

Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*: Splitted Feminine “I”s

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ABSTRACT: The subject of identity and self-recognition by feminine individuals is one of the main issues of feminist arguments and debates, particularly in the modern literature. This paper focuses on femininity and the effects of splitting of feminine self in Virginia Woolf's (1882-1941) *The Waves* (1931), and shows the psychological results of this splitting on the life of the characters. Woolf, as a feminist writer and thinker, tries to depict in her novels the cultural, social, and psychological conditions of women being deprived of their rights in every aspect by men, during her time. In this respect, the feminine identity of female characters will be examined, using an interdisciplinary method, based on the ideologies of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Hélène Cixous (1937-). Through their ideas, this paper works on disintegrated feminine identity of the novel's female characters. This splitting of feminine identity is manifested in the form of special types of mental neuroses in each character. In this paper, Susan's love-hate ambivalence along with Jinny's narcissistic personality disorder and Rhoda's existential insecurity will be discussed using Freud's and Cixous' points of view. Subsequently, it could be assumed that ambivalence, narcissism, and existential insecurity are the main causes of the splitted feminine identities in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*.

Keywords: Splitting, Identity, Femininity, Ambivalence, Narcissism, Existential Insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

The paper focuses on the issue of splitting of feminine identities in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931, *W*). The female characters are analyzed psychoanalytically, in order to find their psychological neuroses. In psychoanalysis, the concept of splitting stems from the instability of one's mental concept of self. This modulation in the experience and assessments of the self leads to chaotic and unstable relationship patterns, identity diffusion, and other-directed mood swings. Splitting contributed to intense emotional experiences, something that has been noted with persons, with narcissism and love-hate ambivalence disorder. The female characters of *The Waves* have undergone a special type of splitting of their identities because of the imposed hegemonic masculinity of the novel's male characters.

Woolf, in her novels, tries to depict every dimension of an individual's life in her time, particularly the femininity. The vast majority of her scholarship over the past thirty years has focused on her as a feminist, on the artist working through her writing to undermine a binaristic society that holds women as second class citizens, subjugated to the rule of their domineering husbands. Her characters are mostly those females who are subjugated to the domination of a patriarchal power, a father, a husband, a lover, or sometimes a friend. These subordinated women are often undergoing identity crises as the ultimate result of their suppressions. These identity confusions demonstrate themselves in the form of mental breakdowns which are depicted meticulously in the texture of Woolf's novels. During her life, she was subjected to the patriarchal and domineering manners of her father Sir Leslie Stephen while being sexually abused by her half-brother George Duckworth. Struggling with various kinds of sexual apprehension through her writing during her lifetime, Woolf attempts to express her fear of sexual intimacy and to escape the influence of patriarchal domination.

The Waves is a portrait of the intertwined lives of six friends: Bernard, Neville, Louis, Jinny, Susan, and Rhoda. The novel is divided into nine sections, each of which corresponds to a time of day, and symbolically, to a period in the lives of the characters. Each section begins with a detailed description of the course of this symbolic day. Woolf builds her characters from the inside out, and one of the concerns of the novel is the way individual personalities and sensibilities are shaped by relationships with others, for example how the masculine dominance of the male characters affects and endangers feminine identity of the novel's female characters.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subject of identity and self-recognition by feminine individuals is one of the main issues of feminist arguments and debates. The paper uses interdisciplinary method by accumulating, assessing, and combining the ideas and the viewpoints of feminists and psychoanalytic critics such as Sigmund Freud and Hélène Cixous about feminine identity and self in general. The purpose is to reveal the splitted female selves of *The Waves*, and to provide a review of the hegemonic masculinity of male characters of the novel spread over the narrative, which could be considered as one of the causes of identity disintegration of *The Waves'* female characters.

In western culture, "the mind and reason are coded masculine, whereas the body and emotion are coded feminine" (Cixous, 1999). The significant visible discrepancy that makes the distinction between female and male gender is the physical and touchable differences, based on western ideology. Sexual differences are the reasons that make both sexes distinguishable. For this reason, a kind of binary opposition is formed, in which "man is considered to be superior over woman because of the physical priorities" (ibid, 254). On the other hand, being a woman is quite different from being a female; "being a female is defined by gender differences, while being a woman is depended on the sexual discrepancies" (ibid). According to Cixous, it is a dominant belief that successful women are "male-identified"; however, "it is a failure for a woman to take her identity from a man" (ibid, 263). Cixous believes that the masculine power and dominance of men led to the marginalization of women; in fact, she adds "the concept of self of female individual is colonized by patriarchy" (1991). The range of this patriarchy is not limited to the domination of father over the daughter; rather it includes all forms of male-domination over the female individuals.

