

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

Fatemeh sadat Basirizadeh <sup>\*1</sup>, Mahnaz Soqandi <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Young Researchers and Elite Club, Qom Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qom, Iran

<sup>2</sup> MA student in English Literature, English Language and literature Department, Faculty of Humanities, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

\*Corresponding author: nbasiri2002@yahoo.com

DOI: [10.22034/jltll.v3i1.46](https://doi.org/10.22034/jltll.v3i1.46)

Received: 03 Jun, 2019

Revised: 31 Jul, 2019

Accepted: 16 Feb, 2020

### ABSTRACT

Looking backwards at a century of capricious discourses, now after another turn of the century, one easily comes to the common point in all Feministic discourses; which all are as efforts to prove women's presence and their equality to men in various aspects of life. The passage of the decades did not mutate the nature of all these feminine studies; just have posed the topic in diverse areas; for the whole body of the Feminist dialogisms and ideas were appointed by patriarchal discourses. This indicates that the current feminist dialogisms are not totally feminine discourses, rather, feminine-masculine ones formed out of men's mischievousness saving their patriarchal authority which changes the discourses to a masculine/feminine relation. However, what nowadays Feminism, as a school of thought, needs is a feminine intuition, that is a moment of feminine epiphany, by which not only women will be able to reach a new understanding of femininity but men also will recognize the essence/existence of females. Discussing Virginia Woolf's dialogism in 'A Room of One's Own' and two novels by Zoya Pirzad (Persian narratives of a highly male dominated society) the study concludes that Feminism needs an intuitive feminine epiphany; an epiphany that both sexes should come to in a society, to enable the school of feminism to come to a purely feminine dialogics and be released from all the mischievous feminine-masculine discourses.

**Key words:** Feminism, Feminine-masculine discourse, Feminine Epiphany, Feministic Dialogism.

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

### An Overview of Feminism: Feminine Epiphany

Feminist literary criticism through its various lineaments has invested hyperfastidiously in harnessing sign systems so as “to find out how woman comes to be positioned in preordained social roles—daughter, wife, mother—within the restrictions of an inherited patriarchal circuit” (Wright, 14). The entire social mores for feminists had been built on virility of signs in their world; so that the pompous macho would have called any attempt pursuing muliebrity as the ‘witch in the attic’. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) cryptically asserts the feminist penchant for having a room of their own in “The Yellow Wallpaper”, though the socioeconomics of nineteenth century would not facilitate women for even a clear-cut proclamation, let alone for having such a room. Despite all the efforts of female—uncanonized—writers of the age such as Kate Chopin (1850-1904), feminist had to wait till Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) create a first draft of a conceivably feminist manifesto in ‘*A Room of One’s Own*’ (1919).

For Gilman’s narrator the only possible loophole of her masculinized ‘asylum-room-home’ is ‘insanity’. She has the room as one for herself, though yellow wallpaper surrounds her perpetually so that she becomes more cognizant of her status qua as the ‘lady of the home’, and of the social expectations of her to be the ‘angel in the house’, the true woman. Put it otherwise, although she has a room, the more she ponders on the chaotic patterns of its wallpaper, the more lucidly she beholds the woman behind the bars. She is entangled in opaque chaotic ivy patterns of the wall. In this regard, even having a room of one’s own would not sooth the challenged femininity. However, Woolf’s abstruse notion of a room goes beyond opacity of a wallpapered room. She pursues socioeconomic datums to come to a room of her own. Woolf asserted that men treated women as low-level, nether creatures till the time and would continue their way. In her view, what ‘being a woman’ means is sketched by men; so, women need to do something about the masculine outlook of femininity.

While the two World Wars and the subsequent economic crisis marginalized the newly blossoming feminist ideas, till 1949 when ‘*The Second Sex*’ was published by Simone de Beauvoir. The French author once again, approximately two decades later, attracted criticisms to feminism. In her book, gradually regarded as the basic manifesto of feminists in twentieth century, de Beauvoir insisted the previously posed ideas that all societies are patriarchal, as identical to Woolf, she believed that this is masculinity that defines what ‘being a human’ is. In de Beauvoir’s view if women really want a status, they should deconstruct the structures of the masculine society and present their own definition of femininity. This definition would be the proof of woman’s presence and existence counter-intuitive to masculine canon of knowledge in power. It can be asserted following Hesse-Biber that:

Feminist perspectives also carry messages of empowerment that challenge the encircling of knowledge claims by those who occupy privileged positions. Feminist thinking and practice require taking steps from the “margins to the center” while eliminating boundaries

that privilege dominant forms of knowledge building, boundaries that mark who can be a knower and what can be known. For Virginia Woolf, it is the demarcation between the “turf” and the “path”; for Simone de Beauvoir, it is the line between the “inessential” and the “essential”; and for Dorothy Smith, it is the path that encircles dominant knowledge, where women’s lived experiences lie outside its circumference or huddled at the margins. (3)

Yet, living in the present era, having passed the century posing all these discourses, it should be no longer a necessity for women, according to de Beauvoir, to prove their existence; rather they have to recognize the feminine aspects of their existence, and to define the feminine aspects of humanity. Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland confer that feminists “have made a range of claims about the position of women in relation to men, and about male domination of social theory. As a result, recent feminism and its claims to knowledge have confronted with three different sources of criticism” (3).

