

Blooming of the Novel in the Bloomsbury Group: An Investigation to the Impact of the Members of Bloomsbury Group on the Composition of the Selected Works of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster

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ABSTRACT

“For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice...” Woolf’s belief has been put to the test in the Bloomsbury Group and this paper intends to investigate the validity of her claim through a critical analysis of the selected works of its novelist members. In a central part of London during the first half of the twentieth century a group of intellectual and literary writers, artists, critics and an economist came together which later on was labeled as Bloomsbury group. The group’s members had an influential role in blooming novel in a different form of expression and profoundly affect its literary figures, Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, in the composition of their fictions *The Waves*, *A Room of One’s Own*, *To the Lighthouse* and Forster’s *A Room with a view* and *Howards End*. The formation of Bloomsbury circle acted as a bridge from the Victorian bigotries and narrow-mindedness to the unbounded era of modernism as they searched for universal peace, individual liberalism and human accomplishments due to ideal social norms. They freely exchanged their views on variety of subjects without any limitation. The reasons behind their popularity compared to several contemporary groups were their innumerable works, the clarification of their lives through their diaries, biographies and autobiographies and their diverse kinds of activities such as criticism, painting, politics and literary writings. They were adherents of truth, goodness, enjoyment of beautiful object, intrinsic values, aesthetics, friendship and personal relationship. Intellectual intimacy and cooperation can be considered as the main attribute of its members as they collaborate with each other and employ the fundamental tenets of the group within their works. The modern style of its artists as post-impressionist highly affects the narration technique of its literary figures. These novelists tried to narrate the verbal utterances in a visual way as if the whole of the story is depicted on a canvas. Furthermore, this paper tries to discover the role of the non-literary (painters and critics) members of the group in blooming and forming of a different and novel kind of narration technique, namely ‘stream of consciousness’, through the visual impact of the painter and the discussion method of critic members of the group.

Key words: Bloomsbury Group, Friendship, Intellectual Intimacy, Virginia Woolf, E M Foster

INTRODUCTION

The first acquaintance and colloquium of the members prompted the public and many writers to figure out the reasons of its formation. S.P Rosenbaum who was famous as Bloomsbury’s expert in his book *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoires and Commentary* elaborated on different aspects of the group and examined their favored conversations and topics. He also collected the member’s diaries, letters and autobiographies which were recited within the Memoire Club to inform the readers about their personal lives and desires. In addition, he elaborated on the literary history of the member’s works in his book *Preface to a Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group* as a representation of

the period in which the works were written by investigating the hierarchy of each member’s writings. The contemporaneity of the member’s works could help the readers to figure out the similar conceptions.

Craufurd D. Goodwin in his paper “The Bloomsbury Group as Creative Community” is concerned with the origin of the group, their practical social, political and economic activities and compared it to other groups. He asserted that, it was an informal group without fixed members, an exact official rules for the new comers and a determined leader. The heyday of the group was before World War I in which their literary endeavor and collaboration added to their reputation.

The fundamental ideal of the group's members was friendship and personal relations which were discussed by Carrol Liana as "Notions of Friendship in the Bloomsbury Group: G.E. Moore, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf" and considered friendship as a means of trophy especially for women to cure their shortcomings and helped them powerfully encounter the social and cultural misjudgments. Friendship increased their self-esteem to recognize their true identity and stabilize their position as women in society. Friendship was a term coined by the philosopher G. E. Moore as the originator of Bloomsbury circle to help the members cope with the complexities of social life. Friendship for them was for the sake of pleasure and mutual interactions to exchange ideas and collaborate for their new works of art.

Geoffrey Moore in his book, *The Significance of Bloomsbury*, elaborates on the ideology and ideals of the group that were based on G.E. Moore's philosophical book *Principia Ethica* which mirrored the critical and aesthetical writings of the members especially the novels of E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf. He concentrated on the set of principles that each member should follow such as the intrinsic values, the nature of goodness and aesthetics.

Kerstin Elert deals with another significant issue of the Bloomsbury group as womanhood in his dissertation "Portraits of Women in Selected Works by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster" and mirrored the Victorian doctrines of womanhood within the context of family and society. In their novels, they mostly represented a Victorian subordinate woman who completely devoted herself to her family as a responsible wife and a sacrificing mother and also depicted a young heroine who revolted against Victorian ideals and wanted to achieve her rights as an individual liberal person and turned to a New-Woman who no longer restricted to a distinct social codes.