It is believed that anatomical biology cannot fully explain the differences between masculinity and femininity, which seem to entail mental aspects. For instance, a person's behavior is defined as feminine, or masculine regardless of her/his gender. Freud provides the general separation as such that masculinity is associated with active traits, and femininity with passive ones. These designations present contradictions; however, as an example, Freud indicates, how a woman taking care of her child exhibits notably active traits. Even when women suppress their aggressions, which can lead to masochistic tendencies, they are not notably different from men who also display masochistic behavior. Overall, Freud believes that psychology cannot fully define the masculine and the feminine.

Psychoanalysis is different in its approach to these questions. It does not attempt to tell what a woman is, but instead aims to understand and account for the process by which she comes into being as a woman, one who develops from being a child with a "bisexual disposition" (Freud, 2010); in other words, psychoanalysis is concerned with the process of becoming. Freud discusses the developing process of a woman's identity or self-development, which is similar to a man's process, in that it is an intense struggle in which the "decisive turning-points" occur before puberty (ibid, 145). However, a woman's process is both more complicated and more difficult. A woman's developing process of identity in comparison to man's contributes of some general differences include the basic anatomical distinctions, as well as a more pronounced intellectual adventurousness and a lower level of aggression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Splitting of feminine identity is a relatively recently discussed issue in the psychoanalytical debates and findings. There are different types of splitting in psychoanalysis and psychology, and the distinguishing lines between them are narrow. Splitting is not a subject which belongs to a special gender group, whether masculine or feminine; however in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, the female individuals of the novel are the subject of splitting of self. The delicate nature of female characteristics is a good victim of this special type of neurosis. In the novel, the female individuals show more traces of the psychological knots related to their identities. Each one of the female characters of the novel has her peculiar psychical complexities with her own way of demonstrating them.

This paper explores the deep layers of the identity of *The Waves'* feminine characters, manifested in their soliloquies, in order to find out the psychological mental disorders each of them has to deal with. The characters of *The Waves* are all in a constant search for their identity and to gain an adequate understanding of their selves. Woolf creates a new language for her novel to fully depict the hidden endeavor of her characters trying to find their identity. In this sense, Leila Baradaran Jamili (1965) argues that "Woolf's language in *The Waves* is [...] a complex articulation

between individuals, their social and cultural context, [...] and their quest for identification, especially self-identity" (2006). However, the female characters of *The Waves* are unable to accomplish their journey to find their identity. Their feminine identities become disintegrated and they experience different psychological neuroses.

In this paper, the issue of splitting will be discussed from the point of view of Sigmund Freud, and the other categories of this subject will be elaborated briefly in order to make a clear cut between the relatively confusing similar matters. Splitting refers to thinking in extremes. According to Otto Fenichel, it may refer to two things: "splitting of the mind," and splitting of mental concepts, or as he calls it "black and white thinking" (14). The latter is about thinking in extremes, for example goodness vs. evil, innocence vs. corruption, and victimization vs. oppression. It can be seen as a defense mechanism. In psychoanalytical debates, the concept of splitting of the mind stems from existential insecurity or the individuals' inability to stabilize her/his concept of self in his mind. The oscillation in the assessments of the self causes chaotic and unstable relationships and intense emotional experiences. Those with narcissism and love-hate ambivalence suffer from these modulations in their emotions and patterns of relationship.

Susan's Love-Hate Ambivalence

One of the categories of splitting of self is ambivalence, introduced by Freud to indicate the simultaneous presence of love and hate towards the same object. According to Freud, "ambivalence is the precondition for melancholia" together with loss of a loved object, and discharge of the aggression toward the self (2009). The same ambivalence occurs in the obsessive neurosis, but there it remains related to the outside object.

Ambivalence, based on what Michael Jacobs says, is a state in which an individual senses a "simultaneous, conflicting feeling" toward another person or thing (98). Stating in another way, it is the experience of having both negative and positive thoughts and emotions toward someone or something at the same time. The term also refers to situations where some general "mixed feelings" are experienced (ibid, 99). The individual experiences a modulation between two extremely opposite and contradictory feelings toward the same subject or even an object.