They gauge the challenges to ‘feminist knowledge’ claims that are rooted in the “dominant approaches to science, reason, progress and truth” in relation to women’s experience. Besides, the ‘colonial and imperial history’, and the ‘uneven development of global capitalism’ for them is rudimentary to such knowledge. They indicate the current criticism on feminists failing to ‘produce rational, scientific, or unbiased’ knowledge. The result is that feminist thought “has been treated in many academic institutions as marginal, or as intellectually inferior to existing modes of thought” (They quoted from Arpad 1986; Stanley 1997). Then, if feminists claim the dominant social dialogisms as masculine, they should be able to pose an unbiased or a feminine dialogism in this knowledge. However, the current feminine dialogisms are still hefted by the masculine dialogism.

Still another challenge to feminist dialogism is the sundered discourses that waiver the possibility of generalizing any feminist idea. In the previous turn of the century (19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>) when Chopin and Gillman were dominant, ‘feminism’ was generally an advocacy of women’s rights; such as education, motherhood, sexuality, working, or political representations. Some of these campaigns led to ideas challenging male peremptory control on women’s minds; which, in its following century became the threshold for oppugning male dominance and power relations. Though, no distinctive feminist theories and practices were developed, and feminists drawn on assorted ways of thinking.

To come to some epitome of feminist discourse, feminists harnessed literary world, in which they faced cases representing the platitude role of women in literature: women were always men’s beloved ones, beauty goddesses, or thoughtless creatures; no woman could have ever reach the literary canon as Wordsworth and Dickens; in all cases women were mostly of secondary and valueless roles; and men never let any

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

female name into the literary canon. Therefore, it was crucial to find and introduce literary works by women and create a feminine literary canon. They took advantage of Kate Chopin's *'The Awakening'* (1899), Doris Lessing's *'The Golden Notebook'* (1962), and Monique Wittig's *'Les Guerillères'* (1969). In the 1980's the feminist theorist, Elaine Showalter, introduced "gynocriticism", through which she tried to unify the feminist theories and codifies the feminine criticism strategies (Bressler, 2007). Gynocriticism has been disserted on four criteria models: 1) Biological model, focusing on how the biological features of female body can influence her writings and how the images, metaphors, etc. indicates the feminine biological features in the text. 2) Linguistic model, concentrating on the different linguistic exploitations of men and women. 3) Psychological model, based on psycho analysis and feminine nature, that how feminine spirit can affect the text. 4) Cultural model, studying the influences of the society in which a female author lives on her goals, needs and viewpoints. Still, these view point were subject to criticisms:

French feminists like Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément (1986), Luce Irigaray (1991), and Julia Kristeva (1986) were accused by social constructionists of biological essentialism, of establishing the female body and maternity as foundational and symbolic sources of woman's psychic and sexual difference...post-structuralist critics, like Judith Butler, expose even the materiality of the body as "already gendered, already constructed." Extending her argument that gender and sex are the result of the "ritualized repetition" of certain behaviors designed to render the body either "intelligible" (normative, heterosexual) or abject (unthinkable, homosexual), Judith Butler asserts that the body itself is "forcibly produced" by power and discourse. (Hesse-Biber, 7-8)

During all these years and debates, women's effort was focusing on changing the views of the patriarchal society on women's nature and female essence. They were trying to indicate the mistakes in men's views, yet, they were not to present the true essence of women. In the opening of "A Room of One's Own" Virginia Woolf asserts:

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction — what, has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain...They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs. Gaskell and one would have done. But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like, or it might mean women and the fiction that they

write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them, or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. (1)

She continues her discussion, not on the woman and story, but on the problem of "being a woman" and woman's status in the society, and refers to 'man' as an obstacle or barrier for 'woman'. She puts 'Lord Alfred Tennyson' along together with a Christina Rossetti<sup>1</sup>, and focuses on the role of the later in English literature and regards her as tantamount to the former. Woolf endeavors blaming men as the only guilty party, and exonerating all women. She concludes that man is furious:

They had been written in the red light of emotion and not in the white light of truth. All that I had retrieved from that morning's work had been the one fact of anger...The professors—I lumped them together thus—were angry. But why? ...standing under the colonnade among the pigeons and the prehistoric canoes, why are they angry? ...What is the real nature of what I call for the moment their anger? (30)

Woolf refers to one of the unjust viewpoints of patriarchal society on women under the appellation of 'men's sense of pride and superiority over women' (31). Implied in her discussion is that this anger stems from another element often present but opaque to perceive. She confers that "to judge from its odd effects, it was anger disguised and complex, not anger simple and open" (30). Yet, she does not refer to men's intrinsic fear in defiance of women. She just, the same as other feminists of her era, tries to fight the inferiority of women in her own society, (which it is anti-feminine per se, for I think there is an implied acquiescence to feminine inferiority in such a presupposition). In my opinion, in order to obtain their goal, women have to fight this false and vacuity of the enlargement (a term Woolf uses) of men.