In addition, K. Yaseen Ashraf in his thesis "Treatment of Time in Virginia Woolf's Novels" unbounded Woolf from the sequence of time. He is concerned with Woolf's attention to her character's flow of consciousness and the interpretation of internal occurrences rather than the external events. Since the human consciousness could not bound to a certain limit of time and travels through the present, past and future experiences and memories. He elaborated on Woolf's different views toward time during the production of her eight novels.

This study elaborates on the mutual interactions of the Bloomsbury's members on each other's works and reveals their intellectual cooperation. It also concentrates on the collaboration of the non-literary figures of the group with its two prominent novelists to bloom a different form of novel according to the visual impact of the painters on their narration technique. The researcher tries to determine the significant role of Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster within the formation and promotion of the group's notions. On the other hand, it extracts the member's letters and diaries to demonstrate their mutual intimacy and shared ideas. It discloses the traces of Bloomsbury's figures and their belief and doctrine within the works of its literary figures. Moreover, it reminded the readers to recognize the efforts of those writers whose names weren't written on the front page of the works even though

they cooperated with the main author to create literary works which became popular and permanent.

Theoretical Approach

The Bloomsbury circle which included a group of literary figures, artists, critics and journalist began their meetings in 1905 at the house of Stephen's children; Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf, Adrian and Thoby Stephen to discuss issues and share opinions. They gathered together irregularly and any common and trivial issues considered as serious discussions that brought about some extraordinary works based on these intellectual interactions and exchange of thought. The first public acquaintance of Bloomsbury Group was in 1910 and 1912 by the success of two post-impressionist exhibitions in London which were held by Roger Fry. The members were the pioneers of anti-war movement and almost none of them participated in the two great wars. They were hostile to the wrong policies which brought about destruction in human life as they rejected Victorian conventions and social norms. The members believed in a same philosophy and belief to shape an ideal society even in tumult of wars or the chaos of social and political change. They favored hedonism as they favored to act and think according to their individual appeal. The main concern of this group was personal relationship and friendship to achieve a great pleasure. Most of Bloomsbury's literature and speech were revolutionary since the members had a general criticism toward all established domains. They were considered as social, political, cultural and educational reformers who desired to alter wrong beliefs and policies through different utterances in their works and arts. Bloomsbury members were the proponents of Aestheticism in 1980s and favored form rather than content and did their artistic and literary activities according to the formalistic viewpoint. Despite the group's informality it became widely known and prosperous due to its diverse forms of professions as novelists, painters, critics, journalists, economics, philosophers and biographers. They became popular through their achievements in modern literature, new form of narration in novels, macroeconomics and painting exhibitions based on post-impressionist movement.

MEMBERS OF BLOOMSBURY GROUP

Bloomsbury Group was a circle of British artists, intellectuals and friends who highly influenced each other's ideas and literary works. Each of the cardinal members wholly affected the group's reputation, without these members' contribution, Bloomsbury like other literary and artistic circles would have never lasted long. There is not an exact list of members but it consisted of ten prominent figures that had a prodigious and diverse output.

MUTUAL IMPACTS AND COLLABORATIONS

Attribution of One Another's Traits in Their Works

The works left from Bloomsbury group presented a kind of literary history as they wrote for the public taste of the then

Members name	Professions
Virginia Woolf	Novelist, Short Story Writer, Essayist, Critic
E.M. Forster	Novelist, Short Story Writer, Essayist
Lytton Strachey	Biographer, Critic, Essayist
John Maynard Keynes	Economist, Political Theorist
Roger Fry	English Art Critic, Painter
Vanessa Bell	Painter
Duncan Grant	Painter
Leonard Woolf	Political Writer, Publisher, Autobiographer, Journalist
Clive Bell	Art Critic
Desmond MacCarthy	Literary Critic, Journalist

England. The literary and non-literary texts produced by the group were considered as a chronology of events to help the readers achieve an accurate interpretation. The collaboration among the friends and their friendly relations brought about the composition of many interconnected text. The members ascribed some attributes and traits of the other members for their characters, for example, some of Lytton Strachey's characteristics were mirrored into Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster's novels. Moreover the original thought of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* was based on the relationship and friendship among the Bloomsbury members.