Ambivalence is experienced psychologically unpleasant when the positive and negative aspects of a subject are both present in person's mind at the same time. Freud defines ambivalence as "an underlying emotional attitude in which the co-existing contradictory impulses (usually love and hate) derive from a common source" and they are held to be interdependent (1999). Moreover, it would not usually be expected that the person having ambivalence would actually feel both of the two contradictory emotions in the same level because one of the conflicting sides is repressed. Therefore, the individual's love for her/his father might be quite clearly and openly expressed, while her/his hate for the same person or object might be heavily suppressed. Susan's love for his father is openly expressed through the narrative, while her hatred of him is repressed.

In addition, Susan's love for the natural, simple, rural life is obviously being expressed throughout the narrative, as she says: "out the day will spring, as I open the carriage-door and see my father in his old hat and gaiters. I shall tremble. I shall burst into tears (W, 27). Though she hates her father for imprisoning her in the house to practice the rules of life, she scarcely admits her aversion. She also shows an intense love and thirst for the natural and simple life on a farm; even though she gradually becomes tired of her natural happiness at the time when she reached it. However, the hidden disgust with her exhaustion of the "natural happiness" is blurred under her vague states: "so I am driven forward, till I could cry, as I move from dawn to dusk opening and shutting, 'No more. I am glutted with natural happiness'" (W, 91).

A love-hate relationship is an interpersonal relationship involving "simultaneous or alternating emotions of intense love and intense hate" (Berne, 1975: 86). It can be applied to relationships with inanimate objects, or between siblings and parents/children. A love-hate relationship has been linked to "the occurrence of emotional ambivalence in early childhood" (Freud, 1991); to "conflicting responses by different ego states within the same person" (Berne, 1976). The inflicted individual may even hate and love her/his own friend in the same level of intensity.

Susan, in *The Waves*, continually swings between the feeling of love and the feeling of hatred. The strong emotions of agony and aversion grow in Susan when she saw Jinny kisses Louis: "I saw her kiss him. I saw them, Jinny and Louis, kissing. Now I will wrap my agony inside my pocket-handkerchief [...] I will not sit next Jinny and next Louis. I will take my anguish and lay it upon the roots under the beech trees" (W, 6). These reactions of childish anguishes gradually outgrow as she enters in the world of adults. She was never again able to control her hatred; nevertheless she senses a strong feeling of love for Jinny at the same time. Love-hate ambivalence may also be the result of poor self-esteem, as she regarded herself as a worthless, unloved person. Worthlessness ironically becomes valuable, because it aptly expresses her depressed identity.

Susan openly admits that she is jealous of Jinny: "I am torn with jealousy. I hate Jinny because she shows me that my hands are red, my nails bitten" (W, 69). When Jinny is near Susan, she loses her self-confidence and the feeling of inferiority and abjection starts to flourish inside her. She wants to protect her self-esteem at these moments from the danger of Jinny's flamboyancies:

Though I pile my mind with damp grass, with wet fields, with the sound of rain on the roof and the gusts of wind [...] and so protect my soul against her, feel her derision steal round me, feel her laughter curl its tongues of fire round me and light up unsparingly my shabby dress, my square-tipped finger-nails, which I at once hide under the table-cloth. (W, 63)

Jinny is aware that this hatred is “indistinguishable” from their love for each other: “it is love, [...] it is hate, such as Susan feels for me because I kissed Louis [...]; because equipped as I am, I make her think when I come, ‘My hands are red,’ and hide them. But our hatred is almost indistinguishable from our love” (W, 72). Catullus’ famous line, quoted by Jasper Griffin and Oswin Murry in *The Oxford History of Classical World*, refers to ambivalence of conflicting feelings: “I hate and yet love. You may wonder how I manage it. I don’t know. But feel it happen, and am in torment” (489). This excerpt is frequently repeated by Susan throughout the narrative: “I love [...] and I hate. I desire one thing only. My eyes are hard. Jinny’s eyes break into a thousand lights,” or elsewhere: “it is hate, it is love [...]. That is the furious coal-black stream that makes us dizzy if we look down into it” (W, 7, 72). They trace Susan’s love-hate ambivalence resulted from her dualistic feelings toward Jinny.