Woolf refers to the great literary characters, yet, since she regards them all as opposed to her viewpoint, states that they are all fiction and not real ones. If it was so, what was the necessity to tell stories about women? 'Women of Troy', 'Medea', 'Electra', 'Climestra'...., why should be all these women attract Seneca, the greatest Roman philosopher and orator. Woolf answers no more and insists on her states, and finally finishes her discussion as such:

Even so, the very first sentence that I would write here, I said, crossing over to the writing-table and taking up the page headed Women and Fiction, is that it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly. It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is no

---

<sup>1</sup> - Tennyson's contemporary female poetess.

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death. (98-99)

In this case we will see again that Mrs. Woolf does not assert anything new; since Samuel Coleridge had referred to such a case a few centuries ago. Coleridge notes that 'human mind has to contain the both sexes while perfection will be achieved through the accumulation of contradictions' (Selden). Yet, it will be credulity to have the same opinion in the beginning of the new era.

There is an oft-condoned point in Woolf's argument that refers to the aforementioned fear in men. She indicates that "possibly when the Professor insisted a little too emphatically upon the inferiority of women, he was concerned not with their inferiority, but with his own superiority" (32). She is insinuating that to protect their imperiousness, men have had created a dialogism in which women are induced to believe their nether status quo. In this regard this study is pursuing a counter-intuitive dialogism, not simply seeking equality or equal rights, but goes a step beyond current dialogisms striving a feminine dialogics for the sake of femininity; thus creating a blandishment for the masculine discourses to accredit the essence and existence of feminine discourses.

Throughout the whole course of feminist discussions the domineering masculine dialogics had cunningly represented itself as intellectual and respectful to women and their rights, while simultaneously it had asked them to be womanly-manly. Joyce deftly refers to this manly shenanigan in *Ulysses* as 'Nebrakada Femininum' (312), which concurrently indicates the desire for woman's flesh, the will to cajole her, represent the man as intellectual, and hoax the woman to acquiesce to her own inferiority. This is what "Hamid"—Arezu's husband—does in Zoya Pirzad's novel, *"We'll Get Used To"*. In order to stand against the common opinion in societies on women, Arezu claims that she can act and be just as men are, and that she is no less than them; thus she becomes an epitome of twentieth century's female feminists in pursuing a womanly-manly discourse. There are some women not trying to do as men, such as Mrs. Ramsay in Woolf's *'To the Lighthouse'*, yet they are not even looking after their own femininity and feminine essence. Mrs. Ramsay is thoroughly an epitome of the accepted feminine figure (what Gillman's narrator cannot be and thus is driven to insanity) and she is the reason for the family cohesion, and simultaneously she is the obedient and submissive wife to her husband. She does as Claris in *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"* does. Among them this is only Clarissa Dalloway that thinks and acts womanly. Yet, she is also entangled in a society opposing her thoughts, and frequently, Woolf, consciously incorporates her stream of consciousness with that of the man in the story, to come to the accepted womanly-manly discourse of the social mores. Woolf simply enters the story from Clarissa's stream of consciousness into Pitter Walsh's and the reader after reading two paragraphs would get the change of the thoughts/mentalities. The reflection of Clarissa's voice and thoughts in Pitter's means the integration of man and woman, and proves Woolf's belief that women and men should think womanly-manly. But why? Why Clarissa should not think just womanly? Here is the first time referred to the question of femininity and the feminine essence. Although the cunning

masculine discourse impacts Woolf, finally this is the personality traits of Clarissa Dalloway that precede Woolf. Clarissa becomes converted into a sort of Dostoevskian character and detaches her thoughts from all others. She no longer wants to be womanly-manly. Rather, she wants to show 'being a woman'. This mere wish of the female character deciphers an intuition to her own feminine real essence in an instant of epiphany.

Epiphany is a sudden revelation of mind, an underlying truth, for someone: a sudden manifestation in which the whole thoughts becomes phenomenon and turn into a more communicative mind and a new, different cognition of the essence or meaning of something or a comprehension or perception of reality by means of a sudden intuitive realization. Morris Beja defines epiphany as a kind of sudden spiritual intuition and discovery, whether its source be an object, scene, of event; or of the many memorable instances of the mind. Intuition is not congruence on any scale based on the logical rules. This is the exact moment some characters experience in the narrative world, an instant that Claris is afraid to encounter, while Arezu comes to it and the gained intuition though it by the end of the novel. An epitome of such sudden intuition in feminist literary discussion is Nora Helmer's epiphany at the end of the play, '*A Doll's House*', in the scene when she is wearing dance custom, and due to the newly gained cognition of herself and the feminine essence, finally decides to leave the doll's house. Arezu in Pirzad's novel, experiences such epiphany when she hears her friend's sobbing on the phone, then gazes at the blue sky from the window pane, it is the time all her life's truth is manifested to her, she comes to the memorable instant of her life when an intuition gives her a knowledge of all her immediate life, afterwards, she is ready to decide due to her epiphany experience. Yet, on the other side, Claris never lets herself to have such an intuition.

In this moment of epiphany, not only woman's mind achieves recognition, but the masculine discourse will also be put to think in deep silence. At the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*, when Clarissa Dalloway experiences the feminine epiphany, no longer womanly or manly-womanly subjects are in the dialogic, rather a human recognition is the main topic and the ruling dialogic. The narrative goes on that "Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone" (372). There is no more a feminine-masculine challenge, but a strife for 'One's' intuitive recognition.