Virginia Woolf in her novel *To the Lighthouse* used her sister's characteristics for her character Lily Briscoe who was a painter. In addition, E.M. Forster in his novel *Howards End* derived the original thought of Schlegel's sisters and their aesthetic and intellectual life from the literal sisters of Bloomsbury. He referred to the culture and literary life of these two sisters who preferred communication with male literary figures despite society's conventions.

Interconnected Texts

Clive Bell's book *Art* (1914) which highlighted the aesthetic experience and "significant form", derived its original thought from the group's formalistic figures as G.E. Moore and Roger Fry. Occasionally some of the member's works connected to the other member's texts or elaborated on the same issue as S.P. Rosenbaum named some of these writings as:

Sometimes entire texts are related to others in Bloomsbury as Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* is something of a sequel to Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*; Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* is a postwar and Postimpressionist Bildungsroman that can be compared with Forster's more impressionistic, prewar *The Longest Journey*. Virginia Woolf's *Flush* is a parody of Strachey's Victorian biographies; her *Between the Acts* incorporates a pageant play like Forster's *England's Pleasant Land*.¹

On the other hand, John Maynard Keynes derived some internal thought of his work *Economic Consequences of the Peace* from the *Eminent Victorians* which was a collection of

Roger Fry's essays based on psychological and biographical insights of four Victorian figures. Close relationship between Bloomsbury friends brought about some interactions within their art and literature. The use of houses which corresponded privacy in E.M. Forster *Howards End* represented femininity and the need of women to have a place of their own which was the long-life belief of Virginia Woolf as S.P. Rosenbaum declared some relevance between this novel and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*:

There are traces of *Howards End* to be found in the structure and subject of *To the Lighthouse*, with its connected antitheses, its family life in the country, the continuing presence of a dead woman, and a housecleaner called Mrs. Bast.²

The members employed the concept or meanings of other Bloomsbury's works within their own texts to emphasize on their same notions and ideas.

Mutual Effect of the Members in the Creation of Other's Works

Roger Fry had an extreme collaboration with Virginia Woolf as he helped in her writing style and craft of her novels and short stories. In addition, he encouraged her to represent the reality in a pleasurable mood as it was viewed on the canvas in order to affect the reader's emotional experience. In his view, the work of a writer is like a visual art as they depict the same thing in different ways. Roger Fry's theory of Post-Impressionist highly influenced the writing and thinking of Bloomsbury members especially Virginia Woolf. Post-Impressionism means each viewer receive an exclusive vision from a painting as Virginia asserted the term "luminous halo" for a unique view of each individual from the reality. The influence of Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibition affected Virginia Woolf's Novel *To the Lighthouse* and influenced its texture since Virginia highlighted the aesthetic experience through her character Lily Briscoe as a painter who pursued the artistic style of Bloomsbury painters especially Vanessa Bell.

To the Lighthouse is the post-impressionist novel. In it Lily Briscoe stands at her easel as surrogate author, the question for her, as by peculiar analogy for Woolf, being 'one of the relations of masses, of lights and shadows... how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left'.³

Since it promoted the formalistic ideas, the importance of form was evident in this novel. Moreover, her style of writing as "Stream of Consciousness" included multiple points of view derived from Cezanne technique and similar to cubist style of painting. Virginia decided to write his biography in 1940 to appreciate his services in the progression of modern literature and art. She devoted most of its parts to his letters and quotations on different subjects. Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant were the great artists of Bloomsbury who the group owed for painting and decorating success. Roger Fry along with the assistance of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant founded the Omega Workshops in 1913 at 33 Fitzroy square at the center of Bloomsbury district for the public visiting. The intention behind forming such a center was to combine fine arts with decorative art