Jinny’s Narcissistic Personality Disorder

The other category of splitting of identity is narcissistic personality disorder. People with narcissistic personality disorder use “splitting as a central defense mechanism” (Freud, 2009: 98). Based on what Freud asserts, most often the narcissist does this as an attempt to “stabilize her/his sense of self” in order to keep his self-esteem by perceiving himself as “completely upright or admirable” (1991: 21). Those who do not conform to the will or the values of a narcissist individual are regarded as wicked or contemptible by him. Narcissism is a term used to describe “a person characterized by egotism, vanity, pride, selfishness, and self-admiration” (Millon, 324). Narcissistic personality disorder is based on Freud’s idea, “a mental neurosis in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration” (2012). The people with narcissistic personality disorder believe that they are superior to others and have little regard for other people’s feelings.

Behind the mask of high confidence in narcissists lies a fragile self-esteem, vulnerable to the slightest criticism. According to Robert Emmons, narcissistic personality disorder symptoms may include traits such as:

Believing that s/he is better than others, fantasizing success and attractiveness, exaggerating achievements or talents, expecting constant praise and admiration, believing that s/he is special and acting accordingly, expressing disdain for those s/he feels that are inferior, believing that others are jealous of her/him, having a fragile self-esteem, having difficulty with empathy, and also perceiving themselves to be unique and special people. (291-2)

These characteristics may not all manifest at the same time in the narcissist individual; however, much of them are common among the patients of the same sex. Jinny, in *The Waves*, demonstrates various symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder. She is thirsty of admiration and needs to arouse the attentions of men to earn love and adoration in order to satisfy her egotistic needs:

The black-and-white figures of unknown men look at me as I lean forward [...]. They are anxious to make a good impression [...]. All gold, flowing that way, I say to this one, ‘Come.’ Rippling black, I say to that one, ‘No.’ [...] He approaches. He makes towards me. (W, 53)

Jinny is confident and assured of her beauty to the point that she speared a sense of insecurity and unreliability to those around her. She acts immensely confident that other women become doubtful and vulnerable about their appearance. Jinny’s assurance is the result of other men’s admiration and exaltations of her beauty. Hélène Cixous, in “*The Laugh of Medusa*,” pointed to this kind of narcissism which is resulted from men’s excessive laudation of one especial type of woman and their attempt of stereotyping this ideal kind:

Men have committed the greatest crime against women. Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs. They have made for women an antinarcissism! A narcissism which loves itself only to be loved for what women haven’t got! They have constructed the infamous logic of anti-love. (1976)

Based on what Cixous pointed out, this stream pushes women to the edges of hatred and abhorrence of their own species, as it obviously happened for the case of Jinny and Susan. Jinny loves to shine and to be in the center of attentions. In other words, she wants to be in the spot lights: “there is Jinny [...]. She stands in the door. Everything seems stayed. The waiter stops. The diners at the table by the door look. She seems to centre everything” (W, 63). Susan once refers to the idea that how Jinny “sticks [flowers] behind her ear so that Miss Perry’s dark eyes smoulder with admiration [...]. Miss Perry loves Jinny” (W, 21). This indicates that Jinny constantly seeks the admiration and praises of those who are around her.

According to Emmons, women who score high on tests of narcissism consistently “dress more provocatively than their more modest counterparts” (294). Jinny spends lots of energy and attention to choose best style and fashions in clothing. She pays lots of attention to the colors and the fabric of her dresses: “I have chosen what yellow

or white, what shine or dullness, what loop or straightness suits. I am volatile for one, rigid for another" (W, 117). This demonstrates her eager to arouse the attentions of others by her look and her glamorous style of dressing.

Jinny's excessive obsession with her look and her fashion puts credit on the evidences that reveal and prove her narcissistic personality disorder: "I feel myself shining in the dark. Silk is on my knee [...]. The stones of a necklace lie cold on my throat. My feet feel the pinch of shoes. I sit bolt upright so that my hair may not touch the back of the seat. I am arrayed, I am prepared" (W, 53). Narcissists will be thrilled to hear that, as a group, they are rated as more attractive and likable than everyone else at first appearance. Simine Vazire and others found that narcissists have a distinct physical signature. They are considered "more stylishly clad, cheerful, and physically appealing at first sight than are those who score lower in narcissism" (Vazire et al, 1986). A range of studies find a link between narcissism and physical attractiveness, and narcissists' tactics for standing out are well-documented, often by themselves.