The above discourse, which is, more or less, common throughout Woolf and Pirzad's (second) novels indicates that the female in the novels pay too much attention to the disintegrated human relations. This is a sort of problem women mostly have faced during diverse social relationships. As soon as they decide to perceive and understand the human part of their own existence and their feminine essence, they will be alone.

Thus it gives the impression that in a poststructural era of diverse discourses and viewpoints, one should change his/her classical look to feminine discourses and dialogic; not to regard it as a sort of solely feminine topic, but as cognitional discourse

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

on human and the existence essence of humanity, rendering Feminism as humanism. Coming to such an epiphany means reaching cognition and intuitive perception, and this is the cognition that makes the real condition of human being and humane look.

All feminists' efforts in the previous century were around proving themselves a status in the masculine society; yet, amidst all these efforts they should achieve, though even unconsciously, an intuition of their own feminine existence. At the end of a century full of sound and fury, isn't it time to know human aspects of our own existence rather than manly or womanly one? Feminism dialogic are no longer specified to women, rather men should try to find such recognition or epiphany. Since, it is through epiphany moment that coming to a perception of the essence of both sexes as human and reaching a way to all the sounds and furies become possible. Epiphany, providing a sudden spiritual manifestation, leads human to such a perception of his own essence. The important point in reaching such perception and recognition through epiphany, is surrendering and committing one's self to the epiphanic moment of manifestation; (what Stephen Daedalus does in James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*). This is epiphany that Arezu, the protagonist of *We'll Get Used To*, tries to experience, while passing so many a challenges in her life for her femininity. Yet Claris, the protagonist of *I'll Turn Off the Lights*, entangling in the patriarchal discourses of society, revokes and repels to accept it.

### Feminine Epiphany in Zoya Pirzad

Pirzad's *"We'll Get Used To"* challenges the patriarchal world. The narrative moves around Arezu's feelings, emotions, and thoughts. In the beginning of the novel, she is introduced as an independent woman, working and having all the duties just as a man. She is depicted so:

Arezu looked at the white Citroen parking in front of the dairy market. She murmured: I bet you'll goof up boy; and waited putting her elbow on the car's window pane. The goatee faced driver went to and fro, to, and came back, again to, and gave up the parking. Arezu putting her hand on the back of the side seat and looked back, the goatee boy was watching, the wheels screamed and the Renault parked. (1)

The whole story, in the same trend as the very first paragraph, goes around Arezu's challenges facing the society especially the masculinity in the society. The novel begins with the idea of proving woman presence and existence; yet, no reference is made to humanist aspects of woman existence and the female essence. Arezu's condition is not suitable and she is stuck in her family's and friends' expectations. On the one hand, she is under pressure by her ex-husband, Hamid, who insist on sending their daughter, Aydin, to France; on the other, her mother, Mah-Monir, asks Arezu marry to the guy she wants; this is what Shirin, Arezu's intimate friend, also constantly reminds her. It seems that all her immediate people try to wield their authority over her, as if Arezu is indecisive. Thus, for proving her own existence and the ability to choose and decide,



she enters masculine contests, and detaches from her own feminine essence and womanly life.

Arezu's mother believes in some unwritten rules and manner of communications; rules that all have to acquiesce to. They are some feminine aristocratic rituals, in which Arezu has no role because her part is not womanly, as if Arezu's surrounding people expect her to be a man. Before her birth, her father named his shop as "Sarem and the Son Real State"; that is she had to be a boy, not a girl. Her femininity is basically dubious. Even they did not change the name of the Real State after her birth. The father once said: "what's the difference?" and so many years later Arezu answered: "wish he were alive to see there is no difference". This shows Arezu's awareness of her condition and the others' expectations. They wanted her as a son and it seems that Arezu is only an improper patch to the family; or even she is the son of the family. [Even her name, Arezu, (in Persian meaning Hope) shows the unfulfilled hope of the family, which she has to fulfill.] Her feminine existence and nature in family is dubious.

In her marriage it seems she was forced to choose one of her twin cousins, either Hamid or Hesam. They even had ignored her feminine nature, in this regard. She chose Hamid thanks to her loneliness and being guideless. Besides the choice was due to the fact that Hamid would have taken her to France and in this case she would have been released from her family in Iran. Or that in France, where freedom and enlightenment were prevalent, she could be able to activate her potentialities as a woman and no longer experience the feeling of failure. Here, there is a question: why France? Isn't it the reason that some critics believe France as the pioneer origin of Feminism?! However, Arezu does not feel comfortable there. The masculine look that ignores her feminine nature still dominates her life. Even in the current condition, her ex-husband, Hamid, constantly tempts their daughter to immigrate to France. Yet, the daughter, Ayeh does not follow her mother; rather she does what her grandmother wants. She does not credit Arezu as a mother. In the first place it is because Arezu herself wanted to divorce her husband, and so caused Ayeh to be detached from her father. The second reason is that Arezu does not play a mother role for her daughter, let alone to be both her father and mother simultaneously. Thus, Arezu neither is father nor mother, rather a supplier. While Ayeh dreams a day Arezu plays her own role: mother. Ayeh is not able to request her wish because of social situation of her mother. So, nothing would change in the mother-daughter relation.