as it was wrongly divided and to introduce a new form of painting consist of abstract shapes and bold colors. He gave an opportunity to his artist friends to decorate and design the furniture, textiles, clothes and ceramics. The formation of "Omega Workshops" highly depended on the financial helps of the patrons; some of the patrons were related to Bloomsbury's artistic circle as Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster and Clive Bell. Roger Fry himself tried to make pottery and designed books in 1915. These three artists also painted the portrait of Bloomsbury's central or marginal figures as Lytton Strachey, David Garnet and Mary Hutchinson. Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell collaborated on Berwick Church decoration and decorated the houses of their Bloomsbury friends as well as others. They decorated the house of John Maynard Keynes, Virginia and Leonard's and Virginia's brother Adrian Stephen. The gatherings of these ten prominent figures of the group in a "memoire club" and their consultation on different subject matters may have bloomed a thought in their mind to write a new work of art as E.M. Forster wrote in one of his autobiography that was read in this memoire club:

We do constantly invest strangers and strange objects with a glamour they cannot return. But now and then, before the experience dies it turns a key and bequeaths us with something which philosophically may be also glamour but which actually is tough. From this a book may spring.⁴

It can be concluded that each member had an impressive role within the early thought of their friend's works due to their intimate relation and candor expression.

Works Written According to the Group's Notion and Belief

The members of the group inserted their notions and beliefs into their writings to make readers familiar with their principles and social condition and tried to reestablish the rules and regulations. As friendship determined their most valuable conduct, almost all of them incorporated it in their writings. Virginia Woolf in his novel *The Waves* treated friendship as an essential therapy for women who were in need of others empathy and support to alleviate their pains. She rejected the necessity of equality in friendship, per se, it could exist among those who were not equal. The idea of *A Room of One's own* originated from the resumption of the group's meeting in 1928. It was an essay depicted the conventional and patriarchal environment of nineteenth century of England which restricted women in all social, educational and literary domains so it prompted her to demand women's rights and independence. Jane Goldman, citing Peggy Kamuf (1982, 17), writes:

Woolf's room metaphor not only signifies the declaration of political and cultural space for women, private and public, but the intrusion of women into spaces previously considered the spheres of men.⁵

Virginia Woolf's other precious novel *To the Lighthouse* was a revolt against the conventions, beliefs and standards of a Victorian father and demanded a civilized society which was free from restrictions and discriminations to pursue

beauty and truth. Woolf derived the intellectual life of her characters as a sample of Bloomsbury members which included different types of artistic endeavors as a philosopher and man of letters (Mr. Ramsay), a painter (Lily Brisco) and a literary figure (Augustus Carmichael). In addition, she depicted the unequal marriage of her parents in this novel and solicited for the couple's equality in marriage. It represented Woolf's own family and while writing this novel she wrote in her diary: "Father's character done complete in it; and mothers; and St. Ives; and childhood; and all the usual things I try to put in—*life, death, etc.*"⁶

E.M. Forster who was the other talented novelist of Bloomsbury inducted the group's essence of formation in his fictions as well. He valued some significant aspects of Bloomsbury circle as literature, art, friendship and personal relationship in his novel *Howards End* and concentrated on the truth and beauty which were the prominent principles of the group and highlighted the beauty of life which will be lost without the existence of women. He also in his novel *A Room with a View* depicted a woman who struggled with the strict and hostile attitude of her society towards women and disregarded all social and traditional boundaries so tried to achieve new experiences based on her desires. The female protagonist of the novel finally found her own self and individuality and turned her back to all her societies' restrictions.

WOOLF OF BLOOMSBURY

Here, the researcher concentrates on Virginia Woolf as a central member of Bloomsbury group and elaborates on the impact of her Bloomsbury friends on the composition of her three selected works as *The Waves*, *A Room of One's Own* and *To the Lighthouse*. Virginia Woolf was a real shy and lack of esteem young writer who struggled within herself with the restricted rules of her society but after her acquaintance with the intellectual, intimate and supportive group of Bloomsbury, she changed into an inventive and self-confident woman novelist, poet and essay writer of the twentieth century who is still generally admired and widely read. Bloomsbury group and the notion of friendship and intimacy played an important role within her personal dealings and it was a transition for her from her childhood memories to her adulthood as a professional writer. She believed that friendship and the psychic relation among human beings can create each ones identity. Without Bloomsbury's friendship, she couldn't deal with the sufferings of her parent's death, her mental breakdowns and the heartbreaking events of the great wars. Virginia derived various styles and opinions in her writings from her Bloomsbury's friends.