Self-esteem mediates between mental health and narcissism. Therefore, because of the narcissists' high self-confidence, "deriving from self-perceptions of competence and likability," they are relatively "free of worry and gloom" (Sedikides, 404). Jinny cheerfully laughs and constantly plays and dances in the school yard: "Jinny dances. Jinny always dances" (W, 21). She is not worry of being punished for breaking the rules of school, or being caught mocking her masters: "Jinny leaps higher too when Miss Lambert passes," "she picks some flower forbiddenly" (W, 23, 21). Jinny's cheerful manner proves her elevated self-esteem and shows her high self-assurance or self-confidence, as a result of her belief in her likability. Nevertheless, this gloom-free trait puts credits on her narcissistic personality disorder.

In the sexual realm, "promiscuity is a key strategy that allows narcissists to maintain control" (Vazire et al, 195). Jinny constantly dreams of a perfect man to come: "I begin to feel that wish to be singled out; [...] to be called away by one person who comes to find me, who is attracted towards me, who cannot keep himself from me, but comes to where I sit on my gilt chair (W, 23). She does not want, however, to be attracted to only "one person in particular" (W, 92), which shows an evidence to prove her promiscuity. Elsewhere, she puts an emphasis on her previous assertion: "one man will single me out and will tell me what he has told no other person [...]. But I shall not let myself be attached to one person only. I do not want to be fixed, to be pinioned [...]. I have fifty years, I have sixty years to spend [...]. This is the beginning" (W, 28). Considering love and intimate relationships as a playful game, Jinny thought that she has an eternal youth and beauty that last forever. For this reason, she becomes latitude and inattentive to the rules of fidelity.

Based on the principle of least interest, the partner with the least interest in a relationship has the greatest power. According to John Clarkin, promiscuity is "a key behavioral ingredient, because narcissists are always searching for a better deal" (268). As soon as Jinny is done with one love, she looks for another to satisfy her need for love: "he [a stranger] approaches [...] towards me. [...] 'Come,' I say, 'come.' Pale, with dark hair, the one who is coming is melancholy, romantic. And I am arch and fluent and capricious" (W, 53). She prefers the blonde men with blue eyes and uses the rule of least interest in order to maintain her power to resist love and falling for one specific person, therefore, in this way, to remain free to love another individual and also to maintain her position in choosing new affairs.

The assumption of "physical attractiveness and concinnity," as well as the idea of "everlasting youth and beauty," could also suggest that symptoms of "Dorian Gray Syndrome" (DGS) (Brosig, 279). The critics take the desire for eternal youth as leitmotif of the disorder, and create the term "Dorian Gray Syndrome." It alludes to Oscar Wilde's (1854-1900) famous work *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In the novel the protagonist, as a handsome young man, looks at a portrait of himself and wishes that it, rather than he, could grow old. Wilde's artistic condensation in the form of the portrait of Dorian Gray shows narcissistic motivations and "eternal beauty and the process of aging and maturation" are represented by the protagonist (ibid, 76). This phenomenon is characterized by extreme pride in one's own appearance accompanied by difficulties coping with the aging process.

Sufferers of DGS may be heavy users of cosmetic products in an attempt to preserve their youth. Jinny mentions: "I powder. All is exact, prepared. My hair is swept in one curve. My lips are precisely red" (W, 53). Jinny, reluctant to accept that she is aged, uses more cosmetic so that she could preserve her youth and beauty against the passing of time: "time's fangs have ceased their devouring. We have triumphed over the abysses of space, with rough, with powder" (W, 121). She decides to fight the process of aging: "but now I swear, making [...] those slight preparations that equip me, I will not be afraid. [...] I too, with my [...] reddened lips and my finely penciled eyebrows, march to victory" (W, 102). Jinny, suffering from DGS, could not accept the fact that everything, even youth and beauty, has an expiration date, and as she gets older this date becomes nearer. The fear of old age and the loss of beauty as its consequence is common issue among the sufferers of DGS. It is also considered as one of the symptoms of the narcissist individuals. The syndrome of DGS describes a psychodynamic behind these disorders in a form that a narcissist, seeking eternal youth, resists against time-dependent aging and maturation.

DGS is characterized by symptoms combining of diagnostic symptoms of “dysmorphobia,” which means “excessive concern about conceived flaws in one’s body,” narcissistic behaviors, and also “the denial of maturity” (Csef, 281). Although Jinny always refers to her beauty as perfect and flawless, she slightly admits the flaws of her face by comparing it to Rhoda’s and Susan’s:

And my lips are too wide, and my eyes are too close together; I show my gums too much when I laugh. Susan’s head, [...] with its grass-green eyes which poets will love [...] because they fall upon close white stitching, put mine out; even Rhoda’s face, mooning, vacant, is completed. (W, 21).