Throughout the novel Arezu tries to prove her femininity to other and sometimes even to herself. Since she is affected by others and sometimes finds a sort of conflict between what she knows as Arezu and what other believe. This is much more seen in her relationship with her mother. She sees Arezu as if she is someone else, not an independent woman. In this regard Arezu does not have a parental feeling towards her mother, and this feeling was absent since her childhood; rather she searches such feelings to Nosrat (the housemaid). Arezu's mother regards her as not her own daughter, rather a woman at her own age. Arezu cares Nosrat's comments as if she is her mother. The mother senses such views. While she is sick and Arezu visits her and

## **A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad**

---

recites some of Nosrat's quotations, she loses her temper and says: "You like the housemaid better than me; it seems she is your mother." Such relation was made as soon as Nosrat entered the house as a housemaid, when Arezu studied in primary school. Since then Arezu found the expected look and respects as a female just in Nosrat's looking, and Nosrat also believed in Arezu as a woman, so Arezu called her: "My dear darling Nosrat".

Arezu needs someone to protect and support her. She has been in limbo since her father died. She is stuck in a world full of people not knowing her feminine needs, desires, and emotions. The two close ones, her mother and daughter, are among her rejecters. Arezu has just one friend to rely on: Shirin. Their friendship relation is a haven for Arezu. But, as soon as Sohrab, a man entering the real state as a customer and gradually became her friend, enters to Arezu's life, the friendship with Shirin loses its color. Since, now this is Sohrab who is Arezu's haven, the one who first Arezu remembers as soon as she meets a problem. For instance, once she stealthy reads Ayeh's private writings on her weblog and her eyes fill with tears, she says to herself: "I should call Sohrab." Arezu and Shirin's friendship is also a refuge for Shirin. After Esfandiar's departure (Shirin's ex-husband), for his mother's accident and death, finding Arezu was as celestial gift to Shirin. Shirin never gets marry and is still waiting for Esfandiar and at the same time she hates all men, a sort of mendacious hatred to mollify herself. She says all men are the same. Replying Arezu's question "is there any exception?" Shirin says: "none."

Every day and each time after drinking her coffee, Shirin looks at the bottom of the cup to soothsay her fortune just for the sake of finding some rays of hope in Esfandiar's return. She is anxious, waiting for the man to come back and decide for her life. But Arezu is not waiting a man to come decide for her life since she is an independent woman and lives like a man, a kind of living so many women wish to have; rather than trying to find feminine originality.

Once answering Ayeh's query about Sohrab and Arezu answers: "since, just once in my whole life I decided to keep something for my own." It might be a reason that Arezu does not introduce Sohrab to her mother. Arezu feels her mother and daughter detached from herself, and knows they do not credit such a right for her. She imagines herself in solitude. She finds a man, Sohrab, and tries to keep him for herself and postpones introducing him to her family. She desperately needs a refuge accrediting her femininity. She is a woman, the fact that nobody around heeds it, for she was supposed to be a man. She is searching for a look to see her just as a woman. All the characters in the novel regard Arezu as a man owning a real state. The very first one who sees Arezu's femininity is Sohrab. Sohrab is the only one who sees Arezu's elegance, bangs, hands, and generally her whole feminine existence.

On the other hand, Sohrab is a man who supports Arezu in achieving her feminine rights and requests. There are two Sohrabs in the novel. One is Sohrab Razmjoo who is a friend to Arezu, and the other one is Tahmineh's brother, an employee in the real state. The latter is addicted. Arezu takes the addicted Sohrab to a survival clinic in order

to relinquish addiction. Having the same names, Sohrabs may open Arezu's eyes toward truth. Those realities Arezu ignores them, or even does not heed. The addicted Sohrab belongs to Ayeh's generation. Aiding him, Arezu becomes more familiar with her daughter's generation. Since then she knows Ayeh and her nature much better. The other Sohrab becoming Arezu's refuge is the one who helps Arezu to stay in her feminine position. He is the man who recognizes Arezu's femininity. He is the man who reminds Arezu: it is not late to be a woman. Arezu's tendency to Sohrab is for her own sake. Sohrab lets her to be seen and existed as a woman. Before visiting Sohrab, Arezu is a middle-aged woman dealing with her daily concerns, incognizant to her feminine essence. After Meeting Sohrab, Arezu feels younger once again. She just needed a sort of confidence-imposing force to recognize her own feminity, which meeting Sohrab wakens such a self-confidence. She no longer wants to be a submissive and obedient woman; this is the time Arezu finds a conflict with her mother and daughter, for they are obstacles to her expressing femininity.

