

An Approach Towards the Subtlety Yet Personal Composite of Women's Writings in Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own Through the Prism of Of Elaine Showalter's Theory of Gynocriticism

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ABSTRACT

The extended essay of Virginia Woolf, named “A Room Of One’s Own”, is a subtle approach towards the personal experiences of every individual women struggling for her identity, struggling for the recognition of her artistic genius, without having to escape from her true identity of being a woman, without the limitation that is exposed on gender. Through the use of semi-fictional characters such as ‘Mary Beton’, ‘Mary Seton’, the author uses the element of subtlety to represent all the concerns of women in a patriarchal society and yet such a personal approach towards listing the needs of women in the contemporary world, be it political, literature, historical, societal, intellectual. The master as she was of the ‘stream of consciousness’, she uses this narrative device in the essay itself and depicts the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that passes through the mind of the narrator, and makes it even more comprehensible through the use of pellucid metaphors, used in the entirety of the essay, just so to plea to her readers to create and maintain a legacy of those women writings who struggled a lot to reach to the situation and designation they are at present. And the comparison of this text to Elaine Showalter’s theory of gynocriticism, it vivid out the flaw of sex-consciousness in a society of the time and appeals to be open to the different sexes and accept themselves with this unity of the mind, they wouldn’t be so offended by the maleness and femaleness but will successfully prevail of mutual respect and understanding for one another.

KEYWORDS

Modernist Criticism, Women Writings, Act of Subtleness, Gender Limitation, Financial and Intellectual Freedom of Women, Legacy of Women Authors, The Truth, Historical Opinions, Self- expression, Sex-consciousness .

INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf differentiates women from men in values. Woolf says “It is probable, however, that both in life and in art the values of a woman are not the values of a man. Thus, when a woman comes to write a novel, she will find that she is perpetually wishing to alter the established values- to make serious what appears insignificant to man, and trivial what is to him” (Quoted by R.S. Sharma in Anita Desai, P.19).

Simultaneously, Elaine Showalter discusses her views about- What is the real nature of woman? And What is the appropriate attitude a woman writer has to adopt between the Feminine, the Feminist and the Female writings? What is the type of theme, the language and style the woman writer is to assume for her being open to the world, to win true judgement about woman's situation in the prevailing circumstances. While man is noted for thoughts, action, achievements, and fame and for his sacrifice of his pleasures for power and fame, women is well-known for her feelings, moods, thoughts and experience. And Virginia Woolf in this essay justifies the ways of thinking of the women that prevails in their writings and how this very thought have been marginalized for decades in the patriarchy dominated society. So, if women are now allowed to write fiction then it shouldn't stagger the other sex, if those works emphasizes in the struggles of the women, so that the patriarchal society may someday change. Women have always received instruction for their ways of living, thinking, analyzing and processing every single thought from a male point of view. As a result, she looks at everything with the influence of the male tradition. But Virginia Woolf in the essay clearly states that fiction (or any art form) should be for the good of everyone, hence universal and thereby women writers should write ferociously too. And to prove her points that women are capable of this genius, Woolf herself constructs this very essay about 'Women And Fiction' with all the elements that a virtuous work of fiction should be composed of. And the six chapters of the essay prudently deals with all the pretentiousness of the patriarchal society overshadowing the female intellect. And this article is a mere blend of the understanding of Virginia's "A Room of One's Own" alongside with the comparative study of Elaine Showalter's theory of gynocriticism.

CHAPTER 1

The very first chapter deals with the educational opportunities and its drawbacks, in regards to women. The narrator, who's a fictional character of the author's mind, is sitting on the bank of a river at Oxbridge (a hybrid name of Oxford and Cambridge Universities), trying to formulate the lecture that she was asked to deliver in that very university. While going through her musings, a Beadle (guard) restricts her from walking in the same path that is used by the fellows and scholars of the university. This made the narrator feel very insignificant. The next incident that the author had to go through is prohibition from the famous University library, as she wasn't accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction (being a woman on her own wasn't a viable introduction according to the societal norms). This shows women's denying of proper education the the developing society.