However, as the time passes in the narrative, Jinny eventually realizes that her narcissism drove her to the edge of nothingness. She realizes that her beauty is not everlasting. This realization disintegrates her fragile and vulnerable narcissistic self-confidence.

Rhoda’s Existential Insecurity

Splitting of self can be demonstrated in the form of existential insecurity which is one of the insecurities threatening humans’ psyche. Insecurity can be felt in several practical dimensions: financial, physical, social, interpersonal, and emotional. But a much deeper level of insecurity, which is existential insecurity, cannot be solved by any of the security operations that will resolve the ordinary worries about not being safe enough. Even when the person has every form of objective security and safety, s/he might still feel threatened and unstable. Existential insecurity differs from ordinary insecurity in five ways. James Park demonstrates these discrepancies in his book, making a clear-cut between existential insecurity and other types of insecurities in human’s life.

The first difference is that instead of being the result of unsafe conditions, the existential insecurity is free-floating and generalized. Park asserts that “it is an unexplained sense of uneasiness within” (2008). The second is that the existential insecurity has nothing to do with identifiable threats, even though one might try “to project her/his uncaused precariousness onto definite dangers, perils, and menaces in the real world” (ibid, 33). The third one is that “all forms of ordinary security or insecurity rise and fall with the objective conditions for the safety, health, and well-being” (ibid, 34). But existential insecurity is a permanent condition of the beings. According to Park, “one cannot abolish his underlying insecurity by telling his self that he is protected” (ibid). The fourth difference is that each form of in/security is separate from the others. Financial troubles might have far-reaching implications, but being poor need not affect the interpersonal or emotional life of the person. Existential insecurity is, however, threatening in every dimension. The final difference is that unlike the other insecurities, and as Park believes, “existential insecurity cannot be cured” (ibid, 35). It will remain as a life-time sense of insecurity in the mind of the individual.

Even if all the securities are satisfied, the individual with the existential insecurity disorder still feels fundamentally insecure. Park believes that because the ordinary and existential insecurities are often being confused with each other, “the person might use security operations” that would be appropriate for obtaining financial, physical, or emotional security when s/he is really “struggling with her/his existential insecurity” (2001). If the deep vulnerability disguises itself as ordinary fears, doing ordinary security actions will not overcome the sense of existential insecurity. Park believes that “trying to secure the relationships by assurances of fidelity, loyalty, exclusiveness, and love will not overcome the existential insecurity” (ibid, 271). One of the major faces of existential insecurity is the state of uncertainty.

Uncertainty simultaneously constructs and frustrates the world of interconnected selves in Woolf’s work. Her characters are, as Lisa Marie Lucenti observes, “fluctuating between acceptance and rejection of their own insubstantial nature” (76). The “seamlessly unified self,” to resort to Toril Moi’s phrase, is constantly questioned and deconstructed by all the characters of *The Waves*; it is “the elusive figure of Rhoda” that becomes Woolf’s main vehicle for articulating the above delineated concerns (78). Rhoda can be defined as “a transgressive figure of uncertainty” through which Woolf develops a critique of the unitary self (ibid, 79). By the focus on Rhoda’s uncertainty, her delirium and its potentiality, this section is based on a fragile self-effacing female character, whose performance is enacted through a number of fearful soliloquies. Rhoda’s untold suicide could be considered as a part of Woolf’s feminist project of re-conceptualization of female identity.

Makiko Minow-Pinkney argues that Rhoda is incapable of establishing the stable and constant subject, and remains fearfully suspended between the “denial of unity” and “the agony of the fragmented self” (163). In the character of Rhoda, Woolf explores such powerlessness and helplessness that all reality seems hostile and invasive: “life, how I have dreaded you, [...] stained by you and corrupted” (W, 108). Being paranoid, Rhoda fears everything and everyone in general. She regards people around as “hideous,” and “squalid” (W, 108). She fears others for no definite reason and thinks that everyone around wants to do harm to her, and for this reason, she wants to avoid any contact with others.

Rhoda’s vulnerability manifests the insubstantiality of the deeply depressed self. The objects around seems to deny her very existence. She feels excluded when she finds Miss Hudson’s mathematical formulas

incomprehensible: "the figures mean nothing now. Meaning has gone [...]. The world is entire, and I am outside of it, crying, 'Oh, save me, from being blown for ever outside the loop of time!'" (W, 10). Based on Park's ideas, meaning is found when the self has the power to "organize perception of outer facts," so that "the internal schemata coincide with the structure of objects" (2001). Understanding presupposes that, according to Park, the self is real enough to "create or authorize schemata that illuminate previously hidden structures" which bring the world closer and include the self in their life (ibid, 131). Therefore, those understandings and perceptions which cannot be disintegrated will resist against the depersonalized, unauthorized self.