Art of biography (Lytton Strachey), post-impressionist art (Vanessa Bell and Roger Fry), pacifist and liberal socio-political views (Leonard Woolf), and interventionist economics (Maynard Keynes).⁷

This liberal friendship as regards to their intellect and practicality not to their gender, helped her face the horror of social experiences and encouraged her to write about her favorite style or challenged with various subjects.

THE INFLUENCE OF BLOOMSBURY'S NOTIONS ON THE SELECTED WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

The Waves Written in/by/for the Group

The Waves is Woolf's most mysterious, complex and poetic novel. It is considered as homage to the group she belonged to and favored by. She reflected the fundamental principles of Bloomsbury group within this novel as friendship, projection of reality, individual perception, aesthetics and reading classical texts. Her well-known novel *The Waves* was written at the time of her power and fruitfulness and was considered as her best novel in modernist style and it was "...concentrating as it does on a close circle of intelligent, highly articulate friends, has often been seen as her tribute to Bloomsbury"⁸ Because of their great help and companionship, she adopted the characters of her first major work from her Bloomsbury fellows. Their experience was not an individual but a shared one composed of six characters and referred to one another in different situations. This presented an accurate fact that an individual's experience and life, by the passage of the time, had become the group's experience. The thought of these six characters of the novel came from the guise of Bloomsbury's figures or represented different aspects of Virginia Woolf's character.

Thus Jinny is a project of Woolf's love of clothes and social occasions; Susan, under cover of maternal passion (based on her sister, Vanessa), Woolf's love of the Sussex Downs and country life; Neville, under guise of Lytton Strachey, her love of London and literature; Rhoda's terror of crowds and hatred of her body an almost too close realization of that 'other' Virginia Woolf.⁹

In this novel more than the rest of her novels she highlighted the central principles of Bloomsbury group as: the importance of conversation, friendship, aesthetics and the nature of identity.

A Room of One's Own Written in/by/for the Group

Bloomsbury was a complete shift from the familial rigidity of her childhood to the domestic liberality of this group which provided her a warm gatherings and close friendship with male character to change her idea about the dictatorial and dogmatic men of her childhood. In the patriarchal Victorian society the interior spaces of the house were divided between the genders as the drawing room, nursery and bedroom were related to the women and the study room and the dining room were special for men. So, the private places for study were just possessed by the male figures of the houses and the household members shouldn't reach this boundary to provide a silent atmosphere for the male character; therefore women, as Virginia asserted, had no room of their own or personal space to write, study or solitude. In Bloomsbury circle, there was no division in spatial boundaries or discrimination between the genders but it was all unification and alliance within the group's members.

The primary thought of *A Room of One's Own* derived from the irritancy of Desmond MacCarthy the literary critic and journalist of the Bloomsbury group from Arnold Ben-

nett's book that was called *Our Women* "women were naturally inferior to men and in fact they wished to be dominated by them"¹⁰ that had a great discrepancy with MacCarthy and in general with the groups ideas. It prompted Woolf to write her essay in 1928 to reject the general view of women's inferiority. She described the term "Androgynous mind" in this essay as a third sex which was a complex of masculine and feminine attributes that was considered as an essential factor for the writers of each sex without which no one could write. The term androgynous came from the Bloomsbury group as Showalter stated "In *A Room of One's Own* she adopted the sexual ethic of androgyny from the Bloomsbury Group to escape from the confrontation with femaleness or maleness."¹¹

Virginia Woolf explained the reason of the popularity of novel for the women before the twentieth century as lack of privacy or a room of their own for concentration. Since fiction demanded less concentration than other genres as drama or poetry and women were deprived of private places and ought to write in the sitting room or drawing room which was full of interruptions and shared by family members so they were persuaded to write fiction. The other reason was the fiction correspondence to real life as it was easier for the novelist to show the subjects related to reality. Woolf believed that no one knows what is a woman? Even she doesn't know herself until she started to write and express her personal experience and put down whatever came from her mind unconsciously which proved her real self and identity without which everyone was incapable of her recognition. So, the group's partiality of women's rights and equality prompted Virginia to write such an influential essay.