"I had no wish to enter had I the right, and this time the verger might have stopped me, demanding perhaps my baptismal certificate, or a letter of introduction from the Dean. But the outside of these magnificent buildings is often as beautiful as the inside" - This very statement of the narrator vividly represents the wrath and anger of the female intellectuals being hurt by the constant denial and numerous approval of their identity in the educational institutions, and that those educational institutions are actually being hypocritical of their own principles by differentiating among the male and the female sex. And the narrator unaversely called them as *'sailing-ship always voyaging never arriving'*.

The narrator further unveils the sponsorship of these educational institutions, and how the rich upper classes abundantly pours funds in order to maintain the superiority of the patriarchal society, to carry on with this legacy of sanctimony. Then the scene shifts to the luncheon party that the narrator was invited to. Despite of the sumptuous lunch, there, she senses lack of interesting conversations and the author

elegantly introduces the metaphor of the tail-less cat, that she compares with herself in that party, being completely out of place and absurd, though a queer yet a beautiful creature. Then, the narrator goes on to discuss about the new poetry, themed with post-war disillusionment and the one that lacks the romantic views of Tennyson and Rossetti. The author here, uses the element of subtlety by naming two great classic poets, both of different genders, and that the readers accepted them whole-heartedly. Again, the narrator emphasizes on her statement, “Fiction must stick to facts”, and the unfiltered the facts, the impactful the work of fiction. The narrator then goes on to compare the livelihood conditions of women in the university, and finds out that its condition is so much worse, underfunded, in comparison to that of the men, be it the food, the working staff, the conditions of the buildings. Though the amount of funding that the women portion of the university required was not much of a big amount, in comparison to the funds the male portion of the university received, it seemed impossible to get funds for the education of women, stating the fact of the society that how few people really wish women to get educated. And this reprehensible poverty of this sex made the narrator further vexed. In order to get some relief from the frustration, she begins to blame her ancestors, for not learning the art of making money, and just focusing on marrying and bearing children. But, gradually the narrator starts to realize that even if their ancestors made money of their own, it would still have the ownership of the male dominant of the family, as the law was being established as such and denied the women the right to possess the money they might have earned. And thereby makes the readers understand the concept and importance of legacy, for the maintenance of one’s identity. This very notion is stated by Elaine Showalter as ‘The Feminine Phase’, where the writers follows norms that internalize the dominant male aesthetic standards. They identified themselves with the male cultures as women were not allowed to write. And those women, who dared to write exhibited a kind of sense of guilt in their writing as they accepted certain limitations in their writings.

CHAPTER 2

The setting of the next chapter is the British Library in London, which is comparatively urbanized, as a lot of metaphors related to machinery and industrial life is used by the narrator, such as “*London was like a workshop. London was like a machine.*”. The reason of visiting that library is shown as to get some feedback on some of her inquiries, such as, ‘Why did men drink wine and women water?’, ‘Why was one sex so prosperous than the other?’, ‘What effect has poverty on fiction?’ and ‘What conditions are necessary for the creation of works of art?’. Unlike the Oxbridge Library, she is allowed entrance in the British Library of London, but soon realizes that this too is an urban, yet a masculine institution. The narrator realizes that, while there are no books with a female authorship, but there’s an abundance of books on women, written by men, where the narrator says, “*Are you aware that you are, perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe?*”. And this could mean only two things; Absence of women authors in history and in literature. And male authors tend to write more on the subject of women, than on the subject of men (be it men of designation and qualification or men without it). And this raises the question of, Why men could be so interested in women, whereas we could hardly find any books written about men by women? And to further establish her point, she states two quotations by Samuel Butler, as he says, “Wise men never say what they think of women”, and another by Pope, “Most women have no character at all”. To find out the inquisition, she arbitrarily selects a few of those books and is furious with Professor Von X, another fictional character from the mind of the author, and his book, “The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex”, and he represents the angry men in positions

of power who feel better about themselves by insisting that women are inferior. It becomes ardent for them to make the women sex feel deteriorated, just so they could fuel themselves with the power of superiority, as its inversely related with each other. In trying to learn, not what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be, Showalter traces the phase in feminist criticism, where women wrote in an effort to equalize the intellectual achievements of the male culture and internalized its assumptions of female nature. The distinguishing sign of this period is the male pseudonym. Therefore the content here is typically oblique, displaced, ironic and subversive and one has to read it in between the lines.