Rhoda's identity seems to fall apart, for it lacks some kind of continuity to perception that makes meaning. Her face represents a self that is "not here," and so she must imitate others' reactions. She feels depersonalized and transparent which is "a common complaint from depressives who seem not to have enough energy to be responsive or even to recognize that a situation calls for an emotional reaction" (Harper, 219). Because Rhoda describes the real world as belonging to others, it brings the assumption that she lives in a mystical realm, and other characters do tend to see Rhoda's isolation as otherworldliness. But Rhoda herself describes it as nothingness: "alone, I often fall down into nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness" (W, 22). Based on what Minow-Pinkney believes "depressive nothingness" is neither "a visionary experience" nor "a mystical level of consciousness" (165). Acknowledging the solidity of the world of her friends, Rhoda attributes exclusive value to it. She thought that the world of her friends is full, but hers is empty.

When Louis speaks of the necessity to unify many selves into one whole, he reminds the reader of Rhoda who is precisely destined to "fall like snow and be wasted," she is unable to form the self into a unified whole and also is unable to exist "here and now" (W, 88, 89). Being "broken into separate pieces," and being "no longer one," (W, 56) she can neither judge, name the thing around, nor be logical. Rhoda, who feels being hurt and persecuted by "those who live in self unity" (Minow-Pinkney, 166), and who hates "all details of the individual life" does not know how to make "the whole and indivisible mass" (W, 55, 68) called life. She endures agony in going "through the antics of the individual," yearning for those "moments when the walls of the mind grow thin; when nothing is unabsorbed" and when she could for a moment fancy "that we might blow so vast a bubble that the sun might set and rise in it and we might cast-off and escape, from here and now" (W, 118, 119). However, all of these yearnings remain as wishes and do not fulfill, for she lacks a sense of her self as a unified entity. This lack led her more and more to her uncertainty in her life.

This abolition of the limiting walls of individuality can be experienced as "the dissolution of the self" as Freud suggests that "the denial of unity can be either a perverse of multiple selves or the agony of the fragmented self" (2009). Rhoda is undone by her fellow human beings who "pierce" her heart with a "million arrows," (W, 55) pinning her down and exposing her. The sense of psychic breakdown even produces hallucination of corporal disintegration: "you will let me fall, and will tear me to pieces when I am fallen," "I am broken into separate pieces; I am no longer one" (W, 118, 56). This hallucination shows how she suffers from those agonies resulted from her sensing the disintegration of her identity.

Rhoda, refusing or is being unable to take a place in the passing of a family lineage, is an instance of the unsuccessful repression of the mother; a repression necessary to place oneself in the family triangle. Rhoda has the self-image as "the youngest," "the most naked," "exposed," "unprotected" (W, 50, 55, 53, 116) and accordingly she seeks protection. She yearns for "mothers from whose wide knees skirts descend" to hide and protect her (W, 55). The novel inscribes, based on Lisa Marie Lucenti's words, "the image of union with and separation from the mother with explicitness" (80). Driven out of the socio-temporal order, Rhoda has to live a fragmented time; for her, "one moment does not lead to another":

I cannot make one moment merge in the next. To me they are violent, all separate; and if I fall under the shock of the leap of the moment you will be on me, tearing me to pieces. I have no end in view. I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole and indivisible mass that you call life. (W, 68).

For Rhoda, who has only moments, "maturation and teleology are impossible" (Lucenti, 81); she cannot believe that she will "grow old in pursuit and change," for if she could endure the passing of time and the change of body and grows old, "[she] should be rid of [her] fear" (W, 68). According to Lisa Marie Lucenti, "fragmentariness" is as characteristic of the time of the novel as of Rhoda herself (82). Rhoda's own abhorrence of the social rule is largely shared by the novel itself: "how you stand embedded in a substance made of repeated moments run together; are committed, have an attitude, with children, authority, fame, love, society; where I have nothing. I have no face" (W, 118). Unable to have a family of her own, or to sense love and fame, she hates the society in general.