The central male character of the novel can be ascribed both to Sohrab and Hamid. They both have the same effect in the novel. Although the reader does not face Hamid directly, his role is crucial since his ever presence in the background of Arezu' mind foregrounds Sohrab's role. Hamid is a sophisticated man, studied philosophy and always gives lectures on the repressed rights of the women; a rich man who travels a lot, full of experiences, lives in Paris, and finally as Arezu's mother says: a high class one. Yet, this man with all mentioned characteristics behaves in a manner so that Arezu leaves him exactly in the city well known as the center of intellectuality and freedom. Arezu became left in her own solitude; and she remembers nothing from those dark days but his dual manners in behaving Arezu and other women, his seemingly highbrow and intellectual speeches, which now all seemed absurd and nonsense to her: talking about women rights and defending them, yet behaving exactly opposite at home, expecting Arezu to be obedient. He never heeded Arezu's femininity. He causes her to leave the house. This is what Ayeh can never comprehend. Sohrab is the second man who enters into Arezu's life. He is exactly the opposite one. Hamid gets his university degree, studied philosophy, and read many books, yet Sohrab leaves his studying unfinished, came back to Iran, and lives in downtown; not being interested in giving lectures, proposing theories, and living in what Arezu's mother calls "high class" part of the society, he now live among the philistines. Sohrab has dealt with all kind of people and as he tells to Arezu: "look how I can speak to anyone as himself" ().

Sohrab never talks of women rights, yet he treats Arezu gently. He talks to Arezu, a simple thing Hamid failed to do. While talking his attention is totally dedicated to Arezu, a kind of attention Arezu never experienced before. Sohrab does not act extraordinarily, he just see Arezu with all her feminine traits so simple as he fondles Arezu's bangs and takes them away of her face saying: 'take a rest'. This simple action distinguished Sohrab as a different man, and makes him her ideal man; the one Arezu has always dreamt of, the one who reminds Arezu of her late father. He plays the role of a savior and an enlightener for her. He changes Arezu's view toward her life and her immediate

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

world; this caused an ambiguity at the end of the novel: "she does not know it was snow or rain" (). This might indicate that the whole world around Arezu is defamiliarized to her and is changing. Such vagueness is seen in the relation between Arezu and Sohrab. Yet, Arezu's final decision for her relation is laid on her recognition she comes to through her life epiphanic moment. The most crucial thing is the new look given to Arezu by the novel's course of events along with Sohrab's presence. And thereafter she views her immediate world with a different look. In a moment of epiphany, hears Shirin's sobbing on the phone, Arezu comes to her life epiphany, a sort of intuition occurs. She realizes that she is drowned in a world overwhelmed by masculine discourse which all women subscribe to and tries to drag other women to submission too: she had been a victim, the role that the world wanted her to play, not her feminine essence. Yet in a moment of epiphany she came to the whole reality and recognition of the true essence.

Arezu informs Ayeh and her mother of her decision of marriage, and they both are shocked, and disagree. Ayeh sulks leaving home for her grandmother's, and does not call her. Arezu had belonged to them so far, and now that she decided to heed herself, others do not let. They want her to be obedient just as before. Neither her mother nor her daughter considers her such an authority of choice. Sohrab tells Arezu: "they had got used to the alone you." "The alone you" is the Arezu who should play any role others decide for her. Ayeh says: "grandma is right; such feminism stuffs goofed up all lives." () Still there is a question here: if Ayeh was in Arezu's shoes wouldn't she decide the same? However, they all expect Arezu to do what benefit themselves. No one asks her of her feelings and desires, while she is trying to fulfill others. Arezu says: "I wanna decide for my own." She wants to be herself. When she sees that Sohrab's collar is turned, she faces an internal challenge that if she can touch it to make it right? (It is a deed that is regarded so impudent and unsocial in the Islamic, traditional society of Iran.) And finally tells herself that: "I am not a fifteen year old girl" and make it right. She wants to make a decision that anyone at that age and situation can do. This is the same as what Forough Farrokhzad<sup>2</sup> did in her era. She decided to be herself and no other one.

The noticeable fact in the novel "*We'll Get Used to*" is that Arezu is mostly under the pressure of women rather than men. Women themselves cause a patriarchal situation not only against a woman, but against her whole femininity of woman who tries to reach her sole feminine rights. Arezu's mother regards her as woman of her own age, so being postmenopausal; so she doesn't let Arezu buy (feminine needed hygienics) cosmetics: "it's not suitable for our age to buy such things." She wants Arezu to be obedient. Thus, she as a woman does not consider an independent existence for Arezu.

---

<sup>2</sup> Late contemporary Persian poetess who were criticized at her own time and even nowadays for impudency and femininity in her poems.

In Pirzad's former novel *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"* the narration is thoroughly masculine. It seems a man is narrating the life of a housewife woman: a woman captured in masculine discourse. This is the men's presence that forms her life, not her own femininity. In this novel there is no sort of marital relation between the woman and her husband. The relation is in the masculine context; but in *"We'll Get Used to"* a better relation is shown between Sohrab and Arezu; a kind of logical and natural relation between two engaged. In this regard Shrab's witticism and jokes, and Arezu's feminine swanks and coyness are obvious.