Then the narrator held the media responsible for uplifting such lowered opinions of the women, *“Nobody in their senses could fail to detect the dominance of the professor. His was the power and the money and the influence. He was the proprietor of the paper and its editor and sub-editor”*.

The essay was written almost at the same time as when women got their voting rights in Britain. Virginia Woolf influenced by the political rights achieved by women of the time, on the first hand argues that men are angry now because their superiority, which they have taken for granted is being questioned and challenged by feminists and women’s rights activists. Men have used their literature and scholarship to affirm their own superiority. In that sense, women have served as mirrors to men for centuries, *“possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man twice its natural size.....Whatever may be their use in civilized societies, mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action. That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. That serves to explain in part the necessity that women are so often are to men. And it serves to explain how restless they are under her criticism; how impossible it is for her to say to them this book is bad, this picture is feeble, or whatever it may be without giving far more pain and rousing far more anger than a man would do who gave the same criticism.....The looking-glass vision is of supreme importance because it charges the vitality; it stimulates the nervous system. Take it away and man may die.....”*

The narrator further says that she was left with a legacy of 500 pounds a year by her aunt (another fictional character), which was an obvious metaphor that is used to thank her ancestors, i.e., the women activists whose struggle made the narrator or Woolf or any women in the contemporary time have their own standpoint, and able to have an individualized mindset. This intellectual legacy and the financial legacy, left behind, proved very important in securing her financial freedom as it relieved her from doing odd jobs and this also allowed the narrator to forgive men for their collective injustices toward women and see males too as victims in some ways of their education or the culture, conditions of life, lack of civilization, *“.....by degrees fear and bitterness modified themselves into pity and toleration; and then in a year or two, pity and toleration went, and the greatest release of all came, which is freedom to think of things in themselves”*. And this very realization made the narrator enlightened, *“Lamps were being lit and an indescribable change had come over London since the morning hour”*.

Showalter maintains that feministic criticism acquires political overtones as it is often mixed with socialism or Marxism, and men happened to spearhead the Feminist movement and Feminist criticism tend to follow the male oriented tradition and writing. As a result, the cause of woman has never received its due attention and justice and described as it is. There is a self-deception on the part of woman writers following Feminist criticism, when they choose the subjects to suit male oriented society. And *‘Gynocriticism begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary*

history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the nearly visible world of female culture...'. And in accordance to it Woolf too comments, "Remove that protection, expose them to the same exertions and activities, make them soldiers and sailors and engine-drivers and dock laborers, and will not women die off so much younger, so much quicker.....". Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation.