Rhoda hates looking-glasses, for the image of herself motivates her to attach to her identity: "that is my face [...] in the looking-glass behind Susan's shoulder, that face is my face. But I will duck behind her to hide it, for I am not here. I have no face" (W, 21). Yet still she has to experience her totality outside her, in the mirror; and as Minow-

Pinkney mentions "her identity as a whole is experienced in alienation" (172). This gap between the image in the mirror and the self threatens her, as she says, "alone, I often fall down into nothingness. [...] I have to bang my head against some hard door to call myself back to the body" (W, 22).

Between the image of herself on the surface of the water and her actual self lie "crevices" and "fissures," from which the "emerging monster" (W, 33) leaps and menaces Rhoda's life. She reflects "with intermittent shocks" and "life emerges heaving its dark crest from the sea. It is to this we are attached; it is to this we are bound" (W, 33). She is unable to put her trust in her own existence. She senses the insecurity from her surroundings. Through the conflicted figure of Rhoda, Woolf also creates a female character whose identity prefigures the modern-day state of anxiety that according to Zygmunt Bauman characterizes post-modernity: "fear is at its most fearsome when it is diffuse, scattered, unclear, unattached, unanchored, free floating with no clear address or cause [...] 'Fear' is the name we give to our uncertainty" (2). Bauman's paradoxical conceptualization of fear emerges as a fundamental trait of Rhoda's uncertainty. The source of Rhoda's sense of horror is unknown and this obscurity makes the fear more intense. Rhoda is unable to find a logical cause for her dismay, and this inability becomes the origin of her uncertainty. In other words, Rhoda's uncertainty is the result of an unknown sense of horror with no definite reason.

Rhoda, who according to Małgorzata Myk, "suffers a dispersal of the self of pathological proportions" (117), exists only in the continuity of its ways: "how you snatched me from the white spaces that lie between hour and rolled them into dirty pellets and tossed them into the waste-paper with your greasy paws. Yet those were my life" (W, 108). The human face is "hideous"; you will "tear me to pieces when I am fallen" (W, 84, 119). Therefore, Rhoda has no choice but to draw herself across the enormous gulf into her body safely, in order to feel secure; however, this feeling of security is unreal and unstable.

Woolf shows the Rhoda's desire to identify her personality with the unitary self through one of her powerful soliloquies: "I am nobody. I have no face. This great company, [...], has robbed me of my identity [...]. I will seek out [...] monumental face, and will endow it with omniscience, and wear it under my dress like a talisman" (W, 16-17). Percival's death in India deeply affects Rhoda, not only because of her love for him, but rather because his death paradoxically makes her feel all "the more self-conscious and vulnerable by forcing her into a collective experience of mourning" (Myk, 119). Importantly, it also amplifies the contrast between her fearful vulnerability and low self-esteem, and Percival's grandeur.

CONCLUSION

Woolf frequently talks about the split of identity in the woman's consciousness in her works. This split of mind of Woolf's female characters could be assumed as the direct result of their limited freedom. They are usually subjected to the oppressions which are imposed on them by the male figures of the novel. This subordination has negative impacts on the females' mental conditions. They suffer from a kind of psychological disintegration of identity and the side effects of this split of consciousness are categorized into different types of psychological neuroses.

Each of the female characters of *The Waves* can be considered as a victim of mental and psychic breakdowns in their own ways. Susan suffers from the feeling of oscillation between two contrary feelings which are often the sense of love and the feeling of hatred for an object or a person at the same time. This dangling mood becomes the main cause of the splitting of her identity and the destructed sense of unitary self.

Jinny, on the other hand, is the main prey of excessive sense of self-admiration and adulation. She, with her destructive fear of growing old and the decadence of her beauty and youth, deals with the mortal force of narcissism which draws her into the abyss of nothingness and futility. She gradually annihilates her ego with pride and narcissism and what is remained is a disintegrated sense of feminine self.

Rhoda lives in the illusionary world where she felt nothing there but the threats and dangers from those who approach her. She deals with the issue of existential insecurity which is resulted from her vulnerable and fragile sense of self. She has no fixed and stable idea about her identity and regarded it as a disintegrated and fragmented entity subjected of the attacks of others. Desperately trying to stabilize her sense of selfhood in the face of limited ambitions, Rhoda feels that her uncertain image can be fixed only momentarily. She believes that her identity is contrasted with others' stable identities. Because of her sense of insecurity she is even unable to put trust in her friends; and therefore, she regarded them as her avowed enemies. This destructive uncertainty brings nothing but inexistence for her.

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