To the Lighthouse Written in/by/for the Group

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* was the amalgamation of visual and textual elements as she included the field of fine arts especially painting in the literature. Woolf, as a professional writer, synthesized the qualification of modern principles with the aesthetic tenets of her Bloomsbury friends namely Roger Fry, Clive Bell and Vanessa Bell. She depicted her character Lily Briscoe and her artistic appeals as a model of Vanessa Bell and her new style of painting. By the use of "stream of consciousness" as the modern form of narration by Bloomsbury's novelists as Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, the author, much like a painter, whose novel, much like a canvas, stands on the easel and looks closely to perceive more interpretations; she turned back to the incidents with different perspectives in order to provide a general understanding for the readers. It seems that the narration technique of 'stream of consciousness', pioneered by Woolf, is an amalgamation of visual art of painting and verbal art of storytelling sprang out of the joint intellectual collaboration of painters and novelists in Bloomsbury group.

Lily Briscoe as a Victorian painter had difficulty with her society because of her gender in spite of all these conflicts, she always tried to introduce a new technique of painting that was not mimetic, in this case she utilized the term which was coined by Clive Bell as significant form to represent abstraction in painting. She promoted the principles of formalists in her paintings.

Some means must be found to manage powerful emotionsthrown up by the unconscious in response to the subject of one's art. For this purpose, Lily the formalist makes use of the abstract principles of design emphasized by the Post-Impressionists in order to assert controlover her response to Mrs. Ramsay's maternal power.¹²

This is the power of post-impresionism to describe a textual occurrence in a visual way as if it is the real object to arise others sensitivity toward a visual artifacts to be more tangible than the verbal description. Bloomsbury's friends who brought about the aesthetic quality in Virginia Woolf's literature were Roger Fry and Clive Bell. Woolf adapted the term "New Woman" in her novel by the character of Lily who turned her back to all of the traditional values of Victorian and found her way and voice in the liberal modern era. This novel dealt with historical, biographical and psychological aspects of its writer to alleviate her pains. As a result, the principles and notions of Bloomsbury group affected the mind and writings of Virginia Woolf profoundly as it exemplified in three of her novels.

FORSTER OF BLOOMSBURY

E.M. Forster was one of the most gifted English novelist, short story writer, critic and essayist of Victorian period. He went to King's college, Cambridge, where he was admitted as a member of free discussion group of Apostles which later formed Bloomsbury group under the philosophical notions of G.E. Moore as an encouraging initiator. He later collaborated with its members especially Virginia Woolf, a woman novelist, and shared opinions during his writings. Forster revolt against the traditional mores of Victorian society and demanded a modern and civilized society which was empty of wrong hypocrisies and conventions. He dealt with humanism, imperialism, personal relationships, liberalism, class distinctions and Englishness in his works. He wrote *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* in a transition time from Victorian society with rigid social values to Edwardian period with a new mode of thinking and acting. He attended Bloomsbury's meetings, expressed his new ideas and criticized other's works. Forster highlighted the significance of "Memoire Club" that persuaded the members to read their diaries and autobiographical texts in order to share their personal experiences which initiated a new thought within the minds of the novelist to bloom a new form of writing.

THE IMPACT OF BLOOMSBURY'S MEMBERS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTED WORKS OF E.M. FORSTER

A Room with a View Written in/for/by the Group

As a Bloomsbury member, Forster appreciated friendship and personal relationship as a core of civilization within his works. He pursued G. E Moore's principles as searching for truth, the pleasure of intrinsic values but he was profoundly interested in his enjoyment of beautiful objects and goodness. Forester's values mostly derived from the Bloomsbury's.

The values enunciated in his fiction and criticism have frequently been regarded as deriving to a great extent from the influence of Bloomsbury and his writings have been read as an uncomplicated elaboration of what the Group as a whole espoused.¹³

The term "New Woman" was coined by Virginia Woolf and then reflected in Forster's fiction. Forster described Lucy, his protagonist, as a new woman who refused the strict feminine ideals of her society that prohibited the unmarried girl to communicate with male figures and decided to go out without the supervision of her chaperon.