CHAPTER 3

The third chapter deals with the works of women through the concept of historicism. The central claim of historicism is that all theories, traditions, interpretations, and most- if not all- concepts, are nothing more than cultural artifacts of a particular time and place. Since they are one and all human creations, none of them can claim to be true in the sense of corresponding to reality. The narrator turns to history as she couldn't find the desired answers to her questions, "Why women are poor compared to men?", "What is the effect of poverty on fiction?", as history records not opinions but facts, therefore selects another fictional book by another fictional character, Professor Trevelyan's "History of England". But to her disappointment, she finds some really controversial topics on the book related to underage and forceful marriages of young girls, and though the situation hardly changed in the contemporary situation for the upper class and middle class to choose their husband, but when the husband has been assigned, he was the lord and master, so far at least the law and custom could make him. But then the narrator asks herself another question, while the situation of women in real life was so deteriorated, how come the women in the fiction were characterized as such strong-willed and ambitious characters, as she says, "But the paradox of this world where in real life a respectable woman could hardly show her face alone in the street, and yet on stage woman equals or surpasses man, has never satisfactorily explained.....Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history.....". The narrator looks into the lives of English women in the Elizabethan period, as it was an era of literary accomplishment, but even history seems to be biased, as this accomplishment was shown only among men, while women were systematically omitted from history. To fill in those gaps in the historical records and to reconstruct the experience of the 16th century women, the narrator creates the imaginary character of Judith Shakespeare, gifted fictional sister of William Shakespeare and shows such defined occurrences in the character playact of Judith that justifies, ".....it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare". Judith, being as talented and adventurous as her brother, the societal norms didn't let her bloom with her genius as her brother did. Without any proper education, she ran away from home to London, or else she would have been married off to her neighbour. With a hope, that London might be able to serve her with the requisites and opportunities, just the way her brother was served, she began her endeavor in the theatre stages of London. But at she got was rejection and exploitation, which made her to take her own life. Back in the 16th century, gifted women could either kill themselves or become prostitutes as there was no way for them to obtain the things they needed to become a writer. So the author goes on to make the statement that the anonymous in the literature is most supposedly to be a woman, who wanted to let the world become aware of the genius without revealing her true identity, as she knows what societal norms prejudiced those women as. As women for them is supposed to the tongue-less and mind-less creature, whose always be the damsel in need of a male point of view and guidance, as the author says, ".....for chastity may be a fetish invented by certain societies for unknown

reasons-- but were none the less inevitable. Chastity had then, it has even now, a religious importance in a woman's life, and has so wrapped itself round with nerves and instincts that to cut it free and bring it to the light of day demands courage of the rarest....". The author again presumes that, even if the women of the time had written something for the readers, it would still have been twisted and deformed, issuing from a strained and morbid imagination. The author sites that by the 19th century, self-consciousness had developed so far that it was the habit for men of letters to describe their minds in confessions and autobiographies. And this goes well with Simone de Beauvoir's provocative declaration, "*He is the Subject, he is the Absolute--she is the Other*". Women's self hood has been systematically subordinated or even outright denied by law, customary practice, and cultural stereotypes. Throughout history, women have been identified either as inferior versions of men or as their direct opposite, characterized through their perceived differences from men; in both cases, women have been disintegrated on the basis of these views. To account for features of the self that have been traditionally overlooked, such as interdependence and vulnerability, the self must be understood as socially situated and relational. But there's a start to every great step, and the author here pleas to have the women authors, or women in general, a room of one's own and leave behind the notion, the effect that a enormous body of masculine opinion has to say about what and what not could be expected of women intellectually. And for this instance, not let history repeat itself.

CHAPTER 4

The narrator traces the gradual emergence of women writers out of that blank past to the 19th century. Firstly she deals with the women of the aristocratic class, with the fictional character named Lady Winchilsea, who had comparatively freedom and comfort and resources for their writing and also brave enough to face public disapproval, and this scenario is constituted around the 18th century. But the works of writers like her lacks the element of incandescent, "*....one has only to open her poetry to find her bursting out in indignation against the position of women*". Then the narrator brings out the work of another fictional author named, Margaret of New Castle, also an aristocratic lady who might have been a poet or a scientist but instead, "*...frittered her time away scribbling nonsense*". Then the narrator took out of the shelves the letters of Dorothy Osborne, which indicated a disdain for women who write, at the same time betray a remarkable verbal gift, "*It was a thousand pities that the woman who could write like that, whose mind was tuned to nature and reflection, should have been forced to anger and bitterness. But how could she have helped herself? I asked, imagining the sneers and the laughter, the adulation of the toadies, the scepticism of the professional poet*". Then the narrator introduces us with the talent and writings of Aphra Behn, that marked the turning point in the women writing: a middle class woman making a living by her writing, in defiance of the conventions of the society and the imposed chastity also proving the fact that, 'Necessity is The Mother of Discoveries'. She too became a torch-bearer for the later great women authors such as Jane Austen and George Eliot, "*....all women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn....for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds....*". As she had to work on equal terms with men, "*....for here begins the freedom of mind, or rather the possibility that in the course of time the mind will be free to write what it likes. For now that Aphra Behn had done it, girls could go to their parents and say....*", "*....That profoundly interesting subject, the value that men set upon women's chastity and its effect upon their education, here suggests itself for discussion, and might provide an interesting book....*", "*...Thus towards the end of the 18th century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of*

greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses.”. Then the narrator goes on to decipher the fact that its completely normal for women to get inspired from the women writer that precedes them, just the way Marlowe got his inspiration from Shakespeare,”.....*for masterpieces are not single solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people , so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice....*”. Yet the narrator couldn’t help but asking,”...*as I ran my eyes over them, were they, with very few exceptions, all novels?*”. The narrator offers several reasons why they all might have been attracted to the novel form, and then she came out with the presumptions that all the women writers wrote from the common space of the sitting room, which is an obvious zone of distractions, “...*women never have an half hour...that they can call their own--she’s always interrupted. Still it would be easier to write fiction there than to write poetry or a play.....Jane Austen hid her manuscripts or covered them with a piece of blotting paper. Then, again, all the literary training that a woman had in the early 19th century was training in the observation of character, in the analysis of emotion.....People’s feelings were impressed on her, personal relations were always before her eyes*”. The education 19th century women received in reading character and behaviour would have been their main literary asset, applicable to novels. Emily Bronte might have been a better dramatic poet and Eliot a historian or a biographer, but yet these women chose to write novels to express themselves. Integrity, in the novelists is the conviction that he gives one that this is the truth. It is what holds the novels together and makes them exciting to read. The narrator considers how the novelist’s gender affects the ability to achieve this artistic integrity. According to the narrator, the absence of an existing literary tradition was the greatest obstacle to these 19th century heroic writers. The writings of the greatest letter writers did not help the author against the problem of “*that there is no ready-to-use common phrase*”. This is perhaps another explanation for the transition to romance, which is “*just young enough to be soft in the hand*”. But women don’t always prefer to write novels, the narrator predicts. They have within them a poem that has yet to be interpreted. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they will write poetry, but they can translate that poetry into a new, unthinkable form as well. The narrator begins to outline the female literary tradition to which she herself has inherited, and which these early female writers are conspicuously absent. Even the ‘countless bad novels’ that women produced in the years after Behn made writing an industry, were a prominent part of this tradition. Writing can generate income that is the basis of everything that follows; “*Money honors frivolity if its not paid*”. After all that has been said about the conditions of genius and its manifestation, the career of the classic female writers appears in a new light. We were asked to look at what they did and what they didn’t in terms of their effectiveness and integrity of their work. This aesthetic standard in itself was a hard-earned luxury; Woolf wanted to show us that it couldn’t be adopted a generation earlier, and its relevance measures the leaps these women have made. Elaine Showalter delineates woman as a writer-producer of her own text, in her own language, by her own thoughts which are combined by her own feelings and reactions. She treats ‘gynocriticism as the genuine, original and independent writing through which she comes out with herself. Elaine Showalter says, “*The Feminist Critic is essentially political and polemical with theoretical affiliations to Marxist Sociology and aesthetics; Gynocritics is more self-contained and experimental with connections to other modes of new Feminist research....Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the nearly visible world of female cultures...*”. Feminists including male writers championing the cause of woman as a stereotype and opposed the traditional injustice done to woman.

