young fellow to fall quick infatuated and atone it for an incredible remainder" (JR 154). Be that as it may, even his companion's perspective on Jacob isn't valid. Fanny Elmer who is acquainted with Jacob by Nick Braham, the painter, appreciates Jacob's trademark quiet. She feels "how little he said at this point how firm it was". She envisions that it will be glad to sit close to him and take a gander at him. She aggregates up his character to be "virtuous" "lofty" and "a touch of domineering perhaps...". Jacob encourages her to peruse Tom Jones in the event that she needs to peruse books. Fanny Elmer purchases the novel and understands it. She observes it to be dull however when Jacob gets some information about it she lets him know "I do like Tom Jones". Anyway Jacob discovers that she imagines.

So he supposes "Tsk-tsk, ladies lie!" (JR 122). However Fanny Elmer feels betrayed when Jacob leaves for Paris. While sitting firmly as a model her mind-set isn't consistent. Presently she is dull and thick as bacon. Presently she is straightforward as a hanging glass. At this crossroads the storyteller considers the excellence of ladies which is "like the light on the ocean, never consistent to a solitary wave" (JR 114). All ladies have it. At that point they lose it. As a general rule excellence is momentary. Agonizing over the mentality of Jacob, Fanny Elmer feels frantic. As she rushes past the establishing Hospital, she cries "At any rate, I can suffocate myself in the Thames".

Whenever Jacob and Timmy Durrant drink espresso at a slowdown where the urns are shined and little lights consumed along the counter, the stallkeeper, "taking Jacob for a military gentleman..." (JR 75) informs him concerning his kid at Gibraltar. Jacob reviles the British armed force and acclaims the Duke of Wellington. Both the stallkeeper and Jacob don't have the foggiest idea about that Jacob will be in the military and bound to death later on. Obviously Jacob's demise is unexpected. However, as Michael Rosenthal feels, it isn't altogether sudden. For, the sheep's skull that captivated him as a youngster and the gun shots that reverberation through the novel clue that Jacob will be slaughtered in the war. At the point when Betty Flanders hears the weapon shots, she gets up half snoozing and goes to the window. Again far away she hears the dull sound as though the "nighttime ladies were beating incredible floor coverings" (JR 175). The idea that her children are battling for their nation enters her thoughts. Through the symbolism of winged animals Virginia Woolf recommends the end. "Be that as it may, were the chickens safe?... Her hens moved somewhat on their roosts".

Rose Shaw arrives at a resolution that life is mischievous in light of the fact that she couldn't comprehend why Jimmy won't wed Helen however both are delightful, both are respectful to one another, both move supernaturally and both sit in the niche. Jimmy and Helen resemble dispatches hapless. It is exceedingly hard to decipher melodies without words. Rose Shaw has a similar trouble in getting Jimmy and Helen. So she finishes up "life is awful, life is

wicked..." (JR 96). While Mrs. Flanders is cutting a dress, Mrs. Jarvis reveals to her that Jacob's letters resemble him. Mrs. Flanders does not hear her since her scissors make much commotion on the table. So Mrs. Jarvis proceeds with that the dead are very still though "we go through our days doing silly pointless things without knowing why".

Jacob sits in the lodging imagining that he needs to rise right on time next morning to get the train to Olympia. He is desolate. He goes to the window with his hands in his pockets and watches out. He sees three Greeks in Kilts, the poles of boats and occupied individuals of the lower classes walking, falling into gatherings and gesturing with their hands. Their absence of worry for him isn't the reason for his misery. Virginia Woolf discovers some significant conviction in it. "it was not that he himself happened to be desolate, yet that all individuals are" (JR 140). In spite of the fact that lived in packed enormous urban communities, the normal man has felt the horrifying dejection which has quickened misery. Underneath the outward show of gatherings, lie the overwhelming distress from which there is no chance to get out, "To escape is vain" (JR 47). Woman Miller's outing gathering has gotten the eyes of Jacob "a kind of ungainliness, cantankerousness, gloom..." (JR 36). Virginia Woolf feels that this sort of agony is the result of our development. "This agony, this give up to the dim waters which lap us about, is a cutting edge creation".