The public view toward women as inferior, weak, delicate and unintelligent sex was transformed in Edwardian time as women questioned their rights, equality and individuality. Much similar to Virginia Woolf, Foster also dealt with different aspects of women's life as social, educational, cultural, political and economic status within his fiction. He pursued Woolf's androgynous mind while he was writing his two prominent fictions as *A Room with a View* and *Howards End*. He ascribed women to aesthetics in his works especially in *A Room with a View* that named his ninth chapter as "Lucy as a Work of Art".

Forster's fictional writing not only offers a variety of representations of women and the feminine, but it also opens up questions of how women and the feminine are caught up in the literary and cultural processes of representation.¹⁴

It is supposed that even the similarity between the titles of E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908) and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's own* (1929) is not an accidental one. It may have come from the same implied meanings which were prevalent in the Bloomsbury group. Forster tried to alter the public view toward women's restriction by providing privacy and individualism for his female protagonists at the end of his novels. Therefore, Forster's partiality of women may prompt Virginia Woolf to elaborate on the same issue to defend women's rights within the literary canon and social life.

As he was concerned with women subjects and used women characters, some critics called him a "Woman Writer"¹⁵ and Virginia Woolf defended this assumption in her diary in 1919 and wrote about his adaptation and shared ideas, "I always feel him shrinking sensitively from me, as a woman, a clever woman, an up to date woman"¹⁶. He depicted his main characters as women who, in spite of their society's common rules, were educated and independent artists or literary figures as Lucy who was educated and had a great musical talent or Miss Lavish, a woman novelist in his *A Room With a View* or Schlegels sister in *Howards End* who did not attend college but inherited an extraordinary intelligence in literary discussions. Lucy, like Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell who favored in spending their time with the male figures of Bloomsbury to achieve confidence and identity, knew her inborn competence and self-courage within their companion. Lucy described her new experience and good feeling which came from these male friendships as spring time "In the company of this common man the world was beautiful and direct. For the first time she felt the influence of spring"¹⁷ that caused her to bloom her susceptibilities

and reach her utmost happiness like the flowers and trees that blossomed and presented their wonderful beauties in spring. Forster's secrets were revealed in the intimate and unbound group of Bloomsbury and each member tried to improve his qualifications as Virginia Woolf asserted "the strength of his blow is dissipated; we want to make Mr. Forster stand and deliver, and grasp fiction".¹⁸ The lives of Bloomsbury's members were strongly interwoven to each other as they helped one another in creating new work of art and giving suggestions because of their similar perspectives. It can be concluded that, Bloomsbury's collaboration and main intentions highly influenced on E.M. Forster's writings.

Howards End Written in/for/by the Group

Forster's ten years of hilarious childhood spent at the household in Rooksnest from which the thought of Wilcox house in *Howards End* inspired. Later, His attendance in Cambridge prompted him to get familiarized with Mediterranean culture which was in complete contrast with the rigid and bounded culture of England. He advocated Bloomsbury's values and notions as women's rights, gender equality, feminism, aestheticism, humanism and class consciousness within this novel as his protagonist revolted against her social traditions and moral norms. He acted as a social reformer and tried to substitute modern norms instead of the Victorian conventional ones that were abhorred by the intellectual figures. He promoted liberal norms and strategies to release the characters from former restrictions and biases as he called "the hero of liberal values in liberalism's dark time".¹⁹

In different contexts, Forster makes use of liberal-humanist and Bloomsbury values: in his fiction, particularly the later novels, they function as the equivalent of a 'climate of opinion', a set of beliefs which have gained in certain quarters a moral currency, but which Forster interrogates in relation to the exigencies of specific social and political problems – class divisions, for instance, in *Howards End*.²⁰

He presented the Schlegel's sisters as the model of Stephen's daughters, Vanessa and Virginia, as they both favored art, literature, reading novels and writing letters. They were admired as liberal and high-talented girls who differed from the women of their age. Margaret resembled the character of Virginia Woolf as an intelligent and brilliant woman and Helen, like Vanessa, favored painting and art.