In *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"* the focus of the title is on "I". The 'I', the narrator, says: "I will do that" because of regarding it as her own daily duty. Though the narrator in this novel is female, she is under the masculine influence in the background of her speech. The dominant masculinity imposes on her the idea that: you are a woman, a housewife, and you have to remain a housewife woman, you have to accept what is prescribed for you. The narrator and I can say even the writer herself, looks down at the heroin of the novel, and impede her of any possible slippage. This is the masculine discourse that surrounds Claris and simultaneously takes care of her. When the new neighbor guy asks Claris to meet to talk, this is the dominant masculine discourse in the novel in the role of the narrator caused the city experienced a locust rain in summer, so that consequently they cannot meet each other. It could be a kind of ordinary meeting between two friends not that of forbidden or illegitimate date. Locust swarming is the symbol of sin in Christianity and its ending in a blue sky is the beginning of purity. Here, yet, Claris is condemned, having done no sin. In *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"* it seems that the narrator-author is an advisor man does preach to the benefit of the husband; and the wife should only be interpreted via her household. Studying the novel from the new-historicism biographical and historical criticisms, while considering the masculine and patriarchal discourse as the background of it, one can regard Zoya Pirzad, the author, as a woman was entangled, and was dealing with such masculine atmosphere and discourse. She starts writing in her fifties, having her two sons grown up, she finds some time to develop her writing potentialities. This is exactly what Claris and Arezu try to achieve.

Everything is clear and no question is unanswered at the end of the *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"*: "I looked at the sky. It was blue, without any clouds, even a piece." Yet, in *"We'll Get Used To"* there is an ambiguity remained: "it was not clear either it is rainy or snowy outside". Such ambiguity is in fact Arezu's internal haziness. It seems in Claris' case, the final decision is more easily made by marriage and religious solutions, yet Arezu cannot decide so easily, since she is aware that deciding to be a victim is no more due. The end of the novel is the beginning of spring and the Persian New Year. It is the hopeful event that Arezu has to make herself ready for the new life with a new look. So, in the last sentence the primary ambiguity is resolved: "it was rainy outside." This is not only Arezu's obvious decision on getting married to Sohrab but also resolving ambiguity, and widening Arezu's viewpoints. Now, Arezu's mother and daughter treat her same as the previous days, it might be due to Arezu's acceptance on

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

letting Ayeh go to Paris. This causes Mahmonir (Arezu's mother) to be proud of and boast about, and Ayeh to fulfill a dream always wished: to see her father, not only his physical presence but also his masculinity. Shirin also behave Arezu as ever, not because she earns a new look but due to Esfandiar's calling, no longer is she worried about losing Arezu and being alone. It is obvious that all around Arezu want her for their own sake, not for Arezu's presence and existence. However at the end, Arezu will be released from all obstacles surrounded her life and can easily decide for her own. She is not the sort of yes-man like what is seen in *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"*. She is independent and can do anything she wishes. By surrendering herself to epiphany and intuition, she gets a new recognition of her femininity which allows her to make the correct decisions for her femininity.

The two novels *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"* and *"We'll Get Used To"* stand opposite each other. There is a woman in the former who accepts herself as an obedient housewife woman; even the narrator focuses on such viewpoint in narrating the novel. But the woman in the latter tries to be herself though the situation is against her. Due to her true vision and right understanding of the situation and opportunities, Arezu experiences her feminine epiphany, and her look toward people surrounding her is changed. She does know that reaching her desires requires paying great expenses such as losing her daughter, yet she does not quit her attempts. Now she finds her femininity and wants to be a woman.

Looking outside where it is rainy, or snowy, creates Arezu the moment of epiphany; a moment in which all her life seems to be presented to her, this is when Arezu finds new things, that is artistic epiphany; so henceforth "it was rainy" outside; the same as what is seen in James Joyce's *"A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man"*: the whole events let the protagonist move toward the moment of epiphany, and finally the protagonist reaches that.

In *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"*, Claris faces the epiphanic moment for many times, yet the masculine background of her thought causes her to consciously reject experiencing this moment. This is exactly the womanly-manly thought of Coleridge and Woolf that causes Claris not to experience such moment.

The first time Claris meets Emile, the new neighbor, is a sample of such moments of epiphany. At moment of Claris and her husband's (Artush) entrance, Emile greets them both then bows putting his lips on Claris' hand; this short kiss on the hand is a long-time kiss; during which all memories of her life and Artush's behaviors pass through her thoughts, but the masculine discourse of her thought stops her from following the stream of consciousness leading to epiphany. Claris says: "Artush coughs and the twins gaze at my hand and the head of Emile Simonie ....I wish my sleeve wouldn't be wet by sweat....no time to think about..." (\*\*\*\*).

The masculine discourse dominated Claris' mind, highlighted by her husband presence, dose not let her to think of the moment of epiphany until they are at Emile's home. When Emile wants to go to Claris' house, the feminine discourse of Claris urges her to wear some lipstick as cosmetics. Claris asserts that: "two sides of my mind

conflicting with each other, finally one said the other: 'being well-ordered and neat is not a sin.' So, I went to the bedroom, combed my hair and wore some lipstick" (\*\*\*\*\*). Here this is the feminine discourse that confirms Claris, yet, as soon as Emile is about to enter, the masculine discourse overshadows her unconsciousness femininity: "the bell rang; I jumped to it in the middle of the way I cleaned up my lipstick by tissue." (\*\*\*\*\*)

The mental challenge of Claris here is what Arezu faces with when she tries to order Sohrab's collar. Arezu finally overcomes the masculine discourse, yet Claris is in the bounds of it. All characters that Zoya Pirzad depicted in her novels are ever challenging with masculine discourse. In *"We'll Get Used To"* Shirin tries not to heed the masculine discourse yet in her mental background she is the captive of such discourse. Even Artush's (Claris' husband) secretary Ms. Noorollahi, despite being the lecturer and secretary of Women's Right Association, is bounded in the framework of masculine discourse dominant in the society. The reason is hidden in Ms. Noorollahi and Claris' private talk in milk-bar, when Ms. Noorollahi unconsciously reveals it in her speeches. But this canny masculine discourse by expressing the idea that one should think womanly-manly does not let them any opportunity to think womanly, and take them as the captives of the dominant discourse in the society. Such dominant discourse does not let them to have feminine thoughts.