At the point when the train gradually adjusts a slope while in transit to Olympia, the Greek worker ladies are out among the vines, the old Greek men are sitting at the stations tasting sweet wine, Jacob stays bleak. In the meantime it is lovely to "be distant from everyone else; out of England; all alone; cut off from the entire thing".

There is no appropriate clarification for the back and forth movement in our veins, for bliss and despondency. When he sits in the quarry where the Greeks have cut marble for the theater, he sees little tortoises limping from bunch to cluster. It is extremely stunning to the eyes to see the sun striking on rugged fragments of marble. However he sits smoking his pipe "composed, commanding, disdainful, somewhat despairing, and exhausted with an august sort of boredom..." (JR 144). Requesting a jug of wine for Jacob, Mr. Evan Williams believes that it will assist him with a sort of isolation. "To be disregarded – that was useful for a youthful individual" (JR 156). Folding the Daily Mail in his grasp, Jacob considers governmental issues, the British Empire and about giving home standard to Ireland. Considerations of going into the Parliament and giving fine addresses, the decency of night parties and the pitiable ghettos at the back of Gray's Inn enter his thoughts. Jacob yearns to peruse something different. For, he is "without a doubt so significantly melancholy that anguish more likely than not been held up in him to cloud him at any moment..." (JR 138). At the point when Sandra asks Jacob not to overlook her when he returns to England, Jacob looks edgy. The storyteller imagines that Jacob is enduring and unsophisticated and there is something harsh about him. "He had in him the seeds of extraordinary disillusionment, which would come to him from ladies in center life".

Virginia Woolf utilizes the picture, waves, to draw out the illusion in the life of the old. Every one of the waves originates from the ocean. Some ascent modestly and break on the shore. Some appear to clear, ascent high yet break on the shore. Every one of the waves are drawn once again into the chest of the ocean. "Here are three coming routinely in a

steady progression, all much of a size. Then, hustling after them comes a fourth, enormous and threatening; it lifts the pontoon; on it goes; some way or another converges without achieving anything; levels itself out with the rest" (JR 119). Correspondingly in the event that we see through the window even in the sunset, we see individuals swelling through the road with yearnings and wants. And afterward all calmly die down. The development of the fight ships with weapons, the development of the military, the relentless trade of banks, research facilities and places of business – with all these we feel that world is pushing ahead. Be that as it may, everything will be brought to a halt as the transports stop when the police officer at Ludgate carnival raises his correct arm. "It is subsequently that we live, they state, driven by an unseizable power. They state that the authors never get it; that it goes rushing through their nets and leaves them torn to strips".

Bonamy and Mrs. Flanders go into the room of Jacob after his demise. Things are left unarranged. Letters are strewn about. Remaining amidst Jacob's room, Bonamy muses "What did he anticipate? Did he figure he would return?" (JR 176). Mrs. Flanders blasting open the room entryway shouts "Such disarray all over!" (JR 176). Michael Rosenthal feels that Mrs. Flanders' outcry "proposes the disorder of the room as well as of the survivors too" (85). Bonamy's last cry "Jacob! Jacob!" (JR 176) and Mrs. Flanders' inquiry, holding up Jacob's shoes, "What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?" (JR 176) give a strong touch to the novel that focuses out that life is an adventure from illusion, through illusion to illusion.

Michael Rosenthal in Virginia Woolf calls attention to that Virginia Woolf utilizes her preferred worldview of two individuals in a railroad carriage in *Jacob's Room* and Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Darker to "investigates the trouble of knowing individuals which structures such a focal worry of the novel" (77). Obviously, Virginia Woolf remarks on Mrs. Norman's discernment go subsequently: "it is no utilization attempting to aggregate individuals up. One must pursue indications, not actually what is stated, nor yet altogether what is done..." (JR 29). When she rehashes these sentences later in the novel in page 153, it is clear her worry isn't just about Jacob's misperception or illusion of others nor about the illusions he makes in the brain of different characters in the novel yet the general essential supposition of human relationship.

References

1. Woolf Virginia, *Jacob's Room*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1947.
2. Bell Q, *Virginia Woolf. A Biography. Volume I: Virginia Stephen 1882 to 1912*.
3. London: The Hogarth Press, 1973. ISBN 0-7012-0291-2.
4. Blackstone Bernard, *Virginia Woolf: A Commentary*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1972.