CHAPTER 5

In this chapter, the narrator talks about her time, i.e., the 20th century. Women in the 20th century writes as much books as the men and they write on almost all subjects unlike in the 19th century when women wrote mostly novels. In order to make the readers understand the process of this literary transition, the narrator invents another fictional character named, ‘Mary Carmichael’, and analyzes her book, “Life’s Adventure”, in order to talk about the change that has occurred in woman’s writing in her own generation. The narrator compares the works of Carmichael with Jane Austen, and found that both of their works completely differs from one another, as Carmichael is attempting something completely different and it gives rise to women’s experimental writing in the 20th century. Seeking to see what the young writer had inherited from women of the past- both writers and non- writers, both “...*their characteristics and limitations*”-- she first decided that prose was not as good as that of Jane Austen’s, the fluency of sentence to sentence is interrupted. Something is torn, something is scratched.

A defining moment in Mary Carmichael’s innovation is the words, “*Chloe loved Olivia*”. The narrator remains motionless. She realizes that literature rarely portrays genuine friendships between women. At least until the 19th century, women were always considered in relation to men, leaving a large and serious gap in literary history and history as a whole, “*So perhaps the special nature of women lies in fiction; breathtaking extremes of its beauty and terror; her alteration between heavenly goodness and hellish depravity- for that is how a lover would see her as her love waxed or waned, whether she was prosperous or miserable*”. According to Carmichael, women also have interests and pursuits outside the home, as Chloe and Olivia worked together at the lab, which drastically changes the kind of friends they can be. The narrator begins to think the meaning has changed, “...*because if Chloe loves Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to put it, she’s going to light the torch in this huge room where no one’s been before.*”. The real, unrecorded experience of single women has been so seldom covered that it would overwhelm existing English language resources to represent it. The narrator lovingly admits that Mary Carmichael will have a job for her. It does not represent the culmination of literary development that Woolf is thinking of, “...*for she will still be encumbered with that self- consciousness...*”; How does one hold up in the realm of ‘nature novelist’? not a contemplative artist. She must learn not only to tell the truth about women, but also to gently and without resentment tell the part of the truth about men that no one has told because they don’t see it in themselves. But while Carmichael lacks the genius of Austen and Eliot, the narrator finds that she has virtues- not only as a person but also as a writer. There is no grudge against men or their living conditions in their writings, “*Fear and hatred were almost gone, or traces of them showed only in slight exaggeration of the joy of freedom....*”. The author concludes that in a hundred years, with 500 pounds and a room of her own, this Mary Carmichael will be a poet if she wants to be. Woolf gives us a little lesson in reading experimental writings (like hers), reminding us that, “...*she has every right...*”, to try new forms and styles as long as she creates something new and not just destroys what came before. Carmichael represents Woolf’s point of view on the state of women’s literature at its historical moment. She sees the women’s literary tradition on the verge of something new and exciting, and takes the opportunity to point out current shortcomings and articulate a direction for the future. “*The natural simplicity, the epic age of women’s writing may have gone*”, through this the narrator surveys the range of issues that women of her time have become writers, which is another logical step in Woolf’s historical identification with “women’s pain”, and she is also open to the idea that the very natural way can someday be regarded as historical. Change is probably

natural for them too and such a change will indeed be for the better, and when this happens, it maybe the beginning of using writing more as an art than as a method of self expression. And as Elaine Showalter's three distinctive phrases, will there still be something like, 'Feminine Phrasing'? Woolf envisions it because he wants to preserve the richness of the differences between men and women. But it has to be as flexible and calculable as the women themselves. Women have completely different creative power than men, which has also been expressed in non-literary ways in the past centuries. Education, narrator argues, should emphasize these differences rather than similarities, thus recognizing and enhancing the richness and diversity of human culture, "...for we have too much likeness as it is....".