Zoya Pirzad can imagine her characters experiencing epiphany only when she had come to a recognition and wisdom of feminine essence herself, and no more write womanly-manly. Due to such manly-womanly discourse Claris, Ms. Noorollahi, and Shirin do not experience the epiphanic moment, yet Arezu despite all challenges does experience the epiphany; since no longer does she think womanly-manly, and Pirzad also does not write womanly-manly. They both think just womanly, and had come to femininity.

## A Comparative Study of the Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Zoya Pirzad

---

### Conclusion

In post-human, postmodern era it is no longer true to expect women to think manly-womanly. In the posthuman feminism thought there is no emphasis on proving a woman's existence and feminine essence for men (for there is no need to 'prove' so long as it is accepted as the for granted basis of humanism), rather the emphasis is on the intuitive recognition of human nature of women for all men and women. This school is not limited to women, rather all have to be familiar with. The goal of this school is achieving mental manifestation and recognition, such recognition that Woolf experiences it through Clarissa Dalloway and Lily Briscoe, and Pirzad through Arezu. That kind of recognition Forough Farrokhzad achieved through her poems.

Perhaps the reason that Woolf regards the outstanding woman characters in literature as fantasy and imaginary, and also the reason that society rejects such characters as Forough, is due to the fact that they were women believing in their femininity and so respecting it. Forough writes: "I am a woman; I decide to remain a woman in my poems too, never have I think to return." (Keshavarz and Rostami, 38) She shows her femininity in her poems so:

"I wear pair earrings

From two double cherries

And stick to my nail the starflower leaf" (Keshavarz and Rostami, 42)

She continues;

"I sit gazing in the eyes of nightfall

Can I be detached of this frame a moment" (Keshavarz and Rostami, 45)

Her writings shows her idea that if she can get released from the masculine discourse? Is it possible to think womanly and achieve the feminine existence and originality and boast about it?

The society's talk and obstacles on Forough's spirit is obvious in her poetry and it is due to her feminine physics. Yet, the women readers who found such poet among them are more aware of such obstacles. Forough answered her internal feminine 'I' so soon and achieved recognition. Among diverse faces, she selected the one that comes out of her heart and existence, what Claris does not want and couldn't do in the "*I'll Turn Off the Lights*". Never does she speak of her feminine feelings and each time that her feminine 'I' wants to call her, she turn back and make herself adapted to the masculine discourse of the society. Yet this is Arezu, as Forough, who eagerly answers the feminine 'I' calling and reminds us of Ibsen's Nora Helmer.

Such answering to femininity has to be from both women and men in order to achieve a real recognition on feminism and femininity. This moment of recognition will be an epiphany for human being either men or women. Arezu and Claris' need is this same femininity: to be woman even for some seconds, to think and speak womanly. That is to achieve their feminine 'I' recognition, and feminine epiphany. Such as what Forough refers to:

"The woman got disheveled and complained

That O! Alas!



This ring having a glittering face  
Is the ring of servitude and bondage" (Keshavarz and Rostami, 153)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to reviewers for their valuable suggestions on an earlier version of this paper.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### REFERENCES

- Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland 2002 *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*. SAGE Publications: London
- Bal, M. Ed. (2004). *"Narrative Theory"*, Vol. II. Oxen; Rutledge. Print.
- Beja, M., (1971) *"Epiphany in the Modern Novel: Revelation as Art"*, London: Peter Owen.
- Bresler, C.E. (2007). *"Literary Criticism"*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, New Jersey: Pearson Education. Print.
- Keshavarz, M. and Rostami, F. (2003). *"Romanticism in Forough Farrokhzad's Poetry"*, Arak: Navaye Danesh. Print. Originally in Persian.
- Pirzad, P. (2001). *"I'll Turn Off the Lights"*, Tehran: Markaz. Print. Originally in Persian.
- (2004). *"We'll Get Used To"*, Tehran: Markaz. Print. Originally in Persian.
- Selden, R. (1989). *"Practicing Theory and Reading Literature"*, Worcester; Billing. Print.
- Hesse-Biber, Sh. N. (2012). *"Feminist Research: Exploring, Interrogating, and Transforming"*.
- the Interconnections of Epistemology, Methodology and Method'. from Handbook of Feminist Research Theory and Praxis. 2<sup>th</sup> edition, Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Ed. 2012.
- Woolf, V. (1919). *"A Room of One's Own"*, New Delhi: Taj, 2005. Print.
- , (1925). *"Mrs. Dalloway"*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000. EPUB.