Similar to Bloomsbury's sisters, they provided their house, "Wickham Place", as an appropriate place for literary and political discussions and gatherings as Stephen's House 36 Gordon square located at Bloomsbury district "They filled the tall thin house at Wickham Place with those whom they liked or could be friend. They even attended public meetings."²¹ Forster, in his later novels, concentrated on the Masculine spaces and feminine boundaries which were used interchangeably especially by women. The male characters of the novels eventually undertook the tension that was caused by the women's entrance and succumbed to the transformation of Edwardian period. He was not opponent to the female's liberation as he believed that men could adapt themselves to new situations and occurrences.

His sympathy for George, as well as his participation in the Bloomsbury group's salon model, where educated women conversed freely with Cambridge men, supports a reading of the text that contends that he is not antagonistic to women in masculine spaces.²²

Forster was really pleased with his intimate relationship and a sense of relief that was caused through the Bloomsbury's friendship. Bloomsbury should be considered as a shelter for him to separate himself from the society's oppressive rules through their companion since the common ideas and close intimacy among the members provided a comfort and relaxing relation as opposed to the social turbulence and disorders. Its fundamental purpose was to reform the social and political conducts through their speeches and writings "He had practiced a line of dissidence and rebellion which secured them a place in the British history as dissidents and beacon of change and hope - the men and women that belonged to the so-called Bloomsbury Group."²³ So, the intention and beliefs of the group and its members were concealed within the content of these novelists' works. A competent reader should disclose the member's mutual interactions and intellectual collaborations by extracting their central notions.

CONCLUSION

The Bloomsbury circle included liberated, open-minded, civilized and free-thinker members who were proponents of personal judgment and experience and rebelled against all seriousness and false manners of the predecessors that were extremely supported by upper-classes. They abhorred the norms, beliefs and dogmas of the then England and tried to build a modern society based on freedom and individualism. They really appreciated friendship not only for the sake of entertainment but for the profound understanding resulted from the exchange of thoughts and ideas embedded in its notion. Bloomsbury members were against the patriarchy of Victorian Society and introduced themselves as a matriarchal group who considered equal rights for the genders and highly respected Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell as the only women of the group because of their influential role in the formation and promotion of Bloomsbury. The group included critics, literary and artistic figures who pursued modern thought and styles within their writings. Innovative narration technique can be seen as the inclusion of painters, critics, journalists and biographers forms of presentation in writing novel.

This literary and cultural circle made a great change in the formation of British fiction and nonfiction texts. Bloomsbury members never gave a distinct solution to a problem. They, instead, favored recommending a general conclusion for a topic to decrease the reader's resentment and gave the readers an opportunity to arrive at the final decision by themselves. Bloomsbury gained reputation through its literary and non-literary figures by demanding social and cultural reforms as a result of breaking down the barriers of Victorian rules. The group's conversation and close friendship prompted them to criticize each other's works and opened their minds toward diverse subjects and profound knowledge. By discussing and reviewing one another's works, each member expressed his/her opinion and ultimately was affected by the

reviewed works and resultantly edited the work by the recommendations he/she received.

The cozy and comfortable atmosphere of Bloomsbury's meetings prompted E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf to exemplify such gatherings and friendship among their characters. The notable novels of Virginia Woolf *The Waves*, based on Bloomsbury's friendship, *To the Lighthouse*, related to its artistic and intellectual milieu together with Forster's *Howards End*, depicted the discussion group, philosophical and intellectual life of the members through representing Schlegel's sister, have all the fingerprints the members of Bloomsbury group in their forms and contents which this paper has tried to detect some.

It can be summed up that all great works of literature may have been created by the collaboration of some literary figures. The world-wide known works as *Paradise Lost*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Dunciad*, *Odyssey* and the many other works of literature found their shape through the intellectual intimacy of the contemporaneous talented authors. Without their close and intimate cooperation, none of these works could receive the fame they rightly deserved. Any work of art conceals the cooperation and contribution of other men of name and fame in its background and each competent reader can comprehend such collaboration by reading the text profoundly. The formation of groups and the intellectual interactions of its literary figures brought about literary masterpieces as the members of Bloomsbury who consulted and shared ideas with their friends to write such great works: *The Waves*, *A Room of One's Own*, *To the Lighthouse*, *A Room with a View* and *Howards End*. 'The many years of thinking in common in Bloomsbury Group, as Woolf claimed, really paid off as "...the experience of the mass is behind the single voice"²⁴ of the aforementioned works.

END NOTES

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