CHAPTER 6

The narrator starts this chapter by describing an October morning in London with the humming of traffic and the mechanical life that's been going on around, and the date too is presented here as the 26th of October 1928. According to the narrator, in a day and age as such nobody preferred reading books, such as, "Antony and Cleopatra", which are way less relatable for today's readers. The narrator describes that nobody cares about nothing in today's age as, "...the nonchalance of the hurrying feet would have rubbed them in out in half an hour...". The narrator looks out at the London Street in the morning through all the hustle-bustle and notices a man and a woman getting in a cab, which is an obvious metaphorical impression. For her, this particular image symbolize the unification of men and women, which is also similar to Coleridge's theory of the androgynous mind which states that '*The great mind is Androgynous in which there is a natural harmonious balance of masculine and feminine aspects. Such a mind is naturally creative and undivided like that of Shakespeare*'. The narrator points out that the creation of distinction between the two sexes interferes with the unity of the mind, and the cab-scenario have seem to restore that interference. According to the narrator, the mind has the great power of concentrating at any point at any moment that it seems to have no single state of being and that the mind is always altering its focus, and bringing to the world into new perspectives. But, some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others. Woolf points out that sex-consciousness is a flaw of the society and literature of her own time, "*No age can ever had been as stridently sex-conscious as our own; those innumerable books by men about women was no doubt to blame...*". And if everyone were open to the different sexes and allowed themselves this unity of the mind, then they would not be offended by the supposed 'maleness' as well as the 'femaleness'. On the contrary, there would be mutual understanding and respect for one another.

At this point, Virginia Woolf takes on the role of the narrator and begins to anticipate any objections that her viewers may have to the character's 'failings and foibles'. First, she does not comment on the relative merits of the either sex as writers, and further says that this very struggle for status is exactly what an artist should avoid. One might object, she admits, "...that I have made too much of the importance of material things...when we expect great minds and great art to rise above their circumstances...". But the facts, she says, show indisputably that the chances of becoming a poet without money or education are slim. She concludes his argument, "...Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years, merely, but from the beginning of time....women then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own...". She urges them to remember their current advantages as well as the contours of their unwritten history,

and to see their own work not only as worthwhile in itself, but as part of the crucial preparation for women writers to come. She urges to the audience to create a legacy for their daughters, inspires them to write all kinds of books- be it poetry, fiction or everything as it will prepare other women writers to write. Woolf discusses further the tensed state of mind in which this essay was written, a state of mind that, while important and useful, does not quiet the mind, much less enhance the narrative. This unbridled attention to sex is too self-conscious to be a part of ‘the art of creation’, however the artistic unconscious of sex is the luxury of independence and freedom. *“The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace. Not a wheel must grate, not a light glimmer”*, and Woolf closes the door on her fictional narrator with the essay, “Women And Fiction”, still unwritten, as the theory was to show that the thought process become the content of the essay/work itself. This is a story that promises to be continued.

Elaine Showalter addresses feminist stereotypes that feminist critics are ‘obsessed with the phallus’ and ‘obsessed with destroying the male artists’, and wonders if such stereotypes stem from feminism’s lack of a fully articulated theory, which seems to be the exact criteria and concern of Virginia Woolf, that she had worked in the essay. The way the reader changes our perception of the text and awakens a sense of the sexual codes, it contains a historically grounded study, examining the ideological underpinnings of literary phenomenon; the subject may include images and stereotypes of women and literature, omissions and misunderstandings by women in criticism, and cracks in literary history created by men. The problem of feminist criticism is that it is aimed at men. When we look at the stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited role of women in literary history, we do not discover what women have felt and experienced, only what men think women should be and at the same time it naturalizes the victimization of women, making it an inevitable and obsessive topic of discussion. So rather than focusing of the attacks of the male criticism towards women, what women should do is to focus on describing her own journey, her own identity, her own story.

CONCLUSION

Prejudices against women has been long installed in the veins of the social system whether it be our culture or the western culture, therefore it is up-to the women who must take the lead here to articulate who they are and what more of the roles she is able to handle in and among the society, by defying the pre-nuptial patriarchal assumptions that women are in any way inferior to men. Here Woolf and Showalter are concerned as to choose, which is the way in which feminist’s turn away from theory as a result of the attitudes of some male academics that theory is not ours to meddle with. Both of the great personalities here did everything to cope up with the working of the topic except to mean that their goal is not to erase the differences between male and female; rather aims to understand the specificity of women’s writing not as a product of sexism but as a fundamental aspect of female reality.

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